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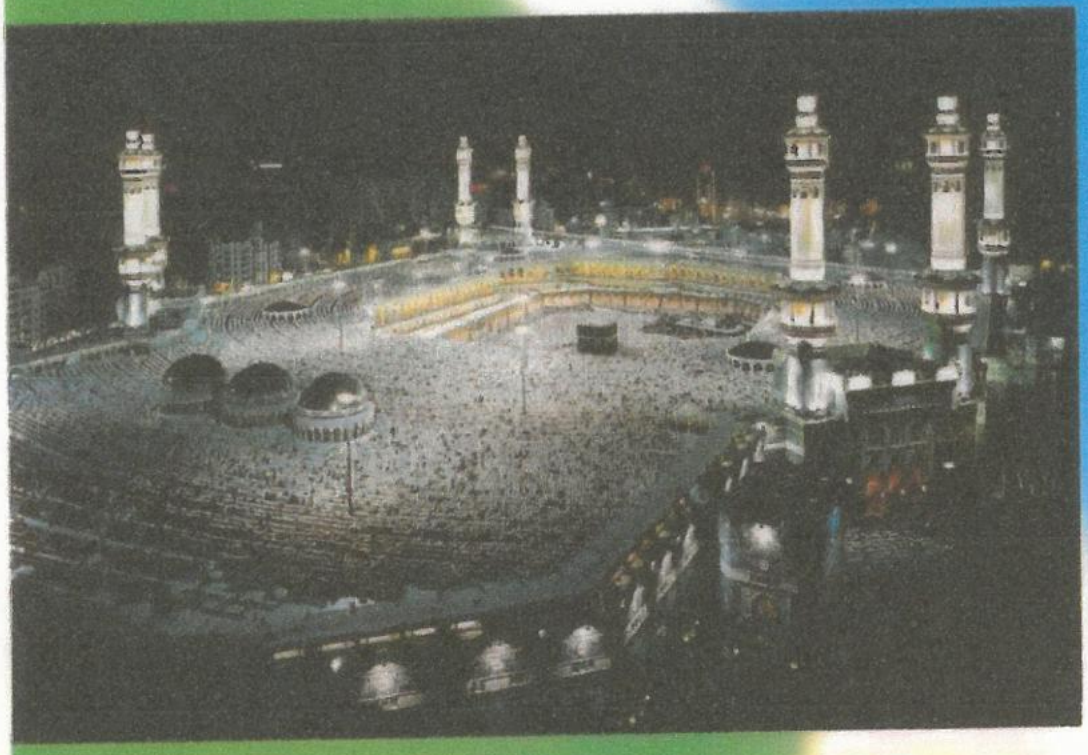


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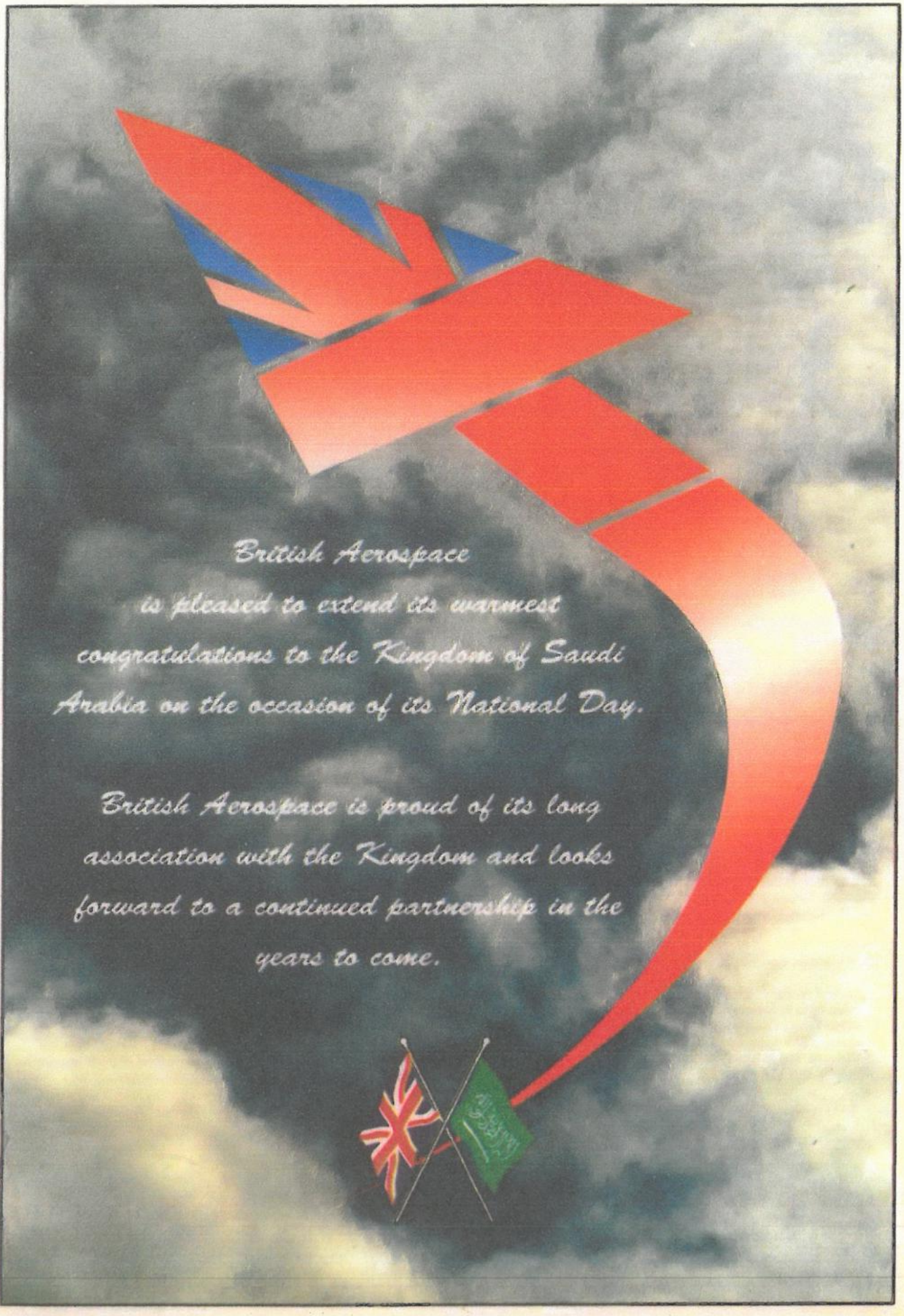
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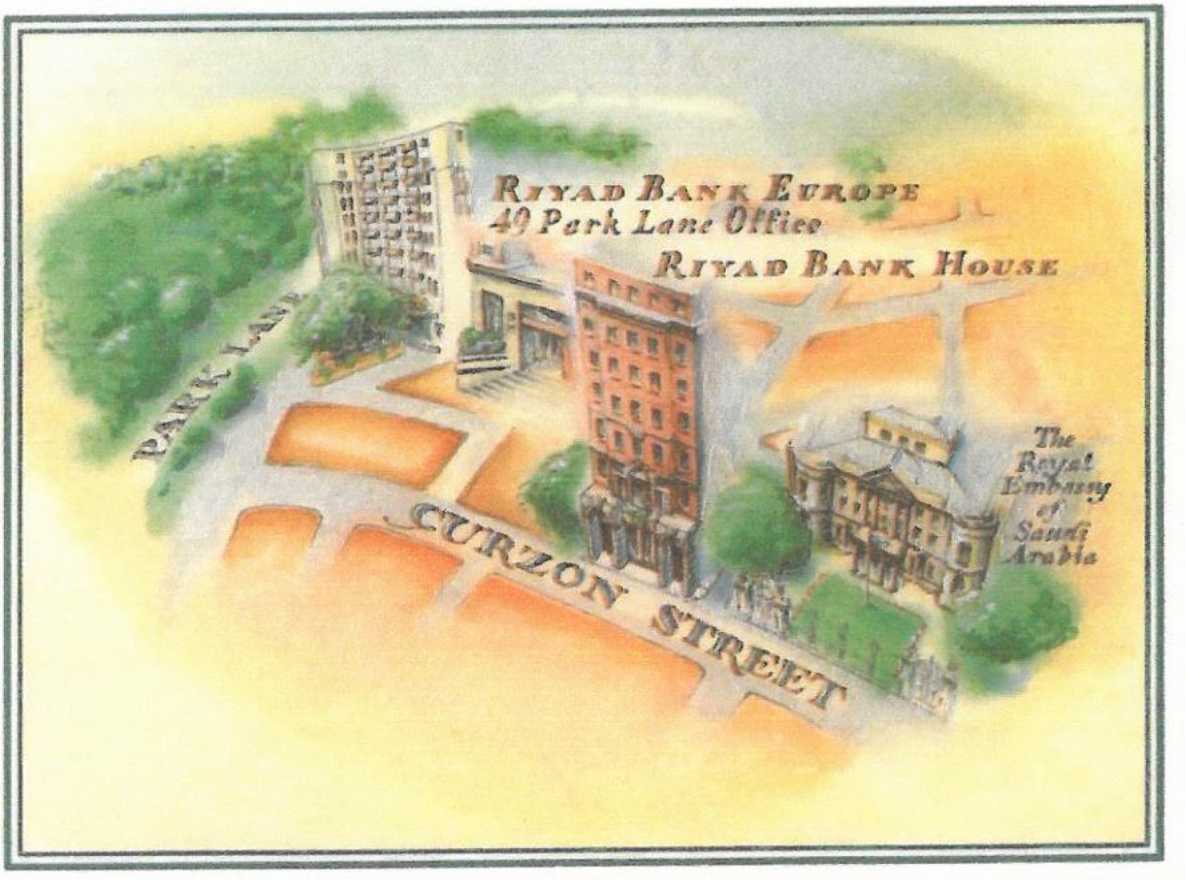
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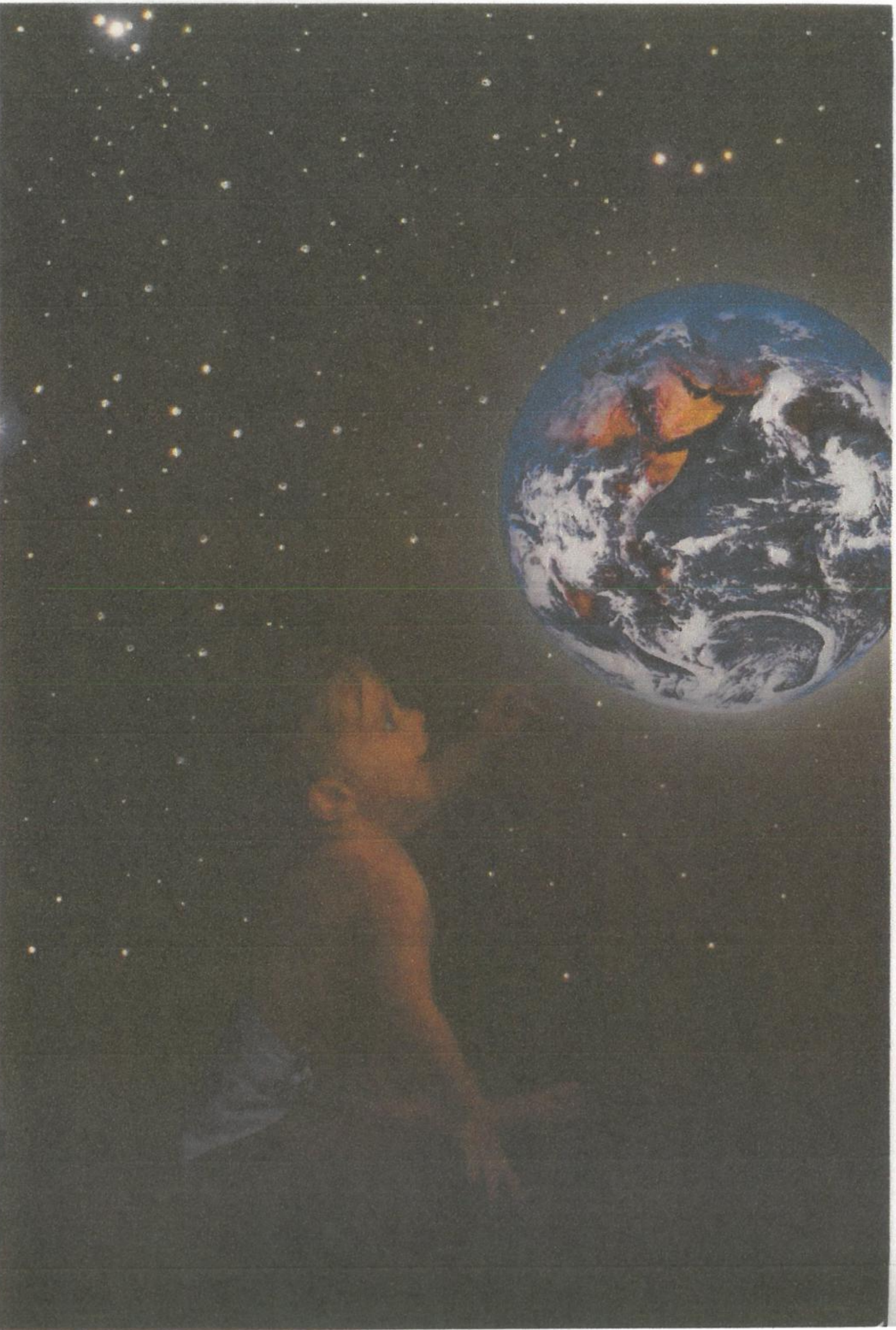

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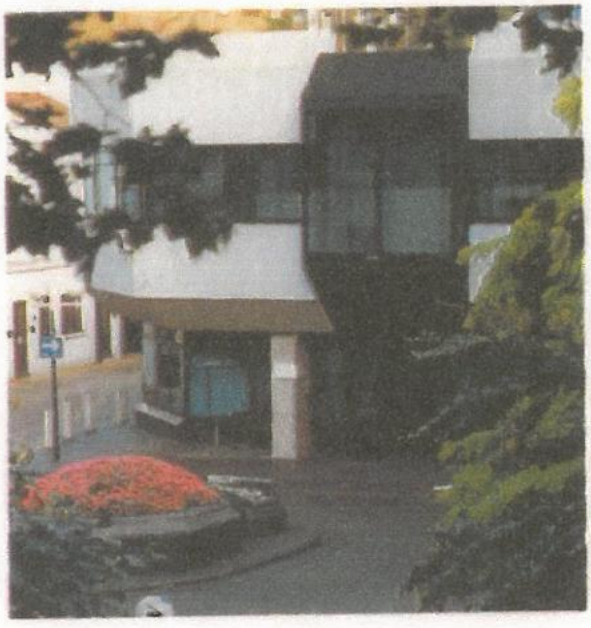
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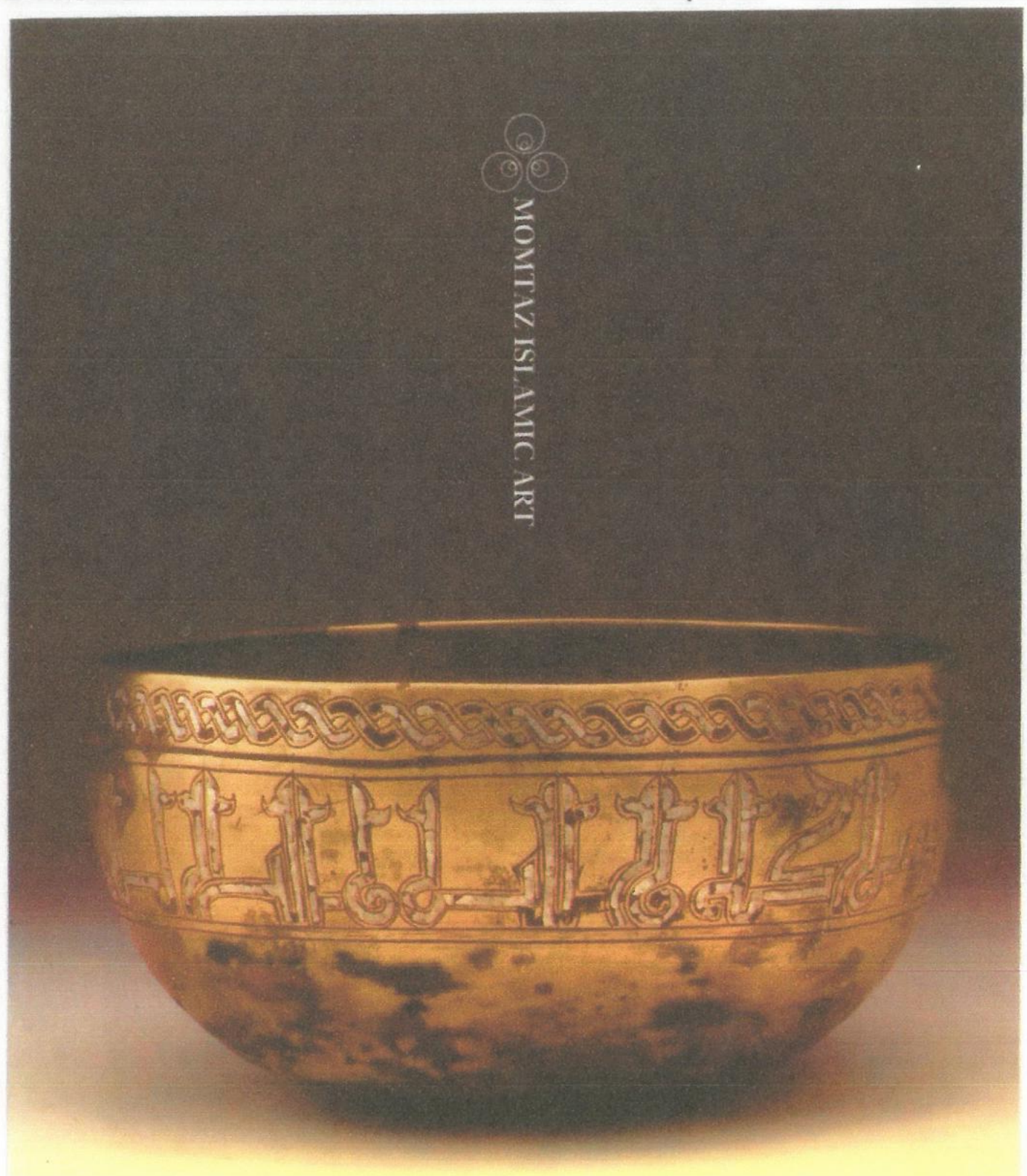
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Haft-joush (seven alloys) bowl with angular and foliated kufic calligraphy inlaid in silver.
Persia, 12th century. Diameter: 20 cm, Height: 11 cm.

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Highlights of 1994

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UAE: Today's Work in the Arts 1994

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Malaysia's Rain Forest Painting Project
Moroccan Popular Arts Festival in UK and Germany
A Celebration of Artisans at Work in Islamabad and
Meeting of the World Crafts Council
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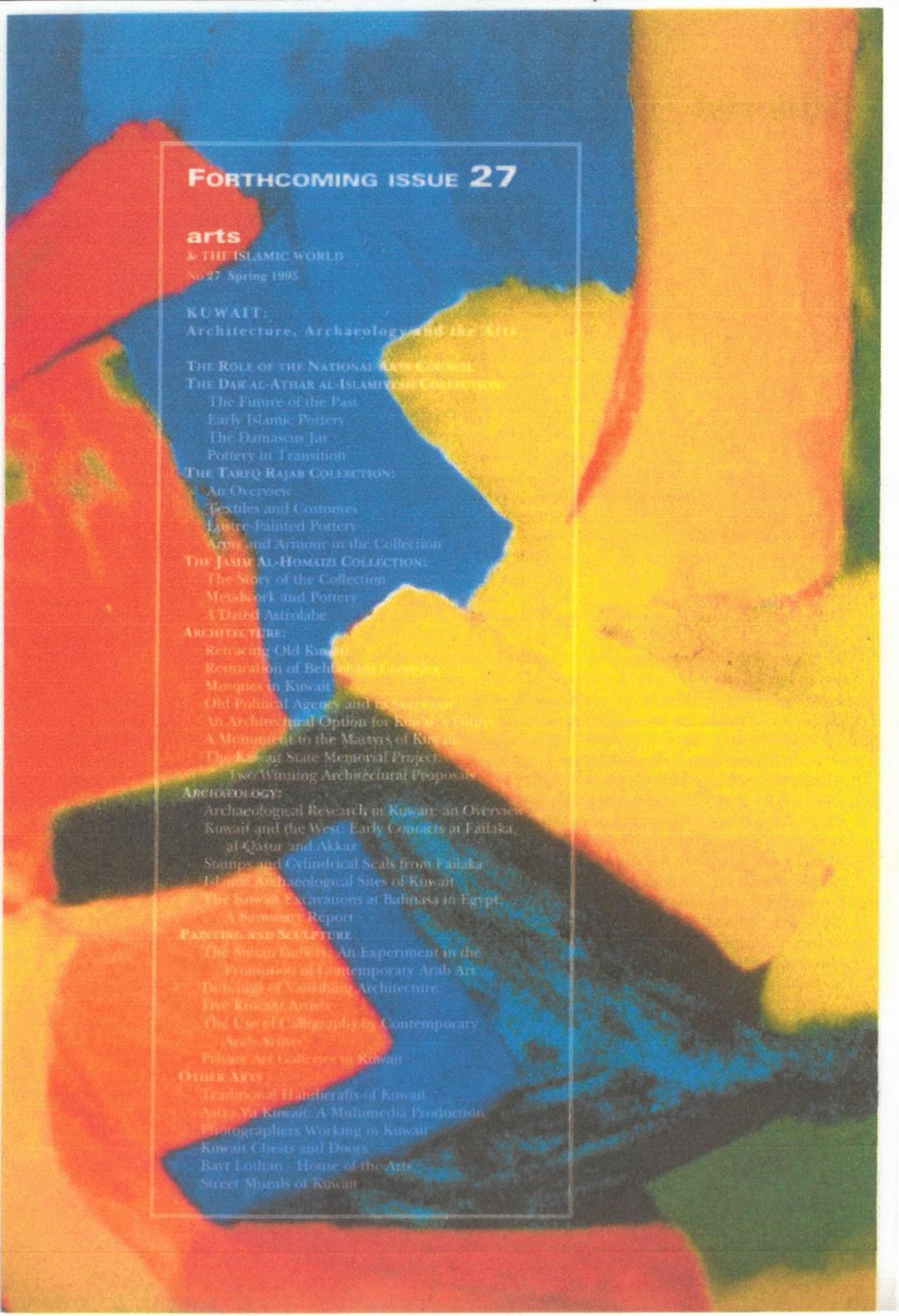
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FORTHCOMING ISSUE 27

arts
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No 27 Spring 1995

KUWAIT:
Architecture, Archaeology and the Arts

THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL

THE DAR AL-ATHAR AL-ISLAMIYYAH COLLECTION:
- The Future of the Past
- Early Islamic Pottery
- The Damascus Jar
- Pottery in Transition

THE TAREQ RAJAB COLLECTION:
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- Lustre-Painted Pottery
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THE JASIM AL-HOMAIZI COLLECTION:
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- Traditional Handicrafts of Kuwait
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- Kuwait Chests and Doors
- Bayt Lobnan - House of the Arts
- Street Murals of Kuwait

Editorial

This is the second in our series of special volumes dealing with architecture, archaeology and the arts in various countries of the Islamic world. An earlier issue of the *Arts & the Islamic World* (No 23) was devoted to the United Arab Emirates. The present one (No 25) looks at Saudi Arabia, through contributions from Saudi and international scholars as well as heads of relevant art and cultural institutions. These include the Chairman of ICPICH (International Commission for the Preservation of Islamic Cultural Heritage) and Chief of the General Presidency of Youth Welfare, HRH Prince Faisal Ibn Fahd Ibn Abdulaziz, delineating the support for culture and the arts in Saudi Arabia; the Secretary General of the King Faisal Foundation, HH Prince Bandar Ibn Saud Ibn Khaled Al Saud, underpinning the Foundation's role as an alliance of culture and philanthropy; and the General Director of the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies, Dr Zaid A al-Hussain, highlighting aspects of Islamic art, architecture and civilisation in the context of the Holy Cities of Makkah and Madinah. The Saudi Ambassador in London, HE Dr Ghazi A Algosaibi, himself an eminent poet and scholar, has contributed an Introduction for this special volume on Saudi Arabia.

* * * * * * * *

The 3rd volume in the above series will cover Kuwait, and is planned for publication next Spring (April 1995) as our issue No 27. Our Guest Editors for this volume are two distinguished scholar-diplomats presently based in Kuwait, Professor Geza Fehervari and Mrs Arlene Fullerton, and a tentative Contents List appears elsewhere in this magazine.

Meanwhile the forthcoming issue (No 26) in January 1995 is visualised as a *review volume* in terms of the announcement made in our last issue, and will highlight some of the more important events and developments in, and of special interest to the Islamic world during 1994. It will also include a Special Report on the United Arab Emirates, and the 2nd Supplement on the contemporary Islamic arts scene in North America, which is presently being put together by Dr Carol Malt, the Guest Editor of our earlier supplement on the subject published in 1985. We had included in our last issue an on-the-spot survey of Islamic/Oriental arts resources in the United States by our Research Associate, Camilla Edwards; and we have watched with admiration the work of NAHIA (North American Historians of Islamic Arts) whose annual "Majlis" in New York earlier this year listed an impressive membership comprising more than 200 academics in this field. We hope to be able to include in the *review volume* a report on NAHIA's own work over more than a decade, by its current President, Dr Nancy Micklewright.

* * * * * * * *

From time to time we have been sharing with our readers/subscribers some of the constraints under which a voluntary and honorary editorial team of networking scholars and specialists in several countries manages to produce *Arts & the Islamic World* magazine on a non-profit and self-paying basis. With its limited print run of 5,000 copies, its cover price is inevitably higher than what we would wish it to be, specially for the student community and for those engaged in any field of performing or plastic arts and crafts. We are happy to say that a contribution from an educational Charity in London has enabled us to offer to individual subscribers a concessional subscription of £20 in UK, US$ 40 Overseas, for 4 issues; and we look forward to expanding our subscriber base in an area which is a primary target as well as a vital resource. The subscription rates for institutions remain unchanged (£30 in UK, US$60 overseas).

Introduction

Ghazi A Algosaibi

I am very pleased to introduce this special edition of the Islamic Arts Foundation's magazine *Arts & The Islamic World* which is devoted to a review of architecture, archaeology and the arts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. There have been many important developments in these fields since the early 1970's and a corresponding increase in international interest. Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Ibn Abdulaziz, and HRH Crown Prince Abdullah have done much to encourage the work of scholars.

HRH Prince Faisal Ibn Fahd explains the critical role of the General Presidency of Youth Welfare in the cultural development of the Kingdom . However, characteristically, he does not mention his personal contribution which has been vast and has spanned the past two decades.

HH Prince Bandar, Secretary General of the King Faisal Foundation, has contributed an article entitled "An alliance of Culture and Philanthropy" which explains the work of this highly respected organisation. I was drawn by his comments about the sword, which for Muslims transcends the bounds of weaponry to become an object of reverence, signifying honour and justice. Dr Robert Elgood in his piece on "Arms and Armour in Saudi Arabia" mentions the swords of the founder of the modern Saudi nation, the late King Abdulaziz. The King's swords were truly weapons of honour and justice as he worked for the unification of his beloved country. Crossed swords and a palm constitute the symbol of Saudi Arabia, with the date palm standing for vitality and growth. The inscription on our flag is the Muslim creed: that there is only one God and Mohammed is the Messenger of God. The life of King Abdulaziz provides an inspiration to all Muslims.

Dr Zaid Al-Hussain writes about our most holy places at Makkah and Madinah, and Islamic art, architecture and civilisation. He tells us that architecture is the art and science of enclosing space and that the way we do this reflects our spiritual values. He says that the mystery of art is its ability to penetrate the heart and speak directly to the human soul. Both Dr Al-Hussain and Dr Geoffrey King, author of *The Historical Mosques of Saudi Arabia* and a contributor to this volume, point to the Holy sites expansion projects of the present monarch, Custodian of The Two Holy Mosques King Fahd, who has said: "I will spare no effort or expense in serving the needs of the guests of Allah."

In his second article here, "The Development of Archaeology in Saudi Arabia", Dr King notes that the first important excavation by King Saud University in Riyadh was the pre-Islamic site of al-Fau. Fieldwork began in 1971 and has continued ever since under the direction of Professor A R Al-Ansary. During the early 1970's the Department of Antiquities conceived of an ambitious five year plan for a country-wide survey of archaeological sites. The first comprehensive field study was initiated by Dr Abdullah Masry and completion of this programme has resulted in a more coherent overall picture of Saudi archaeological sites. Both Professor Al-Ansary and Dr Masry have contributed articles to this publication.

Professor Al-Ansary has unearthed much evidence to show that Saudi Arabia was extensively settled by early man many millennia ago, and the discoveries at al-Fau suggest a flourishing and advanced society.

Dr Masry reviews the early Arabian states of 2000 - 3000 years in the past. This period witnessed an accelerated growth of walled-town centres engaged in multiple trade and cultural interactions between Saudi Arabia and the combined regions of Mesopotamia and the Levant.

The earliest recorded appearance of an independent Arabian state came in the middle of the first millennium BC. There was a decline in the pattern of growth of town centres during the 400-year period immediately prior to the age of Islam. This, Dr Masry suggests, was partly due to the confusion and chaos resulting from the conflict between declining great empires; but there were other and perhaps more important factors at play including that of climatic change. The writer tells us that it is important to understand developments during these early phases to appreciate the great flourishing that occurred with the coming of the Islamic age.

We also have a contribution from Dr Zahir Othman of the Arriyadh Development authority. Dr Othman writes about "The Traditional Urban Form of the City of Riyadh". Our capital, an oasis city situated in the heart of the peninsula, became highly significant during the early part of the nineteenth century. In his survey of the work of native historians and European travellers, Dr Othman provides a fascinating glimpse of Old Riyadh.

Few can have done more than Michael Rice to promote interest in Arabia's past. His excellent article provides us with a most comprehensive report on archaeology and museum development in Arabia.

Throughout this volume the reader will have the impression of many highly skilled professionals – both Saudi and Western – exploring the country in depth with the aim of gaining a better understanding of our distant past, our traditions and our culture. Shirley Kay is one such explorer whose writings tell of the Hejaz dams, Medain Salih and the rock carvings of Desert regions. Prof Daniel Potts of Sydney University shows that amateurs have also assisted in the process, with retired members of the Saudi ARAMCO community discovering important ancient coins in the Eastern Province.

Ahmed Osman's paper on "The Relations Between Ancient Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula" was presented at one of a series of lecture evenings at the Saudi Information Centre in Cavendish Square. Indeed many of our contributors here have shared the benefits of their scholarship with us at the London Centre. We are most grateful to those who have given so freely of their time.







Top: King Abdulaziz Ibn Saud.
Middle: The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Ibn Abdulaziz.
Above: HRH Crown Prince Abdullah Ibn Abdulaziz, Deputy Premier and Commander of the National Guard.

Sarah Searight reports on the activities of the Society for Arabian Studies which was formed in 1988 but whose members have been active in Gulf archaeological studies since the early 1970's. The Society supports research in the region and tries to make its results widely known through the publication of a newsletter and lecture programme.

Dale Egee assembled an art collection for the American Embassy in Riyadh some ten years ago. She was able to bring together a number of pieces to reflect the similarities in culture between the United States and Saudi Arabia. She points out that Western European writing was influenced by Arabic calligraphy and that the traditional handicrafts of the two countries are similar in certain respects. It is possible to discover closeness between cultures which on the surface appear to differ so much, and perhaps here lies a great bonus that accompanies scholarly research. I have seen and greatly admired this



The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Ibn Abdulaziz at the Holy Prophet's Mosque in Madinah.

collection of artwork.

The circle now returns us to HRH Prince Faisal who has done so much to encourage Saudi art and artists. There are now many galleries in Saudi Arabia and a significant number of our artists have displayed their work in London and elsewhere. All these artists are cultural ambassadors of the Kingdom.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to this special edition of *Arts and The Islamic World*. It is a great joy that the publication comes at the time when we mark the National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

HE Dr Ghazi A Algosaibi, an eminent poet and author of *Arabian Essays* and other publications, is Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Kingdom and Eire.

Culture and Art in Saudi Arabia

The Work of The General Presidency of Youth Welfare

Faisal Ibn Fahd Ibn Abdulaziz

The culture and art of Saudi Arabia originate from the authentic Arabian tradition of Islam, which is a deep-rooted Saudi heritage. Under the direction of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Saudi Arabia has witnessed tremendous progress and achievement in all spheres of culture and art.

With the assistance of other government sectors, the General Presidency of Youth Welfare (GPYW) plays an important role in cultural development. With its help, Saudi youth, who are proud of their Islamic heritage, are enabled to use their inspiration to create new forms of art and culture which will play an important part in the advance of humanity.

GPYW promotes and subsidises multi-cultural activities and services on local, regional, Arab and international levels. Focusing on the future, it encourages young people by providing incentive finance and awards for works of distinction in all the arts.

Students of fine art receive continuous encouragement to develop their gifts and express them in their works . We are particularly concerned with the aesthetic aspects of Islamic art, which have had an undeniable impact on the art of other cultures.

Many well-equipped art galleries and exhibitions, both in Saudi Arabia and internationally, have been set up and, from time to time, GPYW conducts seminars and symposiums where young artists are able to exchange ideas and develop their skills. Many works of art have been collected from these events.

In addition, the folkloric art of Saudi Arabia has been rediscovered and documented and the folklore Dance Troupe of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has toured the world performing at festivals and theatres.

Young writers and researchers are also extended help. Several contests for the writing of essays, poetry and stories have been arranged and many young people have attended literary conferences and panels. The compiling of various publications for libraries is now flourishing, including a series called Know Your Country, which covers the history of each city and region in Saudi Arabia.
These publications enlarge the scope of the knowledge of Saudi citizens on a wide variety of subjects, including the doctrines of Islam, the Arabic language and the customs and traditions of the country.

GPYW has honoured prominent scholars with the State Distinguished Award of Letters for the betterment of art and literature in Saudi Arabia and with its encouragement and financial help, Saudi dramatists, actors, directors, technicians and others connected with producing theatrical performances have been able to go all over the world staging plays and shows.

In the application of science to life, GPYW has established centres and provided equipment for youth to pursue their interests in all sorts of activities and hobbies. It caters for every kind of activity, from camping to holding scientific exhibitions, as well as providing the means of improving manual skills and craftsmanship.

Through cooperation with UNESCO and ISESCO (Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) Saudi Arabia has opened the minds of youth to current world cultural and artistic trends and helped to build cultural bridges with many countries in the world.

Through its chairmanship of the International Commission for the Preservation of the Islamic Cultural Heritage, GPYW set up a world-acclaimed award called the King Fahd Award for Islamic Architecture. It is also an active member of the International Organisation for Recreation and Leisure-time Entertainment, the Arab Association of Clubs of Science for Youth and many other international organisations related to science, culture and art.

To sum up, it can be said that GPYW has spared no effort in encouraging, supporting and promoting culture in Saudi Arabia. The cooperation of Saudi scholars and artists with these activities gives us confidence that we can expect Saudi culture in all its aspects to flourish more and more in the coming years.

HRH Prince Faisal Ibn Fahd Ibn Abdulaziz is Chairman of the International Commission for the Preservation of Islamic Cultural Heritage (ICPICH) and Chief of the General Presidency of Youth Welfare, Riyadh.

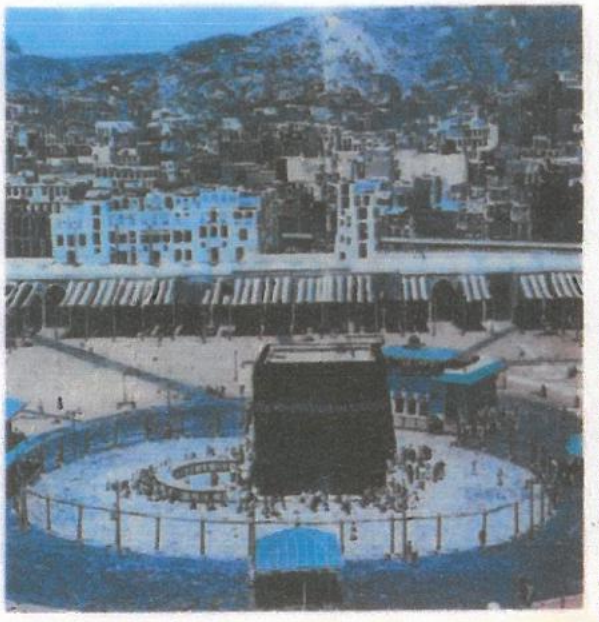
Makkah and Madinah: Saudi Arabia and the Holy Cities

Zaid A al-Hussain

In September 1924, dressed in the *ihram*, the garb of pilgrims, King Abdul Aziz Al Saud peaceably led his forces into the Holy City of Makkah and ended a long conflict for control of the Holy Places. Soon after the unification of Saudi Arabia, King Abdul Aziz turned his attention to the Holy Cities. In 1929 repairs at Madinah began. When he died in 1953, King Abdul Aziz had drawn up plans for the largest ever enlargements to the Grand Mosque at Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque at Madinah.

King Abdul Aziz's sons and successors, Kings Saud, Faisal, Khalid and Fahd, all made important improvements in the Two Holy Mosques. King Saud, completed his father's plans to enlarge the Mosques: Madinah in 1955 and in Makkah in 1961. King Faisal cleared the *mataf*, the area set aside for circumambulation of the Ka'ba, to make more room for pilgrims; and spared no expense to save the ancient *riwaq*, the colonnaded arcades surrounding the central court around the Ka'ba, from demolition. At Madinah King Faisal cleared a large area to the west of the Mosque to take the overflow during haj and Ramadan. King Khalid replaced the door of the Ka'ba, until then of silver, with a new one made of solid gold. King Fahd, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, besides many other improvements, has recently completed historic enlargements to both mosques.

Today, the Two Holy Mosques provide beautiful examples of the highest achievement of Islamic architecture. They demonstrate the continuity of Islamic architecture across the ages and stand as solid proof, in stone and in steel, of the eternal message of Islam.



The Holy Ka'ba: an early view

Islamic Art and Civilisation

Islamic art is widely appreciated beyond the Muslim world. Even non-specialists are able to identify examples of it. Islamic architecture, like all Islamic art, displays an astonishing variety of forms and techniques, yet still projects an undeniable impression of unity. Consider, for example, three buildings on three continents: the Alhambra in Granada, the Mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo and the Taj Mahal at Agra - a palace, a mosque and a tomb - three masterpieces of Islamic art, three exemplary buildings, three buildings so unlike one another it is surprising to consider that they are products of a single civilisation.

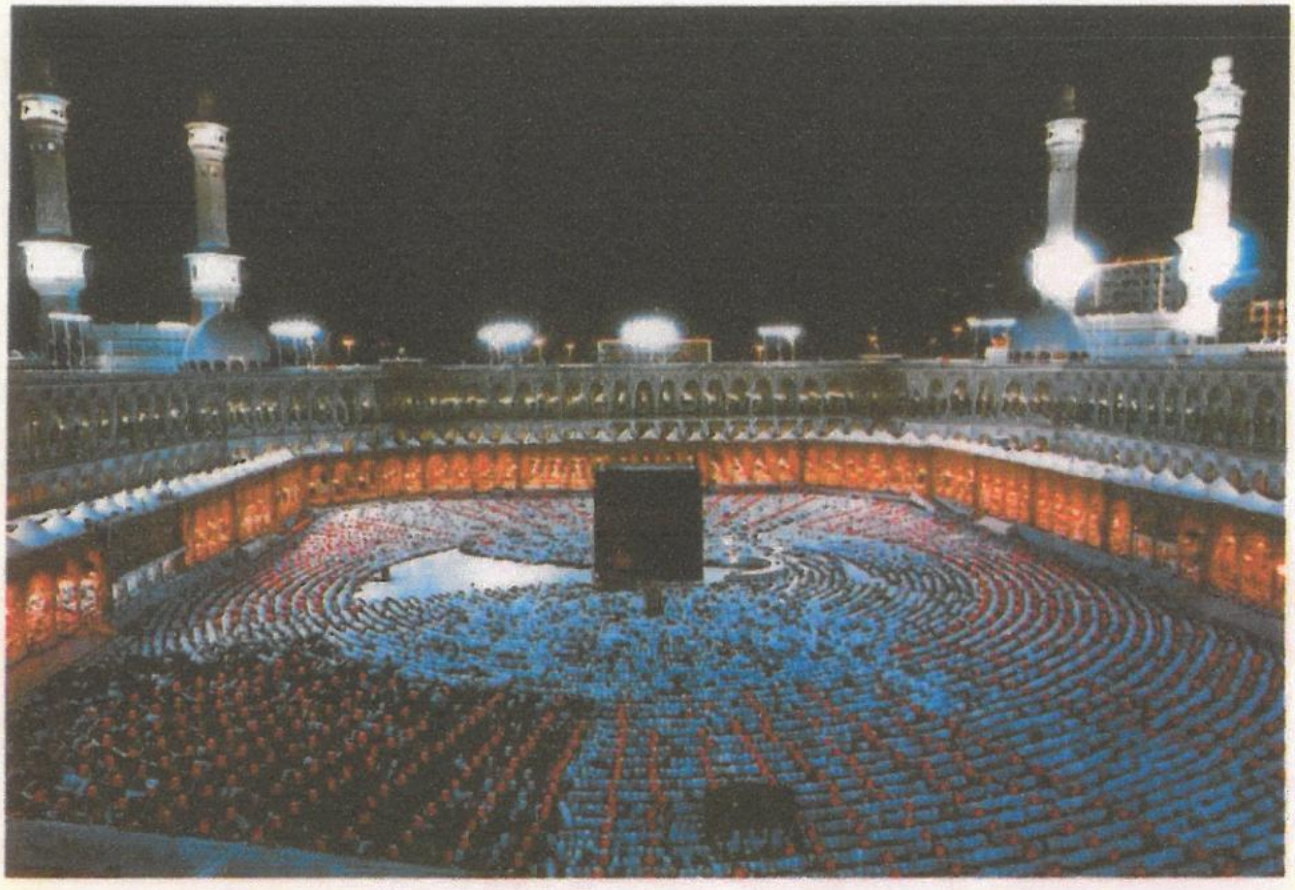
Architecture is the art and science of enclosing space, The way we enclose and embellish our space reflects our spiritual values. Muslims reject all spiritual mediation between themselves and God. No prophet, no priest, no person, stands between them and the Almighty Creator. Muslim space has no centre point and no central focus. The well-known geometrical forms of Islamic decoration move out with mathematical precision to defy all attempts to find a centre or point of origin. The familiar image of the columns of a mosque spread out beneath unfolding arches, like a forest of palms, to suggest the unfinished nature of creation. Arches, columns, arabesques, calligraphy and *mukarnas*, the colours of the architect's palette, transform matter into light, move the eye away from the self and focus the heart on the infinite. We see beyond the appearance of things to penetrate a deeper reality, to know that the ultimate reality is God, that there can be no other god but God. The mystery of art is its ability to penetrate the heart and speak directly to the human soul.

Makkah

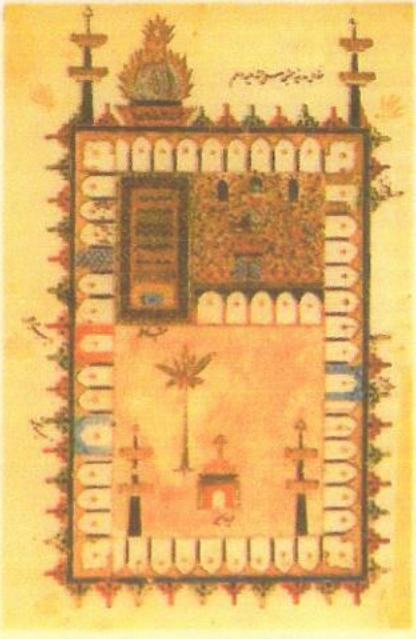
The Grand Mosque at Makkah stands at the very heart of Islam. It is unique in many ways: most significantly, it houses the Ka'ba, a simple cubic building made of stone and draped in the black *kiswa*, a heavy curtain embroidered with gold. The Ka'ba is the hub, the stationary point, the place towards which all Muslims turn in prayer, and the final destination of the pilgrim. The Qur'an says,

The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka, full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings. In it are Signs Manifest: The Station of Abraham. Whoever enters it is safe.

In the days of the Prophet, upon whom be peace, there was no mosque at the Holy Sanctuary, or *Haram*, of Makkah. The Ka'ba stood alone in a valley in the centre of the city. It was the third Caliph, Omar ibn al-Khattab, who bought the houses standing near the Ka'ba, demolished them and then enclosed the area with a wooden fence. Since then, the Grand Mosque at Makkah has been rebuilt many times, most recently by







Above: The *tawaf* area (circumambulation space around the Ka'ba) has become much more spacious making it easier for the people to view the Maqam Ibrahim. **Extreme left and left:** Illustrations from manuscript, Ka'ba and Madinah. Reproduced from an Arabic travel book, Egypt or Syria 12th/13th century. **Opposite page:** The door of the Holy Ka'ba, adorned with a magnificent drape of the finest black silk inscribed in silver and gold with verses from the Holy Qur'an.

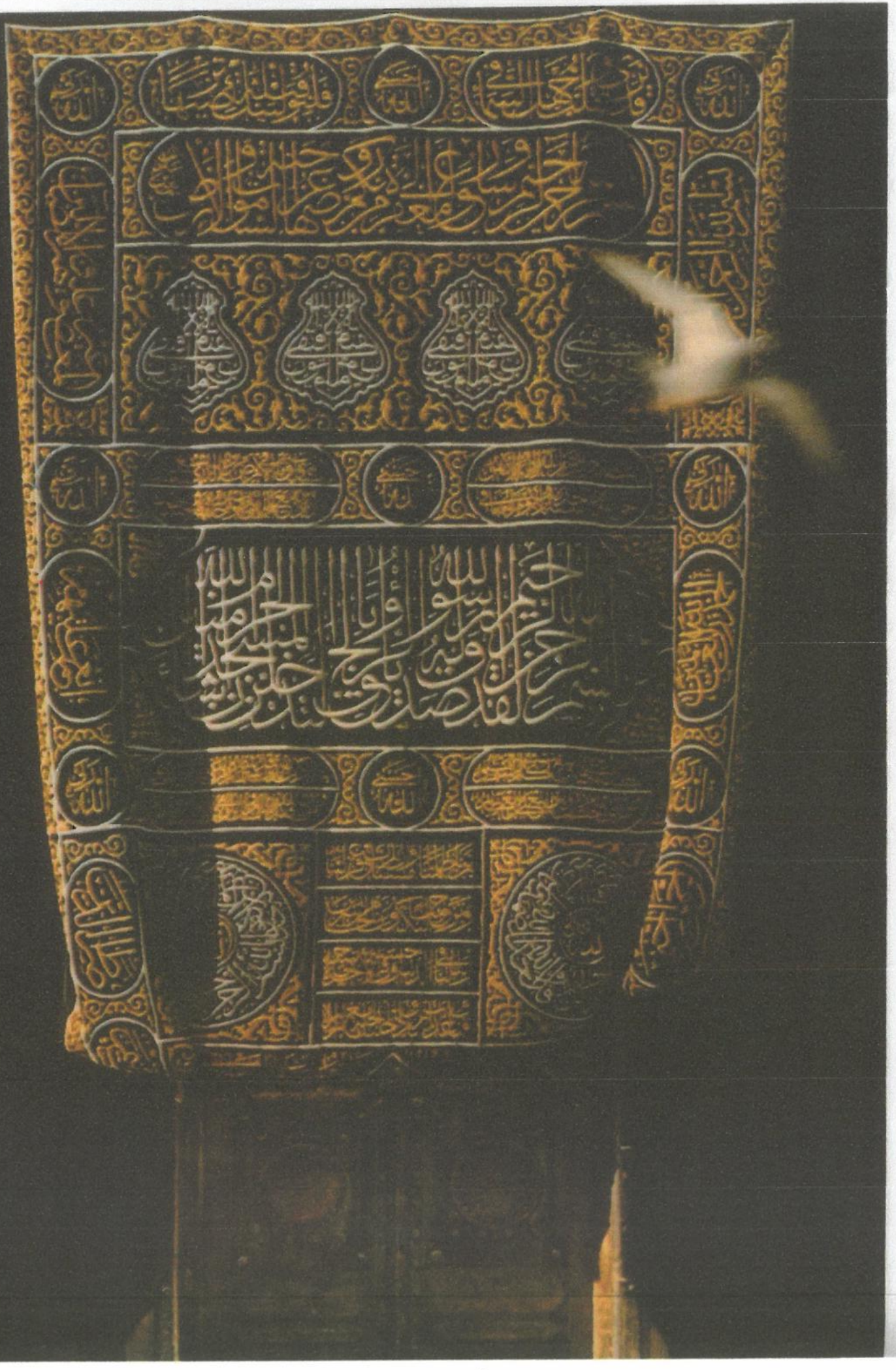
the Ottomans.

The Grand Mosque has changed little since it was first laid out by the Caliph Omar. It consists of a large open courtyard, the *sahn*, surrounded on four sides by an arched *riwaq*, or arcade. Behind this stands the two storey extension built by King Abdul Aziz. The facade of the upper level is made of open arches, like the ancient *riwaq* below.

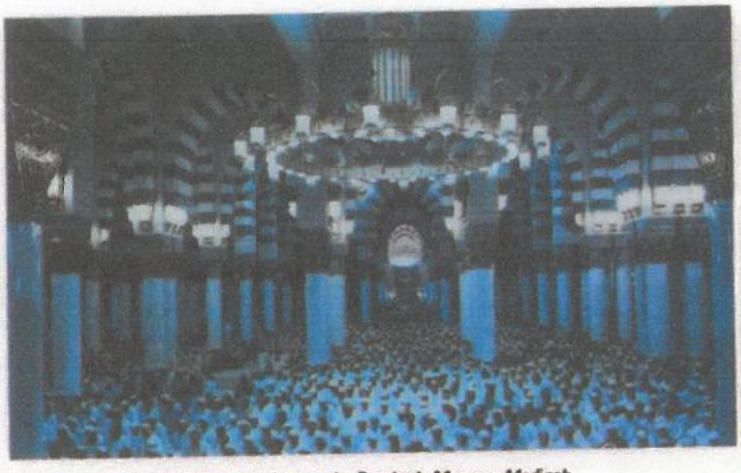
Nestling in a ring of rugged and barren mountains, the Mosque's green roofed minarets soar high above the valley floor to greet the traveller from afar. Only at the last moment does its monumental facade come into view. The outside walls, more than twenty meters high, are covered in grey-green marble. No one seeing it for the first time could doubt that this is the largest Mosque on earth. But to appreciate it truly, you have to see it from the inside.

The Mosque has four main doors and many smaller ones. Entering by one of the main doors, the *Bab al-Malik Abdul Aziz*, you enter a monumental hall. To the left and right are long arcades, framed by marble columns, on either side of which large areas covered in oriental rugs provide accommodation for worshippers and shelter from the sun. If you look closely between the columns in front of you, you may catch a glimpse of the Blessed Ka'ba.

Proceeding towards the centre of the Mosque you descend progressively towards the *sahn*. There is a hall, an arcade, another hall, a short flight of stairs, then another hall and so forth. As you descend, the space around you becomes more confined - columns are more closely placed, halls are smaller and arcades



become more narrow. At the last of these levels, you enter the oldest part of the Mosque. Here you may notice the ceiling is lower and, unlike the newer extensions, supports many small domes. Brightly painted wooden joists support traditional Arab lamps, *masabih*. Many of the columns are irregularly shaped. Some of these are marble while others are made from local stone. Some bear inscriptions while others are bare. Many have the appearance of great age, and indeed one, near the *Bab al-Safa*, bears the name of the Caliph al-Mahdi, and the date 167 *hijra*, 783 AD.



Interior view, King Fahd's extensions to the Prophet's Mosque, Madinah.

A final flight of stairs takes you to the central courtyard. The roof opens above and the Mosque disappears as you approach the Blessed Ka'ba, which stands in a field of cool white marble, specially treated to deflect the heat of the sun. The *tawaf*, the human tide of pilgrims, engulfs the Ancient House and embraces it in a swirling, endless procession. From the steps of the *riwaq*, you can only just hear the sound of pilgrims' voices quietly proclaiming the glory of God, and you know that certainly you have entered the most hallowed place on earth.

Monumental Extensions

In 1986 the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud began the most recent enlargements to the Grand Mosque at Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque at Madinah, and personally supervised both record breaking projects to ensure that these were completed to the highest standard and in the shortest possible time.

Because the Grand Mosque lies in a narrow valley, the only way to extend it was to build a new wing to the west, on land formerly occupied by a market. From outside the new extension is truly monumental. The exterior walls are 23 meters tall, decorated with arabesques and covered with grey-green marble. It contains two floors and a basement. These provide an additional 135,000 m^2 of interior floor space rendering a total interior area of 309,000 m^2. There are also two new open spaces, one to the west and another to the east, beyond the concourse linking the mounts of Safa and Marwa. The whole complex now easily serves more than one million worshippers. The interior decoration is modest and does not force its way into view. Its ceilings are a little higher and there is more use of marble; its 492 interior columns with brass capitals and bases are especially beautiful. Unlike the older parts of the Mosque, which consist of open arcades, this new wing is enclosed on three sides, only the side adjoining King Abdul Aziz's extension has been left open. Since it is enclosed it was possible to install air conditioning. This has made the Mosque much more comfortable for pilgrims since temperatures in Makkah can often exceed 40°C/100°F.

Madinah

The Prophet, upon whom be peace, settled in Madinah in 622. Before he even alighted from his camel he had chosen the site of his new mosque. The land, which had been used for drying dates, belonged to two orphans, Sahl and Suhayl. Their guardian, Mu'adh ibn Afra' gave this land to the Prophet and reimbursed the orphans himself. The plot included a pool of water and a small grove of date palms. The Prophet cut down the palms and kept the wood and fronds for use in the Mosque roof. The water was used for making unbaked mud bricks, the traditional building material of the region.

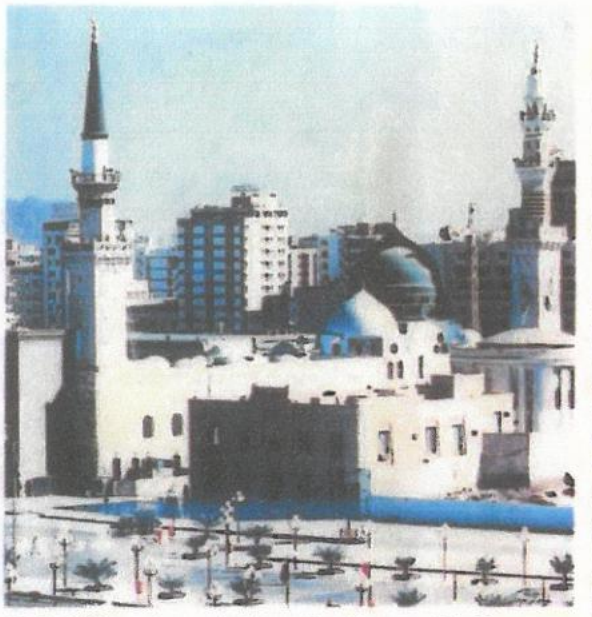
Building began shortly after the Prophet's arrival. First, a ditch was dug all around the site to hold a stone foundation. Upon this stone course they set the mud brick walls. At this time Muslims still prayed facing Jerusalem, so the area adjoining the north wall was partially roofed. They made posts and rafters from the trunks of palms and covered this frame with palm fronds. A smaller area against the south wall was covered to shelter the poorest migrants from Makkah who lived in the mosque. The central portion of the Mosque was left open to the sky. The building had only three doors, no minaret, no *mihrab*, and no decoration. Mosques in Saudi Arabia are still built in this simple, utilitarian style. Outside the south-east wall of his Mosque, the prophet built a series of small chambers for himself and his family. He is buried in one of these.

After the Prophet's arrival, Madinah was transformed from a small oasis town to the capital of the first Islamic state. The Mosque became its centre. The life of the Muslim community flowed out of it. Markets, public buildings and private enterprises all gathered around it. the Mosque was more than a place to perform religious rituals. It was a centre of learning, the seat of government, a court of law, and the place where the community met to discuss their problems and plan their future. It was from this Mosque that the first Muslim battalions set out to conquer Makkah. From Madinah the religion of Islam spread throughout the world.

The Prophet's Mosque has been extended and rebuilt many times. In 629 the Prophet enlarged it himself. The second Caliph Omar enlarged it again in 638. In 649/50 the third Caliph Othman completely rebuilt it of stone, constructing *riwaqs* on all four sides of the *sahn*. These were supported by stone columns covered in plaster and secured with iron. The roof was made of teak. Today, the south limit of the Mosque is still that defined by Othman. The Prophet's Mosque was twice destroyed by fire. First in 1256 and again in 1481 when it was rebuilt by the Ottomans.

King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud began repairs to the Prophet's Mosque in 1929, shortly after the incorporation of the Hejaz into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He carried out further repairs in 1930/31, and in 1949 announced plans to build a huge new

extension to it. The houses adjoining the Mosque were bought and demolished and work began in July 1951. This was the most extensive rebuilding of the Prophet's Mosque ever undertaken. This enormous project was completed by King Abdul Aziz's son, King Saud, in 1955. It brought the total area of the Prophet's Mosque to some 22,955 m². King Faisal ibn Abdul Aziz added an open area to the west in 1973 to accommodate the great numbers who visit Madinah during haj and in Ramadan. In 1986, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King ibn Abdul Aziz al Saud began a second enlargement to the Prophet's Mosque: this is the largest such project to date.



Prophet's Mosque,dome and minarets. The oldest part of the Mosque, standing on the site of the mosque built by the Prophet in 622 AD.

Latest Enlargement

The latest enlargement of the Prophet's Mosque by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd ibn Abdul Aziz includes a huge new extension, ancillary service buildings, an underground car park and open spaces. The project adds some 148,500 m² to the Mosque, to give a total interior area of 171,455 m². The entire complex can now accommodate some 700,000 worshippers.

While the Prophet's Mosque is much smaller than the Grand Mosque at Makkah, the first impression one has entering it is of enormous space. Although the building is huge it is neither intimidating nor confining. You feel the space around you, but not the building enclosing it. The high ceiling, supported by uncountable columns and arches, stretches out before you as subtly as a cloud.

The floor is a huge expanse of polished marble. On either side of a central arcade prayer halls open to provide comfortable accommodation for thousands of worshippers. These halls are simply furnished with carpets. The columns supporting the roof are covered with marble and stucco and decorated with arabesques. Intermittently, the principal arcades open into larger galleries. If you pass through these a second time by night you may be surprised to find their roofs open to the heavens. Stopping, you wonder whether you came through here earlier or have simply lost your way. Twenty-seven moveable domes can transform these galleries into beautiful courtyards within seconds. The decoration of the new extension is simple, and very similar to that of the older Saudi extension. New, however, are the huge brass chandeliers, which are fine examples of traditional Islamic metalwork. These are truly enormous and made in the shape of a wheel supporting many lanterns.

The Prophet's Mosque has not been extended to the south since the days of the Caliph Othman. The last significant extensions to the east and west were the work of the Caliph al-Walid in 707. Since then, all extensions have occupied land to the south of the first Mosque. The new extension surrounds on three sides the previous one built by King Abdul Aziz and his son King Saud. This has been left undisturbed. Only its doors have been removed.

Largest Religious Buildings

The Grand Mosque at Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque at Madinah provide many examples of the best of Islamic architectural design. Unlike many other ancient mosques, these have been continuously added to throughout their long histories. Built in many stages they do not have the piecemeal appearance of other buildings with similar additions. Recent enlargements to the Grand Mosque at Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque at Madinah have been carried out by the Saudi construction firm Bin Laden, a fine local firm with many year's experience. Bin Laden also carried out work on the earlier extensions of King Abdul Aziz and King Saud. This has meant that in both cases, the whole structure displays a surprising continuity and harmony.

These Mosques are not meant to distract, nor to intimidate. While they may look imposing from the outside, they do not oppress or confine from the inside. For those who come to seek forgiveness, to seek knowledge, or simply to relax, they provide shelter and comfort. Indeed the Prophet described the part of his Mosque that lay between his home and his *minbar* as a corner of the garden of paradise. Throughout the centuries Muslim architects have tried to express and inspire this peace and this comfort in their art.

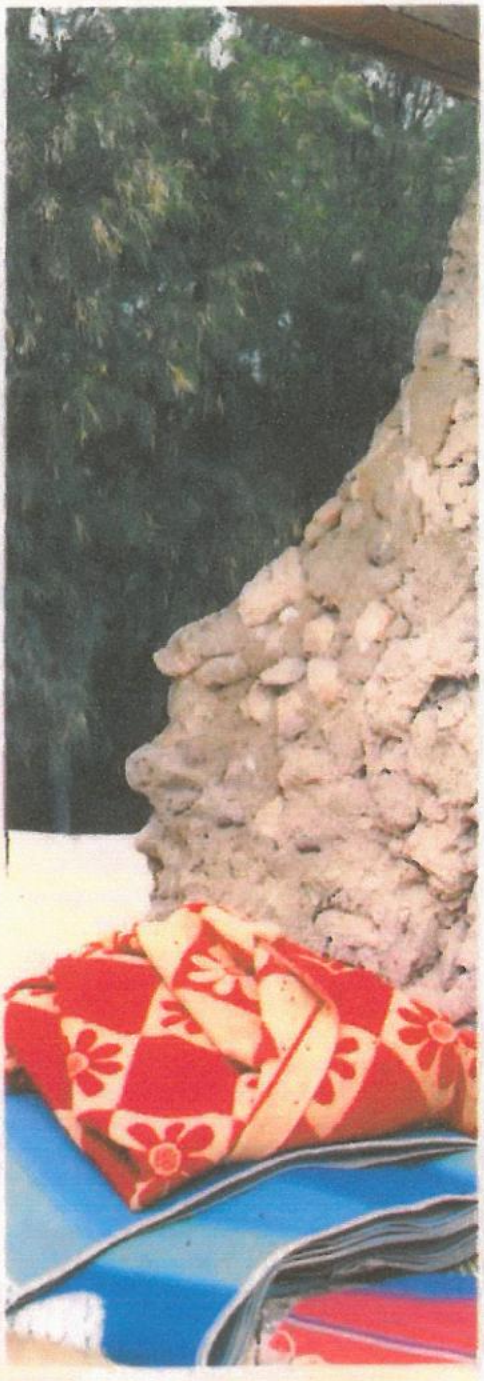
Today, the Great Mosque at Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque at Madinah are two of the largest religious buildings on earth. Enduring monuments to a vibrant and dynamic culture, and silent witnesses to the glory and vitality of Islamic civilisation.

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, reflecting the serious concern of King Abdul Aziz Al Saud and his sons Kings Saud, Faisal, Khalid and Fahd for the holy places, has spared no effort and no expense to improve the facilities available for pilgrims to the Holy Cities. King Abdul Aziz's concern for the welfare and comfort of pilgrims led him to begin improvements to the Grand Mosque almost as soon as he had become ruler of the Hejaz. The stability and prosperity of Saudi Arabia ensures that improvements in the holy cities and the Two Holy Mosques are a matter of routine. King Fahd ibn Abdul Aziz continues to serve the Muslims, as did his brothers and father before him – he takes his role as custodian of the Holy Places so seriously that he has adopted the sole official title of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

Dr Zaid A al-Hussain is General Director of The King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies, Riyadh.

The Mosques of Saudi Arabia

G R D King



Among the countries of the Islamic world noted for their historical architecture, Saudi Arabia has a unique position. At Makkah and al-Madina are the holiest and most ancient mosques, their foundations going back to ancient times, although today they survive largely in the form acquired when the Ottoman Sultans Sulayman al-Qanuni (972/1564) and Sultan Salim (979/1571-2) rebuilt them. Today, this Ottoman work is virtually the oldest part remaining of each of the Holy Mosques, and even this is dwarfed by the vast extensions undertaken by the Saudi Arabian government in recent years. Yet this Ottoman work, like that of the Saudi government, continues a traditional concern to maintain the Holy Mosques and to extend and refurbish them: this concern has characterised Islamic governments since the first century of the Hijra.

In Islamic belief, the Haram Mosque in Makkah is the oldest sanctuary, with the honourable Kaba standing at the centre of its courtyard. According to the Qur'an, the Kaba was built by the Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismail. After reverting to paganism, the Kaba was rebuilt by the tribe of Quraysh in ca 608 AD, on the eve of the establishment of Islam. In the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, the Kaba was a stone and teak rectangular structure, covered annually by a great cloth, the kiswa: the building stood at the centre of an open esplanade with the houses of Makkah pressing close around.

With the coming of Islam to Makkah in 629 AD, the Haram Mosque underwent expansion in a process which has continued throughout subsequent centuries, reflecting the ever-increasing numbers attending pilgrimage, and the concern of Muslim rulers to embellish the Haram. Side by side with this has been the need to alleviate or repair the mosque after repeated flooding, for the Haram Mosque lies in a flood channel that drains through Makkah from the highlands above the city. As early as 638 AD, the second Caliph, Umar b. al-Khattab, had to deal with the effects of flooding and the need to increase the space for pilgrims to circumambulate, and these preoccupations have continued down to the present century.

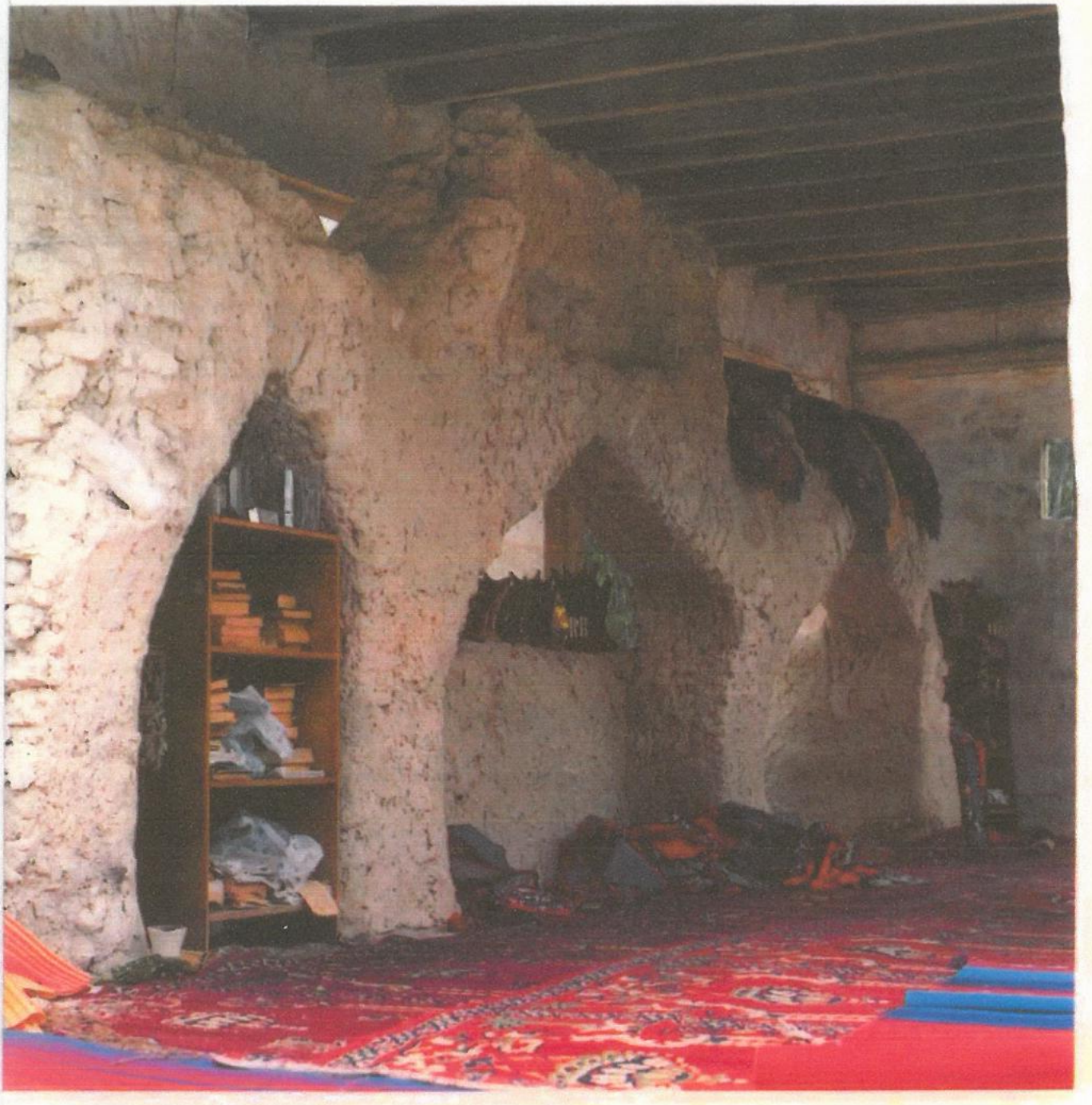
In contrast with the Haram Mosque, the Mosque of the Prophet



Muhammad was founded on empty ground as an entirely new structure in the first year of the hijra (622 AD). It was built along with the Prophet's residence in mud brick and palm trunks, its roofed prayer hall and its open courtyard setting the organisational model of all mosques thereafter. In this early period, it lacked a minaret or a mihrab, and there was no minbar before ca 628 AD.

The Caliphate of Uthman b. Affan saw major changes to both the Haram Mosque in Makkah and the Mosque of the Prophet in al-Madina. In 646 AD, Uthman ordered roofing and colonnades to be built at the Haram Mosque to enclose the open court where the Ka'ba stands: hitherto, houses had directly surrounded the esplanade. Shortly afterwards, in 649-50, the Caliph rebuilt the Mosque of the Prophet, replacing the palm-trunks of the Prophet's day with stone columns and providing a teak roof. This use of teak reflects the long-distance trade of the Hijaz with the Indian Ocean at this early date.

Under the Umayyads , further major rebuilding took place to both Mosques. The Caliph Abd al-Malik





Opposite page: Najdi Mosque, Farasan. Above: Mosque at Jawatha, Al-Ahsa. Left: Mosque attributed to Ali b. Abi Talib or to the Prophet Muhammad at Khaybar..

and his son, al Walid, undertook a major mosque building programme which included not only rebuilding the Haramayn Mosques, but also the reconstruction of the mosques of al-Aqsa', Damascus, al-Fustat and Sana' and the founding of the Dome of the Rock. The Haramayn Mosques were lavishly embellished by the Umayyads and were decorated with wall mosaics like those that still survive in the Great Mosque of Damascus. The Mosque of the Prophet was also enlarged to encompass the graves of the Prophet Muhammad and those of the first Caliphs, Abu Bakr and Umar. It was during the rebuilding of the Mosque of the Prophet in 707 AD that, for the first time, the curved mihrab niche was introduced, a device which was to spread very rapidly thereafter to mosques elsewhere.

Nothing of this Umayyad work remains in the Mosques today, although an account of the mosaics in the Mosque of the Prophet is preserved by the 12th century visitor, Ibn Jubayr. However, the Mosque was ravaged by fire in 1256, and the mosaics were lost along with the minbar of the Prophet and the Qur'an of Uthman. In the aftermath of the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258, and the death of the Abbasid Caliph, responsibility for refurbishing the Haramayn increasingly passed to the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt which emerged as the principal Islamic power in the course of the 13th century. The present S.E. minaret of the Prophet's Mosque and perhaps the dome over the tomb of the Prophet date to the later Mamluk period when Sultan Qayt Bay, a lavish builder in both Egypt and Jerusalem, completed extensive rebuilding in the Mosque in 1487.

With the exception of the work attributed to Qayt Bay, most of the Mosque of the Prophet at the beginning of the 20th century was Ottoman work, carried out by Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent, al-Qanuni, and by Sultan Salim II. It was this Ottoman period mosque that has been described extensively by Western and Muslim travellers over the past two centuries, starting in the most detailed way with J.L. Burckhardt. It is this Ottoman mosque which was transformed by the Saudi government in two increasingly ambitious building campaigns. The first of these was announced in 1949 and a further immense enlargement of the Mosque of the Prophet was begun in 1985; it has recently been completed.

As to the Haram Mosque at Makkah in the period after the fall of the Umayyads, the most important work was that carried out in 777 by al-Mahdi for which he brought marble columns from Egypt and from Syria to extend the roofed area of the Haram. Testimony to his work still survives in the form of columns near Bab al-Safa which are inscribed with his name , and one is dated to 167/783-4. The form that the Haram Mosque acquired under the early Abbasids was retained until the 16th century when the Ottoman Sultans Sulayman and Selim II initiated the major rebuilding already mentioned. It was the Haram Mosque as rebuilt by the Ottomans that was photographed by S. Hurgronje in 1884-5, in the earliest photographs taken of the Haram Mosque. Extensive stretches of the Ottoman arcades around the esplanade still survive within the heart of the Mosque as extended by the Saudi government. The Mosque has become the largest on earth with an area of 356,000 sq.m. The first of these extensions by the Saudi government was begun in 1955, and successive campaigns have continued down to recent years.

The unique nature of the Haramayn Mosques is reflected in the degree to which their architectural history is deeply influenced by traditions emanating from beyond Arabia - whether from Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo or Istanbul. By contrast other mosques in Saudi Arabia are very different and to a large extent are the product of regional architectural traditions within the country, although some mosques on or near the coasts reflect a degree of influence from further a field. Few of these mosques are of any great age, because of the fragility of the building materials used – clay generally in the central desert regions and coral masonry on the coasts. However, as excavations of Islamic archaeological sites increase, more early mosques may well be found. The earliest mosques identified to date through excavations are at Rabadha, a halt on the Darb Zubayda hajj road from al-Kufa to Makkah. One of these mosques is probably of the Umayyad period while the other is Abbasid, and presumably dated to the 9th C. or a little earlier.

Other extant mosque sites are associated with the early Islamic period, although most have been altered since. Of the places where the Prophet Muhammad prayed on his way to Tabuk from al-Madina in 630, only the mosque at Tabuk remains and that was entirely rebuilt under King Faisal b. Abd al-Aziz some twenty years ago. Other early mosques include the Jawatha Mosque; a mosque attributed to the Prophet or to Ali b. I'Abi Talib in Khaybar; mosques attributed to Umar b. al-Khattab in Jeddah, Dumat al-Jandal, and Najran; and the funerary mosque of Abd Allah b. al-Abbas, the progenitor of the Abbasid Caliphate.

The mosque at Juwatha in eastern Arabia in al-Ahsa' oasis is said locally to have been founded by al-Ala b. al-Hadram, of the tribe of Abd al-Qays, after visiting the Prophet at al-Madina. He is said to have converted to Islam and returned to al-Juwatha where he built a Friday mosque for his tribe, the second in Islam , according to local tradition. The present remains are presumably later and although ruinous have been isolated in recent years on a platform within a courtyard.

The foundation of the mosque in Khaybar in the northern Hijaz is also attributed to an early date. It stands close to the graveyard of the Prophet's Companions who died fighting the Jews of Khaybar in 628. The mosque is locally associated with the fourth Caliph, Ali b. Abi Talib, but it has also been connected with the Prophet. Whatever its origins, there can be little doubt that the present building is very much later than the 7th century. The minbar is set in the thickness of the qibla wall, a design found in many parts of Arabia, as well as in east Africa where some minbars appear to derive from Arabian practice.

The Shafi Mosque at Jeddah is attributed to the Caliph Umar, although it seems more likely that it is dated to 1251, and to the Rasulid ruler of Yemen, Sulayman II. Its floor is well below the surrounding street level suggesting that the building is indeed old. Its minaret is quite unlike any other in western Arabia, recalling early Mamluk minarets in Cairo.

Apart from these ancient sites, there are numerous mosques scattered across Saudi Arabia that reflect local traditions of considerable diversity. Few are very old although

they may well preserve regional forms that have persisted from more distant times.

As with the Haramayn Mosques, the impact of Ottoman architecture made itself felt in a number of other towns of the Hijaz, for here there has been sustained exposure to the Islamic world beyond the coasts of the Peninsula. There was still a minaret at al-Ta'if in the pencil-like ottoman style some twenty years ago, and the same was true of the minaret of the al-Pasha mosque at Jeddah, dated to 1137/1724-5, and that of the Mimar mosque, also in Jeddah, perhaps of the early 19th century. However, Ottoman influence confined itself to minarets: the prayer halls were level roofed halls on columns. They were entirely indigenous in character and devoid of any other Turkish influence.

In south-western Arabia, mosques vary in design between those of the Red Sea coastal area of the Tihama, the highlands of Asir and the highlands towards Yemen, and those of Najran, on the edge of the desert. On the Tihama coast, there are marked similarities between the mosques of Sabya, Abu Arish, Farasan and the coastal towns of Yemen. Mosques in the Tihama area of Saudi Arabia tend to have domed prayer halls, with the smaller mosques having ranks of three domes and the larger mosques often having multiples of three or more. Minarets, where they exist, are combined with staircases to the level of the prayer-hall roof, with the staircases surmounted by diminutive towers. A well preserved example of this is found in the Abbas Mosque in Abu Arish. However, this is not the only minaret in this particular mosque, for in the courtyard is a low platform from which the prayer call is also given. This simple feature is found throughout the south-west, both on the Tihama and in the highlands.

The most impressive mosque in the coastal region derived from this domed style is the al-Najd Mosque in the main town of the island of Farasan. It was founded by Ibrahim al-Najdi al-Tamimi, a merchant, and it is dated to 1927-28. It is said to reflect the founder's desire to have an Indian style mosque, and its 12 domes and its ornate plaster screens seem to represent a combination of the styles of the Tihama coast and the architecture of the Indian Ocean.

Inland in the highlands, very different types of mosque are found, although within the mountains there is no uniformity region to region. The mosques around Abha in the Asir highlands serve towns of considerable size. Thus, there is a striking Friday mosque at al-Suqa', with a large prayer hall supported on distinctive tapering piers, and a large square minaret. The roofing and the mihrab are also surmounted by large merlons serving as finials. The courtyard ablution facilities are elaborate, and are coated with water -proofing qudad, a plaster found throughout south-western and southern Arabia.

In contrast with the larger mosques around Abha, the steep mountainous villages and hamlets nearer the Yemeni border have much smaller mosques, serving small, isolated communities. Typical of these are the stone-built mosques at al-Muqanda and al-Qahaba on Jabal Bani Malik, and the mosque of al-Marmar on Jabal Fayfa'. In this area , the small size of the congregations is reflected in the diminutive prayer halls of these mosques. However, as is common in all of the south -west, the mihrabs tend to be large, forming projections on the exterior. None of these mosques has a minaret. Water was always a problem in the Bani Malik and Fayfa' areas in the past so that there was heavy reliance on rain water run-off. This was stored in water tanks under the courtyards for ablutions before prayer.

The mosques of Najran further east towards the Empty Quarter are very distinctive, and differ entirely from those in the highlands. They are small mud built structures, always with level roofs and marked by the contrast of their clay construction material and the hard white plaster used to coat their roofs and finials, and as exterior ornament. Mihrabs are invariably pronounced rectangular projecting chambers. In many cases, a staircase built on palm trunks gives access from the courtyard to the prayer hall roof, in place of a minaret.

In the central area of Najd, clay is also used , but the mosques are very different, although they are generally characterized by a design consistent regionally. Open courtyards precede roofed prayer halls with arcades of keel arches set parallel to the qibla wall. These arches are constructed with two long stones, set against each other to form a triangle and resting on stone columns. The columns are composites of stone drums, plastered smooth and bearing stone capitals.

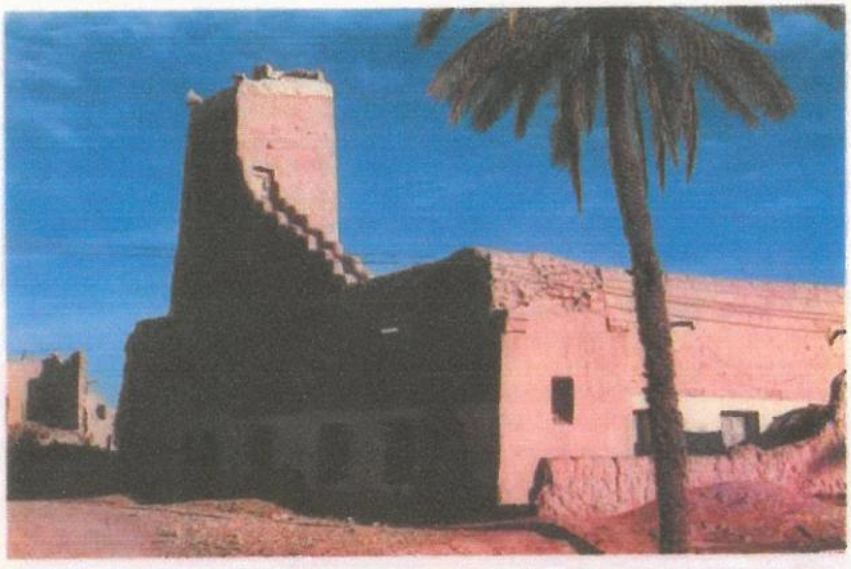
In some cases, the mosques of Najd are built in two levels, with an upper summer mosque which is marked by its openness and a closed prayer hall below termed a khalwa, which is used in winter .The mihrab, usually a curved recess that forms a corresponding curved projection on the exterior, will run the full height of the building, serving not only the ground-floor khalwa and the open prayer hall above, but also the roof, which provides a further prayer place. These mosques have at least one staircase to the roof and where there is a minaret, this is in the form of a diminutive rectangular tower, set as a bridge over the head of the staircase. This is common throughout the area around al-Riyad. However, further north in Najd, in Sudayr, al-Qasim and at Ha'il, the minarets are constructed away from the stairs, as independent structures, circular in ground plan and steeply banked as they rise. The distinction between the rectangular minarets of central Najd and the circular ones of more northerly areas represents one of the great shifts in the religious architectural tradition of the region.

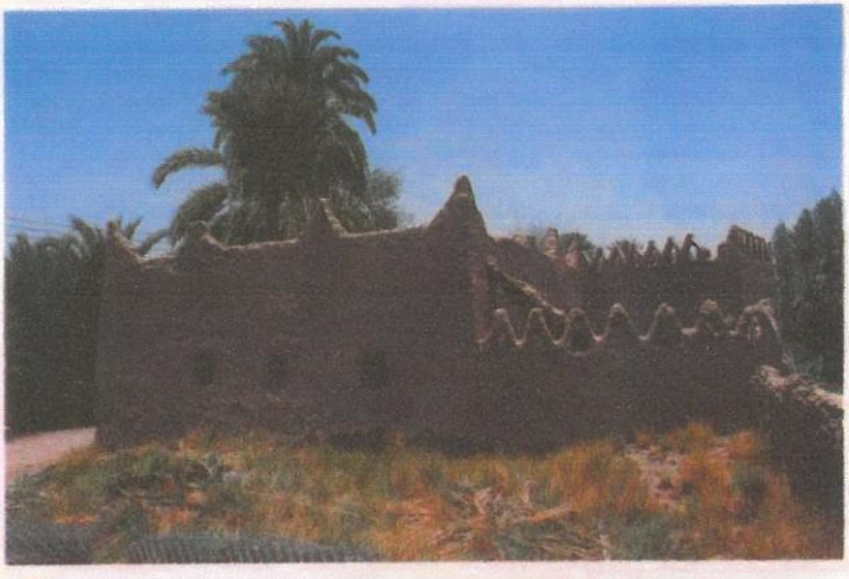
Eastern Arabia, like the Red Sea coast, is exposed to a greater degree of foreign influence than the interior plains and the mountains, because of the communications with the outside world provided by the Gulf. This is reflected in the design of one of the most curious mosques in Arabia, the Mosque of Ibrahim in al-Hufuf. It stands within the vast Qasr Ibrahim , a part of the still greater Kut, a fortified district that once encompassed the heart of al-Hufuf. The Mosque of Ibrahim is a curious structure, dated to the 16th century and built in Ottoman style, inasmuch as its prayer hall is dominated by a great dome in the style of Istanbul mosques of the same period. However, it has been translated into terms of the architecture of eastern Arabia so that its exterior arcades have arches of the pointed type found throughout the region, interspersed with lobed arches, again a form commonly found in the traditional architecture of eastern Arabia. The fixed minbar is also of the widespread Arabian type that occurs in other places in the Peninsula.

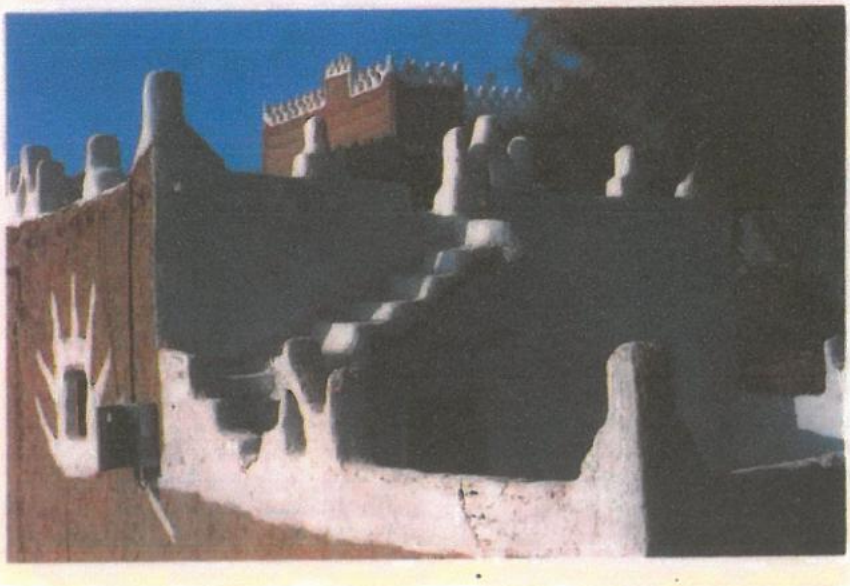
These traditional mosques belong to a Saudi Arabia which has vanished

or is vanishing. With the coming of oil and modernity, these buildings are giving way to new mosques throughout the country, and decreasing numbers of old buildings – whether mosques or houses – remain intact. Yet the heritage they represent reflects the cultural complexity of Arabia's past, and they form a part of the little known record of Arabia's indigenous architecture.

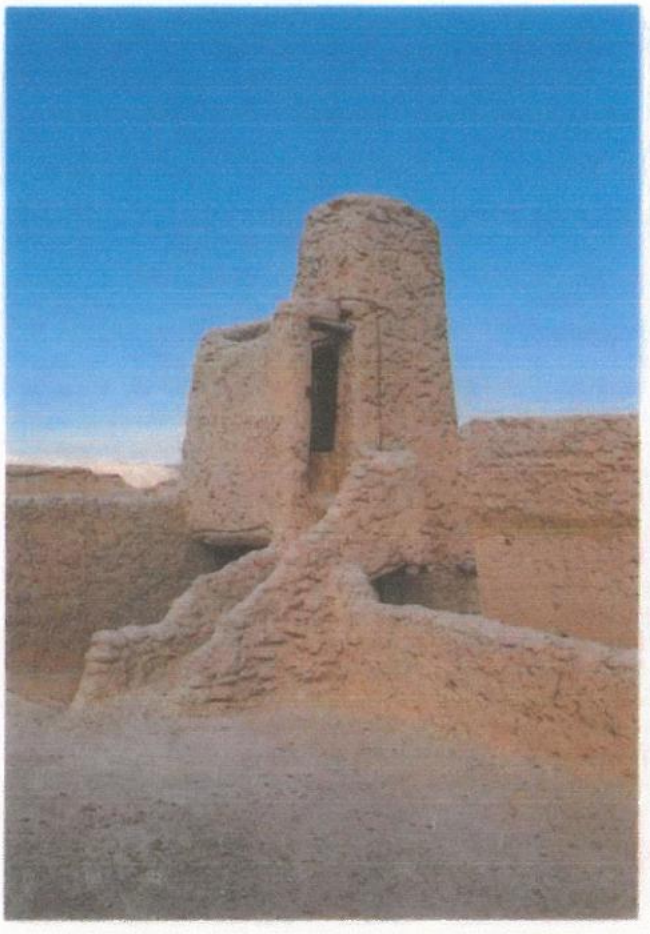
Dr G R D King is author of several works including the *The Historical Mosques of Saudi Arabia* and is Senior Lecturer in Islamic Art and Archaeology at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

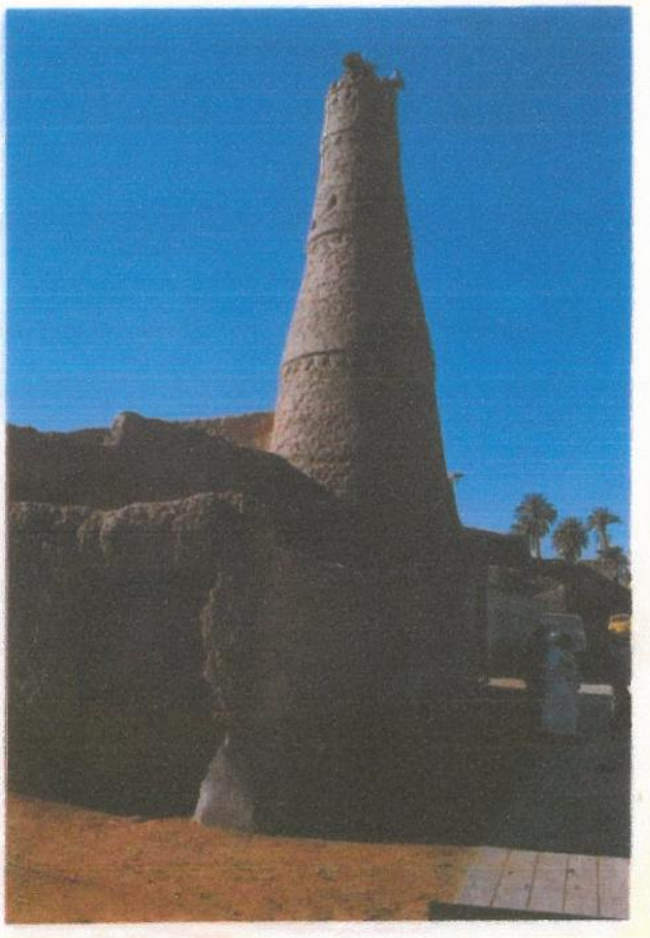


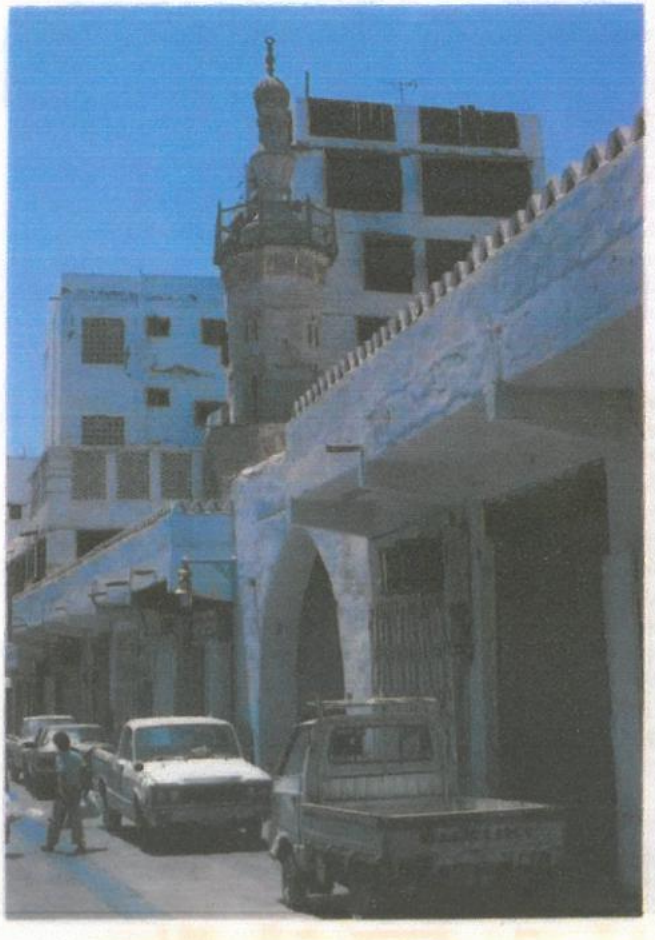


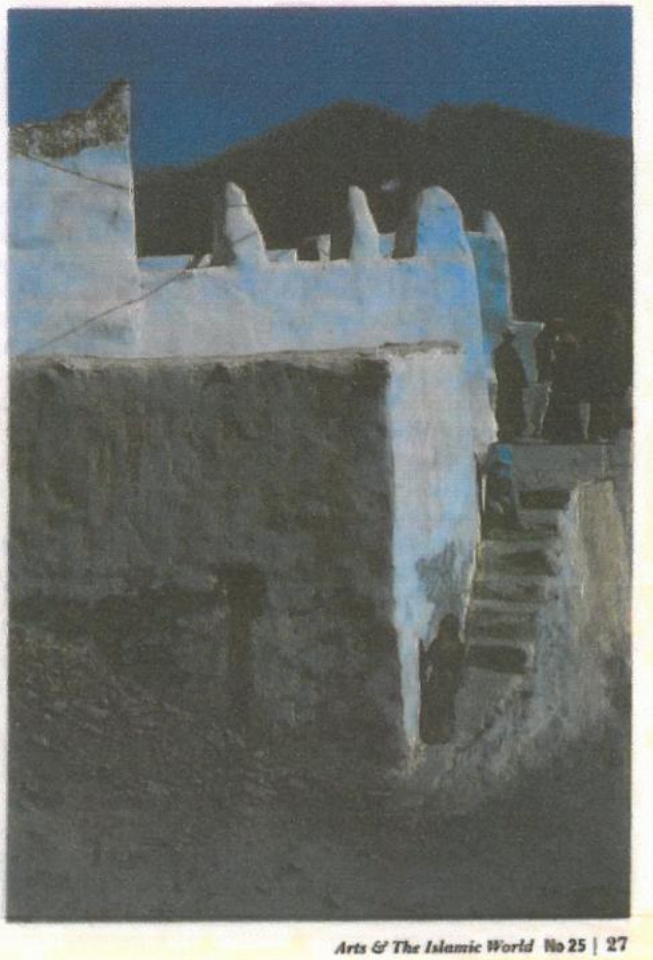


Top: Mosque at Irqa, Najd. **Middle:** Mosque of Muhammad al-Mansur, Dahdha al-Suqur, Najran. **Bottom:** Mosque at Dahdha al-Suqur, Najran. **Opposite page, top left:** Minaret of the mosque at Sudus, Najd. **Top right:** Minaret at Majma'a, Sudayr, Najd. **Bottom left:** Shafi Mosque, Jeddah. **Bottom right:** Mosque, al-Qahaba, Bani Malik.









The King Faisal Foundation - An Alliance of Culture and Philanthropy

Bandar Ibn Saud Ibn Khaled Al-Saud

Exquisitely illustrated manuscripts, finely crafted metals, and beautifully ornamented ceramics are but a few of the creative expressions that are hallmarks of Islamic art. Throughout the history of Islam a prevalent characteristic of the Muslim community has been its search for knowledge and esteem for learning. This profound desire to understand and emulate order and harmony was reflected in the development of Islamic art. As techniques matured and spread, they began to have an impact on the West where elaborate Islamic design was regarded as being both exotic and refreshing after a prolonged classical period.

It is the responsibility of every generation to safeguard tradition and ensure that future generations appreciate the significance of their heritage. Consequently, one of the mandates of The King Faisal Foundation, a philanthropic organization founded in 1976 by the eight sons of King Faisal, is to preserve and promote Islamic culture. Accordingly, the Foundation established The King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies in 1993 as a branch devoted entirely to this pursuit. The Centre has now become recognized as a leading research institute for continuing studies relating to early and modern Islamic civilization. Its extensive, modern facilities offer research materials in 16 languages.

In addition to several reference libraries, the Centre administers a manuscript preservation department. There are currently 20,000 texts in the Centre's manuscript library, some of which are more than 1,200 years old, in need of repair. The number continues to grow. Considering that it takes from one week to six months to restore each book, the task at times seems daunting. State-of-the-art storage equipment and laboratories managed by expert technicians enable the Centre to excel at the meticulous work of restoring even the most damaged pages. In order to increase the number of qualified technicians, the Centre instructs, free of charge, suitable candidates in the discipline of manuscript preservation. Upon completion of their training, these new experts preserve Islamic texts wherever their talents are required.

In addition to its support of Islamic scholarship, the Centre periodically arranges public exhibitions to promote other aspects of the culture. *The Unity of Islamic Art*, was held in 1985 to inaugurate the Centre's Islamic Art Gallery. The exhibit reflected the many common denominators in Islamic art forms regardless of their geographic, political, or social origins. The most prevalent of these are a veneration for calligraphy and a commitment to themes and symbols, usually depicted through intricate designs. Displays in metalwork, stone, wood, glass, ceramics, textiles, and ancient manuscripts served as elegant examples of these principles at work. Together they emphasised the valuable contributions that Islamic craftsmen have made to civilization.

Calligraphy in Islam is not merely the aesthetic representation of letters, but an act of devotion, a celebration of the word of Allah. Despite the fact that calligraphy remains a vital component of Islamic culture, there has been inadequate scientific study of its history. As part of its agenda to reverse this academic deficit, the Centre held an exhibition which had the added benefit of providing pleasure and insight to audiences which might otherwise have remained unfamiliar with the opulence of this artistic form. *Arabic Calligraphy in Manuscripts* comprehensively documented the stylistic evolution of the craft using as examples the works of some of the most outstanding calligraphers and copyists from all periods of Islam.

To Muslims, the sword transcends the bounds of weaponry and becomes an object of reverence. Typical of Islamic art's use of figurative expression, the sword signifies honour and justice. Most importantly, it represents Jihad, the holy struggle for the cause of Islam. An exhibition entitled *Swords and Armour* brought together some of the finer examples of the decoration and craftsmanship which have elevated Islamic armaments to a form of art and the subject of countless verses in Arabic poetry. Specimens from India, Persia, the Arab world, Hungary, and Turkey dating from 1000 AD to the present were on display.

The exhibition *The Decoration of Silver and Manuscripts Among Muslims* demonstrated the elaborate Muslim contributions to the art of decoration. Ever since the Muslim artist and craftsman began incorporating colour and decorative techniques to enrich surfaces, there is hardly any Islamic artifact, architectural or domestic, which is devoid of embellishment. The silver art pieces and manuscripts selected for the exhibit were beautifully representative of richly decorated surfaces, meaningful themes, and finely executed, well-organized compositions. The diversity of the designs reflects cross-cultural influences resulting from pilgrimages, commerce and occupations.

The common thread throughout these exhibits is the ambition of Islamic artists to accomplish more than eloquent beauty and superior craftsmanship. By the use of subtle but sophisticated symbolism and harmonious design, the collections expressed the Muslim fascination with echoing the wonders of the universe.

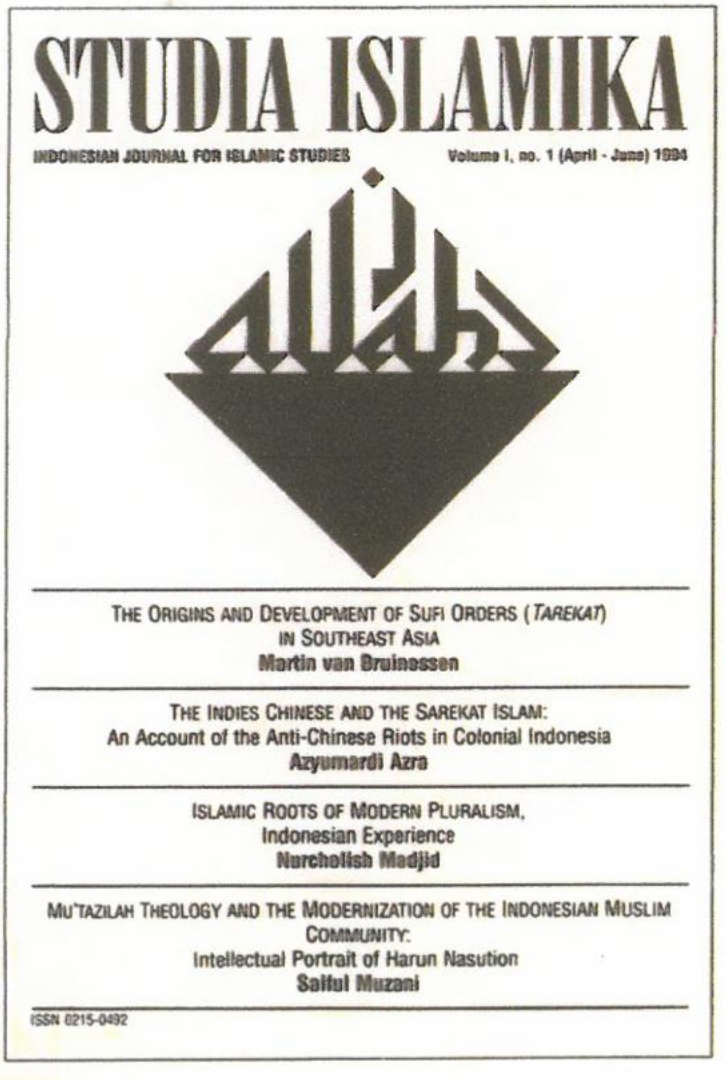
The Foundation's efforts to preserve Islamic heritage are not restricted to the work of The King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies. Although the Foundation's Programmes and Research Department normally concentrate on funding appropriate academic, scientific, religious, and social programmes worldwide, there is also provision for cultural projects.

The Research Centre for Islamic History is a case in point. This organisation studies Muslim contributions to the advancement of science and human civilization. When the Centre outgrew its original premises within the historical Yildiz Palace complex in Istanbul, Turkey, the Turkish Government allocated the Cit Qasr, one of the main sections of the Palace, originally used as a reception hall and library during the reigns of Sultan Abdulaziz and Sultan Abdulhamid II. Through a King Faisal Foundation grant the Research Centre was able to restore and suitably adapt the Cit Qasr to meet its requirements for a research section, a documentation and library section, and a cultural activities and public relations section. The completion of the Cit Qasr project enables the Research Centre for Islamic History to continue its important contributions towards the development of the cultural renaissance of the Islamic world.

Another branch of The King Faisal Foundation, The King Faisal International Prize, annually rewards excellence in the fields of Service to Islam, Islamic Studies, Arabic Literature, Science, and Medicine. Merit alone governs the selection process, an attribute which has earned the Prize the distinction of being one of the most prestigious of international awards. While the categories of Science and Medicine encourage decisive advances in areas which benefit mankind in general and the most needy nations in particular, the Islamic subjects bring attention to important issues and achievements in Muslim society, from Islamic education and Islamic law to research of Islamic societies and contributions of Muslim scientists to European civilization.

The Foundation is proud to merge culture and philanthropy in a way which reflects the spirit of Islam, a way of life in which aesthetic and intellectual standards are entwined with moral principles. By preserving and promoting beauty, faith, and learning, The King Faisal Foundation hopes to endow the future generations with a comprehensive understanding of the past and ideals to which they can aspire.

His Highness Prince Bandar Ibn Saud Ibn Khaled Al Saud is Secretary General of The King Faisal Foundation, Riyadh.



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HE Alija Izetbegovic, President of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

1993 Winner of the King Faisal International Prize for *Service to Islam*, Alija Izetbegovic, accepts the award at the official ceremony in Riyadh in April 1993. In addition to a 22-carat gold medallion, President Izetbegovic received a cash endowment of SR350,000 (US$93,333) and an abstract of his winning work. The *Service to Islam* prize has been awarded since 1979.

King Faisal International Prize - The Winners

Previous Winners 1979-1993

1979		
Service to Islam	Syed Abul Ala Modoodi	Pakistan
Islamic Studies	Dr Fyat Sezgin	Turkey
Arabic Literature	Not Awarded	
1980 Service to Islam	Syed Abul Hasan Ali al-Nadwi	India
Islamic Studies	Dr Mohammad Nastir	Indonesia
Arabic Literature	Dr Mohammad M Al-A'Zami	India
	Dr Ihsan Abbas	Palestine
	Dr Abdel Qader al-Qet	Egypt
1981		
Service to Islam	HM King Khalid ibn Abdul Aziz	Saudi Arabia
Islamic Studies	Not Awarded	
Arabic Literature	Abdel Salam M Haroon	Egypt
1982		
Service to Islam	Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baaz	Saudi Arabia
Islamic Studies	Dr Mohammad N Siddiqi	India
Arabic Literature	Dr Nasir Al-Din Al-Asad	Jordan
Medicine (Primary Care)	Dr David K Morely	Britain
1983		
Service to Islam	Sheikh Hasanein M. Makhloof	Egypt
	HH Tunku Abdulrahman	Malaysia
Islamic Studies	Sheikh Mohammed A. Odaimah	Egypt
Arabic Literature	Dr Ahamd S. Abdel Salam Daif	Egypt
Medicine (Malaria)	Dr Wallace Peters	Britain
Science (Physics)	Not Awarded	
1984		
Service to Islam	King Fahd ibn Abdulaziz (Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques)	Saudi Arabia
Islamic Studies	Sheikh Mustafa al-Zarqa	Syria
Arabic Literature	Mahmoud Mohammed Shaker	Egypt
Medicine(Diarrheal Disease)	Dr John S Fordtran	USA
	Dr William Greenough, III	USA
Science (Physics)	Dr Michael Field	USA
	Dr Gerd Binnig	Germany
	Dr Heinrich Rohrer	Switzerland
1985		
Service to Islam	Abd Rab Al Rassoul Saiaf	Afghanistan
Islamic Studies	Dr Farouk Ahmed Desouki	Egypt
Medicine (Hepatitis)	Dr Mario Rizzetto	Italy
Science (Biochemistry)	Not Awarded	
1986		
Service to Islam	Ahmad H. Deedat	South Africa
	Dr Roger Garaudy	France
Islamic Studies	Prof. Abdul Aziz A.K.Al-Duri	Iraq
Arabic Literature	Mohammed Bahgat Al-Athari	Iraq
Medicine (diabetes)	Dr Gian F. Bottazzo	Italy
	Dr Albert Renold	Switzerland
Science (Chemistry)	Dr Lelio Orci	Italy
	Dr Michael Berridge	Britain
1987		
Service to Islam	Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi	Nigeria
Islamic Studies	Not Awarded	
Arabic Literature	Not Awarded	
Medicine (Blindness)	Prof. Barrie Russell Jones, MD	Britain
Science (Mathematics)	Professor Sir Michael Atiyah, OM PRS	Britain



In December 1992, the King Faisal International Prize, in cooperation with the Royal Society, held a Symposium in London entitled "Science and Medicine in the 21st Century – A Global Perspective". The event celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Science and Medicine Prizes. The picture shows winners for Science and Medicine. **1st row, seated left to right:** Professor Mustafa A El-Sayyed, Professor Anthony E Butterworth, Professor Andre Capron, Dr Robert G Edwards, Professor Sir Michael Attiyah, OM PRS, Professor Janet D Rowley, Professor W B Greenough III, Professor Raymond U Lemieux and Professor Wallace Peters. **2nd row, left to right:** Professor David C Morley, Professor Melvyn F Greaves, Professor Attilio Maseri, Professor Luigi Mastroianni, Dr John S Fordtran, Professor Michael Field, Professor Barrie R Jones and Professor Ahmed H Zewail. **3rd row, left to right:** Dr Heinrich Rohrer, Professor Ricardo Miledi, Professor Theodor W Hansch, Professor Gerd Binnig, Professor R Palmer Beasley, Professor Gian F Bottazzo and Professor Frank A Cotton. **Not present in picture:** Professor Lelio Orci, Professor A E Renold, Professor Pierre Chambon, Professor Sydney Brenner and Professor Mario Rizzetto.

1988		
Service to Islam	Dr Ahmed Domoco Alanto	Philippines
Islamic Studies	Mohammad Qunb H.El-Shazli	Egypt
	Dr Mikdad Yagin Mohammad Ali	Turkey
Arabic Litrature	Dr Mahmoud Yousuf Ali Makki	Egypt
	Dr Mohammed bin Shareifa	Morocco
Medicine (Leukemia)	Dr Melvyn Francis Greaves	Britain
Science	Professor Janet Dafisow Rowley	USA
	Professor Ricardo Miledi	Britain
	Professor Pierre Chambon France	France
1989		
Service to Islam	Sheikh Mohammed A. Al-Saqqa	Egypt
Islamic Studies	Dr Salih Ahmad Al-Ali	Iraq
Arabic Literature	Professor Shakker M K Al-Faham	Syria
	Professor Yousef A Kulif	Egypt
Medicine (Infertility)	Professor Robert Geoffrey Edwards	Britain
Science (Physics)	Professor Luigi Mastroianni	USA
	Professor Theodore W Hansch	Germany
	Professor Ahmed H Zewail	USA
1990		
Service to Islam	Sheikh Ali Al-Tantawi	Saudi Arabia
	Professor Khursheed Ahmed	Pakistan
Islamic Studies	Professor Dr Al Siddiq M A Al-Dharir	Sudan
	Mohammed Omar Shabra	Saudi Arabia
Arabic Literature	Professor Yahya Haqqi	Egypt
Medicine	Professor Andre Capron	France
(Schistosomiasis)	Dr Anthony Edward Butterworth	Britain
Science (Chemistry)	Professor Raymond U Lemieux	Canada
	Professor Frank Albert Cotton	USA
1991		
Service to Islam	HE Dr Abdallah Omar Naseef	Saudi Arabia
Islamic Studies	Not Awarded	
Arabic Literature	Ahmad Mahmoud Najeeb	Egypt
Medicine (Biochemical	Abd-Attawab Yousef Ahmad	Egypt
Aspects of Mental	Ali Abd Qadir Al-Siqilli	Morocco
Health)	Not Awarded	
Science (Mathematics)	Not Awarded	
1992		
Service to Islam	HE Dr. Hamed al-Ghabid	Niger
Islamic Studies	Not Awarded	
Arabic Literature	Professor Muhammad Mustafa Badawi	Egypt/Britain
Medicine (Coronory	Professor Abdul-Fattah Shukri Ayyad	Egypt
Artery Diseases)	Professor Muhammad Yousuf Najm	Lebanon
Science (Biology)	Professor Attilio Maseri	Italy
	Professor Sydney Brenner	Britain
1993		
Service to Islam	HE Alija Izetbegovic	Bosnia
Islamic Studies	Professor Hassan el-Saati Abdel Aziz	Egypt
Arabic Literature	Not Awarded	
Medicine (Acquired	Professor Luc Montagnier	France
Immuno-deficiency	Dr. Jean-Claude Chermann	France
Diseases)	Dr. Francoise Barre-Sinoussi	France
Science (Physics)	Professor Herbert Walther	Germany
	Professor Steven Chu	U.S.A

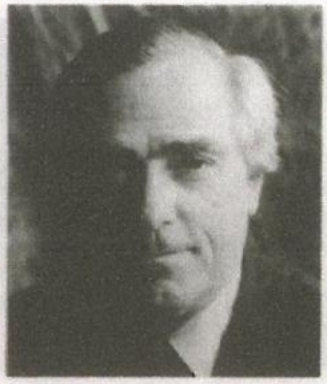
Awards for 1994

The Selection Committee for the 1994 King Faisal International Prizes held their 17th annual meetings on 5-7 February at the King Faisal Foundation, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The following awards were made:

The prize for Science (Mathematics) was awarded to Professor Dennis Parnell Sullivan (USA), Albert Einstein Professor of Mathematics, New York City University, and Professor, Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques, France, whose contributions as a gifted mathematician have had a tremendous impact on the development and understanding of contemporary mathematics.

The prize for Medicine (Medical Applicants of Genetic Engineering) was awarded jointly to Professor William French Anderson (USA), Professor of Biochemistry and Professor of Paediatrics, University of Southern California; and Professor Robert Williamson (Britain), Chairman, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics, St. Mary's School of Medicine, London. Professor Anderson is a leading pioneer of gene therapy, a field of considerable potential in future medicine. Professor Williamson's discovery of the gene responsible for Thalassemia A has been of profound importance in the applications of gene therapy for treating genetic disorders.

The prize for Arabic Literature (Studies Dealing with Ancient Arabic Prose) was awarded jointly to Professor Aisha Abdul Rahman (Bint Al-Shati) (Egypt), Professor of Higher Studies, Al-Qaraween University, Morocco, for her outstanding contributions both to the study of ancient Arabic prose and to Islamic studies, and to Professor Wadad Afif Al-Kadi (Lebanon/USA), Professor of Arabic Literature and Chairman, Department of Near Eastern Linguistics and Civilization, University of Chicago, in recognition of her extraordinary contributions in authenticating documents, letters and essays of ancient Arabic prose.







Top, first row from left, 1: Professor Dennis Parnell Sullivan. 2: Professor William French Anderson. Second row, 1: Professor Robert Williamson. 2: Professor Aisha Abdul Rahman (Bint El-Shati). Third row, 1: Wadad Afif Al-Kadi. 2: Sheikh El-Said Sabiq Mohammad Et-Tihami. Fourth row, 1: Professor Sheikh Yusuf Abdallah El-Qardhawi. 2: His Eminence Sheikh Mohammed Bin Saleh Al-Uthaimin.

The prize for Islamic Studies (Studies Dealing with Islamic Law) was awarded jointly to Sheikh El-Said Sabiq Mohammed Et-Tihami (Egypt), Professor, Um Ul-Qura University, Makkah, in recognition of his pioneering efforts to simplify and popularize Islamic law (Fiqh), particularly as exemplified in his book "Fiqh As-Sunna"; and Professor Sheikh Yusuf Abdullah Al-Qaradhawi (Qatar), Dean of the Faculty of Shari'a and Islamic Studies, Qatar University, for his immense contributions towards associating Islamic law with contemporary Muslim society, particularly well illustrated in his book "Fiqh Az-Zakat".

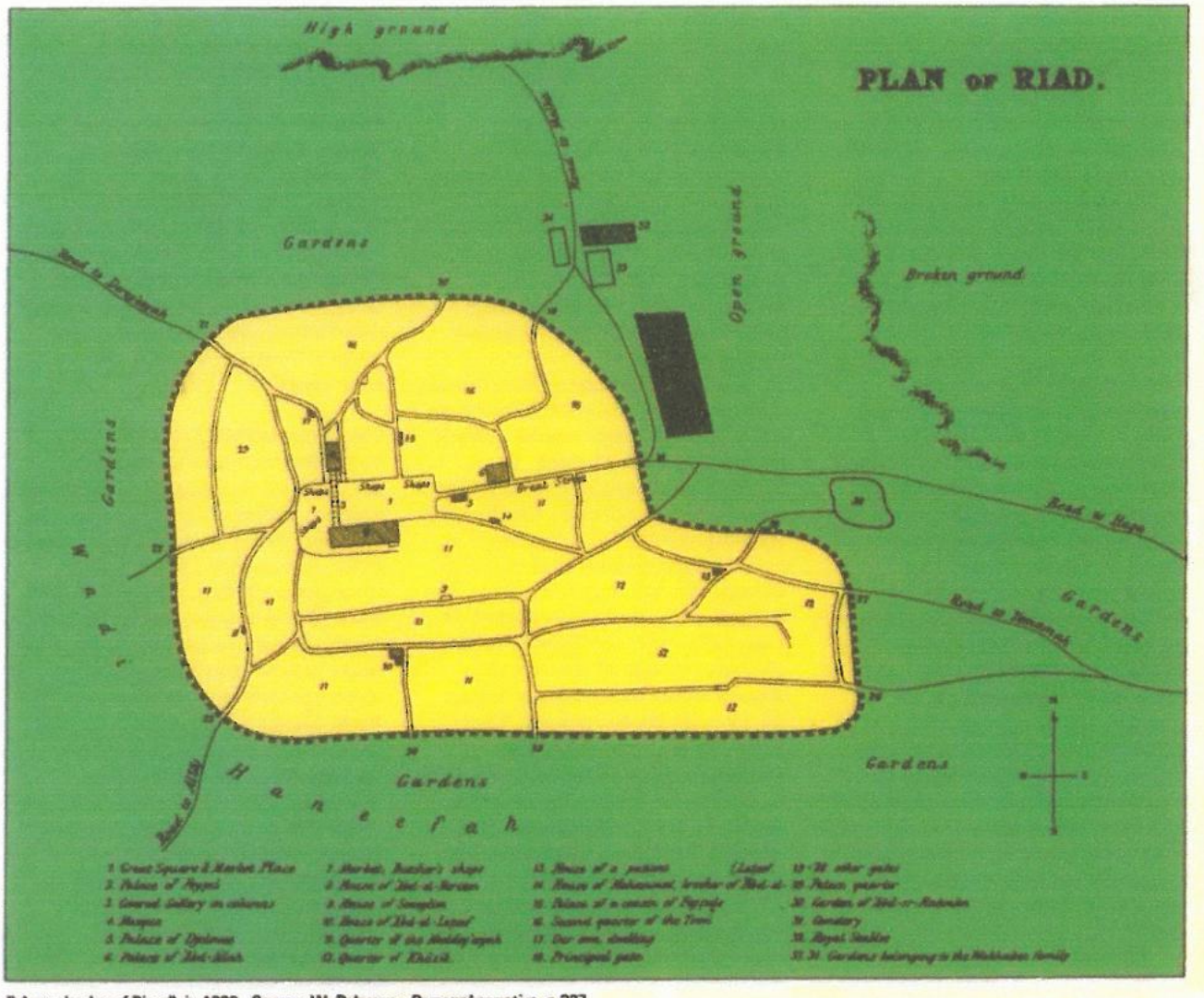
The prize for Service to Islam was awarded to His Eminence Sheikh Mohammed ibn Saleh Al-Uthaimin (Saudi Arabia), Professor, Imam Mohammed ibn Saud, Islamic University, Riyadh, and member of the High Committee of the Ulama'a. Sheikh Al-Uthaimin has made outstanding contributions towards the dissemination of Islamic knowledge to a large and varied audience of Muslims through his many publications and his distinguished career as a Muslim scholar and teacher.

Topics for 1995

Topics for the 1995 prizes are: Science (Chemistry), Medicine (Molecular Immunology), Islamic Studies (Studies Dealing with thematic Commentary of the Holy Qur'an) Arabic Literature (Studies Dealing with Prominent Men of Letters in Modern Arabic Literature).

Traditional Urban Form of the City of Riyadh

Zahir A Othman



Palgrave's plan of Riyadh in 1865. Source: W. Palgrave , *Personal narrative*, p.227.

Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, is an oasis city in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula on the eastern bank of a fertile valley called Wadi Hanifah. It was located on the traditional trade route that connects the southern parts of the Peninsula with the northern and north-eastern parts. The significance of the city of Riyadh started in 1834 when al-Imam Turki Ibn Abdullah (d.1834) selected it as the capital of the second Saudi state. Information about the city's urban development and character is sparse. The only way to trace it is by a careful review of native historians' writings, extracting the dispersed general references to urban elements that can only give a limited impression of the city form. Fortunately, European travellers managed to document a good description of the city in the middle of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

It can be assumed that the urban form and architecture of Riyadh were until end of the 19th century, very much the same as for the previous 200 years. At the beginning of the 20th century some changes were made to the urban fabric. Nevertheless, the changes in general were compatible with the traditional urban form. Major changes started only after the discovery of oil in the country by the end of 1930's.

The urban form of the city was very similar to the early Islamic settlements. The mosque formed the nucleus of the city. All major activities or buildings were at the city core around the mosque. William Palgrave (1826-1888) described the city from a distance as:

"Large and square, crowned by high towers and strong walls of defence , a mass of roofs and terraces, where overtopping all frowned the huge but irregular pile of Feysul's royal castle, and hard by it rose the scarce less conspicuous palace, built and inhabited by his eldest son 'Abd-Allah."

From Palgrave's description one notices that, contrary to the skyline of most Islamic cities , Jamie (Friday) Mosque or other mosques did not form a dominant feature of the city's sky line . The extreme simplicity of mosque buildings and the defensive fortifications of the palace made the latter more apparent.

The architecture of the city did not excite all travellers. Palgrave stated that the Jamie Mosque "has no pretensions to architectural beauty"[2]. Lewis Pelly, who visited Riyadh in 1865, mentioned that the Justice Palace (Governor's Palace) building "had the slightest architectural pretension"[3]. The disappointment could be a result of a pre-visit imagination that the central Arabian cities were similar to major Islamic cities such as Cairo or Damascus. H. Philby (1885-1960) who stayed longer in Riyadh admired its architecture. He stated that the Justice Palace, the Jamie Mosque and the fort had architectural distinction. He also stated that the palace was "so splendid in its proportions, so beautiful and so representative of all that is the best in modern Arabian architecture... Its merit lies in the superb simplicity of design and in an almost complete absence of ornament so appropriate in an edifice intended to provide not only comfort but security for those dwelling within its walls"[4].

Mud was the main building material used in Riyadh. It gave the buildings an appearance of heavy and massive volume. The external openings on the outer walls were limited and located mainly on the upper floors. The only openings at the ground floor were the guest room windows. Small triangular high openings were used for ventilation. The external decoration was limited to surrounding the top of buildings with a frieze of delicate stepped pinnacles called "Sharaf" and to various designs mainly triangular, in low relief on the upper floors and to mark floor levels. The main wooden doors were highly decorated with contrasting colours. The prominent features of the city included the city core itself, the street pattern, the residential quarters and the walls and gates.

The City Core

The mosque was the nucleus of Riyadh. The Justice Palace and the main suq (market) around the city maidan (square) were within the mosque precincts. The mosque, the palace and the city wall were all rebuilt by al-Imam Turki Ibn Abdullah. He had a special access to the mosque through a door near "al-Mehrab" (prayer niche) to avoid disturbing the worshippers. This access was a new feature that became common to mosques in this part of Arabia as a private entrance for the prayer leader. This door was replaced by al-Imam Faisal Ibn Turki (d. 1865) with a private, raised, long covered passage linking the palace and the mosque.

The Jamie Mosque of Riyadh was a simple, large, flat-roofed building, supported on square wooden pillars coated with mud. It could accommodate around four thousand worshippers at a time within the main building and the open courtyard in front. Palgrave stated that the Jamie Mosque did not have a minaret, "but instead a small platform slightly raised from the roof-level"[5] . In fact that was the style of minarets in Riyadh which showed great respect for the neighbour's privacy. The Jamie Mosque and some other smaller mosques there were also used as schools teaching religion and the Arabic language. Besides the Jamie Mosque there were more than thirty neighbourhood mosques.[6]

The Justice Palace was three storeys high, and between fifteen and eighteen meters from the ground to the roof parapet. It looked "more like the outside of a fortress than a peaceful residence". The ground storey had no openings at all on the exterior. The main entry to the palace was through "a low and narrow gate" with long earthen seats offering a waiting place for visitors . The palace had an open courtyard, and was elegant enough to be called the "Wahhabee Louvre" by Palgrave. The palace comprised guest quarters, a prison, a special "Musalla" (place of prayer) and the royal treasury.[7]

The central point at which the main streets met and intersected was the suq, with the Justice Palace adjoining it on one side, and the Jamie Mosque on the other. The northern side of the maidan consisted of shops and warehouses. On the western side other shops and warehouses made up the end of the maidan. Beside it the women's open suq was located where bread, dates, milk, vegetables, and firewood were sold.[8]

The main street was the only direct way from the city's primary gate to the city centre. Besides, there were several streets and alleyways of varying width, of which a network of narrow streets led to broad enclosures surrounded on either side by several houses. Palgrave described the atmosphere in the main street by saying: "Here we found ourselves at first in a broad street, going straight to the palace; on each side were large houses, generally two storeys high, wells for ablution, mosques of various dimensions , and a few fruit-trees planted here and there in the courtyards".[9]

The Residential Quarters

According to Palgrave, Riyadh was divided into four quarters. The north eastern, accommodated members of the royal family and the upper classes of the community. The dwellings were generally high, and the streets were almost straight and wide. The south eastern quarter was larger and more heavily populated than the other quarters. It accommodated the lower classes of the population who were mainly peasants and others coming from the surrounding villages. This was the poorly built and neglected part of the city. The north western and the south western quarters were spacious and well populated. They included large irregular masses of houses, varying in size and state of preservation. There was no distinct separation between the residential quarters other than by broad streets between those several quarters. Although no gates or dividing walls existed, each quarter was considered as a municipal entity.[10] The palace and most of the houses were built around courtyards with planted trees in some areas. In some quarters there were several cultivated enclosures, in which the crops were watered from wells.[11]

. The city was surrounded by a strong high wall, varying from six to nine meters in height .

Outside the city in the northern part were the royal stables, spacious gardens, and the main cemetery.

End of 19th Century

In 1887 Muhammad Ibn Rasheed (d.1897), governor of Hayel, took over Riyadh. The city plan did not change until 1891 when Ibn Rasheed demolished its fortifications and destroyed most of the palm groves surrounding the city.[12] The major change was in the city centre where he destroyed the Justice Palace and all the palaces of the Saudi royal family. Only a fortified part of the palace of Abdullah Ibn Faisal remained. This was converted to al-Musmak Fort for the use of his governor of the city. The governor had a residence opposite the main gate of the fort. The open space between the fort and the governor's residence became the formal city square. The shape of the city core changed due to the demolition of the Justice Palace and the use of the fort instead. The Jamie Mosque and the suq remained unchanged, on their original locations.

a hospital at al-Qiri quarter (south eastern). It was the same quarter that Palgrave referred to as having what he called "a patient house" in it.[16]

The city was encircled by a thick wall about 7-9 meters high, interrupted at frequent intervals by imposing towers. Most of them were circular but some were square or rectangular, and generally projecting outwards from the wall. Palgrave's plan showed 12 gates to the city, of which one was drawn but not enumerated. In 1917-18, Philby drew a map of the city showing nine gates of different sizes, some of which were used "as means of access to the walled palm groves in the vicinity".[17] According to both Palgrave and Philby, the most important one was al-Thumairy gate, which opened to the main street leading to the city core. The natural convergence of all the main traffic lanes was on the central maidan. Most of the main streets were straight while the internal roads turned and twisted and some times were so narrow that they could not accommodate two men walking abreast.[18]

"Many of the houses in Riyadh were built against the town wall in such a way that the wall itself formed the back of the house".[19] The need for more residential units within the city wall forced the conversion of some palm groves to residential quarters. The main elements of the city core were the Jamie Mosque, the Justice Palace, the suq, the main maidan and the al-Musmak Fort.

The area of the Jamie Mosque had no expansion since the period of al-Imam Faisal. The mosque could barely be recognised and its main entrance was through a gap in the row of shops lining its southern wall. Another subsidiary entrance was on the eastern side. The main minaret was a low stepped clumsy structure near the centre of the north side of the building. A similar but much smaller minaret enriched its south eastern corner.[20] The Jamie Mosque could not accommodate the increase of the city population during the 1930's . Two other mosques were made available as Jamies. However, the Jamie Mosque continued as the city's main mosque where the king used to attend the congregational prayer in a private chamber built on the roof of the mosque.

The Justice Palace was the highest building in the city and occupied a picturesque location, facing the maidan and the suq. A great lamp was hoisted on its top to give light to the roofs of the palace. The lamp was ordinarily lowered before midnight, but during the month of Ramadhan it was left there all night to illuminate

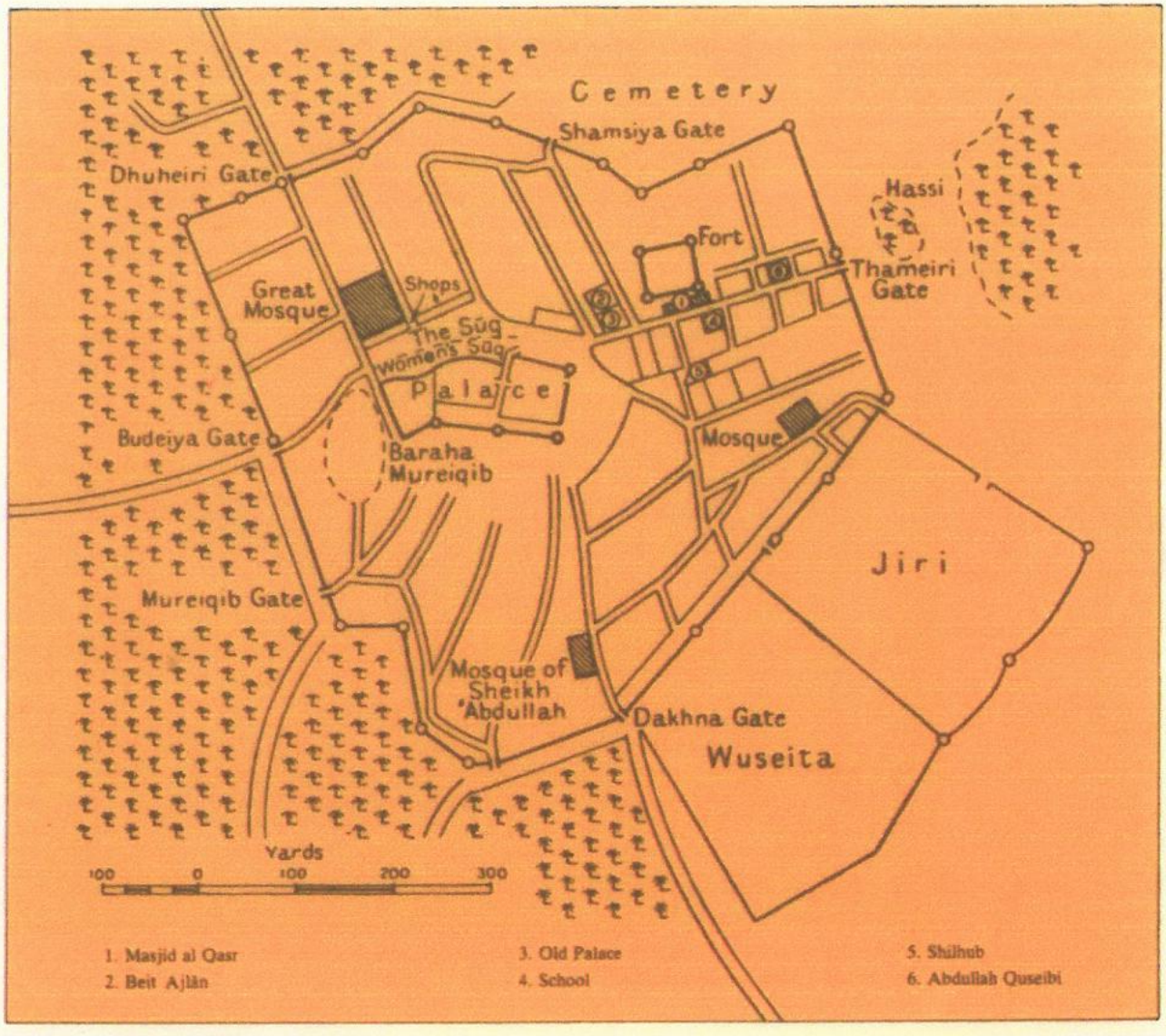


Photograph of the city of al-Madinah in 1880 showing the dominance of the mosque on its skyline.
Source: courtesy of Royal Geographic Society.

Early 20th Century

King Abdul Aziz al-Saud (1880-1953) captured Riyadh in 1902. He repaired and rebuilt its fortifications . The city's gradual development started approximately within its original boundaries. The character of the city was sensitively preserved and the only new element in its centre was the al-Musmak Fort. In 1918, the city covered about 100 acres of which the palace, fort, Jamie Mosque, suq, maidan, and the houses of the royal family occupied at least one quarter.[13]

When the king rebuilt the palaces he followed the original pattern and connected his palace to the Jamie Mosque and the treasury house by raised passages. Amin al-Rihani who visited Riyadh in 1922 called it "city of bridges".[14] The number of local mosques was around twenty varying in size. Besides, there was a special enclosure reserved for the "Eid" (feast) prayers outside the north-eastern gate.[15] The city had a sort of



Philby's map for Riyadh in 1918.
Source: H. Philby, *The heart of Arabia*, vol.1, p.70.

just before dawn gave the signal to the beginning of a new day of fasting.[21] The palace was the first building in the city graced by electric lighting in 1931.

The suq occupied the open space to the north of the palace. It was divided into two sections by a partition wall. The section between this wall and the wall of the palace was reserved as a women's suq. The other and larger section contained about 120 modest shops arranged partly along either side of a broad thoroughfare and partly back-to-back on a narrow island. Some shops were backed in partly by the outer walls of houses and partly by the south wall of the great mosque itself.[22] The camel suq was outside the eastern gate of the city.

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3 Lewis Pelly. *Report on a Journey to Riyadh in Central Arabia* (1865) (Cambridge, Naples: Oleander/Falcon), p.46.

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6 W.G. Palgrave. Ibid., p.267.

7 Ibid., pp.231-233, p.235.

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18 Muhammad al-Mana. Ibid., p.33.

19 Ibid., p.35.

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21 Ibid., Vol.1, pp.75-76.

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Dr Zahir A Othman is General Director, Planning and Programmes, Riyadh Development Authority.

Pre-Islamic Antiquities in Saudi Arabia

Abdul Rahman T Al-Ansary

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is replete with several thousands of antiquities scattered over the entire length and breadth of the vast Kingdom occupying an area of 900,000 square miles, approximately. These antiquities came to light as a result of systematic surveys and excavations conducted during past three decades by the Kingdom's Antiquities Department and by the Department of Archaeology and Museology at the King Saud University, Riyadh. In the latter case, the scientific excavation was made under my direction, for the first time in the Kingdom, at the Pre-Islamic site of Qaryat al-Fau located 700 Km. south west of Riyadh, and dated to 300 B.C.-300 A.D. As such, this study is with special reference to the discoveries made at al-Fau: most of them are unique in the Kingdom. However antiquities from other places in the Kingdom are also highlighted. The nature of the Pre-Islamic Saudi Arabian antiquities is very vast and varied. However, they may be broadly classified into five categories: (1) artifacts or smaller articles; (2) architectural remains and monuments; (3) rock art; (4) frescoes; and (5) Inscriptions.

Besides indigenous antiquities of local origin, some of them are of foreign origin and some are the product of foreign influences. The latter two cases are a result of foreign trade by land and sea with the neighbouring countries and international trade passing through Arabia which acted as a corridor between the civilizations of east and west as early as third millennium B.C. Trade routes from Southern Arabia passed through Qaryat al-Fau linking major commercial centres of Arabia with Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, and the Mediterranean and the Arabian Gulf.

1. Artifacts

Under the first category of antiquities we have the stone tools of the Stone Age man, his domestic utensils, metallic tools and weapons and other articles of the Bronze and Iron Ages, jewellery of gold, silver, and of beads, coins, ivory and wooden objects; statuettes and statues of humans as well as animals; seals etc. A large corpus of evidence, tools of the Stone Age man suggest that Saudi Arabia was extensively settled by early man almost one hundred thousand years before the present. Their settlements are widespread and mostly concentrated along the margins or the deserts; for instance, the Nafud in the north and the Rub al'Khali in the south, southwest and southeast. A large variety of stone or flint tools ranging from the Lower Palaeolithic or the early Stone Age to the Neolithic or the New Stone Age recovered from surveys and excavations are preserved in the National Museum of the Kingdom at Riyadh. Raw stone extracted from the mountains were shaped in different sizes to serve different purposes and were used as axe, chopper, knife, scraper, burin, borer, blade, hammer, points, arrows etc.

The domestic utensils, pottery, and soft stone or chloride, vessels used by the ancient man for preserving grains and food, for cooking, for carrying water etc., throw light on the domestic, social and cultural aspects of the life of the people. Sherds of painted 'Ubaid pottery dated to fifth millennium B.C., have been found at several sites in the eastern province of the Kingdom. A unique complete pot of 'Ubaid dated to circa 5100-4300 B.C. from Khursaniyah is preserved in the National Museum at Riyadh. From Tarut we have black-on-red pottery of Umm an Nar of The United Arab Emirates with geometric designs and animals drawn on them. From Tarut we have large biconnical carination pots with everted rim, resembling Jamdet Nasr types from Mesopotamia and are dated to 3000 B.C. They are preserved in the National Museum at Riyadh. A large variety of steatite vessels, similar to those found in Oman peninsula, were found at Tarut. Alabastar dish and cylindrical jar with stone bowls were also found from Tarut. Four glazed Mesopotamian amphoras were recovered from a Tarut mound and dated to Seleucid-Parthian period. From Qurayyah in the northwest we have a variety of painted pottery dated to 12-10 centuries B.C.

Fragments of steatite vessels from the eastern region depict a variety of themes/designs, such as, weave pattern, step pattern, birds, palm tree etc. exhibit the taste and culture of the people who made and used them. Different types of pottery collected from different far-flung regions of the Kingdom suggest development of indigenous culture.

From the excavations at al Fau settlement, a wide variety of pottery, coarse, fine and glazed and vessels of steatite to serve different domestic purposes were recovered. Jewellery of gold and silver and complete necklaces, pendants etc. were unearthed from al-Fau. Two necklaces from Jawan tomb are of gold and semi-precious stones. Bracelets of metal, glass, bone, and ivory were also found at al Fau. Most of the woven pieces of textiles found at al Fau are of linen, lambswool and camel-wool. These pieces are parts of dresses of men and women and also fabrics which adorned the camels' back and covered litters. Some were extremely soft and woven with fine linen yarn.

The Kinda Kingdom at al Fau minted its own silver and bronze coins in various denominations for domestic consumption and for commercial transactions of external trade passing through it. A large number of coins of silver and bronze-copper, were discovered at al Fau. They comprised locally minted as well as north and south Arabian and foreign coins; dated to Sasanian, Hellenistic and Roman periods. Al Fau coins are characteristic with the figure of their deity "Khal" and his monogram. These features are

unique in Saudi Arabia and these characteristics are not found in the Himyrite and Minaean coins which seem to have served as proto-types for al Fau coins.

A statue of Sumerian type was found at Tarut, dating to circa 2500 BC A red sandstone statue of man was discovered at Dedan dated to 800-400 BC. A Lihyanite head of basalt dated to 4th-3rd centuries BC was found at Yenbu.

Bronze statuettes of human male and female recovered from al Fau are in Hellenistic and Roman style and are of foreign origin. One represents Harpocrates, the son goddess and another Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom. One of them has a double-crown, of upper and lower Egypt. A large bronze lion's head from Najran is an outstanding example of animal statues found in the Kingdom. At al Fau two lion heads cast in copper, forming the terminations of two tubes were found. Dolphins and camels in bronze and clay are found at al Fau. Statues of limestone are also found at al Fau. One is of a lady, possibly a goddess or a princess, wearing a crown or a diadem. Another is of a lady having braided hair. A sculpture of hard limestone seems to represent a king. Bas-relief representing a kneeling ibex, sun or moon disc, and facade of a shrine are found on a rectangular stone. Archaeological surveys and excavations at Thaj have brought to light a wide variety of articles from the confines of the Pre-Islamic 'Walled' city, such as: terracotta figurines of both humans as well as animals and one of them is of mother goddess of red clay; incense burners; offering bowls; a variety of pottery, plain and incised; bronze stamp seals, hundreds of coins of Nabataean and south Arabian states and others; etc.

Two very important coins from Thaj, are tetradrachms, having a head of Heracles on the obverse, wearing a lion skin, and the reverse shows a seated Zeus figure holding a flower in the right hand and holding a sceptre in his left hand.

Excavations of numerous burial mounds dated to first millennium BC found in Dhahran, are similar to those thousands found in Bahrain, and have produced a large array of antiquities. They comprise: several gold ornaments; ivory earrings; stamps and amulets of stone, gypsum, diorite, seashell, soapstone etc; beads in different size, shape, colour and material; incense burners, copper ware and metallic articles, pottery and stone vessels; of two seals, one depicts a horse and star and the other a human. One of the stamps is like a small Egyptian Scarab; large ceramic vessels are same as the ridged pottery from Dilmun. Two gold jewellery hoards from Dhahran of Seleucid and Parthian period consist of a large variety of jewellery, such as: gold beads, saucer and cylinder shaped gold beads, gold plaques, gold earrings with attached gold beads, a pair of gold earrings with vase shaped element, and earrings with pendant plaque, earrings with crouching lions and pomegranate beads, rings with inlaid garnet, gold bracelet with ibex-headed finials, etc. This recovery of golden jewellery suggests that inhabitants of the north-eastern Arabia accumulated vast amounts of wealth with economic prosperity and indicate flourishing of an advanced civilization. All these finds suggest Thaj's wider links with other Arabian centres of trade and culture. Some of the pottery sherds from Thaj are preserved at the British Museum.

Ancient Dumat al-Jandal(modern al Jauf) occupied a strategic position linking central and southern arabia with northern Arabia, Petra, Syria etc during the first century BC. It has several ancient buildings. Recent excavations have brought to light numerous articles: gold ornaments, stamps with relief in the form of a scarab; coins, pottery, beads, metallic articles, etc.

2. Monuments

Different types of stone structures used by the ancient man as shelter or tomb for burial purposes still exist. The most famous are the Stone pillars at Rajajil, south of Sakaka, dated to the Bronze Age of the second millennium BC The Tarut *tell* is also ancient with its foundations dating to the Neolithic period or 5th-4th millennium BC. Elliptical stone structures with ideological indication are found at Thumama, near Riyadh and are dated to second millennium BC. At Tayma, Dedan Khayber, al Jauf (Dumat al Jandal), Qurayya etc., we find traces of large walled-town complexes during mid-to-late second millennium BC. For instance, at al Jauf, the Qasr-Marid is the most impressive structure. It is constructed of stones and mud-brick, and functioned as a fortress. Its original foundation seems to date to 3rd century AD.

At al Fau the architectural remains comprise: a double-storey market (Souk) which is unique in Arabia, so far discovered, with well planned shops lined on two opposite sides, a courtyard, corridors, leading to the stores, staircases, water-well, public conveniences etc. It is built in stone and mud brick, with wide doors capped with semi-circular lintels. The market complex measures 30.25 x 25.20 metres.

Religious buildings are another unique aspect of al Fau so far discovered within Saudi Arabia. These are dedicated to the pre-Islamic deities, Shams, Sin, Wud,'Abat, and al Hawar. The statuettes found within and outside these religious buildings are similar to those from Syria, Egypt, Palmyra and other Mediterranean countries; and thus suggesting foreign links and influences in religion and culture at al Fau. Blending of different architectural elements are evident from the general rectangular plan of these religious structures which are similar to those found in contemporary south Arabian states as well as at the Awratian temple at Altin Tepe, in Anatolia.

The residential area unearthed at al Fau with well planned houses, palaces, streets, lanes, hotels, rest-houses, water channels, storage tank, kitchen with oven and hearths, lavatories etc. gives us a vivid picture of the life and society of the people at al Fau and the flourishing of an advanced civilization. For the dead also, well planned tombs were built at al Fau. Separate tombs for the Kings, nobility, and common people were built in different sizes and standard. The tombs of the Kings are palatial buildings with several rooms/chambers, inter-connected, built in stone and lime with permanent stairs for going down.

At Madain Saleh and al Ula in the north western region we have the most prominent monuments of great architectural achievement. At Madain 23 Nabataean tombs have been carved into the rocks and dated to the first century BC. The details of pediment of tomb facades and internal designs are distinctive features of Nabataean tomb architecture similar to those found at Petra in Jordan. The rock-cut Minaean tombs with lions carved in them at al Ula are yet another outstanding remains. An ancient

water tank, supposed to be associated with the Lihyanite sanctuary at Khuraibah is 4 metres in diameter and 2.5 metres in depth.

At Tayma several buildings, palaces, city wall, well etc. exist which are dated to first millennium BC. Nabonidus, the Neo-Babylonian King, during his flight sojourned at Tayma and built palaces. From the Qasr al-Hamra, a cube of greenish-coloured soft stone was recovered with relief carvings of a bull with religious symbols of crescent and star. The iconographic motifs are similar to those from Mesopotamia.

3. Rock art

Saudi Arabia possesses not only the largest number but also the richest rock art in the whole of southwest Asia. It gives us a vivid picture of ancient man's life styles, habits, social, cultural and economic conditions of the people. It speaks about the intellectual and the aesthetic interest and taste of the people who made it.

The early rock art depicts hunting and pastoral people with animals; and had outlined, large and crude figures. As the art developed and took a refined shape during the Neolithic period, the figures are shown with detailed and realistic physical features, except for facial features which were always vague. The human and animal figures from Jubba and Hanakiya with their deep outlines and fully or partially pecked bodies represent the finest specimens of the early Neolithic rock art of Saudi Arabia. Fine life-size anthropomorphic figures of women are found at Bir Hima in the south. Petroglyphs from Aiduma hills depict cows with cattle brands and humans. These brands are called Wasum, the marks or symbols of identification of ownership. Subsequently, the rock art developed into representation by "stick-figures".

At the Tuwaiq mountains, overshadowing al Fau settlement, we find a life size figure of the deity "Khal" and numerous rock engravings with Sabaean inscriptions.

The function of prehistoric art was generally for communication or aesthetic purposes. In Saudi Arabia, from this pictographic communication system through rock engravings, evolved the alphabets of the Proto-Beduin writing system. The human stick-figures found in the rock art of Saudi Arabia, reveal that they were engraved methodically and arranged systematically with complete synchronisation and homogeneity, and repetition of some figures with specific traits are indications of a definite meaning in itself. Some of the human stick figures of rock art are very similar to several letters in north and South Arabic script.

4. Fresco

Coloured Wall paintings are found in the houses and palaces at al Fau depicting various social activities of the people and their cultural achievements. They depict, males and females in action, hunting scenes, dancing groups, palm trees, fruit picking, domestic and wild animals, water with swimming fishes etc. A large size coloured portrait, of a man wearing a diadem, with two persons in attendance has characteristic features of face, eyes, nose, moustache, hairstyle, showing resemblance to people of different foreign lands – Central Asian, Palmayrean, Indian etc., and does not appears to be purely Arabian, thus, suggesting people from different lands visited al Fau to give the artist the vision to draw such a portrait. Alternatively, the artist might be a foreigner. A bathing woman is depicted in one of the scenes. Another has a nude woman and a censer, surrounded by a frieze of South Arabian inscription giving her name. Hunting scenes depict riders on camels chasing gazelles and ibexes. A scene depicts a camel carrying a hawdaj, and a man holding the tether, surrounded by decorations of vine leaves and stems. A mural shows a bunch of grapes.

5. Inscriptions

Along with graffiti on rocks scattered all over the Kingdom we find several thousands of inscriptions in different Pre-Islamic dialects, Lihyanite, Minaean, Hasaean, Sabaean etc. Sabaean is dated from circa 1000 BC. Inscriptions are also found on tomb stones, steles, statues, on walls of houses within the monuments, religious buildings, domestic articles, coins etc. These are either on stone slabs or on metallic plates. The Minaean inscription on stones found at al Jauf are among the rarest found in north Arabia, as Minaean is very much confined to south Arabia. They reveal to us the political, administrative, social, economic, religious and cultural aspects and are most important for the study of history and civilization of Pre-Islamic Saudi Arabia.

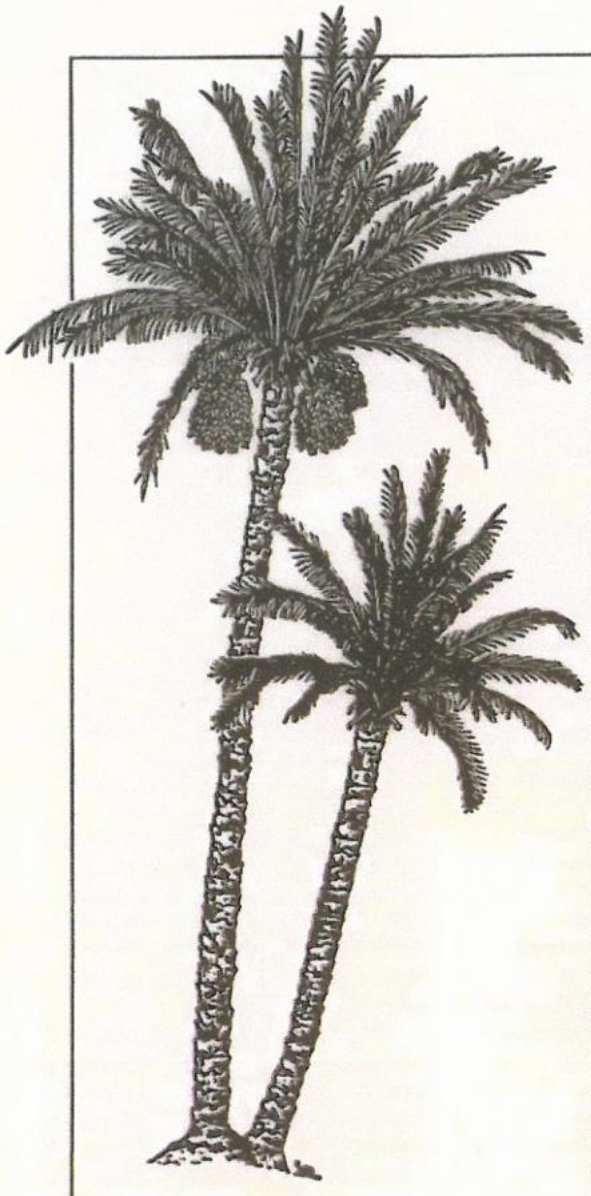
An inscribed stele in Lihyanite measuring one metre in height was found at al Ula. It mentions the names of a family of worshippers of the Lihyanite deity, Thu-ghabat, dated to 3rd century BC. At al Fau a large number of inscriptions on stone and plaques have been recovered from the excavations of residential areas, tombs and religious shrines. They not only reveal the names of the Kinda and Minaean Kings who ruled at al Fau, but reveal names of the nobility, and aspects of life and conditions and some historical events. A bilingual inscription in Nabataean and Minaean from al Fau suggests relations between al Fau and Nabataeans in north Arabia.

From Tayma we have an stele which is now preserved in the Louvre Museum. It bears an Aramaic inscription carved in relief and is dated to circa fifth century BC. It records how a new deity, Salm of Hajam, alien to Arabia, was introduced at Tayma by the priest Salm-Shezeb, who also made an endorsement for the new shrine, and founded an hereditary priesthood. On one side of the stone the deity Salm of Hajam is depicted in Assyrian fashion, and below him a priest is shown standing in front of an altar with the inscription.

A large size basin carved from a stone found at Tayma has an Aramaic text. Several Aramic inscriptions from Tayma reveal personal names, sex of individuals, names of deities etc. this information provides us a glimpse of the ancient population. They are dated to fifth or fourth centuries BC. Nabataean dedicatory inscriptions are also found at Tayma.

At Thaj, in The Arabian Gulf three slabs bearing Sabaean inscription of Southern Arabia were discovered from a grave. One of the slabs was used as a headstone for a cist grave. From the same site, fragments of a large jar with painted inscription in Aramaic was recovered. These inscriptions suggest Thaj had direct links,specially commercial, with both the North and South Arabian states, as it was situated on a traditional caravan route linking qther trans-Arabian trade routes. Several stelae of the Hasaitic inscription are found at Thaj around the grave mounds which reveal names

continued on page 48



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Pre-Islamic Coinage in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia

D T Potts

At the time of his death, Alexander the Great was laying plans to invade Arabia and had indeed gone so far as to send out three naval expeditions from Babylonia (southern Iraq) with the aim of circumnavigating the peninsula and exploring its coasts. Arrian, the 2nd century AD Greek historian of Alexander's conquests, makes it clear that the Macedonian emperor's sights were set on the Gulf coast of Arabia 'for he thought that it would be just as prosperous a country as Phoenicia' (*Anabasis* 7.19.5-6). Indeed, the prosperity of the region's most well-known city, Gerrha, was unequivocally proclaimed by Strabo (*Geography*, 16.4.19) who wrote that, 'from their trafficking both the Sabaeans [inhabitants of Saba, in modern Yemen] and the Gerrhaeans [inhabitants of Gerrha] have become the richest of all [the Arabians]'. Little wonder, then, that in 205 B.C. the Seleucid emperor Antiochus paid a visit to Gerrha where, Polybius tells us, he was given no less than 200 talents of stacte [a superior type of myrrh], 1000 talents of frankincense, and 500 talents of silver (*Histories* 13.9.4-5). This account, if true, means that not less than 15,000 kgs. of silver (and possibly close to 20,000 kgs., depending on the type of talent alluded to) were delivered into the hands of Antiochus in return, Polybius says, for 'perpetual peace and freedom'. But few ancient historians have bothered to ask how such a payment was made, in bullion or in coin?

Until recently, no serious consideration would have been given to the latter possibility. At the beginning of this decade, only a handful of pre-Islamic coins from northeastern Saudi Arabia had been published[1], and indeed the only indigenous coinage in the peninsula known to Arab historians such as al-Baladhuri, al-Maqrizi, and Ibn Khaldun were the dirhams of the Himyarite state in South Arabia. Otherwise, the Islamic historians were only aware of the circulation of Byzantine, Sasanian and Tabaristan (i.e. from the Central Asian region of Tabaristan) coins in pre-Islamic Arabia. Of course, it has been long known that both pre-Himyarite South Arabia (the kingdoms of Saba, Ma'in, Qataban, Hadramawt) and northwestern Arabia, specifically the Nabataean kingdom, minted their own coinage, but since the early 1960's retired members of the ARAMCO community in Dhahran have been communicating the discovery of numerous coins at sites in the Eastern Province such as Thaj, Ayn Jawan, Jabal Berri, Dhahran, the Salt Mine site, Jabal Kenzan, ash-Sha'ba, and Hofuf (Fig. 1) which have transformed our view of coinage in pre-Islamic eastern Arabia. Hundreds of coins from these sites have been published in the past few years[2] revealing a multitude of types and an important numismatic field of study which was virtually non-existent just a short time ago.

With the exception of a very small number of Greek, Roman[3], Phoenician[4], Nabataean[5], Elymaean, Parthian[6], and Sasanian[7] coins, well over 95% of the coins occurring on pre-Islamic sites in the Eastern Province are local, east Arabian issues. Roughly speaking, these span the period from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd or 4th century AD. The discovery of copper ingots near Jabal Kenzan and a clay impression of the reverse of an Arabian coin at Thaj, which may have been used by a die-cutter as an example from which to work, strongly suggests that mints existed at both of these sites, but in view of the variety of issues attested to date, there may well have been more.

As in so many parts of the ancient world, the coinage of Alexander and his Seleucid successors was the model adopted by east Arabian minters. It has often been pointed out that this was no doubt due to the high quality of Alexander's own silver coinage. Imitation, after all, is the highest form of flattery. A coin of Seleucus from Failaka in Kuwait, minted at Susa in Iran (Figs. 2-3), illustrates the prototype well. The obverse shows a head of Heracles wearing the pelt of the Nemean lion, while the reverse shows a seated figure of Zeus, his left arm curled around a staff, his right arm outstretched, supporting an eagle on the palm of his hand. The legend which runs vertically down the right side of the reverse is usually the name of the king who minted the coin, as in the present case where we find the name Seleucus written in Greek. In many instances, however, the name of Alexander was slavishly if not always very accurately copied, again in Greek, even on coins issued by Arabian kings. In still other cases, the name of a local king appears in either the local, Hasaitic dialect which used the South Arabian script, or, later in time, in Aramaic.

The use of the Hasaitic dialect, otherwise best known from funerary inscriptions found at Thaj and other sites, is seen on the coinage of a king named Abyatha. A silver tetradrachm (Figs. 4-5) from Thaj weighing 16.71 g. shows a particularly fine portrait of Heracles on the obverse, while the seated figure is shown, not with an eagle, but with what looks like a reed (or pipe?) between the thumb and forefinger. The vertical legend gives the name of Abyatha, while a partially obscured monogram, the south Arabian letter *alif*, appears in front of the seated figure's legs. A silver drachm of Abyatha from Jabal Kenzan, weighing c. 3.5 g. (Figs. 6-7), shows the monogram more clearly.

A small number of east Arabian coins shows a different sort of head on the obverse. A silver obol from Jabal Kenzan (Figs 8-9), weighing only about 1 g., shows what is clearly a diademed head with long locks of hair, clearly modelled on the coinage of one of the Seleucid emperors. The reverse, moreover, differs from the coins of Abyatha. Not only does the legend consist of a fragment of the name of Alexander in Greek, but in place of the monogram in front of the seated figure's knees is a word in

South Arabian characters, S²MS¹, which is the name of the Shams, the pre-Islamic east Arabian sun god. The legend is only partly legible on the example shown, and indeed very few coins show the full legend. Much more often we find just the first letter of Shams' name, the South Arabian letter *shin*. The presence of Shams or the first letter of his name suggests that, in eastern Arabia, the image of the Greek god Zeus was assimilated with the local solar deity who shared many of his attributes.



Four silver obols with debased heads of Heracles on the obverse show, on the reverse, the letter *shin* lying horizontally, and therefore resembling a W (Figs. 10-11). It is far more common, however, to find the *shin* shown vertically, not only on silver issues (Figs. 12-13) but on hundreds of debased copper/bronze issues, as well. The coppor/bronze issues, all of which have a blank obverse, provide a fascinating record of the progressive debasement and abstraction of the seated reverse figure on the east Arabian issues. As we look at Figs. 14 and 15 we see that the realistic, modelled form of the silver issues has yielded to a stick figure with straight torso and legs, bent arms, and dots used as filler motives. In both cases, however, the vertical *shin* is still very visible. Once the arms are made horizontal, i.e. perfectly perpendicular to the vertical torso (Fig. 16), we find that the lines of the limbs, body, and throne take on the role of dividers which transform the reverse of the coin into an abstract, geometric scene (Figs. 17-18). It is only by knowing what the original prototypes of this coinage looked like, and with their faithful renditions of a seated Zeus, that the more abstract issues can be recognized as variants of a coinage which ultimately owes its existence to the Alexandrian model.





Top: A coin of Seleucus II from Failaka in Kuwait and minted in Susa, Iran. Middle: A silver tetradrachm from Thaj weighing 16.71g. Above and opposite page: Realistic, modelled form has yielded to a stick figure with straight torso and legs, bent arms and dots used as filler motifs.

There is a great variety in east Arabian coinage, as a closer look at some of the obverse portraits on the smaller silver denominations shows (Fig. 19). Moreover, there are small numbers of variant issues which show quite different iconography to the mass of the material found to date. For example, a handful of silver drachms shows, on the obverse, the head of Heracles, while the reverse shows a small figure of Nike presenting a wreath to the seated Zeus (Fig. 20). Still others show, on the obverse, a debased head of Apollo with barely recognizable features, while the reverse depicts a solitary bird, probably an eagle, accompanied by a vertical *shin* (Fig. 21).

Other variants exist, both in the Eastern Province and in the United Arab Emirates where important coin finds have been made at the sites of ed-Dur and Mleiha. Generally speaking, however, northeast Arabian coinage did not circulate widely. With the exception of the coins found in the U.A.E. several clearly northeast Arabian issues have appeared at Qaryat al-Fau in south-central Saudi Arabia; on Bahrain; on Failaka (Kuwait); at Susa in Iran; and at Gordion and Mektepini in Turkey.

The meaning of the iconography of these coins will continue to generate debate for years to come. Does the obverse head of Heracles which, even in his own lifetime, came to be identified with Alexander, represent the king who minted a particular issue? Does the seated figure on the reverse, whom we have called Zeus, represent the Arabian deity Shams or, when the *shin* is absent, another member of the pre-Islamic Arabian pantheon? How many mints issued this great variety of coins?

What is perhaps the most important to recognize is the fact, in the ancient world, the minting of coinage was largely the prerogative of the king. The very existence of mints is an indication of a sophisticated economy, and the multiplicity of issues would seem to suggest that numerous smaller kingdoms may have existed throughout the region. We have already mentioned the fame of Gerrha's wealth, and sites like Thaj attest to the presence of a large and

sophisticated population in northeastern Arabia at the time of Alexander. Ptolemy's map of Arabia records the names of many an east Arabian city and tribe, and it is not unlikely that the more powerful cities and tribal groups in late pre-Islamic times, equipped with silver and copper from the montane regions of the peninsula, issued the coins we have been discussing here.

When eastern Arabia fell under the sway of the Sasanians and their Lakhmid vassals, the minting of indigenous coinage was no doubt stopped, which accounts for why the early Islamic writers knew nothing of the indigenous issue of the region. Archaeological research has brought to life this important chapter in the numismatic history of Arabia, and opened up an entire new field of numismatic research.



Notes

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6 Potts, D.T. The Parthian Presence in the Arabian Gulf. In: Reade, J.E. (ed.). *The Indian Ocean in Antiquity*. London: British Museum Publications, in press, for both Elymaean and Parthian coins from the region.

7 Morris, R.W. An eighth century hoard from Eastern Saudi Arabia. *Arabian Archaeology & Epigraphy* 5 (1994): 70-79; Potts, D.T and Cribb, J. Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian Coins from Eatern Arabia. *Iranica Antiqua*: in press.

Prof Daniel Potts is Professor of Middle Eastern Archaeology, University of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

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The Historic Legacy of Saudi Arabia

Abdullah H Masry

It is no secret that we do not possess an adequate understanding of the depth and breadth of Arabian antiquity comparable to our knowledge of the other ancient regions in the Middle East, such as, for example, Egypt, the Levant, Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) and Iran. Until quite recently, one could not sketch even the barest outline of chronology for the pre-Islamic history of Greater Arabia. The exception to this perhaps is southwestern Arabia, sometimes known as "Arabia Felix", where archaeological and epigraphical researches undertaken since the early part of this century have contributed to the emergence of a fairly well-defined chronological sequence stretching back to the second millennium B.C. There were also sporadic investigations in various parts of Arabia during the early decades of this century and one may consult the historical accounts of numerous western travellers-explorers which provide some useful, if too often unsystematized, information on aspects of Greater Arabia's antiquity.

There exists an extensive literature on pre-Islamic history from Arabic sources. Al-Hamdhani, al-Istakhri and al-Tabari were among the leading early Muslim geographer-historians who were deeply interested in recording and analyzing evidences of ancient settlements in Arabia. Among contemporary historians one many single out al-Ansari and al-Jassir as particularly original and thorough in their approaches to the early history and epigraphy of Arabia. Their findings are disseminated in their respective scholarly publications al-Manhal and al-Arab.

The recent advent of systematic and controlled investigations in Arabian antiquities, particularly in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, has brought to light new and important information on the Peninsula's history which must be integrated with previously known information in order to construct a historical chronology that includes the Age of Islam in Greater Arabia. Here I prefer to deal with the Islamic and immediately preceding epoch.

First Millennium: Early Arabian States

The first millennium B.C. was a very complex period in early Arabian history both in terms of the intensity of external cultural influence and the rapid internal developments of "state" entities. When the millennium came to a close one end of Arabia was already partially Hellenized and the other apprehensively awaited the onslaught of Roman expansion.

First , where as settled life remained a very reduced version of what it was a millennium earlier, significant cultural influences, through a local dialogue with nuclear Mesopotamia and later Persia, continued unabated, Furthermore, literary evidence from Mesopotamia leads us to suspect that sizeable movements of largely nomadic populations (ie.Arameans, Chaldeans and Arabs) from this part were coming into frequent and sometimes disruptive contact with the frontiers of settled life along the alluvium. Indeed, it was in one of the Assyrian annals, dated to the middle of the ninth century BC., that we first encounter a mention of the Arab nomads who engaged the imperial army of Assur in one of the many clashes that punctuated the history of the period. The pattern usually ended with Assyrian regulars pushing the nomads back to the oblivion of the vast north Arabian deserts, but the latter would within a short interval resume their swift attack upon the frontiers of the imperial domain.

The evidence of external cultural influences upon the few settlements that continued to thrive along the Gulf ranges from Assyrin, Babylonian, Achemenid and later Parthian periods; ie., from the ninth to the second centuries B.C. It was in the period of the Seleucids, successors to Alexander the Great who reportedly had dreamed of conquering Arabia, that the east once again witnessed a sizeable increase in settlements. The famed emporium of Gerrha (al-Jarha), still to be accurately located along the Saudi Arabia coast, belongs to this era of expansion. Other Seleucid-influenced cities and many smaller setlements dot the length of the Gulf coast; some are even located far in the interior. The most prominent of the latter is the large, massively walled city of Thaj, some 100km inland from the coast. The interior location is significant in terms of the trade that criss-crossed the Peninsula in a southwest-northwest direction ending in southern Mesopotamia. Along the southwesterly expansion from Thaj, there thrived many trading towns such as al-Faw and Najran during the same period.

The Seleucid influence in the east lasted well into the third century AD and was succeeded by the Sassanian. Settlement growth continued during this period virtually to the beginning of Islam.

In central and northern Arabia, the first millennium BC witnessed an accelerated growth of the walled-town centers which saw their beginning in the previous millennium. The towns were now engaged in multiple networks of trade and cultural interactions with South Arabia on the one hand and the combined Mesopotamian and Levant regimes on the other, which were under the successive rules of the Assyrian, Chaldean and Achemenid empires.

New town centres also appeared . The settlement of Ha'il or "Arre Kome" in latter Greek sources located in the central Jabal Shammar area is a good example of this later development. The other towns along the Wadi'l Sirhan (dubbed later the Gateway of Arabia) as, for example, al-Jawf, were also expanding at a great pace and by the middle of the millennium came to control the whole area of central and northern Arabia, thus making the earliest recorded appearance of an independent Arabian state.

At the same time similar developments of unified entities were also occuring in the Najd plateau along the Tuwayq escarpment Wadi'l Dawasir system leading into the highlands of the southwest. The famed Kingdom of Kinda, centred perhaps at the trading town of al-Fau, was the earliest identifiable politico-cultural component of the Arabian heartland. The site of Faw itself has been recently excavated by Dr. Abdul Rahman Ansari of the University of Riyadh. The results confirmed a succession of setlements starting in the mid-millennium and lasting until pre-Islamic times. The recovered artifacts indicated strong links with Parthian, Hellenistic, and Sassanian in addition to the nearby Arabian cultures.

The hegemony of the Kingdom of Kinda could have also included the well-known trading towns of Najran and Jarash which appeared at about this time and provided the direct link between South Arabia and the rest of the Penninsula. Located along the lower eastern slopes of the fertile Asir highlands at the pivotal juncture of the major trade routes to the north and northeast, these town centres figured prominently in the historic contacts between the land of Sheba and Palestine. It is quite possible that their surrounding highland region represents the land of Ophir, famous for its timber, silver, spices and gold during the time of Solomon (ca. 1000 B.C.) The Romans under Aclius Gallus invaded Najran in the second century AD, seeking to control the trading system. However, the attempt failed.

It was in northwestern Arabia or the land of Midian, that the most significant developments of the first millennium BC took place. As we observed above, the previous millennium saw the rise of several important town settlements located along the eastern slopes of the Hijaz mountains. By the middle of the first millennium they had become sizeable and had acquired access to the Red Sea through numerous coastal settlements scattered along its shores from the latitude of modern Jeddah up to the Gulf of Aqaba. Those centres began to be assimilated and unified under a succession of trading states already in the first half of the millennium. Thus, the Dedanite kingdom centred at modern al-Ula was followed by the Lihyanite. Paralleling these localized state developments was the expansion of the South Arabian states. Hence, we have Minaean and Sabasean influence widely spread throughout Midian. The states of this region also extended their domain into the interior of central north Arabia and sometimes controlled the Wadi'l Sirhan settlements.

Perhaps the most illustrious example of all the northwestern setlements was that of Tayma, the chief reason being its association with Nabonidus, the last king of the New-Babylonian Empire which collapsed by the middle of the sixth century B.c. as a result of the Achemenid invasion. The story of Nabonidus' flight is well recorded in history thanks to the inscription found in Harran, Turkey. The details of Nabonidus' retreat from Babylon, including his ten year sojourn in northwestern Arabia, principally at Tayma, are clearly set forth in that important document.We learn much about the then thriving towns of the region; e.g., Adumatu (modern Jawf), Yathribu (modern Medina) and a host of others , as yet unidentified in the archaeological record. Future investigations at Tayma, itself a site of considerable dimensions, should throw significant light on the history of this region during the first millennium.

By the closing centuries of the millennium there appeared in northwestern Arabia a dominant unifying force represented by the Nabataean Kingdom which supplanted the earlier successive states. The magnificence of their culture and achievements is echoed in the monuments they left behind at Petra in Jordan and Madain Salih in Saudi Arabia.

Their language and writing styles are the most direct predecessor of the modern Arabic and are in most instances referred to as Early Arabic. The domain of the Nabataean, a state based on the control of trade, has been traditionally recognized as extending from the Syrian Desert and Jordan Valley to northwestern Arabia. Recent discoveries have established their dominion also in the interior Wadi'l Sirhan and Jawf settlements.

The Nabataean Kingdom fell victim to Roman expansion and was subsequently liquidated by the second century AD. Its historic trade was diverted to North Africa. The eclipse of the Nabataean signalled the end of the independent early Arabian state-system and the beginning of rivalries over the control of the Peninsula between the great empires of Byzantium and Persia.

Imperial Conflicts over Arabia: 200-632 AD

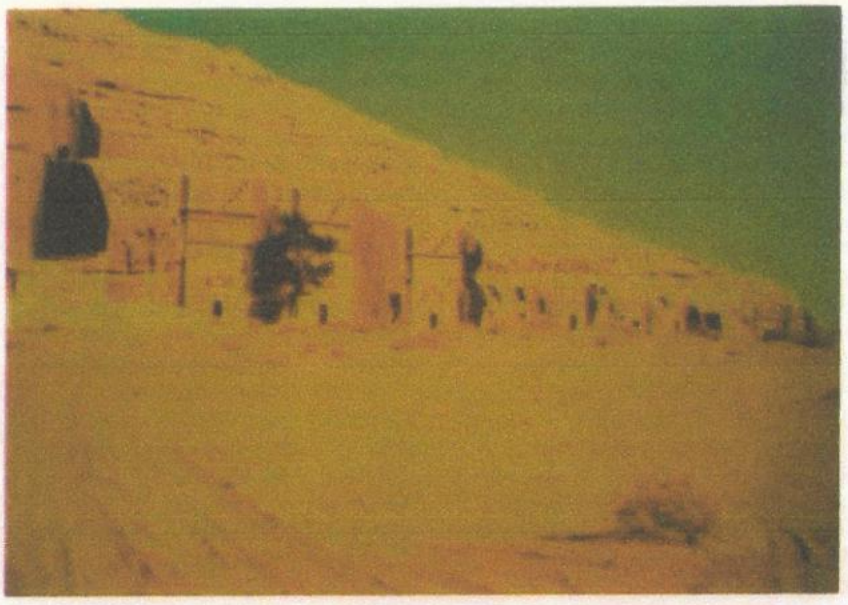
Much of the history of northern Arabia, and to a lesser extent elsewhere, during the early Christian centuries up to the emergence of Islam was reflected in the fierce struggle between the eastern and western empires over the control of trade in Arabia. There were successive Arabian vassal states which attached and frequently switched their allegiance to either of the two dominant powers. The case of the Ghassanids in the northwest and that of the Lakhmids in the northeast are prime examples. As a result, the history of this period is very confused and is ironically much less understood than the previous era of independent states.

Eastern and southern Arabia fell under Sassanid suzerainty during this period until the Islamic conquest. The east, particularly, as observed above, achieved a remarkable revival of settlement growth. Many substantial sites of this period were found along the Gulf coast and in the interior.

The known archaeological sites of this period in central and southwestern Saudi Arabia are very few. The settlement of Fau existed only until the fourth century AD. The center of Najran collapsed well before the rise of Islam. A few seaport sites along the Red Sea are known from this period; e.g., al-Jar (modern Riys) and al-Is (modern Yanbu). However, these too appear to have terminated before Islam.

During this period in Arabia's history, the pattern of growth in town centers and other settlements shows a decisive decline. Undoubtedly, this

Clockwise from right, 1: Madain Saleh (Al-Hijr) southern capital of the Nabataeans ca. 100 AD. **2:** Al Masmak fort in Riyadh before restoration. The conquest of this citadel-like structure in 1901 signalled the beginning of the 3rd and contemporary Saudi dynasty. **3:** The modern fort of Al Murabba – the residential and official palace of the founder of the 3rd Saudi dynasty – King Abdulaziz Ibn Saud. (built ca 1940). **4&5:** A precious stone stamp seal and a golden stamp ring from the relics found in a pre-Islamic settlement near the modern city of Dhahran in the Eastern Province. **6:** Jewellery, painted pottery and other assorted artifacts from Taima, the famous Arabian spiritual center since 600 BC.





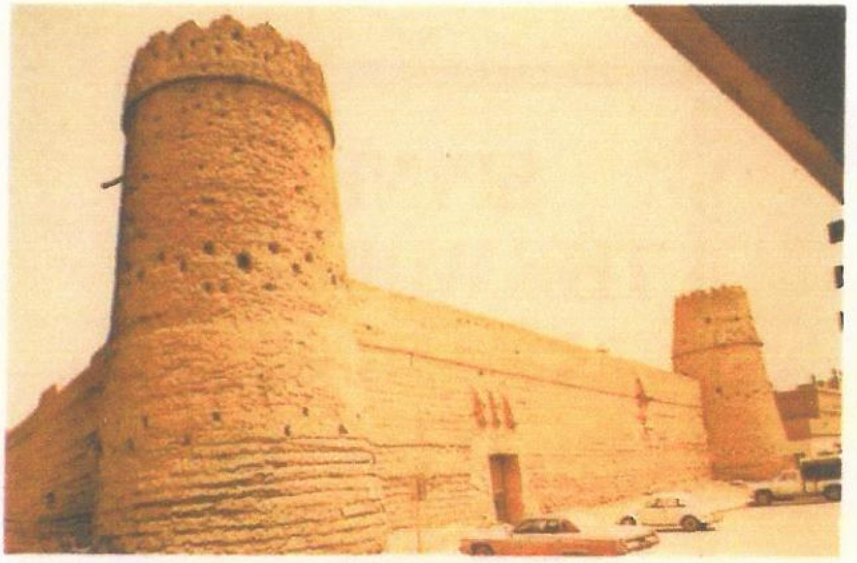


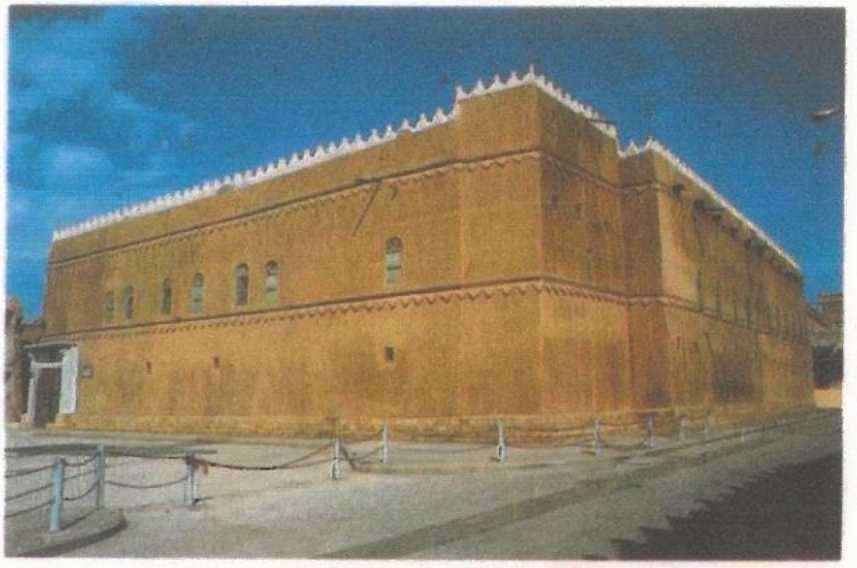
was partly due to the confusion and chaos that befell trade as a result of the enduring conflict between the declining great empires. Furthermore, traditional explanations frequently associate this decline with the recession of the incense trade in the Christian markets of the western empires. However, this may have been only a secondary factor. A more plausible primary cause could well have been a slight climatic change which could have produced devasting effects upon town growth in the context of an ever precarious ecological balance attending Arabian settlements and which might have led to sizeable dispersion. Unfortunately, the state of our knowledge of climatic history for this period is not much better than for the earlier or later ones. In fact, it is most impoverished.

The Age of Islam

From a purely geopolitical point of view, the rise of Islam represents the most significant juncture in the history of the Arabian Peninsula. Within barely a decade of its consolidation in Medina, the nascent Islamic state was able to accomplish the unique feat of assimilating the various segments of the Peninsula that had been for millennia entangled in the orbits of divergent external cultures. Without a deep appreciation of the segmentary pattern of ancient Arabian history, as I have attempted to outline it above, one would not readily perceive the impact of Islam from this angle of consideration.

Islamic archaeology in Arabia has long suffered a distinct disadvantage resulting from the analytical deductions propagated by historians of the Empire. The prevalent view is that beyond the initial stage of the formation of the Islamic state, Arabia came to play an increasingly minor







role in the epoch-making and subsequent processes of expansion and achievements of the subsequent Golden Age. Once the center of gravity had shifted from the Peninsula to the Levant and later to Iraq, the former became merely a backwater region throughout the various stages of global Islamic history.

This assessment, while it might be partially true from a glossy generalized political view, does not even narrowly reflect the new growing record of material evidence for extensive growth and achievements in Arabia during the early and middle Islamic ages.

In general, the evidence indicates the re-emergence and expanded growth of many formerly renowned town centres throughout the Peninsula. Furthermore, new urban settlements were created especially during Umayyad and Abbassid times (e.g. Samira, Sadriya in the Najd).

Particularly in eastern Arabia, hundreds of early Islamic sites were found and the majority are of substantial size. In fact, the traditional oases settlements of al-Hasa and Qatif appear to have achieved their greatest settlement density during this early period.

In the southwest, many new settlements were founded around the ancient gold mining areas in the highlands. Presumably, substantial amounts of gold were mined and shipped to the minting towns of Wasit in Iraq and Ray in Iran.

Along the western coastline many new towns were established near the earlier pre-Islamic sites. Moreover, along the western pilgrimage route from Egypt and the Levant there appeared a great number of settlements - some supplanting the earlier towns of the ancient trade while others were newly founded.

The most spectacular development during the Islamic Age in Arabia, however, took place in connection with the caravan link between the Holy Places and Iraq. Along a stretch of road nearly a thousand miles long - later known as the Darb Zubayda - the late Umayyads and early Abbassids undertook a gigantic work project for the benefit of the pilgrimage caravans. Over seventy stations were built at intervals of no more than twenty five miles apart between Kufa in Iraq and Makkah. The water reservoirs and pools erected at each

of the stations reflect the highest engineering achievements of the age. In addition, palaces, large public buildings or "caravanserai" as well as smaller service units were established at each station. Since the road at its northwestern end traversed the barren, treacherous Nafud Desert, large sections were paved with flagstones, presumably for the benefit of donkeys providing the main transport of provisions but which do not travel easily over sandy tracts. Accurate milestone were posted at each station indicating the distance to and from Kufa or Makkah.

Near the Makkan end, the road went through heavily settled communities where complex and grandiose architectural monuments were erected. In one such setlement, an Ummayyad palace with stucco decoration was discovered.

The decline and fragmentation that the Islamic Empire underwent at the end of the middle and throughout the late ages was also felt in the Peninsula. Various independent hegemonies were created within the Peninsula with partial Ottoman control. The Peninsula was not united again until the coming of the present Saudi State, And once more, this was achieved only through the ideational system - the purity of the faith.

Dr Abdullah H Masry is Executive Director of MBC (Middle East Broadcasting Centre) in London.

Pre-Islamic Antiquities in Saudi Arabia
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of the deceased persons and their genealogical information about the person's descent, official designation he held etc. The Hasaitic were labelled after their first discovery at al-Hasa, in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi Arabian Antiquities are so innumerable that it is beyond the scope of this article to mention them all. I have tried to just highlight them in outline to show their richness, vastness and the great potentiality they possess as national treasures for historians, archaeologists, and tourists as well.

Prof Abdul Rahman Al-Ansary is the author of *Qaryat al-Faw: A Portrait of Pre-Islamic Civilisation in Saudi Arabia*, and a member of the Saudi Consultative Council.

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The Development of Archaeology in Saudi Arabia

GRD King

Like so much else in modern Saudi Arabia, archaeology developed to a very large extent in the 1970s with the establishment of a national Department of Antiquities, the teaching of archaeology in the university system and the inception of well-funded research projects. In earlier decades, archaeological sites had been noted but insecurity and the inaccessibility of many areas had meant that archaeological research had been sporadic. However, significant scholarly work over the previous hundred years or so laid the foundations on which more recent archaeological fieldwork has developed: indeed, some of this early archaeology still remains of key importance.

Among the most significant early archaeological research was the study of the great Nabataean monuments at Madain Salih in the northern Hijaz, carried out by the Franciscan fathers, A. Jaussen and F. Savignac in 1907 and 1909. They transcribed numerous inscriptions and their description of the architecture has still not been bettered. Alois Musil also travelled extensively in the northern regions of the Peninsula in the years before World War 1 and his work on the northern Hijaz, Dumal al-Jandal and the Wadi Sirhan remains as useful today for the archaeological study of these regions of northern Saudi Arabia as his fieldwork further north in Jordan and Syria.

Epigraphic studies have always constituted a principal part of the research carried out on Saudi Arabian archaeology, and this is true for both the pre-Islamic and the Islamic period. Epigraphic material is especially concentrated in the centre, the west and the south-west where rock formations tend to be appropriate for incising inscriptions. Furthermore, ancient Arabia was remarkable for its literacy: the strong concern with the Arabic script that is central to Islamic art has its counterpart in pre-Islamic times in epigraphic south Arabian, Lihyanite, Thamudic, Safaitic and Nabataean, all scripts that are found in different parts of Saudi Arabia. One of the most important early studies of pre-Islamic epigraphy was undertaken in 1870 by Joseph Halevy at Ukhdud in the Najran oasis, where the cataloguing of inscriptions was to continue very sporadically over the course of the following century. H. St J. Philby collected more Najran inscriptions and he acted as guide to the epigraphist G. Ryckmans who came to Saudi Arabia to carry out field-work in 1951-2 in Najran and the south-west in more secure conditions than Halevy had enjoyed.

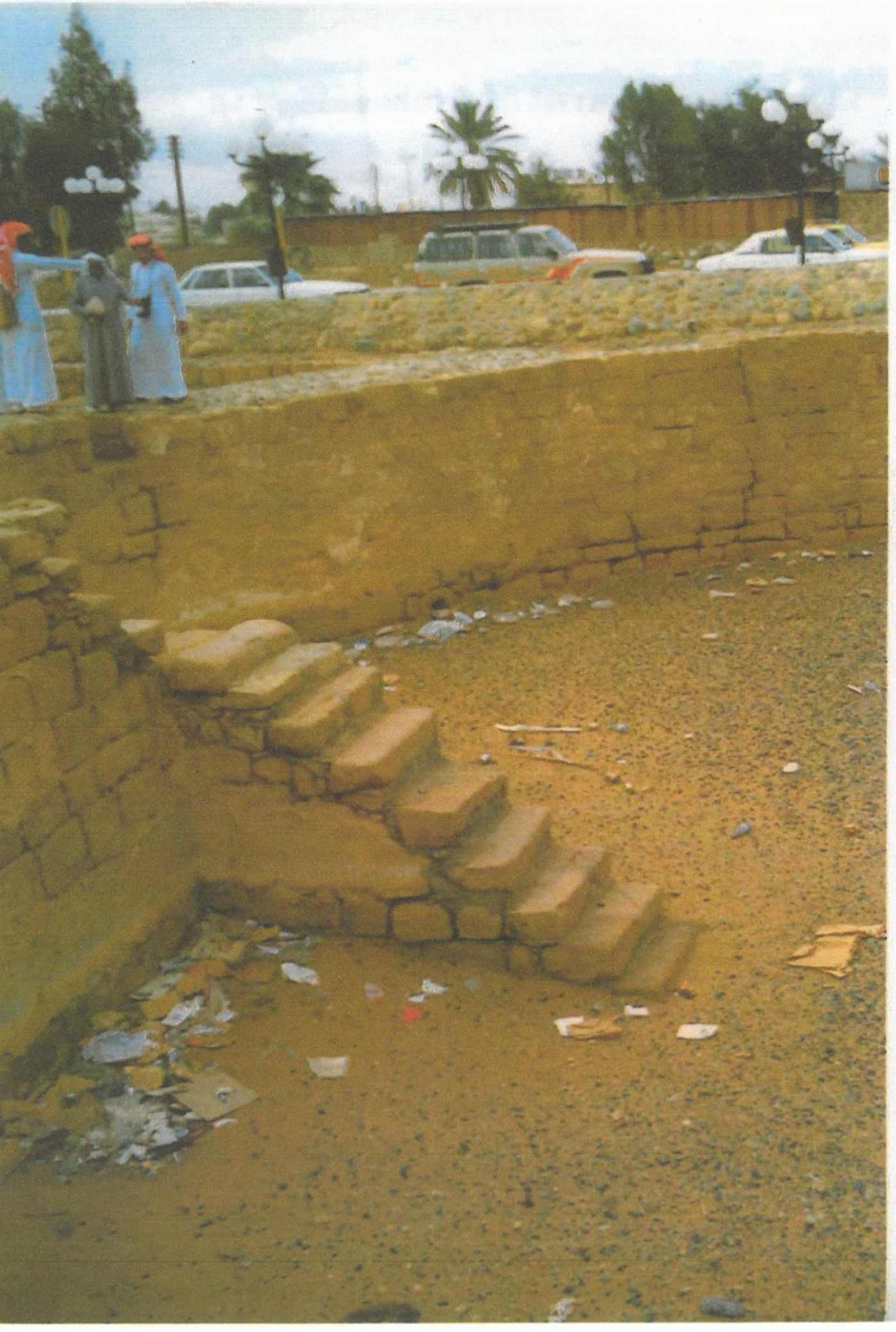
Another significant epigraphic study was carried by F. Winnett and W. Reed in 1962 in northern and north-western Arabia, recording the pre-Islamic inscriptions in the region of al-Jawf, Tayma' and other areas, and their account of their expedition remains yet another study that has not been superceded.

Three visits were made to eastern Saudi Arabia betwen 1962 and 1965 by a Danish archaeological expedition led by T.G. Bibby, which was already working elsewhere in the Gulf. Bibby and his colleagues undertook investigations at the important eastern sites of al-Thaj and al-Uqayr. Al-Thaj was a major fortified Hellenistic site and it has been suggested that it should be identified with the Gerrha of the Classical sources. Bibby also suggested that the large site at al-Uqayr on the coast is of Islamic date. If so, it appears to coincide with the port mentioned by early Arab geographers as one of the principal towns of the Gulf coast in the Islamic period.

An expedition to north-west Arabia by P.J. Parr, G. Lankester Harding and J. Dayton in 1968 marks the eve of the inception of sustained field archaeology in Saudi Arabia. Parr and Harding had extensive experience of the archaeology and epigraphy of Jordan and Palestine and the north-west of Saudi Arabia constitutes the southern continuation of these areas archaeologically; it also contains some of the most important sites in the country. The survey report that emerged from the expedition by Parr and his colleagues remains a major contribution to Saudi Arabian archaeology. Sites examined included Tayma and its neighbourhood, al-Ula, and Madain Salih. Their account of al-Bida and Mughayir al-Shuayb in Midyan is especially important, recording the Nabataean tombs there and the large *tells* whose range of occupation extended down to the mediaeval Islamic period. This area was always important because of its postion on the caravan route from southern Palestine and Egypt. Even at the time of writing , the 1968 expedition report by Parr *et al*, remains the principal study on the area.

In these early years, two Saudi scholars stand out as contributors to archaeology in the country. Hamid al-Jasir explored many areas of Saudi Arabia and described the antiquities that he found, especially in the north, the north-west and the south-west. Likewise, Abd al-Quddus al-Ansari wrote a great deal on the antiquities of the country, especially those of the Hijaz and al-Madina. Their publications in Arabic served to encourage Saudi nationals to take an interest in the antiquities and archaeology of the country, and their books and their writings in local scholarly journals are outstanding for their pioneering nature in a period when few in Arabia were aware of the national archaeological heritage.

Apart from intermittent research by major explorers and scholars, much of the archaeological exploration undertaken in Saudi Arabia before the 1970s was amateur in character, carried out by foreign workers as a recreation. although some of this amateur interest was a mixed blessing, Saudi Arabia was changing rapidly with the development of the oil industry and





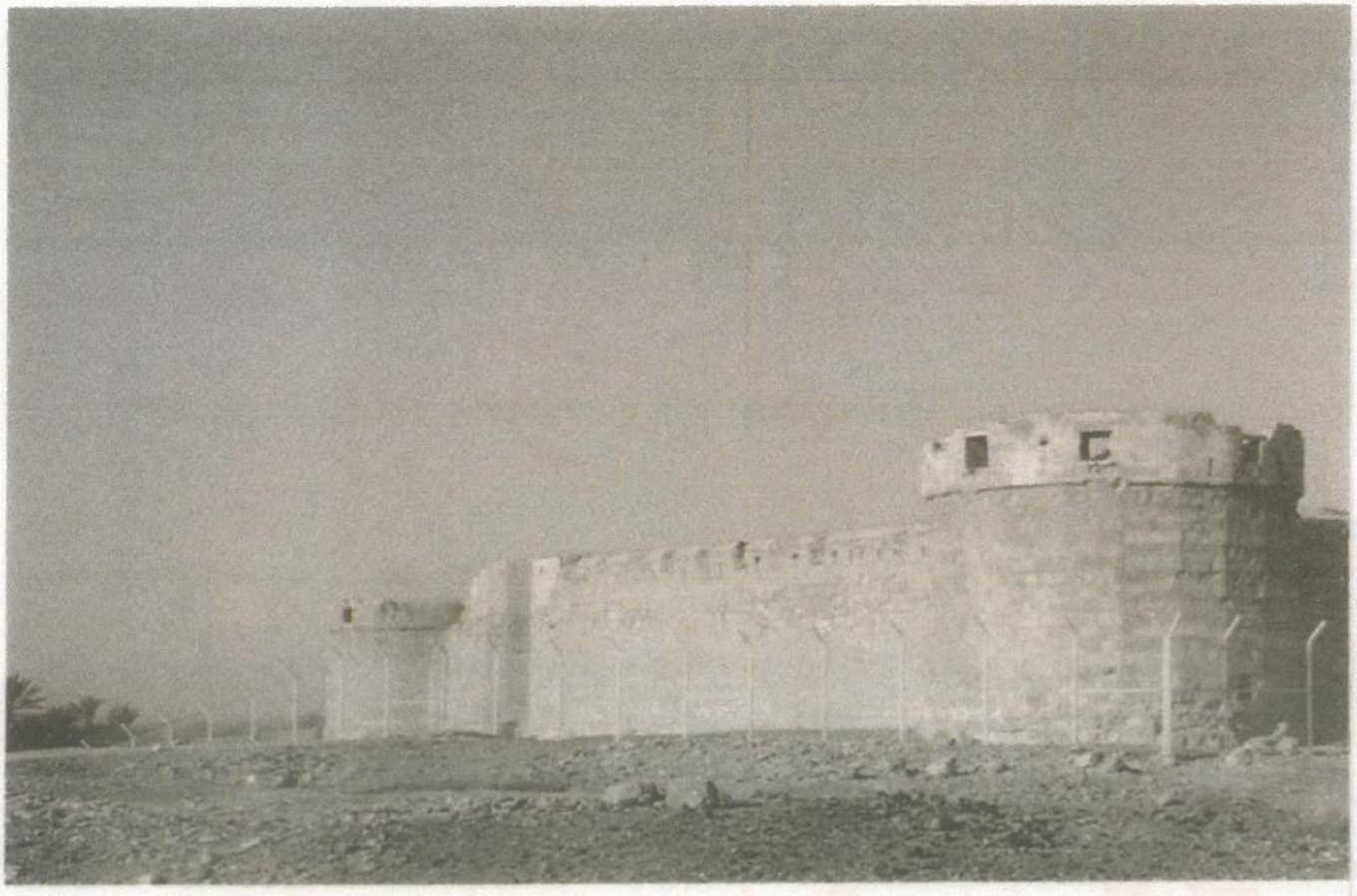
the expansion of agriculture, and certain archaeological sites which were threatened or are now lost were recorded as a result of these amateur efforts. Much of this interest was centred on the oil company, ARAMCO, and it had the long term beneficial effect of stimulating local interest in archaeology. ARAMCO was instrumental in providing facilities for scholars to study the country, including Bibby's Danish team. As early as 1951 the company had given the means to F.S. Vidal to produce the definitive study of the al-Hasa' oasis and its Islamic architecture, much of which has now vanished.

By the 1970s, an increasing appreciation emerged in Saudi Arabia of the archaeological heritage of the country. The establishment of a Department of Antiquities under the Ministry of Information gave the framework in which a far more formalized and methodical approach could be adopted for the study of the antiquities of Saudi Arabia, involving both Saudi nationals and foreign archaeologists. Furthermore, the University of Riyadh (now King Saud University) became deeply involved in the teaching of archaeology and fieldwork. The first important excavation by the University was at the pre-Islamic site of Qaryat al-Faw, where fieldwork began in 1971 and has continued ever since, under the direction of Professor A.R. al-Ansary. Many archaeology graduates from the University in subsequent years were to staff the Department of Antiquities, and both the University and the Department have sent individuals abroad for higher degrees, with their research based on fieldwork at Saudi Arabian archaeological sites.

In the course of the early 1970s, the Department of Antiquities conceived of an ambitious five year plan to carry out a country-wide survey of archaeological sites, region by region, spanning everything from the prehistoric period down through Islamic times. The first comprehensive field survey initiated by the Director of Antiquities, Dr Abdullah Masry, began its work in 1975, and included a number of scholars involved in Near Eastern and Arabian archaeology. This five year programme was completed with a final campaign in 1980, and as a result, a more coherent overall picture of Saudi Arabian archaeological sites , their distribution and their chronological range has emerged . The results of these surveys and other fieldwork has appeared in the national archaeological journal published by the Department of Antiquities, *Atlal*.

In the aftermath of the completion of the survey, a number of prominent sites were excavated. Already in 1979, P.J. Parr and M. Gazdar had carried out soundings at Zubayra (al-Amara) in al-Qasim on a Hellenistic site. In the same year, preliminary fieldwork was commenced by G. Bawden, C. Edens and R. Miller at the great pre-Islamic site of Tayma in the north-west, and thereafter, H. Abu Duruk carried out excavations at the site.

An important site in the south-west, al-Ukhdud, was investigated by Juris Zarins in 1982. The site is of particular interest as it plays so significant a role in the events surrounding the 6th C. AD invasion of south Arabia by the Monophysite Ethiopian Christians, who overthrew the Himyarite king, Dhu'l-Nuwas, a convert to Judaism. The site was already known to a degree from



Halevy's examination of its pre-Islamic epigraphy. Subsequent visits by Philby had made the pre-Islamic structures of al-Ukhdud and their architectural decoration familiar to scholars, underlining the character of pre-Islamic building and its quality of craftsmanship. The excavations demonstrated that Najran was also a significant settlement in the early Islamic period and beyond to post-1000 AD.

Other major studies by the Department of Antiquities have included a survey of the various Hajj roads that traverse Arabia to Makkah, and of special value has been the mapping and the description of sites along the course of Darb Zubayda, the pilgrim road running from al-Kufa in Iraq to Makkah. The main development of the road took place during the early Abbasid period with water-tanks, mosques and fortified structures being built at its way stations in reflection of the pious concern of the Caliphate to provide facilities for pilgrims making the arduous journey to the Hijaz.

In recent years, the field research programme of the Department of Antiquities and the Department of Archaeology and Museology at King Saud University have led to the publication of a plethora of archaeological studies. Many of these publications originated in the doctoral theses of Saudi scholars: Professor S A al-Rashid published the first major scholarly account of the Darb Zubayda in 1980, and other works have followed including Dr Abu Duruk's account of his Tayma excavations: an account of the antiquities of al-Ula by Dr A.A. Nasif; and an account of the Islamic sites and the later Islamic fortifications of the north-west by Dr Ali Hamed Ghabban. Other recent archaeological theses by Saudis have included studies of Dumat al-Jandal from the pre-Islamic times through to the Islamic period by Dr K. Muayqil and an account of the Hajj road from Yemen by Dr M Thunayyan. Other scholars, including Professor A al-Wohaibi, writing on the Arab geographers' accounts of the Hijaz and Dr Ahmad al-Zaylal, writing on the external relations of 10th-11th C. AD Makkah, have produced studies which are significant ancillary contributions to archaeological research. In 1977, a series of conferences was instituted at King Saud University on the Sources of the History of Arabia, which brought together international scholars involved in Arabian studies, including archaeologists. The second of these conferences dealt with Pre-Islamic Arabia, and the third covered the period of the Prophet Muhammad, and the papers presented were either published or in preparation.

Continuing archaeological fieldwork in recent years has included the long-term excavations at the al-Rabadha pilgrim station on Darb Zubyda, directed by Professor S A al-Rashid . These excavations were initiated in 1979, and have revealed not only a very significant early Abbasid town on the Hajj road, but also early finds including evidence of an Umayyad occupation. A joint project between King Saud University and the Institut fur Volkerkunde of the university of Vienna was undertaken in 1980-81: this was an ethnographic study of the Asir region which produced material relevant to the archaeology of this little studied

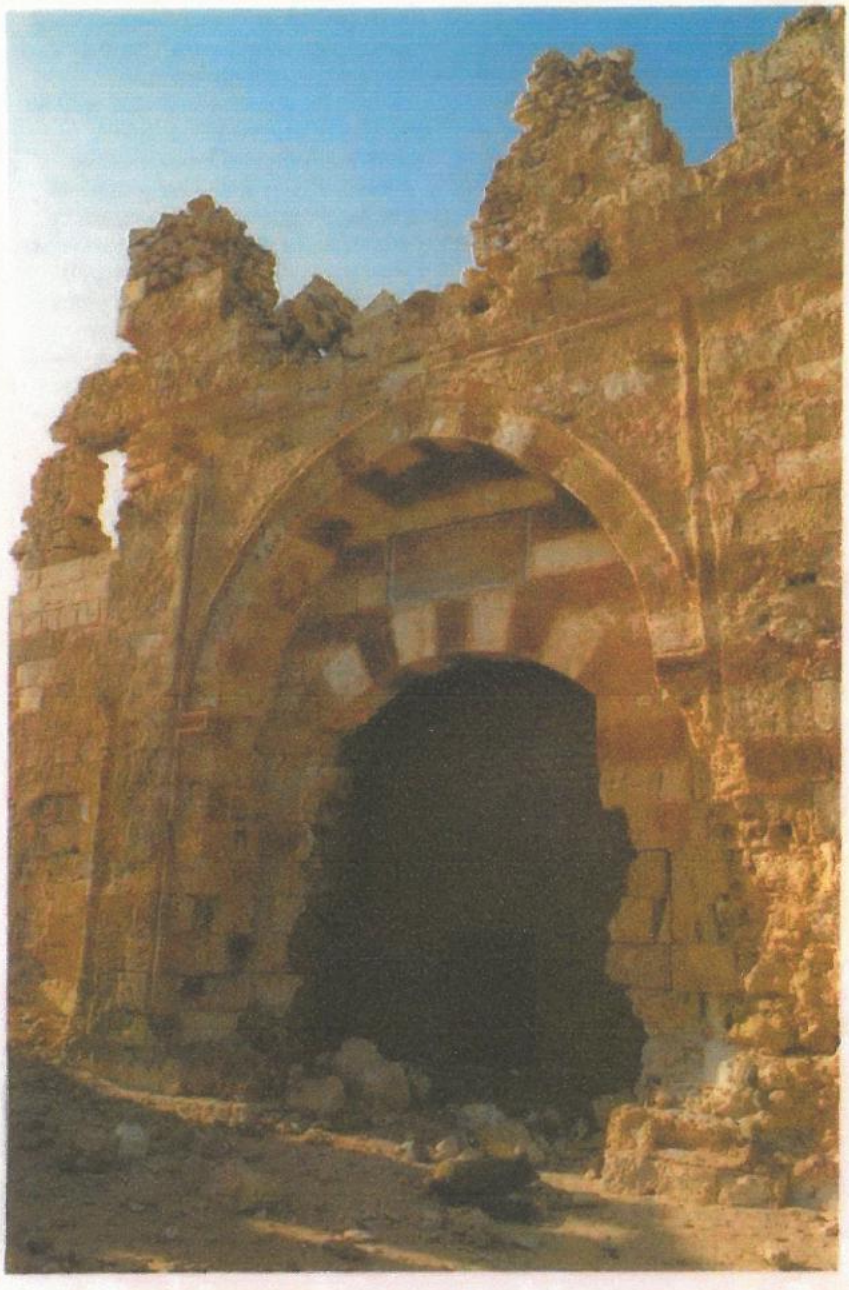
Below: Qalat Muwaylih (968 AH / 1561), an Ottoman hajj fortress on the northern Hijaz coast.

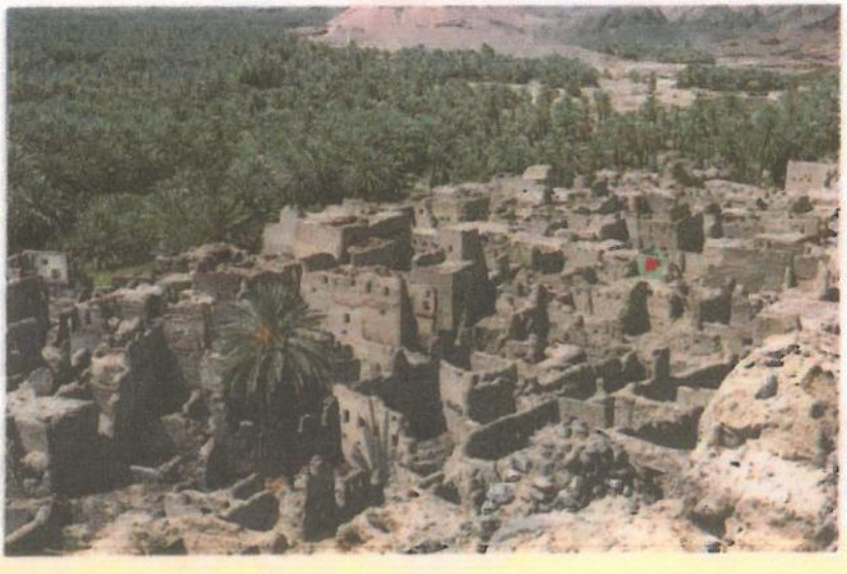


region , with the study directed by Professor A R al-Ansary and Prof. Dr W Dostal.

Like the Asir project, the development of archaeology in Saudi Arabia since 1970 has tended to be an international effort involving not only Saudi scholars but also non-Saudi nationals. Apart from the British and American archaeologists who participated in the comprehensive surveys and excavations of the Department of Antiquities, in both the Department and in King Saud University there has been a strong international element with Sudanese, Egyptian, Jordanian, Palestinian, Iraqi, Syrian and Indian scholars and experts contributing to surveys and excavations at both the academic and technical levels. Many archaeologists from outside the Kingdom have stayed for many years and given sustained contributions to research projects and to the training of Saudi archaeologists. These have included Dr Alastair Livingstone at the Department, and at King Saud University, Professor Abd al-Qadir Abdallah, Dr Wafiq Ghoneim, Dr Asim Barghouthi, Dr Yusuf al-Amin, Professor Ahmad Ghazal, and Dr Ghanim Woheida among numerous others.

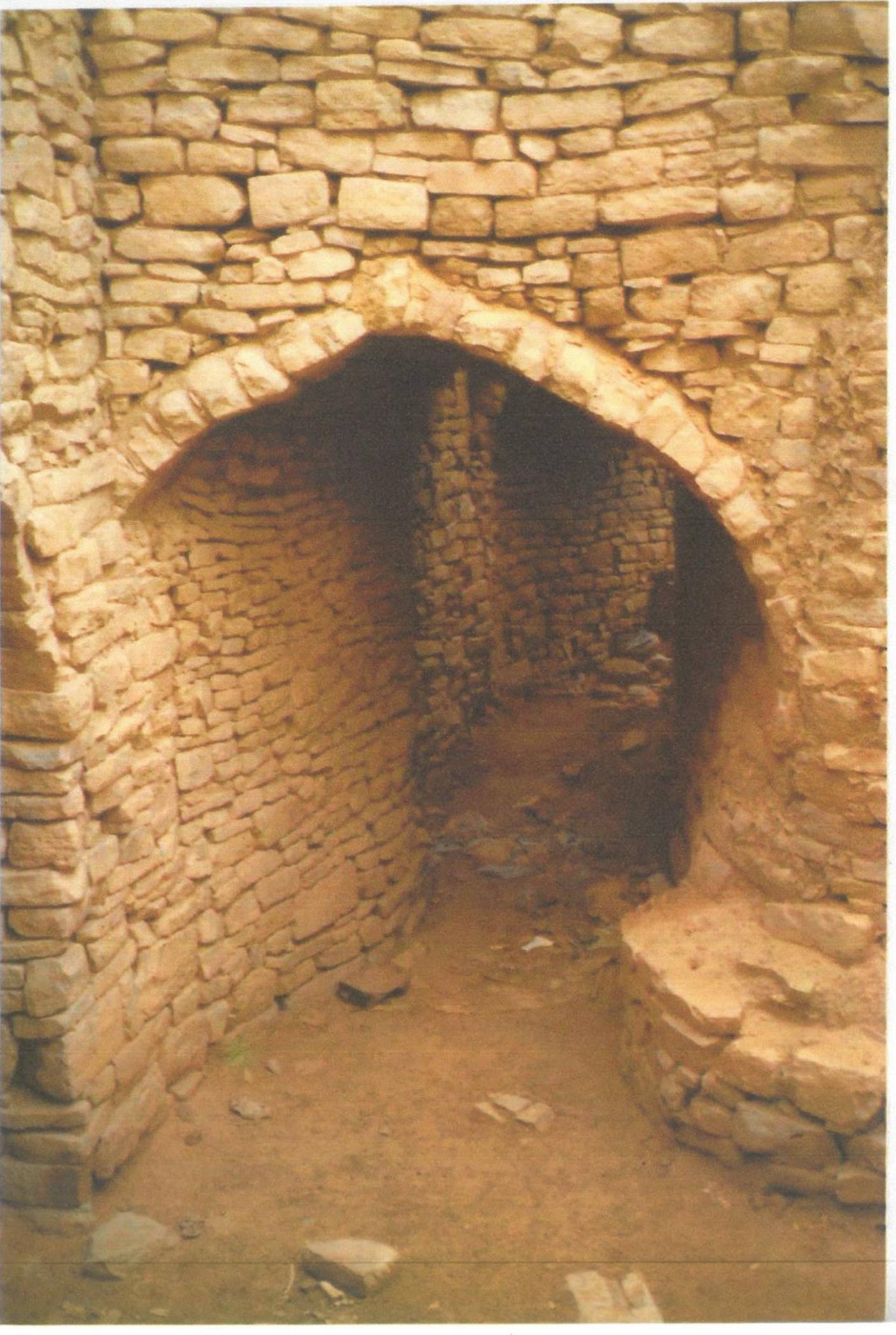
Finally, a summary of archaeological research to date has been written in recent years by Professor D T Potts, which deals with the Gulf generally, and includes an excellent account of discoveries to the date of publication (1990) in north-eastern and eastern Saudi Arabia.





Pages 50 and 51: Water tank of uncertain date at Tabuk, beside the Qalat.

Top right: The entrance of Qalat Muwaylih (968 AH/ 1560 - 1). **Right:** General view of the fortified hill top and lower town at al-Qurayyya, northern Hijaz. **Opposite page:** Arch over a roofed street in Dumat al-Jandal. Later Islamic.



The Arabian Peninsula and the Recovery of the Past

Michael Rice

Trade, Empire and the Early Days of Archaeology

It was the promotion of trade and empire which occasioned the presence of most Westerners in Middle Eastern lands; in Arabia's case, trade, in the form of the oil industry, ultimately predominated but the interests of empire were not wholly ignored. Ambivalent figures such as Hogarth are to be glimpsed in the Hejaz before the Great War, perhaps discharging an intelligence function as much as pursuing his scholarly interests. An intrepid pair of Belgian missionaries, Jaussen and Savignac, surveyed the extraordinary area of Mada'in Saleh in the far north-west of Arabia. Their handsome publication on the Nabataean tombs, the most notable feature of that region, is still current and must figure in every scholarly library concerned with the archaeology of Arabia.

T.E.Lawrence, an archaeologist by training and early orientation, pursued interests other than the purely archaeological when setting out on what was to become his historic role in Arabia. Before the Great War he had followed archaeological pursuits enthusiastically. W.F.Petrie, the dominant figure in British archaeology of the period who was in effect the founder of Egyptology as a modern discipline, tried to interest Lawrence in investigating the enigmatic remains on the island of Bahrain, a conjunction which, if it had happened, would have been interesting in its outcome. As it was, Lawrence was diverted onto other priorities, and, in the process, passed into the footnotes of history.

The northern reaches of Arabia had been penetrated by French and German scholars in the nineteenth century. From the great Arabian site of Taima was extracted an important inscription, now resting in the Musée du Louvre and known as 'The Taima Stone'. This is an inscription of the Babylonian King, Nabonidus who was, rather surprisingly, to move his capital from Babylon to north Arabia for approximately ten years, c. 553 BC. But this early enthusiasm for one of the most intractable and unfriendly landscapes on the surface of the earth was not followed up by later scholarly generations, until well into the present century.

It was different in the east, in the coastal regions bordering the Gulf and in the islands of the Gulf itself. A succession of well-equipped and perceptive scholars visited this part of Arabia, recorded their impressions and went on their ways. This indeed was the problem; it was not until the post-war period that planned and persistent expeditions were mounted over a period of years, a condition essential if any really fruitful work is to be done. Nonetheless Durand in 1878/9, the Bents in the '90's, Prideaux, a senior Indian Civil Service official in the early years of the century with a careful approach to excavation and recording, Mackay, sent in the 1920's by the same Petrie who had failed to persuade Lawrence in earlier years and, perhaps most notably, the young American scholar P.B.Cornwall, all spent time in Bahrain as well as the east Arabian coastal lands and noted the extraordinary density of ancient remains on the surface of the deserts.

E L Durand and the Bahrain Islands

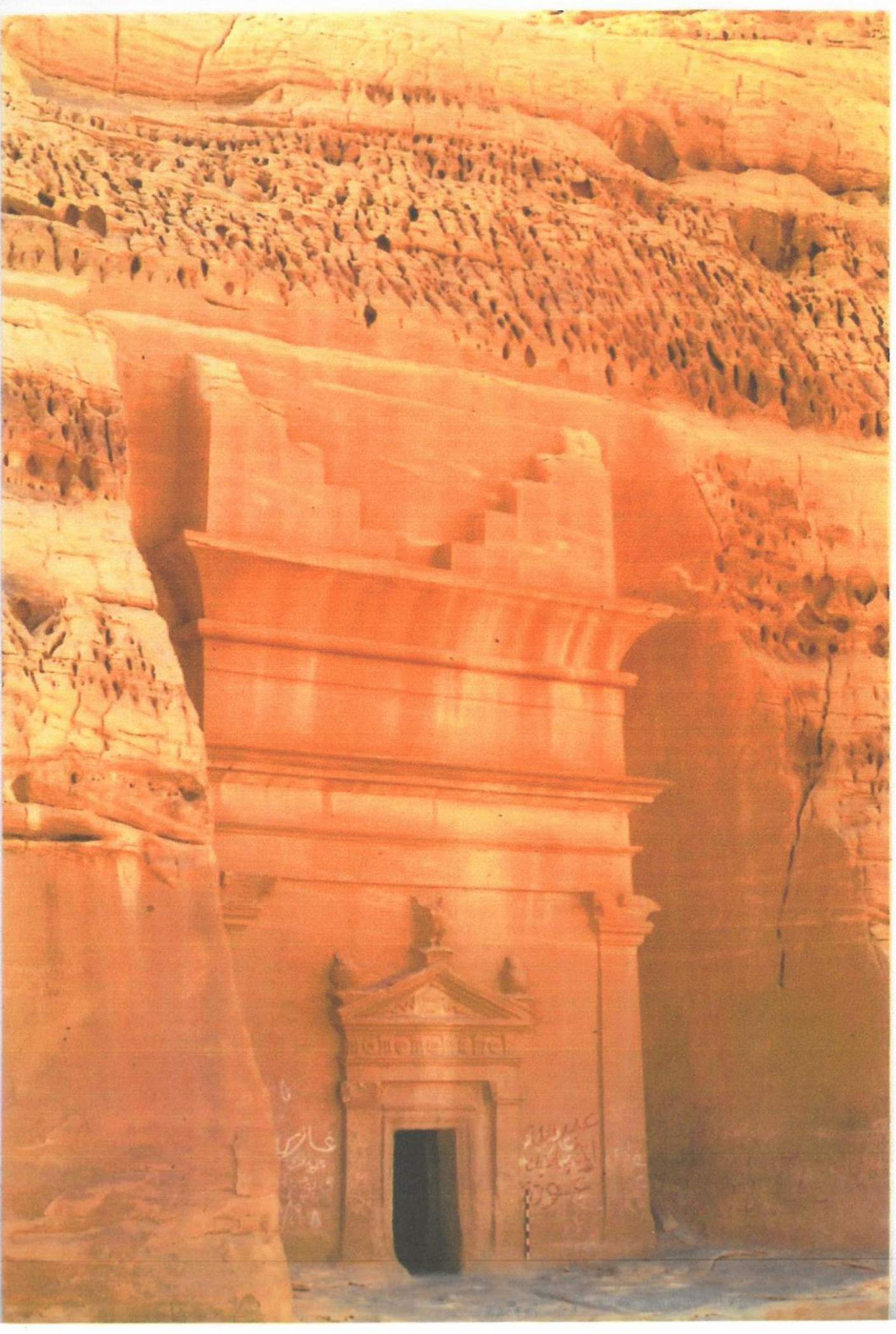
Of this list the first and last names are perhaps the most interesting. Captain E.L.Durand was an official in the service of the Government of India. He visited the Bahrain Islands in the early winter of 1878, staying into the following year. His report to the office of the Viceroy was the first modern survey of the antiquities of any part of the peninsula; the office of the Foreign Secretary to the Viceroy caused Durand's report, embellished with some charming drawings (for he was a talented artist) and an engaging, anecdotal style of writing, to be published. In the following year he delivered a lecture to the then Royal Asiatic Society (now the Royal Society for Asian Affairs) when, in a somewhat more straight-laced version of his report, he described his discoveries in Bahrain.

His report was reviewed by one of the most remarkable and talented men of his day, Major-General Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, a soldier and brilliant polymath who was one of those who recalled the existence of the Sumerians, forgotten for four thousand years, to history. Rawlinson, in an astonishing display of erudition lightly borne, set Durand's findings into a historical context, based particularly on his reading of an inscription which Durand had found and which, in Rawlinson's view, identified Bahrain as the land of Dilmun, the near-magical, archetypal Holy Land of Sumerian mythology and the centre of an important, very early mercantile empire.

Cornwall was a young American archaeologist who spent some time in Bahrain and eastern Arabia in the months immediately preceding the Second World War. His doctoral thesis, submitted to Harvard University in 1944 and entitled 'Dilmun – The History of the Bahrain Islands before Cyrus' was, until very recently, amongst the most comprehensive summaries of the textual reference to Dilmun in antiquity. He also wrote extensively on his visit to eastern Arabia, including the first survey of the coastal regions, and commented on various scholarly issues related to the antiquity of this part of the Gulf. Sadly he seems later to have abandoned this early interest, one which, in prospect, seemed likely to be particularly worthwhile, after the Second World War.

The Post-War Phase

Exploration for oil and other mineral resources was accelerated in Saudi Arabia after the end of the Second World War, which resulted in the reporting of more ancient sites:



scholars, particularly from America, began to hear of such reports and to speculate about what the peninsula might hold. Similarly, random 'finds' were reported from Bahrain and Kuwait, though these probably attracted less attention even than the admittedly slight interest which was shown in what was coming out of Saudi Arabia.

It was apparent, even at this early stage, that the Arabian Gulf and the eastern regions of Saudi Arabia were likely to yield the most profitable returns for the archaeologists. As a consequence most of the activity in the '50s, '60s and '70s was concentrated in this part of the peninsula. Though it was unbeknown to all but a relative few, this eastern quadrant of the peninsula and the inland sea which washes its harsh and inhospitable shores, had a profound influence on virtually everyone born in the western hemisphere in the past four thousand years or so.

The Arabian Gulf

The result of the work of the past archaeological generation has been to show that in a unique period in the history of humankind, the third millennium BC and the few centuries to either side of the millennium itself, the Arabian Gulf nourished a rich, complex and demonstrably high culture. This was at the time when an entirely unprecedented sunburst of creative activity changed totally the life of man in the lands of the Near East. At this time the cultures of Egypt, Sumer, the Indus Valley and Elam arose and altered the course of human history. The culture of the Gulf, which first appeared, tentatively, at the end of the fourth millennium, was the peer of these more celebrated cultures which flourished in the lands contiguous with it.

The Arabian Gulf is a roughly rectangular body of sea water, running approximately north-south, inclining slightly westwards. On the western side, running along the Arabian littoral, the sea is generally shallow; on the eastern littoral the sea-bed shelves sharply and the water is deep. On the Arabian side of the Gulf are several islands which once were part of the mainland, before the Gulf's waters receded to their present level. It is this last fact which reveals the peculiar nature of the Gulf: in terms of its present configuration it is a relatively recent development, less than 20,000 years old.

The region as a whole is a very volatile one, geologically speaking. Arabia is still drifting towards Iran, an observation which is devoid of ideological significance; the drift will not result in a collision between the two land masses for many millions of years. However the quality of volatility is further demonstrated by the erratic behaviour of the sea levels in the Gulf over the past hundred thousand years or so. Research has shown that the level of the Gulf has varied by as much as 150 metres from the mean over this time and that the waters have frequently transgressed and regressed, either flooding considerable tracts of land or leaving what is now sea, exposed.

Contrary to what was once believed it is now clear that there is no evidence for the presence of palaeolithic tool makers either in eastern Arabia or in the Gulf. In palaeolithic times, the desert to the east of the modern city of Riyadh, was flooded. During the last Ice Age, when sea levels fell throughout the world, the waters withdrew and the Gulf itself probably became dry or, at the least, was marsh land down to the shores of a great, ancient river, whose course can still be traced on the sea-bed. It ran from the headlands of the Gulf, where today the twin rivers of Iraq, the Tigris and the Euphrates debouch; it joined the ocean at the Straits of Hormuz.

During this phase the islands of the Gulf, Failaka in the Bay of Kuwait, Tarut on the eastern seaboard of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and those which lie off the coast of the United Arab Emirates, would have been features in the landscape of the eastern desert. The largest of them, the principal island of the Bahrain archipelago, would have been a dome in the desert with a notable prominence rising from its centre.

Climate Fluctuation

The level of the Gulf waters declined to 110 metres below its present level some 18,000 years ago. Around 14,000 BC the Gulf began slowly to fill, the result, in all probability, of the thawing of the northern ice flows. It reached its present level around 7,000 BC. For a short time, about 6,000 years ago, the sea level rose again, though this time only marginally, to about two metres above the present shoreline. Around 2,000 BC it became stable at something like its present level.

One of the most important factors which has affected life in the region over the period that man has lived there has been the variations in precipitation, the small deposits of moisture from dew and occasional rainfall which can now be detected over quite extended time-scales. This has resulted in the recognition of a succession of alternating Wet or Moist phases interspersed with Arid or Dry periods. By examining the more recent historical record it is possible to see how important even these variations in precipitation were, though this would be barely perceptible to people living at the time, and how profound their influence could be on the environment. An increase in a very few percentage points in the precipitation in a particular area could permit the maintenance of larger animal stocks or the cultivation or the collection of more cereals or roots, thus allowing the growth of more numerous communities. By the same token the decline in precipitation by a marginal amount would produce the gradual reduction of a community with more and more individuals in the course of a very few generations being forced to move away to reduce pressure on the community and in the hope of finding a more generous environment in which to make a new life. This process has repeated itself countless times in virtually every part of the globe.

The so-called 'Neolithic Wet Phase' which persisted in eastern Arabia between 7,000 BC and 4,000 BC is an important influence in the Gulf's historical development. The relatively benign climatic conditions which this period represented enabled a far more varied faunal population, including man, to establish itself in the region than would have been the case when harsher conditions prevailed. During this time eastern Arabia yields evidence of the presence of the first pottery users, settlers or transients who were in touch with the seminal populations of southern Iraq, who were close to the beginnings of the profoundly transforming experiment of the creation of cities.

The somewhat higher sea levels prevailing meant that in the periphery of the area now known as Ar Rub Al-Khali or the Empty

Quarter, the immense sand sea which covers much of the south-east quadrant of the peninsula, populations of hunters subsisted on the large game which the region could then sustain, living on the shorelines of brackish lakes which covered much of the region which is today endless sandy wastes. The hunters' prey included hippopotamus, large bovids like bos primigenius, possibly elephant and certainly the herds of oryx which were able to maintain themselves in extreme desert conditions. The few remaining herds of oryx, which had become almost extinct as a result of twentieth century hunting techniques being unleashed against them and which have now been preserved as a result of the action of several of the present-day Gulf governments, are the survivors of an even earlier time having been first established in Arabia around two million years ago. They are, in popular parlance, 'living fossils'. The hunters who subsisted on the game which roamed the desert were also skilled craftsmen, the makers of exceptionally fine stone tools which bear comparison with the most delicate and appealing artifacts of Neolithic cultures which developed in less forbidding circumstances.

The First Settlements

It is at this point that the Gulf begins to acquire a history, as distinct from its prehistory with which we have so far dealt. The appearance of the hunting communities, though it introduces more questions than it resolves, is critical for an understanding of the five thousand years and more of intense activity which were to follow this time, down to the present day.

The problem, at its simplest, is that there is no indication from whence came these people, who made such handsome tools, nor what was their eventual destiny. However it is apparent that, certainly from 4,000 BC onwards and very possibly from a somewhat earlier time, one of its periodic arid phases began to blast the eastern desert, producing a climate which would be virtually indistinguishable from that of today. As such it would be increasingly difficult either for men or large game, with the exception of specially adapted creatures like the oryx and the herds of gazelle which have always been a feature of the desert, to survive. Soon the sea level dropped and the waters regressed from the inland lakes.

The Sumerians of Southern Iraq

This time of apparent desolation however was also the beginning of one of the most innovative periods in human experience. To the north of the Gulf, in the strange marsh-lands of Southern Iraq, a new people was establishing itself. The people are known to history as the Sumerians; they were perhaps the most creative who ever lived on the planet, without whom the life of civilized man would be unthinkable. In large part the Gulf's history, over the next two thousand years or so, is inextricably bound up with that of the Sumerians. However, the origins of the Sumerians are as mysterious as the fate of the hunter populations living in south eastern Arabia, in the period which immediately precedes the Sumerians' appearance in Iraq.

Prior to the point at which it is possible to descry the Sumerians in Iraq, on linguistic evidence in the middle of the fourth millennium, it appears that another 'folk' was dominant in the marsh lands. Again on the evidence of language and place-names it would seem that this people was not directly akin to the Sumerians. The Sumerian language is sui generis, like no other known, either living or dead. The language which preceded it in what was to become Sumer was associated with the makers of a particular type of pottery, known from its original find-site in Iraq as Ubaid ware; it is not related to Sumerian.

It has been suggested that the people who lived in south-eastern Arabia before the desiccation drove them away were, or were ancestral to, the 'Ubaidans'. This is a tempting theory but it is one which so far lacks any real evidence to support it, though the inferences are strong. There is at present no evidence that the hunters developed into such skilled potters, though the quality of their tools is notable and suggests that they were, in potential at least, proficient craftsmen (or, conceivably, craftswomen). It will however become clear that there was a tradition of high artistic achievement in the Gulf which, though it was no doubt influenced by Sumerian and other sources, yet was very much its own.

The possibility, albeit a remote one, must be accepted that the people who had settled in the periphery of the Rub al-Khali *may* eventually have migrated northwards (and possibly to the west too) and to have joined their cousins who may have settled there before them. Though this is wholly speculative it still does not solve one of the most persistent of archaeological 'mysteries', the origin of the Sumerians, for their language seems to have been totally different from the other, presumably earlier and putatively 'Ubaidan', strain in the aboriginal population of southern Iraq.

Ubaid Pottery in the Gulf

But to return to more secure ground: by the early centuries of the fourth millennium there is evidence from eastern Arabia of extensive contacts between local communities there and people who in turn had contact with the makers of some of the later examples of Ubaid pottery. It is necessary to express the matter in this somewhat cumbersome way as the earlier pottery which has been excavated in eastern Arabia appears to have been made in Ur, one of the most important cities to be established from very early times in southern Iraq. It cannot be said for certain that Urites themselves travelled to the Gulf, nor that Gulf people visited Ur; the likelihood is that the pots were brought to Arabia by seasonal visitors, probably fishermen who obtained them from the makers in Ur, by way of trade.

Ubaid pottery, which is most distinctive and, in its earlier forms, extremely well made, has now been found at more than fifty sites in eastern Arabia. It has also been recovered from sites in Qatar, further to the south and from the main island of Bahrain; more recently still it has been found in coastal settlements of what is now the United Arab Emirates.

The management of water was a dominant theme in the progress of Sumerian civilization. The two great rivers which ran through the land down to the Gulf and the network of canals which ran off them, opening into the lagoons on which the cities were frequently built, provided swift and easy access over a region which otherwise would have been most difficult to traverse. To achieve such access the Sumerians had to become skilful and courageous sailors and, in the process, became the first sophisticated shipwrights. They built, at first, craft which would navigate the



Page 57: The rich decoration of the facade of a Nabataean tomb. **This page, above:** The Islamic Room. **Right:** The Bronze Age (3rd Millennium) room, showing the importance and extent of eastern Arabia's early trading contacts. **Opposite page, top:** The Stone Age room in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography, Riyadh. **Bottom left:** Shreds of Ubaid pottery, dating to early in the Fourth Millennium BC, first identified in eastern Saudi Arabia and now recognised in many of the Gulf's coastal sites and found throughout the Gulf states. **Bottom right:** A tiny figurine in lapis lazuli, from Tarut, early Third Millennium BC.

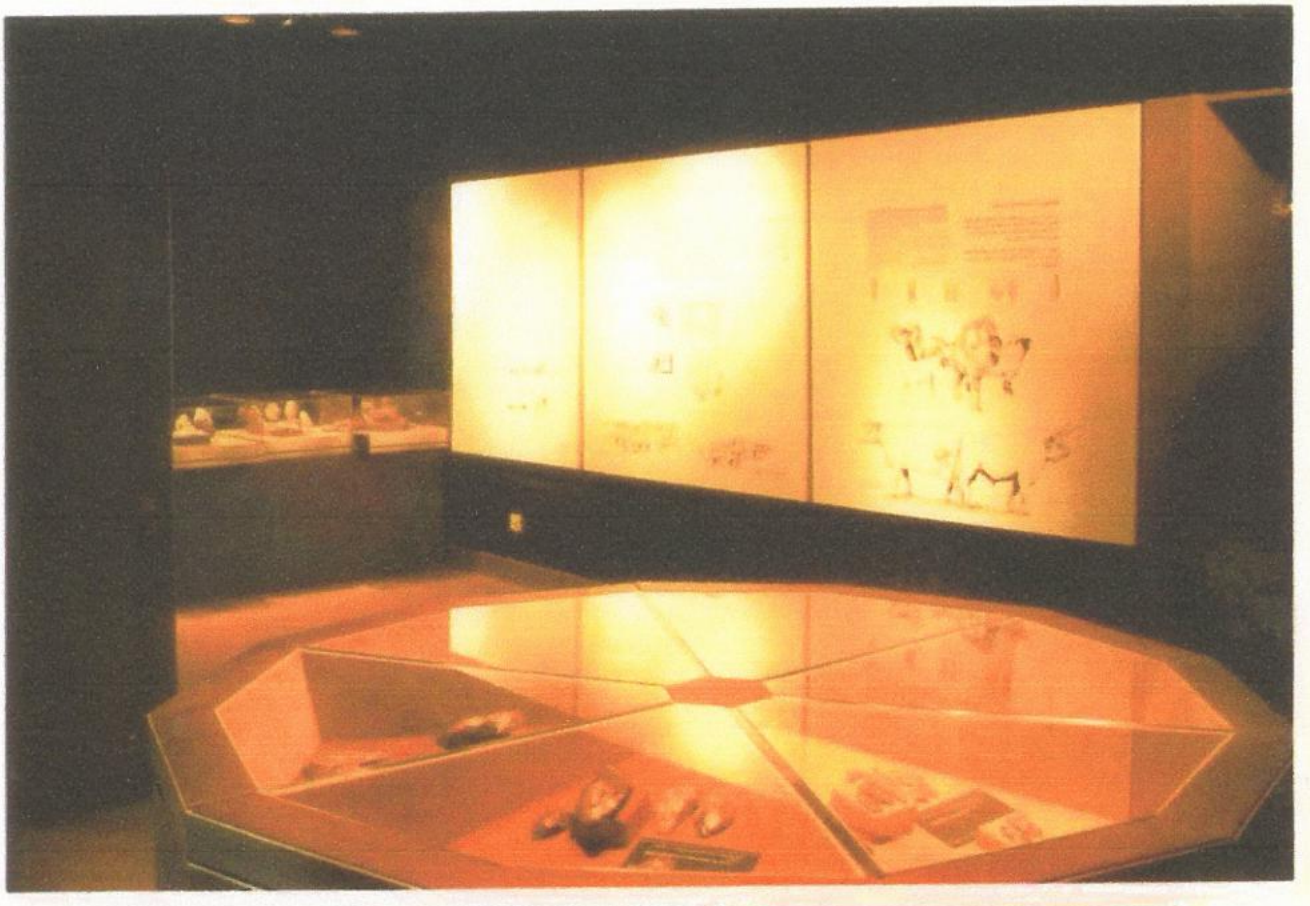


often dangerous waterways of their homeland and then, probably at the end of the fourth millennium, they invented sailing ships which were capable of undertaking ocean voyages. Thus they conquered the waters of the Gulf itself and so opened up an entirely new range of experience for mankind.

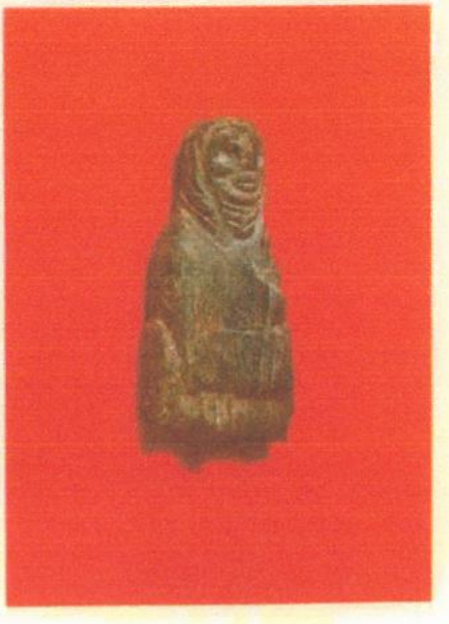
The Sumerians had the need to travel. Their land was bereft of raw materials: there is virtually no timber, other than the palm tree and no stone for the purposes of architecture or the making of statuary. For their mighty public buildings they invented mud-bricks and consumed them in prodigious quantities. But of stone they had none.

The Sumerian Quest for Resources

Nor, more drastic still, did they have ready access to supplies of metal ores, either copper, which was to become effectively the staple commodity of the third millennium, or gold. All such commodities had to be imported over great distances and for such commerce sea travel was the most expeditious and the most efficient, since it was possible to carry far larger







cargoes by sea than was possible overland; the camel had not at this time been domesticated as a beast of burden and the caravans would have consisted, such as they were, of pack animals like the fractious and uncooperative onegar. If the Sumerians had not invented sea-going ships their nascent culture would almost certainly have withered and died. That it did not is the world's gain, to a degree beyond computation.

The invention of ocean-going ships was not the Sumerians' most triumphant legacy to the world, however. The supreme achievement of the 'black-headed people' (as they called themselves) was the invention of writing, which was, with little doubt, the most benign human accomplishment. Writing began as the response to a very down-to-earth need: keeping the records of the first entrepreneurs who sought a profit from the disposal of surplus animals or manufactured goods. The true ancestors of Homer and Shakespeare were Sumerian accountants.

The merchants of Sumer and later of Akkad and the first, or Old, Babylonian kingdom ranged over immense distances, keeping in touch

with sources of supply as far away as Afghanistan and Anatolia as well as with markets in the Indus Valley, the heartland of Arabia and, very probably, Egypt. To judge by later evidence they probably established small professional 'colonies' in or close to the cities with which they traded. They were vital components in the dissemination of information and in the diplomatic processes which were maintained between the Sumerian cities and distant rulers.

The Copper Trade

One of the most acute requirements of the early inhabitants of Mesopotamia was for copper, without which their economy was virtually bankrupt. Though the smelting of copper, as distinct from the manipulation of the ore in its raw state, was a comparatively recent technological development the Sumerians, from the earliest period of their trading argosies, seem to have known that the most important and readily accessible source of the ore was in the Oman Mountains, the best part of a thousand miles distant to the south, the route protected by severe natural barriers of desert and sea.

Lapis Lazuli

Around 3,000 BC the ancient world becomes a singularly interesting place. Away to the west from Sumer, in the Valley of the Nile, two thousand years of human settlement was culminating in the appearance of the first god-kings and of the majestic dynastic culture which was to support their divinity. Trade was already moving in that direction too, for artifacts which could only have been made either in Sumer or by Sumerian craftsmen, have been found in Upper Egyptian sites from this time. Lapis lazuli, the fine blue stone which both peoples valued highly, has been found in Egypt and as it comes only from one source, located in far-distant Afghanistan, it must have been traded westwards over a formidable distance, which may have included the Gulf. In the manufacture of lapis objects found in Egypt some authorities have seen traces of influences from eastern Arabia.

The Appearence of Dilmun

It is now possible to put a name to the culture which was beginning to establish itself along the Gulf's western, Arabian shore. For the first time a name is attributed to it in archaic Sumerian texts; it was, presumably, the Sumerians who gave it its name though of that we cannot be sure, since the name does not itself seem to be Sumerian. As such it may survive from the pre-Sumerian language bequeathed to the region by the only-to-be-guessed-at 'Ubaidans'. Be that as it may the name which the Gulf was to bear in one form or another for the next two and a half thousand years is first recorded at this time, at the very end of the fourth millennium: that name was Dilmun.

The first recorded mention of Dilmun occurs in tablets from Uruk, the city of which, some three or four hundred years later, the great hero Gilgamesh was to be king. A large number of tablets was recovered from the centre of the ancient city, from the ruins of an archaic temple. The excavations began in 1928 but it is only in recent years that some of the tablets have been recognised as mentioning Dilmun. These are the earliest written texts yet known from anywhere in the world, and it is an attestation of the importance that Dilmun represented to the Sumerians that even at this early date it appears in their records.

There are a number of references to Dilmun in the Uruk tablets. All of them seem to have a bearing, perhaps not surprisingly, on trade. One seems to refer to a tax, or possibly, a rent collector - a reminder of the antiquity of such professions. This is contained in one of the literary forms much favoured by the Sumerians when they were still experimenting with writing, the making of lists: the tax-collector appears in a list of the professions. There are also lists of metal objects, in which a 'Dilmun axe', is noted. Dilmun occurs in a geographical list, which would be especially interesting if it were possible to read the text more completely; it would be interesting to know, for example, the order in which Dilmun was listed with other places, for the Sumerians later on tidily listed places in sequence, according to their distance from Sumer, for example. The state of preservation of the particular tablet on which this reference appears however is such that it does not permit precise decipherment.

In the Uruk tablets there is another mention of Dilmun which associates it with textiles, later to be one of the staple exports from Sumer in the Gulf-wide trade which Dilmun was to dominate throughout much of the third millennium and into the beginning of the second. There is reference to various foods, in the context of which there appears a somewhat mysterious figure, who seems to be 'the prince of the good Dilmun-temple'.

The exceptional antiquity of these tablets from Uruk make them of supreme importance in the history of writing and, hence, of communication. It is especially significant therefore that the Gulf, through the medium of its most important political construct, Dilmun, should at this early date feature in so many different contexts, suggesting that already it was a diverse, multi-levelled society.

The Location of Dilmun

Having established the importance, even in its dawn-time, of Dilmun in the Gulf's trade it is timely to consider its location; this is a somewhat more complicated matter than might be expected. There is no doubt that from the middle of the third millennium Dilmun meant Bahrain, in particular in the main island of the group. However thus far no remains that can with confidence be dated to a period earlier than around 2,400 BC have been found in Bahrain, other than a scatter of Stone Age tools and a few traces of the occasional visits of the possessors of Ubaid pottery. In the early centuries of its existence therefore Dilmun must be sought elsewhere. It seems virtually certain that in its origins Dilmun comprised the eastern coastlands of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia down at least to the land around Tarut and running into the hinterland.

Since, however, it is clear that Dilmun was an important place even at the end of the fourth millennium (by any standards of advanced societies an immensely early time) it must be supposed that it existed somewhere; if it was not yet Bahrain, then eastern Arabia must be a reasonable alternative location. There is not however a great deal of actual evidence there to support this view, though there is enough to make it feasible. In later times there is no doubt that the islands of Bahrain and the mainland to the west went by the same name; even in Islamic times this was the case, when the whole region,

eastern Arabian coastal lands and the islands, was called Bahrain. In antiquity, too, they shared a common identity but there is at present no indication when this began, nor what the original name might have been. However, if 'Dilmun' is a pre-Sumerian linguistic term, then it is possible that the aboriginal inhabitants of the eastern region bestowed the name on the coast and only later did it become adopted for the island.

Carved Chlorite

There is thus no certain indication of the whereabouts of the Dilmun of the archaic Uruk tablets. There are some examples of contemporary pottery to be found on eastern sites but these may, like the Ubaid pottery of still earlier times, be merely the evidence of the presence of occasional visitors who brought the pottery with them. Of more direct value in suggesting a developed economy in the eastern region in the first half of the third millennium are the large quantities of carved chlorite, a relatively soft and easily carved form of schist which is also frequently, though inaccurately, called steatite or soapstone. These have been found in eastern Arabia, particularly in the vicinity of Tarut, which seems to have been an important and very early settlement.

The Saudi Arabian chlorite carvings show a particular refinement of technique, suggesting a long, extensive and secure tradition in their making. It is also clear that the society which could support craftsmen capable of work of this quality would itself be an advanced one.

Chlorite carvings are found over a wide area of ancient western Asia. They repeat a repertory of designs which are also found on other of the Gulf's products, notably the circular stamp seals. Some authorities have seen similarities between the chlorite designs of the Gulf and Western Asia at this period and the approximately contemporary designs being fabricated in schist in Egypt.

The carved chlorite tradition on the Arabian side of the Gulf is one which was shared with the early societies which were developing contemporaneously in Iran across the Gulf. There is a particular correspondence between the vessels found in Arabian sites and those from Tepe Yahya, inland to the due east, across the Gulf from Tarut.

In addition to the chlorite found in such large amounts at Rufay'a, quantities of a much rarer material, lapis lazuli, were also found there, worked and unworked, a circumstance which itself suggests a trading centre, local manufacture or conversion and a considerable lapidary tradition. The sites in Iran may have been posts on the route by which it was traded to the west from the mountains in which it is found. As was noted earlier, it is also found in Upper Egyptian sites at this period, a formidable extension of the journey from its source.

Tarut, which despite its close proximity to the mainland is actually an island, has in all probability been one of the main settlements in the Gulf from the beginnings of human occupation. It has not yet proved possible to carry out extensive excavations on the site but an informal survey conducted some years ago revealed Ubaid pottery on the top of a very substantial occupation mound, suggesting that a great deal lay beneath the scatter of early shards. In addition to the chlorite/steatite which has been found at Tarut in generous quantity, lapis lazuli and alabaster have also been recovered, suggesting that Tarut was an important centre for the early trade of the Gulf and as such must have shared in the prosperity which the copper trade would bring.

Inland from Tarut and some 150 kilometres to the south-west lies Abqaiq which seems to have been an important settlement in early times and from which handsome pottery vessels and seals have been recovered.

The Mound Burials of Dilmun

One of the most typical cultural components of the Dilmun civilization in the Gulf is the manner in which provision was made for the dead. All over the lands which were identified with Dilmun or which had extensive dealings with Dilmun, elaborate burials were conducted and large-scale, complex monuments erected for the comfort and protection of the dead. All over the region but particularly near Dhahran, Abqaiq, and as far to the south as Yabrin, extensive mound fields, representing many thousands of burials, are still to be seen. On the analogy of Bahrain these would suggest an extensive settlement of the proportions of a city near-by, for there is no real evidence that the individuals who were buried under these substantial mounds were other than people living in the vicinity of the mound-fields.



A superb bronze lioness' head from Najran, south west Arabia.

Arabian Archaeology Today

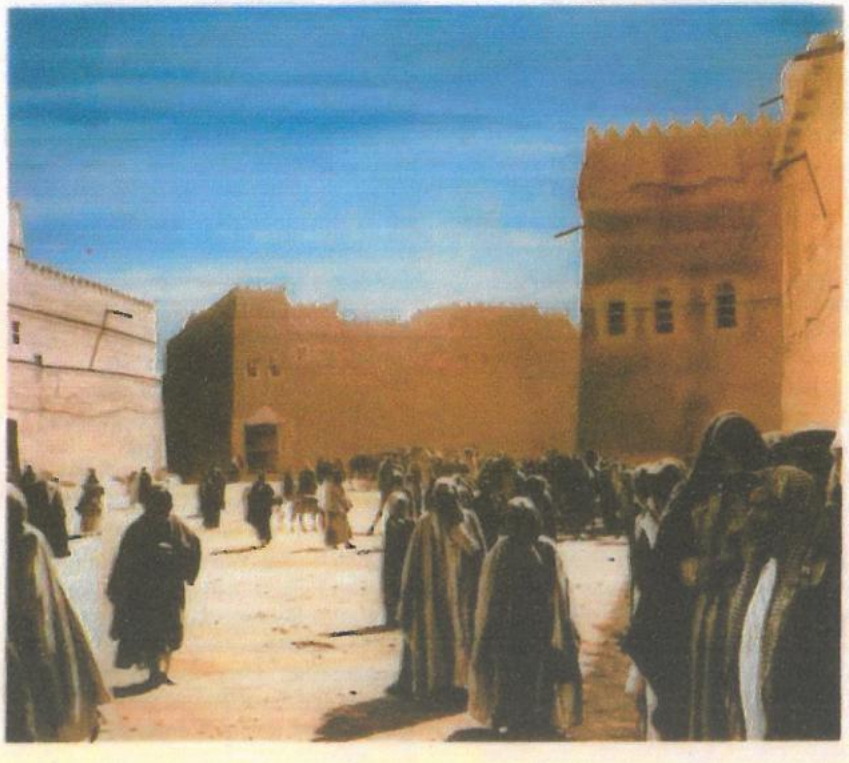
It was not until the mid-fifties that archaeology in eastern Arabia really found its true originators and serious survey and excavation began. From 1953 until the 1970's, and spasmodically thereafter, teams of Danish archaeologists worked, first in

Map of locations of the museums mentioned in the text.

1. The Bahrain Museum (original location)
2. The Qatar National Museum, Doha, Qatar
3. The Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
4. The Oman Museum, Sultanate of Oman
5. The Museum of the Sultan's Armed Forces, Beit-al-Falaj, Oman
6. The Jizan Museum
7. The Najran Museum
8. The Al Ula Museum
9. The Jawf Museum
10. The Hofuf Museum
11. The Museum of the King Abdul Aziz Military Academy, Riyadh (original location)
12. The Qasr Al-Masmak, Riyadh, Seudi Arabia



Below: An enhanced photograph of Old Riyadh, showing the Masmak in 1916.



Bahrain and then throughout the eastern and southern Gulf lands.

The Danish teams were assembled by a remarkable institution, the Forhistorisk Museum at Moesgard, near Aarhuis in north Jutland, a location about as far removed, geographically and climatically from the Arabian Gulf as it would be possible to find. A Danish connection with the historiography of Arabia was however itself of a very respectable antiquity since an expedition of learned men was despatched by the Danish King Frederick V in 1761 to chart the peninsula, study its flora and fauna and report upon its customs and people. It was an ill-omened mission, with most of its members dying en route and the expedition was beset by all manner of dissensions and disasters. Much of lasting academic value was achieved by its members however of whom one, the youngest, a Danish naval lieutenant named Carsten Niebhur, was to achieve immortality by his record of the expedition, published

successively in 1794, 1798 and 1837. The only important place that Niebhur did not visit was, a trifle surprisingly, Bahrain, which was later to be particularly associated with Danish scholarship.

In a series of seasons beginning in 1953 the Danish teams, originally under the direction of Professor P B Glob and later of T G Bibby, an English archaeologist living in Denmark, uncovered, in effect, a virtually unknown ancient civilization. They demonstrated that a large and prosperous mercantile community existed on Bahrain which built splendid stone temples in what seemed to be a prodigious quantity for so small an island, developed a major city on the island's north shore and left behind them more than 170,000 large well built mound graves, extending in undulating fields over the surface of the desert in the northern half of the Island.

The Danes made it clear that the land of Dilmun which Rawlinson had identified from Durand's explorations of the islands so long before, had represented a major cultural and economic presence in the Gulf, long before the great civilizations of east and west had even had their beginnings.

The Danes were also instrumental in expanding the archaeological horizons of the Gulf considerably. From their original base in Bahrain they branched out into the neighbouring lands on the Arabian shore. Qatar was the first where a remarkable sequence of neolithic tools (some of which were first mistakenly described as Palaeolithic) was assembled. Then, further to the north, the island of Failaka in the Bay of Kuwait was to prove one of the most rewarding sites, though its habitation was intermittent and began c. 2,000 BC, some centuries later than Bahrain therefore. It was however a site which produced some important and distinctive architectural remains and a remarkable quantity of the Gulf's characteristic round, domed seals. After the Danes initial work Failaka has been principally a province of French archaeologists.

In the south of the Gulf, the Danes early on identified a remarkable and very early culture on the island of Umm-an-Nar, of the shore of Abu Dhabi. Some of the graves which were found there, and which are of remarkably fine construction, seem to have been ancestral to the long-enduring traditions of grave-building in Bahrain. This has prompted the suggestion that the earliest settlers on Bahrain, as distant from the islands's occasional visitors, came from the south.

In more recent years important discoveries have been made in other parts of the United Arab Emirates. A remarkable concentration of Miocene fossils were found in Jebel Dhanna, the Bainuna Formation, again in Abu Dhabi. From a later time, it is now clear that the users of Ubaid pottery in the early fourth millennium reached as far south as in the more easterly parts of the UAE. Important settlements were established on the coast throughout antiquity; most of them seem largely to have been autonomous, exhibiting their own cultural characteristics, though they were clearly involved in the far-ranging trade which has always been the Gulf's principal preoccupation.

Museums in Arabia

For more than twenty years now it has been the concern of my colleagues and I to assemble the remains - or at least a good part of them - which archaeology has unearthed from the lives of the long-dead, early inhabitants of the Gulf, and, with the help of many scholars drawn from a variety of disciplines, to present them in a coherent and accessible manner, in museums throughout the Arabian peninsula states.

The first of these was in Bahrain in 1970. Since then we have planned, designed and installed the Qatar National Museum in Doha, the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography in Riyadh, the King Abdul Aziz Military Academy Museum, also in Riyadh, the Oman Museum at Qurm, the Museum of the Sultan's Armed Forces at Bait al-Falaj outside Muscat, and six site museums throughout Saudi Arabia. We are now completing the restoration of the Masmak Fortress in Riyadh and its conversion into a museum for the city.

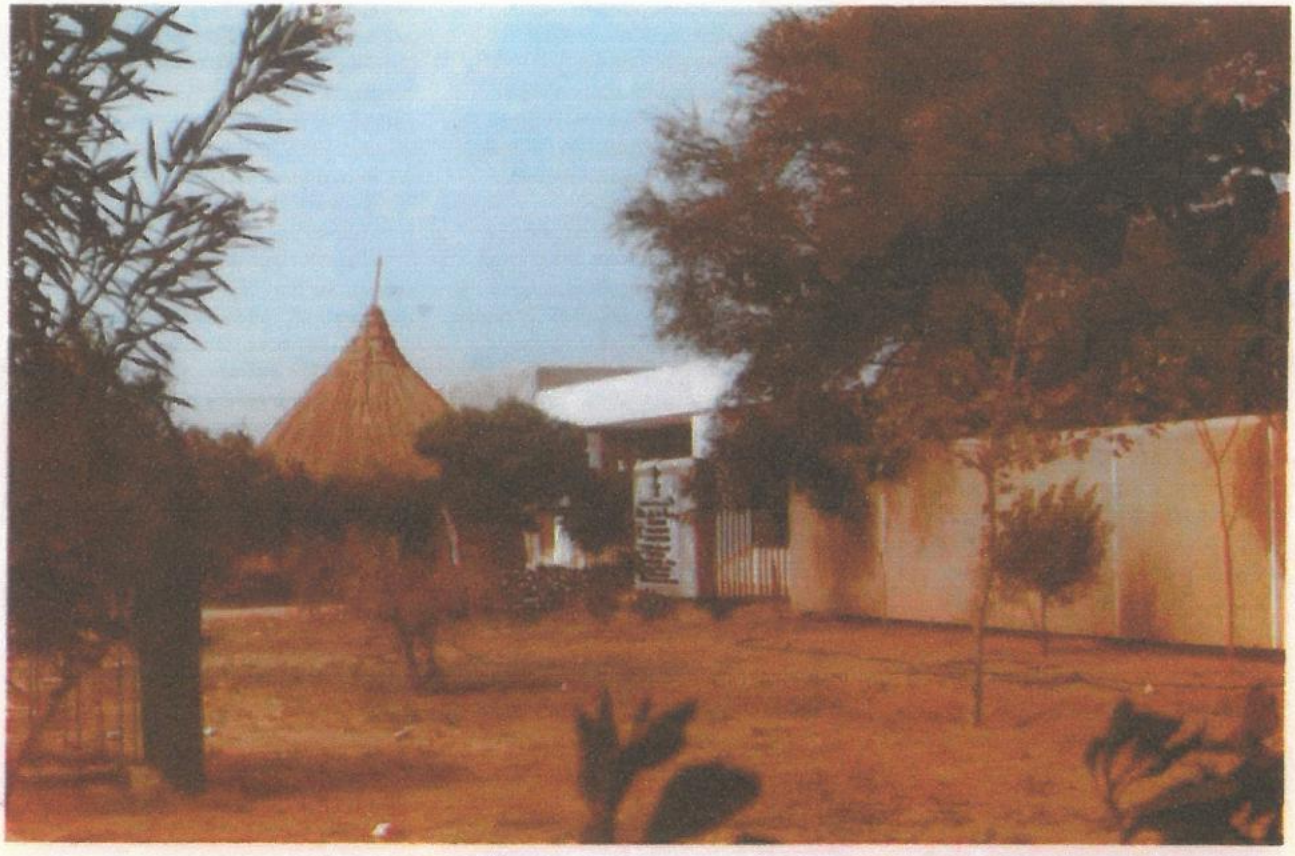
All of these institutions are conceived essentially as centres of information, in addition to their museological roles. Since they were established in communities which, when they were newly conceived, had little or no experience of museums we were able to break away from some of the constraints which characterised museums in countries with a longer museological tradition. Other considerations apart, they fulfilled an important function in giving the people of the country or region concerned access to their own history; in this respect they also played a part in developing a sense of national or local identity.

The museums generally contain a mix of archaeological, historical and ethnographical material. In the case of most of them, they contain facilities for storage, conservation, research and public education. This is most notably the case with the six museums established at or near to the major archaeological sites in Saudi Arabia, which may be regarded as one of the most enlightened museum development projects undertaken anywhere in the world, at its time. Each is distinct, reflecting the often subtle differences of the cultural province of which it is a part.

In addition to the creation of museums all the principle states in the region have now established antiquities services. These have charge of many important archaeological sites which have been identified, mostly over the past twenty to thirty years. In several cases continuing excavation programmes are being carried out. Some of the most important sites, many of them, like Mad'ain Saleh in the north west of Saudi Arabia and the great third and second millennium sites in Bahrain, have been restored and conserved.

Bahrain

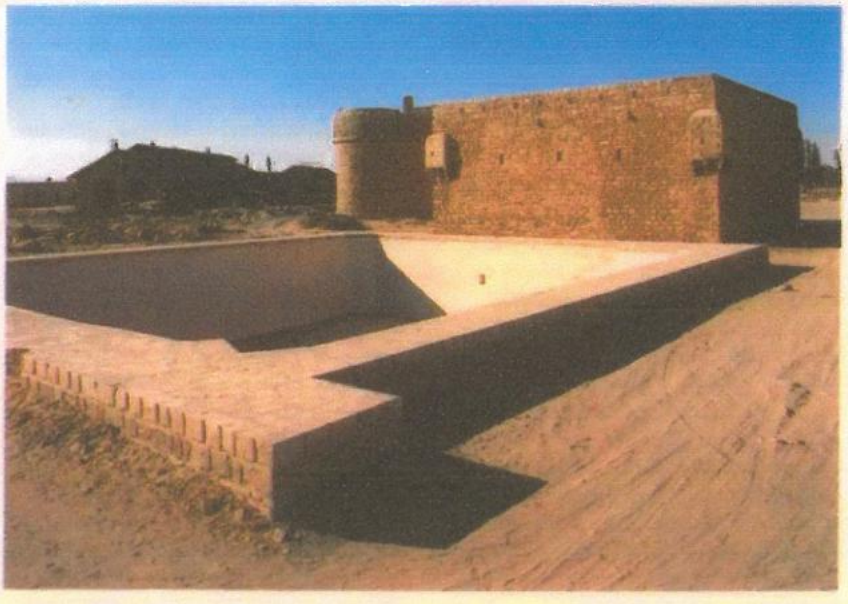
The Bahrain Museum, the first in the series, was the first attempt, anywhere in the Gulf, to display the results of archaeological excavations professionally and, in doing so, to try to establish a historical structure for the materials displayed. Bahrain, at least from the middle of the third millennium, was the epicentre of the Gulf, culturally, economically and, latterly, archaeologically. Its remains of early settlements and of the disposal of the dead are very numerous; it has an exceptionally important role in the mythology of the inhabitants of the southern part of Iraq, the Sumerians and their successors and features, by inference at least, in one of the greatest of all epic stories, that of Gilgamesh and his friend Enkidu. All of these elements are related in the museum, simply and directly. Visually, it made



extensive use of graphics to make its message more readily intelligible, a practice common to all the museums which have followed it, for which Michael Rice and Company has been responsible. It was also notable as the first occasion on which the remarkable domed, round seals which are typical of the trade of the central and upper Gulf in the late third / early second millennia, were displayed.

The Bahrain Museum was originally housed in the newly constructed government building in Manama. Subsequently it was moved to a site on Muharraq Island; later still it underwent its present incarnation, as part of a larger cultural complex, on the corniche, again in Manama.

The Bahrain Museum attracted wide spread attention especially in the Gulf. Other states, as a consequence began to recognise the need to preserve their past. To do so, they realised, provided the means for establishing their national identities in a time of rapid political change and unparalleled economic and social development.

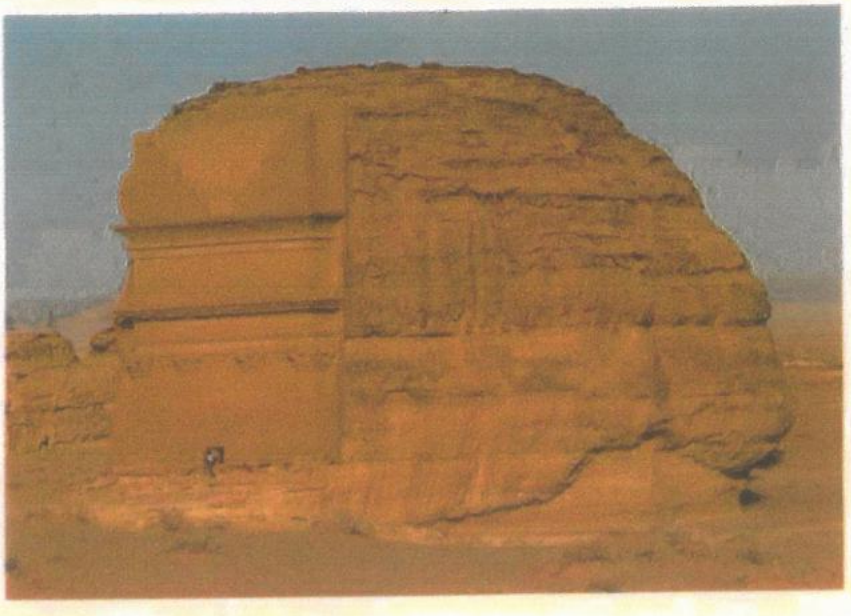


The Qatar National Museum

The first of these to profit from Bahrain's example was her near neighbour, Qatar. There, the Amir, Shaikh Khalifa bin Hamed Al-Thani had recently acceded to the Rulership. One of his first decisions was to order the creation of a museum for Doha. Michael Rice and Company was invited to visit the city, chose a site and put forward proposals for the museum.

We were fortunate to be presented with a unique site, on the waterfront at Doha, comprising a group of ruined traditional houses, belonging to the Amir's family, in one of which, indeed, he had been born. The houses were delightful buildings which we were able to cause to be restored (the first major project of its kind in the Gulf, at that time) and they now form the most important part of the museum. The collections of archaeological and ethnographical material were housed in a new building, set up on the site and most skilfully designed (by the consultant architect to the project, Anthony





Opposite page, top: Exterior of the Najran Museum. **Bottom:** The Mamluk period fort at Mad'ain Saleh, after restoration. **This page, top:** A graphic showing the method of construction of the Nabataean tombs at Mad'ain Saleh. **Left:** A massive Nabataean tomb at Mad'ain Saleh, north-west Arabia.

Irving FRIBA) so that it neither competed with nor dwarfed the traditional buildings.

The scale of the Qatar National Museum allowed us to develop more elaborate and ambitious presentational techniques. We relied upon the use of film extensively and set the entire museum in the context of its people's relationship with the desert and with the animals which also inhabit it. The museum complex was completed by the creation of an artificial lagoon on which were moored traditional Gulf sea crafts (for Doha had been an important centre for the pearling trade) and a marine museum, in which the life of the fisherfolk and the creatures of the sea was displayed.

One of the most satisfactory aspects of the museum in Doha was that we were able to organise a national campaign to recover objects of daily life from the families of Qataris who had mostly moved away, in material terms, at least from the style of life of their elders. We received a generous response and, as a result, were able to exhibit a wide range, probably the most extensive in the Gulf, of local ethnographical material.

The Department of Antiquities, Riyadh

Whilst we were working on the Qatar National Museum (which opened in 1975) we were approached by the newly appointed Director of Antiquities of Saudi Arabia, Dr Abdullah H Masry. Then began our longest and, in many ways most rewarding, association in the peninsula.

The Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography, Riyadh

First we designed and installed what became the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography in Riyadh. This provided the first opportunity to set the archaeology of Arabia into a firm chronological context, ranging from the earliest stone tools, found in the south-west of the country and dating from upwards of one million years ago, to the Revelation of Islam.

The archaeology of the Kingdom, with a land surface approximately the size of Western Europe, is exceptionally rich. In the east the trading history of the Gulf is reflected in that of Eastern Arabia, from the earliest times of human occupation. From the south east we were able to show the little known, but highly evocative evidence of the hunters who roamed the desert in search of large prey such as hippopotamus, and who lived on the edges of brackish lakes which ran deep into what is now the Empty Quarter, some 6,000 years ago. Great cities, like Taima in the north and the richly endowed culture of the Nabataeans in the region of Madain Saleh and Al Ula in the north west typify the diversity and complexity of the Kingdom's archaeology.

Films and Journals

The museum in Riyadh was established as part of the Department of Antiquities and Museums, with which we worked closely for many years. We were responsible for the making of a series of films on the archaeology of Arabia, which, nearly twenty years later are still sometimes to be encountered on Saudi Arabian television. One of the most enduring and satisfying of our responsibilities was the setting up and the design, editing and production of the early volumes of the journal, Atlal, which, year by year, has recorded the work of the Department of Antiquities and of the Saudi and foreign archaeological teams which have been working on the Kingdom's sites.

A Network of Museums in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia also provided us with the opportunity of working on one of the most ambitious projects undertaken by any national antiquities service. This was the creation of a network of museums and technical service centres established in population centres far distant from the capital, Riyadh. In all six such museums were constructed, at Jizan, Najran, Al Ula, Taima, Jawf and Hofuf.

They were designed to a common format, with two ground plans, depending upon the topography of the site. They average some 6,000 sq. metres in extent. The architects responsible were the well-known Saudi Arabian practice, Zuhair Fayez and Associates. In addition to their role as museums, providing exhibition facilities for excavated material from the sites which they encompass, they also serve to identify the region which they represent, in the larger history of the Kingdom as a whole. In this they serve as a means of identifying people and places often far distant from each other and convey a sense of their common destiny and purpose.

The purpose and functions of the Site Museums have been formulated after extensive discussions with the Department of Antiquities and Museums and can be summarized thus:

To provide services and facilities to conserve and protect the major sites which are the focal points of each Museums' location, and to participate in the restoration of local monuments.

To provide services to conserve and protect an archaeological area up to an approximate radius of 200 kilometres around the Museum.

To investigate and record the important archaeological and historical sites within the Museum's area, and to provide facilities for professional teams to investigate and record such sites.

To act as a base for the collection of artifacts from the area under the jurisdiction of each Museum, to provide storage, conservation and recording facilities for such artifacts, and to provide adequate interim storage and recording facilities for antiquities awaiting shipment to the Regional and National Museums.

To record local culture and traditions, and to act as base for the collection of ethnographic artifacts from both settled and nomadic contexts.

To play an active part in the local community, particularly in expressing the contribution made by the local community's history and traditions to the history and culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

To mount interpretive exhibitions for the benefit of the public, particularly the local community, and to initiate other educational activities appropriate to their function.

To maintain administrative and informational liaison with the Department of Antiquities and Museums and to operate effectively as a member of a Kingdom-wide network of museums.

They also provide facilities, including accommodation, for archaeologists and others working on the sites, of which they are the centre. The fact that, although they are relatively compact structures, they are equipped with laboratories, conservation facilities, photographic studios and processing as well as extensive storage and exhibition areas, means that they are better equipped than most institutions of comparable size. Altogether they represent a most sophisticated and advanced adjunct to a national antiquities service.

Between the creation of the Riyadh Museum and the network of site museums, my colleagues and I were engaged on other projects, in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman. On the accession of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said in 1970, it was decided to set up an antiquities department to identify and preserve the Sultanate's rich, and highly distinctive, heritage. A British archaeologist, Andrew Williamson, was retained by the Omanis for this purpose and we worked closely with him until his tragic, early death at Sumharam, (Khor Rori) in Dhofar.

The Oman Museum

Our first assignment was at Qurum, outside Muscat, the capital city. There we established the Oman Museum which was intended principally to provide visitors to the Sultanate with an accessible survey on the Sultanate, the many different aspects of its topography, culture and people and of its past.

The Museum of the Sultan's Armed Forces
Later we were retained to provide the first designs and plans for the Museum of the Sultan's Armed Forces at Bait Al-Falaj, in the Ruwi Valley outside Muscat. This project was a particularly pleasing one for it involved the restoration of a fine late eighteenth century Omani fortified country house. In this we worked with the architectural practice of Huckle and Partners.

The King Abdulaziz Military Academy Museum, Riyadh
A similar assignment, but designed principally as a teaching museum, was given to us in Saudi Arabia, when we were asked to plan a museum for the King Abdul Aziz Military Academy. This was particularly interesting for it required a considerable degree of research into the campaigns by which Abdul Aziz ibn Abdul Rahman Al-Saud brought about the Unification of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia early in the present century.

The Masmak Fortress, Riyadh
This experience proved valuable when we were retained to convert the Masmak Fortress in Riyadh into a museum for the city, commemorating in particular the fortress' role in the events which lead to the Unification of the Kingdom, when it was captured by the young Abdul Aziz in 1902. The building, one of the few of its period surviving in Riyadh, had been skilfully restored by the Italian architectural practice Albini, before being handed to us to design its museological function.

Bahrain through the Ages, 1983
In 1983, to commemorate the bi-centenary of the Al Khalifa dynasty in Bahrain, Michael Rice and Company was engaged to organise what was certainly the largest international gathering of archaeologists and other scholars in the region. This resulted in two substantial volumes of Proceedings (Bahrain Through the Ages Volume I The Archaeology, edited by Shaikha Haya Al-Khalifa and Michael Rice, and Volume II The History, edited by Shaikh Abdullah bin Khaled Al-Khalifa and Michael Rice, Kegan Paul International, London, 1986 and 1993). Both volumes have now become standard works on the region's history.

The Re-Excavation of Barbar
At the same time we supervised the re-excavation of one of the most important archaeological sites in the entire Gulf region, the great temple site at Barbar, in the north of the principal Bahrain island. Here, three immense structures had been built successively on the same site from c. 2100 BC - c. 1700 BC. The intention was to give access to the site for the archaeologists who visited the conference (see 'The Barbar Temple Site, Bahrain' Michael Rice, The Ministry of Information, Bahrain, 1983). The site was carefully cleared of the back-fill in which it had been covered after its original excavation by the Danes in the 1960's. It was the intention that it would either be covered once again or a structure built over it, to protect it from the often harsh extremes of the Bahrain climate. Thus far, however, this necessary protection, for what is probably the most important site in the region, has not been put in place.

The Threat of Development
Many of the sites in Arabia are, like historic sites everywhere, vulnerable to the depredations of international tourism and the demands of contemporary industrial and social development.

This has not yet proved to be too serious a problem in Saudi Arabia though urban development in the 1960's and 1970's resulted in the loss of some fine buildings in the Kingdom's cities. However, in some of the Gulf states the situation could give rise to concern as they turn their eyes, however tentatively, to tourism as a source of revenue and as a means of providing employment opportunities for their people.

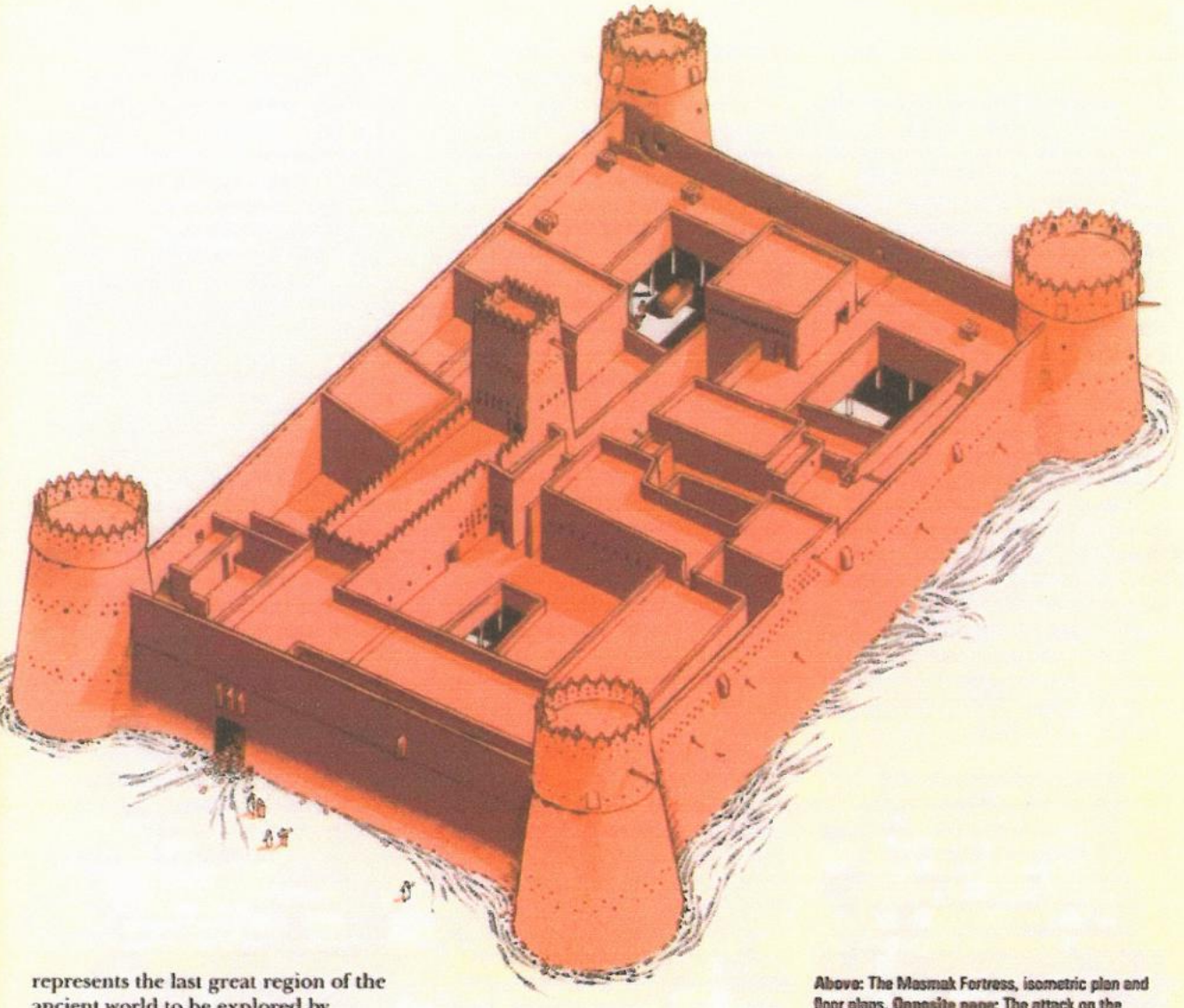
Tourism, though as theory it provides revenue for the protection of the national heritage, can, often, prove more a blight. Already many countries in the Near and Middle East have experienced what tourists, unthinkingly, can do to sites, even those which have withstood centuries of indifference, not to speak of pillage: Egypt is perhaps the most pertinent and lamentable example. The Arabian peninsula states must avoid such destructive policies, usually carried out in the name of goodwill, understanding and profit, which can irreparably harm the heritage which time has conferred upon them.

National Archaeological Services
It is of great importance that the peninsula states should do all that they can to acquaint their citizens of the value of the sites of which they are the custodians. Equally it is important that cadres of archaeologists and other professionals, concerned with the proper management of the heritage, should be educated in the countries themselves, to prepare them to work on the protection and measured development of their past. In particular university courses, of the highest international standard, need to be introduced: in this regard, Saudi Arabia has led the way with a very competent department in King Saud University which has carried out a number of important projects in the Kingdom, including the long term excavations of the important caravanserai of Al-Fau.

The Future of Archaeology
There are still important opportunities for extending the base of archaeology and related work which has already been laid down. Saudi Arabia and Oman were both early in the field of journal publishing; the region as a whole would benefit by an internationally circulating journal recording the diversity of work and research which is currently being undertaken, in the peninsula and around the world. Museums whose collections represent particular themes, relevant to the region and its people, could with benefit be established: themes such as the history of trade, the Bedu, the environment and ecology of deserts are obvious candidates.

There is an urgent need for the creation, over the longer term, of a collection of Islamic artifacts of international quality to be established in the peninsula. Although the traditions of the creation of works of art are not generally associated with the peninsula the pre-Islamic experience, the subject of much of this review, suggests that the arts have flourished, especially in the West and East of the region. A very creditable permanent museum exhibition devoted to the Holy Quran is now a feature of Bahrain's intellectual and aesthetic facilities. A collection of artifacts of the quality of the great European collections, assembled in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is now overdue.

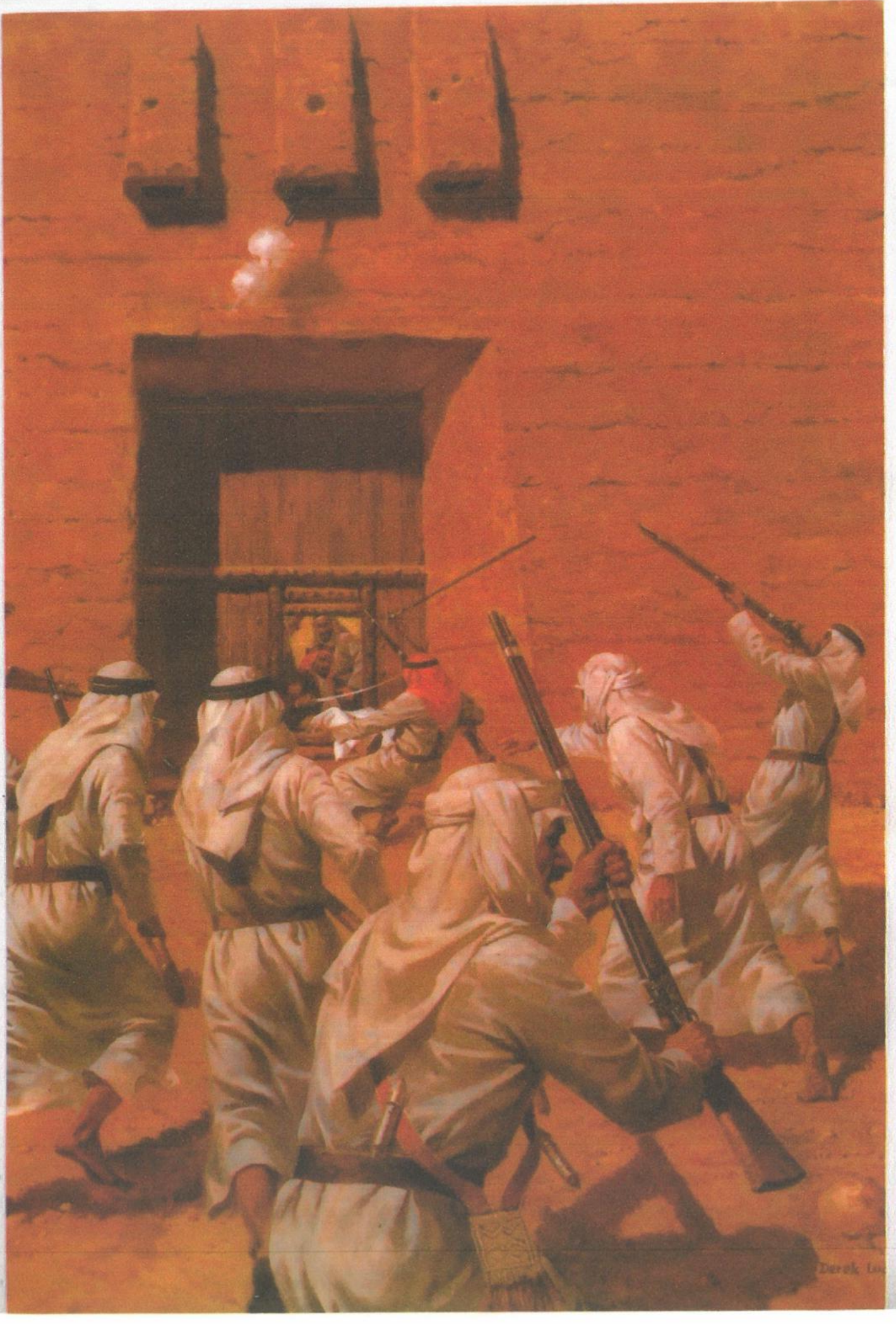
The Arabian peninsula as a whole



represents the last great region of the ancient world to be explored by professional archaeologists. In the past it was too often dismissed, by those who often should have known better, as empty desert. In reality it is a treasure-house of human experience, particularly the experience of surviving in an unyielding and ungenerous environment. In the future it will take its place with the other cultural regions of the ancient near east from which the modern world continues to derive a rich inheritance.

Michael Rice, author of a number of books on the archaeology of the Gulf, is the Chairman of Michael Rice and Co., London.

Above: The Masmak Fortress, isometric plan and floor plans. Opposite page: The attack on the Fortress in January 1902.



The Relations between Ancient Egypt and The Arabian Peninsula

Ahmed Osman

The first Egyptian kingdom is known to have started as a result of a union that took place between the Two Lands, at the same time as the hieroglyphic language was invented, around 3200 B.C. For this reason the kings wore a double crown composed of a red crown superimposed upon a white mitre. Egyptians gave the name "Tawi" to the union of the two lands which consisted of "Kemet", meaning the Black (fertile) Land of the Nile Valley, and – Desharet", meaning the Red (desert) Land. This has conventionally been interpreted as indicating Upper Egypt, the area extending from Nubia in the south to Memphis near modern Cairo, and the Nile Delta.

Recent archaeological discoveries in both Egypt and Saudi Arabia, however, suggest a different story and indicate that the union took place, not between Upper Egypt and the Delta, but between the whole Nile Valley and the Sinai peninsula. As, while modern archaeological excavations have shown that at the time of the union, during the last part of the fourth millennium B.C., the Nile Delta largely consisted of swamps and marshland, developed forms of settlement had already existed in Upper Egypt and Sinai. It was not before the beginning of the second millennium B.C., twelve centuries after the Kingdom of the Two Lands had been formed, that permanent settlements appeared in the Delta.

Modern investigation of the prehistoric settlements along the Nile Valley began only in 1961, following the international campaign to salvage the archaeological material which was to be inundated by the reservoir of the High Dam at Aswan. Work started first in Nubia then, between 1967 and 1969, was extended to cover the area between Aswan and the Fayum depression to the south of ancient Memphis.

These investigations revealed a rich and complex sequence of prehistoric settlements and showed evidence of the agriculture age starting from 6,000 B.C., with remains of villages and farmers. The main prehistoric centres in this area were at Nakada north of Luxor, Abydos near Nag Hammadi, Badari in Assyut and Gerzeh near Memphis.

At the same time, although the international team was not able to carry on with their original plan to survey the Delta, recent excavations by the Germans uncovered a predynastic settlement at Buto, 24 km from the Mediterranean. But it became evident that most of the Delta was covered by swamps and marshes in prehistoric times.

On the other hand, excavation work in Sinai was extensively carried out by the Israeli archaeologists during the period it fell under Israeli occupation following the Six Days War of June 1967, and recently by the Egyptian Antiquity Organisation.

Sinai is an upside-down triangle, with its base extending for 240 miles on the Mediterranean coast and its apex intruding into the Red Sea at Sharm el-Sheikh. It covers an area of 23,500 square miles, separated from Arabia by the narrow Gulf of Aqaba. Here archaeological work revealed many predynastic settlements in northern as well as southern Sinai, that go back to a long time before the Egyptian union. These findings also show the presence of trogodyte hunters in the part of Sinai nearest to the Negev desert, while a considerable settlement, found near the city of Ismaelia, included houses and burial remains.

Archaeologists also found traces of early Bronze Age (3000 BC) domestic ruins and pottery shards in south-central Sinai indicating a self-sufficient life there, with dexterous use of tools, raising of sheep and goats and possibly copper mining and smelting.

Egyptian authority over Sinai is clearly shown by archaeological finds. From the early dynastic period, as the evidence shows, regular mining expeditions arrived from the Egyptian capital to exploit Sinai copper and turquoise mines. A survey of the northern coast of Sinai by Professor Eliezer Oren of the Ben Gurion University demonstrates that a well-travelled route that reached up to Gaza, confirms the Egyptian presence in this area from the very beginning of its history.

Furthermore, the presence of a hieroglyph of King Narmer at Tel Erani, and the walled city found on the Narmer Palette make it very clear that Pharaonic armies were already traversing the Arabian peninsula during the First Dynasty.

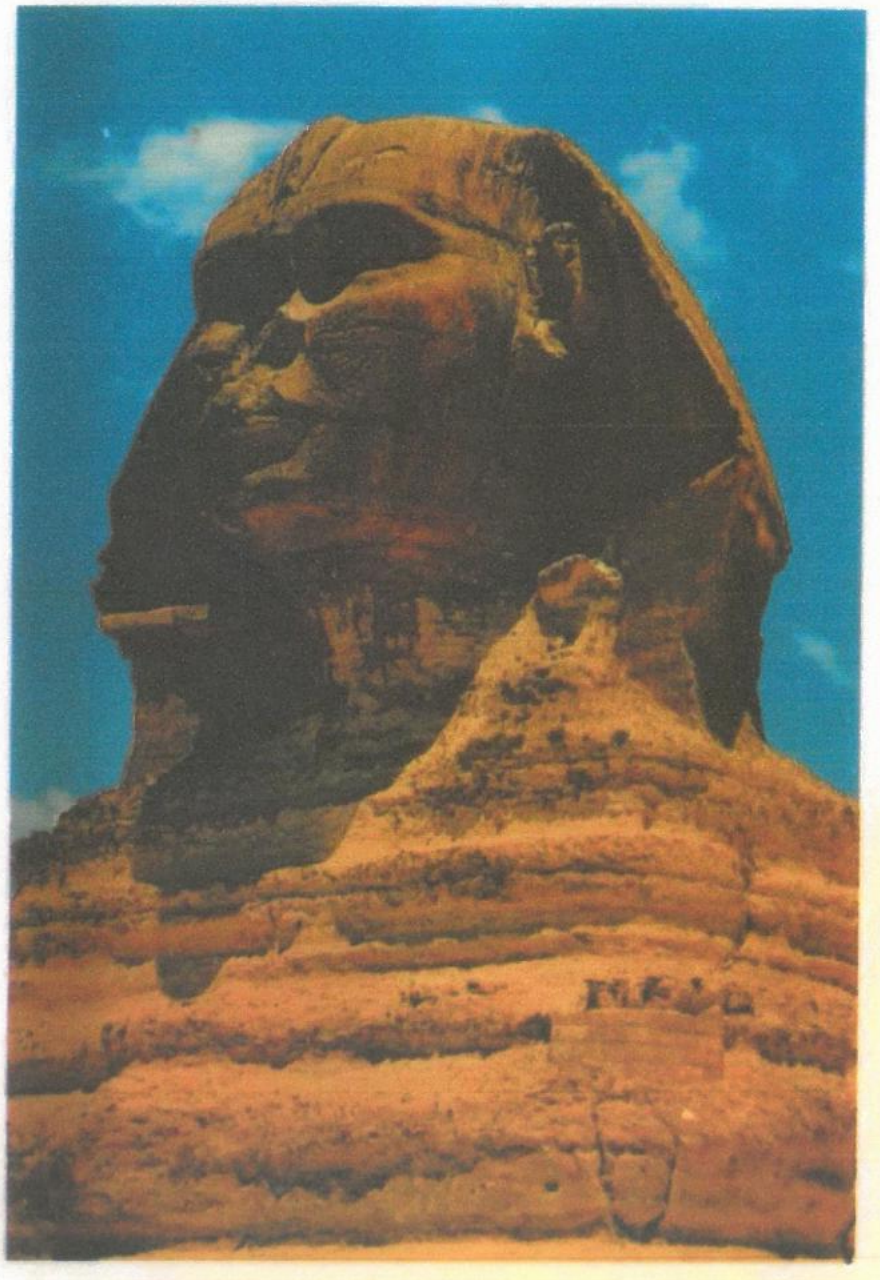
Other remains and inscriptions found in Sinai as well as in the Nile Valley, indicate that Sinai was already part of the Two Lands of Egypt, from the time of Narmer, the first king to wear the double crown at the start of the dynastic period. It is also significant that, on the top of both sides of Narmer Palette, two figures of Hat-hor, the goddess of Sinai, are shown.

The result of these archaeological works shows that, at the time of the Egyptian union, while the Delta was still largely uninhibited, developed settlements already existed in Upper Egypt and Sinai. It also confirms that Sinai, at the time, was part of "Tawi", i.e. the "Two Lands" of Egypt.

This can explain how the lion, no doubt in commemoration of the union, became a prominent figure in Egyptian art and mythology from the early part of the dynastic period. For the lion, which was a symbol of the dwellers of Sinai, soon appeared in its gigantic figure of the Sphinx, seated on the Giza plateau with its royal human head looking towards Sinai.

Although the inhabitants of the Nile Valley had many sacred animals; such as the cat, the crocodile, the cow, the serpent and the falcon... the lion is only mentioned as being hunted by courageous Pharaos during their sport activities. Thus the lion became a symbol of royal power. In Sinai, however, it is the main symbol of the people and the land. The name of





Zarw, the fortified city in the area of Kantara East in northern Sinai, is spelt using the figure of the seated lion. As the dwellers of Sinai were known in Egyptian language as "Shasw", the Sphinx was given the singular form of this word "Shes-pa-ankh", which means the living "Shes", indicating its Sinaitic origin.

For the same reason Horus, represented as a falcon, which was the symbol of the first royal family that came from Upper Egypt and united the Two Lands, became associated with the lion in the form of the Sphinx. Soon the Sphinx, together with the falcon, became assimilated with Ra, the sun god of Heliopolis, where it became known as Harmakhis (Horus of the Horizon).

As a result of this understanding, we can now explain another confusing issue relating to the origin of the early inhabitants of Sinai. For both the Bible and the Quran, when referring to the inhabitants of Sinai, in the story of Moses, regard them as being Midianites.

"Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian". (Exodus 2:15)

"When he (Moses) turned his face towards Midian, he said: May my Lord show me the straight path". (Sura 28:39)

In this case Midian indicates the Sinai peninsula. Nevertheless, we find many other cases in the Bible where "Midian" indicated a north Arabian location:

"Hadad...smote Midian in the field of Moab". (Genesis 36:35)

This indicates the southern part of what is now the Jordanian Kingdom. In many of these cases it is clear that the land of the Midianites extended from the neighbourhood of Moab and the Kingdom of Sihon the Amorite in the border region of Transjordan, along the border of the Arabian desert west of Edom to the Sinai desert.

Many references are also found in the Greek-Roman and Arabic sources to indicate that Midian was in Arabia, as well as the shore of the Red Sea. This location is also identified, according to the tradition of Arabic geographers, with the area of Maghayeer Shu'ayb, near Aqaba.

It has been argued by some scholars, the Lebanese Kamal Salibi being the most recent, that the biblical word "Mizraim", does not

continued on page 78

Ancient Dams of the Hejaz

Shirley Kay

The great escarpment of the Hejaz soars up some 1,500 metres above the plain, to a range of mountains running parallel to the coast of the Red Sea. The plain below is arid desert, and the mountains themselves are bleak and for the most part barren although they have an average rainfall of some 30 to 40 cm a year.

The rain there comes suddenly, however, and in great bursts. A fierce downpour may bring a whole year's rainfall in one evening, turning dry wadis suddenly into raging torrents. The water rushing down the valleys can carry all before it, boulders, bushes, crops and the construction of man. Elsewhere in Saudi Arabia the rainfall is at least predictable in that it comes in winter; but the Hejaz mountains catch the tail end of the monsoon rains, and sudden downpours with great hailstones may strike in midsummer or midwinter alike.

Since ancient times the inhabitants of the Hejaz have sought to control their erratic water supply, in order to cultivate their crops in the wadis and along the terraced hillsides. Around Taif some of the wadis are astonishingly green, cultivated in small fields beneath the shade of spreading trees.

The secret of success, in many of these wadis, was in ancient times due to the construction of massive dams to retain the torrents which otherwise ran off with such destruction. Along the range of the Hejaz, to north and south of Taiz, traces of vast structures can still be detected in the valleys, some of them mere foundations of a retaining wall, some huge dams which tower above the wadi bed, still standing today to their original height. In all, nearly two dozen of these structures have been found, extending from the Wadi Dama 140 km to the south of Taif, as far as the Khaybar region some 500 km to the north. But the great majority of the dams lie within a few kilometres of Taif itself.

The most easily visited of any of these ancient dams is the Sadd Thalbah, some 7km north-west of Taif and visible from the main road. This huge dam still stands almost 10 metres high, crossing a deep valley along which an asphalt road now runs. The dam has been breached right through the middle, but was once 100 metres long, and even today a span of 79 metres is still standing. It was built of two strong walls, constructed of huge rocks up to 3 metres long by a metre wide, with a rubble fill between the two walls. This produced a dam varying in thickness between 7.5 and 8.5 metres.

The downstream side of the dam has two narrow steps in its rock face, a feature characteristic of many of the Hejaz dams. The upstream face was plastered with a lime and sand plaster, to make it waterproof; the plaster has grown golden yellow with time, a lighter coloured section at the bottom showing where silt had stood piled up against it over the centuries. Some silt is still visible today, towards the ends of the dam. At the southwest end of the dam, in the wadi wall, a two metre wide spillway was cut into the rock, to take the overflow when the waters behind the dam rose too high. No trace of water channels remains however, and there is no sign at all of any agriculture in the narrow, rocky wadi below the dam.

Most famous of Taif's dams is Saad Saysid, some 10km to the north-east of the town and sited in what is today an ecological preservation area. This dam has attracted attention for a long time on account of the numerous inscriptions carved on it and on neighbouring boulders. The main inscription here was first published in 1936.

The dam is approached by a bumpy track running across fields which suddenly stop at an apparent cliff. The cliff is in fact the huge rock structure of the dam itself, now silted to such an extent that it looks more like a monster terrace wall. The dam is complete today, preserved by its strong construction of solid blocks right through. It stands 8.5 metres high and is 68 metres long. A series of high steps is visible on the downstream side, and there is a rock cut spillway at the north west end. A hydrographic study by Ronald Raikes showed that the dam could have held 500,000 cubic metres of water before it silted.

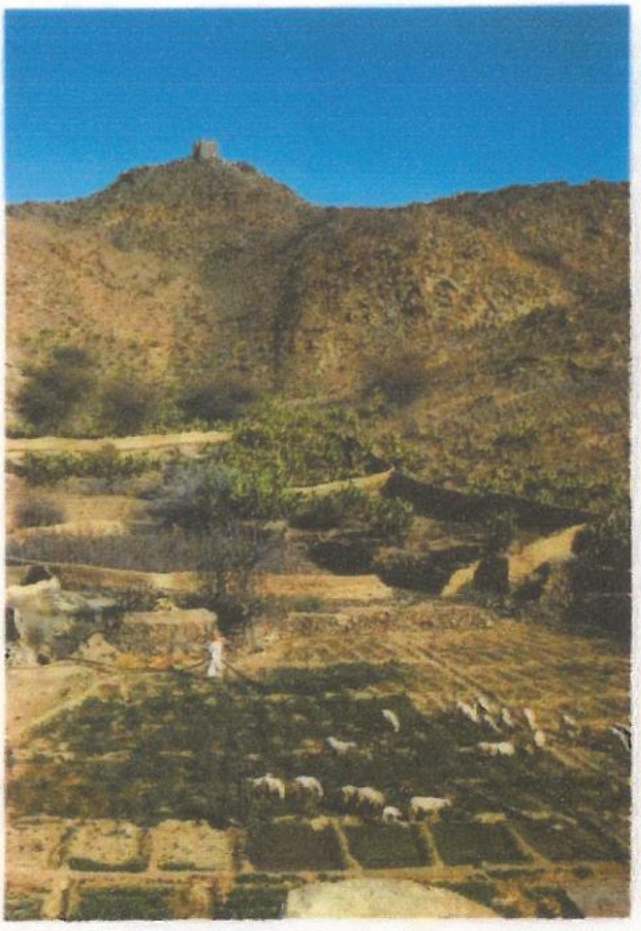
The most exciting feature of the dam is, however, the early Kufic inscriptions on the boulders at either end, and on one in the downstream face of the dam. One of these inscriptions reads: "This dam (is built) for the servant of God, Mu'awiya, the Commander of the Faithful. Abdullah ibn Sakhr has built it in the year 58.." The dam was therefore completed in the first century of Islam, in the equivalent of 678 AD.

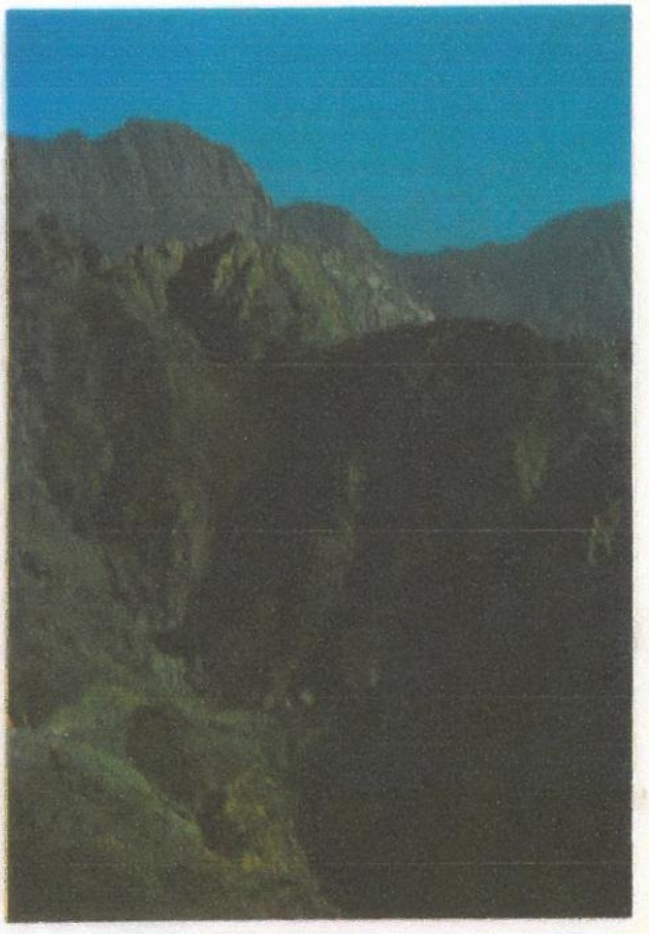
This inscription is particularly significant in dating the ancient dams of the Taif region, which might otherwise have been thought to be related to the great dam of Marib in the Yemen, which was however built over a thousand years earlier than Sadd Saysid. Many of the other Taif dams have similar features to Saysid, particularly in the stepped downstream face, and one other, Sadd Samallaqi, has Kufic inscriptions probably also of the first century AH.

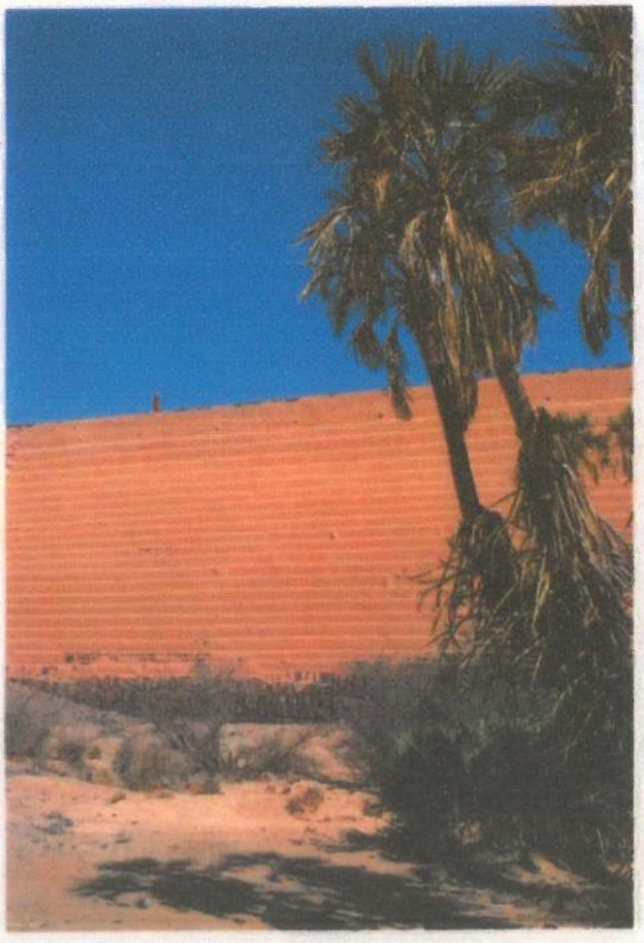
This dam, Samallaqi, is certainly the most attractive of the dams today. It lies some 18 km south west of Taif, in a district of ruined watch towers and old villages. Trees, green fields and wild flowers blossom around the dam which is vast, some 210 metres long and 10 metres high. The construction is similar to that of Thalbah,, consisting of two massive outer walls with a rubble fill, and the upstream side and crest of the dam were plastered with lime and sand plaster.

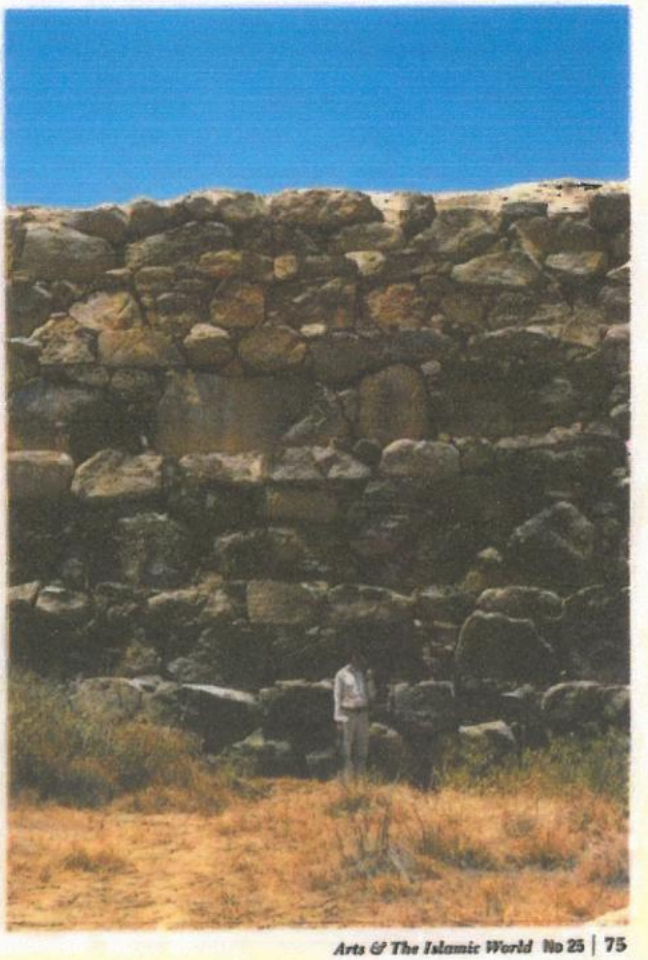
This dam too was estimated to

Opposite page, top left: Looking downstream from Sadd Samallaqi over cultivated valley. Right: The great escarpment of the Hejaz mountains near Taif. Bottom left: Sadd Qusaybah near Khaybar. Right: Downstream stepped face of Sadd Saysid.









have held 500,000 cubic metres of water, but there is none there today for, although the main section of the dam stands intact, a short section which once spanned a rocky gully is now missing, allowing the water to run off there. Downstream of the dam, however, the wadi is filled with intensively cultivated fields, irrigated from a number of wells.

A couple of ancient dams still stand in the Wadi Aradah, also not far from Taif. The larger of these, Sadd al Darwish, is similar in construction to Thalbah and still stands nearly 10 metres high. It has been badly breached but would originally have been 150 metres long. Nearby are the remains of an old settlement.

In many other wadis are small or broken dams, some of them reduced to the foundations alone. Memory of their use has often disappeared all together. In the Wadi Sadd (valley of the dam) we asked for the ancient dam, to be told that there was none. Yet across the field we saw a great stone wall, some four to five metres high, though apparently just a terrace wall. But at one end we found the spillway of this old dam, which had silted up to the top just like Sadd Saysid.

These green valleys of the Taif region are a far cry from the wild, black volcanic valleys around the old town of Khaybar, way to the north of Al Medina. Yet in the valleys cut through the lava flows there, sheep graze, the branching doum palms grow wild, and crops can be cultivated. And in ancient times dams were constructed there too. One of these dams, Sadd Khasid, was in so good a state of preservation that it was renovated in 1975, to retain a long lake of water after the rains. Little can be seen now of its original structure, for the whole dam has been encased in concrete.

Not far away, in the Wadi as-Silsilah to the south of old Khaybar, rise the remains of Sadd Qusaybah, most massive and most spectacular of all the Hejaz dams. This mighty structure, now breached through the centre, was originally some 300 metres long and still stands about 30 metres high. It is built in a series of easily climbable steps on both faces, and tapers to a walkway along the top. Its upstream face is plastered with a yellow lime plaster, and traces of similar plaster skins can be seen inside the structure, in the cutting caused by the breach. They show that the dam was strengthened several times, by additions to its downstream side.

A complicated series of structures at the southern end of the dam must have been used for leading water away, yet there is today no sign of agriculture in this part of the valley. In the past, however, this most massive of dams must have retained a huge reservoir of water after the rains.

However, these dams, for all their vast structures, were not cut down into bedrock. Their foundations were not sufficiently soundly footed and although they might stand for centuries, a sudden exceptional storm could still cause their downfall. Sadd Qusaybah must have had a fairly long life, since it was strengthened several times, but by whom, and when, are as yet questions which remain unanswered.

Shirley Kay is author of more than a dozen volumes on the art, architecture and archaeology of the Gulf countries including *Architectural Heritage of the Gulf*.

The Relations between Ancient Egypt and The Arabian Peninsula
Continued from page 73

refer to Egypt, but to the same location as the land of the Midianites, in western Arabia.

An interesting archaeological find in northern Saudi Arabia, has also confirmed the common origin of peoples living on both sides of the gulf of Aqaba. The lion, which was the symbol of Sinai, turned out to be the symbol also of the ancient northern Arabian tribes. Figures of the lion have been discovered engraved on the sides of the Arabian mountains. This is also confirmed by the story related in Hone of the Arab scholars book about the ancient remains of northern Arabia, for Humud Bin Dawi Al-Qithami says that he found a figure of the Sphinx drawn on a wall of an ancient tomb in this area.

It is also noticeable that, while the lion gave his name to many Arab tribes "Asad" or "Laith", the lion is mentioned in much of the old Arab poetry.

The inescapable conclusion, however, is that the land of the Midianites included the areas on both sides of the gulf of Aqaba, inside Sinai as well as in north west Arabia. At the time north Arabia, in contrast to the arid picture it presents today, was an agriculturally prosperous area, while the Delta consisted largely of marshland. It is only much later in the Pharaonic period that the climatic changes resulted in much of Arabia being transformed into desert while the Delta area became the rich principal source of Egypt's food and crops.

This means that Two Lands of the Egyptian union were the Valley of the Nile, up to Aswan, and the Midianite Sinai peninsula. And it also means that the Egyptian kingdom included, from the very start of its history, some Semitic Arabs as part of the Egyptian people.

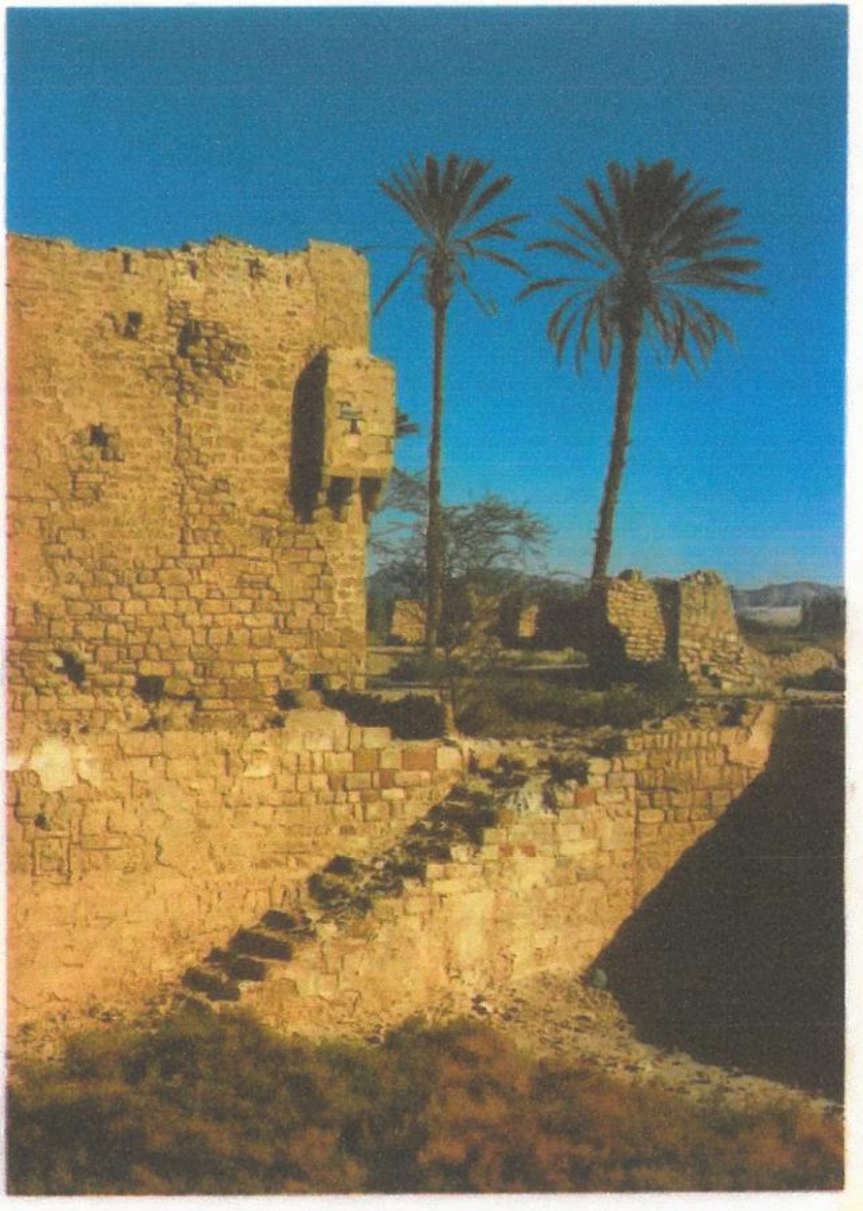
Ahmed Osman is author of a number of books on Egyptian art and archaeology.

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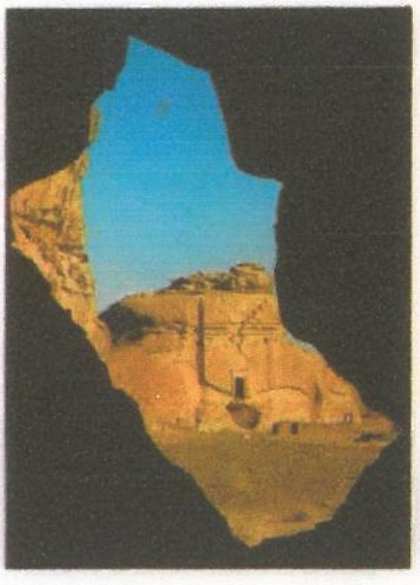
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Medain Salih



The ancient pilgrimage route to Al Medina and Makkah runs southwards through the mountains of the Hejaz. It follows the line of a yet more ancient trail, that of the great incense caravans which trekked northwards from the Yemen to the Mediterranean shores, some 2,000 years ago or more. The same route was used once again, in the early



years of this century, for the Hejaz railway, built by the Turks to provide a direct link between Damascus and Al Medina. All these routes followed the same trail through a broad sandy valley in the heart of the mountains, the valley of Al Hijr, better known today as Medain Salih, the cities of Salih.

At this spot, Medain Salih, the Turks built a small fort in the 17th century for the protection of pilgrims; in the early 20th century a main station on the Hejaz railway was built there. But the place had been even more important some two thousand years earlier, when it was established as a major station on the incense caravan route, by the Nabataeans, masters of Petra. Here too they sculpted the surrounding sandstone cliffs into magnificent tombs for their dead, just as they did at Petra.

Left: A classic tomb seen through a crevice in the rock cliffs. Above: The 17th century Turkish pilgrims' fort at the centre of Medain Salih before restoratom

Eventually almost a hundred elegant facades looked out over the sandy plain here.

Medain Salih was still a stopping place for caravans in the days of the Prophet Mohammed, and the story of its destruction is mentioned several times in the Quran. It is related that the Prophet Salih warned the people of Thamud to serve God, and presented to them a She-camel as a sign from the Lord. But they killed the camel and taunted the Prophet Salih. "So the earthquake seized them, and morning found them in their habitation fallen prostrate."

This golden valley must have seemed just as impressive, and just as eerie, to the camel men of those days as it does to the visitor today. The magnificent , architectural tomb facades, sculpted in relief from the ochre rocks, look down on the passer-by from all angles. Great eagles, or grimacing masks with twisted snakes, glower from above the doorways of some of the tombs.

Yet even before the Nabataeans began their amazing works of rock sculpture, the valley had a natural beauty of its own. Pillars and mushrooms of rock, formed by natural weathering, could almost match the works of the Nabataean masons.

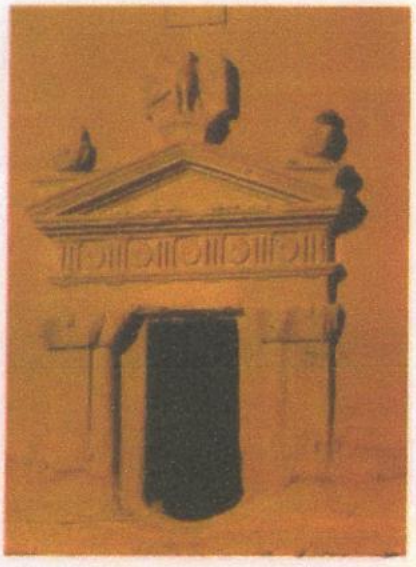
The Nabataeans established Medain Salih as a southern outpost to their domains in the first century BC. Their wealth came directly from the great incense and spice caravans, passing through their lands to the Mediterranean where their goods

were sold to Egyptians , Greeks and Romans. The Nabataeans charged a toll of 25% on the passing merchandise, in exchange for ensuring the security of the route and providing reliable water supplies.

This income was more than enough to finance their rock-cutting extravagances, and in the following century the cliffs around their settlement were honeycombed with tombs. The facades of the tombs here are very similar to the simpler, earlier styles of Petra. They are almost more impressive than those of the Nabataean capital, for they are better preserved and more homogeneous in style. The massive extravagances of the Roman-type Palace Tomb of Petra are absent here; this was a purely Nabataean settlement.

Each tomb has a high doorway giving entrance to a large square cave within. The doorway is usually flanked by a pair of square pilasters topped by plain, Nabataean capitals. Above the door there may be a decorative frieze topped perhaps by an eagle, urn or mask and serpents. High above this, on all of the tombs, are the crenellations of crow-step design so typical of Nabataean architecture. This crow-step pattern was already ancient by that time, for it has appeared in the buildings of the Assyrians centuries before. It has continued as a popular motif throughout the Arab lands, from Yemen in the south, via the traditional houses of Nejd, to Morocco in the west.

The great doorways were closed with wooden doors held fast by wooden latches. Dowel holes for door pivots and latches can still be seen in the lintels and uprights of the doorways. Inside the door, a large square room was cut from the solid rock, still showing the marks of diagonal chisel lines typical of Nabataean stonework. Inside the room individual burial places were carved out of the rock for the various members of the family. Graves were dug down into the floor and often covered with a flagstone, niches were cut in the wall, and larger loculi like walk-in cupboards some 2 metres deep were hollowed into the rock.

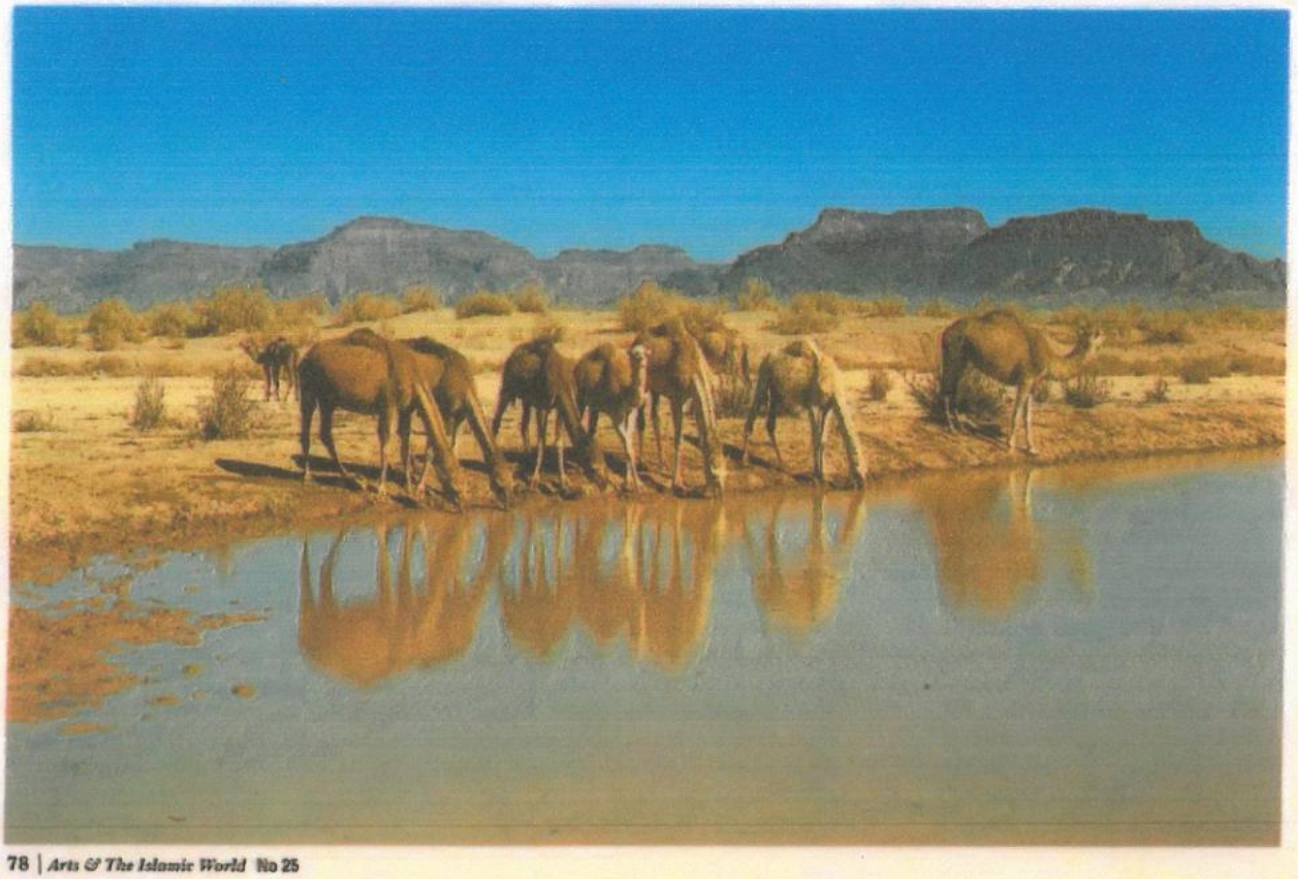


Above: A fine tomb with urns and eagle, and inscription plaque above. **Below:** The ancient route through the valley of Medain Salih provided water for caravans.

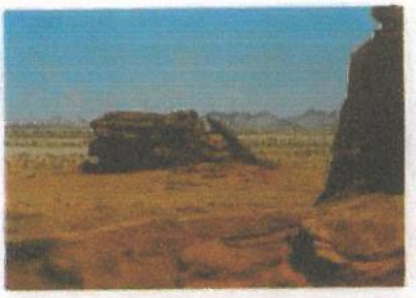
Some of these oculi still show the runnels where flagstone shelves could be slid into place. A particularly large one was found to have four shelves, each divided into three sections, to take 12 burials in all. The wall niches are often arranged at random, carved as need arose. Some are 2 metres long for adults; other very short for infants. In a few cases further niches have been closed by large slabs, some of which may have been inscribed, for a few such fragments have been found.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of these tombs, however, is the small plaque carved above the doorway of about half of the 80 or so monumental facades. Inside the plaque is a lengthy inscription in

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Rock Carvings of the Saudi Deserts







Top, left: View across plain from rock of Hanakiya. Top, right: View across plain from rock of Hanakiya. Above: Frieze of gazelles in ancient style of carvings, Hanakiya.

"It was nearly sunset when we first saw Jobba itself...with dark green palm trees cuting the pale blue of the dry lake, and beyond that a group of red rocks rising out of the pink Nefud... They are from seven hundred to eight hundred feet high... Wilfrid found several inscriptions in the Sinaitic character upon them". These words were written by Lady Anne Blunt in 1881. They are the earliest mention of the amazing rock carvings of Jubba, near the southern edge of the great Nefud desert, and include all the elements of the settings in which rock art and inscriptions are to be found in Saudi Arabia.

Throughout the country, there are rocks covered with ancient inscriptions and often with even more ancient pictures of animals and men. For these engravings, smooth clear rocks faces were chosen, often on rocks which stood out dramatically from the sands. Today these rocks frequently stand in a complete wilderness, devoid of any vegetation or apparent source of livelihood . But things must once have been different, as Lady Anne Blunt realised when she correctly spotted the dried-up lake of Jubba. This lake is now thought to have been full of water between 9,000 and 6,000 years ago, during a wetter climatic period. The oldest of the inscriptions which Wilfrid saw were of course much later, from around 2,000 years ago.

The rock carvings of Saudi Arabia provide a unique and first-hand record of life in the peninsula in ancient times. Archaeologists may make deductions about ancient cultures from the artefacts they produced, but it is a quite different matter when one can look at pictures of people of those times, drawn by the people themselves. The most ancient pictures, from a time long before written records, show men armed with spears and shields, bows and arrows, daggers, axes and throwing sticks. They wear short jerkins or loin clothes , necklaces or torques, sometimes anklets, and usually headdresses. Complex headdresses, shaped like large inverted combs are clearly seen on a remarkable frieze on a rock outcrop at Sakaka, north of the Nefud and close to the major caravan route from the Nejd to the Mediterranean, which ran through Jubba itself.

Even more informative can be the writings carved into the rocks between about 500 BC and the coming of Islam. The one great problem, in making use of these extraordinarily ancient textbooks, is that of interpretation. Reading and understanding the ancient writings is a field of study of its own, to which epigraphists devote their life's work. Interpreting and dating the rock pictures is even more complex, the subject of continuing research over the years.

The most obvious and easily comprehensible carvings are those which appear in clear white or pale yellow lines on the rocks, and are written in Arabic. The inscriptions are often prayers, or giving thanks to Allah, or simply stating the writer's name. Some are accounts of historic events or property rights, such as an early Kufic inscription on one of the ancient dams near Taif, giving the date of construction and the name of the Caliph for whom it was built. These Arabic inscriptions may often be accompanied by an isolated mark, a U-shape, or circle, or cross, or hook; these are the tribal marks, the *wasm*, of the bedouin. They are used to identify animals, or territory, as belonging to a certain tribe. Beside them may be pecked a picture of a camel or a palm tree, or a scene of camel or horse riders, perhaps hunting or battling with each other.

A little darker than these Arabic writings and pictures are the inscriptions in more ancient scripts, mostly in Thamudic - the script of northern Arabia, but also in the writings of southern Arabia - of the Yemen, in Nabataean - the script of Petra and Medain Salih, and in Lihyanite. These inscriptions may record historic events; deciphering them enables the history of the incense kingdoms and caravan trade to be pieced together. They may record property rights and warn against tresspassing, like the Nabataean inscriptions above the tombs of Medain Salih: "May Dusares



and Martaba and Allat curse anyone who sells this tomb, or buys it, or mortgages it, or removes the bodies from it..." Or they may simply give the name of the writer, and perhaps the reason for his passing. Some 2,000 years ago, it seems to have been commonplace for any passing camel man to carve his name or prayer into the rocks, and this at a time when northern Europe was still illiterate and would be so for many years to come.

The inscriptions of this period are often accompanied by pictures of camels, equids, ibex, goat, sheep, gazelles, and stick-like human figures often riding camels or horses. These pictures therefore can be dated to between 1,500 and 2,500 years ago, and they show the animals which were important to the people of those times. often, however, they are carved over other drawings which must therefore be older than those of Thamudic times. Indeed, some rocks contain a veritable picture gallery of strange, exotic carvings, laid at random one above another in a complicated muddle of pictures which may be very difficult to untangle. While the camel pictures show brightly, white or yellow in colour, some of the animals in these friezes are so dark that they are no different in colour from the rocks on which they are carved. Over the centuries they have acquired a patina which grows darker and darker as time goes by.

These very dark pictures show a rather different range of animals from the lighter ones. Typical and most common of all the animals shown in this very early rock art are cattle; cattle with very long horns (like those of eastern Africa today), and short-horned ones as well. Today no cattle could live wild in Saudi Arabia; dairy herds there must be carefully kept in cooled environments and fed with specially grown food. Along with the cattle, in the some scenes, are dogs, ibex, equids, gazelle, goats or sheep, occasionally lions. Most noticeable too are the many carvings of human figures, some stick-like but many realistically carved.

Most famous of the rock art sites in Saudi Arabia are the rocks of Jubba in the Nefud, rocks of the Taif region, and the great rock of Hanakiya not far from Al Medina. The flat-topped, straight-sided sandstone rock of Hanakiya rises abruptly from the plain like a large stone letter X. Its smooth, cliff-like surfaces have appealed to rock artists over a very long period of time. Some of the pictures there are very light-coloured and bright, others are the colour of the rock itself. The light-coloured pictures appear on the lower rocks, men on camels, ostrich, *wasms*, date palms.

High above are amazingly beautiful friezes of gazelles, ibex, and especially men herding oxen with giant horns. The oxen are drawn in a strange and very specific way, their bodies seen from the side, their heads and horns in profile as seen from above, as though the artist had stood on the rock looking down on the passing herds, and been impressed by the great horns. These cattle have straight backs, unlike the hump-backed zebu catle kept by villagers today. They are often shown with large patches on their bodies, possibly colour markings, or perhaps a saddle or trappings.

The men with them are tall and thin, drawn almost life size. They seem to wear short jerkins and a feather in their hair, or is it a plait or a headdress? This hook-like projection from the head is common in ancient carvings all over the kingdom. Sometimes the men carry a tool which looks like an axe; the same tool may also be carved by itself. At their feet run a few dogs. These men look as though they are herding the cattle, but other scenes have been found on the rocks of the Asir where the cattle have been speared with several spears, and the men were clearly hunting them.

These ancient carvings at Hanakiya are beautifully executed, deeply engraved then polished, and they have acquired a patina as dark as that of the rock in which they were carved. Today it is impossible to imagine that the plain below could have supported herds of cattle; when these pictures were cut the climate must have been wetter, relating perhaps to the time when the lake at Jubba was full of water.

A detailed study of the age of the rock carvings was made by Emmanuel Anati in his 4-volume work *Rock Art in Central Arabia*. He studied the weapons carried by the men in these darkest of carvings and found, for instance, that a dagger at a man's belt was similar to ones found in the Middle East of 2,300 BC. Square shields were like those shown in frescoes at Beni Hassan in Egypt, from the 1,900 BC. Double curved bows on several pictures are known from Egypt in the 4th and 3rd millennia BC.

The earliest pictures, Anati thought, were those showing Indian elephant, wild bear, rhinoceros, wild ox and fallow deer. These he placed before 6,000 BC. Then suddenly the pictures show cattle above all else. Cattle were first domesticated in the Middle East in the 6th millennium, so these could have been brought to Arabia not long after 6,000 BC. The friezes in which they appear may have been made between 6,000 and 4,000 BC (coinciding nicely with the geological dating of the Jubba lake).

Apart from the patina of the pictures, the way in which they were engraved can also give a clue to their age. Here, as in many other aspects of human endeavour, the earlier works are often the better ones. Initially the outline of the pictures was chipped out with a flint or other hard stone. Soon this outline was polished to give a smoother effect, then the whole of the engraved surface of the picture was polished (as at Hanakiya). A simpler method, and that used in more recent pictures, was to peck the whole picture , or simply its outline, with a hard stone. A better result could be obtained by indirect pecking, holding a pointed stone against the surface of the rock and hitting it with a hammer stone. This gives a close control of the carving, and the effect of light and shade.

The engravings are carved on a wide variety of rock faces, from the red-gold sandstones of Jubba, Al Ula and Hanakiya, to the black basalt rocks of the Taif area. The Saudi archaeological authorities have in recent years carried out an extensive survey to record all rock carvings throughout the land. The results are impressive. In the Khaybar, Yanbu, Medain Salih triangle, for example, some 5,500 pictures of animals were found, and this is an area better known for its inscriptions than for any ancient picture carvings.

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Opposite page: Rocks near Taif, Long horned cattle and other figures,perhaps 4000 BC. Photographs by Shirley Kay.

Arms and Armour in Saudi Arabia

Robert Elgood

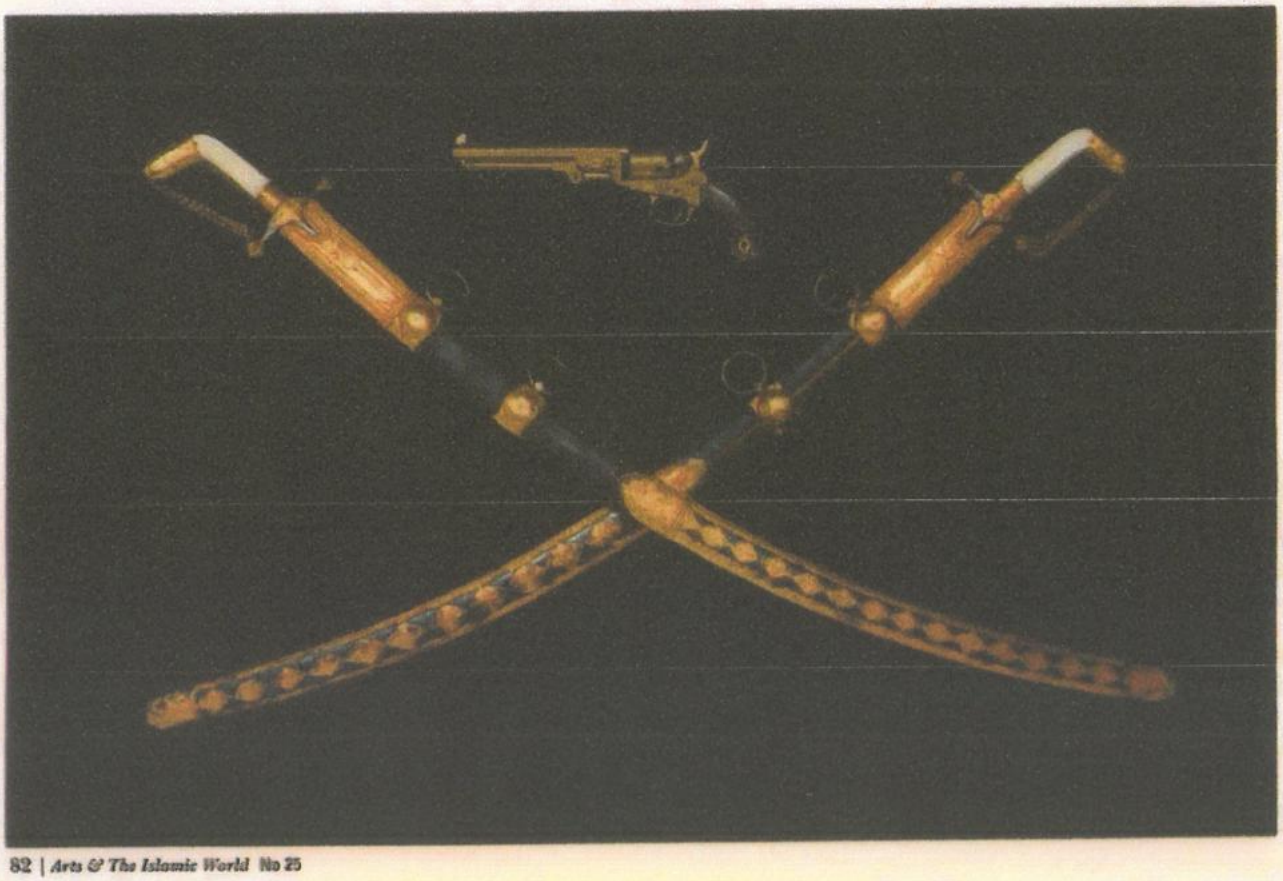
The personal arms and armour of the Arabs of Arabia were arguably amongst their most valuable possessions, together with their horses and camels. They are as much a symbol of the old Arabia as Arab hospitality, chivalry and religious piety. These qualities are still to be found in 20th century Arabia but the arms of Arabia are disappearing, and with them the traditions and tribal history that were so much a part of the country. It is to be hoped that something of this may be saved for future generations.

The broad silver dagger is one of the most instantly recognisable symbols of Arabia, called a khanjar or janbiyaa as it is known on the western side of Arabia. In Najd, the Badu prefer the words 'giddamiyyah' meaning a large-bladed knife or 'shibriyyah' (from Shibr - a hand's span) meaning a small, curved, double-edged dagger. The 19th century English traveller, Doughty, in his book 'Arabia Deserta', wrote that "The crooked girdle knife (khanjar) is seldom seen among them, which the Beduins name rather kiddamiyyah and shibriyyah for all such wares of the far border lands, and this is a deep wilderness of dearth and misery."

The dagger in the Arabian Peninsula is a symbol of manhood and also of social standing. There is a Hijazi idiomatic saying "I would silver my dagger" meaning "I would raise myself up in the world". The traditional manner by which a Bedouin might "raise himself up" was by the raid. These raids were not without danger. 'Auda abu Tayy of the Huwaitat, a famous warrior at the beginning of the century, led his fighting men as far as Aleppo, Basra, Wejh and Wadi Dawasir. In thirty years his warriors had been reduced from 1200 to less than 500. When T.E. Lawrence met him he had slain 74 Arabs with his own hand in battle and he kept no tally of the Turks. It was said that he liked to be at enmity with most of the desert tribes so as to have proper scope for his raids. A successful raid would bring personal glory and generally resulted in few deaths and considerable booty. Amongst the most sought-after boot along with horses and camels, were fine weapons. A 19th century poem portrays the return of a sunburnt warrior with a captured mare very clearly:

"al-asmar alli gadha
wal-bai ma yatri 'aleih
ya mahala jawz ar-radani
wimgariz yazhi aleih.

Dark skinned is he who leads her





Opposite page: Pair of Gold Saudi swords. Courtesy of Sotheby & Co. **This page:** Gold sword (*seif*) presented by King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud to Lord Athlone in 1928. It has a Persian watered steel blade. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum.

And to sell her will not occur to him
Oh, how sweet to carry two pistols
And a spear, too, rising above the rider."

So what were the arms that the Arabs fought with and coveted? First and foremost was the Arab sword or 'saif'. Gerald de Gaury visited King Ibn Saud in 1935 and described his swords:

"...the King has one of his swords always near him. There is Al Ajrab, 'the rusty from blood', and Raqban, 'the severer of necks,' or Al Khafiq, 'the cleaver'... There is Khataf, 'the snatcher', or Suwailah, the sword of his great ancestor Turki bin Saud's Negro favourite, and several others. These old swords seem to the Arabs to have a character of their own, and they recount their histories with zest. There is a saying about Al Ajrab, the rusty one: 'In the day when companions desert me there is ever Al Ajrab I press to my heart, a trustier friend than they."



A Hadhramani dagger known as an 'abdi with a prominent 'thum' or garlic on the end of the scabbard or jiffar. The central dagger is called a Shafra or blade in the South and by the 'Ajman in north eastern Arabia. Northern Arabs would use the word khusa. Omani Khanjar. Author's collection.

The author is informed by HH Prince Mish'al bin Sa'ud that it is now privately owned in Bahrain and other swords of distinction can be seen in the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies in Riyadh.

Across society the sword was held in high esteem. Some were made locally but many of the best blades to be found in Saudi Arabia are of Persian type with watered steel blades which the Arabs refer to as 'jauhar'. Due to the folding of high and low carbon steel during the construction process these blades have various patterns associated with certain well-known sword-producing centres. One of the most famous is the ladder pattern which represents the rungs of the ladder by which the Prophet ascended to Heaven. The pattern on the blade was an indication of excellence of the smithing, usually associated with a known manufacturing centre of excellence and therefore reflected the probable reliability of the blade to withstand the stress of combat. Burckhardt, in 1830, wrote that "the Arabs esteem very highly the Persian blades, but are not qualified to judge their real value and often purchase from the travelling pedlars for 80 or 100 piastres, blades of damasked steel not worth more than 20." Many of the watered steel swords which are in appearance Persian, and which the Arabs used to associate with Damascus which was a market for such blades, came in fact from Sirohi, with its slightly curved blade as formed like that of Damascus and states that the commercial houses of Rajasthan traded with Persia, Arabia, Africa and Europe.

Whatever the origin of the blade, the Arabs mount them with handles and scabbards which distinctively reflect local jewellery work. A characteristic of the swords of Saudi Arabia is the presence in stylised form of an 'agrab or scorpion on the locket or mouth of the scabbard with the mandibles lying on either side of the langet. The symbolism of a sword blade like a scorpion's sting is obvious but the 'agrab originally served a less obvious purpose which was to ward off the evil eye which was done either by portraying something repellent or else by a mirror or shiny object to reflect the malice from an object which was greatly coveted. To this day there is no great admiration for watered steel blades in Arabia which are encountered occasionally at the tribal dances and weddings to which swords are brought. Next to the Persian swords, the Arabs used to rate the Indian blade known as 'al Hindi'. The Hindi blade is mentioned in the poems as a simile for brightness. In one example, camel's nose is described as glistening 'like the blade of an Indian sword'. Many of these reached Central Arabia from the Hadramaut and Yemen, where the Arabs used to refer to a good sword as 'muhannad' meaning an Indian sword. The Prophet Muhammad himself owned a Hindi sword of Yemeni tempering.

Other swords entered Arabia from Europe and in the nineteenth century the Caucasus and Bulgaria supplied blades. The sword remained in use by the Arabs as a fighting weapon as long as available firearms remained predominantly single-shot and in tribal society therefore retained its value as a weapon well into the 20th century. It was probably last used in the hands of large numbers of combatants at the battle of Sibila in 1929.

The Arabs disliked firearms because they detracted from the traditional warrior skills. In this respect, they mirrored the equestrian nobilities of neighbouring states. Firearms arrived in the Arabian peninsula as a result of the Mamluk

and Ottoman response to the arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean at the beginning of the 16th century. A contemporary history of the Yemen describes the arrival of the matchlock in the hands of the Turks:

> 'The soldiers of the Lord of the Room (Rum) were armed with musket-bows with which they took aim. It is a most wonderful weapon, and whoever confronts it must be overcome. It is something like a gun, (cannon) only it is longer and thinner. It is hollow, and in this hollow is inserted a piece of lead as large as a lote berry, and it is filled with powder, and then discharged by means of a match at the bottom of the musket, and if it strikes anyone he must perish, for it goes in at one side of him and comes out at the other.'

The matchlock spread very slowly across the tribes of Arabia and the bow retained its dominance well into the 18th century. This was in part due to the unreliability and expense of firearms, to their scarcity, and to the fact that the Prophet himself had encouraged his followers to practise with a bow so that archery was considered a meritorious action. Few of the Sheikhs had pistols, which were rare amongst the Bedouin, even as late as the end of the 19th century. Sir Richard Burton, in 1855 said that pistols were introduced into the Hijaz and were not common among the Bedouin. Doughty was staying at a Bedouin camp south of Ha'il, which had recently lost some camels to a raiding party. Wondering from which tribe the raiders had come , the tribesmen agreed that it was from the North because they had seen them armed with pistols. Town-dwellers within Arabia liked the weapon because it came from Istanbul or Cairo and was a measure of sophistication. The old European export flintlock holster pistols were known as 'el Engleysey'. The attitude of the Arabs to firearms was personified by Farris, Sheikh of the Northern Shammar, who refused a generous gift of a modern rifle and pistol from the Blunts in the 1870s, though he greatly enjoyed shooting with them:

> 'No, he said. I am better as my fathers were, without firearms...'

In 1911 Gertrude Bell encountered the same Northern Shammar still 'carrying the long spears that are planted before the tent door'.

The lance in Northern Arabia was known as a shalfa or rumh. It was made either from a light reed found on the banks of the rivers of Mesopotamia or rattans brought from India. Al Jahiz, writing in the early 9th century, records how the early Arab reed lances were tipped with ox horn, which in due course changed to iron but otherwise remained unchanged from the time of the Prophet to the present century. Many travellers have described the mock fights on horseback, when the Arabs practised the use of the lance.

> "In the exercise with the lance the rider endeavours to put the point of it upon the shoulder of his adversary, thus showing that his life is in his power. When the parties become heated, they often bear off upon their lances the turbans of their adversaries, and carry them about with insolent vociferation."

Spears in Northern Arabia were approximately two horse lengths long, a little under fourteen feet, though there were also spears 25 feet long which were particularly useful in trying to guide two captured camels while seated on a third. These remained in use sufficiently recently to be shown in early photographs. Amongst many tribes, the lance was ornamented with two balls of ostrich feathers placed below the head. If these were ash grey, they symbolised the heroism of the owner of the spear while black feathers, sometimes covering the grey, signified cowardice. These were planted before the tent door, thereby indicating the prowess or cowardice of the owner. If two hostile parties of Bedouin met, it was customary for them to halt outside matchlock range and for individuals to met in single combat, without interference from their companions. Conflict can be seen in the towns as wellas amongst the tribes. For example, riots (hoshah) used to occur frequently in Makkah, the participants armed with nabbuts, described as 'goodly ashen staves six feet long, thick as a man's wrist, well-greased and tried in many a rough bout'. Injury caused by them was not considered felonious as a similar wound from a sword or gun would be. To avoid the Turkish authorities, the members of rival wards within the town would meet at pre-arranged places and riots would take place, usually outside Makkah. The foot of Abu Qebes hill is mentioned as the site of such fracas. In order to prevent unrestrained feuds developing, the sheikhs of the respective wards would meet and arrange a peace settlement (naqa). The two wards would meet for a feast, but before eating anyone responsible for causing a wound would step forward and wound himself with a knife until the other side was satisfied and called 'enough'. Bread and salt shared between the parties then bound the peace.

The Biblical King David was reputedly the first person to make mail, a fact enshrined in the Qur'an:

> 'On David we bestowed Our favours. We said: "Mountains and you birds, echo his songs of praise." We made hard iron pliant to Him, saying: 'Make coats of mail and measure their links with care. Do what is right: I am watching over all your actions.' The Qur'an 34:8

Coats of mail were extremely expensive and comparatively rare. Burckhardt describes them:

> 'The light Wahaby chief, Ibn Saud, constantly wore one under his shirt. The Wahabys esteem highly the coat of the mail. Saud had in his possession an ancient and celebrated coat of mail, which once belonged to the famous Drar el Deyghemy, the owner of the horse Mashour, a hero well known in Arabian history. A coat of mail of the finest quality (which is called Daoudy) costs from 500 to 1000 dollars...'

Mail shirts are mentioned in jahiliyya poetry as highly desirable objects which were themselves the objects of tribal raids. From before the time of the Prophet until the twentieth century, the way of life and the arms and armour of tribal Arabia changed very little. Within one lifespan they have passed into history and are in danger of passing into oblivion.

Dr Robert Elgood is the author of *The Arms and Armour of Arabia in the 18th-19th and 20th Centuries*, and is currently completing a catalogue of the Islamic Firearms in the Tareq Rajab Museum, Kuwait.

The Society for Arabian Studies

Sarah Searight

The scene of Arabian studies has changed dramatically over the last fifteen years. The rise in oil prices and of incomes in the countries of the peninsula has led to the establishment of educational institutions throughout the region and the funding of Arabian studies in other parts of the world, not least in British universities. The peninsula has also attracted the attention of many foreign academics previously specialising in Iran and Iraq, areas which today are less accessible to the foreign field worker. These are some of the reasons which led to the establishment of the Society for Arabian Studies in 1988.

The Society began as a less ambitious committee. During 1969 the government of Bahrain found itself about to become the host of the Third Conference in Asian Archaeology, which was to be held in the capital, Manama, in March 1970. The government was keen to use the occasion to extend its archaeological connections beyond the limits of the Danish Forhistorisk Museum at Moesgaard, near Aarhus in Jutland, which, up to that point, had provided most of the archaeologists and representatives of other disciplines who had been working in the island since the early 1950s.

Through their contacts in london the government invited Sir Mortimer Wheeler, the secretary of the British academy, to attend the conference, Sir Mortimer, in turn, proposed that Dame Kathleen Kenyon and Sir Laurence Kirwan would add to the archaeological importance of the conference and they were also invited to attend.

Among the British scholars who also attended the conference was Dr Richard Barnett, Keeper of Western Asiatic Antiquities at the British Museum. Barnett and his colleagues were impressed with the material excavated from Bahraini sites, at a time when the archaeology of Bahrain and the Gulf was virtually unknown outside a very small group of scholars, diplomats and people with some connection with the States. The political relationship between Bahrain, other Gulf states and Britain was undergoing profound change at the time and it was thought timely to consider a declaration of commitment to the region's archaeology by British interests.

Back in London therefore a Committee for East Arabian and Gulf Studies was formed, with terms of reference that allowed it to promote fields of study or research in addition to archaeology. Sir Mortimer Wheeler was its first chairman. From the outset the Committee was able to initiate and carry through some valuable work. The first British archaeological expedition since Mackay's in 1926 worked in Bahrain for several seasons, at Al-Markh (where the first Ubaid-related material from Bahrain was found) and at Diraz East where an enigmatic temple structure was excavated. British archaeologists have continued to investigate Bahrain's past, among them Society committee member, Dr Harriet Crawford (University College, London) and her colleague Dr Robert Killick.

Early in its existence, too, the Committee took part in a research project in Qatar to meet the requirements of the Qatari government which was establishing a national Museum. The project was led by Miss Beatrice de Cardi, currently the Society's President. Discoveries of considerable importance were made and led to a major publication, Qatar Archaeological Report: Excavations 1973 (OUP, 1978).

By the 1980s British scholars were playing an increasingly active role in the exploration of all aspects of Arabia's history, culture and environment. In 1988, therefore, the Committee decided to upgrade its activities to those of a Society. Miss de Cardi chaired its executive committee for five years while it set about recruiting members amongst those, abroad as well as in Britain, who were interested in Arabia. The Society has also developed important links in other countries operating in the same field.

The Society's committee members, past and present, have played a vital part in developing the study of the peninsula. One of the most active promoters of interest in Arabia's past has been Mr Michael Rice, a founding member of both Committee and Society, author of a number of books on Bahrain and Egypt and responsible for the establishment of museums in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman. Mr Peter Parr (University College, London), another founding member of the Society, was one of the first in the archaeological field, taking part in 1968 in the first major survey of north-west Saudi Arabia, together with Mr John Dayton and Mr Gerald Lankester Harding. Mr Parr also participated in the first five-year archaeological survey of the Kingdom, as well as excavating at Dumat al-Jandal. Dr Geoffrey King (SOAS, London), currently the Society's Vice Chairman, excavated the site of Al-Rabadhah for six seasons, as well as publishing a survey of Saudi Arabian mosques. His study of Saudi vernacular architecture will be published shortly. Dr John Healey of Manchester University has worked on Nabataean sites in the Kingdom. In other parts of the peninsula, too, British and other foreign scholars have been elucidating the past. Professor Rex Smith, also of Manchester University and a former vice chairman of the committee, is the leading British scholar in the field of medieval Yemeni studies; he has also been responsible for supervising the studies of many Saudi students at British universities. Dr Venetia Porter of the British Museum has specialised in the history of Yemen's Tahirid dynasty. In the UAE 4th and 3rd millennia BC settlements have been excavated, revealing dynamic agricultural societies with trading

contacts and Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley. Miss de Cardi crossed the Gulf from Baluchistan to Ras al-Khaimah in 1968 to study possible cultural links between those regions in the third-second millennia BC. She has carried out extensive surveys in both Oman and the UAE and assisted in the selection and arrangement of archaeological material to be displayed in the National Museum of Ras al-Khaimah. She will be lecturing on her work, *Seeking the past from Baluchistan to Arabia*, on October 12th, at 5.30 pm, at the Institute of Archaeology; non-members as well as members are most welcome to attend the occasion.

Activities by other committee members include an epigraphic project led by Dr Geraldine King in Dhofar, Oman, in 1991-1992; this recorded inscriptions found in mountain caves behind Salalah, in a script related to other South Semitic scripts but with new features, so far undeciphered.

At the request of the Ruler of Abu Dhabi and President of the UAE, Shaikh Zayed al-Nahyan, Dr Geoffrey King (SOAS) has directed three seasons of survey and mapping of the western littoral and islands of the emirate. Excavations have been carried out on Dalma and Sir Bani Yas islands where sites of special interest were threatened and attention was drawn to the need to protect several later Islamic mosques on Dalma.

Dr King has also directed the British team participating in an international excavation of Julfar, a medieval Islamic port in Ras al-Khaimah. The study of Ras al-Khaimah's history has also benefitted from the work of Mr Derek Kennet on the emirate's towers and forts, so many of which dot its coastline and hinterland; the Society is publishing his report later this year.

Mr Carl Phillips (University College, London) carried out emergency excavations for the government of Ras al-Khaimah on second-first millennium BC sites at risk in the Wadi al-Qawr. He also directed work on behalf of the Society, which cooperated in international excavations at ed-Dur, in Umm al-Qaiwan. He is currently engaged in excavations in the emirate of Sharjah in conjuction with that government. Early in 1994 the Society negotiated the establishment of a British Archaeological Mission in Yemen, now operating as a semi-autonomous body under the Society's umbrella, and chaired by Professor Rex Smith. Dr Geoffrey King has already undertaken a survey of the Abyan area in southern Yemen but sadly further developments in Yemen will have to wait the return of peace to that country. The Society has previously sponsored geological and ornithological expeditions to Yemen.

As can be seen from the above, the Society exists to support and encourage research in Arabia and to make the results as widely known as possible, in particular through an annual newsletter and a series of wide-ranging lectures on Arabia's environment, architecture, history and culture throughout the year. Looking to the future, it aims to increase grants in support of academic research projects in Arabia; to establish a permanent centre in Britain where an archive of source material on the peninsula can be housed and made available to scholars; and to develop student exchanges so that more students are enabled to undertake research in Arabia and in Arabian studies in Britain.

Sadly its activities are limited by lack of funds . It receives no government funds and is largely dependent on the subscriptions of its members. The Arabian peninsula is home to dynamic, rapidly developing societies whose history, culture and environment are as vulnerable to progress in the present as in so many parts of the world. The Society for Arabian Studies, a registered charity, exists to elucidate those aspects of the peninsula but desperately needs the funds to do so.

All those concerned with the same cause, may please contact the Society's Honorary Secretary for further details, including membership, c/o The British Academy, 20 Cornwall Terrace, London NW1 4QP.

Sarah Searight is a Middle East specialist, and is General Secretary of the Society for Arabian Studies.

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Aramaic script, giving the name of the owner of the tomb and his relations to be buried there, the name of the stone mason, and a caution against desecrating his tomb.

Husabu's inscription, cut in 5 AD., is typical, appealing as it does to Dusares, patron god of the Nabataeans of Al Hijr; "This is the tomb and enclosures made by Husabu, son of Nafiyu son of Alkuf, of Tayma, for himself and his children and Habu his mother, and Rufu and Aftiyu his sisters and their children. It is sacred according to the sacred things of the Nabataeans and Salamians for ever. And Dusares will damn any who bury in this tomb other than those mentioned above, and who sell or buy or mortgage or rent or give away or receive this tomb. Whoever infringes what is written above will be held responsible to Dusares for the violation, for the total sum of 1,000 drachmas, and to our lord, King Haretat also. In the month of Shubat of the 13th year of Haretat, king of the Nabataeans, who loves his people".

Many of the inscriptions give the status or rank of the owner, who was often a military officer, but in some cases it was a woman who had the tomb built. They also name the stone mason who carved it. Abd'obodat was a leading mason, followed by his three sons, Aftah, Wahballahi and Abdharetat who continued his craft. Between them they made many tombs, but the styles of their carvings seem to have depended more on the taste and wealth of their patron, than on the masons themselves.

One cave stands out as different to the rest, and that is the huge cave known as the Diwan, carved at the entrance to the gorge ("*Siq*") running into the interior of Jebel Ithlib. This open fronted cave is huge, 10 metres wide by 12 metres deep, and has stone benches running along three sides, and stone pilasters at the corners. It was clearly a meeting place, a triclinium used for sacred banquets. On the cliff face near it and along the *Siq* many niches containing cult figures and sacred blocks of stone have been carved. For the whole rock outcrop of Jebel Ithlib seems to have been a sanctuary, centered on an enclosed open space at the heart of the Jebel. Around this space rooms have been cut in the rock and many more cult niches. Steps lead up from it to a small plateau, a "high place". dominated by a large stone stele with a face carved on it. A rock cut gully leads water down from rock cisterns at the top of the Jebel to the open space at its centre.

Until very recently these monuments and plaques provided the only direct evidence concerning the life of Medain Salih two thousand years ago. Unlike Petra, there were no massive ruins of stone buildings in evidence. The only sign that anyone had ever lived there (apart from the fact that obviously many had died there) was a scatter of stones and broken pottery, a few remnants of stone pillars and basins, in places along the sandy floor of the valley.

In 1985, however, the Department of Antiquities and Museums began a series of excavations in Medain Salih. They were concentrated on the area with the most surface debris, between the rock outcrop of Qasr al Bint and the railway, to the south of the fort and railway station. These excavations have revealed the walls of numerous buildings, walls built of sandstone and clay a few of them with well dressed stone courses. The archaeologists found that the earlier Nabataean buildings were better made than later ones.

Among the buildings were sherds of the fine burnished Nabataean pottery, glazed Persian pottery, Roman lamps, fragments of glass, and terracotta figurines of Egyptian gods. the debris of their settlement confirmed the wide-spread trading links of the amazingly successful Nabataean tribe, whose language is thought to be the origin of modern Arabic.

S K

Problems *of* **Art Education** *in the* **Islamic World**

Proceedings of the 3rd International Seminar on Islamic Arts

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The Art Collection of the US Embassy, Riyadh

Dale Egee

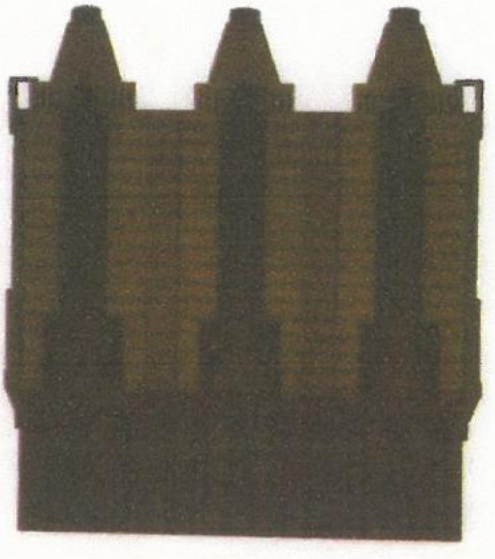
In 1984 Egee Art Consultancy was retained to commission and assemble an art collection for the new American Embassy in Riyadh. The brief was that the artwork should reflect the similarities between the culture of the two countries and to highlight American artists, especially any whose work reflected an appreciation of Saudi or Islamic culture.

The geographical similarities were striking: vast deserts, port cities on East and West coasts, oil rigs, modern skyscrapers. These were reflected in photographs, enlarged to 2 x 3 metres and more. Similar landscapes were hung side by side: it was difficult to know whose drifting dune it was. The desert was also reflected in a huge all white tapestry by American artist Vsoske.

The handicrafts of the two continent-sized countries revealed many similarities. American Indian and Saudi Bedouin craftsmen and craftswomen worked with leather extensively. They often used similar motifs: triangles, step shapes, dot patterns. They used the same unmixed shades: bright red, blue, yellow, green. They featured beads and decorative beading.

Both Saudis and Americans embellished everyday objects and this included carved furniture and doors. I had long been struck by the beauty of carved doors throughout the Kingdom and hung them as sculptural artworks on the walls in the Mobil Oil offices and elsewhere. For the US Embassy in Riyadh, I commissioned a life-size stained glass panel from an American artist, Brenda Belfield. I asked her to study books on Saudi handicrafts and prepare a design appropiate to her medium. She proposed a handsome life-size door design, complete with a chunky Saudi frame. We hung it against a floor-to-ceiling glass wall in the Ambassadorial suite, where it sparkles in the strong light. Nearby is an antique Saudi door, a gift from Mobil. They look fine together.

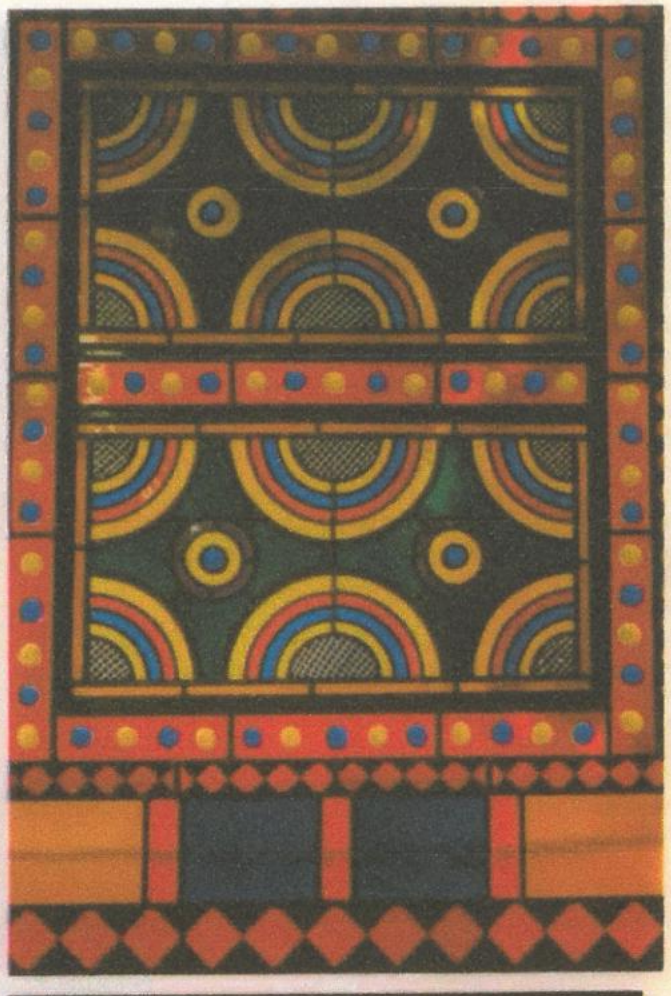
Most people don't imagine there can be similarities between the calligraphy of Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries and the United States and Western countries. On the contrary, Western European writing was influenced by Arabic calligraphy, the numbers, as well (Arabic numerals). I did some research and put together a collection of American 18th and 19th Century calligraphy. I found students' exercise sheets, demonstrating cursive 'copperplate' style penmanship and including 'Arabesques'. I assembled these on a panel with plume pens and ink pots. A separate Arabic panel focused on students' work sheets in Arabic





Left: Michael Graves, American architect – Pen and Ink Drawing. **Bottom:** Arabic calligraphy.







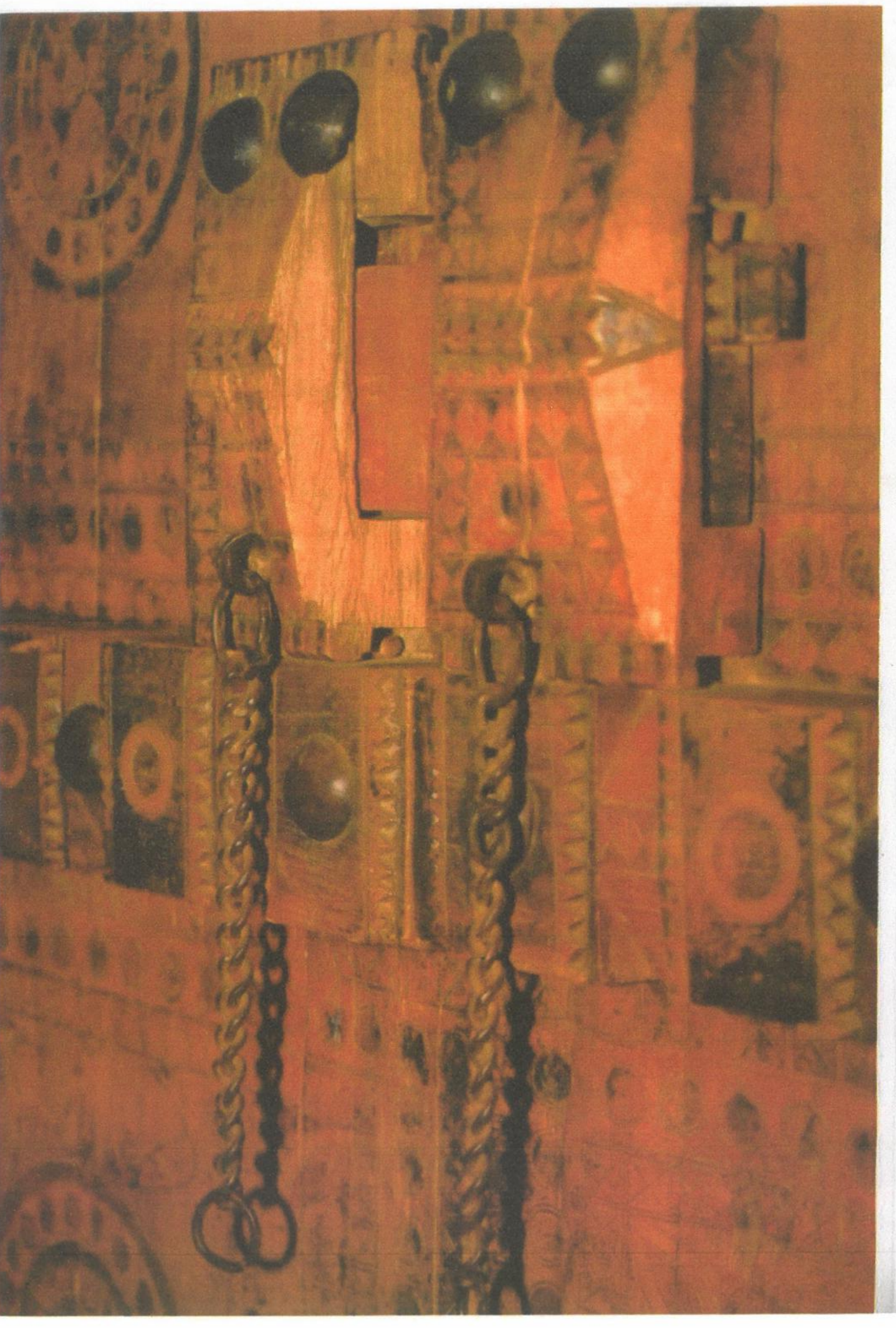


This page, top left: Arab and American Musical instruments" – Painting by Christopher Harrison. Top right: Stained glass panel by Barbara Brand, inspired by a Saudi door. Right: Detail, Pennsylvania Dutch quilt – USA. Above: Tapestry on Saudi desert theme by US artist Vsoska. Opposite page: Traditional Saudi door. Photographs by Kate Brennan.

calligraphy. There were reed pens and an antique pen holder. I included bottles of the raw ingredients some calligraphers still use to make their own ink, including soot (from the Arabic 'siout', black), oak galls and gum Arabic(!)

I wonder if any of the American Embassy personnel or their visitors have reflected on the West's abandonment of an elegant script in favor of typescript while most of the Muslim countries have managed to

continued on page 96



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The Arts Scene: An Overview

Azra J Ahmed

Two recent exhibitions of contemporary Saudi art in some ways symbolise the long distance already covered by the art movement there, and the limitations which still beset it, as young artists have often to get accepted abroad before they can find appreciative viewers at home. One was a composite show in London displaying the works of more than 40 Saudi artists, put together by the Plastic Arts Committee of the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts; and the other was a solo exhibition in Jeddah by a young woman painter Maha Mufti whose work has been seen in many countries, but this was her first in her own country.

As one of the participating artists put it, the efforts of early artists in the Kingdom did encounter some difficulties "like art movements elsewhere, but is that not true of younger artists in most countries?"

Indeed it was only in 1957 that "drawing" was approved as a subject for the prescribed curriculum of the secondary schools and some technical institutes, and it was not long before the first Saudi plastic arts exhibition was held in Saudi Arabia under the patronage of the late King Saud. By the academic year 1962-63, the Ministry of Education had already started specialised courses for the training of art teachers, and the art movement was beginning to take shape.

One of the best known Saudi artists, Safeya Binzagr, recalls those early years in her career, in a sumptuous volume published in 1979, *Saudi Arabia: An Artist's View of the Past*. "In 1967 I met a Saudi artist Monira Mousley, who was attending Cairo Fine Arts College. We began thinking about the need for making art a part of Saudi culture and the school curriculum. We decided that an exhibition of our work would be the best means of introducing art to the country. Although I would have tried to have a public exhibition on my own in Saudi Arabia, support from another woman artist made it easier to work towards public recognition."

In the years since then Saudi artists have been participating in many regional and international exhibitions, including the Biennials in Cairo, Kuwait, Ankara and Alexandria. Works of contemporary artists are acquired by government agencies as well as many individual collectors. One-person and group shows of Saudi artists have been held in many Western capitals, such as the 1994 exhibition in London with more than eighty works on display, which drew commendation from a wide range of viewers.

Reproduced here are some of the works which were on show in London, as well as one of Maha Mufti's paintings exhibited at the Rida Gallery in Jeddah this summer.

Art Galleries

There are today a number of privately owned picture selling galleries in Riyadh, Jeddah, Al Khobar, Dhahran and Dammam. Some of these offer space - even occasional sponsorship - for exhibitions of contemporary paintings, ceramics, jewellery and handicrafts. They also provide a range of services, from advice on interior decoration and framing to acquisitions of works for developing a private collection of art objects.

One of these is the Art Line Gallery in Riyadh, run by Paul Rivas under the guidance and supervision of Abdulrahman D Olayan, offering what they identify as "a wide selection of the very best in art in the Kingdom, together with specialised services to meet each and every need of the client."

Khalil Museum

Jeddah also boasts of an extensive privately owned museum named after its owner, Abdul Raouf Hasan Khalil. A modest, soft spoken and much travelled art collector, he has put all his resources and highly personalised view of art and architecture into building a series of structures. These are based on his own interpretation of Arab and Islamic architectural styles and motifs from many countries and historical periods. The structures themselves, and the artefacts housed therein, make him perhaps the nearest Saudi equivalent of Paul Getty!

Understandably, the project has evoked much controversy, but the museum itself is there in all its expanse and opulence, certainly a landmark beckoning its many visitors, both Saudis and foreigners.

Private Collections

One of the most important elements that make up the indigenous arts scene is the emergence of considerable interest in art *per se* - national, Islamic and international. There are many significant art collections being built by individual connoisseurs and collectors, giving rise to a great deal of enthusiasm for Orientalist paintings, thanks to scholar-dealers like Brian MacDermott, of London's trail-blazing Mathaf Gallery, who organised spectacular exhibitions of Orientalist paintings a few years ago in Riyadh and Jeddah.

A new gallery which has recently opened in London, specialising in the works of Orientalist artists of the 19th and early 20th centuries, is the Park Gallery, run by A S Fine Arts. It also displays a largely complementary range of rare and antiquarian books, many of which describe travel accounts and the topography of those Arab and Islamic lands which were the inspiration behind the "Orientalist" movement of the period. The Park Gallery also helped organise the Jeddah exhibition of Maha Mufti in April 1994.

Janadriya: Heritage Festival

An interesting phenomenon as one looks at the arts scene in Saudi Arabia is the remarkable enthusiasm everywhere for the folk heritage, perhaps best symbolised by huge

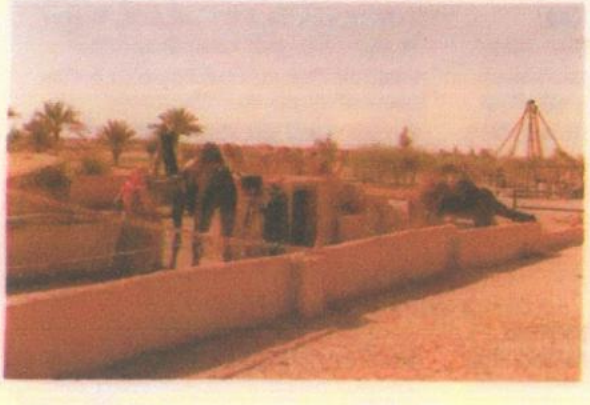




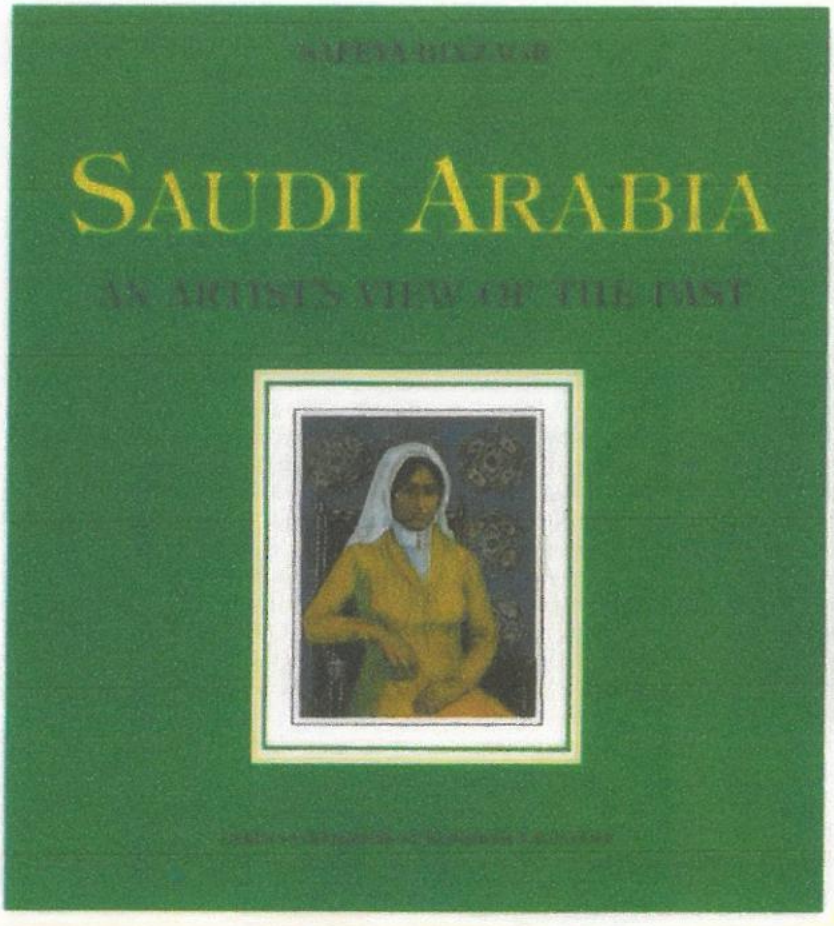


Above: Painting by Sameer Al-Daham **Right:** Painting by Taha Sabbah
Below: Craftsman at work during the recent Heritage Festival in Janadriya. **Bottom, left and right:** Water- wells in Janadriya.
Photographs of Janadriya by Colin Mayland.





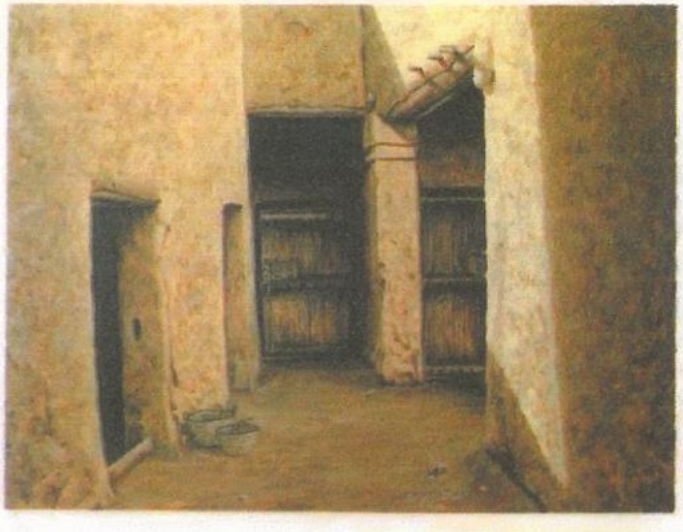




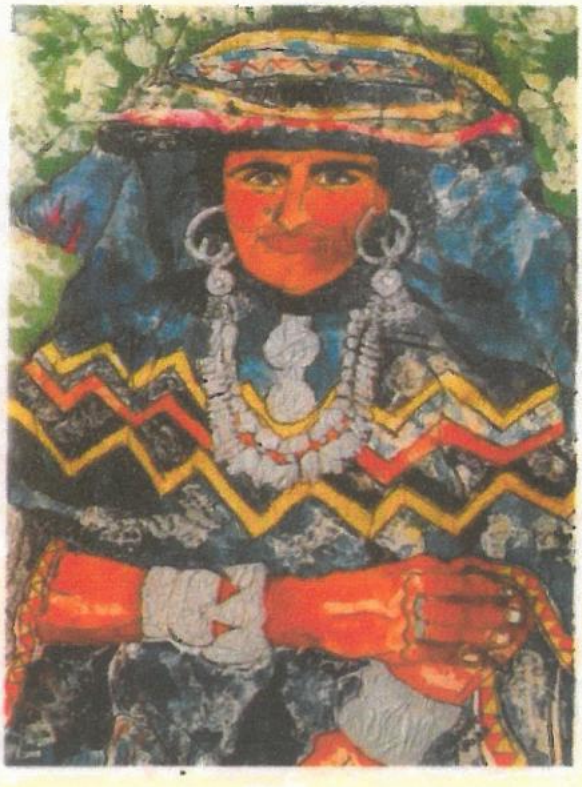




Left: Jacket cover of book on Safeya Binzagr. Paintings illustrated here are by, **top:** Hassan Asiri. **Above:** Ahmed Monshy. **Below left:** Abdul Rahman Al-Hawwas. **Below right:** Maha Naji Mufti. **Bottom:** Khaled Al-Ghannam







crowds at the Heritage Festival in Janadriya, not far from Riyadh, organised as an annual event since 1985, and fast staking its claim to be the leading festival of its kind in the Arab world.

Indeed as a frequent British visitor to Janadriya, artist-photographer Colin Mayland, recently back from the 1994 celebrations, succinctly put it: "The two-week Festival devotes itself to Saudi Arabia's past as well as to its hopes for the future, and now covers topics ranging from indigenous crafts to the history and development of the armed forces, from dancers and musicians to Arabian art.

"To a Westerner, the contrast from modern Riyadh to the atmosphere and traditions of the Festival is like a time warp: watching the craftsmanship of the silversmith fashioning jewellery in the Bedouin style in a manner unchanged and unsurpassed for centuries, seeing carpenters, basket weavers, goldsmiths creating original pieces before your eyes, the scent of perfume, the unique aroma of Arabian coffee mixed with the smells of leather, wood and incense.

"Camels drawing water from wells produce a strange haunting sound from pulleys and ropes which seems to carry for miles, and in the evening there are the folklore shows and music and dancing. All this combines to the point of almost overloading the senses: it is the whole of Saudi Arabia in a few hours, but it is, if presented, an opportunity not to be missed."

A more detailed account of this year's Janadriya Festival appeared in a recent issue of *Streets Ahead:*

"The main stadium itself is a semi permanent display. Some of the indoor exhibitions were in modern prefabs but the vast majority were in purpose-built show houses in the styles of the architecture from all over the Kingdom. There was a typical Gulf coast house, another from the Red Sea coast and another from the mountain ranges in the south of the country. In each case, the materials and builders had been transported to the show site to complete the building. In the case of the 5 storey mountain house, it took 150 labourers a year to complete.

"All of the houses are open to the public, and an hour or so inside one of them shows that these people really know how to get the best out of those materials that are available locally.

"The insides of each dwelling were lined with examples of local farm tools and everyday objects such as jewellery and clothing. Some of the artefacts in the mountain house were still in use, even though they were 150 years old.

"One of the halls held an exhibition of modern Arabic art and sculpture which surprised one with its realism and honesty. Bright colours were on show everywhere and several exhibits would not have been out of place in a gallery in the West.

"Alongside that were four long galleries, connected together to make a square with a large open area in the middle. This was the craftsman's domain. Each of the galleries housed several dozen artisans producing, by hand, some of the most beautiful and practical items you can imagine. One old man was throwing pots on a manually powered wheel, another was weaving wire into baskets, not unlike lobster pots but far prettier. A man was carving Qur'anic writings into blocks of plaster of Paris and others were making belts, buckets, jewellery, tools, camel saddles and decorative *objets d'art*. The open area in the centre was given over to camel rides and a large refreshment area."

Azra J Ahmed is Managing Editor of *Arts & The Islamic World.*

The Art Collection of the US Embassy in Riyadh
continued from page 90

hold on to a graceful tradition. Contemporary Arab artists still find inspiration in their script. I included a small piece by Hassan Massoudy to show this.

We demonstrated cultural similarity in folk musical instruments of both countries. In the ambassadorial suite were two display cases to be filled. Originally intended for historical documents, I thought it would be more decorative to show a collection of instruments: oud, ribab, mandolin, fiddle and wind instruments similar to both countries. Elsewhere, I hung a trompe l'oeil painting by Christopher Harrison showing a collection of these beautiful instruments.

Finally, we hung graphic works by American and Arab artists. In the Deputy Chief of Mission's office are etchings by Rima Farah, and a pen and ink drawing of decorative architecture by American architect Michael Graves. His buildings all show a love of geometric surface decoration common to Saudi and Middle Eastern architecture. Elsewhere in the room are Middle Eastern textiles – a carpet and a kilim framed mirror and an American textile, a Pennsylvania Dutch quilt. Their geometry and sombre colours unified these different artworks.

It was an enjoyable challenge planning the Embassy collection and it has led to similar projects in Amman, Sana'a and Dhaka.

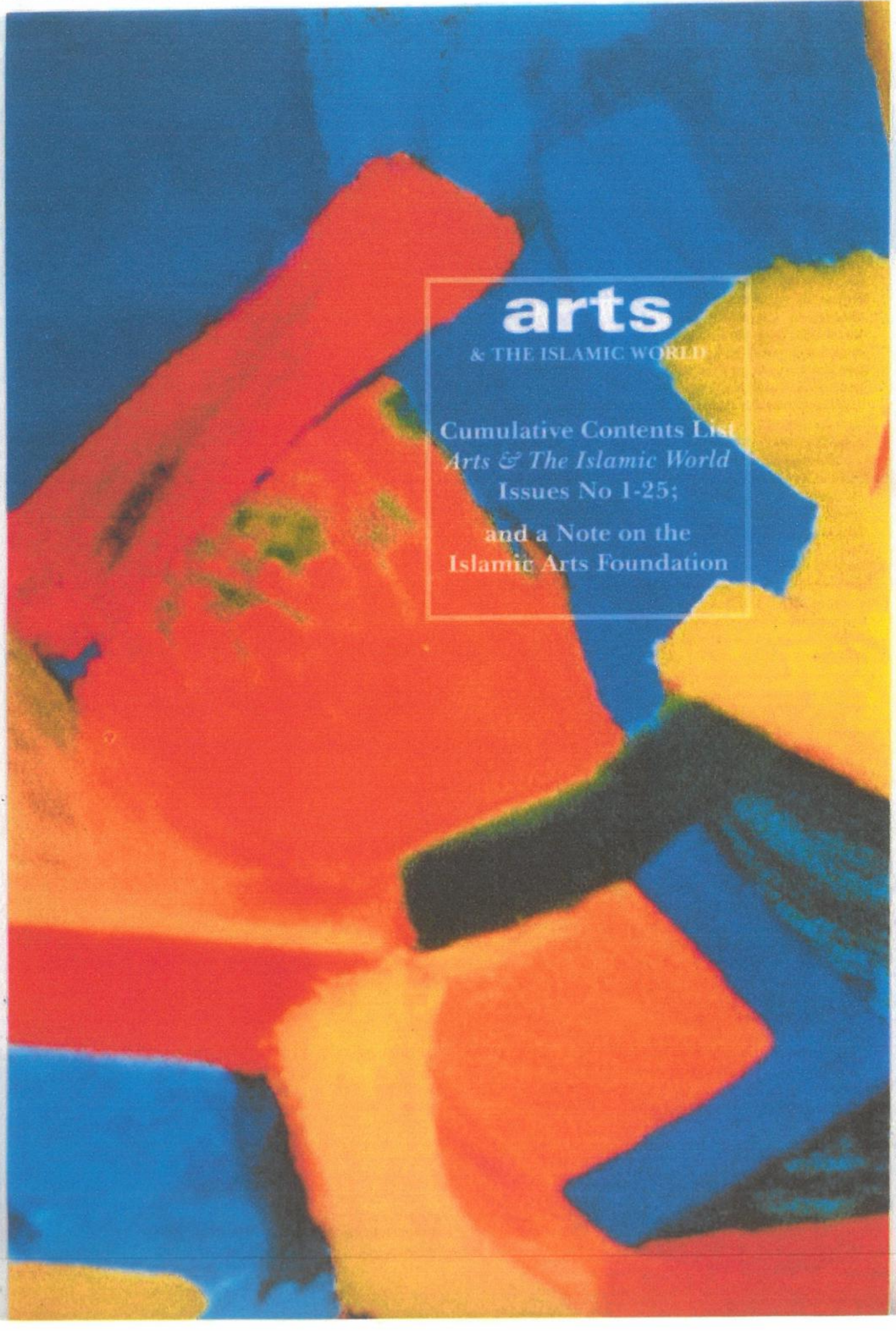
Dale Egee is Director of Egee Art Consultancy, London.



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and a Note on the
Islamic Arts Foundation

A NOTE ON THE

ISLAMIC ARTS FOUNDATION

The Islamic Arts Foundation, which publishes the magazine *Arts & The Islamic World*, was set up in 1981 as a non-profit Trust. The aim was to provide an international forum for the exchange of ideas and researches on Islamic art, culture, history and civilisation, and to help the Islamic world itself keep abreast of significant events and developments in various fields of performing and plastic arts worldwide. The Foundation was registered with the Charity Commission of the United Kingdom (No. 282787) in November 1981.

The magazine itself started publication in pursuance of one of the recommendations of the 1st International Seminar on Islamic Arts, organised by the Foundation in 1982. Participants of the Seminar included scholars and experts from 23 Eastern and Western countries engaged in the study and critical appreciation of Islamic arts, and representing a wide diversity of disciplines and experience. Among them were artists and architects as well as museum directors, cultural officials, and heads of art and archaeological archives and services. There were art dealers and publishers as well as representatives of international and regional cultural organisations. These included Unesco; the Organisation of Islamic Conference; the Hajj Research Centre of the King Abdulaziz University; the Aga Khan Award for Architecture; the World of Islam Festival Trust; and the Islamic Council of Europe.

The Seminar reviewed various aspects of "The Arts in Islamic Lands". More than 40 papers were presented in four broad groups concerning (i) the nature and philosophy of Islamic art; (ii) the relevant resources and influences; (iii) the problems of restitution and conservation; and (iv) contemporary movements and expressions. As a result of the wide-ranging discussions that followed the presentation of papers, a number of proposals and recommendations were drawn up - to be implemented as and when resources became available.

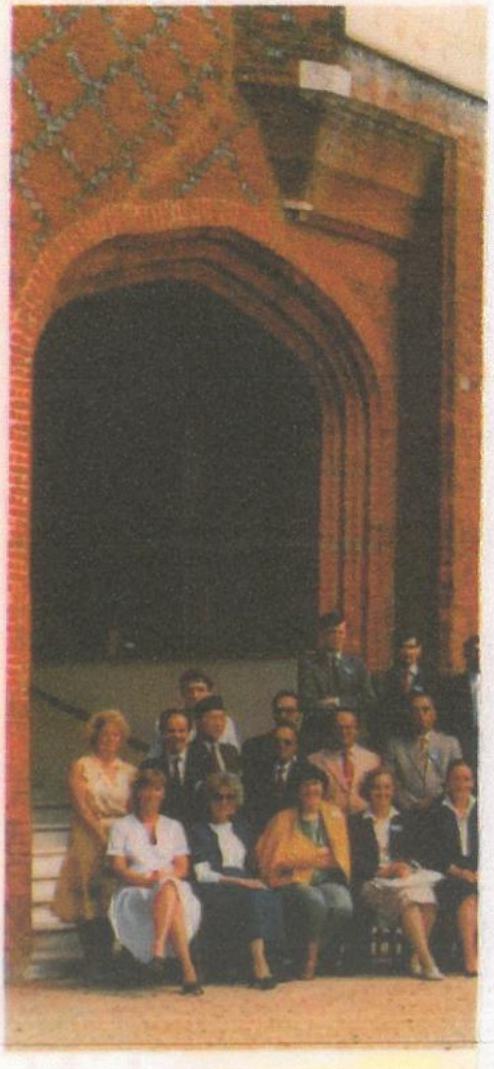
Another three Seminars have since been held: in 1985, 1988 and 1991. The 1985 Seminar surveyed Islamic arts resources in public and private collections worldwide. The one in 1988 was jointly organised with the Royal Society of Fine Arts in Amman, and reviewed the state of art education in the Islamic world. The 1991 Seminar was organised in association with three other institutions; the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies; the World of Islam Festival Trust; and the OIC's International Research Centre for Islamic History, Arts and Culture (IRCICA). It looked at the cultural policies and programmes of the Islamic countries with special reference to the state of arts funding and sponsorship opportunities. A list of those who participated in any one or more of these Seminars is reproduced here (see page 100).

Exhibitions

In 1989, the Foundation helped bring to London the first major exhibition of "Contemporary Art from the Islamic World." Jointly organised with the Royal Society of Fine Arts in Amman, it comprised the works of more than 200 artists from 24 countries, drawn from the Society's own permanent collection. Widely acclaimed as the largest such display of 20th century art from the Islamic countries, it was seen by an estimated 20,000 visitors over a period of five weeks at the Barbican Centre in London.

Earlier, in 1986, the Foundation had organised a competition for young artists from the Islamic world. The idea developed from the deliberations of the 1985 Seminar which was chaired by HE Dr Ezzeddin Ibrahim, Cultural Advisor to the President of the United Arab Emirates. In his inaugural remarks, Dr Ibrahim posed a number of questions relating to the teaching and appreciation of Islamic arts, both in the Islamic and the Western world, and made a fervent plea for a close look at the state of art education in the Islamic countries themselves. While it was decided to make this the main theme for the 1988 Seminar, the aim of the 1986 competition was to gauge the creative response of school children in the Islamic countries. Those under 12 years of age were given "The Eid Festival" as their subject, while the theme for the older age group (12-16), was "A Wedding".

Twelve countries responded with more than 300 entries, and an international panel of judges was constituted to select the first two prize-winners in each of the two age groups. Winsor & Newton donated the prizes awarded to the 12 best entries in each category, with a special award for an outstanding work from either age group. A selection of 120 works constituted an exhibition, entitled "Festival of Colour: Young Artists from the Islamic World", in collaboration with the Zamana Gallery in London, which was on display from 5 February - 26 April



1987. It was seen by about 12,000 visitors, creating considerable interest among school children as well as art teachers.

"Arts & The Islamic World" Magazine

One of the Foundation's major projects is of course the publication of *Arts & The Islamic World* magazine, produced by a networking team of scholars and specialists in the UK, Europe, North America, the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, collaborating in a voluntary and honorary capacity. Visualised as a quarterly publication, two or more issues are sometimes combined to produce a special volume. So far 25 issues have come out, and a cumulative contents list appears in the pages that follow.

Over the years since its first issue was released on 24 January 1983, it has steadily shaped as a leading international publication on the subject. It began with a print-run of 2,000, gradually moving to its present figure of 5,000 for ordinary issues, and to considerably higher print-runs in the case of special volumes. It has built a strong subscriber base in the Islamic world as well as in many other Eastern and Western countries.

Future Plans

The Foundation has under consideration a number of projects to be undertaken in the future. These include the preparation of an Islamic arts database; and a survey of Islamic arts resources in the Islamic and the Western world. It is also proposed to document the contemporary arts scene in various countries of the Islamic world, identifying, recording and evaluating major trends, movements, personalities and publications.

Another area which deserves particular attention is the fact that there is very limited state funding available for the arts in most countries of the Islamic world. Indeed there is a critical need for business and private sector sponsorship on a substantial and on-going basis, if the arts are to flourish, as the Western experience has shown in sponsoring and encouraging traditional art forms as well as commissioning and catalysing experimental and innovative works of art.

The Foundation has therefore extended strong support to a recent move for setting up an international study group in London: ASDEC (Arts Sponsorship in the Developing Countries). Its aim is to monitor and promote business sponsorship of the arts throughout the developing world, to which most of the Islamic countries also belong; and it plans to publish a quarterly newsletter *Artslink*. It will be the Foundation's endeavour, by arrangement with ASDEC, to make this newsletter also available to the readers of *Arts & The Islamic World*.

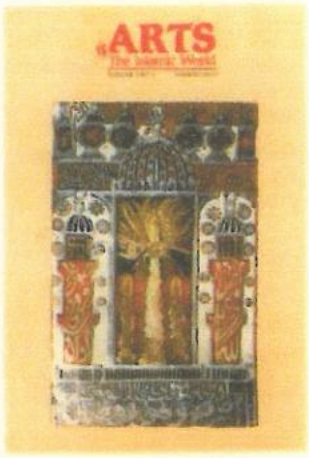
Below: Participants of the 2nd International Seminar on Islamic Arts in 1985 which surveyed Islamic arts resources in public and private collections worldwide.



Participants of the International Seminars on Islamic Arts

1982
1985
1988
1991

Mr Bassem ABDALLAH
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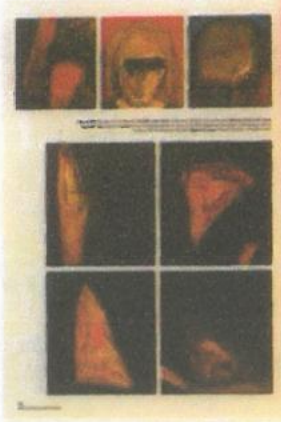
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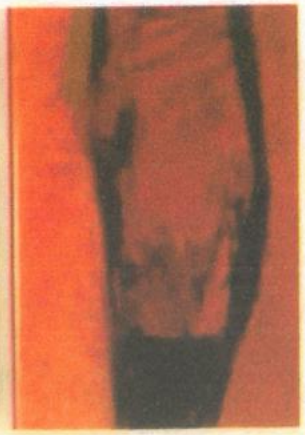
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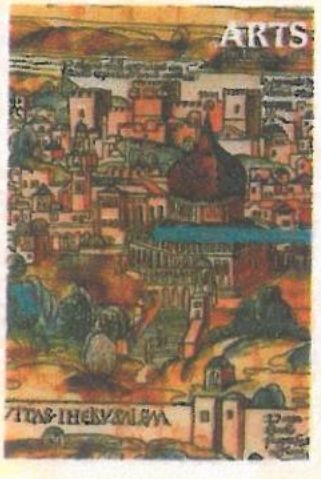
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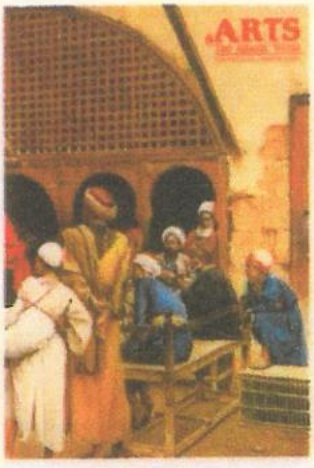
Building in the Islamic World Today
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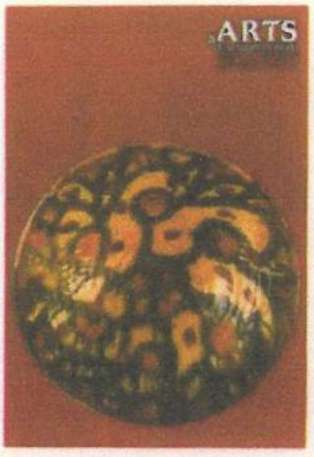
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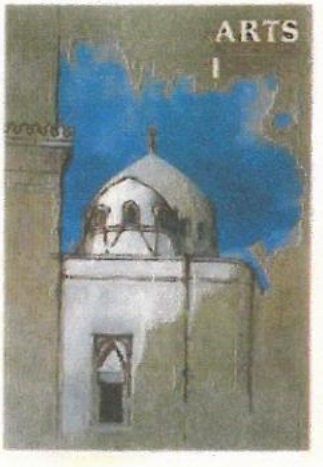
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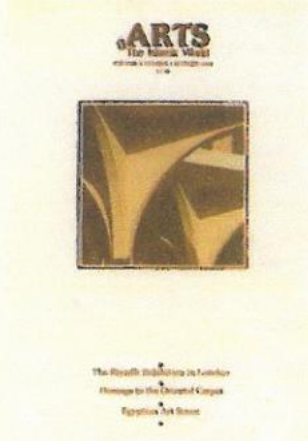
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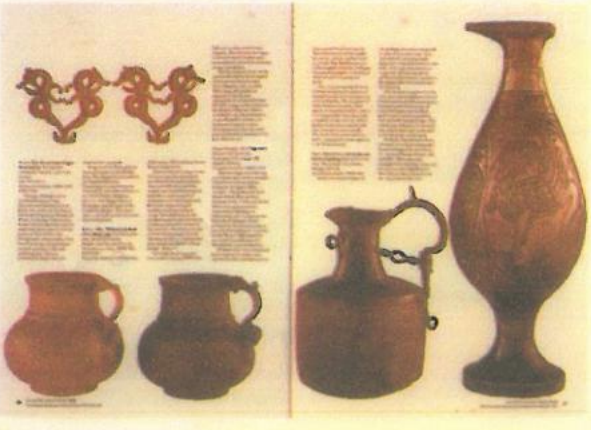
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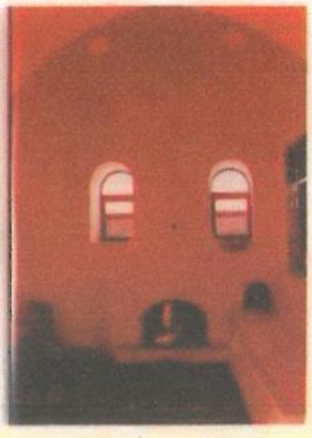
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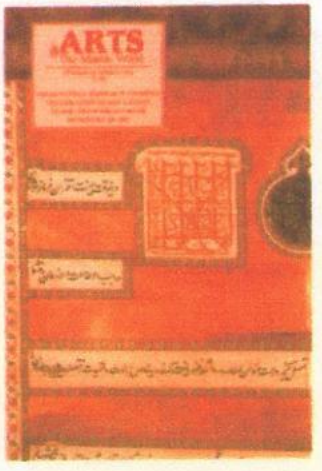
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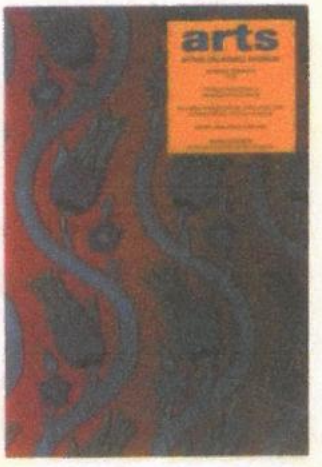
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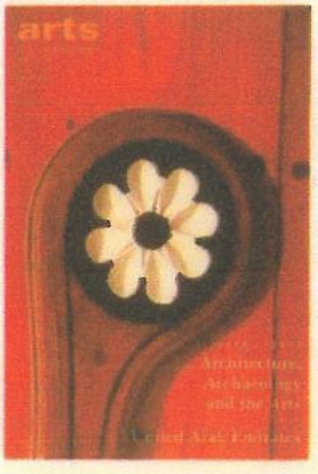
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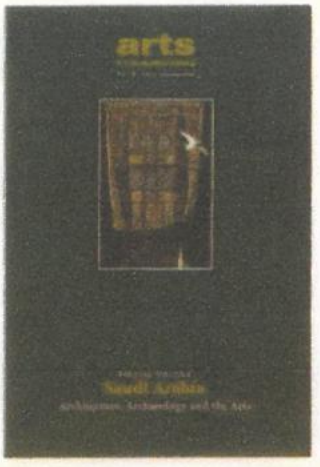
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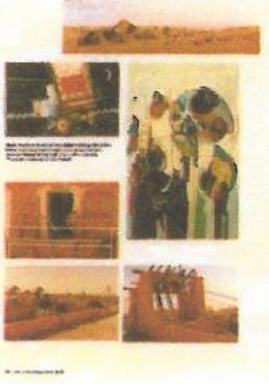


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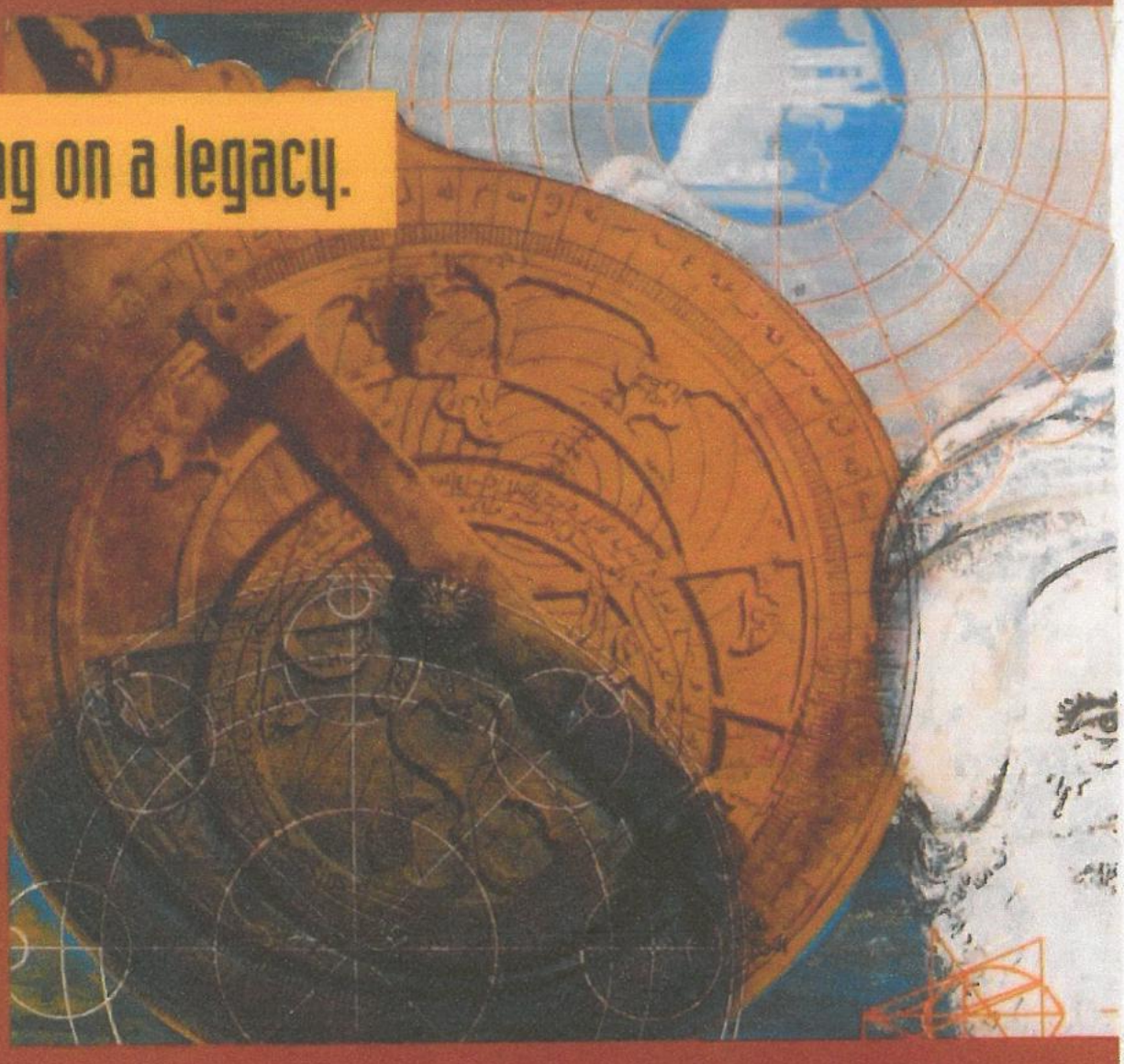
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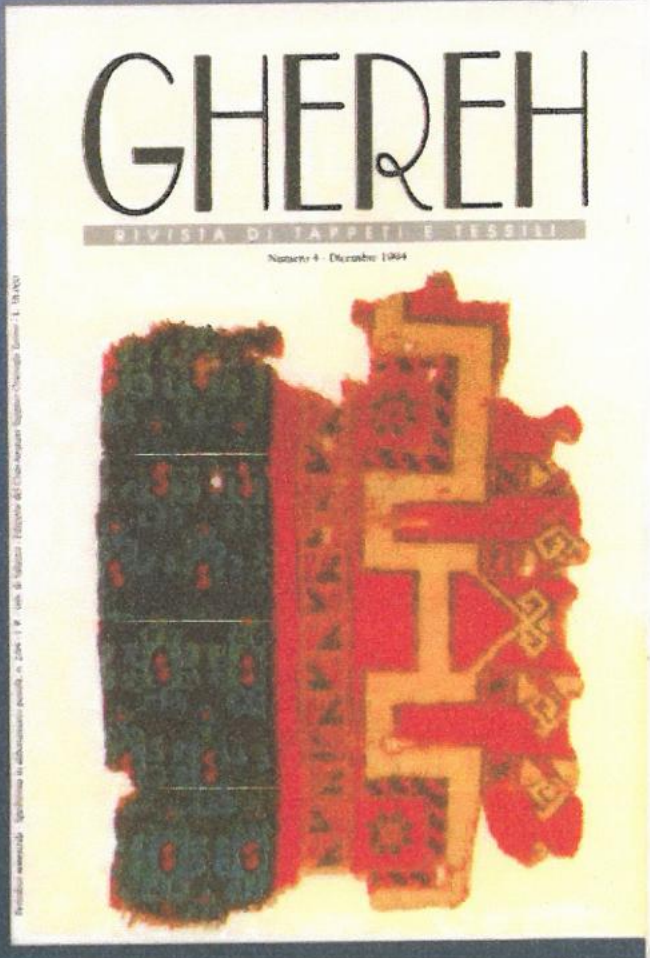
In this issue:

After the Istanbul Congress the ancient Anatolian tradition will again fascinate the readers of the latest issue of Ghereh: antique carpets and rugs from the most important Museums and turkish Mosques will be the leading subject of the article presented by Oktay Aslanapa.

Besides these, Ferenc Batari will present the rare Transilvanian carpets from the Budapest Applied Art Museum, and Taher Sabahi will report on the Second International Congress on Turkish and Central Asian carpets, which drew collectors, dealers and enthusiasts to Istanbul between 14 and 17 October 1994.

In addition, the latest studies made by Istanbul Univetsity on the dyeing techniques used in the past and an article on Anatolian carpets from the Italian Collection reported by Alberto Boralevi.

News and events give us a complete summary of the autumn calendar, from Nuremberg to Istanbul, with particular focus on Italian and foreign exhibitions and auction sales, among those worth noting Ferruzzi and Palazzo Corsini in Florence.



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Cover: A print by Dzevad Hozo *Day 365, Diary Sarajevo 1992-94* Mixed media collage. 1/40 *forty Prints* Courtesy Professor Rusmir Mahmud Cehajic.

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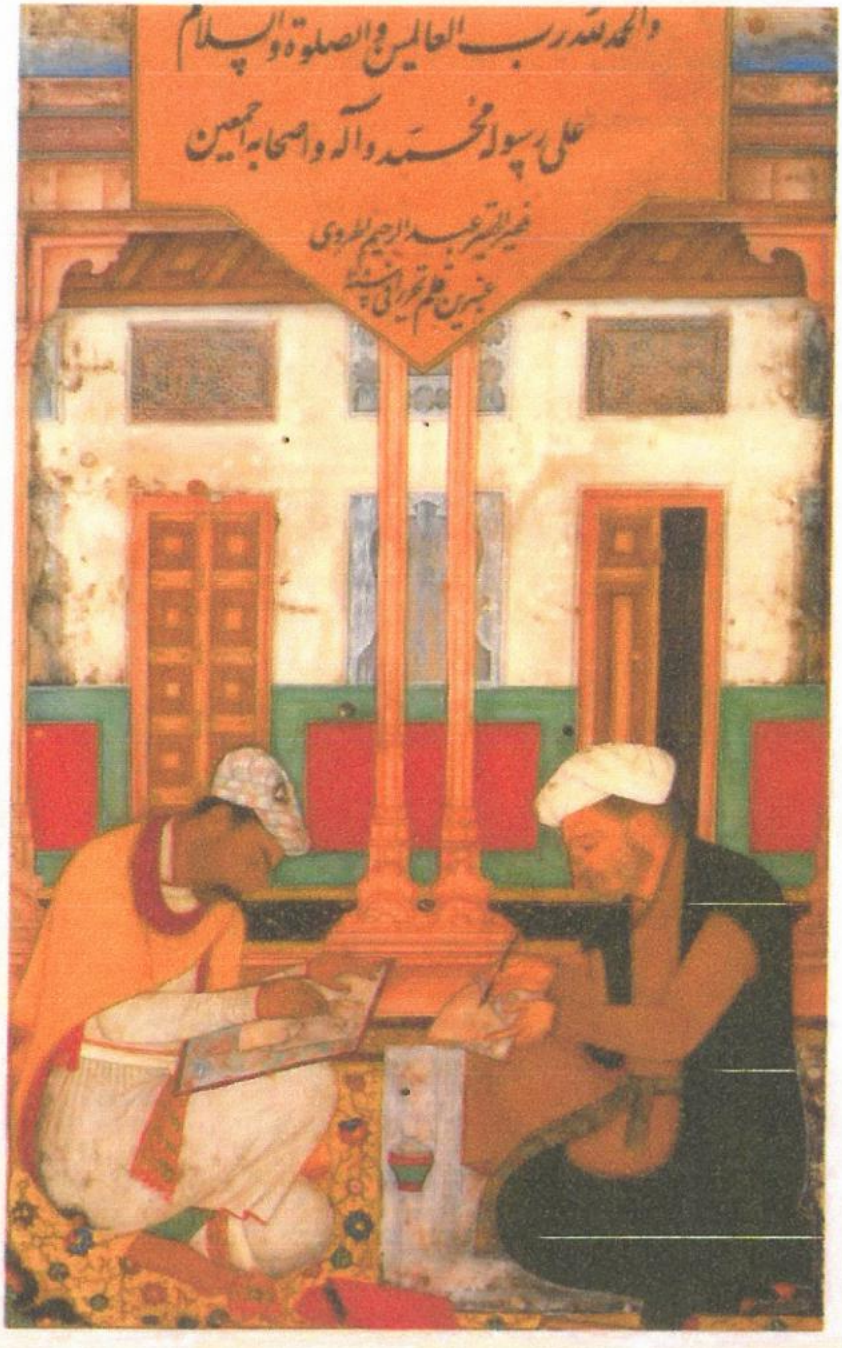
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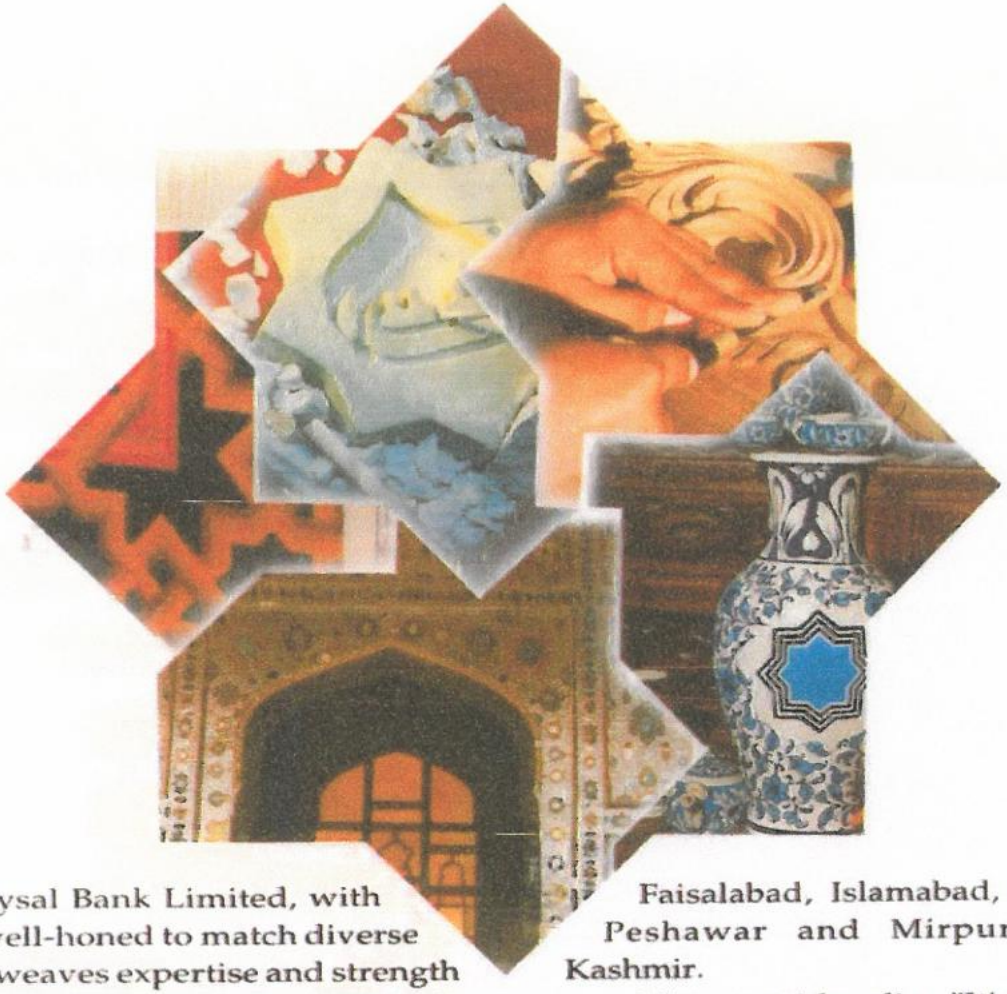
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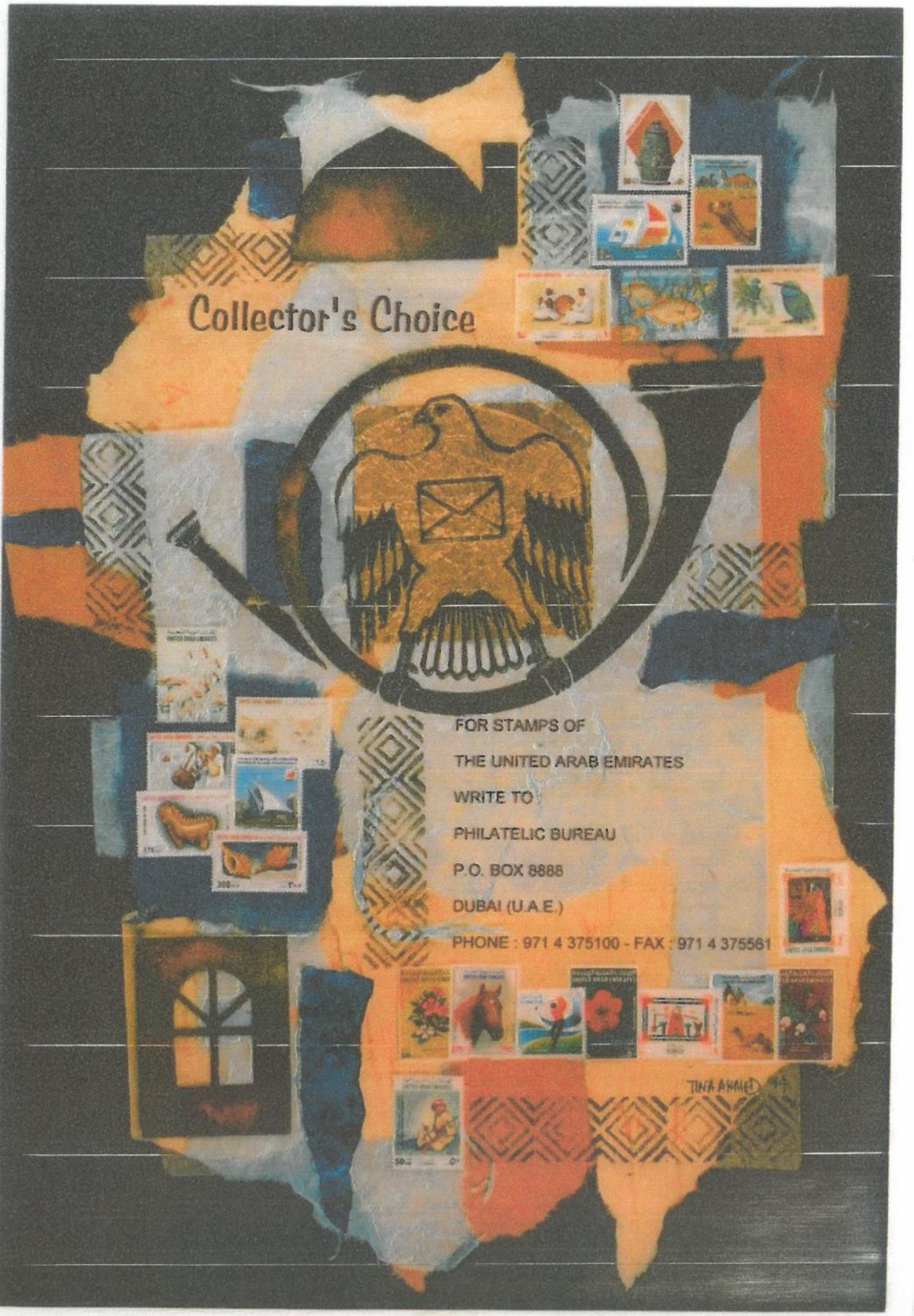
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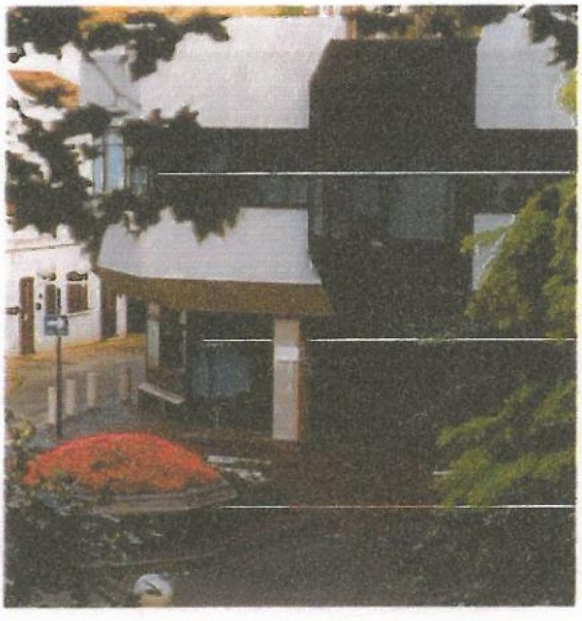
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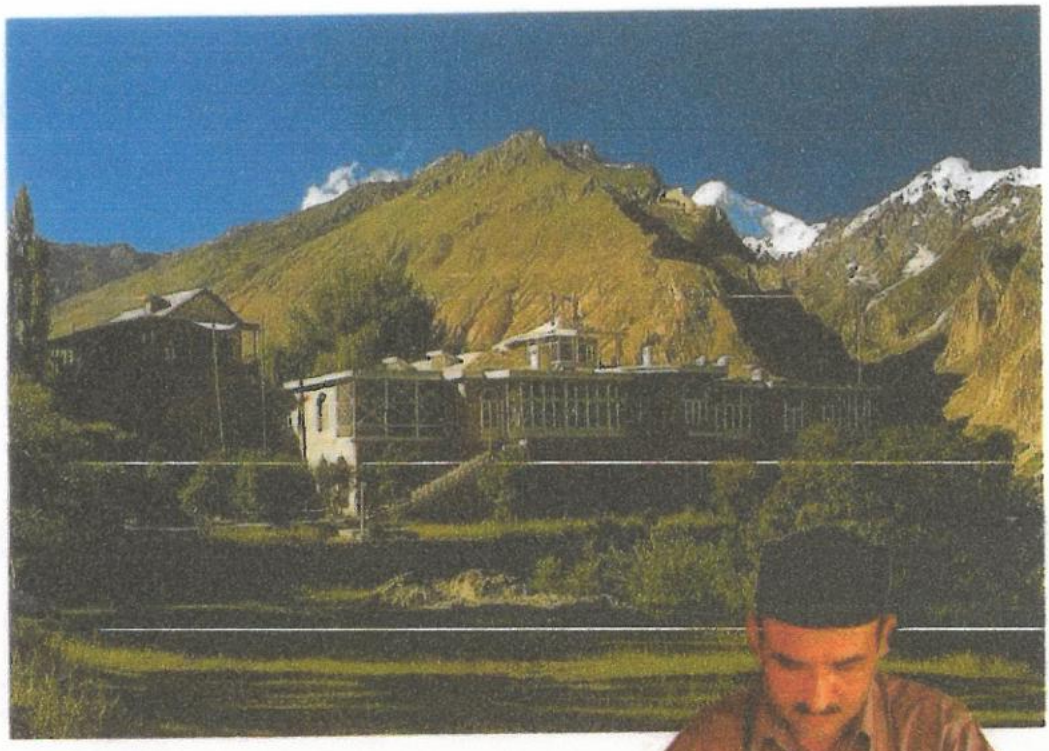
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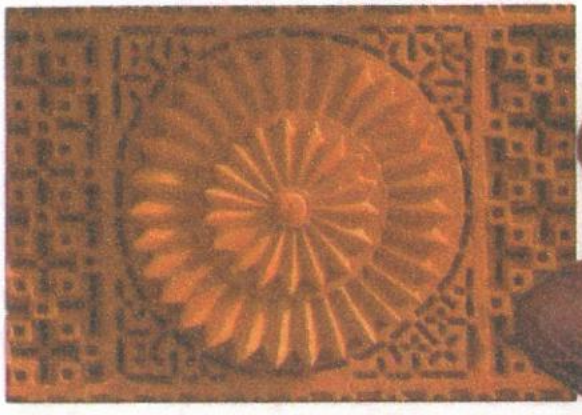
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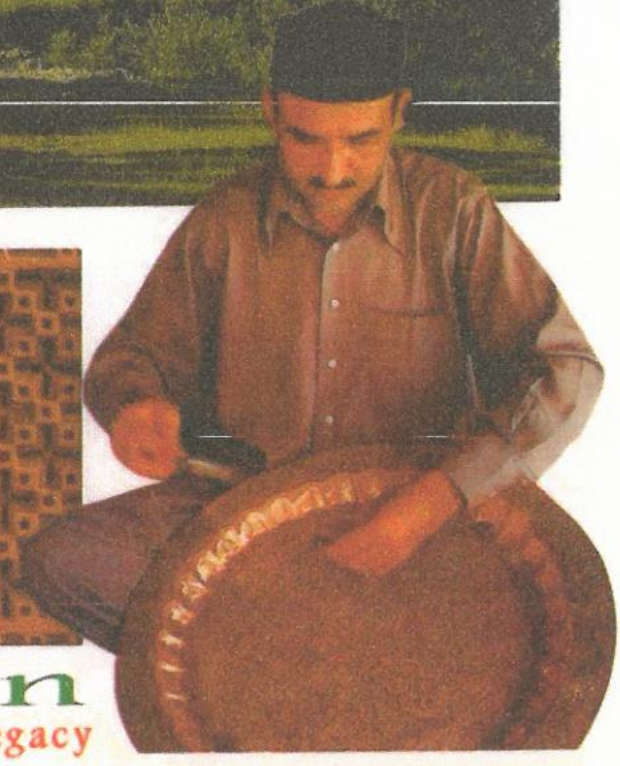


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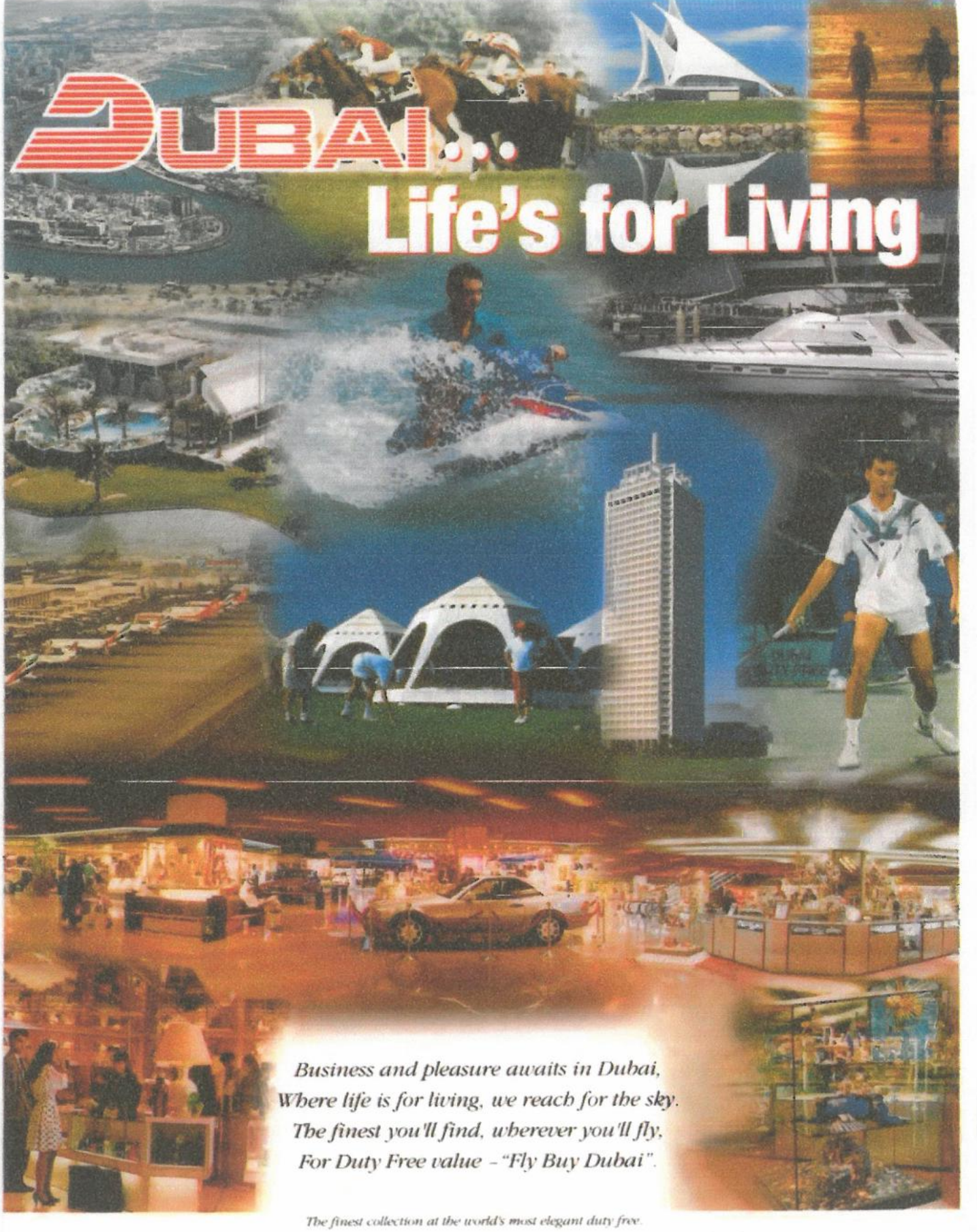
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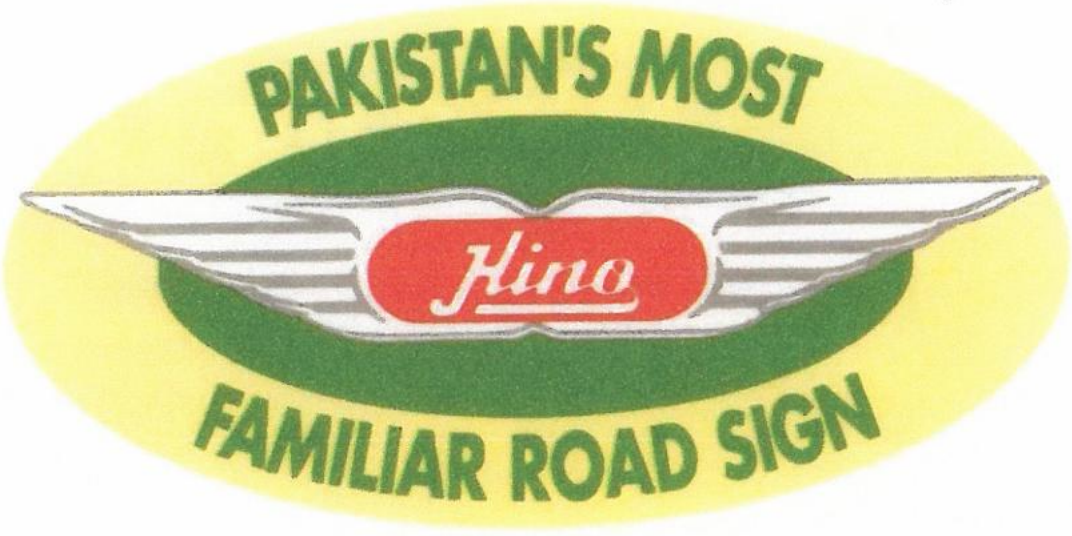
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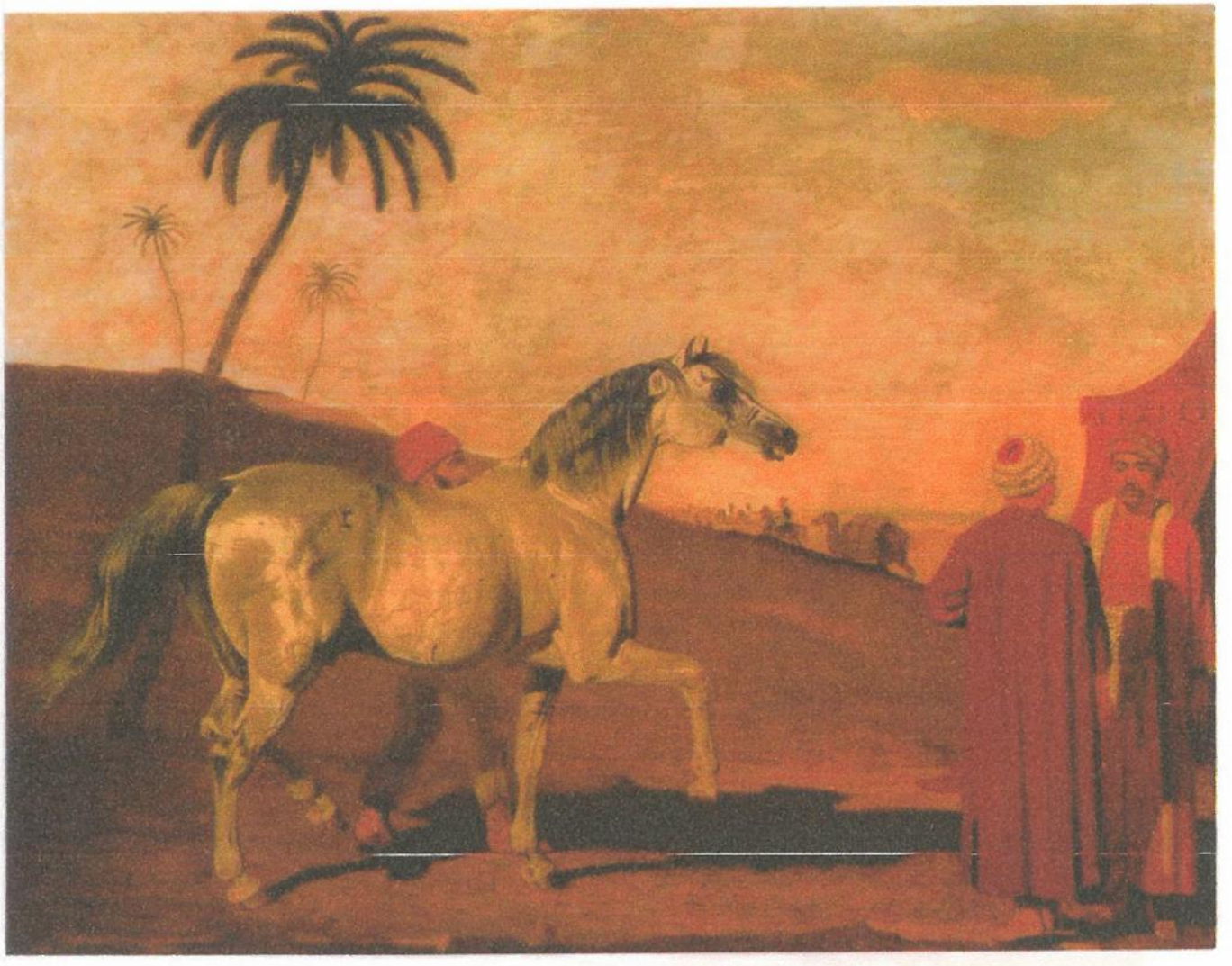
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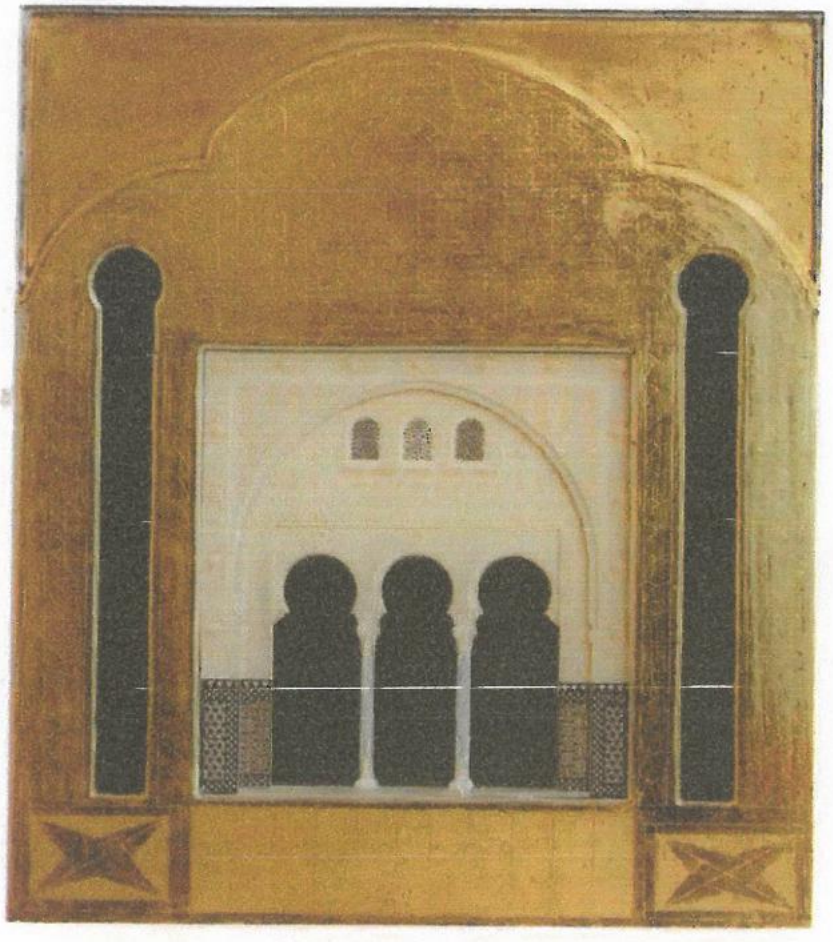
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Editorial

Contributors to this issue were invited to look at some of the more significant arts events and developments in 1994. They bring a wide variety of national and international perspectives to bear on the developing arts scene in the Islamic world. There are rich pickings from the fields of both performing and plastic arts and crafts, and it is heartening to see the cross-cultural exchanges and the increasing opportunities for the arts and artists to travel and find critically appreciative audiences in many countries outside their own.

Examples abound. From North America the President of NAHIA reports on the most valuable work of a growing group of Islamic art historians; and a major exhibit of contemporary Arab artists, perhaps the first with that kind of range and depth, opened in Washington DC to begin a year-long tour all over the United States. In the United Arab Emirates, the Secretary General of the Cultural Foundation has announced plans for the creation of an international museum; and the Ethnology Museum in Rotterdam, in collaboration with the Centre for Islamic Culture, has mounted what is easily the biggest display of Islamic art in the Netherlands since 1927.

In Samarkand an ambitious but highly realistic restoration and development project is set to meet the twin challenges of respecting the heritage while modernising for the new millennium; and for Indonesia it has been a year of intensive preparations for Istiqlal II later in 1995, visualised as a month-long marathon art and cultural festival, bringing together national, regional and international talent to mark 50 years of the country's independence. Visiting folk artistes from countries like Morocco and Pakistan, in separate and professionally choreographed performances, regaled music lovers in the UK and Europe; and an innovative Japanese painter has blazed the trail to master the intricacies of Islamic calligraphy evolving a style of his own deeply steeped in the classical rules, the *usul-al-khat*.

Support and patronage for the arts is also growing. There has been what our Representative in Kuala Lumpur – herself a well-known artist – celebrates as the "flowering of arts sponsorship" in Malaysia. This is matched by the remarkable success of an elaborate 50-event International Arts Festival on a shoestring budget in Dubai, thanks to sponsorships extended largely by the corporate sector, national as well as multinational. In Britain and the United states an artist from the Middle East whose own paintings form part of several international collections, has set up endowment awards to assist younger artists in many countries; and a philanthropic scholar-entrepreneur has endowed additional funds for further development of the Centre for Culture and Heritage he had himself set up in Dubai a few years ago as a centre of excellence.

It has indeed been an exhilarating year and we thank all those individuals and institutions who have helped us in preparing the retrospective overview offered in these pages. In particular we wish to record our appreciation of the facilities extended by the UAE authorities, including the Chancellor of the UAE University and Minister of Higher Education, HH Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak, and the Minister of Information and Culture, HE Khalfan Al Roumi; and the continuing support of the Cultural Adviser to the President of UAE., HE Dr Ezzeddin Ibrahim, and the Secretary General of the Cultural Foundation, HE Mohammed Ahmed Khalifa Al Suwaidi.

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It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing away of the distinguished art critic and one of our Contributing Editors, Agha Abdul Hamid. He was 82. It was a career devoted to art and cultural promotion which included the founding of the Karachi Fine Arts Society in the 1940s. He also helped establish the Pakistan Association of Art Critics and was the Chief Trustee of the Foundation for the Museum of Modern Art in Karachi. May his soul rest in peace. Amen.

Sarajevo 1992-94: Prints by Dzevad Hozo

RUSMIR MAHMUD CEHAJIC

Dzevad Hozo was born in 1938 in Bihac, Bosnia. Now living and working in Sarajevo, he is one of Bosnia's most distinguished artists, who has exhibited in many countries of the world.

Looking at his pictures, the spectator is left in no doubt about his mastery of graphic art. In his use of techniques, he shows his grasp of reason and conceptual discourse and this is the ground from which the intellectual level of his art proceeds.

We use the word 'intellectual' in its traditional sense, to refer to that function of man which is beyond reason and which provides him with immediate knowledge of reality. It is the pure light of intelligence, that which the Eastern Orthodox Church calls 'nous'.

According to the Sufis, the intellect dwells not in the brain but in the heart and it alone is capable of relating the appearances of this world to their transcendent archetypes.

Hozo uses the symbolism of the *nishan* to break through appearances towards the transcendent. A *nishan* is a kind of Muslim tombstone found all over Bosnia and it usually depicts a man wearing a turban, which, in Islam, is the symbol of man's vicegerency, that is, his authority to represent God on earth. The *nishan* usually bears a vertical inscription.

Since Hozo began using this symbol, we have seen in his pictures a maturity which speaks out of the depths of his being, that mysterious darkness illuminated by the light of Infinity, which turns the outside world into a place of shadow.

From *Nishans* to *Forty Prints: Sarajevo 1992-94*, expressions of Hozo's graphic language succeed one another. It is not possible to move inside this parable without encountering the symbolism of the *nishan*.



Alone, Relief Etching, 1968. 645 x 490mm.

These prints show the power of mind of the explorer amid the perfection of craftsmanship. The *nishan* is engraved with red and green letters and figures, resonant, disintegrated, and overgrown with moss. We see in Hozo's preoccupation with the *nishan* his deep inner urge to resist the degeneration of man, who has fallen from the supreme, celestial and cherubic to the lowest material level and even to the satanic.

The *nishan* signifies within itself the inseparability of life and death, heaven and earth, transcendent and worldly. The mystics of both Islam and Hinduism see man as an upside down tree, his brain being on top to receive knowledge from above, equivalent to the tree's roots which are at the bottom to receive nourishment from the earth. While the tree's branches grow towards heaven, man's 'branches', his discursive knowledge, spread over the earth.

The turban is a supreme symbol which signifies man's authority to act as God's representative on earth, where man is fully subservient to transcendent principles; this applies even to kings, who are not subservient to anything in the world.

Denying divinity to anyone or anything but God himself, man manages heaven and earth and everything between, seeing all things as symbols, that is, through his heart, as primordial images. In Hozo's art, the *nishan* becomes a symbol of the human striving towards perfection and, at the same time, a symbol of the baseness of the world into which man falls when he forgets who he truly is. It reminds us of the Biblical Jacob's Ladder, which leads from the lowest spheres of earth to the highest levels of heaven, from where all the perniciousness and debauchery of human evil can be clearly seen. It is an axis around which the human presence, in both its paradisiac and fallen nature, turns.

The *nishan* represents both the shadow and the corporeal completeness of man – a shadow in so far as it is suspended between non-manifestation and incarnation, and corporeal completeness in that man's body can become the temple of Truth or a fire of evil leading to his dissolution. In Hozo's work, man oscillates between nothingness and infinity, one moment progressing towards God, the next towards Satan.

The concept of time in religion

and art is not the same concept of time as understood in history and physics. Ideas of evolution, progress and agnosticism must either disintegrate before art and religion or retreat into a world of their own. From the *nishan*, Hozo proceeds to the *stecak*, a type of medieval Bosnian tombstones symbolising a house. In this, the house is seen as a support for man in the choice between Jerusalem and Babylon, heaven and earth, spirit and substance. From the simple and distinct centricity of the ladder, the *stecak* surface breaks into more peripheral, worldly images and there is a danger of forgetting the narrowness of the passage by which alone man can ascend to the spheres of recognition of the horizons beyond.

Thus Hozo's prints from *Mak's Map* onwards speak more dramatically of the things of this world and heaven. More decisive distinctions between light and darkness are intertwined and shadows of both the living and the dead pass by, telling one another of the mysteries. In this abundance of forms, although reduced to symbols, the inner progress of the artist, who strives for the peace of reflection, can be recognised. We see his restlessness before the enigma of the permeation of the temporal by the eternal. It is as though he were trying, with his self, to light up the deadly darkness by extinguishing the earthly light and making the colours burn themselves out.

Among Hozo's next cycles are those of *The Scarecrows*. The figurative forms of these prints appear to waver between satanic and divine voices. Human shadows merge with earthly formlessness, trodden down by Satan's evil hooves or redeemed by Angels' calls. There, between these extremes, the living dead contort and the dead are resurrected. Never do these works reach either the lowest levels of finiteness or the greatest heights of infinity. There always remains a sense of something beyond the senses, beyond the limits of reason.

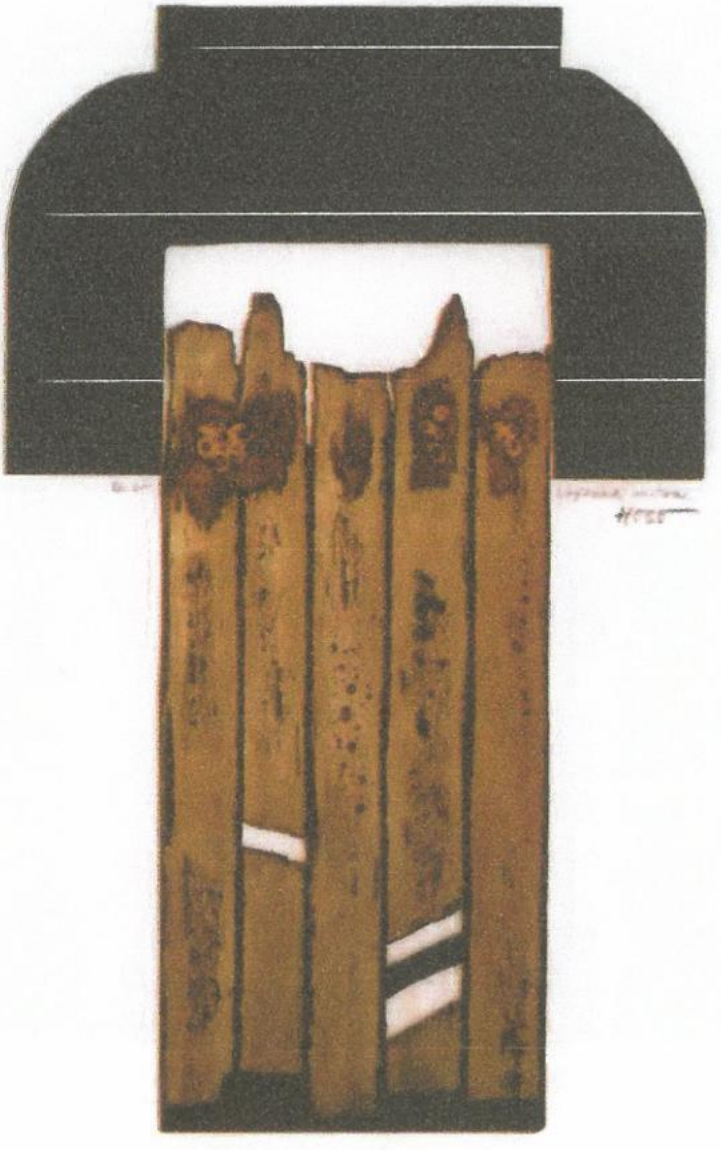
Just as Hozo's technical artistry is submerged in the living line of art which has continued since the time of Seth, Adam's third son, the symbols expressed through his artistry seem to have no immediate relationship with the artist himself but rather to be a reflection of the universal concern of man for his origins and purpose. They become symbols of the essence of human concentration and contemplation.

Forty Prints transmits, through the language of art and the reality of multiple forms, the mystery of human life, a mystery without which man would be a scarecrow, living in a monstrous world of pure reason, a world originating from the dust and destined to return to it.

Although Hozo's works are an impressive reflection of violent reality, they are, at the same time, a testimony of his awareness of his self, a self that is capable of reflecting the world and transposing it into symbols.

Looking at Hozo's work, one should keep in mind what Ananda K. Coomaraswamy said in connection with Meister Eckhart's message concerning art: "The image is in the artist, not he in it; it is his whose image it is, not his who harbours it."

From one print to another, we recognize Hozo's deciphering of the paradox between reason and intellect, brain and heart. According to Hozo, man is at the centre of things, but his mind is veiled by the deceptions caused by the relentlessness and massiveness of evil. If man, being at the centre of the worlds and having a choice of their full range of possibilities, has purpose, then from whence comes ugliness, which, like a tide, floods the modern world? Frithjof Schuon has written, "Only in the modern world has ugliness become something like a norm or a



Warrior of Peace, Relief Etching, 1967. 520 x 312mm.

principle. Only here does beauty appear as a speciality, not to say a luxury. Hence the frequent confusion at all levels, of ugliness with simplicity...Error appears in all the forms around us among which we live. There is a danger of poisoning our sensibility – even our intellectual sensibility – by introducing into it a kind of false indifference, a hardening and a kind of triviality." Hozo's prints warn us that error of opinion is behind the error of forms.

The present tide of evil against Bosnia has clearly reverberated in the depths of the artist's being. These forty prints arranged before us today represent not only the symbols of Noah's forty days and nights on the surface of the water or the forty nights of Moses on Sinai. Everything in Bosnia has been shattered to the deepest strata of existence. Everything has been tested to its utmost. Only the steadiest gaze can persist without being turned away and only a few hearts hold out without denying reality.

In Sarajevo, the *tabut*, a wooden plank on which Muslims are buried, is symbolically related to the ark of the covenant and a chalice with heavenly manna, a stick, a turban and armour are put on it. Man has always relied on a solution from heaven, a Revelation, objecting to being a slave to anything but the Truth protected within his heart. Is this not what we recognise in all its depth in these *Forty Prints*?

With hope and surprise, one must walk among the hungry men and animals, among the dead and mutilated, and cast one's eyes down to the lowest regions of earth. All this is in this forty-print testimony on Bosnia. We are committed to be witnesses, with our suffering and our blood, before the nations. If democracy and dictatorship are the only two forms of rule which the world can resort to, then Bosnia is a witness of the world's progress to its end, which only a few will escape.

The spasms of a man, his shadows in front and behind him, flashes of lethal shots, the tremor of butchered bodies, the mew of a cat and the hungry eyes of a dog, the clatter and breaking of a tin, reflections of lost items of gold and silver, all this, through the transforming power of the human inner self, speak from Hozo's prints, which become a letter and a message about Bosnia, which, in its suffering, becomes both earth and heaven.

Through his printing and subtle chemistry, Hozo turns everything into a symbol with a multitude of shadows and the symbol is placed in the hierarchy of the artist's intellectual



Duel, Relief Etching, 1972. 645 x 495mm. From the MAK Portfolio. **Opposite page: *Day 529, Diary of Sarajevo 1992-94***. Mixed media collage. 1/40 forty Prints.



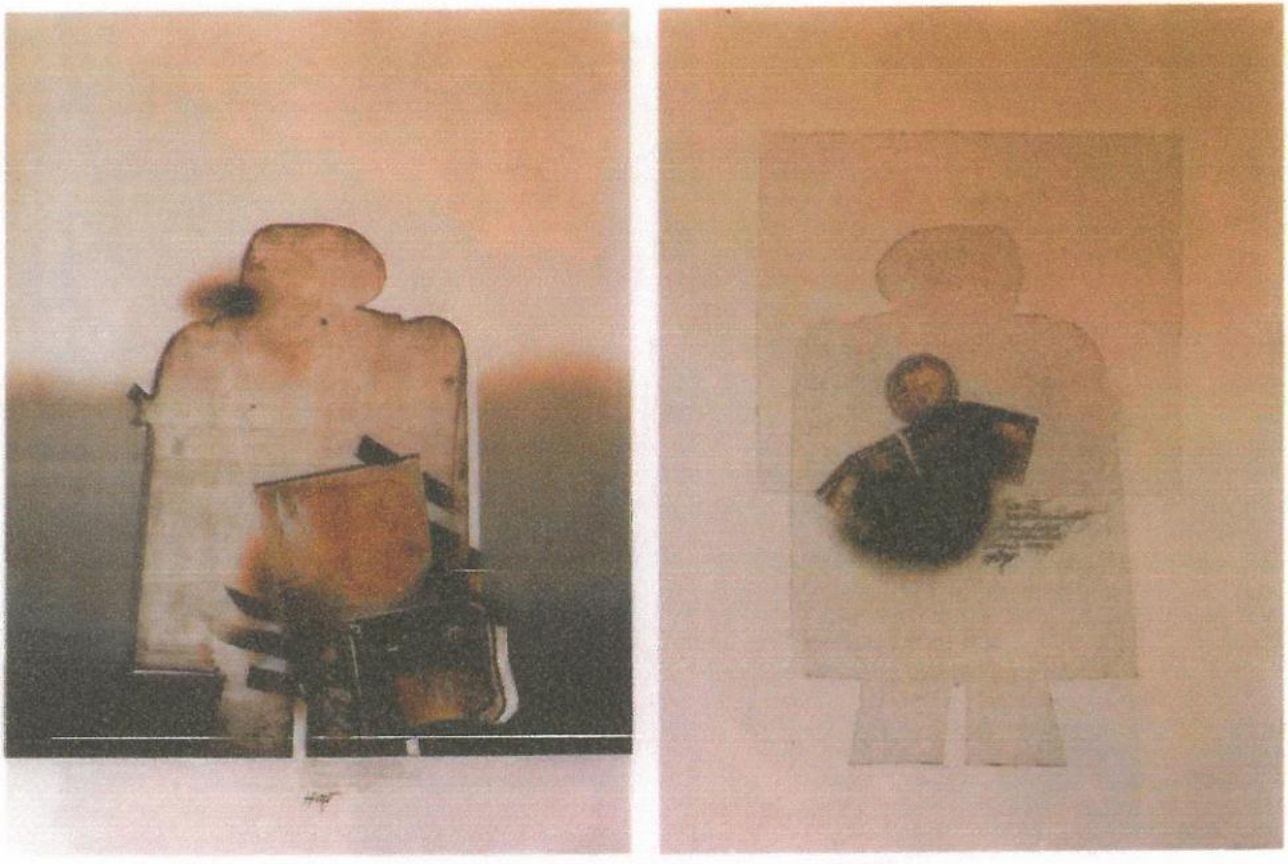


Left: *Day 507, Diary of Sarajevo 1992-94.* Mixed media collage.
Right: *Day 485, Diary of Sarajevo 1992-94.* Mixed media collage.1/40 forty Prints. Courtesy Professor Rusmir Mahmud Cehajic.

parable. Somehow, the internal and the external are related to the ladder of man's perpendicularity between heaven and earth. The cruelty of earth, being the lowest world, is symbolised in a tin, while heaven is veiled in complete mystery. The tin is on the edge of life, opened and disposed of with disgust, like the incoming poisonous internal content of the world. Disgust and abhorrence turn into the image of the multitude of failures that surround us. It is from this lowest level that Hozo, by his symbols, raises our eyes up to the spheres of heaven and infinity and, in our amazement, we derive hope from where it seemed to have disappeared forever.

If we go through the forty pages of Hozo's war diary, we shall be brought to a state of confusion, because the reason remains silent before this condensing of famine and fear, pain and lust, hatred and cruelty. Here all the luxury and superficial glamour of western

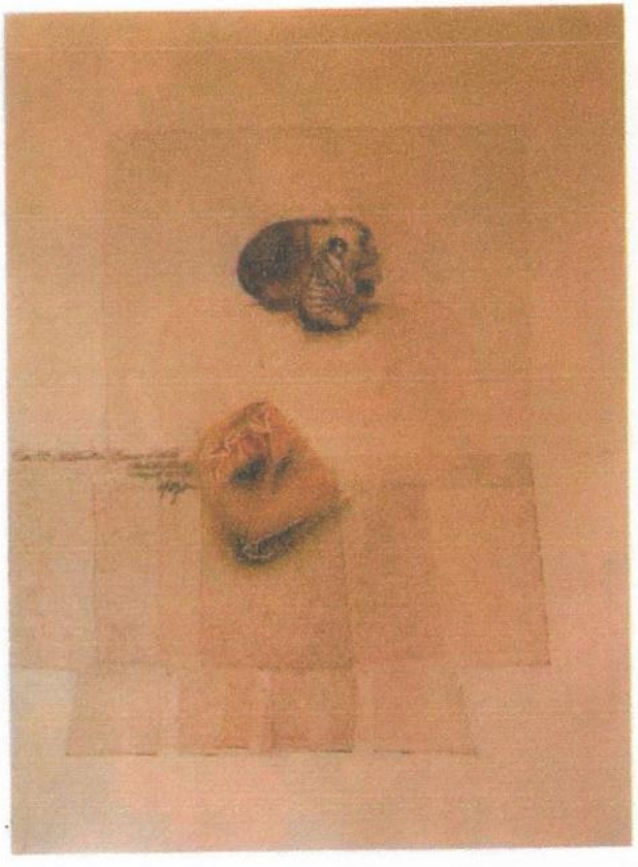




Left: *Day 507, Diary of Sarajevo 1992-94*. Mixed media collage.
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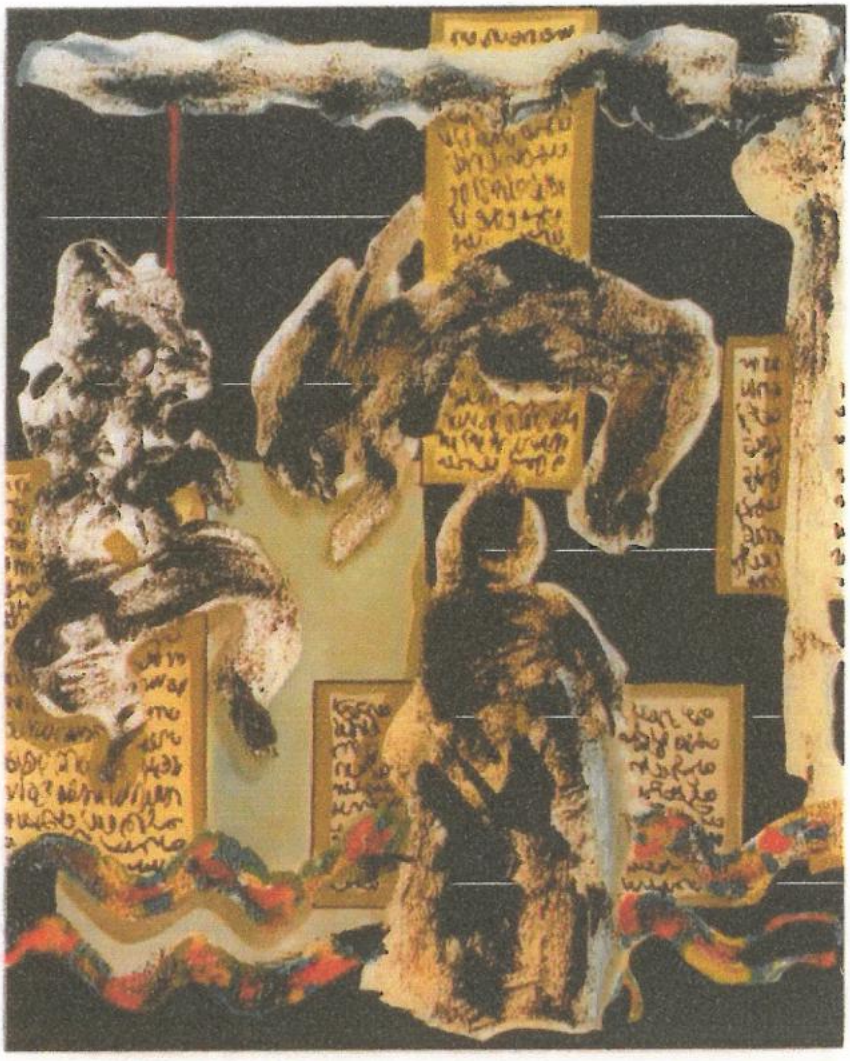
Left: *Day 503, Diary of Sarajevo 1992-94.* Mixed media collage.
Right: *Day 395, Diary of Sarajevo 1992-94.* Mixed media collage. *1/40 forty Prints.* Courtesy Professor Rusmir Mahmud Cehajic.

civilisation disperse into decay and fragments. The boom of flying machines turns into a satanic roar. It seems as though never before Hozo has anyone created such a correspondence between the whiteness of the paper and the imprinted figure. The softness of the uncoloured prints symbolises both the end and the beginning. In between, rows of human conceptions and mortal shadows arrive successively. The dramatic battle of life at the top of the pyramid of civilisation continues through the forty prints, dispersing into screams from the scaffold and trash dumps. The redness of human blood, the tremor emerging from within a human form alone speak of the unveiling of hope that comes after surprise. They return us to the symbol of the *nishan*, the perpendicular axis around which false gods are dispersed and false values recede.

Forces of Change: US Exhibition of Arab Women Artists

SALWA MIKDADI NASHASHIBI AND LAILA SHAWA

1994 saw a major exhibition of the works of women artists from the Arab world, the first of its kind touring the United States (until August 1995). It has been organised by the International Council for Women in the Arts whose President, Salwa Mikdadi Nashashibi, is also the Exhibition Curator. Laila Shawa is one of the participating artists.



Maisoon Saqr al-Qasimi, *Narration in the Course of its Form*. 1993. 27 1/2 x 19 3/4 in.

The concept of "forces of change" is rooted in my abiding interest in Arab women's artistic expression. At an early age I was impressed by the textile and embroidery traditions of the Arab region. In the late 1960s, while I attended college in Beirut, my fascination with creative expression led me to become involved with the local arts community. Over the years I have maintained contact with the artists I met during that time, and this network provided the starting point for the research that followed.

In recent decades women in the Arab world have played a major role in creating and fostering art. The Lebanese arts scene provides one example of the types of activities in which women have been engaged. Beirut offered a wealth of arts events in the 1960s with the opening of several new galleries, including Gallery One, founded by the poet Yusif al-Khal and his artist wife, Helen Khal. Another center that drew many young artists and presented excellent cultural programs was Dar el-Fan, founded in 1967 by the late Janine Rubeiz. During the Lebanese civil war the center continued its activity in Mrs. Rubeiz's apartment, where she exhibited many fine artists.

In earlier decades women established several centers which promoted the traditional arts and crafts of Lebanon and provided the public with opportunities to appreciate and explore the country's indigenous arts. Lodi Edde founded the first such center in the 1930s. Others followed later – such as Inash el-Mukhayem, established by Huguette Caland and Shermine Heneine, and The Artisans, started by May Khoury. These efforts not only created jobs for Lebanese craftspeople but also provided support for Palestinian women living in refugee camps.

In other Arab countries women also have initiated and supported projects in the arts. For example, Najah al-Attar is presently the Minister of Culture in Syria, and Sheikha Hussa al-Salem al-Sabah established the Dar-al-Athar al-Islamiyyah Museum in Kuwait with an impressive collection of Islamic art objects.

In Jordan, Princess Wijdan Ali founded the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts in 1980 with the largest permanent collection of contemporary Islamic art in the world. Ali also organized a comprehensive exhibition of contemporary Islamic art at the Barbican Centre, London, in 1989. Recently Suha Shoman established the Darat-al-Funun, a haven for art

and artists in Jordan. The center houses a permanent art gallery, a library and a studio. This studio provides the opportunity to explore new fields in the arts that require specialized technical equipment and creates an environment in which artists can interact and exchange ideas.

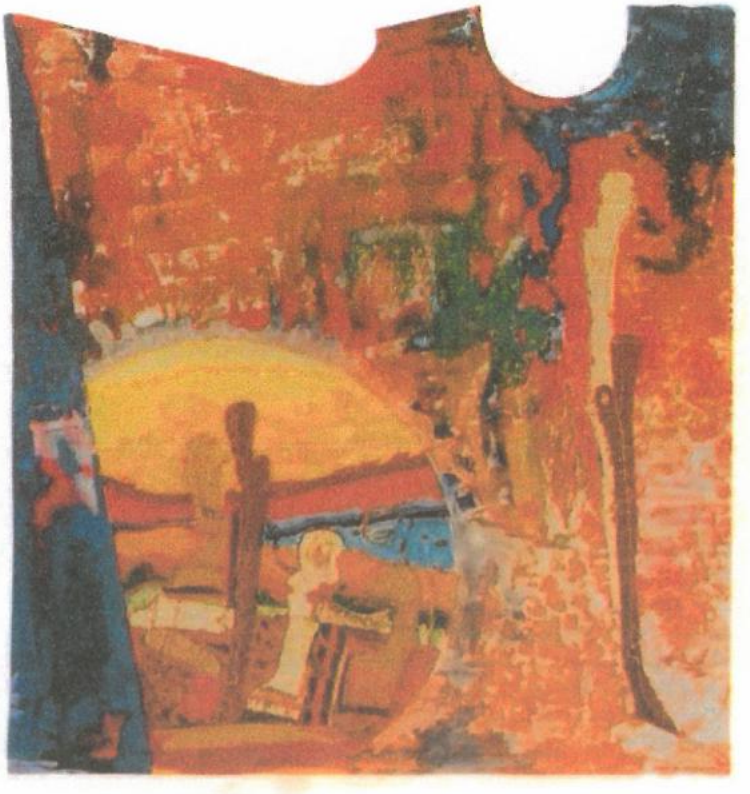
The late Inji Efflatoun of Egypt organized the exhibition *Egyptian Women Painters Over Half a Century* for the Year of the Woman in 1975. In Alexandria, several women artists were among the first to frequent independent workshops.

In Tunisia, Safiyyah Farhat established the Radeis Art Center in her family home. There she encourages the creation of woven tapestries with contemporary designs.

Malika Bouabdallah in Algeria has been the Director of the National Museum of Fine Arts for several years. The first contemporary art gallery in Morocco was founded by Pauline Demazieres.

Leila al-Attar, Director of the Iraqi Center for the Arts in Baghdad for over two decades, organized the largest exhibition of work by Arab artists ever presented. Her tragic death during the recent bombing attack on Baghdad was a major loss to the Arab art world. These women and the work in this exhibition testify to the pivotal role of Arab women in the arts. There are few fields in which women have participated and contributed as much.





Wijdan Ali, *Women of Carbala*. 1993. Mixed media on handmade paper. Triptych, 53 x 84 1/2 in. 60in. **Left: Mounirah Mosly, *May You One Day Hear the Cry of a Window Being Born into the World*.** NO 3 of a series of 4. 1991-92. Mixed media on tent fabric with collage. 62 1/2 x 60 in. Photograph by Ahmad Al-Mulla

Through courses in the Art Department of the American University of Beirut I was introduced to women such as Saloua Raouda Choucair and Jumana el-Husseini who were establishing new trends in the arts. Artists were in the forefront of political and social consciousness. After the 1967 War, Mona Saudi, a Jordanian artist living in Beirut, published a collection of artwork by Palestinian children, *In Time of War:*

Children Testify (1970). This book drew attention to children's ability to express their reactions to life in the refugee camps and to war.

I also had an opportunity to collaborate with Wadad Kawar in the mid-1960s in developing a collection of traditional Palestinian costumes. Over the last three decades Kawar has continued to gather and catalog Palestinian textiles and jewellery. Her efforts insured the preservation of this rich cultural heritage of the Palestinian people.

In the early 1970s I emigrated to the United States, where I often received requests to organize exhibitions of women's traditional arts – weaving, embroidery and costume shows. I found a lack of books which illustrated the diverse creativity of Arab women of yesterday and today. By contrast,readily available was an array of books and articles on Arab women which perpetuated the stereotypes held in the West, including publications by 19th- and 20th-century European travellers who described the intimate lives of women in harems. This one-dimensional interest in a region with a population of over 200 million challenged me to provide other resources and activities focusing on the contributions of Arab women to their contemporary cultures.

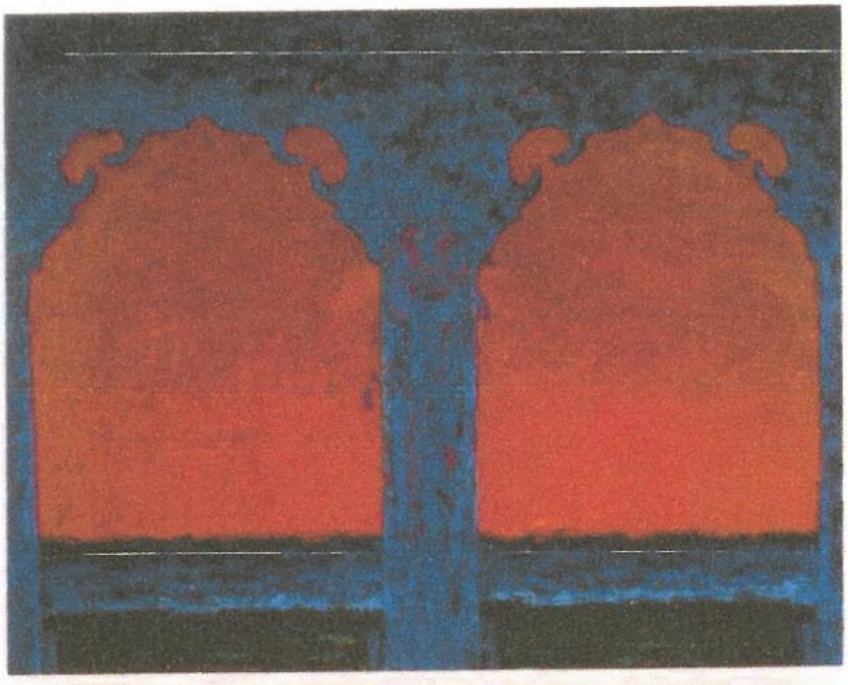
In 1985, while planning an exhibition of artists from the region, I realized that no single comprehensive source of information existed on Arab women artists. Past research on the subject was limited to a few specific countries: Helen Khal's *The Woman Artist in Lebanon* (1976) or the more recent book by Nazli Madkour, *Women and Art in Egypt* (1993). This prompted my investigation. Several trips to the region followed, during which I met with artists, gallery owners, directors of contemporary art centers and museums, professors of art and art collectors. These trips seemed always too short, given the territory and the material to cover. The contacts I established were of great help to me in continuing to develop a comprehensive database on the artists.

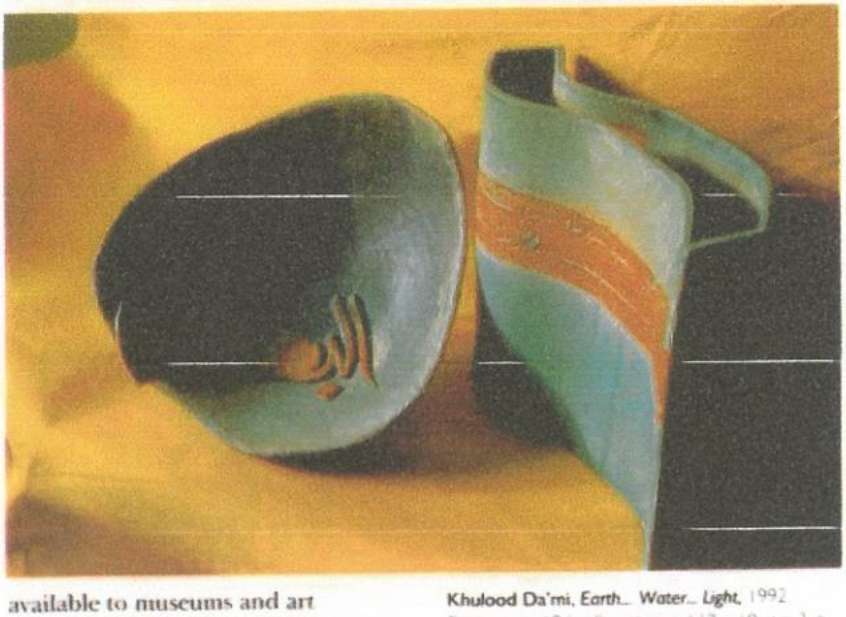
In 1989 The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) contacted me for assistance in updating their library files on Arab women artists. NMWA was the first museum in the United States to include data on Arab women artists in its archives. From that initial interest this exhibition, *Forces of Change: Artists of the Arab World*, developed.

In 1990 Laura Nader, Etel Adnan, Lola Grace and others joined me in the founding of The International Council for Women in the Arts (ICWA). ICWA maintains a resource database with information on women artists who are seldom represented in the United States. This resource is available to museums and art institutions in the United States and abroad.

After four years of research and collecting slides, tapes, texts and videotapes, it was possible to mount an ambitious display. The resulting exhibition gives wide coverage to the diversity of the cultures in the Arab world. Presented are works from the last fifty years, with an emphasis on the more experimental and nonacademic trends of the past fifteen years.

The exhibition and its catalogue provide an introduction to contemporary Arab art for the American public and convey the ideas and concerns of Arab artists. An advisory committee that included both Arab and American reviewers selected the artwork. The principal themes which have come to the fore in assembling the works are: FORCES OF CHANGE...the problems of daily life.





Khulood Da'mi, *Earth... Water... Light,* 1992. Stoneware, 10 in. diameter and 12 x 10 1/4 x 2 in. **Top: Balqees Fakhro, *Birth,*** 1992. Acrylic, 30 x 30 in.

civil war and armed conflict, human rights, occupation and the environment; PRESENT REFLECTIONS — the influence of contemporary art movements in the Arab world and the more conceptual work created in the last fifty years; RHYTHMS OF THE PAST — artists' exploration of earlier artistic expressions and their creation of personal statements using local materials and symbols of the past; and IMAGE AND THE WORD — contemporary forms and interpretations of Arabic calligraphy and the use of the written word as a mode of visual expression.

To collect the required information for an exhibition from a region of twenty-one countries, I personally met with and interviewed most of the participating artists, as well as others whose work was of interest. The artists included in the show come from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. Others are of Arab origin now living in the United States and Europe. Unfortunately, due to space limitations, we were unable to include all deserving artists, or artists working in photography and textiles.

Although I was familiar with the historical and cultural influences which are the foundations of contemporary art in the Arab world, my direct contact with the artists deepened my understanding of the uniqueness of their creative expression. Interviewing the artists in their homes brought out the realities of their struggles and achievements. Their stories were punctuated by their reactions to wars, pollution, emigration, marriage, child rearing, divorce, financial worries and problems specific to the artistic profession.

The Western world is starting to open up to Arab contemporary art. In the last decade the British Museum has built a collection of works by Arab artists. The French public now regularly attends shows of Arab artists organized by L'Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, an organization sponsored by France and countries of the Arab world. *Forces of Change* communicates Arab women's growing sense of power. Theirs is neither a neglected spirit nor an oppressed one. Their contributions to art are bringing them recognition and financial rewards, in their own countries and abroad.

Art invites the viewer to go beyond stereotypes. In the popular culture of the United States, the media rarely looks beyond the conflicts and disasters of the world to convey the significance of people's daily lives and aspirations. Thus, upon hearing about *Forces of Change*, an Egyptian cabinet minister declared, "At last someone is coming from America to report something positive about our country. We welcome so many visitors with open arms, and when they go back home all they write of is children playing in garbage or people living in graveyards in the City of the Dead!"



Laila al-Shawa, *Wall of Gaza*, 1992. Installation detail. Silkscreen. 38 × 59 in.

Prevalent American scholarship on Arab art usually focuses on the pharaonic and the medieval periods. Knowledge of the contemporary artistic production of the region has remained scant, however. We think that this exhibition is the first major step toward making contemporary Arab art well known, as well as stimulating further interest and scholarship. The art in the exhibition is intended to elicit admiration, outrage and amusement. Most of all, though, it is intended to communicate.

Salwa Mikdadi Nashashibi
(from the Preface to the Exhibition Catalogue)

An Artist's View

The difficulty in evaluating an exhibition from the point of view of a participating artist lies in the fact that reviewing other artists' work could be misconstrued as myopic and self-centred.

To me what determines the success of such an exhibition is whether it has achieved its objectives, and to what degree.

Looking back I recall when Salwa Mikdadi Nashashibi, the organiser and originator of the event, contacted me a few years ago, and proposed the idea of an exhibition of contemporary Arab women artists to be held in the US, and asked me to suggest other women artists who may be interested in participating in such an exhibition. While I was very enthused by the idea, I could not help being slightly sceptical as to the feasibility of undertaking such a project.

My previous experience towards helping to raise funds for such exhibitions had left me with the sad conviction that at least in Arab and Muslim eyes, art was less of a priority, least of all women's art.

Nevertheless believing in the aims and objectives, which were to help extend informed perceptions in the United States towards the arts movement in the Middle East, I decided to participate and help in identifying the artists who could make an impact and a difference to such an exhibition.

Initial conceptualisation of a broad-based format and the drawing up of parameters as well as the modalities of finding a venue took time, and a few years passed.

Finally a proposal was made to the National Museum of Women in the Arts. They had previously asked Salwa Nashashibi to help the Museum with its data base on Arab women artists. It was in her capacity as the Founder and President of the International Council for Women in the Arts, an organisation dedicated to the promotion of women artists from the Arab world. This was the first ever American institution to show a more than passing interest in the art movement in the Middle East.

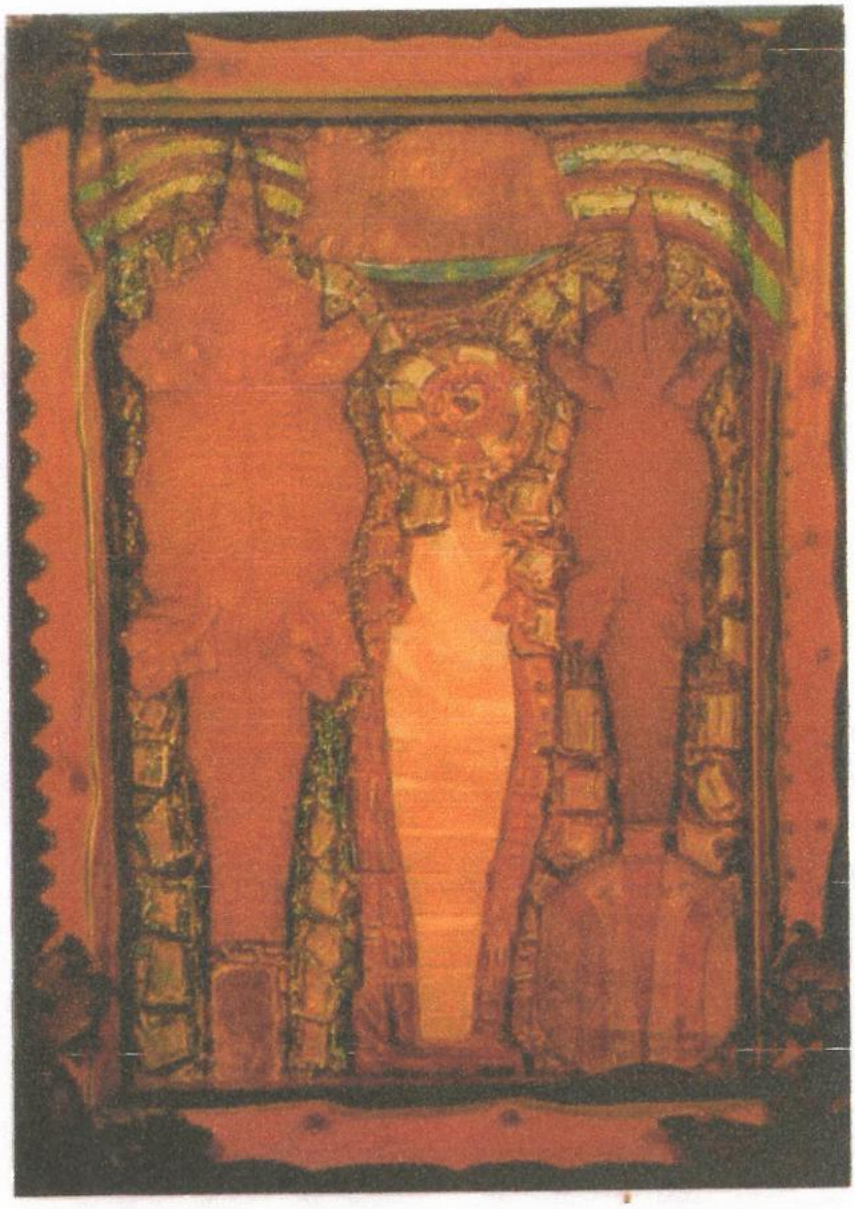
The Museum accepted the proposal and allocated to it a slot in its overall agenda of the year.

As the concept progressed towards becoming a reality, other basic issues such as the curatorship as well as putting together of an infra-structure were looked into. Apart from the determining and setting up of aesthetic standards, the more serious question of an in-depth financial assessment had to be addressed. It required a well studied and organised fund-raising campaign.

The logistics of transporting works from the Arab World and Europe had also to be worked out to the last detail. The team that worked with Salwa was very well chosen, including the professionals as well as the others who volunteered. Considering the size of the exhibition, the work undertaken was immense and yet accomplished in an impressive manner.

The concept behind the exhibition was to attempt and break the mould of the stereotyped image of Middle Eastern women throughout the Western World. Perhaps this has been due to the influence of 19th Century Orientalist Art, or through the present western media coverage of political events in the Middle East. There is a tendency to distort the image and culture, and portray the Muslim world as a nest of fundamentalism, and its women as down-trodden, heavily veiled creatures with no say or power in determining their own destinies.

To challenge that concept, and to project Arab women artists on the same footing as their western counterparts, who themselves suffer from a distinctive form of prejudice within their own societies, meant that certain standards had to be set and maintained.



The exhibition comprised 160 works representing 70 artists from 15 countries, covering a broad range of mediums: painters, sculptors, ceramists, photographers, printmakers, computer and video as well as installation artists. It opened to the American public in February 1994 at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. Attendance at the Vernissage, which received 1500 visitors, was almost unprecedented, indicating the degree of curiosity and public interest. One can only assume, especially from reading the comments in the Visitors' Book, that the purpose for which this exhibition was mounted - that of bridging the cultural gap between the Arab world and the American public - was achieved. It also opened the way to many artists who were approached by various institutions and museums to exhibit, and in some instances to purchase their work.

Despite the evident interest and the success of the event, the marked absence of any serious art reviews was more of an indication of prejudice that still exists within the American media. However, among the comments that appeared, one article that appeared in the *Aramco World* magazine, written by Ann Mullin Burnham (in the Jan-Feb 94 issue) perhaps vindicated that absence. The opening words in my view summed up the influence one hoped to achieve, and I quote:

"Like a poem that pushes the boundaries of language to say what is somehow beyond saying, art can both express an aesthetic vision and articulate previously silent or unheard voices. It can profoundly change the way we view and think about our world and reflect afresh what we have seen too often or too closely to be aware of."

Finally, as participating artists, the exhibition put us in a position where one was fully exposed to the kaleidoscope of the works and concerns of other women artists. The revelation was to discover that though we were all part of the same world and culture, yet perhaps conditioned with different influences involved in varied circumstances.

The real success of the exhibition, in my view, was its equalising effect on a lot of supreme egos including my own. It put things more in context and perspective. It also created many a dialogue between the artists present, and helped in reassessing and evaluating one's work within a much wider context. Even more important, perhaps, was the exhibition's ability to break through and change perceptions and prejudices of the American audience, who came face to face with Arab women artists for the first time, and in such an event of versatility, dynamism and aesthetic ambience.

Laila Shawa

(Excerpts from an interview)



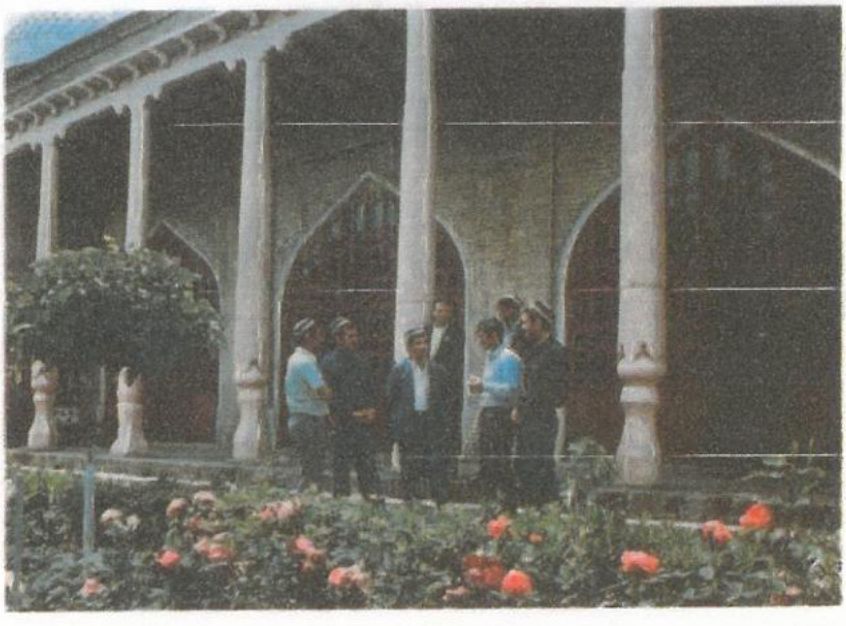
Baya Mahieddine, *Femme Portant de Coupes*, 1966. Gouache on paper. 39 1/2 x 59 in. Photograph by Philippe Maillard.
Opposite page: Effat Nagui, *Icon of the Nile*, 1991. Mixed media on Wood. 68 1/2 x 43 1/2 in.

The Imam Bukhari Project: Restoration and Development in Samarkand

S Abdallah Schleifer



Samarkand, city of golden roads and turquoise domes, has for centuries fired the imagination of European travellers and poets. For the Muslim soul, however, even the architectural glories of this almost legendary Central Asian city seem to pale into insignificance when set beside the dazzling legacy of Imam al-Bukhari, probably the best-known scholar in the history of Islam.



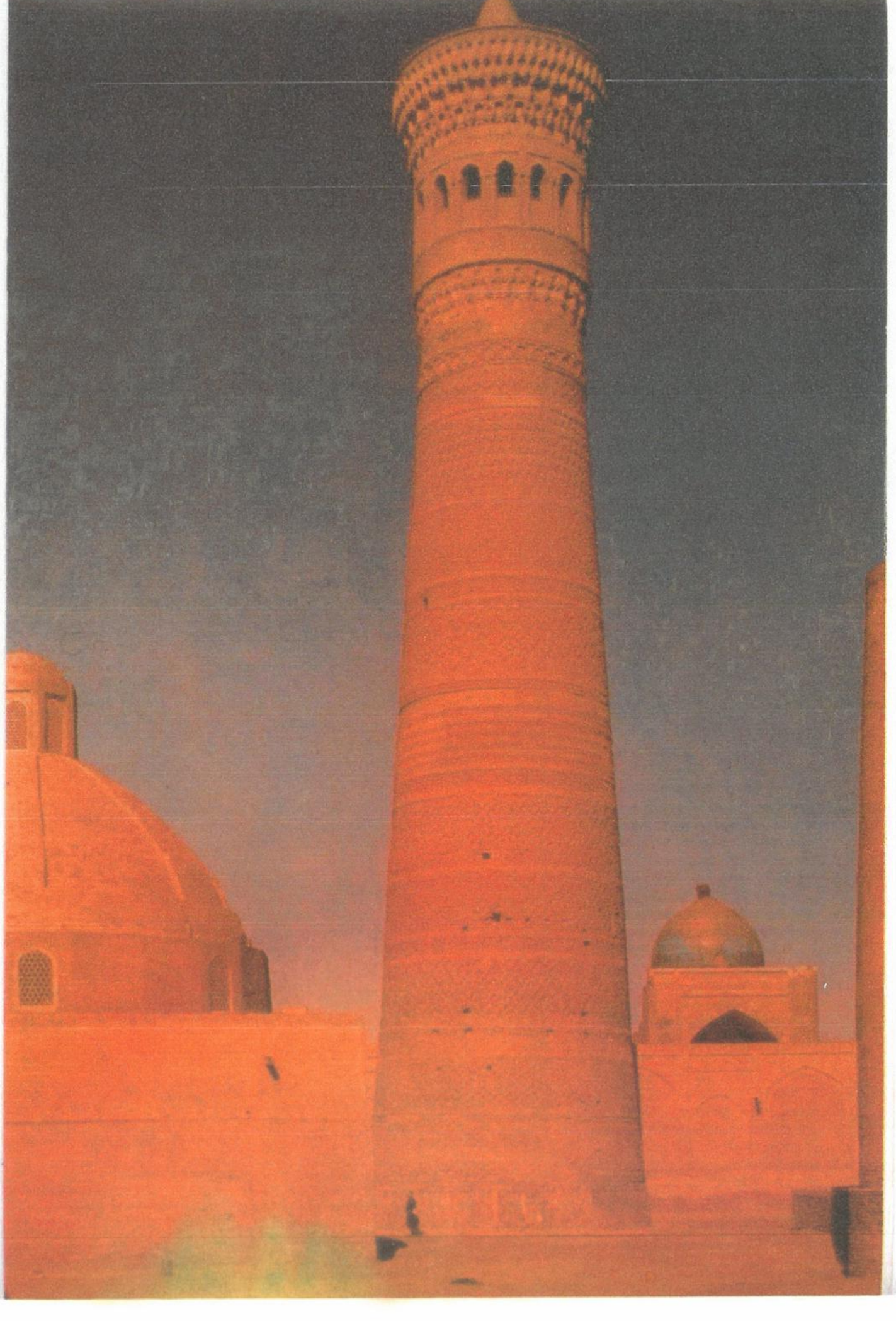
Top: Traditional brick and wood architecture finds a revival in villages near Samarkand. **Above:** Traditional type of *madrassa* with open galleries acts as model for SL's design. **Opposite:** The round and tapering *Kalyan Minaret* in Bukhara, similar to form adopted by SL, demonstrates high resistance to earthquakes.

While the Holy Book of Islam provides the fundamental guidelines for Muslim belief and practice, the detailed elaboration of the religion is found in the books of *Hadith*: the jewel-like utterances which record the teachings and way of life of the Blessed Prophet Muhammad. Imam al-Bukhari's collection of some seven thousand of these Hadiths, known as *al-Jami al-Sahih*, has for over a thousand years been revered as the most accurate anthology of its kind: a sacred text whose authority is second only to that of the Qur'an itself.

Sadly, the very divergent priorities of East and West manifested themselves repeatedly in Samarkand's colonial history. The city's built heritage was admired and celebrated by Tsarists and Bolsheviks alike, but the spirit which had created and sustained it, namely the Islamic worldview which had been set forth in texts such as that of al-Bukhari, was all too often regarded with xenophobia and disdain. Under Communist rule, and particularly from the late 1930s, the practice of the Islamic faith in Samarkand, and throughout Uzbekistan, was severely curtailed. The great majority of mosques and other focal points of Muslim culture were suppressed, or even physically destroyed.

Even today, Western onlookers reveal traces of the same preference. An otherwise excellent and sensitive travel book such as John Lawton's *Samarkand and Bukhara* (Tauris Parke Books, London, 1991), with its exquisite photographs of the madrasas at Samarkand's Registan Square and the street of airy mausoleums which leads through the nearby Shah-i-Zindah Cemetery, fails to mention either the great Imam himself, who bears the name of the Uzbek city of Bukhara, or the modest mosque and mausoleum which stand at his burial-place in the village of Khartang near Samarkand.

Three years ago, that centuries-old dichotomy was directly challenged when the newly-independent Republic of Uzbekistan granted exclusive responsibility to the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (OCIS) to commission and bring to



fruition an international project to restore the mosque and mausoleum complex, and to construct a new educational complex around it.

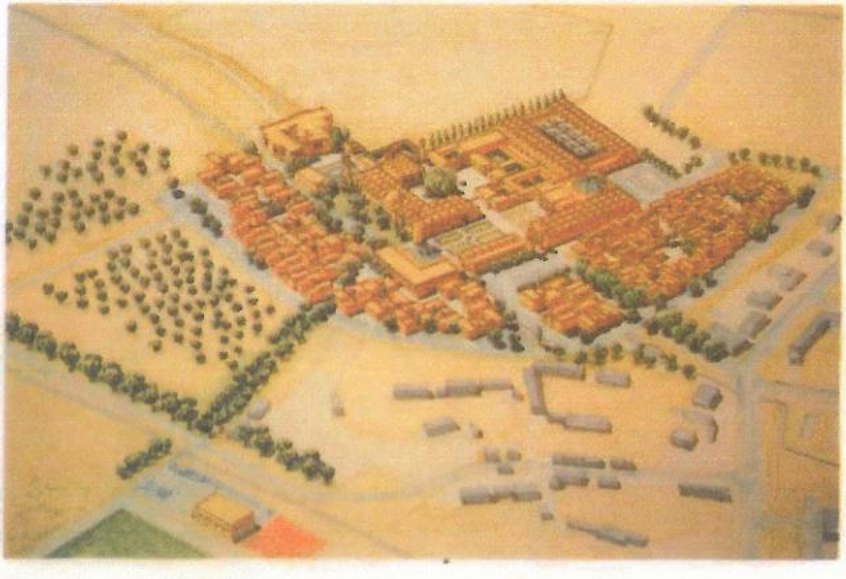
The existing building is modest in scale, and dates from various periods. The prayer hall of the mosque is presently covered by six small domes of traditional brick construction. On two sides it is surrounded by an arched gallery which completes the row of domes with six more, smaller domes, and, through large windows, overlooks a courtyard where beds of roses and ancient plane trees encircle a pool of water. Beside the mosque stands the walled mausoleum in its own courtyard, which is surrounded by open galleries of wood. This is entered through a modest gateway adjoining the mosque minaret. In the very centre of this courtyard, the tomb itself is covered by a domed kiosk faced with ceramic tiles. Nearby there is a traditional Uzbek *ziyaretkhana*, a small domed structure where visitors to the tomb could rest after their long journey.

On the southwest side of the complex stands a building known as the Guesthouse, which displays many of the decorative architectural crafts of the country, such as intricate brickwork, ceramic tiles, and carved and painted wood. The entire complex is surrounded by a walled enclosure entered through a gateway at the end of the tree-lined approach road.

The future educational complex, which could be built upon as much as 39 hectares of land provided by the government, is to include a new mosque able to accommodate a thousand worshippers, and a *madrasa* (Islamic school) for the children in the local community. But the Centre's main vocation would be to serve up to 300 graduate students and visiting scholars, with the provision of sophisticated lecture-halls, teaching rooms and a multi-use reception area along with a modern library capable of holding 200,000 books and accommodating 200 readers as well as computer facilities. The educational complex would also include conference and exhibition halls to serve national and international meetings, office accommodation for faculty, visiting scholars, research staff and administration, along with residential accommodation and social facilities for a total of some 500 students, faculty and staff.







Top: Dr Rasch presents SL's design to the Blessings Committee. **Middle:** Model of the core of the Education Complex. **Above:** Site plan of Educational Complex surrounded by residential accommodation. **Opposite:** Detail of glazed brick of the type to be used decoratively in the Imam Bukhari Complex.



With this brief in mind, the OCIS quickly organised an international architectural competition for the project under the sponsorship of a committee headed by HE Mr Islam Karimov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and including a galaxy of Islamic scholarly luminaries including the Shaikh Al-Azhar, the Secretary-General of the Muslim World League in Makkah, and the Chief Justice of Brunei Darussalam. Dr Farhan Ahmad Nizami, director of the OCIS, who is also a member of this committee, serves as its coordinator. Dr Nizami's vision and deep commitment is at the origin of this project and continues to act as its driving force.

Nizami went on to create an organizing committee for the competition itself, which included Keith Critchlow (director of the Prince of Wales Institute for Architecture), and Professor Abdellatif Hajjami, director of the UNESCO project to restore the Moroccan city of Fez. The two men then drew up a brief for the competition, with Professor Hajjami going on to serve on the international jury for the design competition. This included outstanding Muslim architects and public figures of international standing, as well as international and local Uzbek experts.

A total of seven architects, all noted for their distinguished contribution to Islamic architecture, were invited to participate, and on October 23, 1993 the jury convened in Samarkand to consider their proposals. The winning entry was the design submitted by the German architect Dr Bodo Rasch, who was officially designated as project architect.

Dr Rasch's company, SL, has for many years been involved in some of the most prestigious new projects in Saudi Arabia. Most notable among these has been the design, manufacture and installation of convertible shade roofs in the form of large and spectacularly graceful umbrellas that majestically unfold at sunrise to shade the courtyards of the old extension of the Prophet's Mosque in Madina, folding away again at night to allow cool air to descend and heat to radiate away from the stone surfaces of the building. The Madina Umbrellas, which are at one with the overall structure and atmosphere of the Prophet's Mosque, revealed SL's ability in using very high technology in creating forms that are consistent with, and extend, the Islamic architectural tradition. It is that ability which has informed SL's Imam Bukhari Educational Centre design.

Rasch's innovative yet intensely sensitive work in Madina had sharpened his awareness of the delicate link between original structure and elements that must by definition be of far greater mass than the original structure, and yet defer to the original structure as symbol, raison d'etre, and, to the degree that this is possible, as vista. Years earlier, Rasch's work in Makkah as co-founder of the Haj Research Centre, where he directed the documentation of what then remained of the traditional city, had honed his sensibility to the traditional relationships of structures (or, more accurately, of spaces) that take their form as an organic extension of a central sacred space.

The competition brief had logically separated out the design elements. One was the restoration of the mosque and its adjacent structures (mausoleum, minaret, guesthouse and courts), in order 'to preserve the historic form and cultural values of the Restoration area'. Another was the design of an associated educational complex (including a new mosque) that would be very contemporary in its function. There was also the design of residential accommodation, and a range of landscaping tasks. But against its own necessarily logical separation and notation of design elements, the Brief also stressed the need for an organic relationship between all of these elements and their integration with the existing environment, in a manner 'appropriate to a renaissance of faith and scholarship on this venerated site of world importance.'

The brief hinted at the most appropriate solution by noting that the new mosque could be built as an extension to the restored mosque already in existence. Rasch, drawing on his experience in extension work at the Holy Cities, responded boldly, with a design which flowed entirely from that insight.

This was given recognition by the jury in its report on SL's winning design:

"The decision to extend the existing mosque was inspired. This was further reinforced by preserving the characteristics of the existing buildings and monuments. By extending the principle to the educational complex the designs ensure the clarity of the whole project. The courtyard with the landmark of the great trees is sensitively accommodated.

The clustering principle of the accommodation also expresses the aspect given to the holy space of Imam al-Bukhari's Mosque. This pays respect for the proximity of people to their destinations.

The centrality of the Mosques and educational area in the general layout maintains the important unity of the project. The scheme expresses fully the aims of the Imam Bukhari project in its multifunctional and spiritual character."

The relation between restored site and new construction is particularly delicate because, unlike the Madina Mosque Extension which shared the same function - that of prayer hall - with the existing structure, the new educational and residential complexes with all of their related facilities could easily overwhelm and displace, rather than extend, that sense of the sacred that is implicit in the existing site.

The SL design retains the existing mosque and tomb area in their present form. But since much of the material and craftsmanship in the existing buildings is recent and of low quality, these are to be substantially upgraded. The brick *ziyaratkhana* and the wooden galleries around the mausoleum courtyard are to be refurbished. The existing mosque will be retained in its present form, with alterations being confined to certain improvements to the finishes. The arched wooden screens are to be replaced, as is the sheet-metal cladding on the outside of the domes. A new underfloor heating system will be installed to cope with Uzbekistan's severe winters, while brass chandeliers will be suspended from the domes.

The mosque's external row of domes that now act as an access gallery is to be retained, but instead of giving access to a garden this gallery will be extended and the old mosque connected to the new. In order to sustain the complementary beauty and simplicity of the Imam Bukhari mosque, not to mention the sense of organic rather than arbitrary expansion, the new mosque is also to

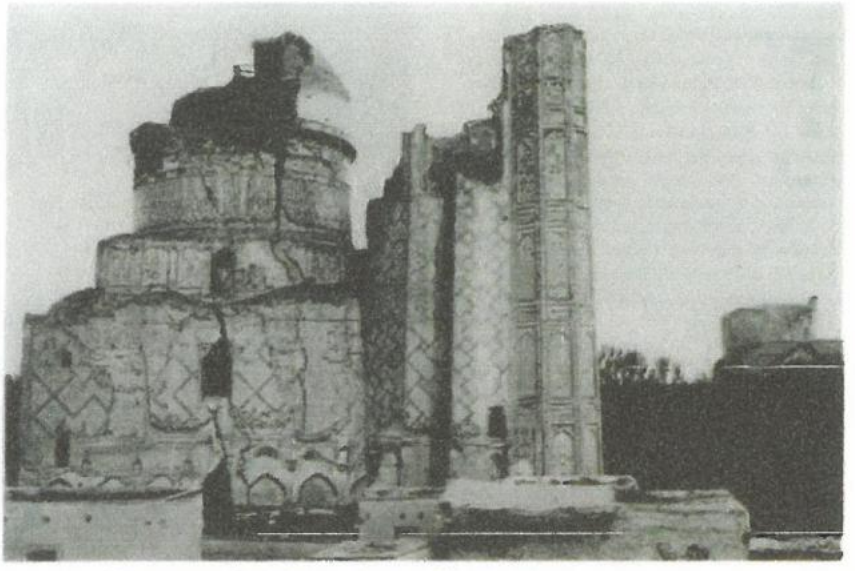
be constructed from rows of small domes built in brick. The men's prayer area, able to accommodate a thousand worshippers, consists of a long hall that will run parallel to the *qibla* wall. A further area will be provided allowing at least 150 women to pray.

Seen together, the existing mosque and the new extension form a U-shaped block which encloses a courtyard that retains and further highlights the beautiful group of mature plane trees, providing shade and dignity to the space.

But if we are to appreciate what one member of the jury described in a private comment to me as 'the pure directness of this design', and what another characterised as 'st.'s strong commitment to urban design and not just to architecture', it would be better to survey the scheme from its formal beginning at the existing tree-lined avenue, just off the main road (lower right side of general perspective. This avenue, which invites pedestrian use but can be utilized by those approaching the complex in vehicles, is the principal entrance to the entire complex. Space will be provided in front of the gate where cars and buses can pull out or park after setting down visitors. To the left, six shop units face this space along with access to a tea house connected to the student dining hall, which might also serve the public and visitors to the complex.

Entry is made through the gateway into a pedestrian zone. Here we should take note of two seemingly unrelated facts. Most of the complex is pedestrianized, and Rasch and his st team met all of the specifications of the brief while using only ten out of a possible 39 hectares. This includes intensive landscaping in which gardens, large and small, are inseparably associated with almost all of the structures.

Rasch has not wanted urban or suburban sprawl. Climatic conditions – particularly the need for shade in summer, and shelter from the winds that blow down from Siberia in the winter – as well as a certain spiritual ambience (in which one is 'expansive' within the privacy of one's own home or compound, rather than in purely public spaces), have always favoured compact building patterns linked by narrow streets. Even prior to the appearance of the motor car, the Muslim city insisted on significant pedestrianization, and, with the exception of approach and service roads, barriers would often be placed in the middle of streets and alleys in such a way as to allow pedestrians free passage, while barring further progress by horse or donkey.



Remnants of Bibi Khanum's Timurid dome after the 1897 earthquake.

At the moment of entry through the new gateway, the visitor has a distant view of the original gateway to the precinct around the tomb, with the minaret of the existing mosque rising visibly behind it. The sight of the new mosque with its many small conical domes will be echoed by the madrasa for local children with its single row of domes immediately to the gateway's left. In this location it is readily accessible to the public, opening, on the compound side of the gateway, onto an open terrace shaded by a roof supported on wooden columns which recalls the buildings of the existing mosque and mausoleum restoration area.

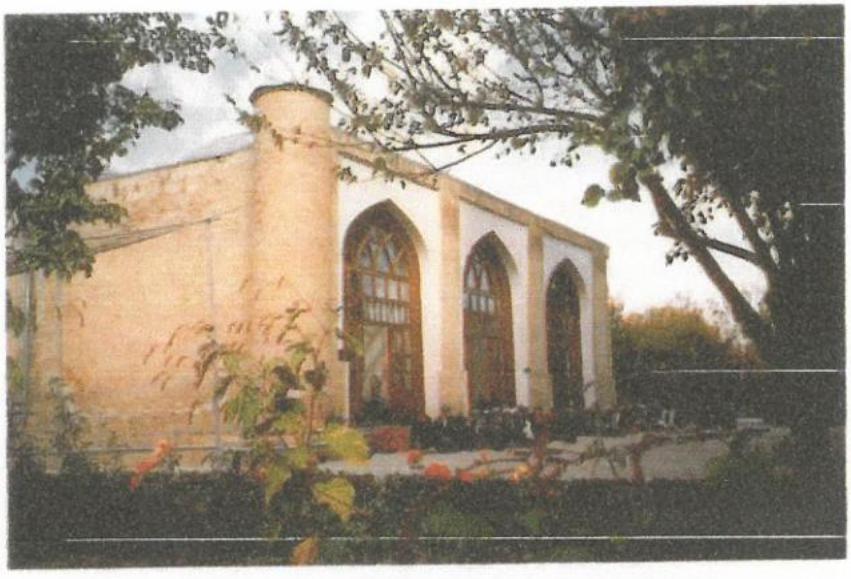
Directly facing the Madrasa, on the other side of the formal garden, stands the southwest wall of the mosque with one of the two minarets rising from the south corner. A side entrance here gives women the most direct, and yet inconspicuous, access possible. Professor Hajjami, jury member and co-author of the original brief, remarks that he was impressed by this sign of commitment to full implementation of what he described as the 'Islamic civilizational values' that necessarily inform the complex, and to the projection of 'those values into actual use in housing and in classrooms as well as the mosque, and to integrate these uses within the Law.'

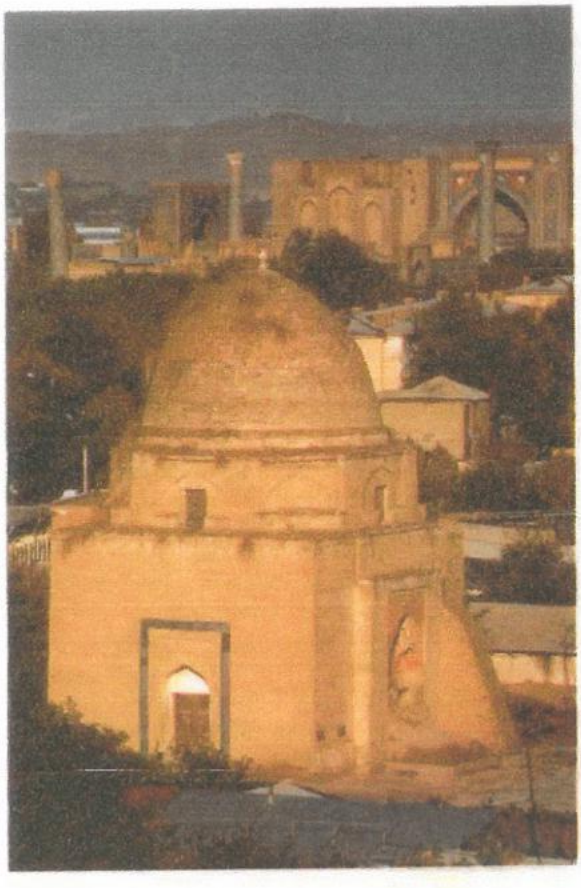
Standing on the axis of the first compound just beyond the gateway, one turns directly to the right and walks through a formal garden set out in traditional '*chehar bagh*' form with beds of roses, jasmine and lilac enclosing lawns of grass. This leads to the reception area of the conference hall, reached up a short flight of stairs to mezzanine level. To the right of this main entrance to the conference hall is the exhibition area, which is subdivided into two rooms, the first featuring tall arched openings overlooking the formal garden, and the second enclosed on all sides. Both are roofed by domes which allow light to enter through glazed openings at the apex.

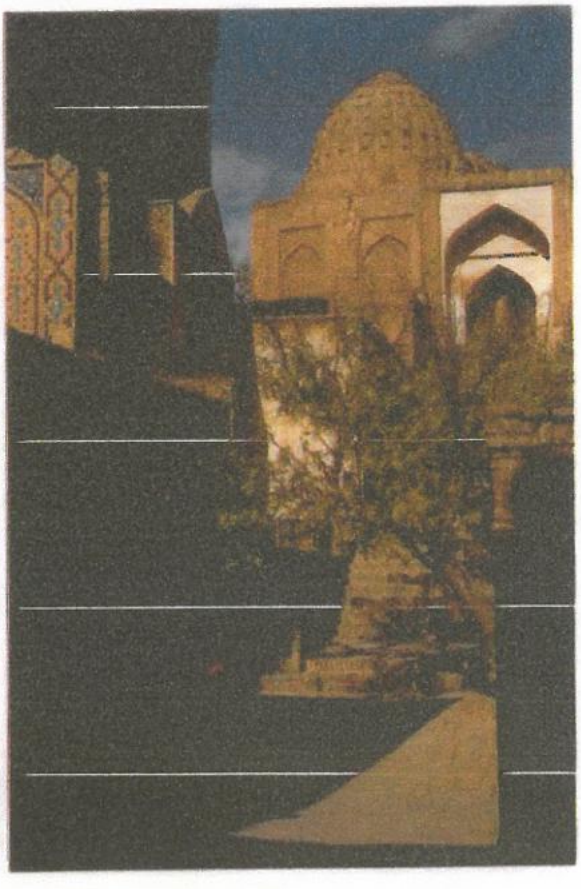
On the upper level above the conference hall entranceway four meeting rooms are grouped around a central space lit by clerestory windows. This section opens out onto a terrace, with wooden columns carved in the traditional Samarkand manner, which provides a striking view over the formal gardens to a tent pavilion, and the students' dining hall on the far side of a small stream. Since this part of the Conference Centre is the only two-storied building in the whole complex, this terrace also commands an outstanding view for visitors over the flat roofs of the buildings, revealing the mosque and the tomb some distance away.

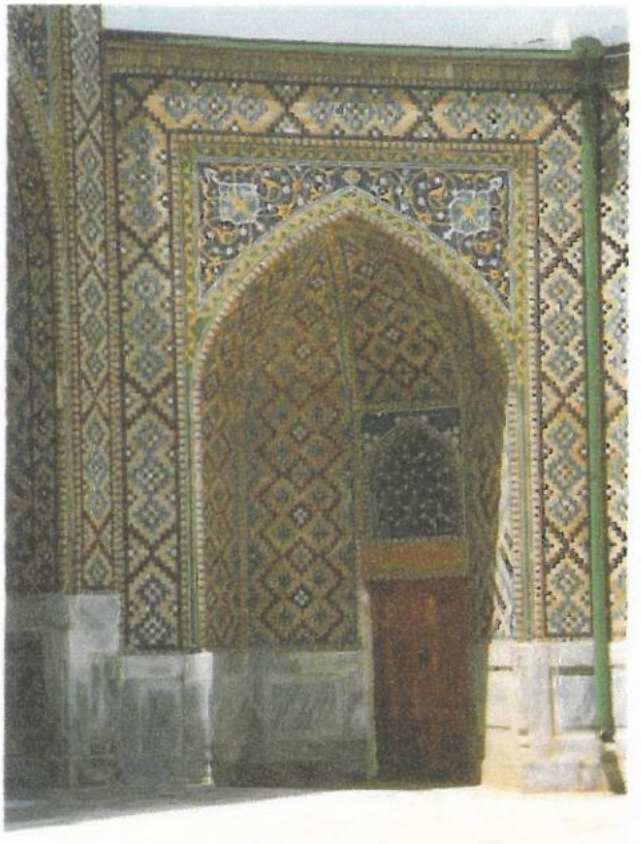
Another path, leading straight ahead from the main gateway, passes through the formal gardens again and leads to the mosque courtyard, which is shaded by the dignified mature plane trees of the smaller mosque, which will flank the far side

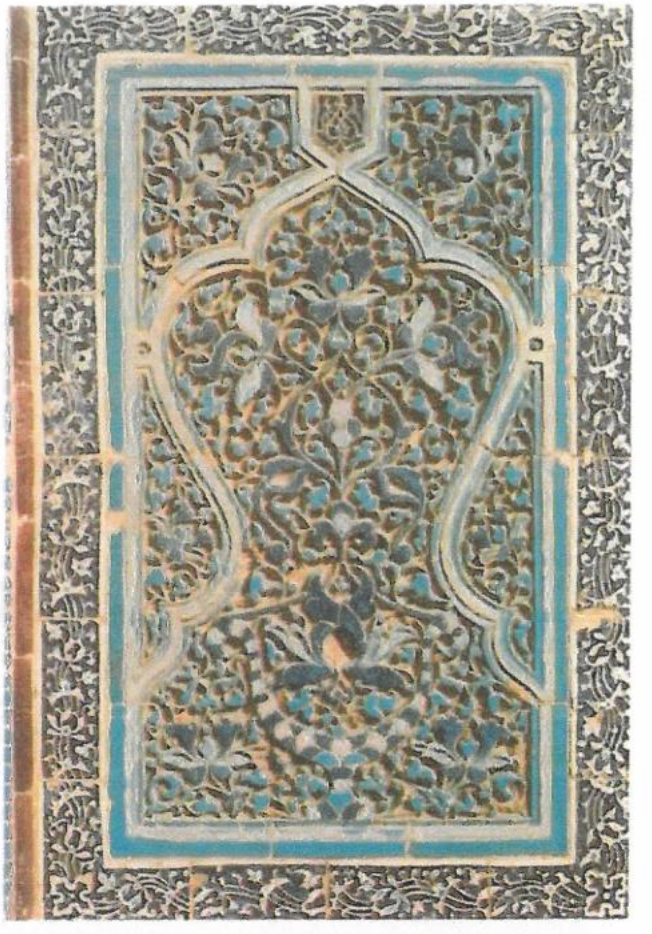
Right: Existing mosque surrounding gardens. **Below**: Rukhabad Mausoleum, Samarkand. An example of a dome profile with better resistance to earthquakes. **Below right**: Entrance to Shah-i-Zindah Complex, Samarkand. Another dome profile with good resistance to earthquakes. **Opposite page: clockwise from bottom left: 1**. Dome over Timur's tomb, the Gur-i-Mir Mausoleum, Samarkand. **2**: Decorative brick work at the *Tilya Kozi* Madrassa, Samarkand. **3**: Examples of traditional ceramic crafts which SI hopes this project will further sustain and revive. **4**. Friday prayer at tomb of Imam Bukhari.

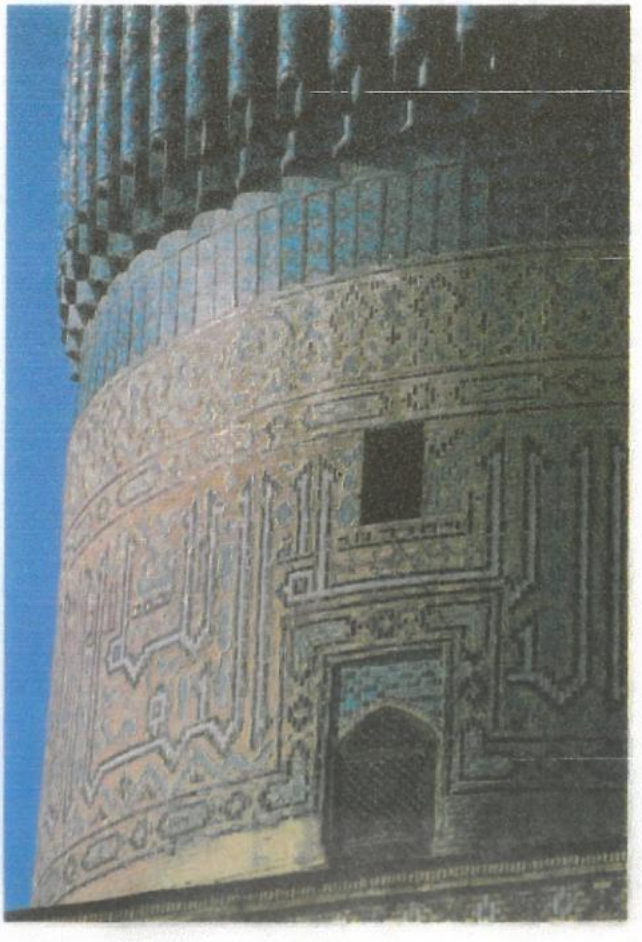


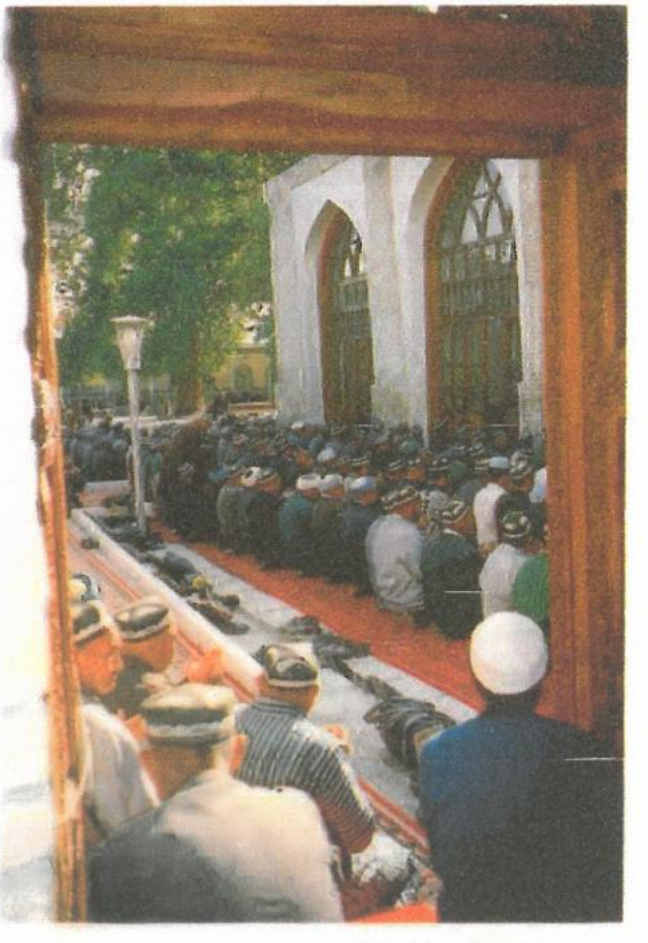












of this court. The court can easily serve a traditional function as an extension of the prayer area, while by the trees there is an ornate marble ablution fountain, which supplements the main ablution areas marked by flanking gateposts back in the passageway leading from the formal garden into the mosque courtyard.

Directly opposite the mosque, and linked to it by a bare courtyard lying a few steps down from the mosque court, is the entrance to the teaching area. These two U-shaped blocks, which enclose a single, although slightly differentiated, courtyard space, express the intention of the entire project: to combine worship and learning. For the local people who visit Imam Bukhari's tomb out of respect for his saintly character, it also restores the balance in appreciation of the Imam as both scholar and saint.

Flanking this lower academic courtyard to the south-east is the entrance to the faculty offices, which are accommodated in small cellular rooms grouped around internal courtyards open to the sky. Traditional canopy roofs supported by wooden columns cover the access paths around the periphery of these courts, which can be protected yet further with convertible shade roofs similar to the *toldos* of Andalucia, which Rasch has adopted in his work on the Quba Mosque in Madina.

Opposite this lies a block containing the Hadith Database Centre, which provides the further arm to the academic courtyard's U shape. The idea for such a Centre does not exist in the brief; but for SL, which for more than a decade has sponsored a team, under the academic guidance of Al-Azhar, which has completed the development of a computer data base which includes Imam Bukhari's *Sahih* as well as at least ten other collections of hadith, the very idea of an Imam Bukhari Centre has seemed providential. As proposed by SL, the Data Base Centre would be linked to a network of workstations allowing students and faculty direct access. At the same time it would utilise satellite facilities to provide an information service accessible by computer link from points all around the globe.

The enclosed corridor to the library runs on an axis between the small courts and leading to an entranceway at a central point opening onto the main academic courtyard. The library has a generous courtyard of its own, which divides the reading rooms for periodicals and reference works from the stacks. In the general perspective, ten metre umbrellas similar to those deployed so successfully in the courtyard of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina provide shade and shelter for this large open area.

Residential accommodation for students and faculty is provided in a roughly crescent-shaped belt around the educational complex. Access to this is from a peripheral road along which the car-parking needs of the complex are catered for without encroaching on the pedestrianised calm within the complex itself. The housing clusters are linked to the educational complex by pedestrian routes which run through a large informal garden. Despite this accent on pedestrian access, emergency and service access is possible throughout.

In the case of the faculty housing, the size of dwellings is dictated by the intention to provide each family with a detached unit with a private outdoor space of its own. The dwellings are grouped into small neighbourhood clusters typical of traditional Islamic towns. The layout of the student housing is similar. While this is not necessarily the cheapest way of building for students, Rasch and his team were convinced that an essential aspect in the establishment of any thriving educational complex is to make the prospect of living there as attractive as possible. The central importance to the architects of the integrity of the family and the importance of privacy in the dwelling units is conspicuous throughout.

All the faculty and student housing units are orientated around a central hall lit by clerestory windows. This provides a shaded semi-outdoor space in the summer, while in the winter the shallower rays of the sun can shine directly in and warm the hall, rendering it a buffer zone separating the core living spaces from the cold.

The design brief called for the preservation and restoration of the guesthouse. Because its present location obstructs the natural extension of the Mosque along the *qibla* wall, the design proposes to move the existing structure in its entirety, either on temporary rails, or by reassembly, to a new position adjacent to the new mosque site, so as to enclose another landscaped space.

The landscaping itself is comprehensive. Its strategy rests upon a recognition that in the dry, dusty and (winter aside) hot countryside of Central Asia each settlement resembles a cluster of oases - large gardens on the edges of towns, gardens in public open spaces within the walls, and, on the smallest scale, courtyards within each individual house. In the specifically Islamic ambience, these gardens represent order and beauty, and provide symbols of Paradise inspired by the descriptions in the Holy Quran, which makes direct reference to fountains, streams of running water, green trees, shade, fruit and cool pavilions.

The jury report was critical of one major element: the shape of the domes which are to cover first the new mosque, and are then echoed extensively in the library, the exhibition area, and, to a lesser degree, in a single row across the madrasa roof. Although the architectural style of deploying rows of small domes on pendentives is derived from the existing mosque, the shape of the domes on all the projected new buildings is conical rather than the more conventional Timurid flatter-topped dome resting on high circular drums. SL has opted for the conical form in response to an earthquake analysis undertaken by the great master of lightweight structures Frei Otto, who was Rasch's teacher and is now a consultant to SL.

The jury did not accept this justification. Noting that 'the profiles of the domes do not conform to the local forms developed over the centuries', they added that 'earthquake analysis alone does not justify these forms.'

SL has responded cautiously to this, suggesting that the issue has ramifications which the jury had not perhaps entirely grasped. The project architect appointed by Rasch to implement the Centre, Yahya Nicholas Stone, points out that since SL elected to treat the new mosque as an extension of the old, it was vital to continue the construction in brick. Unless plaster deceits are to be added to alter the domes' profile, the logic of the project combined with the need to ensure safety in an earthquake zone, demands that the domes take the shape that SL has chosen.

To support this, it could be argued that the consistent use of brick in the region for thousands of years is a far more abiding tradition than the six hundred year tradition of Timurid domes, and that ST.'s use of brick for new building could serve to breath new life into this great Uzbek craft. The people of Samarkand still instinctively relate to the same traditional materials - brick and wood – despite (or even because of) fifty years of insistent Soviet use of reinforced concrete. This is demonstrated by the revival of brick and wood in Samarkand's new popular housing (see picture 14a). But the conventional wisdom of most engineers is that in an earthquake zone such as this, reinforced concrete is the solution.

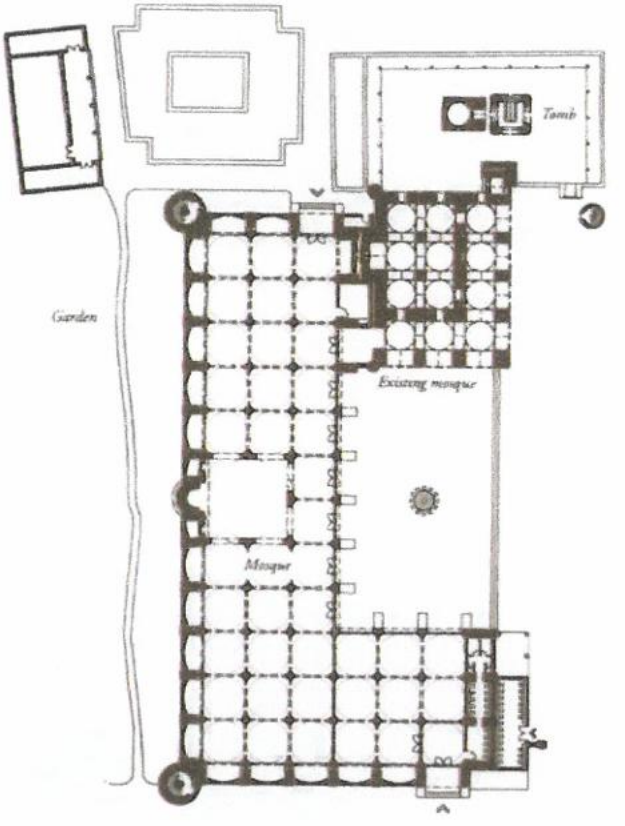
Unless that challenge is answered, the scope for a local crafts revival based upon locally-available materials will be reduced drastically. ST.'s earthquake studies are an answer to that challenge: a scientific rescue operation for an endangered local tradition. Those studies have already succeeded to a degree, inasmuch as the jury did not object to the minaret/gateway tower shape which ST. selected, from local forms, as the most earthquake-resistant. Such round minarets with a gently-tapering profile have demonstrated (as in the case of the Kalyan Minaret in Bukhara) a high resistance to earthquakes, especially when compared to the Timurid type which stands adjacent to the existing mosque and mausoleum. Professor Otto's cross-sectional analysis indicated that the Timurid dome, a relatively late development in Central Asian building, is extremely vulnerable to earthquakes, and this is attested to by the ruins of great Timurid domes, such as Bibi Khanum, which was brought down by an earthquake in 1897. Otto's analysis also revealed that the tall drum that is the hallmark of the Timurid dome was no more than an aesthetic facade, and that the apparent long vertical drum was often a simple skin or veil over the real weight-bearing structure composed of ribbed supports hidden within the drum.

But Samarkand contains other, more earthquake-resistant types of dome. The Rukhabad Mausoleum near Registan, and the dome at the entrance to the Shah-i Zindah Cemetery, both demonstrate dome profiles with better resistance to earthquakes than the Timurid type. Stone says with certainty that there exists an overlap between local traditional design forms and earthquake-safe oriented form-finding. The challenge is to find and expand upon that overlap: the ST. team is eager to get to work with more in-depth research to meet this challenge.

On the broader front of project development, 1994 was devoted to moving the project forward with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, which the Uzbek Government has formally empowered to participate with the OCIS in executing the project. Both sides have been authorized by a February 1994 protocol to execute the project design selected by the jury, and are committed to the OCIS's plan to undertake long-term and continuous direction and development of the educational centre. The Protocol also acknowledges that the OCIS and the Ministry may implement the plan in phases if this is mutually agreed upon.

Rasch has responded to the February protocol by developing, at the request of the OCIS, a plan for the phased implementation of the project. The strategy will be, firstly, to undertake restoration of the existing complex and the relocation of the guest house. Phase Two will extend the mosque (which is already filled to capacity at Friday prayers), and relocate and extend the ablution facilities. ST. also proposes to build the local *madrasa* at this time, together with creating the infrastructure for later development, in view of the fact that some of the roads and car parking facilities will now be needed. In Phase Three, the educational complex would be established, including the Hadith Study Centre and some of the more critical communal facilities such as the Student Dining Hall. The fourth and final phase would be devoted to completing the remainder of the Educational Complex, including the more public functions, such as the conference and exhibition halls, and residential accommodation, recreational facilities, and the remainder of the infrastructure and landscaping.

When completed, this varied and impressive complex will become one of the outstanding cultural and scholarly centres of Central Asia, and will establish Uzbekistan as a leading force in reviving the most positive aspects of the region's rich heritage. While its role in guiding the Muslim cultural life of the region along responsible and constructive lines will thus fulfil an important need, its sheer beauty will render it a credit both to the art of traditional Islam, and to the country which it is to adorn. Unquestionably one of the most informed cultural schemes of modern Central Asia, this complex will represent a worthy perpetuation of Imam al-Bukhari's tradition of sober, educated and responsible advocacy of the Muslim heritage.

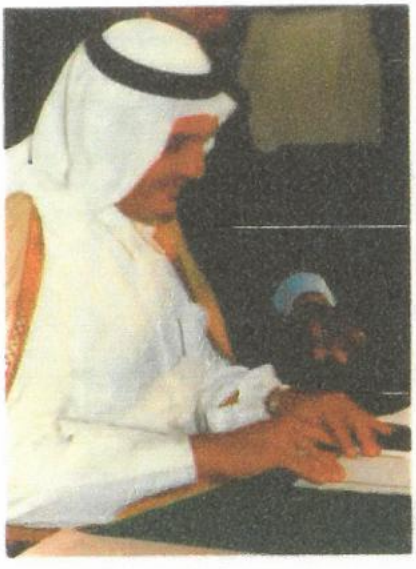


Plan of mosque

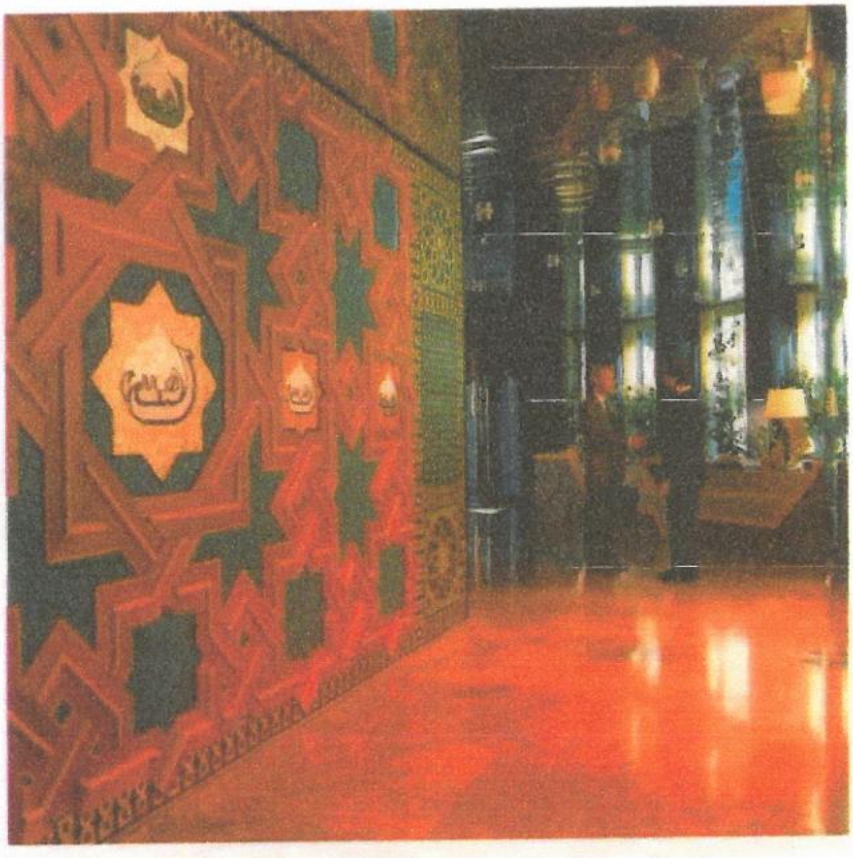
DMI's Collection of Islamic Coins

Geneva Bank Supports Islamic Culture

ROBERT E. DARLEY-DORAN AND ANDRE DE CLERMONT



HRH Prince Mohamed Al Faisal al Saud, the founder and chairman of the Dar al-Maal al-Islami Trust (DMI). **Right:** The entrance hall of DMI's Headquarters in Geneva. **Below:** DMI Headquarters in Geneva. **Bottom, right:** Mr Omar Abdi Ali, the chief executive officer of the bank in the Nour library







Ten years ago HRH Prince Mohamed Al Faisal al Saud, the founder and chairman of the Dar al-Maal al-Islami Trust (DMI), presented a challenge to his colleagues when he said, "Financial success alone is not enough. We have to ask ourselves, 'What are we leaving behind?'" Prince Mohamed's words were the inspiration behind the creation of the Nour Center, which was opened at the head office of DMI in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1988.

The purpose of the Nour Center is to provide both a cultural resource for Muslims living in Geneva, and a reference point for non-Muslims in search of a greater understanding of Islamic history and culture. It is located on the first floor of the bank's magnificent headquarters building, a modern blue skyscraper which is one of the first sights to greet the arriving passenger at Geneva's Cointrin Airport.

The spacious Nour library is approached along a dimly lit corridor whose walls and ceilings are covered in dark green material, dramatically highlighted by a series of showcases containing illuminated Qur'ans, and examples of Islamic calligraphy and metalwork. The floors and bookcases of the corridor and library are made from rare and beautifully decorated woods, which, with the handsome examples of contemporary Muslim calligraphy that hang on the walls, give an atmosphere of peace and elegance. The visitor is welcome to browse freely through the five thousand volumes in the library's

collection which record the faith, traditions, history and economy of the nations that make up the Muslim Community. Although the majority of the books are in Arabic, important works in English and French can also be found on the shelves. Readers are offered the choice of comfortable armchairs where they can sit and read, or library tables if they wish to make notes.

Next to the library is the rare books room which contains a specialised collection of works dealing with the arts of Islam. On one wall hangs a magnificent antique Mamluk prayer rug, and below the window is a large showcase which contains a unique map of the Muslim world on which each great city of Islam is identified by an ancient coin struck in gold, silver or copper bearing its mint name. The idea for this map came from Mr Moustapha Sakkaf, an Egyptian who was for many years a senior officer of the bank. It was he who perceived the importance of establishing a collection of historic Islamic coins as one of the Centre's main activities. As Mr Omar Abdi Ali, the chief executive officer of the bank and a Somalian by origin, pointed out, "It is a fact that most of the great holdings of Islamic coins are not in the hands of the Muslims themselves, but are found in museums in Europe and America. It is one of our duties to reclaim a portion of our cultural heritage for our people."

The coins on the map are only a small percentage of the eight hundred and seventeen pieces that now make up the whole collection. "What could be more appropriate for the first bank established on Muslim financial principles," said Mr Sakkaf, "than to form a collection of the earliest Islamic financial instruments – the coins themselves. We wanted to highlight the history of the Islamic Community by acquiring a wide diversity of pieces from every area of the Muslim world." DMI has been successful in this endeavour, and possesses coins struck in each century of the Hijra from Spain and North Africa in the west to Brunei in the Far East, and from Transoxiana in the north to Zanzibar in the south. Not only did Islamic coins act as missionaries for the Faith, with their legends from the Holy Qur'an, but they are also among the most precise historical documents in existence. From the third century of the Hijra onwards most Islamic rulers inscribed their own names, and in many cases those of their heirs or provincial governors, as well as the mint name and date on their coins. We have chosen a few examples from the Nour Collection to illustrate these points.

The first part of the collection is made up of gold and silver coins issued by the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs. Coin NO.1 is a gold dinar of the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik bin Marwan (AH 65-85: 687-705 AD) struck in the year AH 78, probably in Damascus. 'Abd al-Malik had introduced the first true Islamic gold coin the previous year, bearing the kalima in the obverse field, and in the reverse field part of *Qur'an* 9 verse 33 in the margin, and the words, "God is One, God is the Eternal. He does not beget nor is He begotten" (*Qur'an* 112), with the denomination and date in the margin. This became the prototype on which all subsequent Islamic coinage was modelled.

The second coin is an extremely rare Abbasid silver dirham dated AH 174 h. struck during the caliphate of Harun al-Rashid (AH 170-193: 876-809 AD) at the mint of Tabaristan, in the mountains of northern Iran, bearing the name of al-Rashid's young son and heir al-Amin Muhammad. This piece is unusual because it is a normal Islamic dirham from a region whose governors were at this time striking copies of the coins of the former Iranian Ispabadh rulers. Coin NO.3 is a dinar struck by al-Ma'mun in Iraq bearing the date AH 201, with the name of his *Wazir*, al-Fadl bin Sahl *Dhu'l-Riyasatayn*. (Holder of the Two Authorities – the pen and the sword).

The medallion-style dirham shown in NO.4 was struck in the name of the Caliph al-Mu'tamid (AH 256-279: 870-892 AD) at the Abbasid capital Madinat al-Salam (Baghdad) in the year AH 276. This piece bears the phrase *al-quwwat lillah jami'yan* (power belongs entirely to God) in the outer margin, with the names of the Caliph's powerful brother, al-Muwaffaq billah, and the latter's son Ahmad, who was to succeed as the Caliph al-Mu'tadid (AH 279-289: 892-902 AD), on the obverse and reverse.

Spain is represented by a very rare anonymous undated square silver

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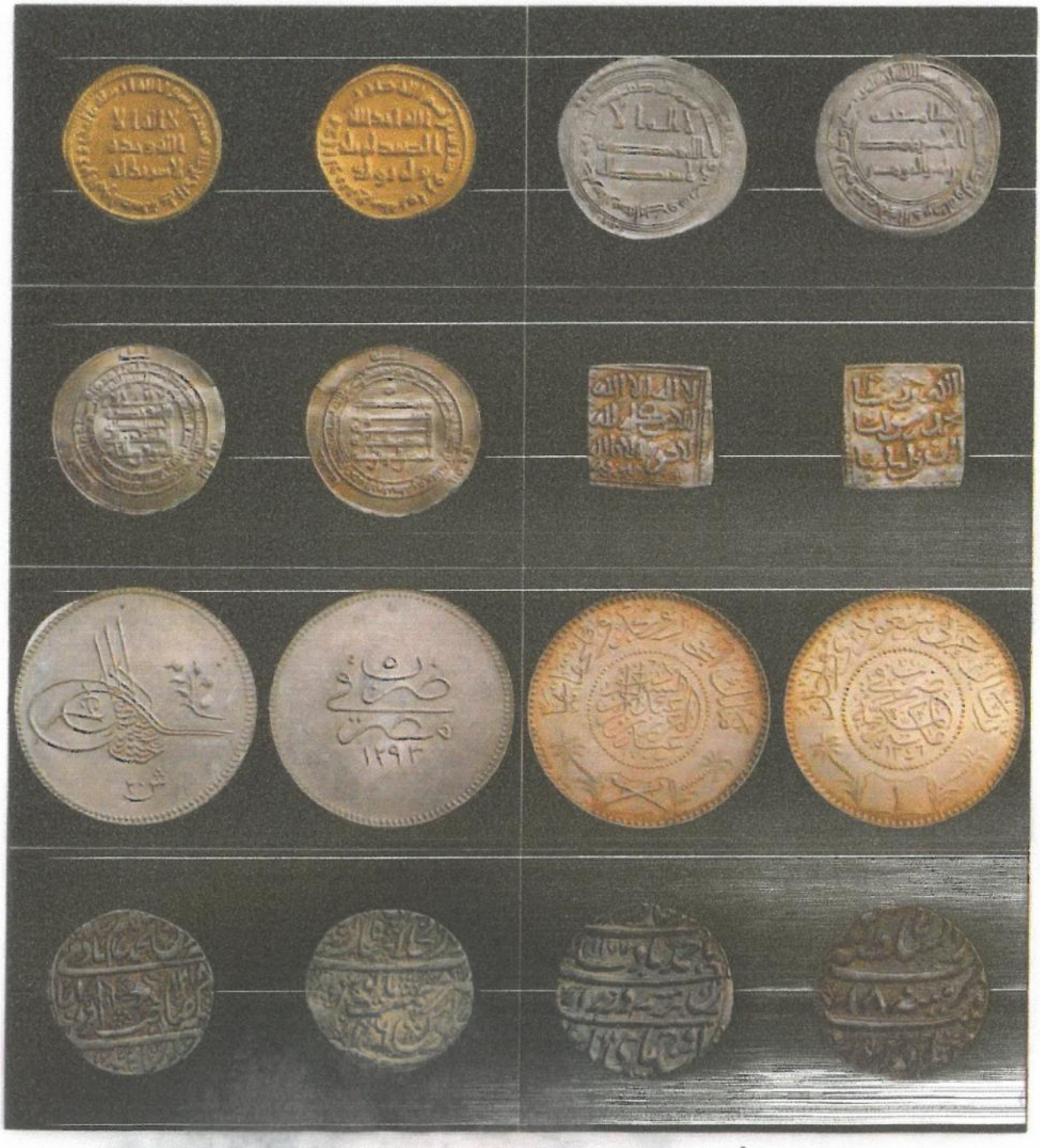
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Top row, L-R: 1a and 1b, 2a and 2b. **Second row, L-R:** 4a and 4b, 5a and 5b. **Third row, L-R:** 8a and 8b, 9a and 9b. **Above row, L-R:** 14a and 14b, 15a and 15b.

nasri dirham (coin NO.5) bearing the mint name Mayurqa (Majorca) struck during the Muwahidid possession of the Balearic Islands between AH 599 and 627 (1202-1229 AD).

Coin NO. 6 is an undated dinar bearing the mint name Madinat Tilimsan struck by Abu Hammu Musa III (AH 922-934: 1516-1528 AD), the Ziyanid Ruler of Tlemcen in Western Algeria. The obverse of this piece is designed with the characteristic square in circle, while the reverse is ornamented by a much less usual circle within a square.

Moving to Egypt, coin NO.7 is a dinar struck between the years AH 666 and 676 by the Bahri Mamluk Sultan al-Zahir Baybars (AH 658-676: 1260-1277 AD) with the mint name al-Qahira (Cairo), bearing his famous heraldic device of a lion passant to the left. Baybars was one of the very few Islamic rulers who used a personal device on his coinage.

NO.8 is a very rare silver twenty qurush or talar, a crown-sized coin. It was struck by the Khedive Tawfiq in the name of the Ottoman Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid II in Misr (Egypt) in AH 1293, regnal year 5. The rendering of the Sultan's imperial device, the *tughra*, on the obverse is particularly artistic.

The first silver Sa'udi riyal was struck in the name of King 'Abd al-'Aziz bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sa'ud, founder of the Kingdom of Sa'udi Arabia, in the year AH 1346 (coin NO. 9). It bears the mint name of the Holy City of Makka al-Mukarrama (Makka the Honoured).

Barghash bin Sa'id, of the Al-Bu Sa'id dynasty of Muscat and Oman, ruled the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba from AH 1287 to 1305 (1870-1888 AD). Coin NO.10 is a gold five riyal coin dated AH 1299 which was struck for Sultan Barghash in Brussels, but never placed in circulation.

The coinage of Iran in the Nour Center's collection is plentiful and varied. Coin NO.1 is a particularly rare and beautiful presentation dirham struck in AH 297 during the short rule of the Saffavid Governor al-Layth ibn 'Ali (AH 297-299: 908-911 AD) in the province of Fars.

Coin NO.12 is a dinar of the Great Saljuq ruler Malikshah (AH 465-485: 1072-1092 AD) struck in Isfahan in AH 483. The reverse field of this piece is a remarkable example of the calligrapher's art, with an extended passage from the Holy Qur'an inscribed in tiny but legible Kufic script.

The Great Saljuq ruler Barkiyaruq, who succeeded Malikshah in AH 487 and ruled until 498 (1094-1105 AD), struck this silver dirham (NO.13) at the mint of al-Ahwaz in the first year of his reign. By this time the issue of silver coinage had virtually ceased in the eastern Muslim world. This extremely rare piece is modelled on the Umayyad silver dirham that had been struck 350 years earlier.

The Mughal Rulers of India issued a heavy-weight gold and silver coinage of great beauty. NO.14 is a silver rupee of Shah 'Alam II (AH 1173-1221: 1759-1806 AD) struck at Dar al-Khilafat Shahjahanabad (Delhi) in AH 1218, in his forty-sixth regnal year. At a time when the British influence in India was growing, both the imperial parasol, which was the device of the Mughals and the British lion appear on this coin.

The last coin, NO.15, is a silver rupee, modelled on the Mughal coinage, of Ahmad Shah Durr-i Durran (AH 1160-1186: 1747-1772 AD), the Afghan invader of India. It was struck in Dar al-Saltinat Lahawur (Lahore) in the year AH 1177, during his eighteenth regnal year.

These few pieces from the Nour Center's collection will give the reader some idea of the great historical interest and artistic beauty of the coins that were struck in every part of the Islamic world.

DMI has set a superb example through its imaginative concept of a library, and its collection of coins and other works of Islamic art. How fortunate those living in, and visiting Geneva are to have the opportunity of visiting this centre of knowledge and place of learning, so originally located within the headquarters of a bank. HRH Prince Mohamed al Faisal al-Saud has every reason to look with pride on what has been achieved by DMI, as have Mr Omar Abdi Ali and Mr Moustapha Sakkaf who have so ably fulfilled the duty to reclaim a part of the heritage of Islam for their fellow Muslims.

Photographs by Daniel Ammann



***Periodica Islamica* is the product of our age. [It is] going to be of inestimable value to anyone wanting to do research.**

Rosemary Ridd, Wolfson College, Oxford, England
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Periodica Islamica
Berita Publishing, 22 Jalan Liku, 59100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Tel +60 3 282 5286 Fax +60 3 282 1605

Leighton House: Contemporary Link with Islamic Arts

Julia Findlater and Michel Volpe

Built between the 1860s and 70s, Leighton House is a Grade II listed building and is today recognised as one of Britain's top 100 historic houses. What makes it so special is that it is a unique survivor of 19th century's fascination with the Orient.

Frederic, Lord Leighton was born in 1830s in Scarborough in the North of England. He came from a relatively wealthy family; his grandfather had been Court Physician to the Tsarina of Russia. Leighton began his cosmopolitan art training in Frankfurt, later Rome and Paris. It soon became clear that Leighton was to be a great painter. The noted author William Thackeray after a meeting with Leighton remarked to John Everett Millias:

"Millais my boy, you must look to your laurels. There's a young fellow called Leighton who is making prodigious strides in his art.... and if I'm not mistaken... will one day be President of the Royal Academy."

These were prophetic words. Leighton indeed did become President of the Royal Academy, preceding Millais who was elected after him.

In 1855, Leighton exhibited for the first time at the Royal Academy where Queen Victoria bought the celebrated painting, *Cimabue's Madonna*. Today, this painting is still in the Royal Collection, and is currently on display at the National Gallery, an indication of Lord Leighton's importance. This acquisition established a close relationship with the Royal Family and Leighton was a frequent guest of the Prince and Princess of Wales at Marlborough House and Sandringham.

The popularity of his paintings and the financial security that resulted enabled Leighton to fulfil his own vision of a Palace of Art in Leighton House, befitting his position as one of Britain's most eminent artists. The House from the exterior is a restrained Italianate villa, but inside it is an expression in



Detail, Iznik Tile panel. Opposite page: *Arab Hall*, Leighton House.

bricks and mortar of Leighton's love of the Orient and very particular aesthetic. The House was built in two phases with the Arab Hall added on later.

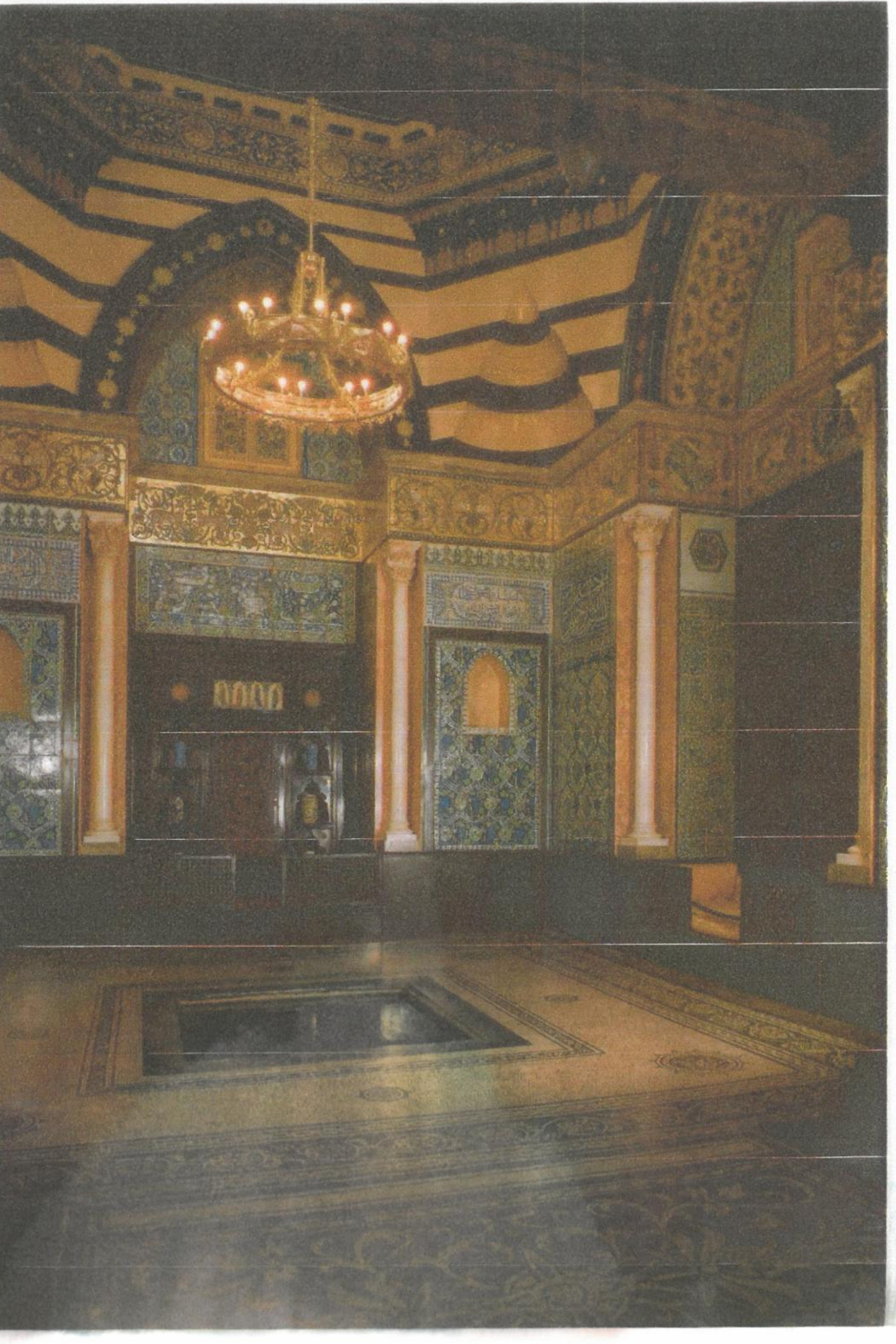
In 1857 Leighton travelled to Algeria, no doubt after hearing stories from his fellow artists in Paris about the wonders of the eastern lands. In 1868 he visited Egypt, commissioning on his return two stained-glass windows in the Islamic style for the eastern end of his studio. In Tangier he responded warmly to the people and the climate:

"....this is a prodigiously picturesque place, and I enjoy more than I can say watching the Arabs in the streets and markets, stately and grand beyond any population that I know."

On these trips Leighton began to collect artefacts which he later used to furnish his home. As his interest expanded he enlisted the help of friends: Sir Richard Burton, the famous explorer and author of Arabian Nights, and Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke, Director of the South Kensington Museum, now the Victoria and Albert Museum. The account of his trip in 1873 gives details of the items he collected. These included: rare textiles, glass, Oriental robes, pottery and many tiles. His collection of rugs was particularly fine and rare. However, it was his passion for tiles that later necessitated the building of the Arab Hall. During the 1870s Richard Burton and Caspar Purdon Clarke acquired many tiles on Leighton's behalf. For some time these tiles languished in the basement of Leighton House until the idea of building an Arab Hall to house and display the tiles was suggested.

Creating special rooms to house Oriental collections was not new. The Peacock Room created by Whistler to house the collection of blue and white porcelain, was built in 1867 for a wealthy industrialist. What makes the Arab hall so extraordinary is the extent to which the collection of tiles and the Victorian interpretation of the Orient fuse to create a convincing setting. *The Times* newspaper commented at the time:

"The harmony is so perfect that



one asks oneself if the architecture had been conceived for the enamels or the enamels for the hall."

The architect of the House and the Arab Hall was George Aitchison, who had a distinguished career as an architect becoming the first President of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Aitchison shared Leighton's love of the East, declaring:

"Splendid colour is, as a rule, only to be found in the East..."

His source of inspiration was a twelfth-century Norman palace in Palermo, Sicily, called La Zisa, meaning "palace of delights". In designing the Arab Hall, Aitchison followed the general lines of the Sicilio-Norman interior but gave it a Victorian interpretation. Aitchison gave Leighton's hall, two side alcoves with windows, shaded by Damascene musharabiyeh screens of his design and included eight Islamic blind windows in the dome for light. At the back of the Hall he incorporated a beautifully carved *alhacen* of ebonised wood, in the niches of which Leighton displayed his most precious ceramics. In order to connect the Arab Hall with the rest of the House, Aitchison created an oriel window opening onto the second floor of the House. The design of the floor mosaic was based on those uncovered at Pompei. Apart from the stained glass and the wooden screens all the work was undertaken by London craftsmen.

However, it is to show off the tiles that the Arab Hall was built. Many of the tiles were panel tiles including the long frieze which bears an inscription from the Qur'an. Leighton would not consider displaying tiles badly damaged in transit so he turned to William de Morgan to recreate the tiles that had been lost and copy other tiles in the spirit of the originals to plug in gaps. William de Morgan was craft potter of considerable talent. He was particularly interested in the tile making tradition of the east. In 1873 he rediscovered the technique of lustre ware found in Hispano-moreseque pottery. In 1875 his work was based on what became known as his "persian" palette, dark blue, turquoise, manganese purple, green, Indian red, and lemon yellow. One photograph shows a tile panel of Syrian origin, one of the finest in the room containing a pair of falcons, parrots and lions. Many of the tiles have their throats slashed following the law of depicting living creatures to be heretical. De Morgan's beasts do not have their throats slashed, making it easier for us to identify the real from the fake tile.

The Arab Hall had underfloor heating in grills around the skirting. To the Victorian visitor the combination of space and light, (Leighton House was one of the first houses in London to be electrified) would have appeared extremely avant-garde. Indeed, Vernon Lee, an American journalist, commented that, the Arab Hall at Leighton House was...

"..... quite the eighth wonder of the world."

Upstairs is dominated by the "Great Studio", the heart and soul of the House. When the House was built in 1864, Leighton realised that most of his time would be spent in this room and therefore had it designed to meet the very specific needs of an artist. The huge, north-facing window and generous skylights were installed to provide plenty of daylight; the double fireplaces provided relatively adequate heating and the huge scale of the room, 58" x 25" – ensured sufficient space to accommodate the vast canvases that Leighton favoured.

The Studio had a dual role. Leighton enjoyed the social atmosphere of his home, and on certain Sundays, the paintings he had worked on during the week would be scattered about the Studio for view and the House would be filled with critics, dealers and patrons. It was also the place where Leighton liked to gather friends for his famous concerts. Leighton invited the best musicians and singers of his day to perform at Leighton House.

Leighton died in 1896 from angina caused by excessive workload. He lay in state in the Rotunda of the Royal Academy before his funeral cortege proceeded to St Paul's Cathedral, where he was buried. Mourners included the Prince of Wales and his pall-bearers John Everett Millais who succeeded Leighton as President of the Royal Academy.

After his death, there was great concern that the House should be saved for the nation. In 1927 the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea took over the running of the House.

It was to commemorate the death of Lord Leighton that in September 1994 we launched the Lord Leighton Centenary Trust. The chairman of the patrons is Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber and the Trust aims to raise £400,000 for a programme of refurbishment at Leighton House. This includes putting the last piece that makes up the bejewelled jigsaw of the Arab Hall. That is the restoration of the decorated ceiling in the ante-room. This fascinating project has got off to an exciting start with English Heritage undertaking paint tests to establish the exact nature and colour of the design. Other projects include the restoration of the garden which, like the interior of the house, was a harmony of colour, texture and sumptuousness. This will culminate in an extraordinary show during 1996 when we plan to recreate the House exactly as it was when Leighton lived here. Visitors will be able to step back into late 19th century artists' house and by using light, sound, and music we plan to evoke for the visitor a sense of what it was to live in a "palace of art".

Today Leighton's Winter Studio is an exhibition gallery and houses a varied programme of exhibitions. The programme has developed in such a way that we try to show the work of at least three artists from North Africa and the Middle East every year. Recently, this had included work by Maliheh Afnan, Walid Mustafa, Hossein Zenderoudi and Suad Al-Attar. Future plans include collaboration in the *Africa '95* project when the House will be showing work from North African countries.

In recognition of our work we have recently received backing from the London Arts Board to develop Leighton House as a venue for crafts exhibitions and it is felt appropriate, given the extraordinary interiors of the house, that we work with artists from the Middle East and North Africa to promote the 3-dimensional work of these countries. This will be a new area of development of this use of his galleries.

Each year at Leighton House, through the exhibition programme, and the varied concert season we try to combine the traditional with the modern. Leighton House is not a static, ossified museum, but a very real living space with artists pushing aesthetic boundaries, through their work, in the way that Leighton did during his lifetime.

Julia Findlater

Despite the Englishness of Leighton himself, and the charge that his urge to gather about him things from different cultures was driven by *Victorian perceptions* of patronage, he was sincerely indebted to the many movements of art around the world and in particular that which emanated from North Africa, the Middle East and Asia Minor. He certainly found the physical beauty of those places and their peoples a most overwhelming experience and found it difficult to even express his affection for them. It is obvious that in some way he found, in what he called, "their stately and grand picturesqueness", a mirror for his own feelings on art.

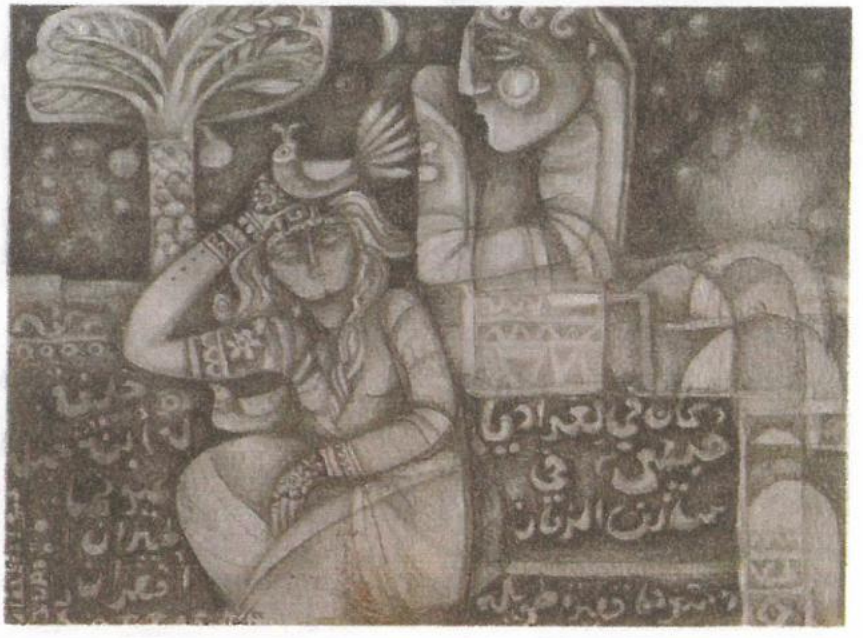
That Leighton should create such a wondrous centrepiece for his home as **The Arab Hall** had more to do with a genuine love of Arab and Islamic culture than a desire for intellectual conquest of it. His wealth helped him acquire fine examples of these cultures, but rather than this being a mere aspiration to possess these beautiful things, Leighton regarded their presence in his home – and thus his place of work – as an inspiration for his own art.

In the light of Leighton's enjoyment of Arabia and its culture, Leighton House today includes many Islamic and Arab artists in its programme, not as complimentary decoration to the interior of the building, but as a distinct attempt to open up a rich culture – both historic and contemporary – to the British public: a culture that Leighton himself had great empathy for. Of course, the introduction to an exhibition of Arab art could not be more appropriate than the Arab hall, with its evocation of distant and noble architecture and impressions of light and space—an *hors d'ouvre* to an oriental meal if you like.

Yet Leighton House does not confine itself or its programme to the past glories of Islamic Arts, though they are great and many. Contemporary Arab artists are fluent in the history of their culture but are more able than perhaps any other group, of drawing influence and inspiration from ancient crafts and welding them with a contemporary Arab – or perhaps even Islamic – visual sense to create something that is utterly appropriate to today's audience.

Despite the mouthwatering array of artists on offer, Leighton House did experience some trepidation when it began its journey into Arab art. Would the preconceptions of this work – that it was more akin to crafts found in tourist markets in Morocco created by artists who worked in a way that last possessed the crisp smack of innovation in the 15th Century – be borne out? The answer was, and is, an emphatic "No".

Hossein Zenderoudi completed the 1993 trio. One of Iran's foremost artists, Zenderoudi has developed a unique personal style which draws on the magnificent Persian heritage of painting, illumination and calligraphy. Such an important artist from the Middle East was quite a catch for Leighton House, and it is hoped he will return in the near future.



Suad Al-Attar, *The Khalifa... and the Khatoon*

There have been no more dazzling exhibitions than that of Iraqi painter Suad al-Attar. Her poetic and deeply moving paintings, inspired by Mesopotamian verse as well as her raw emotional psyche, have made her among the most respected and revered Arab artists. One can only describe her 1993 exhibition as sensational. Its paintings veered from the dreamlike and bright, florid and verdant to the dark and foreboding, powerful clues to a troubled soul burdened with the tribulations of her homeland at the time. Personal tragedy has struck this woman since then, but she will return in 1996.

In that same year, Leighton House showed the work of Meliha Afnan whose paintings re-invented antique alphabets and included mysterious landscapes of violated cities, past and present; people with no land and no country. Her pictures represented the emotional scars left by the memory of a life continually disrupted by forced imposed exile and she was one of the many whose work was to describe, in the most startling visual language, the many troubling aspects of their homelands.

The 1994 season proved beyond doubt that a regular presence by Arab, Middle Eastern and Islamic artists could be sustained. Indeed it reinforced the view that much could be learned from these men and women who, although coming from immensely distinctive traditions, could take those very traditions and startle their audience, with not just the impression of their pictures, but also the execution of them. Such a man was Nja Mahdaoui. Born in Tunis, Mahdaoui is known as a "choreographer of letters". His beautifully-crafted pictures contain strong motifs, surrounded by seas of intricate and even miniscule, calligraphy. Simply staggering in scale, the works were more than mere examples of virtuoso draughtsmanship, but highly stylised epics whose incredible detail added to the disarming simplicity of the overall designs. Nja is without question a true master of his craft who creates affecting and important work. Although his is an abstract use of Arab calligraphy, his images have

influenced many other artists, both from the East and the West.

Also in 1994, Walid Mustafa showed his deeply profound paintings at Leighton House for the first time. Walid, a quiet, yet fiercely driven man is a Kurdish artist whose work is based on the opposing themes of love, war and destruction. He









Top: Suad Al-Attar. *Legend*. 1990. Oil on canvas. Above: Chant Avedissian, *Um Khaltum*. Right, top: Khairat al-Saleh, *The Creation II*. 1989. Gouache, gold leaf and gold ink on paper. 46 x 70mm. Right: Abdel Razzak Sahli.

names Nietzsche as a major influence. The canvases were a paradox; brightly coloured, almost abstract works had the distinctive edge of anger and fury but which somehow retained compassionate softness.

Future exhibitions include, for 1995, Khairat Al Saleh, a painter, ceramicist and printmaker who seeks to express the vibrancy and intensity of the past in a shifting of history and geography. A Syrian who now lives in Britain, Khairat's works are lavish explorations of the techniques of gilding that was practised in Islamic and European manuscripts. Abdel Razzak Sahli from Tunisia, who paints on very large canvasses, is also one of his country's foremost poets. This will be his first exhibition in London, and it will form part of the Africa 95 festival, of which Leighton House is a central venue. Also part of the Africa 95 festival is Chant Avedissian, an Egyptian who creates monoprints from stencils. Again, like many of his contemporaries, Chant's work visualises the many symbols, stars and icons of his home city, Cairo. Finally, Khaled Ben Slimane will bring his ceramics and wood panels to Leighton House. Originally from Nabeul, Khaled, like Abdel Razzak, will be showing in London for the first time.

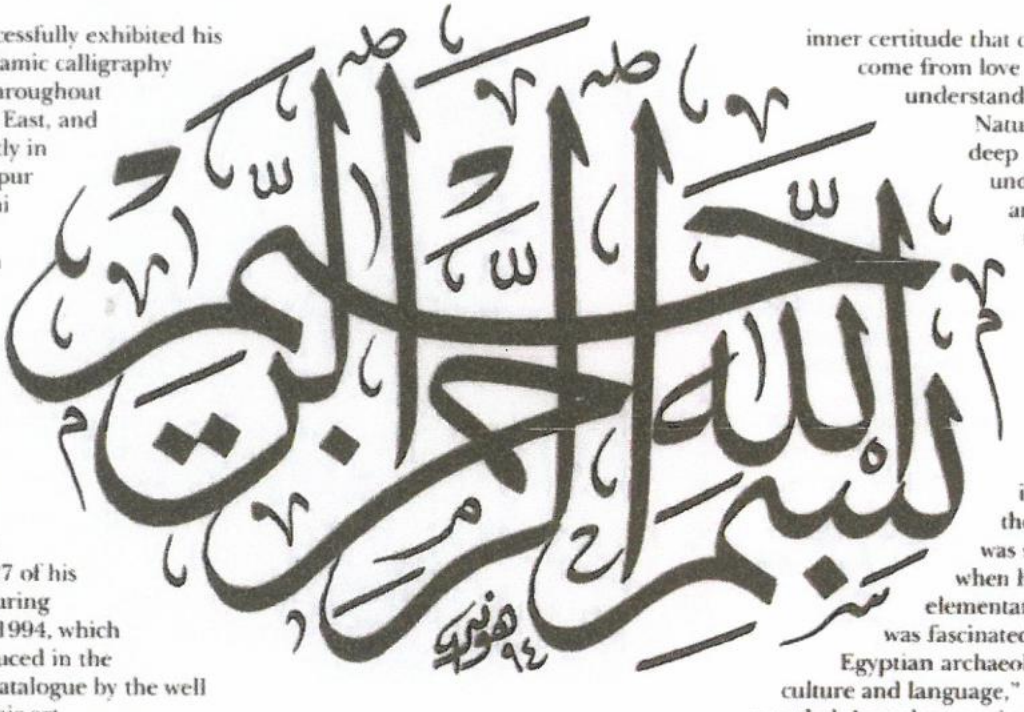
Leighton House is determined to continue this young, but very firm, tradition. In providing a forum for these immensely talented artists in London, Leighton House can claim to be breaking new ground, but it is not just tokenism. Many British artists have visited these exhibitions and have made a point of saying just how deeply affected they have been by the work. From it, they say, they can derive much that can be re-applied to their own work. And this cross-fertilisation of cultures can only be a good thing.

Michel Volpe

Kouichi Honda: Japanese Exponent of Islamic Calligraphy

SHARIFAH ZURIAH ALJEFFRI

"Calligraphy for me is a lifetime learning process", says Kouichi Honda, distinguished Japanese artist who has studied and practiced the art of Islamic calligraphy for more than 20 years, and has produced outstanding work.



He has successfully exhibited his works of Islamic calligraphy in Japan, throughout the Middle East, and most recently in Kuala Lumpur at Balai Seni Menara Maybank in Jalan Tun Perak. Sponsored by Rashid Hussain Bhd, Maybank and Malaysian Airlines, he displayed 27 of his paintings during December, 1994, which were introduced in the exhibition catalogue by the well known Islamic art connoisseur/collector, Bashir Mohammed.

The scripts were painted on canvas, employing evocative spiralling forms, and set against a colourful background of the cosmos. The colours and designs of the paintings reflect the artist's metaphysical sense of the chosen verses. Honda selects and interprets the verses from the Quran, before choosing designs and colours that best represent their meanings.

Introducing distinguishable far-Eastern influences in his presentations has rendered it even more exciting and with justification. Traditionally Islamic calligraphy has reflected the diverse ethnic groups through distinct choice of style and presentation, and now there is a also truly classical Islamic presentation that is also at once honestly Japanese in its perspective.

This is particularly fitting since there are two major classical traditions of writing in the East that were also developed as art forms. One system derives, of course, from the Islamic culture, and the other comes from the Chinese, Japanese and Korean world. Although there has been trade contact and artistic and cultural exchange for millennia, there have been no cases of anyone of the people of these worlds finding artistic expressions in the other's scripts.

The 49-year-old lecturer of Arabic at the Tokyo University, has thus been widely recognised as a pioneer as well as a master calligrapher. All the calligraphic rules - the *Usul al Khati* – are preserved in his work, and calligraphers from the Islamic world have commented that Honda cannot be faulted on his knowledge of letter forms. This requires not only mastery of the outward aspects of a disciplined hand and eye, but an inner certitude that can only come from love and understanding.

Naturally this deep understanding and love of the Arabic script form, has nurtured within Honda from a very early period. His interest in the language was stirred when he was in elementary school. "I was fascinated by Egyptian archaeology, its culture and language," he revealed. In order to gain a more intimate grasp of Arabian archaeology, he chose the language as a major in college, admitting, "It was something that was almost unheard of at that time". Honda, who also speaks French and English, did however encounter difficulties in learning to speak Arabic, finding it something of a struggle: "I almost quit at one point, but then managed to get my degree."

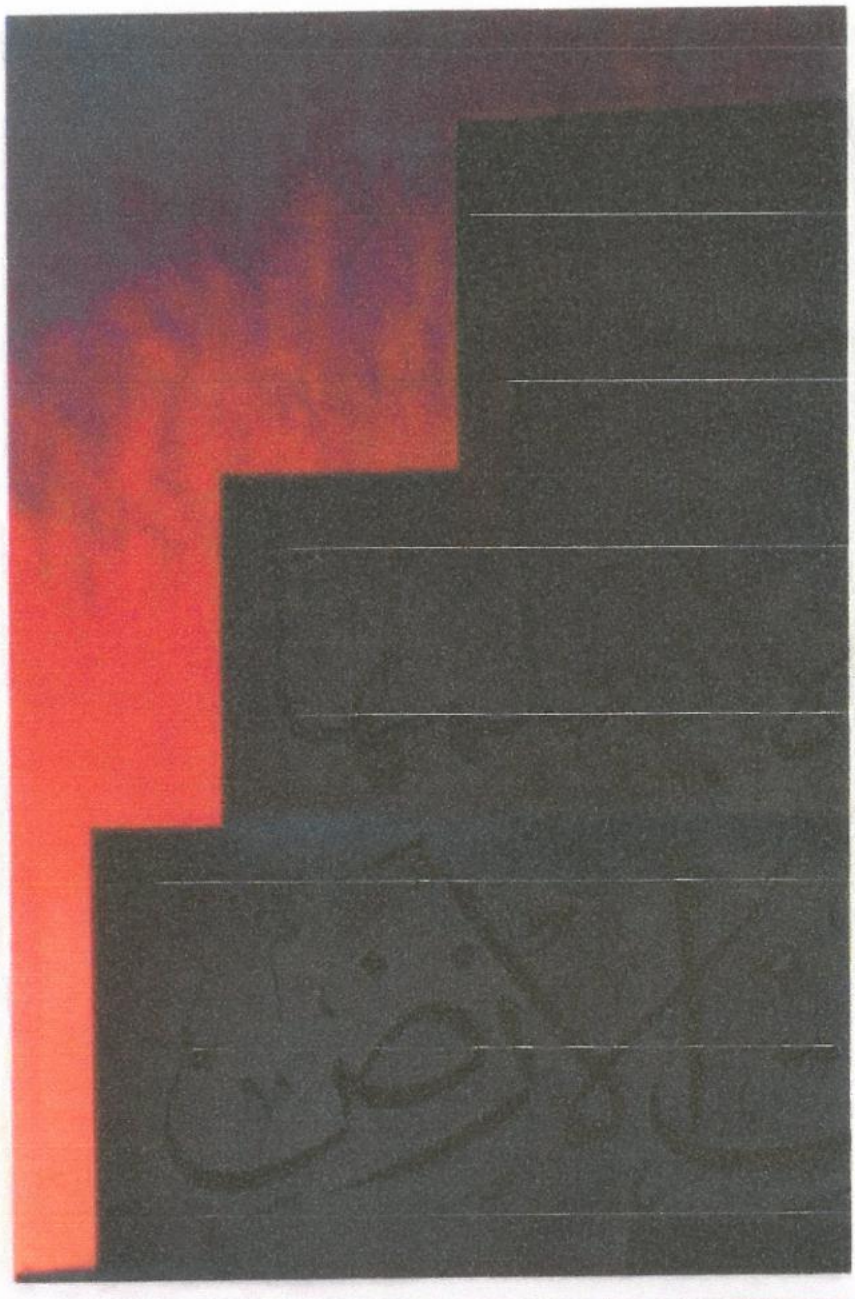
In 1973, he joined the Aerial Survey Co. Ltd and worked as a translator for the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources in Saudi Arabia. It was during the five years he spent here that his love for the language and art itself began to develop. Here he seized the opportunity to learn the basics of Arabic calligraphy from a Saudi calligrapher who also worked for the ministry. This was all the inspiration he needed and there has been no turning back ever since.

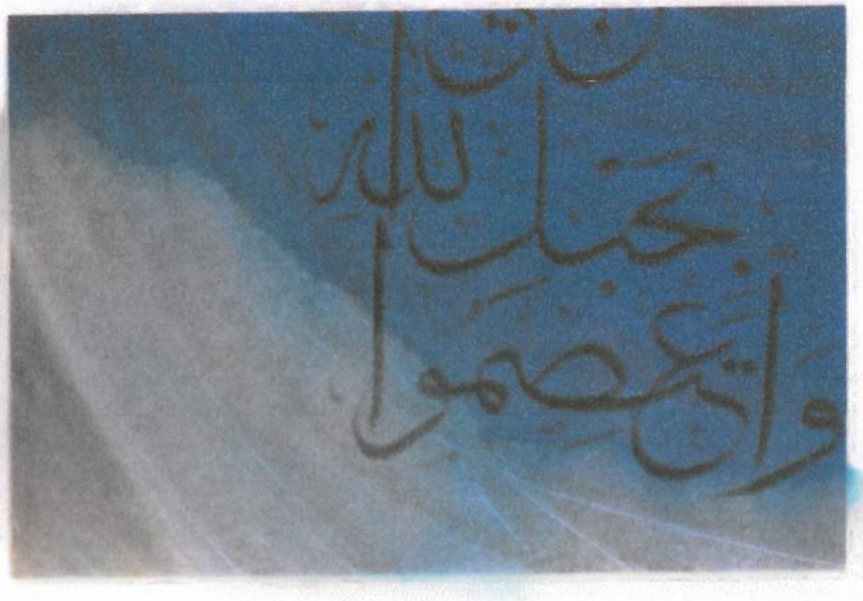
Honda was born in Tokyo, and only works on his paintings just after midnight, or very early in the morning, the only times when the bustling capital is relatively quiet. "I do my work during those times, because calligraphy requires total concentration both physically and mentally," he explained.

Honda takes about a year to lovingly complete a piece, preferring not to rush his art. So passionate is he about his work that he refuses to sell any of his collection. "They are more than art pieces to me," he says. "I do not want anybody or any other factor to overrule the original intention of my doing them." Nor is his beloved art restricted to calligraphy, as he also does oil and water-colours. He has also written several books including *An Introduction to Arabic*, and an eight-part series, *Enjoy Learning Arabic*.

Last year Kouichi Honda also held exhibitions in Tokyo and Osaka under the auspices of the Japan-Arab Association. In 1993 he exhibited in Cairo and also participated in the Third International Arabic Calligraphy contest, winning a prize for his work in the Persian style. He has also exhibited in Qatar, Turkey, Iraq.

As one of the reviewers pointed out, Honda's latest works displayed at the 1994 exhibition in Malaysia, revealed a dramatic departure from his previous approach. "He has increased the scale of his work considerably, but more importantly he has ingested the Islamic pictorial form so deeply that it is now visibly pouring not from his pen, but from his soul. His method of presentation is uniquely his own and also reflects his cultural hinterland, Japan, whilst still respecting all the calligraphic rules."





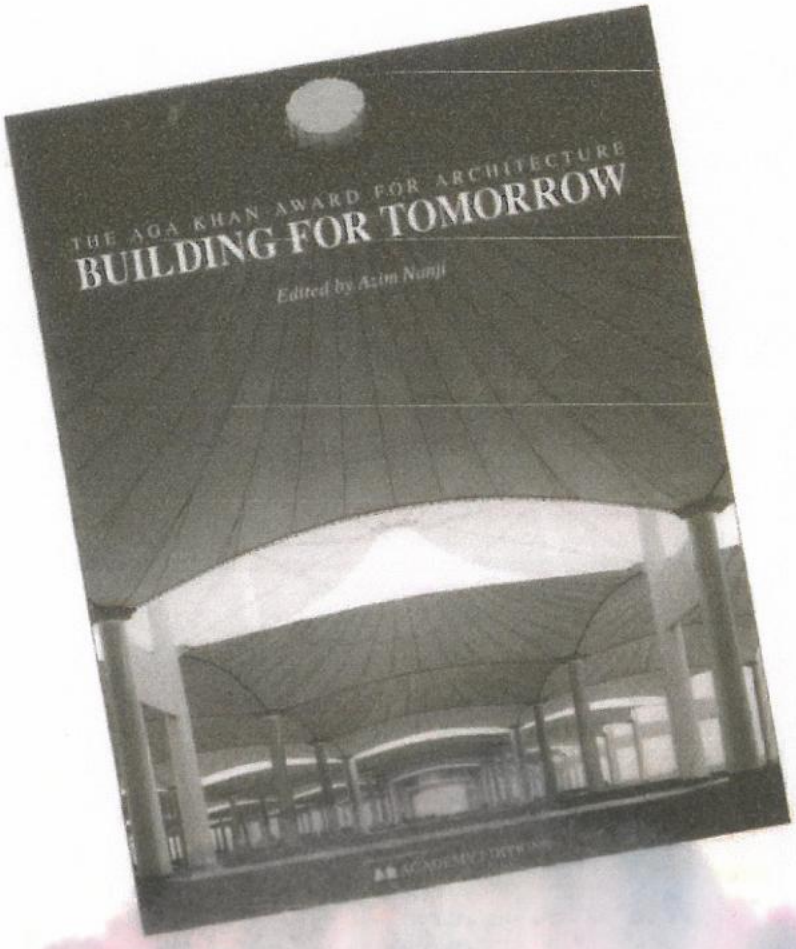




Details from some of the calligraphic works of Kouichi Honda: Opposite page, top: from Sura Al An'am (Cattle), written inside the silhouette of an edifice representing the "Tower of Babel", which symbolises the limitations of mankind. Acrylic on board. 1994. 150 x 95 cm. **Bottom:** from Sura al-Imran (The family of Imran), written along innumerable transparent ropes descending from the night sky. Acrylic on board. 1994. 112 x 73cm. **This page, above:** from Sura al-Ra'ad (Thunder), written on various coloured skies seen from between rocky mountains in the desert. Acrylic on board. Parts of the rocks were made by collage using traditional Japanese papers. **Left:** Photograph of the artist.

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Basil Alkazzi: Mystic Symbols of the Cosmos

George Sorley Whittet

Basil Alkazzi was almost thirty-eight years old when he had his first one-man exhibition in London - at the Drian Galleries whose director Halima Nalecz, herself an artist, had found an irresistible fascination in his work. On reviewing the show for an art journal I found I shared her enthusiasm which increased as I got to see more of his pictures and to meet him more often since that day in 1976.

Even among the many artists from all over the world I have met he stands out as an individual creator. He was born in Kuwait in 1938 in a distinguished family originating in Onaiza, a centre of Saudi Arabia renowned for its culture — a great-uncle was a notable poet and another was one of the most profound Arab scholars. As a youth his father had fought alongside King Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud in the foundation of the Kingdom and was to travel widely before settling in Kuwait impelled by a wanderlust his son Basil may have inherited.

After his education at a boarding school in the Lebanon ended in 1950 he commenced his artistic Odyssey, enriching his knowledge of art in the museums and galleries of Europe, drawing and painting scenes and people he encountered with interest. In London he graduated in art and drama at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, two subjects that were to become analogous in his future. That future was to have the illuminating good fortune to be recorded in three well-illustrated books dealing with successive periods of his active and productive life.

The first volume appeared in 1987 coinciding with his retrospective show at the Drian Galleries. Titled *My heart has opened unto every form: the Art of Basil Alkazzi* with an appreciative text by my long-time friend and colleague Max Wykes-Joyce and an affectionate introduction by Halima Nalecz, it provides a fascinating album of more than one hundred reproductions, most of them in full colour. Dating from 1960 until 1982 in spontaneous portrait drawings through bright collages of magazine faces to the treeless atmosphere of landscape in which miniature lovers are overshadowed by blue skies and white towers, the development of a strengthening character is absorbing. Just before and after 1970 we see small drawings in ink colours featuring forms of humans in skeletal outline and the grotesque in birds and insects. This phase was succeeded by a period when Sufism became discernible as an influence in his figuration and space. A sequence of pictures reflect a concentration on the inner self in which the influences of Sufis and poets such as Rumi of Persia are considered to be strong. Certainly there are in the contemplative study of some of his paintings projections of a mystic ecstasy.

Himself an innovative artist with many exhibitions to his credit, Basil Alkazzi has been encouraging young artists everywhere and has founded awards for them in the UK and USA.

Of the utmost value to a closer understanding of his motives the artist has written short commentaries at chosen periods and those printed opposite relevant illustrations of certain works amplify the intimate nature of his creative processes only rarely revealed to the spectator or the reader.

Mystic Dreamscapes: The Art of Basil Alkazzi was published in 1988 by the New English Center for Contemporary Art in the USA with an introduction by Henry Wieseman and an essay by myself. The twenty-three colour illustrations of paintings dated from 1984 to 1988 including some of those included in exhibitions he held in New York, California, Oklahoma and Connecticut. In my text I described Alkazzi's approach to his paintings: 'an evocation of love as distinct from the erotic is followed in his personal style imaginatively fraught with the uncertainty of close human relationships. Yet beyond its common interpretation "lovers" connotes a closer integration with the world... For the artist himself all beings are lovers, lovers of God, of life itself in its myriad aspects, loving the Earth's continuous regeneration'.

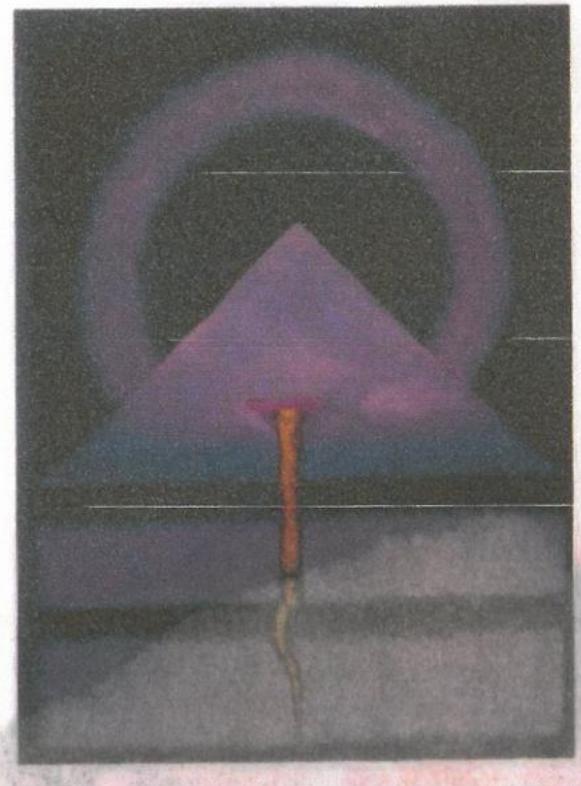
Alkazzi's philosophy as evident in his paintings is clarified in his own words interspersed throughout the text, clarifying to some degree the implicit message in his imagery. In the catalogue of his first New York exhibition of 1971, I wrote: 'It is in his ultimate power that he creates a presence in visual terms capable of provoking both wonder and thought; he is the author of his own phenomena and as all authentic prophets do he establishes his own triumphant category'. 1993 saw the publication of *Basil Alkazzi - New Seasons* by Max Wykes-Joyce (Izumi Art Publications Ltd., Jersey, C.I.) a superb volume in which the authoritative English critic from a long-standing acquaintance with the works writes a concise and illuminating essay on their latest direction. Those pictures of which thirty-two have excellent colour plates are considered as 'dreams or visions, expressions of spiritual perfection'. Among their many symbolic motifs Triangles appear frequently, especially in the double version known as The Seal of Solomon; they have long been familiar among the artist's designs, aligned as many of them are to his devotion to Sufism and its iconography. Architecture provides another important element

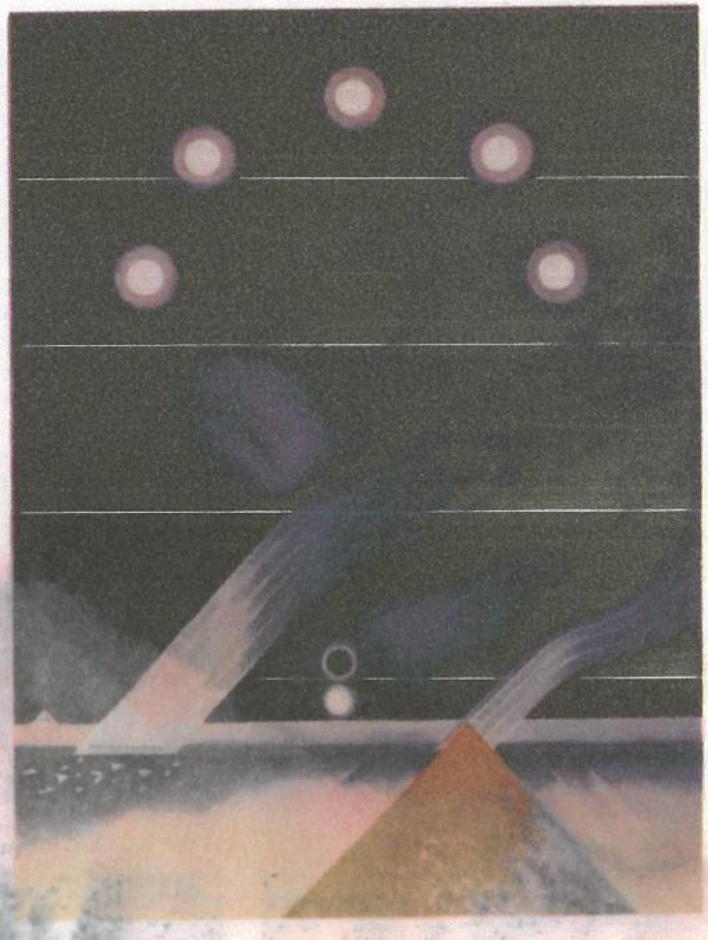
in his symbolism, assuming a vital role in a domed building and a classical doorway as background to the diminutive shadows of lovers implying the implacable passage of time.

Other recurring objects and treatment invite at least an affirmative reading from the spectator: a moving arc of astral bodies across the sky, either moons or stars; the Thread of Life; lovers in various states of growth undulating upwards, cloaked or borne in triangles. In 1992 Alkazzi produced a remarkable group of thirteen works in gouache on paper entitled *The Last Supper*. This vital event in the history of Christianity is interpreted by the dramatically concentrated details each representing the wine-cup grasped by the hands of Jesus or one of his twelve disciples. The strong realist handling of the gestures and the cup focuses speculation on the identity of the apostles adding an almost mesmeric quality to the sequence. In his own personalised conception it is able to compare viably with famous versions of the theme in the past from Fra Angelico and Leonardo da Vinci (whose masterpiece in Milan is now ruined) to Stanley Spencer in England.

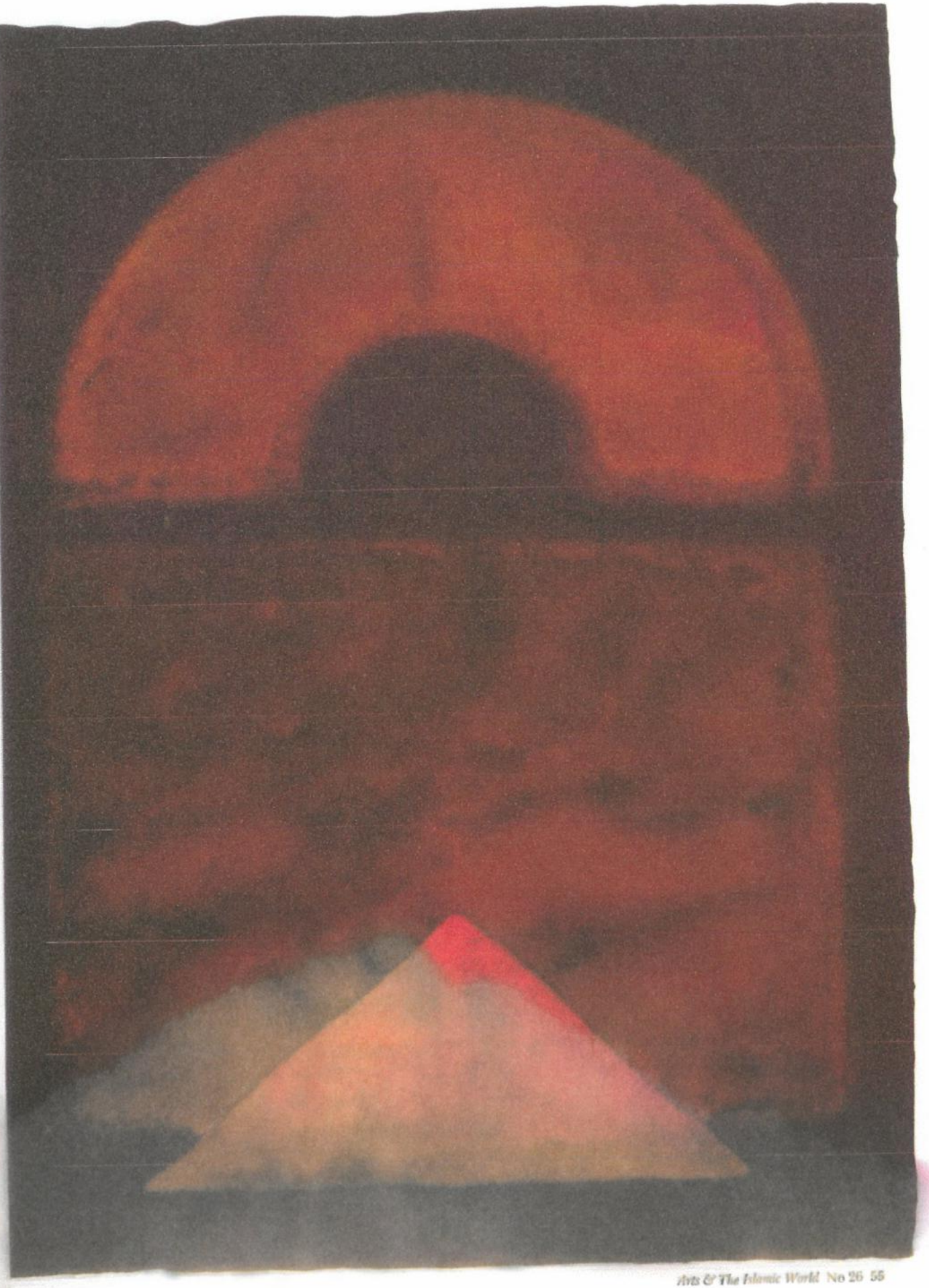
While superb reproductions of the hitherto unexhibited paintings convey the colour and composition with explicit clarity it is the artist's own writing that adds a unique dimension to their appreciation by the reader. His text *...Within the dreams* follows the introduction *New*







Top: *The Last Supper* (detail. Gouache on paper, 22 x 38 in.1992. Photograph: Prudence Cumming Associates. Above: *Transmutations V*. Gouche on paper, 22 x 30 in.1991. Right: *Transmigrated Beatitude II*. Oil on canvas 36 x 48 in.1990-91. Opposite page: *Voyage III*. Gouache on paper 22 x 30 inches 1[illegible] Other paintings: Dominique Clemente, London.



seasons... revealing his personal motivation and philosophy with a candour and lucidity that extends comprehension and empathy with this important contemporary painter's creations. It is a personal exposition of uncompromising directness, commencing with 1988 when his confidence in hitherto trusted associates was terminated and the consequent disorientation required a new direction in life that he found under the influence of the unconscious mind and the spiritual guidance of his Soul.

His radiant figurations originating from this period of re-adjustment he describes as 'deeply experienced and refined metaphysical growths that found expression not so easily in words but more so in images, transposing translucent forms and images witnessed and experienced with paint on canvas or paper'. He also explains the process of a painting's purpose. 'Forms, shapes, lines – the actual pattern of stones made up of a movement and so of a direction are used to lead the eye into the soul of the paintings. It is then the soul of that created image whispers and speaks to the subconscious mind, of the creator and the viewer and it is that lost memory that one re-discovers in the self and for the self.' Photo-montage has appealed to his versatility and he has shown interesting exhibitions of this work, the first in London in 1986 and later in New York in 1987 and 1989. On video he produced a 25 minute 16mm film titled *New Seasons and Dreams 1984-1993* (written, directed and narrated by himself), a moving visual journey of his paintings of the last decade.

Now British, Alkazzi uses London as his base, though he spends long periods in New York where he enjoys the working atmosphere. He has always travelled extensively savouring the spirit of each place; recently he made a short trip to Korea and Japan. Wherever he goes he encourages young artists and in Britain and the United States he founded the Basil H. Alkazzi Award for a two-year degree at the Royal College of Art, London; in New York he established an annual acquisition award he runs personally. It is impossible to regard Basil Alkazzi's works as inscrutable abstract compositions having personal significance only to the artist; their physical and sensual presence must induce a persuasive empathy, impregnated as they are with the subtly nostalgic magic of subconscious memory.

Transmuted Beatitude is considerably more than a fanciful title.

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Artisans-at-Work: Creativity in Traditional Islamic Arts

JEAN-LOUIS MICHON

Artists and craftspersons from a number of Islamic countries participated in a 1994 festival and seminar in Islamabad – "Artisans-at-Work" – jointly organised by IRCICA (Istanbul Research Centre for Islamic History, Culture and Arts) and Lok Virsa (Pakistan's Institute of Folk Heritage). The text of the keynote address on this occasion is reproduced here, along with photographs of some of the events.

At the "International Seminar on Crafts: Prospects for Development" held in Rabat in October 1991, participants unanimously recognized that the preservation of traditional handicrafts which form an integral component of the Islamic way of life calls for dynamic and imaginative efforts to promote and strengthen creative talent among Muslim craftsmen. The present Seminar has been convened to consider how such a strategy can be formulated and successfully applied.

As a starting point, one has to reflect upon the very nature of the creative power which has been given to man alone, among all beings. Obviously, it is in his quality of Khalifat Allah on earth that man has been endowed in addition to reason and speech with the ability to make artifacts responding to a variety of needs, both material and spiritual, individual and collective. This gift, which has been conferred by the one Artisan (*Sani'*) "who perfecteth all things" (Qur'an, XXVII, 88), has to be exercised in conformity with the models, laws and "signs" (*ayat*) which God has placed in his creation and revealed in his holy Books so that men may remember and adore Him. This explains why sources of inspiration for Muslim craftsmen have always been, and continue to be, observation of nature, reading and meditating on the verses of the Holy Qur'an and following the example set out by Prophet Muhammad particularly as concerns professional honesty and the search for perfection.

Just as the Lord taught Seyidna Dawud the art of making garments of mail for protection in battle (Quran XXI, 80) and Seyidna Nuh the art of carpentry to build the Ark of Salvation (XI, 37), Moslem craftsmen have experienced through the grace of God, throughout centuries and regions, visions and intuitions (the sufis speak of *ilhamat, tajalliyat, waridat*, etc.) which they have translated into visual or, in the case of music, auditive language, a language which is universally recognizable as "Islamic". Let us just mention to illustrate this creative process the innumerable variations on the theme of the "prayer niche" (mihrab) and lamp, all inspired by *ayat al nur* (XXIV, 35); or the importance of light itself, as a symbol of God's grace and infinite radiance, in architecture and architectural decoration (muqarnas, screens and mucharabiyas); or the devotion with which builders and landscape gardeners harness and distribute water, "of which we made every living thing "(XXI, 30), creating gardens in the image of Paradise; and not forgetting the omnipresent mark of the divine Word which, through the pen ofcalligraphers and the various styles which they have developed, bring back the memory of the Beneficent Creator to the mind of many an oblivious servant.

The sources of inspiration which have proved so fruitful during fourteen centuries have not run dry: nature as harmoniously ordered by divine *Hikmah*, Qur'anic teachings, the Sunna and the lore and techniques inherited from previous generations are always there to be tapped and generate artistic productions that are both innovative and respond to present needs of the community, in accordance with the spirit of Islam. If little use has been made of these traditional sources during the last generations, the fault has to be ascribed not to the sources themselves but, on the one hand, to the craftsmen who have not been sufficiently conscious of and confident in the value of the sources and have been too greatly influenced by foreign – mainly Western – tendencies, and on the other hand to the "consumers" of the artifacts who have disregarded the role of authentic Islamic craftsmanship as a providential means of infusing beauty and sanctity into daily life.

Now, the question is: what can be done to counteract these forms of forgetfulness and neglect and restore a true understanding of the meaning of Islamic art among the Umma? Obviously, the answer lies, first and foremost, in education. Since artistic production is an essential tool to build up and embellish the City, one must consider that it is a collective duty – *fard kifayah* – to integrate education in the arts and crafts of Islam at all levels of education, whether lay or religious, private or public wherever exists an active Muslim community. A series of basic and specific recommendations on this very subject were made at the First International Conference on Muslim Education held in Makkah mukarrama in 1977. They called for a number of measures aimed at enlisting the interest and cooperation of the general public for the revival of arts and crafts, ensuring the training of qualified craftsmen, and developing programs of national and inter-Islamic character.

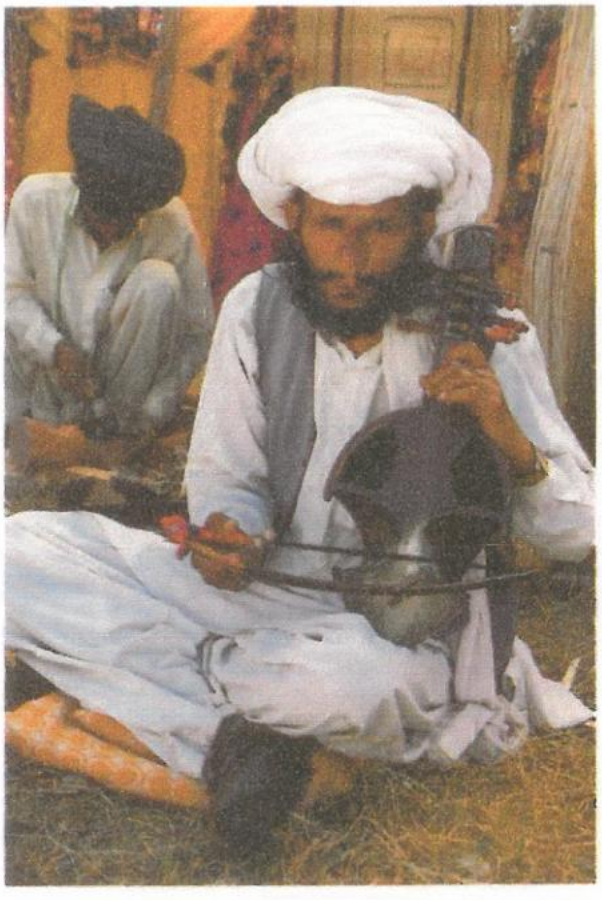
Each one of these recommendations has a bearing on the problem of creativity which we are here to discuss, and it would certainly be of great help if the participants to the Seminar could review these recommendations and assess what has been done during the last 17 years, and what can still be done today, to implement them as they deserve.

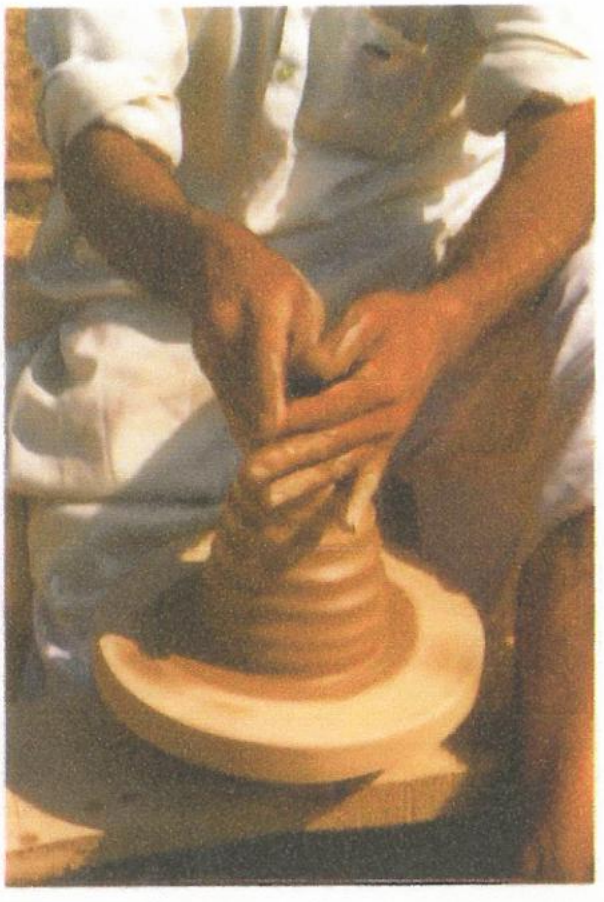
Several of these recommendations bear on the creation of special bodies, funds or meetings concerned with the rehabilitation of Islamic arts. We see that an important step toward implementation has been made with

the creation, in 1980, of IRCICA which proves to be a very active and imaginative Centre, not only for research" as its title modestly suggests, but also for practical encouragement of genuine Islamic arts and crafts. Another felicitous initiative in the same direction is the "international centre for creativity" envisaged in Pakistan which promises to be a forum where Muslim artisans will be able to meet with colleagues of their own and other specialities, exchanging ideas, comparing techniques and patterns, thereby finding new sources of inspiration stemming, however, from the same inexhaustible Ocean of divine Beauty and Wisdom.

Another of these recommendations bears on the role that international organizations, like Unesco, can play for the study and preservation of Islamic cities, arts and crafts. Having been involved for many years as a UNESCO and UNDP field expert in programs of that nature, I can say that if the component "study" of those programs is generally carried out quite satisfactorily, the other component, i.e. "preservation", which implies practical implementation of the results of the study, may be disappointingly neglected, especially when international assistance always of a temporary character has ended. It is therefore necessary that organizations receiving a request for cooperation make sure that there exists, on the national plane, a strong political will to promote arts and crafts, together with the essential nucleus of resources both human and material to ensure the successful operation and follow-up of the projects undertaken with international help.

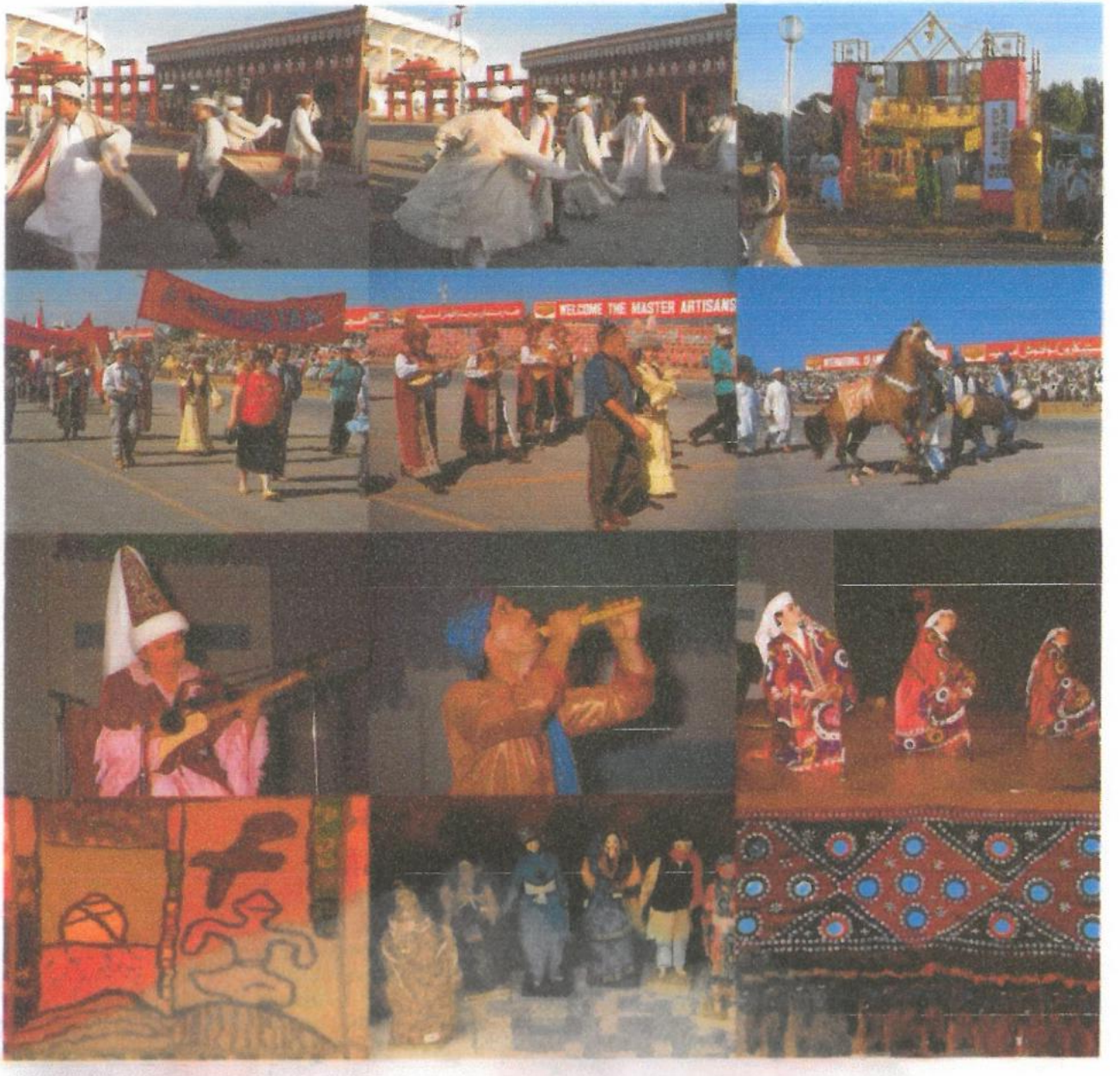
The last remark brings us back to the core of the problem of creativity, which lies in the minds and hearts not only of the actual or potential 'creators' themselves, but of all those who, exercising a responsibility and power at some level of the society, can influence the social and economic statutes of the artisans and their conditions of work, facilitating after proper training their access to credit, to raw materials, to market outlets etc. These tasks require a good deal of intersectoral cooperation between ministries in charge of handicrafts (if they exist...), culture, commerce, tourism and many other institutions and private persons. They show that the problem of artistic creativity, like many other contemporary issues, is a real challenge to the Umma which, by taking it up successfully, may give proof of its vitality and faithfulness to the ideals deposited in it by God, the Merciful.





Above, left: A Balochi on Sarod. **Above:** A Potter. Photographs by Syed Javaid Kazi

Dr Jean-Louis Michon, a Contributing Editor of *Arts & The Islamic World*, has been involved for many years as a UNESCO and UNDP field expert in programmes in the field of study and preservation of Islamic cities, art and crafts.



First row, L-R: 1&2. Silk route Performers. Photographs by Syed Javaid Kazi. **3.** Festival venue. Photograph by Nisar Mirza. **Second row: 1&2.** Cultural Parade. Photographs by Syed Javaid Kazi. **3.** Dancing horse. Photograph by Nisar Mirza. **Third row: 1&2.** Silk route performers Photograph by Sh. Faisal. **3.** Silk route dancers. Photographs by Syed Javaid Kazi. **Fourth row: 1-3.** Various Islamic folk crafts. Photographs by Sh. Faisal.

Among participating authorities and institutions were:

Afghan Handicraft Promotion Centre; National Crafts Council of **BANGLADESH**; National Research Centre and High Institute of Folklore at the Academy of Arts, **EGYPT**; National Commission for UNESCO, **NEW GUINEA**; Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Calligraphists Society, and Iran Handicrafts Organisation, **IRAN**; National Crafts Council, Yayasan Festival Foundation (Festival Istiqlal Foundation), **INDONESIA**; Association of Women Crafts Cooperation and Yarmouk University, **JORDAN**; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, **KUWAIT**; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Arab Establishment of Fine Arts, and Arab Resource Centre for Popular arts, **LEBANON**; Ministry of Culture and Communication, **MALI**; National Art Gallery, KRF Islam International, Ministry of Education, Lembaga Museum, and Department of Sabah Museum, **MALAYSIA**; Government of Niger and Niger State National Council of Arts and Culture, **NIGER**; Green Processing Company NIG Ltd, **NIGERIA**; Officials, scholars, specialists, institutions and organisations, **PAKISTAN**; Department of Culture, Department of Economic Affairs and Planning, and the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR), **PALESTINE**; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Islamic Relief Organisation, Arab Urban Development Institute, Organisation of Islamic Capitals and Cities, Amar Centre for Architectural Heritage, Urban Development Establishment, and Mashareq Institution, **SAUDI ARABIA**; Sierra Leone Intellectual Property Organisation, Department of Information, Broadcasting and Culture, **SIERRA LEONE**; Ministry of Culture, **SYRIA**; Tatar National Culture Centre, Tataristan; National Office of Artisans, **TUNISIA**; Tajik Academy of Science; Ministry of Culture, Mimar Sinan University, and Sumerhali, **TURKEY**; and the Juma al-Majid Centre for – Culture and Heritage, **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**.

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS ON FOLK ARTS AND CRAFTS

The 1st International Islamic "Artisans-at-Work" Festival, was held in Islamabad (Pakistan) from 7-15 October 1994. An International Seminar on "Creativity in Traditional Islamic Crafts" was also held within the framework of the Festival, which coincided with the UNESCO Experts Meeting on the Decade for Crafts Development (13-14 October), and the 18th Asian Assembly of the World Crafts Council, Asia Pacific Zone (8-9 October).

Hosted by the Pakistan Institute of Folk Heritage (Lok Virsa), and organised by IRCICA in collaboration with a number of organisations including Pakistan Ministry of Culture, Unesco and the International Islamic Relief Organisation, the Festival sought to project Islamic culture through its arts and crafts by highlighting their beauty and value. It also looked at the ways and means to create favourable conditions for craftspeople, many of whom participated in the Festival with their tools, workshops and exhibits which were displayed at the Festival.

Participating countries included Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Iran, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Korea,Kuwait, Kazakhastan, Lebanon, Mali, Malaysia, Mauritius, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Syria, Tataristan, Tunisia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tanzania, Turkey, United Kingdom, USA and Uruguay.

The Festival opened with a colourful folkloric parade, followed by Citizens' Walk to "Save the Cultural Heritage". It was preceded by the traditional ceremony of "Dastarbandi" honouring four master artisans, one from each of the regions, by placing a turban or a cloth "chaddar" on their head to acknowledge excellence in a field of artistic endeavour. The well known artist-musician Nusrat Fateh Ali led the Citizens' Walk, joined by renowned scholars, craft experts and representatives of national crafts organisations.

A special attraction was the"Silk Route Pavilion" specially set up depicting foodways, arts, crafts, culture and folk dances of the Central Asian Republics, China, India, and Northern Pakistan. At an exhibition of "Mughal Architectural Crafts", artisans held workshops in such rare techniques as brick calligraphy, marble intarsia, traditional fresco, pietra dura, stucco tracery, and tile mosaic.

Other major events of the Festival included daily folkloric performances and live concerts, museum exhibitions, photographic displays of Islamic heritage, and display-stall of audio-visual documentation and books on folklore, arts and crafts.

Artisans-at-Work was organised by:

LOK VIRSA
Garden Avenue, P.O Box 1184
Islamabad, Pakistan
Tel (51) 82 38 83, 81 25 78
Fax (51) 21 37 56

OIC RESEARCH CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC HISTORY, ART & CULTURE (IRCICA)
P.O Box 24, Besiktas 80692
Istanbul, Turkey
Tel (0212) 260 59 88/ 260 59 89
Fax (0212) 258 43 65

in collaboration with
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC RELIEF ORGANISATION
P.O Box 14043, Jeddah 21434
Tel (9662) 651 2553 • Fax (9662) 651 8191

Indonesia's Plans for Istiqlal II

MAHMUD BUCHARI

In 1991 Indonesia had organised the Festival Istiqlal which was visited by more than six million people in Jakarta. The 2nd Festival Istiqlal now being planned all over Indonesia for September-October 1995, will mark the 50th Anniversary of the proclamation of the country's independence and will offer art exhibitions, seminars and a wide variety of cultural events, national as well as international.

The nation-wide celebrations are being organised by a committee which has been working on it since the beginning of 1994 under the Chairmanship of Mr Mar'ie Muhammad. Mr Pontjo Sutowo, who successfully directed the earlier Festival Istiqlal in Jakarta, is in charge of its management, assisted by Dr A Zacky Siradj as the Executive Secretary.

Some of the most popular artists as well as outstanding writers and intellectuals have been associated in planning, visualising and producing specific events. Their support and collaboration augurs well for the aesthetic quality of the presentations as well as enthusiastic audience response.

The programme in Islamic art and culture has again been entrusted to the eminent painter and scholar, Prof A D Pirous. Others with him from the 1991 team are the distinguished architect and educationist, Mr Achmad Noe'man, the Islamic art historian and researcher in the art of *Mushaf*, Mr Mahmud Buchari; assisted by the veteran diplomat Mr H Ferdy Salim, who has been Indonesia's Ambassador to several countries and is now in charge of international relations for Istiqlal II.

Guidance on the whole programme has been given by the Minister for Religious Affairs, Dr Tarmizi Taher, the Minister for Education and Culture, Prof Dr Wardiman Djojonegoro, and the Minister of Tourism, Post and Communications, Joop Ave.

Indonesia has many characteristics which make it unique among Islamic countries. Islam came to Indonesia in a peaceful way, through teachers, traders and other social contacts at the beginning of the XIII century. It was a period when Baghdad, which, during the Abbasid dynasty, was one of the foremost centres of Islam, fell into the hands of Hulagu Khan, grandson of Gengis Khan, the conqueror from Mongolia.

Later, the descendants of Hulagu Khan became ardent followers of Islam, forming the Il-Khanid dynasty. The existing local cultures gradually became absorbed into Islam without any clashes.

In the succeeding years, Indonesia came to have the largest Islamic population in the world, almost 160 million, about 90% of the population. It has the distinction of being the Islamic country farthest from the *Ka'ba* to the east.

In spite of the population being spread over more than 13,000 islands and comprising more than 200 ethnic groups speaking different dialects, Indonesia succeeded in establishing and maintaining a strong unitary state, the Republic of Indonesia. History shows that it was mainly Islam that gave life and direction to this process of unification, notwithstanding other factors which no doubt supported it.

Islam has been the rallying force unifying the multitude of groupings which constitute the Indonesian nation. For many centuries, the everyday life, art and culture of Indonesia has been imbued by the Islamic spirit, giving it a continuous tradition throughout the centuries to present times.

proclamation of its independence, which has been preserved to this day. National and international festivals, of which Festival *Istiqlal* II is one of the most important, are being organised.

It will be held in September and October 1995 and will have exhibitions of Indonesian Islamic arts and culture, both ancient and modern, and an international seminar at which eminent Islamic scholars from all over the world will give talks about Islamic art in their countries.

The purpose of this festival, at the national level, is to show how the Islamic arts have had a unifying function in integrating the different ethnic groups of the Indonesian nation, thus creating a cohesive national identity. On an international level, the aim of *Istiqlal* II is to show how Islamic art and culture has helped Indonesia in the conduct of its international relations. At the same time, the festival will demonstrate that authentic Islamic art and culture has a universal character which is open to all and promotes a spirit of peace.

To achieve these aims, there will be several different programmes, national and international. The exhibitions will include examples of Qur'ans produced by prominent Indonesian religious scholars of the past, architecture, including traditional and contemporary mosques, the plastic arts, manuscripts and books on the art, culture and crafts of Islam.

In the performing arts programme, there will be traditional and contemporary music and dance, theatre and film, the art of speechmaking and storytelling, poetry and recitals of Islamic ballads, all of a purely Indonesian character.

At the scientific forum, internationally known Islamic scholars from Cairo, Paris, London and elsewhere will have public discussions with Indonesian scholars on Islamic art and culture worldwide.

There will be a competition in the art of *mushaf*, that is, the calligraphy and illumination of the Qur'an, which, for the first time, will be international, and which it is intended will be periodically repeated. This art has been almost totally neglected since the 16th century (see *Arts & The Islamic World* NO.21, and NO.24). According to the well-known Islamic writers S H Nasr and Martin Lings, the culmination of this art was in the Abbasid period in the 13th century, the Mamluk period in Cairo and the Ottoman period in Turkey in the 14 and 15th centuries.

Today, the centre of competition for international calligraphy is Istanbul, Turkey, while the centre of competition for *tilawah* (reading the Qur'an) is in Makkah. And now Indonesia will endeavour to become the centre of competition for the art of *mushaf*.

After the First Festival Istiqlal in 1991, President Muhammad Soeharto assigned a team of experts to design and make a *Mushaf al-Qur'an* with beautiful calligraphy and illumination to be presented, at the opening ceremony of the Second Festival Istiqlal in 1995, to his nation and, at the same time, to the people of the world.

In view of the great importance that the President and the Indonesian community have given this project, it has been generally agreed that this manuscript, the *Al-Qur'an Mushaf Istiqlal*, will become the symbol of the Second National Awakening in the spiritual field as a reminder that true happiness and welfare can only be achieved if people sincerely and conscientiously abide by the teachings of their religion, and, the same time, continue to develop science and technology.



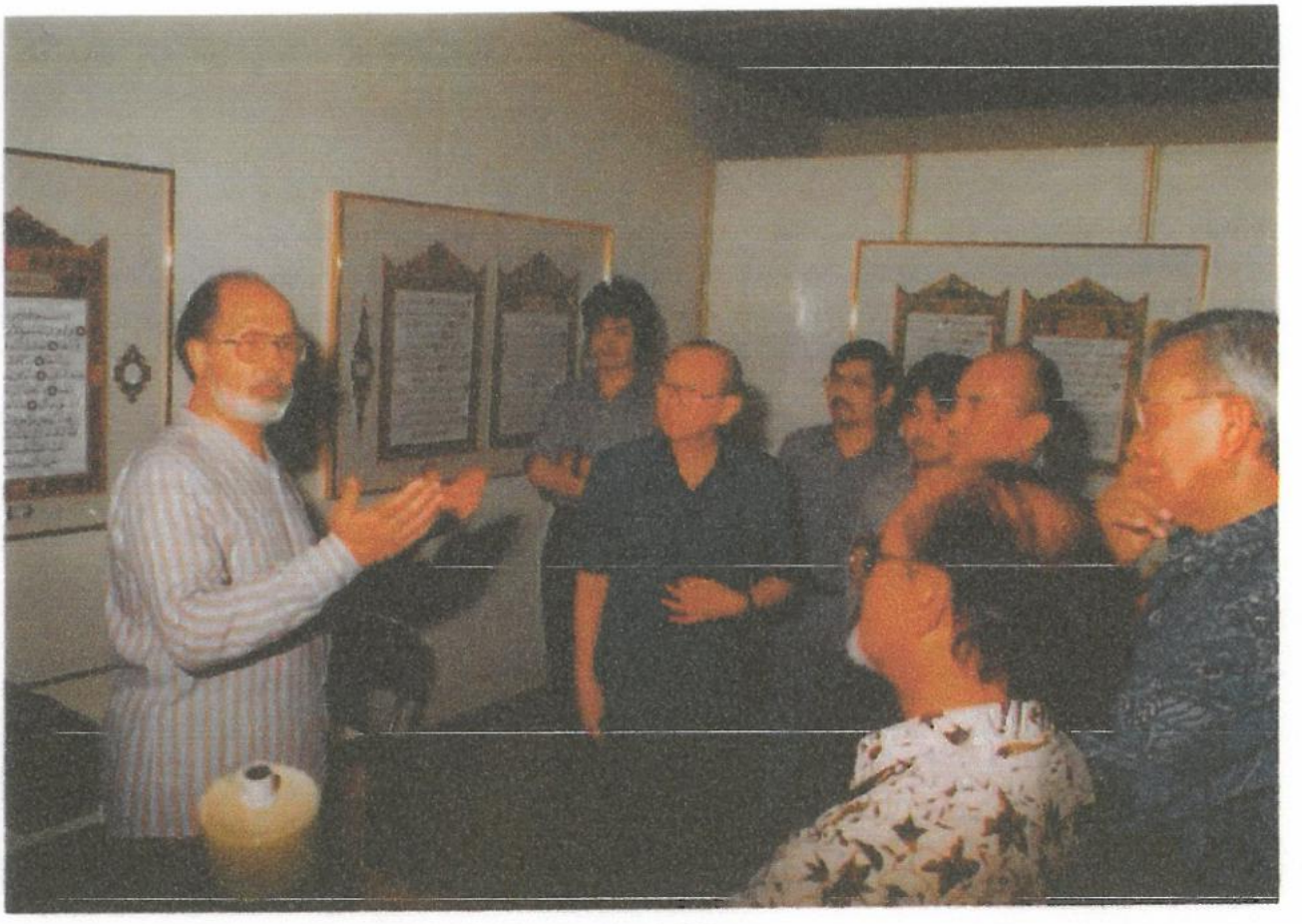




Top: President Clinton with Minister of Religious Affairs, Dr Tarmizi Taher – receiving details on the calligraphy of the pages of the Al Qur'an Istiqlal. Middle: Mr and Mrs Alvin Toffler visiting the Istiqlal Grand Mosque in Jakarta where the Istiqlal Festival is held. Above: The Indonesian pavilion at the World Islamic Civilization Festival '94 - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Indonesian Islamic Arts

The year 1995 has a special significance for Indonesia, since it is the 50th anniversary of the



Professor Hossein Nasr with members of the Istiqlal Committee. Photographs by Anas Stregar

Participation in WICF 1994

Indonesia participated in Malaysia's World Islamic Civilization Festival held in Kuala Lumpur (June-October 1994).

A delegation, headed by Indonesia's Minister of Religious Affairs, Dr Tarmizi Taher attended the opening ceremony. Twenty three other countries participated in this big event.

The organization of this Islamic Festival which can be regarded as a follow up of a similar exhibition held in Kuala Lumpur in 1990 (the Festival Tamadun Islam), and the Festival Istiqlal held in Jakarta in September 1991 linked with the coming Festival *Istiqlal* II to be held in Jakarta in September 1995, should be seen as a concerted effort of these two sister nations, with a combined Muslim population of almost 200 million, to give a clear picture of Islam to the peoples of their respective countries, and that of the rest of the world. All too often, Islam has been portrayed as a religion of terrorists or fanatics with primitive values of life and civilization.

The 1700 pieces of artifacts, which the Organizing Committee managed to assemble from all corners of the world (some dating from as far back as the 7th century AD) in such a limited time, received wide commendation, and gave the public an opportunity to see for themselves the high level of culture and civilization attained by the Islamic community several centuries ago, contrary to the image being projected in certain quarters of backwardness, extremism and intolerance. One can say that it was Islamic civilization which contributed to the renaissance in the West.

The exhibition of artifacts in the science and technology discipline among others is ample proof of the advanced stage of progress Islam achieved in these fields.

In the section dealing with Islamic heritage one could see the achievements of Islamic Civilization not only in the Middle Eastern/Arab countries, but also in the non-Arab region in the East, including Indonesia and Malaysia in South East Asia.

It is hoped that all that has been presented will be recorded and publications produced for the benefit of those who were not able to visit this great event, primarily for the younger generation who have not yet had the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the great contribution of Islam, especially in the early years.

FERDY SALIM

HAFLA!: A Celebration of Morocco's Popular Arts

PRAKASH DASWANI

As part of its commitment to introduce and popularise non-European arts in the West, the London-based organisation, Cultural Cooperation, hosts an annual "Music Village". In 1994, the focus was on popular arts from Morocco, and the Artistic Director here shares with our readers some of the pleasures – and problems – of presenting a cross-cultural project.

HAFLA! was presented in Bradford, Glasgow, London, Birmingham, Berlin and Frankfurt during a five and a half week tour in June and July. Some 70 public opportunities to enjoy and participate in the programme were organised during this time. These presentations were supported by a wide range of materials and activities. These included: a Souvenir Brochure with illustrated articles on Islam, on the background to each group and their particular form of creative expression; a Teachers Pack circulated to Schools some months in advance in order for it to be included in the Curriculum – (the Teachers Pack contained an audio tape featuring the music played by the participating artists, a comprehensive set of articles and notes on Islam and Morocco, a slide presentation kit and maps, recipes etc.).

We also produced a Compact Disc featuring field recordings of all the groups originally invited. Supporting activities include a School programme at the British Museum during the London fortnight; master classes and informal workshops and Moroccan cuisine.

A number of motivations prompted our selection of Morocco as the theme for the 12th annual Music Village. Among the most important of these was our wish to use the vehicle of this popular annual Festival to continue to demonstrate the rich cultural heterogeneity - and inclusiveness – of societies that appear to outsiders to be culturally homogeneous, and exclusive. We felt that there was a particularly pressing need for more light to be cast on contemporary Islamic societies, western perceptions of which have tended to be somewhat blinkered and consequently negative.

Morocco's particular history, its geographic location and its highly developed tourist industry make it among the most familiar of Islamic societies for many ordinary western Europeans. An extraordinarily fertile range of cultural forms, embracing the traditional ways of life of many different peoples, has developed within its territories over the centuries, and many of these continue to flourish in contemporary times in vigorous and confident fashion.

The artists

We wanted our selection of artists to be broadly representative in historical, geographic and cultural terms and for the traditional forms they represented to be thought-provoking, pleasurable to experience, and accessible and meaningful to a contemporary audience. We believe we did manage to achieve these goals, even though some of the groups we originally chose were impossible to bring in the end.

The participating groups presented Morocco's links with Europe, with other parts of North Africa, with the Middle East, and with sub-Saharan Africa.

The *Malhun* musicians and singers – *Orchestra Ben Tahar* – from Marrakesh were outstanding exponents of popular music rooted in the classical Islamic heritage of Al Andalus, which so profoundly transformed the Great Traditions of Europe in general and southern European culture in particular. This group provided the Music Village package with a consistently high level of instrumental and vocal virtuosity. The skill and demeanour of the individual artists evoked the cultural opulence of the golden period of Al Andalus.

Yet when they played "Chaabi" popular songs they brought to life the flavour of those convivial social gatherings that take place regularly in modern Morocco's northern cities. In addition to their extremely popular performances throughout the tour, the Malhun group also gave a memorable master class at Musicworks in London, attended by legendary rock musician Robert Plant (of Led Zeppelin fame). He came to later performances in London and made reference to the Hafla! CD on the promotional video for his own new single.

Sheikh Hassan's group of *Berber* men and women musicians and dancers from Meknes in the Middle Atlas Mountains and the *Rwais Berbers* from the southern High Atlas were very popular with the public – especially with families, who readily joined in the collective social dances and songs so characteristic of Berber village life.

Despite the relative "mountain top" isolation of these traditions, each group showed the influence of contact with other cultures outside Morocco. The Meknes Berbers include dance movements inspired by watching heavy metal groups on satellite TV, but these were incorporated into their existing dynamic traditions in such a confident way that they became virtually indistinguishable from so called "genuine" Berber traditions.

In a similar way, the Rwais sang and danced and played their instruments as their ancestors must have done over hundreds of years but there was little doubt among most observers that most of their performance conventions and styles were borrowed from sub-Saharan Africa.

The performances of both these groups provided extraordinarily vivid insights into the phenomena of cultural "purity" and cultural miscegenation, of borrowing and

mixing between cultures, and of the tenacity - and flexibility - of specific cultural traditions and ways of life.

The *Aissawa* and *Gnawa* musicians, singers, and dancers belong to religious brotherhoods and came, respectively, from the medieval university city of Fes and the former slave trading port of Essaouira. The performances of each group are deeply rooted in spiritual beliefs and involve the inducement of trance in performers and members of the audience alike. The purpose of the trance is different in each case. For the Aissawa, who belong to the tradition of Sufi mysticism that has existed for centuries alongside formal Islam, the aim is to bring about direct experience of the divine.

The Gnawa are descendants of slaves imported into Morocco from the Western Sudanese Empire 500 hundred years ago. Trance for them is a form of healing. Both groups performed elements of their rituals, with some among the artists themselves occasionally going into trance. There was a worrying moment, for us as organisers, on one of the London boat cruises, when a member of the public deliberately "hitched a ride" on the Gnawa trance ritual. She emerged apparently feeling refreshed and relieved of some long standing personal problem. We were simply relieved.

To those less engaged in the spiritual side of things, the performances of both of these groups nonetheless provided outstanding entertainment. The Aissawa created a magnificent spectacle as they marched triumphantly into the performance arenas, with horns blaring and drums pounding out mesmerising rhythms. The Gnawa, by contrast, provided a much mellower, yet equally hypnotic, rendition of songs of suffering and celebration.

The *Acrobats Ou Moussa* from Marrakesh were every bit as impressive this time as they had been when we brought them to London for another Festival in 1989. They were, naturally, very popular with families, and especially with children – both important Music Village target groups. They also commanded great respect from fellow physical artists here in Europe, as the training professionals who participated in the workshop that marked the first public use of the newly cultural complex being built at Circus Space in Hoxton, Hackney) would confirm.

We had also aimed to bring a much greater element of crafts activity and display than we eventually managed. Fortunately what we did bring was very strong indeed. Two artist gave continuous demonstrations of *Berber carpet making;* by the end of the tour they had produced three full carpets. These activities were again selected for their potential attractiveness to families with children, specialist crafts people and members of the general public, all of whom were regularly encouraged to "have a go", which they did.

We were unable to secure, as we had wished, the inclusion of number of other artists, in particular, two tilers from Fes and Tetouan, a blanket maker from Chefchaouen and an embroiderer from Fes. Three performing groups on the original list also had to be abandoned for logistical reasons - the Saharan Dagger from Tissint, a replacement dance group comprising Morocco's famous "Blue Men" and women from Guedra, also from the Saharan region, and the Jewish singer and violinist, Michel, with accompanying Arabic lute player.

The last component of the original artistic package was the group of *Taktouka Jabilaya* musicians, singers and dancers from the Rif Mountains in Northern Morocco. These artists belong to a rich vein of culture that sweeps round from Morocco's northern border with Algeria, westwards through Chefchaouen, Tetouan and Tangiers down to Lahreche on the Atlantic coast. Taktouka Jabilaya heritage revels the incorporation on several elements of gypsy culture and Andalusian folk music. The group invited had won the national Taktouka Jabilaya annual competition on several occasions in the past and gave up the chance to take part in the 1994 competition in order to participate in the Music Village tour. They gave two performances in Bradford and were very well received. Mohammed Barghout, musician, singer and dancer instantly captured the hearts of the Bradford Mela audience with a hilarious rendition of Taktouka dance.

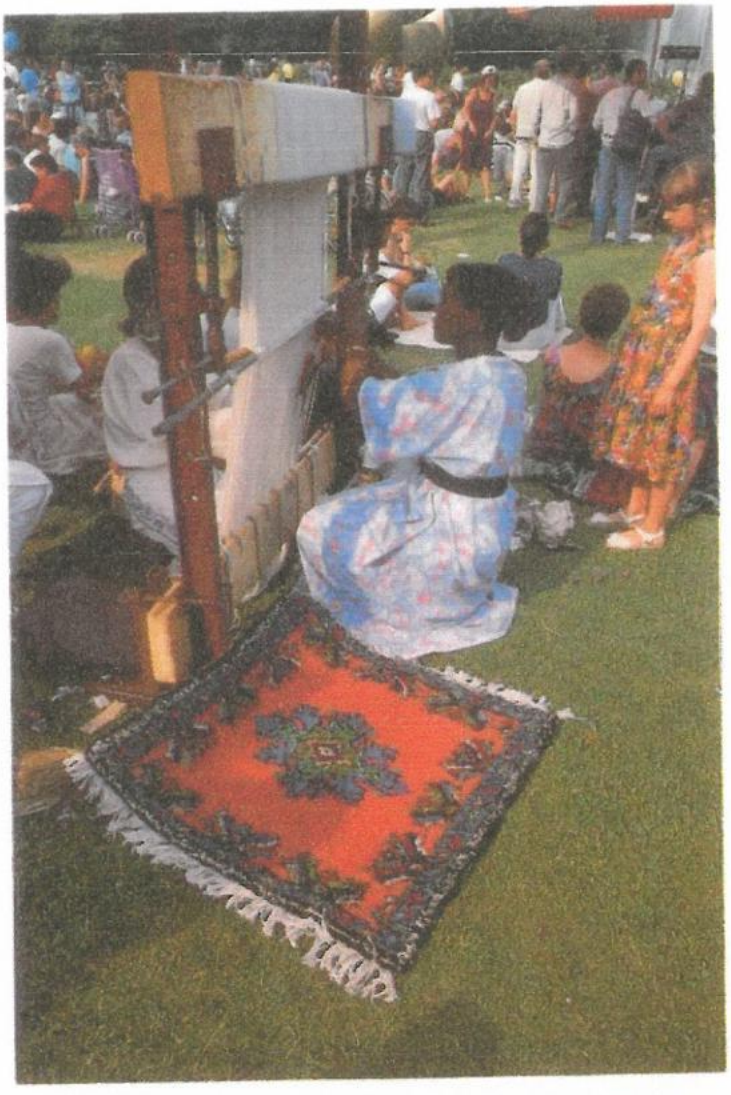
A Devastating Blow

Despite being a highly successful 5-week event, the 1994 Music Village suffered a devastating blow. On the Sunday evening after the Bradford Mela at the beginning of the tour, with our commitments to the Bradford Festival more than satisfactorily met, we returned to our hotel after dinner at a near by restaurant to prepare to travel on to Glasgow the following morning. A drunk hit-and-run driver ploughed into a group of us as we were walking on the pavement, killing two of our party and seriously injuring two others. It took us two full days to absorb the initial impact of this tragedy before we decided, with the full support of the artists – in fact more or less instructed by them – to continue with the tour. We travelled on to Glasgow on the Wednesday morning.

This accident claimed the life of Robert Atkins, Joint Artistic Director of Cultural Co-operation and the Music Village, and Ahmed El Azoaun, one of the Taktouka Jabilaya's lead instrumentalists. Mohammed Al Abidy and Mohammed Barghout also from Taktouka Jabilaya were also struck by the same car and spent many months in intensive care. Mr El Abidy was taken back to Morocco by Bradford City Council in August 1994. Mohammed Barghout was taken back to Morocco on December 10, 1994.

We wish to pay tribute to the people of Bradford, the City Council and of course Bradford Festival in the wake of the accident. They were magnificent. In addition to taking care of the whole group for two days after the accident, they also took responsibility for ensuring that the two seriously injured Moroccans were nursed back to health and returned safely back to Morocco. Also a trust fund was set up by the City and the proceeds were disbursed to the families of those directly affected. Criminal proceedings, which need to be completed before compensation claims can be processed, are currently underway against the driver.

We wish also to thank the Regional Delegate of Culture in Marrakesh, Hassan Joundi, who co-ordinated all the logistics in preparing the artists for travel to Europe and his deputy, Khalissa Lantry, who acted as delegation leader. Last but not least we must thank Anne Marie Teeuwisen of the British Council in Rabat for all she did to make the project happen. It is doubtful whether the project would have succeeded without the efforts of



Traditional carpet-making demonstration at Aston Hall, Bermingham, by artisans from the High Atlas mountains.

Gnawa Musicians from Essaoura conduct an informal workshop with disabled children at Richmond Riverside, London.



these three individuals and one or two others at the Moroccan end.

Bradford

The tour began in Bradford on June 16, in association with the Bradford Festival. The Music Village was one of the events programmed to take place in the Bradford Mela and proved to be its highlights. Over 70,000 people were reckoned to have visited the Mela over the weekend of 18 and 19 June. A large percentage of them experienced the event either briefly or for a more sustained period. We had wished to open up a partnership with this Festival, especially in view of the forthcoming Pakistan Music Village planned for 1995. Bradford has one of Europe's largest Pakistani populations.

Glasgow

Because of the tragedy in Bradford, which resulted in our staying there for two extra days, we had to amend the programme in Glasgow. This had been expanded in comparison with the 1993 Ethiopian Music Village in order to ensure greater impact, especially of the educational, and community activities and public events outside Glasgow. All of these were extremely successful in terms of audience response even though there was little media coverage. The events in Glasgow itself did receive local and national coverage but not as much as we would have wanted. Our main objective in those days immediately after the accident was to meet our commitments and to try and raise morale both within the group and also of all those involved in the Music Village. We did at least appear to succeed in that.

In response to the tragedy in Bradford, the artists were passionate in their determination to present their work at the highest level of their abilities. They gave well-attended and well-received concert performances, workshops, crafts demonstrations and also some spectacular displays, both indoor and outdoor, in City Halls, Argyll St, Buchanan St and the Italian Centre. Although curtailed, the visit to Glasgow was an intensive and generally successful one.

London

We aimed to sustain the process of restructuring the Music Village in London, begun in 1993/4, and to build on this wherever possible. We also aimed to increased the public

profile of the event in the capital.

We consolidated on the successful initiatives of 1993/4 - most notably the Schools programme at the *British Museum* (BM) and the *free Festival weekend* at *Richmond Riverside*, both of which continued in 1994/5 to establish themselves as regular features of London's cultural calendar. Excellent weather encouraged very good audiences for the open air festival weekend while the Schools programme undoubtedly benefited this year from early consultations with *Advisory Teachers* (representing a total of 9 London Boroughs).

Their input was invited at a stage in the planning cycle when it was possible for them to influence in very specific ways the *kinds* of artists and art forms selected. The advisory teachers also gave very specific advice on what the style and content of the *Teachers Pack* should be. Finally, they helped us to organise an *INSET day* for the teachers from the schools taking part in the programme at the BM.

The Schools programme was also helped by the decision to appoint as workshop leaders *local artists* rather than the overseas ones invited to appear in the Festival. Not only did this help overcome the linguistic barriers that had hampered communication in 1993 but also, since it was possible to invite these locally based workshop leaders to the *INSET day*, made them much more finely tuned in, in advance, to the needs of the prime users - the children.

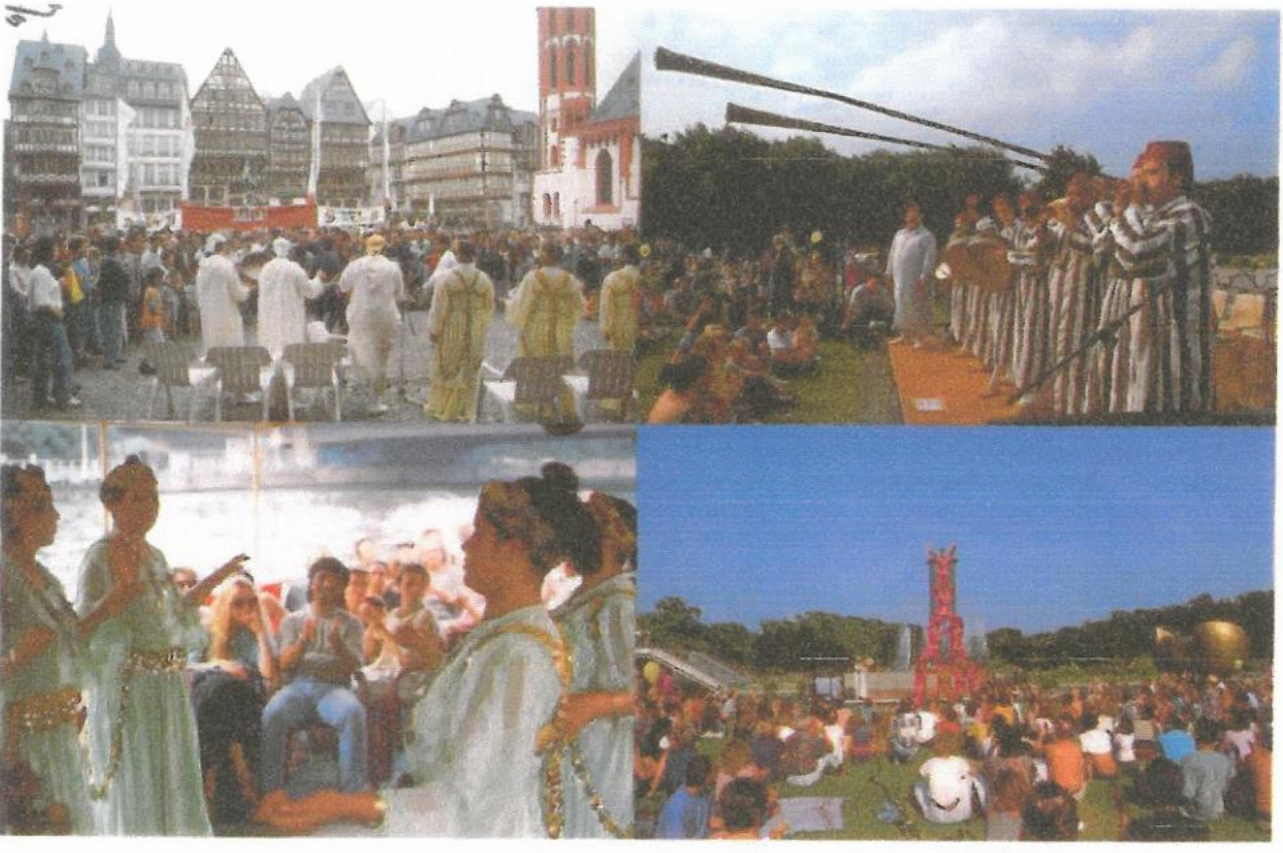
We were also determined to ensure *greater accessibility* to the event across the capital. In pursuit of this we initiated a range of new project partnerships in a number of locations which enabled us to achieve an even greater geographic spread of quality events.

We secured Regents Park as an additional venue for four major free Festival events, one of which took place on the weekend, thus replacing the free Festival weekend event in Clissold Park in 1993.

We worked for the first time with *Blackheath Concert Halls* for the *Music Village Gala Concert*. The partnership with BCH, which also led to a special *afternoon presentation* for 200 local schoolchildren and a *masterclass* for local musicians, also and uniquely involved the LB's of *Greenwich* and *Lewisham* in a *3-way collaboration* with BCH.

We re-introduced the popular Music Village *river cruises*, thus offering to the general public a number of attractive public opportunities for enjoyment of and participation in the Festival. The afternoon cruises, unrelated to any other public Music Village event (as for examples the cruises at Richmond Riverside) failed to attract an audience while the evening ones were virtually sold out.

We also initiated the idea of a *Festival Club* to run continuously through the Festival. Located at the October Gallery as another *first-time*



Top, left: Sheikh Hasan's Berbers from Meknes at the final performance of the Hafla! tour in Frankfurt. **Top, right:** Aissawa musicians from Fes performing for the public in Glasgow. **Above, left:** Berber dancers from the Middle Atlas mountains during a Music Village River Cruise on the Thames in London. **Above:** Acrobats of the Sidi Ahmad Ou Moussa brotherhood from Marrakesh create a human pyramid during a public presentation at the haus Der Kulturen Der Welt, Berlin.

partnership. this took the form of a double *exhibition* and *cafe* where people could gather at lunch time to sample *Moroccan food*, enjoy *short concerts of traditional music and dance* and hear *talks* contextualising Moroccan popular tradition and highlighting contemporary issues. Evening *"club nights"*, so successful in the 1993 Ethiopian festival, proved equally popular here (and also at Leighton House, another new venue for the Music Village). The October Gallery very much wants to host the Festival Club for the 1995 Music Village.

Out of concern that we had not been able to provide more *targeted access for specific community groups* in 1993, we worked together with a range of community organisations – the Moroccan Information and Advice Centre, the Al Hasaniya Women's Project among others – to arrange a special evening for the Moroccan community at the *Subterania* in Ladbroke Grove. These groups acted as hosts for a successful and popular event – the first of its kind for many years for this community – which we co-ordinated with the groups and *North Kensington Amenity Trust* (NKAT). Feedback from these groups and from NKAT indicated that this was a very valuable experience for those in the Moroccan community who were able to attend and/or take part in the whole exercise of hosting around 50 artists from every region of their homeland and enjoying the performances these artist gave primarily for them.

We also re-established or began a new relationship with other London arts organisations – *Circus Space*, *Music Works* and *Chisenhale Dance Space* – by arranging *masterclasses for London arts practitioners*.

More generally we undertook to increase public awareness of the event by attending to create an *in-house Marketing & Press capability*. Assisted by a first-time grand from the Baring Foundation, we appointed two workers on fixed contract to initiate this area.

We were generally satisfied with what was achieved in establishing the capability but disappointed that little of the progress made produced a visible improvement in media awareness of the work. This was despite the decision to facilitate 3 journalists and a photographer to visit Morocco to view and document the overseas artists invited to participate in the event. This visit did, however, help us deliver a revamped and much more attractive and accessible *Souvenir Brochure* than in previous years.

The attractiveness of this publication was due to the selection and commissioning of a new graphic designer, as part of their brief to give the organisation's *corporate image* a face-lift that our new workers felt was much needed.

The visit also made possible the production, for the first time ever, of a *Compact Disc* featuring the actual overseas groups participating in the event. We were very pleased that we were able to break even financially on this exercise, which was thought to have enhanced the stature and profile of the event in the eyes of both the general public and of others involved in non-European cultural promotion in London. The recordings made on the visit for the CD were also used in condensed form for the much – expanded, and very well received *Teachers Pack*.

We aim, given the proposed area of focus for the 1995 Music Village – Pakistan – to place greater emphasis this year on ensuring the activity engagement in the project of members of London's Pakistani communities.

We also seek to link up with other, existing, arts organisations/promoters in order to maximise the profile of the event and enhance possibilities for synergy between the activities of our project and theirs.

Berlin

The 1994 Music Village was the 4th consecutive presentation of this festival at the Haus Der Kulturen Der Welt in Berlin and the best attended so far. The Haus decided to move the main Festival site from its northern riverside gardens to its southern lawn frontage. We were opposed to this move initially because we felt the original location was much more intimate and beautiful, while the new side was rather bland and exposed, with no definite feeling of location.

We were eventually persuaded of the Haus' main argument for this move, which were mainly to do with providing a large area to accommodate the increasing public following for the event. Some unusual architectural features – the Haus's "Pregnant Oyster" building, a large Henry Moore sculpture, a futuristic Bell Tower, a stage built back onto the ponds within the lawn frontage and back by fountains – provided a mix of interesting and contracting backdrops for the main outdoor public presentations.

Oppressively hot weather throughout the Berlin week led to very small audiences at some times of day and huge crowds at other. The Haus had involved a much larger number of stall-holders this time and this provided a popular attraction for the public. The boat trips were as successful as in previous years and some experimental programming with children's workshops proved both popular and effective.

The Haus were generally well pleased with the largest aggregate attendance for a Berlin presentation of the Music Village so far, but are keen for us to increase significantly on the number of crafts people so as to present a more holistic cultural presentation next time.

Frankfurt

As with the Music Village performance in Dresden last year, we agreed with the Haus to accept some additional dates in Germany at the tail end of the tour in order to reduce our deficit on the tour. We spent three nights in Frankfurt, one day to travel there, one day to rest and one to give a full day of performance for the press, invited guests and the general public. The public performance given in one of the oldest and most beautiful parts of the city attracted an enormous audience and parts of the events were broadcast live on the national TV. The press performances also facilitated coverage in three national daily papers.

Art in Bangladesh: Five Decades

TINA AHMED

The modern artistic tradition in Bangladesh began with the establishment of the Art Institute in 1948 in Dhaka by Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin and four of his colleagues. The Institute represented the zeal of independence the artists shared, marking the beginning of a distinct expressive style which would distinguish them from the artists in the subcontinent.

This first generation of artists were trained in the Calcutta Art School where they rigorously trained in the European academic styles. In 1947 when the country gained independence they found themselves moving away from previous academic bindings and nearer to the discovery of their own identity. Folk motifs combined with popular and realistic forms produced the beginnings of a distinct style that this group and the generations preceding them would be well known for.

Amongst these five pioneers of the Art movement in Bangladesh, Zainul Abedin (1914-1976) "Shilpacharya" or "great master of the arts" as his admirers called him was the best known. He was the founder of the present Institute in Dhaka and later its Principal. He came to eminence as one of the prolific painters of the subcontinent with his unforgettable sketches of the 1943 Bengal famine, where his bold strokes embellished the pathos and sensitivity he felt towards his suffering Bengal. He travelled widely and met great artists such as Picasso and Riviera. His art evokes a strong synthesis of local tradition with modern international techniques. His work is summed up in the words of art critic Eric Newton: "Here one can see the combination, which one had thought almost impossible, of Orient and Occident.... He (Zainul Abedin) is capable of observing and contemplating at the same time and the tempo of the brush that never hesitates yet is never flustered, is exactly right for his purpose. It is as though the Oriental hand, holding the brush in the traditional Oriental way, and using nothing but fluent black ink and water on absorbent paper, had been guided by a European eye." Abedin went through several phases of artistic tradition, always inspired however by the land and people that he loved. From sensitive realistic water-colours of 1951 (*Harrowing* and the *Rebel Cow*) or romantic gouaches or oils in stylised figures of village maidens (1953) to the return of brush drawings with black ink of 1970 (Nabanna and Manpura – 70). However there was always that strong link with the common people from whom he himself had come – and his faithful depiction of their lives and struggles – endeared him to them and the generations to come.

QAMRUL HASAN (Born 1915), an ardent protagonist of Bengali revivalism, was born and trained in Calcutta. His work evoked the romantic idealism inspired by the elements of local folklore and the rich landscape of his land. In 1985 he became internationally well known as his painting *Three daughters* was used on a postage stamp printed by the Yugoslav government. Later he resorted to a more abstract form of expression through his vibrant woodcuts and gouaches.

S M SULTAN (1923-1994) was trained in the Calcutta school like his colleagues, and his work is reminiscent of the Kalighat paintings: simplistic in concept yet complex in style. His pastoral utopias deal with the farmer and his toil. The human physiognomy is emphasised boldly against a stylised pastoral setting. His recent death brought him further immortality amongst his people, and his large canvases in oil are collectors' treasures.

ANWARUL HAQ was a founder teacher of the Institute of Fine Arts. He followed European tradition in his rich portraits and figurative pictures.

The Second Generation

The second generation of artists are mostly students of the first generation trained at the Fine Art Institute in Dhaka. Unlike their mentors who were intent on Bengali revivalism, they came under the influence of Euro academic norms as they travelled to Europe and Japan absorbing Western modernism. The emphasis changed from "Art of life" to "Life of Art". This reaction manifested itself strongly in their works creating a significant group who had the talent to merge East and West in their art. As a result realism faded into the background and abstract expressions became the preferred mode.

Foremost among this significant group of talented artists are the following.

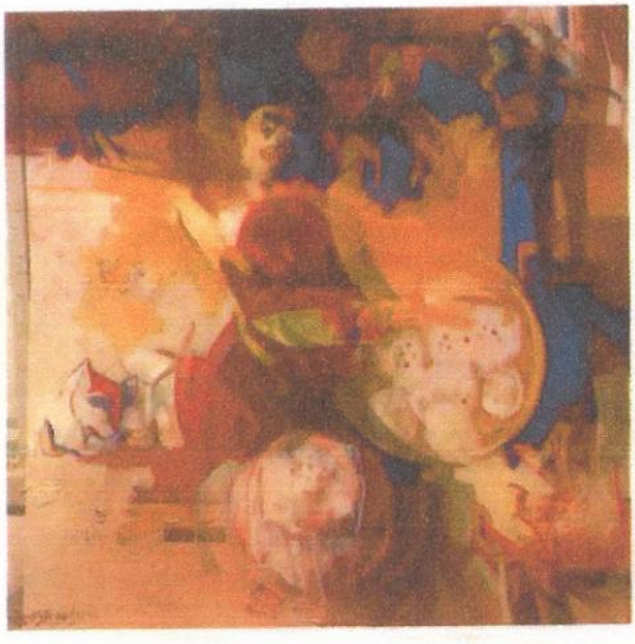
MOHAMMED KIBRIA (born 1932) was trained in Calcutta but belongs to the second generation of artists. He is known as an artist who laid emphasis on materials and the identification of materials as the only expressive element in painting. His use of non-representative forms revolutionised and laid the base for many of the contemporary artists in Bangladesh today. Kibria's stint in Japan in the 1960's helped his specialisation in graphics which he utilises with utmost spontaneity and ease. Presently he is Professor, Department of Graphic Arts, Bangladesh College of Arts and Crafts, Dhaka.

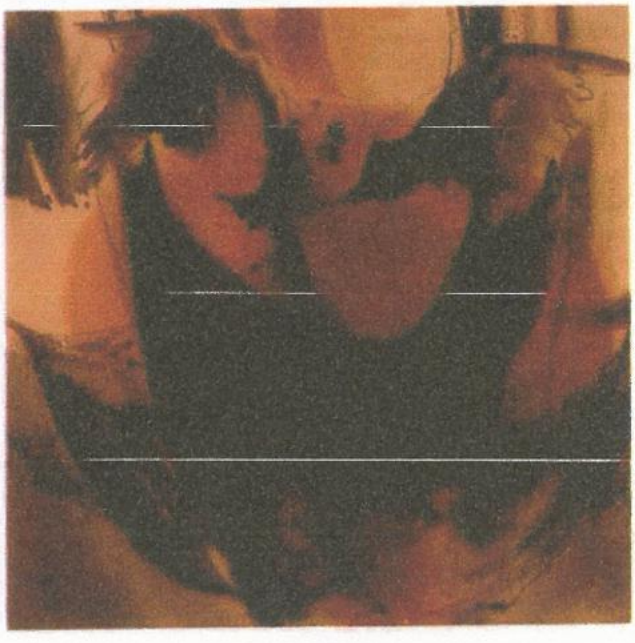
RAFIQUN NABI (born 1943) is the present principal of National Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka. He made his debut in the sixties. In 1973 he trained in Athens School of Fine Art, Greece. He has exhibited in over 50 national and international exhibitions. His work is versatile with a deep fidelity to the reality of life.

inspite of abstract rendition. Notable works include his large woodcuts – which represent this successful merging of media with theme – a confirmation of the artist's fine sense of balance and proportion.

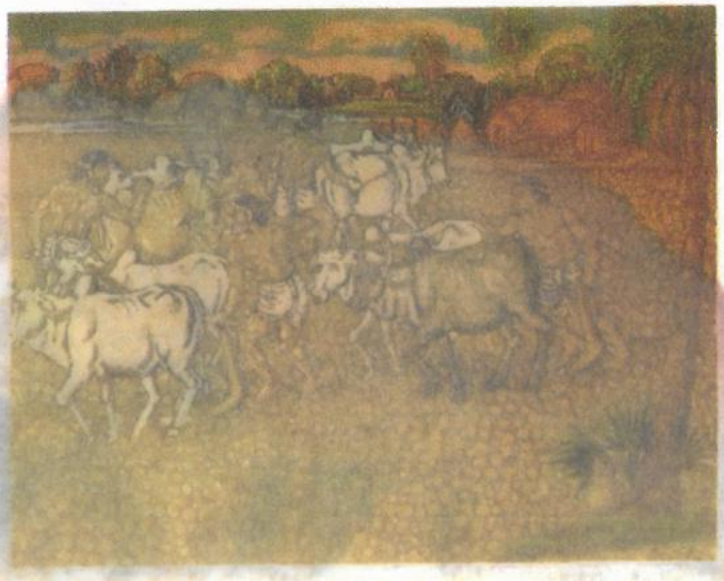
HASHEM KHAN (born 1941) has over 25 national and group exhibitions to his credit. He is probably the country's finest illustrator today. Presently he heads the Department of Oriental Arts, Institute of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka. Hashem Khan is a humanist who depicts human suffering and social problems in an expressive and contemporary rendition. He sums up his work in the following words "There are many aspects and elements to a painting –







Top: Rafiqun Nabi, *The Kingfisher*. Woodcut. Above: Qayyum Chowdhry, *My Village*. Oil on canvas. Above, right: Farida Zaman, *Bird-net*. Oil on canvas. Right: S M Sultan, *Village of Bengal*. Oil on canvas. Opposite page: Khalidas Karmakar, *Image*. Mixed media



but above all there is a message. My message is apparent. I want to express my feelings from the life I live - its joys, sorrows, pain and laughter..." His subjects range from birds to rickshaws, all of which are portrayed in an effective satirical manner but with a totally new dimension.

MURTUZA BASHEER (born 1933) is one of the country's foremost painters. He is extremely versatile as he is a successful playwright and writer as well. In 1956 he studied in Florence



and 1971 saw him in Paris. Basheer was considered an important figurative painter of the country. But a radical change brought the artist into a more simplified and abstract form of expression. He is still experimenting and his inexhaustible creative ability will give us greater insight into the artist's brilliant mind.

KAZI ABDUL BASET (born 1935) is presently the Head of the Department of Drawing and Painting in the Bangladesh College of Arts and Crafts, Dhaka. A Fulbright scholar, Abdul Baset has over 20 exhibitions to his credit. His earlier works were representations of rural Bangladesh but after his stint at the Art Institutes in Chicago in 1963 we find a leaning towards abstract expressionism. He works with straightforward horizontal forms and minimal colours. He is romantic in theme which shows in the rhythmic flow of the brush as his colours get better.

ABDUR RAZZAQUE (born 1932), is a well known graphics and three dimensional artist. He was awarded a Fulbright scholarship at the State University of Iowa in 1955 to specialise in print-making. He made his debut there as he participated in major graphic exhibitions. In 1964 he began the new Department of Modelling and Sculpture in the National Institute. Like his contemporaries, he also began with figurative art, showing extreme dexterity in drawing. As he experimented we find his trend towards abstraction, with increasing emphasis on purity of line and form.

QAYYUM CHOWDHURY (born 1934) is a multifaceted artist, and received the prestigious "Ekushe Padak" (highest civilian national award in the field of culture) in 1984. He graduated from the Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University in 1954. He has participated internationally in over 30 group exhibitions in India, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, UK, USA, China, Germany, Japan, Hong Kong and Malaysia. He has had three solo exhibitions in Bangladesh and USA. Nationally he has participated in the Asian Art Biennials of 1981, 83, 86, 89, 91 and 93. He won first prize and Gold Medal at the National Book Centre consecutively from 1964 to 1983. He was also awarded the Grand Imperial award at the Tehran Triennial in 1966. Qayyum Chowdhury's work, like his predecessers, derives inspiration from folk art motifs. These are rejuvenated by mature stylization. His canvases are rich in colour and form reflecting nostalgia and empathy in the mind and heart of the viewer. Presently he is Professor at the Department of Graphic Design, Institute of Fine arts, Dhaka University.

Establishment of Shilpakala Academy

The seventies saw the establishment of the Bangladeshi Shilpakala Academy (National Academy of Arts), and the first contemporary art exhibition was held here on Dec 16, 1974. This paved the way for a solid structured vehicle for the art movement in the country. Besides holding exhibitions of national and international calibre the Academy also organises seminars and symposiums on fine art, music, dance and drama, research and publications. There are five independent Departments, with a Director General at the head of the Academy. It is also responsible for organising visits and exhibitions of Bangladeshi artists and their work abroad.

The Academy has so far arranged 11 contemporary art exhibitions (the 11th, held in 1995, being the most significant) and the young artists' exhibition. There has been an exhibition arranged every year since its establishment in 1974. In 1981 it organised the 1st Asian Biennial in which artists from over 15 Asian, African and Pacific countries participated and competed for awards. Amongst these many Bangladeshis received generous acclaim for their work from international juries. As the Director of the Fine Arts Department, Subir Chowdhury put it, "The Shilpakala is now well on its way to organising the next Asian Biennial later in November this year. Over 25 countries are expected to participate, perhaps making it the most spectacular so far.

In the 20 years since its foundation the Academy has hosted at least 50 solo exhibitions representing renowned artists such as Zainul Abedin and Qamrul Hasan. It also acts, as Subir Chowdhury emphasised, as the mother recipient for all the graduates of five different Art Colleges all over the country – all one family." Their work is welcomed and propagated. Amateur artists are also encouraged. He cites the example of Rasha, a sculptor who won a coveted prize at the Biennial, but has no academic background at all. "We recognise talent."

The 11th National Exhibition was inaguarated on the 6 January 1995 - More than 1000 works were received from 365 artists, out of which the jury selected 227 works by 183 artists, including 12 invited artists. This was the first time work was selected on the basis of slides and photographs, a step closer to international standards of judging. The jury consisted of a formidable team of well known artist and teachers including Mohammed Kibria, Aminul Islam, Murtaza Basheer, Qayyum Chowdhury, and Abdur Razzaque. The selection committee comprised Rafiqun Nabi, Nitin Kundu, Hashem Khan, Kazi Abdul Basit, and Abdul Khaleque.

The winners were as follows:
Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Award: Mansoorul Karim.

Arab Bangladesh Bank Award: Mohammed Yunus.

Pacific Group Gold Medal Award: Jamal Ahmed.

Honorable mentions: Sheikh Afzal, Abdus Sattar and Mohammed Iqbal.

Mr Mobarak Hussain Khan, Director General of the Academy affirmed: "This exhibition is an assimilation of experiences and experiments of artists of five decades, and I am confident will be highly appreciated by art lovers."

Amongst the significant artists of the last two decades, perhaps the best known are the following.

SHAHABUDDIN AHMED (born 1950) joined the liberation movement in 1971 which remains a great source of inspiration to him. He has participated in over 20 exhibitions, both at home and abroad, and has been the recipient of the Prime Minister's Gold Medal, and various other prizes from French organisations including Sorbonne in France, where he has been residing for the last two decades. His work which is always figurative is a powerful record of his love for his people, reminiscent of the great master Zainul Abedin. Powerful brush strokes for the figures and rather sensitive treatment of large spaces kept around the figures characterise

his large canvases. His work has been declared 'national treasures' by the French government – a fact which Bangladesh is very proud of.

KHALIDAS KARMAKER (born 1946) completed his art education in Calcutta, India. He was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in graphic art from the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts. He has over 12 solo exhibitions and numerous group exhibitions to his credit and has been awarded various prizes. Presently he lives in Japan where he is involved in advanced print making techniques. Khalidas' work is technologically mature and his technique with the use of metals in different compositions belies a love for philosophy. His subject matter may be allegorical at times, but mostly deals with his interpretation of various conflicts and contradictions.

ABDUS SATTAR (born 1948) is one of the established contemporary painters. He has had over seven solo exhibitions and participated in many international shows. He is the recipient of the Gold Medal at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy exhibition in 1980, and at the first Asian Biennial in 1987 held in Dhaka. His work shows variation as he was initially influenced by Moghul decorative style for which he became well known. Later he took up printmaking, his woodcuts specifically capturing the texture and nature of the element on the print. His images are objective, his colours pure and unmixed. At the 11th national exhibition, he received Honourable Mention for his work.

MONIRUL ISLAM (born 1943) Studied in Bangladesh and taught at the Institute. In 1967 he was given a scholarship by the Spanish Ministry of Cultural Affairs. In Madrid, Spanish circles provided adequate stimulus for the young artist, and he turned to graphic print making. His series of prints entitled "Homage to Bangladesh", executed in 1971, generated considerable interest. In 1973 he began his own workshop exhibiting and learning more about his medium. He is now internationally well-known having won various awards. His subjects are abstract yet lyrical and rhythmic which, combined with his advanced technique in colour and texture, provide the viewer with complete harmony. He lives and works in Spain but often returns to his homeland to exhibit there.

HAMIDUZZAMAN KHAN (1946) is one of the few noted sculptors of the country. He has been appreciated by art connoisseurs and public alike. In 1969 Hamiduzzaman was influenced by African art (masks and totem poles) and he became interested in three dimensional art and sculpture. His observation of ancient sculpture helped him realise the unlimited possibilities of this medium. In 1974 he took a sculpture course in India mastering the technique of metal casting. Shortly after his return to Bangladesh he won an award as Best Sculptor. In 1982 he went to New York's Sculpture Center School – and acquired new techniques in metal casting. His work reflects pathos and feeling. He has definitely revolutionised sculpture and introduced environmental sculpture to the country. His spectacular work enriches the city of Dhaka. At present he is teaching at the Department of Fine Arts in Dhaka University.

MANSOORUL KARIM (1950) is the winner of the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Award, and emerged as a significant artist in the 1970's. He remained a regular practising artist and after a gradual period of surrealist and abstract expressionist styles, he developed a style which is uniquely his own. He has won various awards – at the National Exhibitions and at international levels at the Asian Biennial (Dhaka) and the Triennial at New Delhi. Presently he is working as Associate Professor, Department of Fine Arts, Chittagong University.

Women Artists

Women artists constitute at least 15 per cent of the Bangladesh art population, and are notable in their contributions towards its development. Well known amongst these are Farida Zaman (1953) famous for her consistent folk art motifs. Her *Bird and Net* and *Fish and Net* series are highly evocative leading the viewer to analyse and empathise with her feelings.

Others like Naima Haq (1953) and Nadee Laila Mansur (1952) like their contemporaries preferred figurative and semi- figurative forms – again relating to tradition and their relationships to popular realistic motifs.

More recently, however, painters like Nilofer Chaman (1962) belong to the decade's individualistic artists. There is a notable accent on the comic, the grotesque and the absurd yet with marked feeling and technical maturity. Her *Violent Gods in a Peaceful World* displayed at the 11th National Exhibition this year, evokes a pleasing sense of parody and satire, which is seen in all her work.

Sculpture in Bangladesh owes its origin to Nouvera Ahmed who created a sensation by her first solo exhibition of Cubistic Sculpture in marble in the early sixties. Shamim Sikdar (1952) is perhaps the most productive and original sculptor of Bangladesh today. She has kept the art thriving inspite of the tremendous limitations and costs of the medium. Shamim, who has studied both at home and abroad is the recipient of a number of prizes including the Prime Minister's Award for Sculpture (1973) and the Silver Jubilee Award, also in 1973. Presently she is lecturing in Sculpture and Modelling at the College of Arts and Crafts, Dhaka.

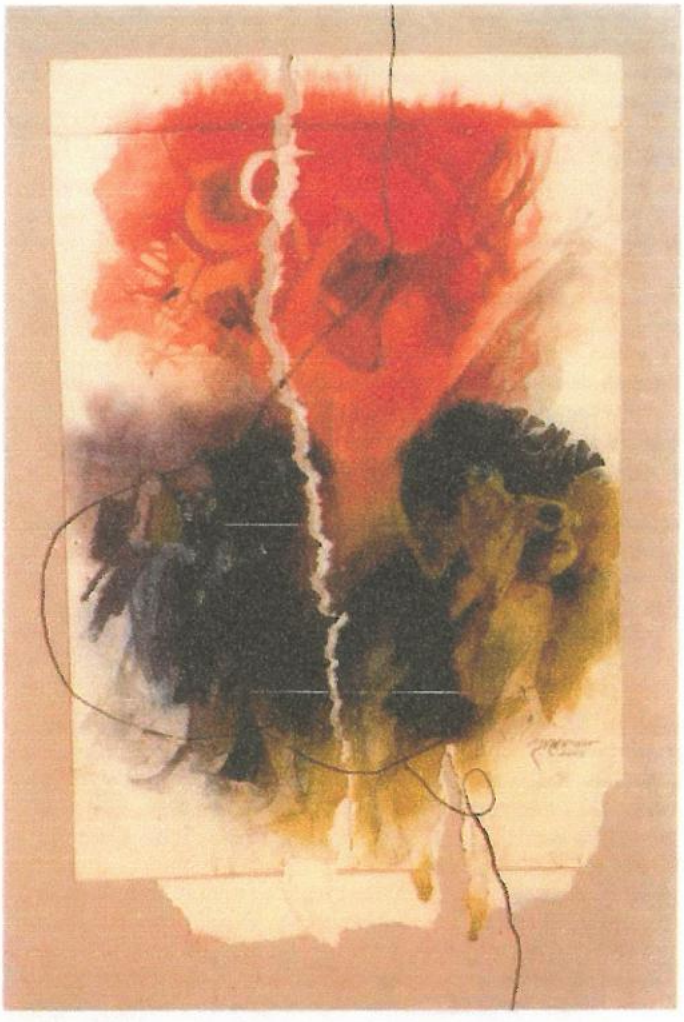
Diversity of Styles and Themes

Since the 1950's every decade has shown modified changes in trend. The giants of the 50's, Zainul Abedin and Qamrul Hasan, under the influence of Bengali Revivalists made consistent efforts to develop a style that would be a blend between nationalism and modernistic trends. Their students of the 60's, many of whom had studied in Western institutions, had absorbed Western modernism in a mature fashion. They were able to merge East and West in their art. The awareness of tradition and strong political motivation makes up the Bengali character. As a result, international exposure enhanced rather than suppressed the powerful artists who emerged with new national vigour in their art and convictions. This was particularly apparent in the 70's after liberation when new socio-political dialects showed up in their work. As art critic L S Manzoorul Islam put it: "There was also a search for roots in myth and history which became important themes and metaphors. Some explored the world of their experiences with self-conscious detachment. All this culminated in a sense of over exhaustion and a new phase of creativity was inevitable."

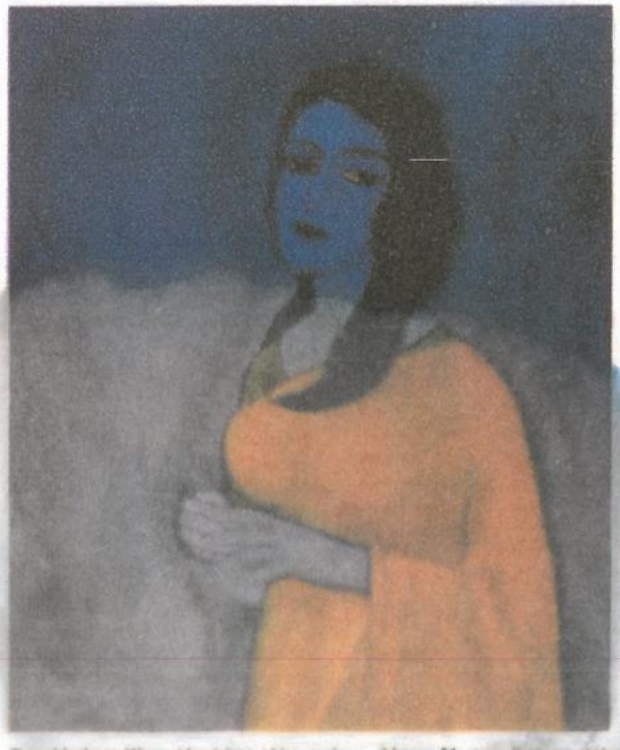
The 80's saw young painters who

questioned what they thought to be over simplification and repetitive. There was also a reaction against symbolism and dead metaphors. The result was an extremely individualistic art which made colours for example neutral agents for composition – not 'loaded symbols'. Figurative and semi-figurative forms dominated the canvas in neo-surrealistic and post modern experiences. The results, however, are often whimsical efforts of assorted parody, though strong in their messages and mature in handling."

In the words of art critic Sadek Khan, "A tide of creativity appears to have stirred the artist community of Bangladesh deeply, the same way as the tide of folk cults of joy brought out unprecedented flourish of Bengali literature in the Middle Ages". Bangladesh and our artists are holding their own. With this optimistic note, we look forward to Bangladesh's participation in the forth-coming Sharjah Biennial in the United Arab Emirates. This should be a significant step towards greater mutual understanding and appreciation between the artists of Bangladesh and those in the Islamic world.







Top: Hashem Khan, *Nur Jehan*. Watercolour. **Above: Murtaza Basheer**, Woman. Oil on canvas. Left: Shamim Shikdar, *Baul*. Wood. **Opposite page: Mansural Karim**, Signs. Oil on



The Islamic Art Market During 1994

PATRICIA JELLICOE

London continues to hold its position as the principal centre of the Islamic art market, which has grown since interest in it first developed around the 1960's. Sales during 1994 at Sotheby's and Christie's were well over £10 million. Bonhams, a new entrant to the Islamic market, enjoyed much reclame last year with the sale of a Mughal jade pendant for £210,000.

The Islamic Art market held up remarkably well during 1994 – a year marked by business depression in Europe and America and by the devaluation of its currency in Turkey. The difficulty for all auction houses in any field of the art market is to find objects of quality (Rumour has it for instance that the older homes in Beirut have by now divested themselves of their Islamic heritage in order to buy "Louis XV furniture"!).

Miniature paintings and Calligraphy command high prices if of the highest quality, as in all cases of the most rare, depending upon the interest – and bid! – of a few rich collectors. Again, only the finest, or more unusual, Ceramics sell well. Furniture, which was very high several years ago, is now of less interest with large cupboards and such pieces unwanted. (Sotheby's Ottoman group in the April Sales were an exception, probably because of their possible background). Fashions change and with them interest in different areas of art – which accountants and the Press do not seem to realise! Interestingly, decorators now seem to be influencing Sales – as witnessed by the extraordinary interest and high prices paid for Sotheby's two sets of Ottoman rooms and for Christie's Andalucian wooden ceiling.

Christie's

Figures for the year 1994 totalled nearly £5 million, which was much the same as for 1993. The latter, however, included £2.4 million for the famed bronze Lion, so 1994 is therefore an improvement on 1993 in overall sales.

In CERAMICS a fine Iznik pottery dish c.1530, estimated between £35-50,000, sold in April for £38,000. It followed a Chinese prototype its interior design including three bunches of grapes, the most popular Chinese element copied at Iznik – in two shades of cobalt blue and turquoise on a white ground, these colours enabling a relatively precise dating for the plate. The reverse had an unusual design of meandering flowering vine.

In CALLIGRAPHY and MANUSCRIPTS a small Near Eastern 10thc QUR'AN section on vellum in very small black Kufic, vowelling in red dots, green, gold and brown marginal medallions, gave parts of Sura ii-iii and vi-x, and was sold in October for £18,000, (Estimate £22-28,000).

In April a fine 18/19thc Ottoman silk and silver thread brocaded Calligraphic Panel on a black silk ground and pistachio-green spandrels, estimated at £25-35,000, was sold for £34,000. These wall hangings made in Egypt from the Mamluk period until 1961 for the Ka'aba in Makkah's great Mosque, have traditionally been changed annually to be cut up and distributed as relics. This piece is from the lower half of the wall hanging, which is bound half way up with a band of embroidered Qur'anic texts (Hizam).

Also sold in April was a Calligraphic Panel painted in gouache on a buff card comprising a Persian couplet by Sa'di interspersed with others similar, the main couplet in large black nasta'liq, closely drawn flowers filling the interior of the letters. Signed by Isma'il Jalayir (c.1860) and estimated between £12-16,000, it sold for £23,000.

A 38.1/2 x 19.1/2 inch OIL PAINTING on canvas of the second half of the 18thc and possibly of Lutf 'Ali Khan Zand – as it is very close to a 1945 engraving of him originally published as the frontispiece for Herford Jones' records of his time as British Envoy to Persia – sold in April for £15,000 (Estimate £20-30,000).

In October two Shahnameh illustrations – Miniature paintings of 9 x 5 in. each, in gouache heightened with gold – estimated at £3-5,000 were sold for £8,000. From Bokhara AH 970/1562-3 AD, one depicted the accession of King Luhrasp, while the other showed the killing of a King's brother suspected of treachery. Its lintel was inscribed in elegant black nasta'liq "the library of the great King Abu'l-Ghazi' Abdullah Khan Bahadur", and dated 970. (The Uzbek, 'Abdullah Khan, was the greatest of the Shaybani rulers of Bukhara and reigned from 1557 to 1598 AD).

In METALWORK a fine, unusually large (32.3 cm diameter), Mamluk silver inlaid brass bowl, estimated at £35-45,000, was sold in April for £27,000. The exterior has a broad band of silver inlaid scrolling leafy vine around a Thuluth honorific inscription to an amir of the Sultan al-Malik al-Nasir Muhammad. The piece itself was in an exceptional state of preservation with most of the engraving on the silver inlay still sharp.

In April also, a Mamluk ALABASTER fountain head, estimated at £25-30,000, was sold for £25,000. The best known form of Mamluk fountain head is executed in marble; this of alabaster is carved from a single block and difficult to parallel in its strength. A comparison with the carved roundels flanking the entrance to the tomb Madrasa of Sultan Hasan date this fountain head to c.1350 AD.

In October, a superb dark green glass stem cup of Persian origin, transitional between the Sassanian

and early Islamic periods, its exterior carved to form a hexagonal honeycomb lattice, was sold for £8,500, (Estimate £10-15,000).

An Andalucian vaulted octagonal WOODEN CEILING, c.14thc of complex geometrical designs, some remaining painted panels, and a Naskh inscription in gold on a blue ground, (too damaged to be decipherable), was sold in April for £190,000 (The estimate was "on request").

In October's Carpet Sales a very rare large (14 x 5 ft. 9in) Safavid silk and metal thread POLONAISE CARPET estimated between £300-400,000 was sold for £380,000. Its silver thread field with palmettes and leaves around open golden-thread cusped lozenge medallions contained palmettes, medallions and rosettes in shades of light blue, apricot and lemon-yellow with a rare decorative border base of raspberry red. A red border has been found only on 5 others among the approximately 30 remaining of these very large Polonaise carpets. Some 300 of the more usual 6 x 4 ft. Polonaise carpets have survived, many still among the recipients of Shah Abbas the Great's gifts – the Danish Royal family, Venice, Austria due to the Hapsburgs, the Czartoryskis in Poland, and Liechtenstein among others – as well as 2 at the great shrine of the Imam 'Ali at Najaf.

A gasp of incredulity was heard at the October Islamic Week Sales when a LACQUER BOOK BINDING, estimated at £2-3,000, was sold for £25,000! Of the first half of the 16thc and catalogued as Persian (though one thought it Ottoman), it was in very good condition. The Catalogue description read: "On a black background finely painted with gold scrolling vine and cloudbands around the gold stamped cusped arabesque medallion, pendants and sprandrels, black border with sayings of the Prophet regarding his son-in-law 'Ali in gold Naskh, maroon morocco doublures with very fine gold and blue decoupe medallion, pendants and spandrels, gold and maroon rectangular cartouche border."

Bonhams

Bonhams, who entered the Islamic market late, latterly enjoyed much reclame last year with the sale of a MUGHUL ALBUM PAGE connected with the Sackville West family, for £210,000.

collection is a rare Mughal manuscript, dated 1599 AD *Hadiqat al-Haqiqat* (Gardens of Truth), from the court of the Emperor Akbar. The calligrapher is the famed 'Anbarin Qalam and the miniatures probably by Jaganath, though possibly also some by Bisn Das and Nar Singh. The expectation is for well over £100,000.

Sotheby's

Sotheby's total for the year 1994 reached £5.5 million. The figures given here for Sales include premiums.

Among CERAMICS, a Persian Kashan lustre bowl of the early 13thc, estimated between £12-15,000, sold for £41,100. From a group of 7 pieces of Persian pottery discovered in Central Asia, this bowl appeared to be flawless apart from a hairline crack, and its subject – a vividly drawn camel and his bearded driver – appear to be unique and without parallel in other Kashan pieces of this period.

Another Kashan lustre bowl of the same provenance and period, and a typical example of the "Kashan" lustre ware style, depicted 2 long-haired, crowned figures and on the outside, a comma-like motif decoration. Estimated between £8-12,000, it sold for £25,300. Another Kashan lustre bowl of the same provenance and period, with two crowned gesticulating figures and on the outside, spiky circles and dots, sold for £31,050. (Estimate £8-12,000) Also from the same provenance and period, a Kashan lustre pottery cockerel-head ewer, decorated overall with male and female figures, coiled and spitting serpents, two Naskhi inscriptions, a large concentric-ringed eye, its handle missing, estimated between £5-7,000, sold for £17,250.

An elegantly under-stated Ottoman blue and white pottery dish c.1575 AD of Saz leaves around a central flower medallion in shades of underglaze blue sold for £10,350 (Estimate £10-12,000). This unique dish belongs to a group classified as "the Iznik sheaf" style of Iznik pottery, though may have been produced at Kutahya and possibly from a particular potter and atelier.

Among METALS, a classic Khorasan type of bronze incense burner in the form of a lion, tail and ears up and tongue protruding, of the 12-13thc from Persia, estimated between £25-30,000, was sold for £23,000.

A Persian 12/13thc silver-inlaid bronze pen-box with decorative silver inlaid medallions at either end, its hinges and frontal clasp each with an openwork palmette-shaped terminal, and two bands of very attractive and legible Kufic inscriptions, was estimated between £14-16,000 and sold for £29,900. Again, a Persian 12/13thc silver-inlaid bronze footed bowl, its decoration of an enthroned king, interlacing foliage, and bands of Naskhi with human head uprights, was estimated between £20-30,000 but sold for £34,500.

An 18thc Ottoman Turkish gun, its muzzle a stylised tiger head, and the wooden stock inlaid with bands of ivory set with green silver wire-banded Cintamani and mother-of-pearl scrolls and cartouches, the latter with coral and turquoise-set parcel-gilt silver overlaid decoration, was sold for £23,000 (Estimated £20-25,000).

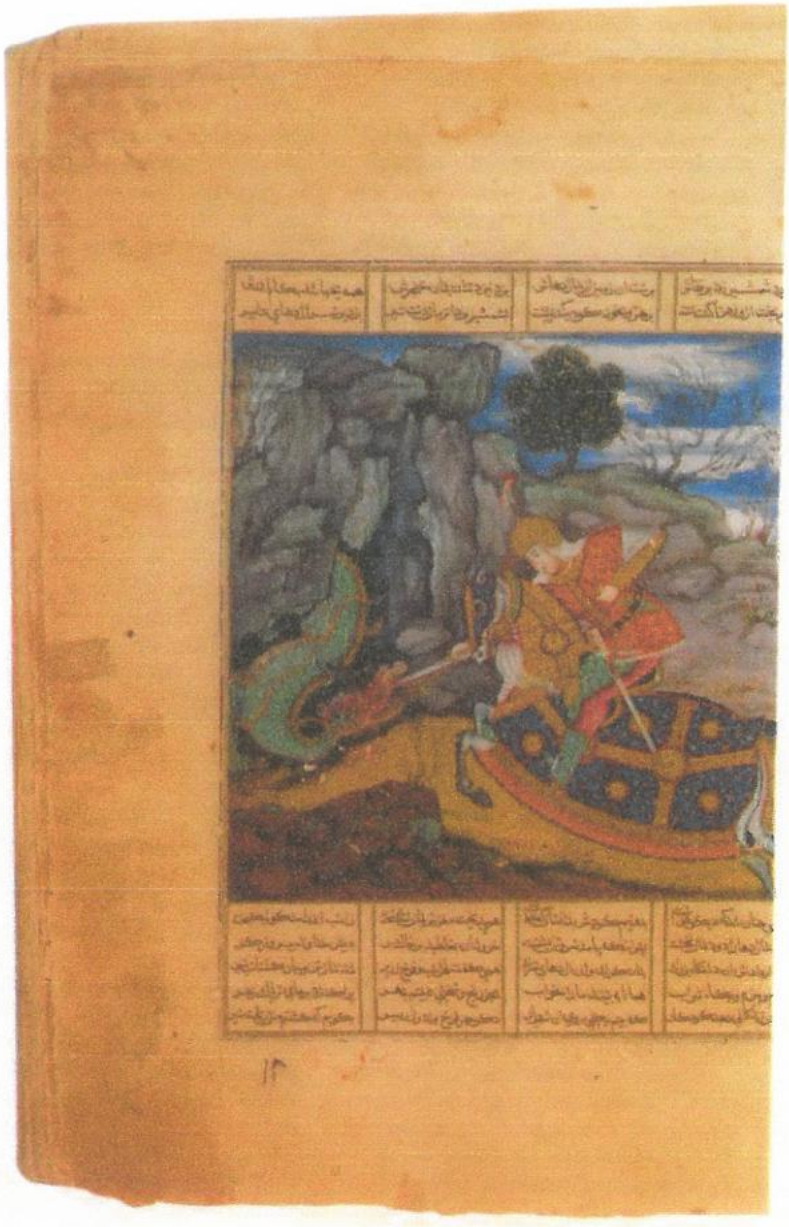
MOROCCAN JEWELLERY sold very well: a pair of gem-set gold earrings with emeralds, rubies and pearls, c 17thc, sold for £14,950 (Estimate £7-9,000) A 17/18thc gem-set enamelled gold fibulae and chain, set with emeralds and enamelled in blue, green and white, sold for £27,600 (Estimate £10-12,000) Early Moroccan jewellery is rare and marked by the use of emeralds. From Syria or Egypt, a Fatimid gold bracelet c 11thc estimated £8-10,000 sold for £13,800.

Illustrating once again, the influence of provenance, the sale of a set of Ottoman 19thc FURNITURE – 2 gilt wood sofas, 2 armchairs and 6 drawing room chairs – estimated £21-30,000, sold for £62,000! The scale and opulence of this furniture – and possibly the coat of arms of the House of Osman, would suggest that it was intended for a palatial setting and it seems most likely that the suite may have been made for Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) who moved from Dolmahce to Yildiz Sarai in 1877.

In October a MAMLUK GLASS EWER from Egypt or Syria c 14thc was sold for £17,250 (Estimate £17-19,000) A band of blue and gold enamelled calligraphy interrupted by three ovoid medallions encircled the shoulder, a similar band the neck, while foliate interlace motifs outlined in rust red were on the shoulder.

Sotheby's Catalogue of 20th October had on its cover a striking

Opposite page, top: *Fine silk and silverthread brocaded calligraphic panel from the Ka'aba* Ottoman, 18th-19th century, comprising *Surah* II v.125, the black silk ground woven with an elegantly drawn overlaid *thuluth* Qur'anic inscription panel with rounded ends, the pistachio-green spandrels woven with tulips and arabesque leaves, in a black border of meandering scrolling trefoil vine, outer plain black stripe. 89 x 631cm. Courtesy Christie's. **Right: Firdausi, *Shahnama (Book of Kings)***, illuminated Persian manuscript on paper with thirty-seven Mughal miniatures. North India, Sultanate, 15th century, and Mughal, c.1580-1585. **Below: *Portrait of a Qajar Prince*** standing in full court costume with a hawk on his raised hand, his black hat decorated with a jewelled aigrette, his coat tied at the waist with a red shawl in which is stuck a dagger, his jewelled sword steadied in his left hand, style of Muhammad Hasan, Qajar, c.1820. Oil on canvas. 191 x 75cm. **Bottom right: *A Silver-Inlaid Bronze Footed Bowl*** with rounded sides standing on a splayed foot, with silver-inlaid decoration comprising ten roundels, alternately depicting an enthroned king and interlacing foliage, flanked by torus borders, a band of naskhi with human headed uprights below the rim, the foot with a similar band of calligraphy against spiralling scrolls. Persia, 12th-13th century. 17.7cms. diameter; 13.8cms. height.

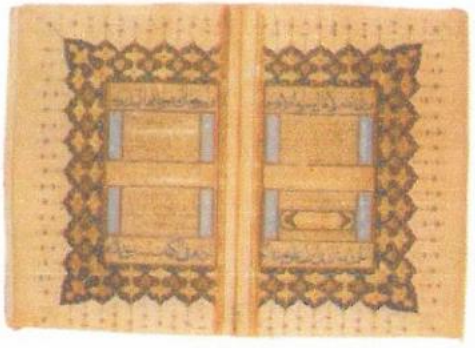


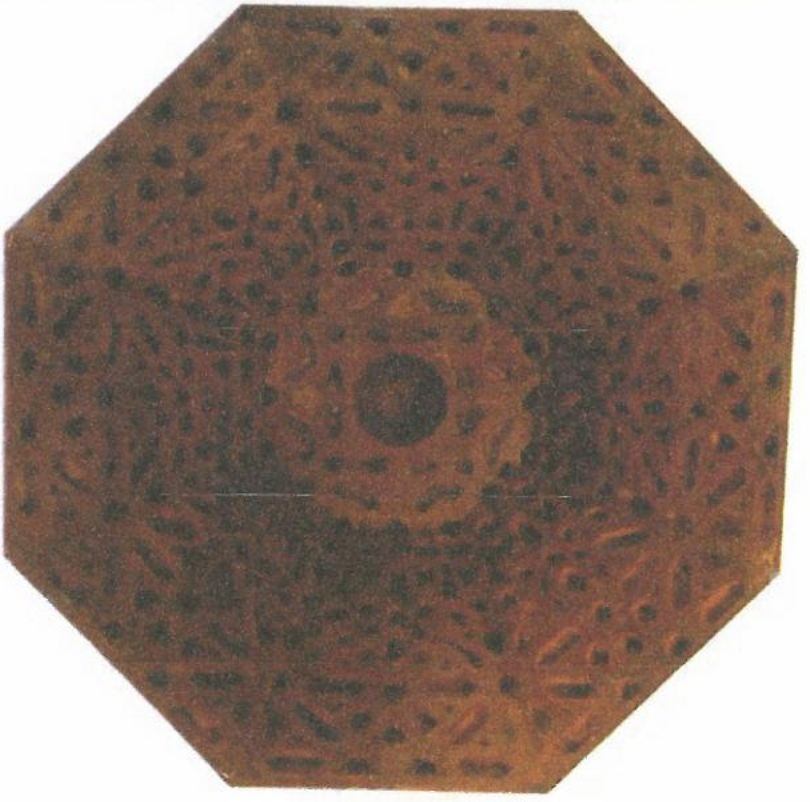






and beautiful Iznik pottery dish from a collection made by a family living in Egypt at a time when Egypt became one of the foremost centres for collecting Islamic art. The dish c 1575 AD is decorated in underglaze blue, viridian green and reliefred





with black outlines, with a breaking wave design on the rim between single and double rings, and at the centre a ring of diagonal pointed leaves and a design of interlocking pointed lobed arabesques reserved on a viridian green ground with a medallion at the centre. On the back six spiral motifs with trefoils between, with the remains of a large brown "etiquette" with the number "4". The central design of this dish ultimately derives from earlier Iznik blue and white prototypes, themselves influenced by Balkan silver designs of Bayezid II's period. Estimated at £25-35,000, this dish sold for £32,200.



Above: ***A large Qur'an***, finely illuminated Arabic manuscript on gold-sprinkled paper, superb contemporary leather binding with gold and filigree decoration, Mughal, late 16th century. Courtesy Sotheby's. **Above right:** *An Andalucian* ***Vaulted Octagonal*** *Wooden Ceiling* rising through eight narrowing quadrilateral panels from the octagonal base to the flat upper octagonal panel, the centre rising further in a twelve-sided cone to a central rosette. Overall width approx. 430cm square total height approx 170cm. Courtesy Christie's. **Right:** *A Fine Iznik Pottery Dish* with cusped sloping rim on short foot, the white interior painted in two shades of cobalt-blue and turquoise with a design of a vine branch with a number of leaves twisting around three turquoise bunches of grapes, the cavetto with well spaced floral sprays, the rim with a stylised wave and rock design, the exterior with a band of meandering flowering vine, circa 1530, 37.4cm diameter. Courtesy Christie's.

Iznik dishes framed with a bold leaf are rare and a dish from the same collection appears to be unique. From the last quarter of the 16thc, it is decorated in underglaze deep cobalt blue, viridian green and relief red with greenish black outlines, the rim with a ring of over-lapping feathery leaves reserved on a blue ground, the centre with an all-encompassing spray of feathery leaves and flowers springing from a leafy tuft, with a rose and a rosebud and other flowers on a curving stem. (The paper "etiquette" on the back is stamped with the number "5"). It was sold for £13,800; (estimate £15-20,000). Another Iznik dish c 1575 AD, estimated £12-15,000, sold for £16,100. In a clean and balanced design in cobalt blue, viridian green and relief red with greyish-black outlines on a white ground, with four roses (2 with broken stems), and two sprays of blue flowers growing from a leafy tuft, a clasp and two leaf shapes below a pendant inverted cusped arch, the back has an old collection label inscribed "Iznik xvi - and. coll J.M... de Caire." Coming from a Brazilian collection, this dish was accompanied by a receipt from Jacques Soustiel, renowned Paris dealer in Islamic art, dated 29th October 1968 stating "un Plat d'Iznik (Turquie) XVIs.

a decor d'oeillets d'Inde et eglantins et motif Seljoukide marli etroit decor geometrique rouge d.O.29,900$
Ancienne collection Jacques O. Matossian du Caire
A remettre a Chenue pour emballage et expedier."

(Chenue, an old-established firm is one of the leading art shippers in Paris). Another Iznik dish c 1575 AD belongs to a well known category of Iznik pottery from this period and is decorated in brilliant cobalt blue, viridian green and relief red with dark grey outlines under a clear glaze with ten pairs of tulips alternating with rosettes on the rim, and at the centre four pointed scalloped medallions with triple sprays of marguerites reserved on a blue ground, with curving floral sprays between springing from a central five-petalled medallion. On the base was a brown paper "etiquette" inscribed in ink "60 1-111 Collection Darses Paris", with a scarlet seal bearing the monogram MD in a square frame. Estimated£15-20,000 this dish sold for £20,700.

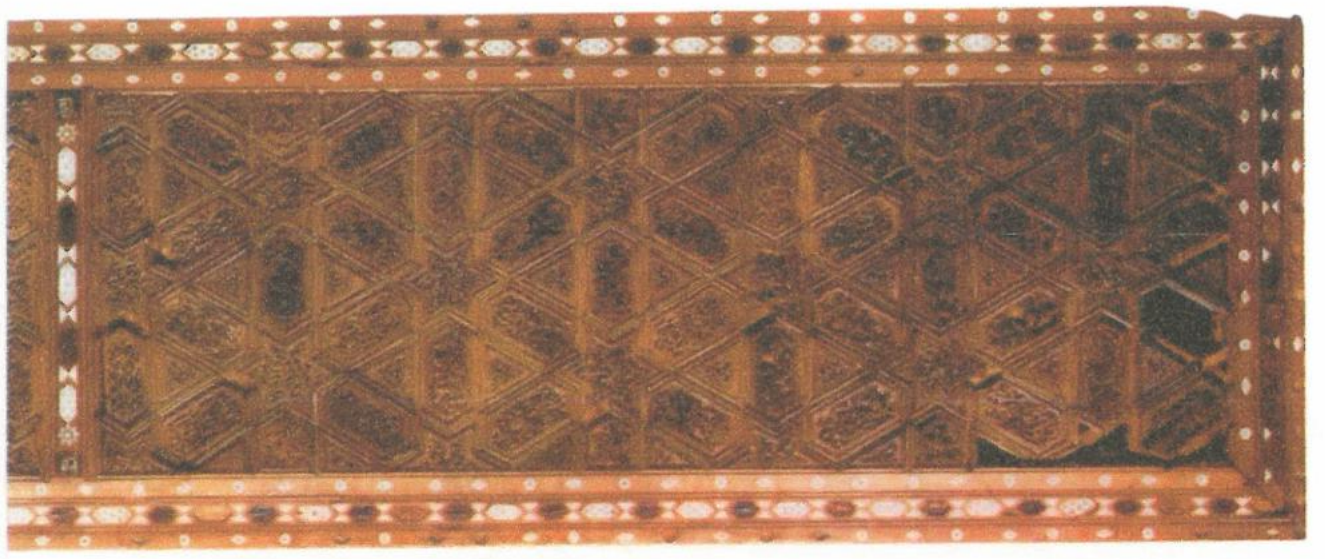
Among MANUSCRIPTS sold in April was a magnificent large Deccani Qur'an of the 16thc. On gold sprinkled paper with 34 fully illuminated double pages and a fine gold and filigree decorated contemporary binding, this Arabic manuscript was copied by the scribe Abd al-Qadir al-Husaini, Deccan, Golconda, c. 1560-1600. This magnificent Qur'an was almost certainly written and illuminated for one of the Qutb Shah sultans of Golconda in the Deccan, either Ibrahim Qutb Shah (reigned 1550-80) or Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah (reigned 1580-1612). The scribe Abd al-Qadir al-Husaini, a native of Shiraz where he was well-known and highly respected, went to work for the Qutb Shahs at Golconda (There are three Qur'ans by him in important collections) The fact that the scribe was known to have worked for the Qutb Shahs, combined with the sheer scale – (The doublure is 437 by 281 mm) – and glamour of the manuscript itself indicate strongly that it was a royal commission. The seal impressions and ownership inscriptions show that the manuscript entered the Mughal Royal Library during the reign of the Emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707), who campaigned in the Deccan for many years, conquering Golconda, then ruled by the Qutb Shahs, in 1687. It is likely that this manuscript – probably then in Qutb Shah's library – would have entered the Mughal Royal Library at this date; the first inscription by a librarian of the Mughal Emperor's library is, however, dated 1703. A sequence of librarians' inscriptions continue until 1736 when the Emperor ordered it to be presented to a war hero (Jang Murtawalibar Bahadur). Although the style of the illumination of the manuscript owes an enormous amount to Persian style of the mid to late 16thc, especially that of Shiraz, there are details which are less typical of Persian work – such as particular colour shades and the degree of detail on flowerheads – but fit in with what is known of Deccani illumination of the late 16thc. The Qur'an sold for £100,500. (Estimated £150-200,000).

A large oil portrait on canvas of a young Qajar Prince, standing in jewelled robe and headdress, with sword and dagger, his hawk perched on his gloved right hand, c 1820, in the style of Muhammad Hasan, estimated at £40-60,000 was sold for £65,000.

In October a large (400 x 272 mm), important late 16thc Mughal Qur'an in a fine contemporary binding estimated at £60-80,000 was sold for £130,000. 7 finely illuminated double pages illustrate the great debt to Safavid Persian illumination of the mid 16thc, but the traits indicating Mughal rather than Persian illumination are again the particular shades of colour used and the degree of detail on flowerheads. Apart from the fine quality of the binding, it is unusual to find such an excellent state ofpreservation – the lapis lazuli used to pick out flower heads is still intact as are the filigree doublures. The particularly fine calligraphy in gold on gold sprinkled paper, the sumptuous illumination and superb contemporary binding would point to a possible royal provenance.

An important illuminated Persian manuscript on paper of Firdausi's Shahnama (Book of Kings) with 37 Mughal miniatures – North India, Sultanate, 15thc, and Mughal c.1580-1585, estimated at £150-200,000, was sold for £190,000. This is the earliest recorded volume of Firdausi's Shahnama with entirely mughal illustrations – many copies of this popular and significant text must have been made yet no other prior to 1600 seems to have survived. From the style of the script and illumination it is clear that the manuscript originally dates from the 15thc. The text contains no colophon and unlike most illustrated texts from the royal Mughal library, this volume bears no seals or notes of transfer on the first page. Nor is there a preface, usual with a Shahnama. The manuscript may have left the royal library at an early date perhaps as a royal gift, hence no seals. The present binding is distinctly 19thc and it may have been at this time that the first leaves were lost. The relatively uncomplex designs and dominant use of blue in the illuminated pages suggest a non-Persian origin which must surely be the Indian sub-continent. Among artists, Miskin contributed the most miniatures, Basawan and Kesu Khurd others.

April's Sale of the British Rail Pension Fund's Indian Miniatures brought £48,000 (Estimate £20-30,000) for a Mughal miniature c 1590 of "The Holy Ghost

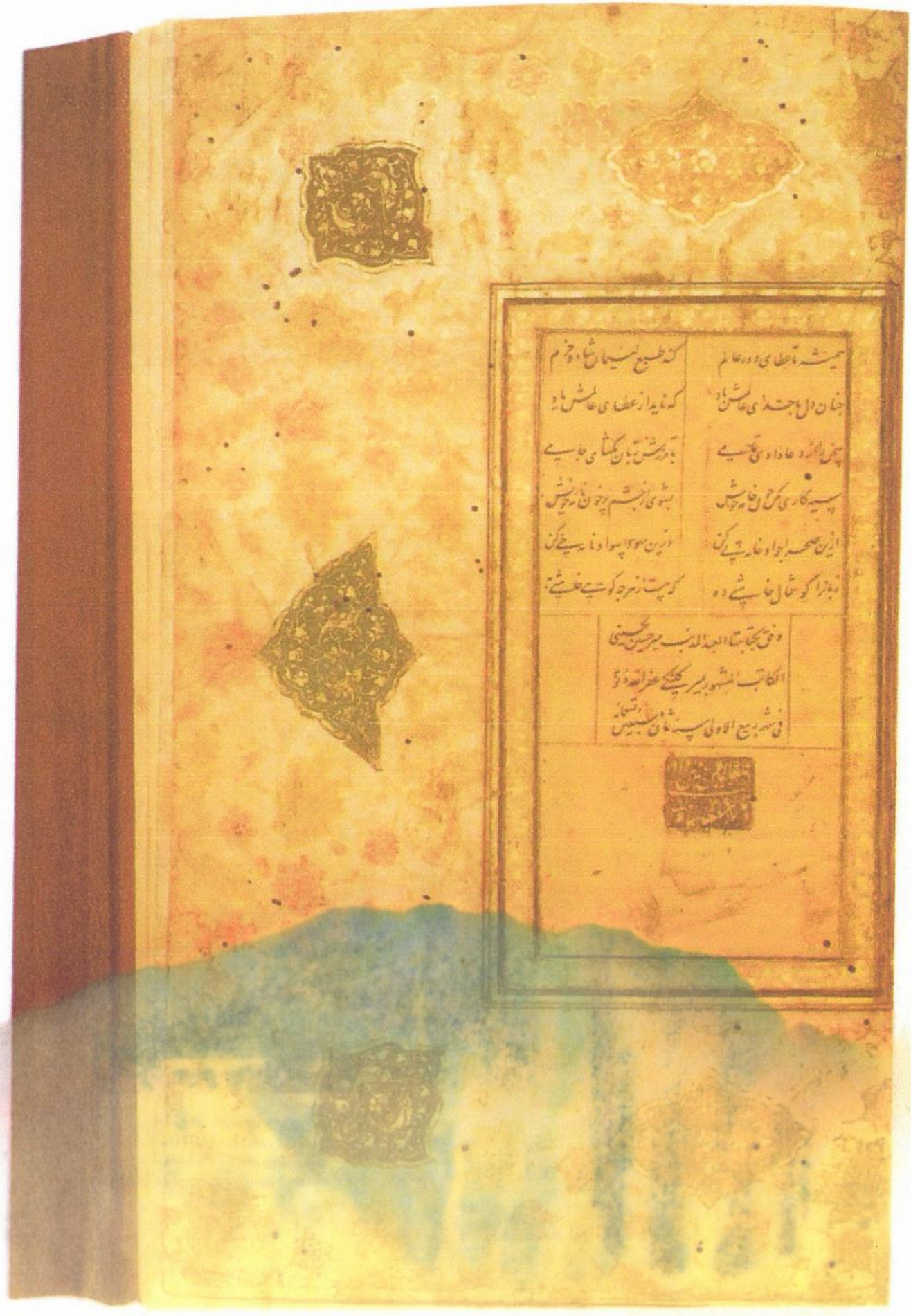


descending to the Virgin Mary and the eleven Apostles at Pentecost." The subject is a direct derivation from a European composition, probably a Flemish engraving many of which were taken to India by the Jesuits. No other Mughal version of this Christian subject is recorded. Another Mughal miniature c 1615-20 from the Hagop Kevorkian Collection – a strong portrait of a Persian warrior with his bow and arrow, seated on a carpet, against a landscape, estimated at £8-12,000, was sold for £26,000.

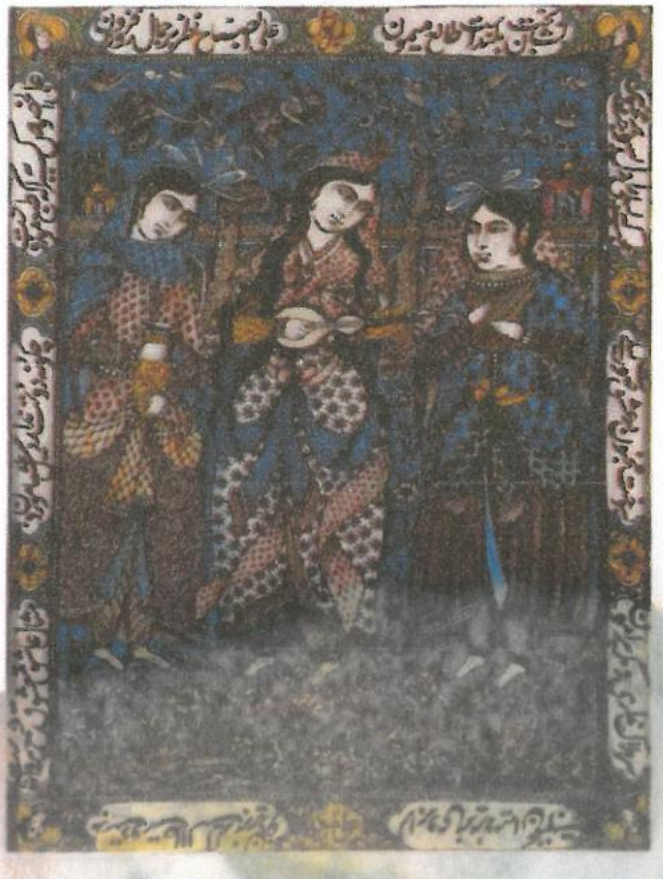
In October, Sotheby's Conservation and Restoration Department reconstructed a painted wood INTERIOR FROM A DAMASCUS ROOM, dated 1215 AH/1800-01 AD. Two early 18thc Damascus Rooms had been sold by Sotheby's in April 1982 and in October 1993 and the great interest aroused resulted in the sale of this room for £100,500: the estimate had been £50-70,000. The room may originally have been from a monastery belonging to the followers of Ahmad al-Rafa'i (AH 512-78/1118-82 AD), the founder of the Sufi sect of ar-Rafi'iyya. A panel above the central arched recess of the main wall contains inscriptions and a SUFI(?) hat. There are three walls and a ceiling, each with deep overhanging cornices, with partly gesso polychrome painted and gold and silver leaf applique decoration. In muted shades of green and pink, the room is a typical example of the



A large Kashan Moulded Turquoise and Cobalt-blue Glazed Tile of nearly squared form, the ground moulded under the turquoise glaze with spiralling vine issuing leaves and palmette terminals around a large cobalt-blue naskh thuluth inscription containing part of Surah II, v.286. 13th century. 44 x 42cm. Courtesy Christie's. Top: *A Fatimid Carved Interlace Wooden Panel* probably originally from a minbar or screen, arranged with a hexagonal lattice centred on a diagonal grouping of six-pointed stars, each of the panels carved with a variant of scrolling arabesques and palmette terminals, circa 1150. 228.5cm. x 71.5cm. Courtesy Christie's.







Above: ***Lacquer binding***, the black lacquer ground finely painted with gold scrolling vine and cloudbands around the gold stamped cusped arabesque medallion, pendants and spandrels, black border with sayings of the Prophet regarding his son in law, ' Ali in gold *naskh*, maroon morocco doublers with very fine gold and blue decoupe medallion, pendants and spandrels, gold and maroon rectangular cartouche border. Persia, first half of 16th century. Each board 32.3 x 20.5cm. Courtesy Christie's. **Left:** ***Qajar Tile***. This tile was sold in April as one of a pair for £6,500.00. Courtesy Bonhams. **Below:** ***Ottoman Decagonel Table***. Courtesy Bonhams. **Opposite page: Nur al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman Jami (d. AH 898/1492 AD):** ***Yusuf wa Zulaikha***, copied by Mir Husain al-Husaini known as Mir Kalangi, probably Herat, Rabi'I AH 978/ August 1570-1 AD. folio 28 x 17.8cm. text 15.2 x 8.4cm. Courtesy Christie's.



Damascus style which became fashionable among wealthy Syrian merchants in the 18thc, combining traditional decorative motifs with more sophisticated Rococo influences brought from Europe through trade links.

Islamic Art in Glasgow - New Initiatives

ULRIKE AL-KHAMIS (An Interview)

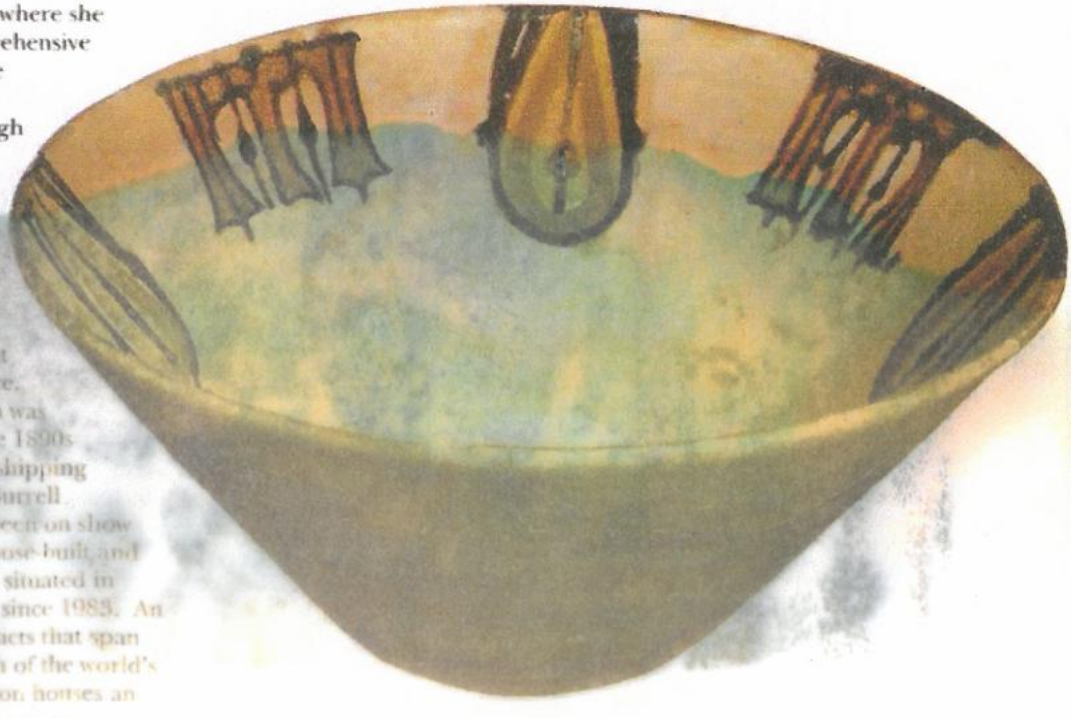
It was in 1990 that *Arts and the Islamic World* first drew the attention of a wider public to the existence of Islamic Art Collections in Glasgow Museums. Then, the impetus for highlighting Islamic art and culture in Scotland's largest city was given by Glasgow's accolade as "European City of Culture 1990". The ensuing year-long celebrations saw the local Muslim community playing a prominent part with various community-based events and an exhibition of Islamic culture and civilisation – "Islam in the City of Culture".

Since 1994 Islamic Art and Culture in Glasgow is again high on the agenda. In August Glasgow Museums appointed – for the first time – a curator of Islamic Art and Design to their Art Department, Ulrike Al-Khamis. Dr Al-Khamis specialized in Islamic Art and Culture at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, after having studied general Art History and worked as a curator in Germany. After completing her first degree at London University in 1987, she moved to Edinburgh, where she embarked on a comprehensive research project in the field of Islamic metalwork at Edinburgh University and was awarded her doctorate in 1994.

Dr Al-Khamis is based at the Burrell Collection, one of the three museums in Glasgow that represent Islamic Art and Culture. The Burrell Collection was assembled between the 1890s and 1957 by Glasgow shipping magnate Sir William Burrell (1861-1958) and has been on show to the public in a purpose-built and award-winning gallery situated in Glasgow's Pollok Park since 1983. An eclectic choice of artefacts that span the length and breadth of the world's art history, the collection houses an impressive selection of Islamic artefacts including ca. 300 items of Islamic minor arts and ca. 150 carpets and textiles.

Among the minor arts, Dr Al-Khamis explained it is the ceramics that command prime position both in number and in art historical significance. Early Islamic pottery is represented by a 10th-century lustre-painted jar from Egypt and several – 9th/10th – century slip-painted wares from eastern Iran and Transoxiana. Slightly later chronologically, several "sgraffito" wares from Iran are datable to the 10th-13th centuries. The innovative occurrence of a fine whitish fritware in 12th-century Iran is represented by a considerable number of carved, moulded, pierced as well as monochrome-glazed vessels and the well-known "silhouette" wares. Most importantly, however, this era in the history of Islamic







pottery yielded large numbers of high-quality lustre-painted and polychrome wares of the "mina'i" type and the collection is fortunate to have a good selection of both groups. Wares produced under the Il-Khanid dynasty in Iran in the 13th/14th century are represented by a beautiful "lajvardina" jug, "Sultanabad" ware and lustre-painted tiles with vegetal and figural designs. The body of Persian ceramics is completed by a 14th-century copy of Chinese celadon and 17th-century underglaze blue and white wares. In addition to the pottery vessels from Islamic Persia, the Burrell Collection holds ca. 40 pieces executed by the Turkish potters of Iznik. One dish of impressive proportions represents the earliest phase in Iznik's production (ca. 1490s-1525) in that it utilizes the familiar Chinese motif of a bunch of grapes executed in underglaze blue on a white slipped fritware body. The remaining Iznik wares – dishes, jugs and tankards – represent the classical age of pottery production at Iznik, i.e. the period between the mid 16th and 17th centuries. On these pieces the colour palette has been enriched by a thickly applied red slip colour that stands in slight relief under the transparent colourless glaze.

Islamic metalwork in the Burrell Collection is represented by several braziers, incense burners and lampstands from 10th-12th century eastern Iran as well as a number of 14th-century Mamluk objects from Egypt. The remaining examples of Islamic minor arts include 17th-century Persian glass and a beautiful ivory casket with painted decoration, probably attributable to late 12th-century Sicily.

The carpet collection assembled by Sir William Burrell is the second most important collection in Britain after that of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The carpets range from the 16th to the 19th century in date and come from Turkey, the Caucasus, Iran, Central Asia and Moghul India. The finest Persian examples come from the Safavid period (16th-18th century) and were executed in the famous workshops of Isfahan, Kashan, Tabriz, Mashad or Kerman. Of particular historical interest is a fragment from one of the two large carpets executed for the mausoleum of Sheikh Safi at Ardebil in 1539. The most outstanding exponent among the Persian carpets and indeed in the carpet collection as a whole, is the so-called "Wagner Garden Carpet", executed probably in 17th-century Kerman. Its intricate design is meant to evoke a formalized royal garden lined by a net of small, geometrically disposed channels filled with fish and other creatures.



Top: Sgraffito bowl, North-Western Iran, 10th-11th century. **Right: Iznik jug**, Turkish, c.1650-1700. Height 26.6cm. **Opposite page, top:** Embroidered Palestinian jacket. **Below: Slip-painted bowl**, Eastern Iran and Transoxania, 9th-10th century. Burrell Collection

Carpets like these were used in a royal context not only to recreate the pleasant atmosphere of the luxurious palace gardens but also and more significantly, to evoke the beauty and eternal bliss of the gardens of paradise, promised to all true believers of the Muslim faith. The Turkish carpets, mostly prayer rugs, come from the Ladik and Ghiordes areas of Central Turkey and generally date to the 18th century.

Dr Al Khamis explained that since her arrival she has accorded high priority to improve and enlarge the Islamic display in the East Gallery. At the moment the Islamic gallery shows a selection of the most beautiful pieces of Persian and Iznik pottery as well as a cross section of carpets, rugs and 19th-century Suzani textiles. Among the Islamic artefacts in store the minor arts are readily accessible for students and other interested visitors. Islamic objects and displays are also being curated in two other major museums in the city – Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum and St. Mungo's Museum of Religious Art and Life.

The Islamic collections at Kelvingrove cover a broader range of material and country of origin than those in the Burrell Collection, and with ca. 500 items they are again quite significant in number. There is a small but interesting assortment of Islamic pottery including 17th-century lustre-painted and blue-and-white wares from Persia, 18th-century vessels made by the Armenian potters at Kütahya in Western Turkey and Chanak Kale pottery made in the Dardanelles during the 18th and 19th centuries. From North Africa there are late 19th-century glazed earthenware vessels executed by the Kabyle berbers of Algeria and Morocco. As regards textiles, the collection houses several modern items from Afghanistan and Morocco as well as a selection of cotton prayer mats from Iran and some full size tent hangings from Rhodes and Palestine. In addition there is a good selection of costume from Turkey, Palestine, Afghanistan, the Gulf and Egypt. Related accessories include footwear, socks and headgear and jewellery, most notably 120 silver ornaments from Yemen and Palestine. Among the metalwork in the collections at Kelvingrove, it is Indo-Iranian arms and armour that stand out as regards both quantity and quality. In addition there are several types of swords and daggers from the Near East and North Africa. A very interesting historical aspect of the Islamic collection is the existence of several objects connected with the Mahdist revolt that took place in the Sudan in the late 19th century. Furthermore, a number of lacquered papier-mache objects executed in 19th-century Iran under the Qajar dynasty and an assortment of musical instruments from the Near East and executed between the 17th and 20th centuries deserve amention here.





Above: St. Mungo Museum of Religious Art and Life, Glasgow. **Above right:** The Islamic display in the inner Gallery of Religious Art at St. Mungo's Museum. **Below:** ***Sultanabad Ware Bowl.*** Iran, 13th-14th century. Burrell Collection.

According to Dr Al-Khamis, the heterogenous character of the Islamic Art collection at Kelvingrove is due to the input over a long period of time of a considerable number of individual donors with differing interests in the field of Islamic art and culture. Its diversity is of great potential as regards future exhibitions concerned with raising the profile of Islamic civilization and it is hoped that the existing Islamic displays in Glasgow's largest museum may receive a more appropriate setting in the foreseeable future.



The third museum in Glasgow that highlights Islamic art and culture is St. Mungo's Museum of Religious Art and Life, newly opened in 1993. Here a unique attempt is made to introduce in a sympathetic manner the six main world religions and represent them as far as possible in the way believers perceived them. The hope behind the Museum's courageous concept was that if people understood more about each other's beliefs, mutual respect and peaceful co-existence would be easier. Among the beautiful and often thought-provoking displays at St. Mungo's, Islam has its rightful place. Most of the cases relating to Islamic religion

continued on page 119

A Cultural Tapestry

MALIK A OMER

The emphasis on the promotion of cultural and artistic activities in the United Arab Emirates has increased over the years, opening up new vistas and opportunities for creative endeavour in keeping with the aspirations of this young nation founded less than 25 years ago.

In the absence of full fledged schools of art, a number of organisations have filled the gap by arranging for classes and workshops in a variety of art forms by leading local and invited international artists. The Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi, the UAE Fine Arts Society under the patronage of the Sharjah Department of Culture and Information, the Dubai International Arts Centre and a number of other art and cultural organisations in various Emirates have played a significant role in training local artists, and organising art exhibitions, music sessions, stage plays, and folkloric performances.

Artists have found patronage from leading banks, airlines, hotels, clubs and other organisations. The Emirates Bank International, Union National Bank, Commercial Bank of Dubai, the national carrier Emirates Airlines, Emirates Petroleum Products Company (EPPCO), Intercontinental Hotel Dubai, Forte Grande Hotels in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the Holiday Inn Centre in Dubai and others deserve a special mention.

Among the local clubs, the Dubai Creek Golf and Yacht Club and the Nad Al Shiba Horse Racing and Golf Club have been the venue of a number of exhibitions as have some of the art galleries, notably the Majlis Art Gallery of Alison Collins in Dubai.

The developing state of art has encouraged greater activity by artists, and this review of the events over the past one year in the field of art should go a long way in confirming that contemporary art has a great future in this small country.

January 1994

His Highness Dr Shaikh Sultan bin Mohammed al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah inaugurated the 13th Plastic Arts Exhibition at the Sharjah Cultural Centre under the patronage of the Department of Culture and Information, Sharjah.

The French artist and poet Bernard Ponnier, a student of George Oudot, held an exhibition at the Intercontinental Hotel Dubai, with a selection of landscapes and still life





Top: HH Shaikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Minister of Finance and Industry, Deputy Ruler of Dubai, and Chairman of Dubai Municipality, at the Arab Towns Conference Exhibition with Mr Abdul Aziz Y Aladsani, Chairman of Arab Towns Conference (on left) and Mr Qasim Sultan, Director General, Dubai Municipality. Above: Mr Qasim Sultan, Director General, Dubai Municipality receiving a special UN award from acting UNDP Resident Representative Billah Ibrahim Hogona in a ceremony at the municipality.

on the theme 'Passage de France'.

Indian-born Scottish artist George Donald visited the Dubai Art Centre to share his experiences in engraving, etching, lithographs, woodcuts, and silk screen printing, sponsored by Emirates Airlines, Blair Anderson and The World Trade Centre, which also hosted an exhibition of his works.

February 1994

The renowned artist Spencer Hodge, acclaimed by the Duke of Edinburgh as being 'the top wild life painter', exhibited his works at the Majlis Gallery in Dubai.

The newly opened Bernard Cassia and Salwa Zeidan Art Gallery in Abu Dhabi was the venue of an exhibition of the works of Ms. Salwa which was inaugurated by Shaikh Abdulla bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

'Universal Language' was the theme of the Dutch artist Jos Clovers, whose large paintings directly executed with his fingers and hands went on display at the Citroen Car Showroom in Abu Dhabi.

the venue of an exhibition of ceramics by the Iraqi artist living in Dubai, Mahmood Hassan, which was dominated by Islamic motifs with contemporary interpretation and a predominance of turquoise colour.

Lawrence Sutton, a French artist and linguist, fluent in Arabic and Spanish, held an exhibition of his paintings at the Sharjah Cultural Centre and then at the Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi.

The Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi hosted an exhibition of leading Bahraini artists which included Abdul





Above: A ceramic work by Mahmood Hassan. Above, right: A painting by Abdul Qader Al-Rais, UAE artist, this work was exhibited at the Holiday Inn Centre during UAE International Festival of Arts.

Karim al Orayyed (60), founder member of the Bahraini Contemporary Art Association, Rashid al Oraifi, an adherent of the Dilmun style of art, Ms Fatima Hyder al Jamaa'a, a surrealist painter, Omar al Rashid, whose desert scenes are captivating, Ahmed al Mansoori, Yousuf Kazim and brass paintings of Jabbar.

The Forte Grand Hotel in Abu Dhabi held an unusual exhibition of decorated golden eggs by school boy Mohammed al Baqar, who had studied egg craft in the UK.

UAE national, young Nabeel Khalfan Saleh al Mehairbi, who was educated in the UK, and is fast becoming a well-respected name in the arts community of Abu Dhabi, held an exhibition of his works, primarily in pencil, at the Cultural

March 1994

The prestigious Nad al Shiba Horse Racing Club of Dubai hosted an exhibition of the works of four expatriate artists – Sid Rose, Qatari artist Abdul Wahed Mawlawi, Marian Ball and Tina Ahmed, on the theme 'Race with Art' to coincide with one of its race meetings.

The Majlis Gallery in Dubai was

Foundation in Abu Dhabi, which had helped him to perfect his art.

April 1994

HH The Ruler of Sharjah inaugurated an exhibition of the works of Zanzibar-born, acclaimed British artist Ali Darwish, comprising his genre scenes of Sharjah, the mountain ranges of Khor Fakkan, mangroves, oases and camel races at the Sharjah Cultural Centre – a visual feast for lovers of art.

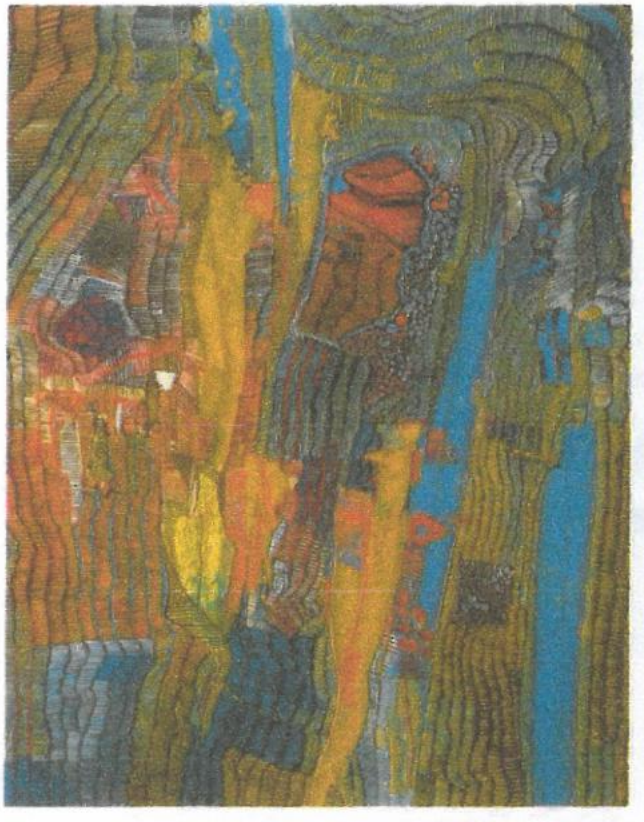
The Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi was the venue of a number of exhibitions including the 9th Emirates Fine Arts Exhibition with 168 works of local artists which included three women – Mona al Qazi, Shaheena Ajmal, Art Workshop Director at the Foundation – and Salwa Zaidan – and invited artists from Egypt and Iraq. The Japanese artist Ms Michiya Sakai held a workshop using a huge palette and an array of brushes, septula, commercial paint rollers and her deft fingers in creating exquisite renderings of flowers, the breeze, spring days, landscapes and people. Finally there was an exhibition of paintings by Egyptian artist Salah Taher, giving art lovers the opportunity to see 50 years of artistic development by the Arab world's greatest living contemporary artist. The exhibition was inaugurated by Shaikh Mansoor bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

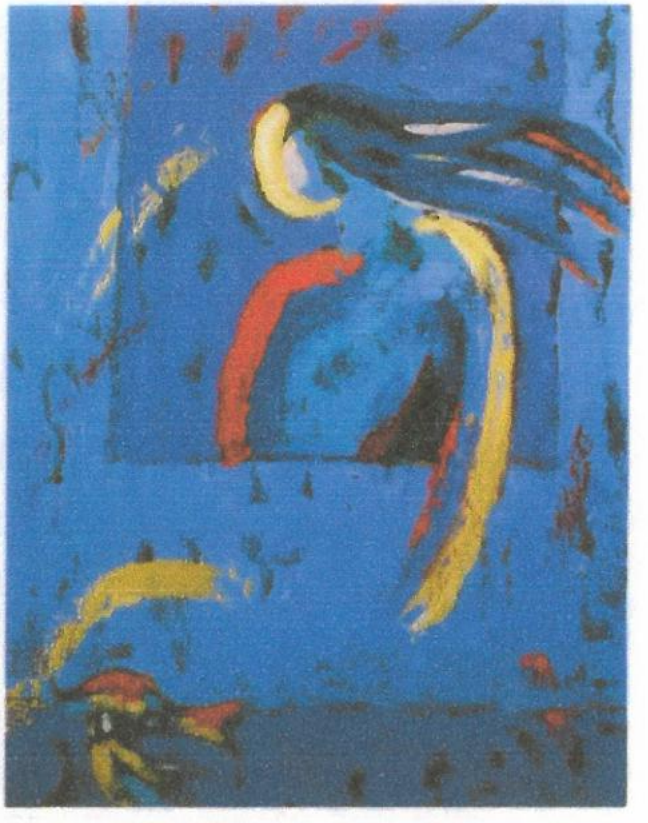
The Majlis Gallery in Dubai was the venue of the talented Iranian artist Ms Parvansh Etemadi who displayed a number of stunning still lifes of traditional textiles. She is into mysticism and lives in India.

The Aati Gallery in Dubai hosted an exhibition of contemporary in-depth studies of old Dubai town by the Bahraini artist Wahab Koheji.

Internationally acclaimed mime artist John Lee was on a week-long tour of Al Ain, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah with his one-man show – 'Blue Moon', a comedy feature combining magic tricks, circus skills, juggling and wirewalking.

Dubai played host to the largest conference ever of the Arab Towns Organisation at its 10th meeting which was held in the first week of April at the World Trade Centre under the patronage of His Highness Shaikh Maktoum bin Rashid al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime







Above, top: Paintings by **Najat Hassan Makky** (left) and **Dr Abdul Karim Al-Sayed** (right). Right: Painting on the theme *Race for Art*, **Sid Rose**, Now Chairman of Dubai International Arts Society.

Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and inaugurated by His Highness Shaikh Hamdan bin Rashid al Maktoum, Minister of Finance and Industry and Chairman of the Dubai Municipality. The Conference was attended by more than 1,600 foreign and Arab participants representing 338 Arab towns.

With a passion for the design of old doors, Saudi artist Ali Ruzeiza, an accomplished holder of diplomas in art from Riyadh and Rome, participated in an exhibition of his sculpted doors alongside the 10th Arab Towns Conference at the World Trade Centre in Dubai.

May 1994

Visiting Scottish artist Ms Sylvia Woodosok Clarke exhibited her paintings reflecting scenes of the UAE which had inspired her, along with Lebanese artist Ms Katya Traboules who had a totally different taste and mood with paintings showing a mixture of striking colours and visual feelings, at the Majlis Gallery in Dubai.

A varied collection of work produced by young Dubai-based British artist and designer Ms Oilath Galbraith went on show at the residence of Ms Cathy Ryan, local representative of the Egee Art Consultancy, London.

British sculptor John Robinson exhibited his works in steel and bronze at the Dubai Creek and Golf Club, drawn from many sources of inspiration. The exhibition was inaugurated by Abdullah al Rahman, Managing Consultant for the Club.

Shaikh Mohammad bin Khalid al Qasimi, Head of the Sharjah Cultural and Information Department opened an exhibition of the Lebanese artist Ms. Diana Zamuddin Hourani at the Sharjah Cultural Centre.

Motivate Publishing launched the autobiography entitled *Zelzelah, A Woman Before Her Time*, by Ms. Mariam Behnam, now settled in Dubai. Ms. Behnam is the mother of accomplished children, one of whom Ms. Shamaz Pakravan, is a London based TV presenter with the BBC. Born in southern Iran in the 1920s Ms Behnam was brought up in Iran, India and Pakistan. Her education and ambition led her to public service and diplomatic posts in Pakistan and in several parts of Iran. Besides telling the story of an unusual woman, *Zelzelah* also provides a rich and colourful insight into a civilisation in transition.

Ms Shirin Akbar, education officer at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, visited Dubai, in connection with the Nehru Gallery 'Mughal Tent' project, which would have 14 pre-designated panels making up the glorious tent to be displayed at the V&A. Co-ordinated by Ms Marian Bahnam, Dubai's artists would work on one of the panels incorporating paintings and embroidery with symbols and motifs of Arab and Islamic culture.

An exhibition of paintings by six women artists focusing on the role women play in enriching the arts was opened at the Cultural centre in Sharjah by Shaikh Abdulla bin Salim al Qasimi, Head of the Ruler's Court. Among the artists who hailed from the GCC countries, were Al Jazi al Hussain from Saudi Arabia, Waffa al Hamad from Qatar, Mariam Abdul Karim from Oman, Najaat Maki from the UAE, Faozia al Issa of Kuwait and Bahraini artist Sabah Mousawi.

The UAE International Festival of Arts Dubai '94, held from May 27 to June 3, 1994 brought together the finest artists, performers and productions from different parts of the world to provide a week of entertainment from lunchtime concerts to late night shows and





Above: A painting by UAE artist **Ubaid Suroor**. **Above, right:** A painting by UAE artist **Abdar Rahim Salim**, winner of a prize of Dhs. 30,000 at the UAE International Festival of Arts.

International Museum Planned for Abu Dhabi

Art Programmes at the Cultural Foundation

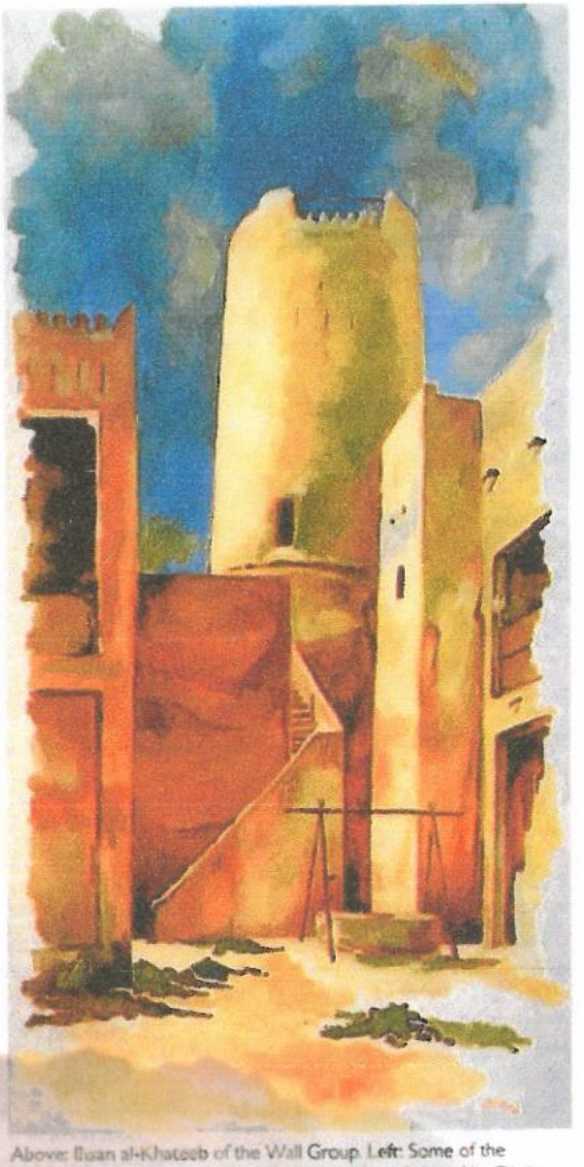
TAMARA MUFTI











Above: Ilsan al-Khateeb of the Wall Group. Left: Some of the monthly programmes listings of the Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi

While major art and cultural projects continue to be undertaken in all seven Emirates of UAE, the focus of activities in Abu Dhabi has been the Cultural Foundation, whose Secretary General, Mohammed Ahmed Khalifa al Suwaidi has announced plans for setting up an international museum in Abu Dhabi.

The Foundation is currently studying its feasibility, and plans are also under consideration to construct a planetarium, and to set up a permanent light-and-sound programme.

Specifically in the fields of art and culture, 1994 saw a substantial increase in the number of programmes organised by the Art and Cultural Institution of the Foundation, headed by Director Khalfan Ali Musabbeh. The number of those who participated or attended has also gone up very considerably, and the emphasis has been on the quality as well as variety of presentations throughout the year.

The first half of the year was marked by the success of the 4th Abu Dhabi International Book Exhibition, the 4th Children's Festival, the production of seven books and mounting of a number of exhibitions. In the second half of the year major activities included celebration of a number of cultural weeks, art shows, literary get-togethers, plays and musical offerings.

There were 25 seminars, four poetry-reading evenings, four book

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