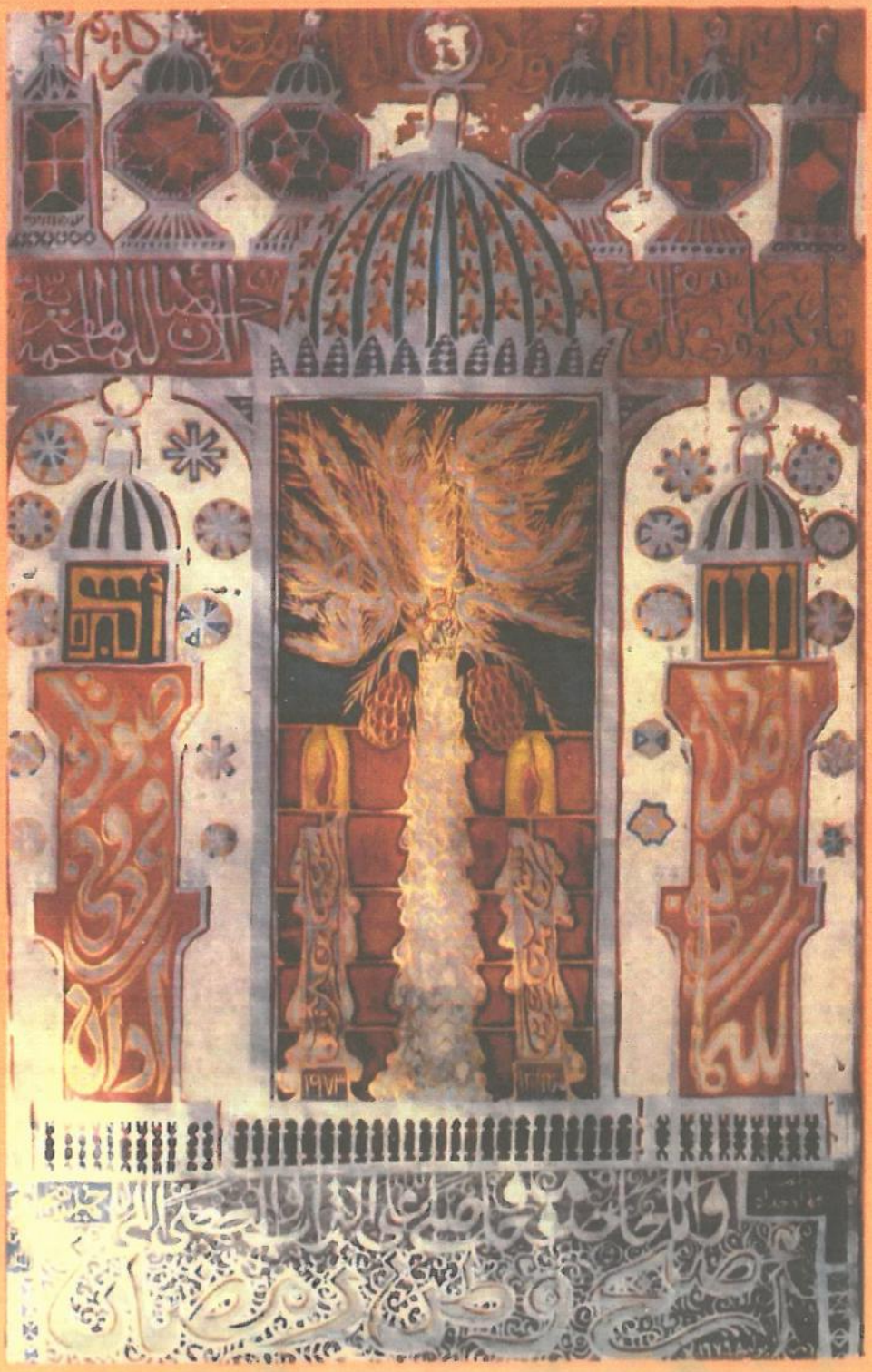
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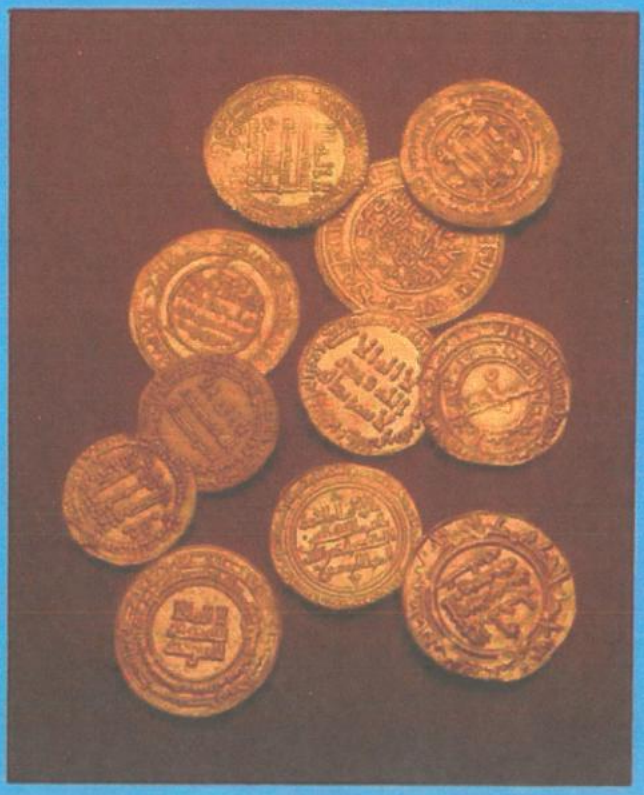
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A large standing bowl with a high foot.
Turkey, Iznik, circa 1525-35.
Diameter: 14 inches



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Front Cover: 'Ramadhan Kareem'
Khames Shatta, Egypt

BRINGING YOU THE WORLD OF ISLAM EVERY MONTH

Islam is part of your world, a vital and fascinating part, whether or not you are one of the 800 million Muslims living around the globe, from Morocco to Mindanao.

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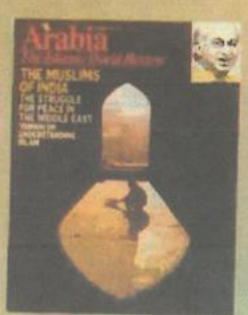
Arabia ranges across the world in gathering news, features and pictures on politics, economics, cultural heritage and modern life.

Recent features in the *politics* section have included reports on Lebanon after the massacres in Beirut, China's shift towards greater religious freedom, and new leaders in the Afghan resistance.

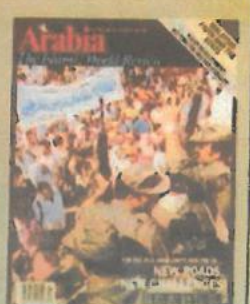
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The *economics* section includes a regular review of the world economy for Muslim businessmen and planners, plus regular reports on Muslim economies, and monthly reports on a new growth area – Islamic banking.

The *Living Heritage* section is rich and varied as the cultures it reports on. A few recent features focus on: Indonesia's conservation conscious communities; a new pollution threat to the Taj Mahal; a woman's place in Algeria, and the jewelry makers of Morocco. A special monthly feature of the magazine is the *book review section*.







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International Seminar
on

'THE ARTS IN ISLAMIC LANDS'

held at
Farnham Castle, United Kingdom.
March 26-28, 1982



Left to right: Mr. Salem Azzam, H.E. Kamel al-Sharif, Mr. Muazzam Ali and Dr. Najmoud-Dine Bammate.

Extracts from Seminar Addresses

Editorial

This journal is being produced in pursuance of the recommendations made by the International Seminar on "The Arts in Islamic Lands", organised in the Spring of 1982, by the Islamic Arts Foundation.

The Foundation itself is a non-profit Trust established as a Charity in UK with the aim of stimulating wider interest in the arts of the Islamic world.

The participants of the Seminar included scholars and experts from the Islamic countries as well as the Western world, representing a wide diversity of disciplines and experience. Among them were artists and architects as well as museum directors, cultural officials and heads of archaeological services and archives; art dealers and publishers as well as representatives of international and regional cultural organisations. These included UNESCO, the Organisation of Islamic Conference, Jeddah; the Research Centre for Islamic History, Arts and Culture, Istanbul; the Hajj Research Centre, King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah; and the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Geneva.

The Seminar underlined the deeply-felt need for the study, research, documentation, preservation and better appreciation of Islamic arts, many of whose traditional forms are now facing a very real danger of being lost or forgotten. At the same time it emphasised the importance of reviewing, examining and interpreting the contemporary art scene, both within and outside the Islamic world, in order to discern, understand and appreciate new ideas, expressions and movements in an integrated Islamic perspective.

Above all there were the questions concerning the nature and philosophy of Islamic art, its resources and influences, the problems of conservation and restitution, and the place of art in the society and culture of Islam. These were discussed in more than 40 papers presented at the Seminar and deliberated at great length. Out of these discussions a set of recommendations emerged which are reproduced in this issue and provide the broad terms of reference for *Arts and the Islamic World*.

The journal is envisaged as a quarterly publication appearing in Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn every year. Its Editorial Board is headed by the Chairman of the Islamic Arts Foundation, and includes a broad-based Panel of Contributing Editors drawn from many countries of the world.

By its very nature, this first issue of the *Arts & the Islamic World* is in many ways an experimental one, and we seek the indulgence of our readers as well as their advice and suggestions for improving it as we go along. ■

Protection of Islamic Monuments and Arts

Kamel Al Sharif

It is a good idea to start organising efforts for the protection of Islamic monuments and arts, repairing and renovating them not only as an outstanding indication of our immortal civilisation, but also as banners around which our youths might assemble spiritually charged with dedication and sense of attachment to their noble message, and cherish their glorious past; indeed it will be a vigorous stimulant for relentles efforts so that the march towards true Islamic revival and worldwide enlightenment might eventually be resumed. There is no need to say that keeping reminicent of the necesity of safeguarding our Islamic heritage is most essential for the formation of our Islamic future; there will never be a real future if it were not linked and firmly attached to our past. Those who imagine the possibility of shaping Islamic future without reference to historical roots are trying in vain to raise their building on sands. Allah Almighty says, "Is he who founded his building upon duty to Allah and His good pleasure better; or he who founded his building on the brink of a crumbling, overhanging preciice so that it toppled with him into the fire of hell? Allah guideth not wrong-doing folk" (IX,109). It is for these reasons that we encourage any initiative aimed at the conservation of Islamic inheritance of architecture as well as all other arts and literature in the broadest sense. Hence we view with great concern the movement represented in this foundation under the auspices of which we are meeting today. So let us hope and pray it will prove fruitful by time and achieve all desired gains.

Islamic legacy — like Islam itself — reflects a humanistic civilisation which is not confined within a specific region or race; although this civilisation takes from local characteristics and interacts with them, it still carries its original properties over all borders and barriers. In Africa, for example, it has taken an African touch, and in Asia and in the Arab world local influence is manifest; yet inspite of that, common features and particularities are perceived in the drawings and architectual shapes as well as in the Arab calligraphy, the fact that makes us identify them as one unique civilisation which reflects the inherent unity of the Muslim world; "Verily, this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood, and I am your Lord and Cherisher" (XXI, 92). This fact — the fact of our being one nation having one heritage — should be strongly underlined in our attempt to project our civilisation; it should be the solid ground upon which the structure of our future should stand.

You are well aware that our Arab area is confronted with a dangerous challenge posed by an alien civilisation represented in the Zionist invasion of the Arab Palestine. This vicious invasion has used various weapons, one of which is the distortion of our historical inheritance to realise their aggressive ends, which are most detrimental indeed. It seems as though they are certain that their security in future will not be realised without the falsification of historical grounds; in other words, they are convinced that they cannot control the future without shaping and controlling the remote past, and to achieve this end they are taking two directions: on the one hand, to chase the Islamic heritage with the intention of liquidating it altogether; on the other, to try to forge historical facts in order to prove their so-called historical right in Palestine. They have a broad plan whose dimensions are becoming more and more visible everyday; and it seems to stretch so as to cover all Palestine territory and the bordering Arab lands. The excavation missions sponsored by Israeli universities and their counterparts in Europe and America, which are lavishly financed, are carrying out investigations all across the country. Their persistence on forging out facts sometimes leads them to very awkward conclusions which might deceive visitors and tourists: if they happen to find an old disused cemetery — a thing which happens often in Palestine as well as in any other place — they take to fabricate about it stories of historical heroisms and publicise them; if investigations led them to find some old pottery, they never feel ashamed to record it as featuring their falsified history in Palestine. Unfortunately enough, these attempts have been endorsed by some international organisations and research centres with which they have strong ties, or rather under their influence; and these sources on their part undertake spreading these lies all over the world.

The Islamic holy places were to suffer a great deal under this Zionist imperialistic policy. It seems as though this aggressive movement, which exploits Jewish religion for its purpose, is concerned in victimising the religious symbols of other nations so that in the end it might remain the only survivor in the arena. This trend explains their persistent campaign againt the Aqsa mosque in Beit-ul-maqdis and the Ibrahimi mosque in Al-Khalil in particular; the other mosques, Awqaf real estate, and the old quarters were not more lucky either. The plot against the Ibrahimi mosque began ever since the Israeli occupation of the city in 1967 when the Isaeli extremists began to make claims to take possession of it and actually tried to make alternations inside. The Israeli military authorities were always to respond favourably, but step by step for fear such measures might provoke world public opinion. However, this drama which was acted jointly by the extremists and the moderates had ended now with the usurpation of large parts of the mosque, and the Muslims have to undergo various sorts of pressure and intimidation during their prayers.

As regards the holy Aqsa mosque, you are certainy aware of the series of conpiracies whose episodes are felt daily; here I would like to recall their repeated

excavations thereabut in search of what they call Solomon Temple. However, these attempts were certainly unsuccessful and digging uncovered nothing more than the ruins of ancient Umayyad and Mamluki palaces. Also let me bring to your memory the Aqsa arson which was committed by an Australian agent of Zionism in 1969, which ended with the destruction of important parts of the mosque and turned the invaluable historical pulpit of Salahuddin into ashes. If the Israeli authorities denied at that time to be behind the crime, yet they showed a great deal of delay and disinterest in the attempts to fight the flames, the fact that leaves no doubt of their complicity. The latest but not the last chapter of that plot was the breaking of some Jewish youths into the holy mosque with the intention to violating its sanctity, when the Muslims who happened to be there drove them back; the atitude of the Israeli authorities in this incident and other ones bring to mind the methods already used in the sacrilege of the Ibrahimi mosque , the major part of which was usurped. Now what was said about the mosques of Beit-ul-maqdis and Al-Khalil applies to all historical shrines in Palestine: The Ahmar mosque in Safad was converted in Jaffa has been expropriated and now in danger of demolition inspite of the temporary retreat of the Israelis in the face of the alertness of the Arab and Muslim inhabitants and public world opinion.
We have prepared a report on the Islamic monuments and historical places in Palestie and the modest efforts we are making for registering and maintaining them, which I hope will be helpful in identifying our Islamic civilisation in Palestine. Also I do hope — through this organisation — it will help securing moral and material support to this effort from the Muslim countries which are undoubtedly concerned in protecting Islamic legacy in the holy land from the vicious Zionist hands. On our part in Jordan, I would like to assure you that the government of His Majesty King Husein is sparing no effort in carrying her responsibilities in maintaining the religious institutins in Palestine so that they might be able to look after and enrich Islamic legacy in the holy land." ■

The Culture and Civilisation of Islam

Salem Azzam

I am happy to know that the Foundation's activities include research and documentational projects for the identification, evaluation and preservation of Islamic art treasures in all parts of the world. I warmly welcome its endeavours to reflect an overview of art projects, movements and enterprises in Islamic countries and communities throughout the world, and to record, review and project the work of official institututions, as well as private organisations and individual contributions in these fields.

On looking at the Foundation's programme of activities, I find that it plans to organise directly, or in collaboration with other groups and institutions, exhibitions, seminars, lectures, festivals, publications, study tours, art education programmes, and other related activities in the field of Islamic arts. This Seminar is among its first projects, and the theme which has been chosen for it is in itself of utmost importance. Of late, the arts of the Islamic world have been not only the focus of considerable international attention, but also the subject of a great deal of discussion and controversy.

For example, it has often been questioned whether such elements in arthitecture as the dome and minaret owe their origin to Muslims, or whether the introduction of the art of calligraphy is attributable to the Muslims. I do not know the answers to these questions, and many others that are being raised, which only you, as scholars and experts, can answer. All I can say, as a layman and as a Muslim, is that the religion, as well as the culture and civilisation of Islam has, over the centuries, produced remarkably creative and beautiful works in varius fields of art. These works span art and architecture, as well as articles of daily use, decorative elements and features, illumination and recitation of the Holy Qur'an, and an ever-widening vocabulary of abstract design and symbolism, of which the Muslims have been not only the pioneers but also the most powerful and consistent practitioners and exponents.

And, as for the elements such as the dome and the minaret, or the unparallelled beauty and flourish of calligraphy, Muslims may or may not have *invented* these, but they have surely made these elements their own in history, tradition and culture.

I am sure that these and other questions relating to the arts of the Islamic lands, in their various facets, will claim the attention of the distinguished scholars who have assembled here for this Seminar. I do hope and pray that this meeting of minds and hearts will, by the grace of Allah, lead to a pooling of ideas and reflection on the whole range of issues and challenges faced by the arts in the Islamic world. ■

A Long and Rich Tradition

Muazzam Ali

The contribution of Muslims in the field of art and architecture can be seen as adding one of the most glorious chapters to world culture and civilisation over the last several centuries. This long and rich tradition, which suffered a temporary setback in some parts of the Muslim world that fell under fogeign imperialist and colonial rule, is now reasserting itself in all its creative strength and beauty. Indeed a fuller recognition of the deep and profound Islamic sources of their own art and architecture is sweeping the entire Muslim world from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Placific. And as our artists and craftsmen excel in various creative fields, there is a need for studying, documenting reviewing, analysing and projecting this, both within the Islamic world and outside it.

I mention this merely to underscore the relevance and significance of your deliberations in various Working Sessions of this Seminar which deal not ony with the contemporary scene, but also with the nature, history and philosophy of Islamic art, and the challenges that confront us as we look ahead. These challenges are many and varied. They relate not only to the fundamental questions of what is or is not Islamic art, but also to the physical aspects, such as the threats and dangers that imperil our splendid architectural heritage, and the no less aesthetically valuable arts and crafts.

It is no doubt a source of satisfaction that a conscious and positive effort is being made by some of the Islamic countries, not only to project, restore and preserve architectural monuments, but also to develop and adapt new architectural structures. But this is not enough. Only a very small fraction of available resources is actually allocated to maintenane, restoration and preservation of our cultural heritage, and a disturbingly large proportion is being squandered away in importing styles and structures totally unsuited to the climate, landscape, tradition and culture of our Islamic lands.

This discrepancy is even more evident when it comes to the living arts. These are increasingly becoming the victims of neglect thus leading to a situation of rapid deterioration and the threat of virtual extinction in most parts of the Islamic world. Even where the products of our traditional arts and crafts are admired, preserved and displayed as collectors' items and museum pieces, the source itself is fast drying up, as the artists and craftsmen themselves are languising owing to lack of patronage and appropriate utilisation of their talents and skills. One hears a great deal nowadays about the building of expensive museums in various countries of the Islamic world. This is a step in the right direction indeed, but unless positive measures are taken now to encourage and patronise the creators of traditional arts and crafts, there may not be very much available for these museums to house and display.

There is also the vital question of the return of Islamic art treasures which have been taken away over the last few centuris by force or deceit, and even now continue to be usurped and smuggled by trading on the innocence or pecuniary circumstances of the owners and creators of these art treasures. UNESCO, under its dynamic and visionary Director General, has launched a strong and vigorous campaign for the return of cultural property to its countries of origin, and we will be hearing a report later in this Seminar about the steps being taken and the difficulties being encountered in implementing the Director-General's appeal. However, notwithstanding the legalistic and juridical aspects, no efforts must be spared to ensure the return or restitution of the Islamic art treasures to their rightful owners — individuals or governmental — in the Islamic world.

Apart from public and private museums, there is also a remarkable wealth of Islamic art treasures currently available in the art markets in various parts of the world. There is need for coordinated international action to ensure comprehensive and updated documentation of all such art treasures. The question of Copyright laws applicable to such art treasures also needs to be carefully considered. The Islamic Arts Foundation will be very happy to cooperate in any project relating to this question. ■

Arts in the Society and Culture of Islam

Nejmoud-Dine Bammate

In the history of art there has seldom been an effort to consider and to study Islamic art within its own social and cultural context. Such situation is due both to internal and external factors. Internal, because in certain countries of the Islamic community, the status of art is ambiguous. It is often considered as marginal, while it is central to the cultural identity in Islam. External, because the methods applied split the unity of the subject-matter into a multiplicity of national arts and individual scholarly disciplines, which are perhaps scientific but certainly do not cover the subject as a whole.

Meanwhile the reading of original texts, even upon the artefacts, and the knowledge of the society and culture, are somewhat neglected in favour of historical and archaeological approaches. Periodisation and the study of borrowings are thereby priviliged, even if they are indispensible, against a straight-forward case-study unaffected by ancient western postulates such as realism or the distinction between "high arts" and artefacts, among many others. There is, however, a different trend now-a-days: for instance, the mosque is more and more examined against its whole environment and specially its urban context. It is hardly any more considered as a monument, a place of worship alone or a separate work of art, but as an integral element in the daily existence of a community.

Similarly, an emphasis on national styles, with an over-specialization in Arab, Persian, Turkish and other styles which are often divided again to fit in with contemporary states, is anti-historical and leads too easily to parochial view. For instance, Islamic art is construed by many as a province of late Hellenistic art, ignoring the great cultural exchanges which happened in Iran and among the Seldjukid Turks, and Central Asia. The reverse is also true.

Another examplle is the research on Islamic art which has too long been affected by what could be called "renaissance" or "neo-classical" prejudice. Byantine art, negro art, modern art are now studied according to their own internal values and criteria and not as a style which tried and failed to imitate realism, or was unable to obtain perspective or confused surface decoration with "great art", or again failed to have a sufficient number of individual artists to indulge instead in the repetition of patterns in workmanship.

"It is high time to approach Islamic art without any such pre-judgement and to simply observe it according to its own values and criteria, to what its society wanted, and to what its cultue desired to achieve, which is expressed in texts as well as in forms.

This requires a rigorous and long-term field work, involving a collective effort of research as well as of preservation, since so many of the works to be studied are scattered, threatened with destruction or alteration, denatured or misunderstood.

This is the task of the Islamic Arts Foundation, its present gathering of scholars, its work of research and preservation, together with museums, archeological surveys, with UNESCO, and other cultural institutions. May this collective endeavour reach ample results. ■

Seminar Recommendations

Art as an Essential Expression of Islamic Civilization. The participants felt that the arts of Islam had to be viewed widely in international context, encompassing in a single scholarly framework all the countries of Islam, and other parts of the world where various expressions of Islamic civilization are to be found. They also felt that in the world of Islam the arts meant a great variety of cultural expressions, from city planning and architecture to calligraphy, artefacts and other objects of daily life, including music in its folk as well as classical and traditional forms. Thus considered, the arts of Islam are to be studied not merely as decoration, brilliant though it may be, but as an essential expression of Islamic civilization as a whole, as a vital component of its cultural identity, its spiritual faith, its human values, its social and economic order, its urban laws and structure.

Islamic Art as an Integral Part of World Cultural Heritage. It was recognised that the arts of Islamic lands are not only expressions of the achievements of the past but, as a powerful factor of unity and cultural identity, they also play a part in shaping the future of those lands. They are equally an integral part of the world cultural heritage. They are indicative of the conditions that prevail and are an incorporate part of all human activity: religious, social, political and economic. Such features call for a scholarly and inter-disciplinary approach, as all works executed in the style of Islam, by Muslims and non-Muslims, are valuable contribution in the milieu of artistic endeavour. The Islamic Arts Foundation, being a professional and non-official organisation, should be in a position to undertake projects for the protection and preservation of Islamic arts in the Muslim as well as non-Muslim world. Indeed a major inspiration for establishing the Foundation was the material threat to which the Islamic heritage is presenty exposed. The dangers are diverse, both internal and external, and call for urgent action.

Preparation of a Repertory of Islamic Arts. The Seminar noted that one of the urgent scholarly tasks to be undertaken by the Islamic Arts Foundation is to prepare an exhaustive repertory of Islamic arts aimed at developing a "catalogue raisonne" of its heritage, concentrating on such elements as crafts and artefacts, and based on collections avalable in the Islamic countries themselves as well as in other parts of the world, including Europe and America. Besides the production of scholarly editions based on such documentation, there was also the need for the preparation of popular editions aimed at a wider public, specially students and the youth in the Islamic countries. Of course in so doing the Foundation should avoid duplication and overlappings by cooperating and coordinating with other institutions and organisations active in these fields.

Setting up Museums of Islamic Art and Heritage. The Seminar urged the Foundation to liaise with the responsible authorities in Islamic countries to mobilise specialized technical srvices for promotion and preservation of arts by setting up Museums of Islamic Art and Heritage.

Proposal for an Islamic Cultural Heritage Year. Within the framework of international cooperation, the Seminar attached great importance to the project of "Islamic Cultural Heritage Year", introduced by the Director of the Research Centre for Islamic History, Arts and Culture, Istanbul. The Foundation is to follow up that project as a priority.

Festivals of Living Arts and Crafts of the Islamic World. The Seminar recommended the organisation of national, regional and international "Festivals of Living Arts and Crafts of the Islamic World" with the participatiuon of craftsmen and women and, possibly, with promotional activities conducted at craft centres and department stores etc. These Festivals should represent not only the socalled "minor" arts but also architectural craftsmanship, both structural and decorative, so that demonstrations would be made of vital elements in the traditional Islamic building techniques.

Central Register of Islamic Arts and Crafts. The Seminar recommended the establishment of a Central Register of Islamic arts and crafts, and the preparation of a Directory of craftsmen, artists and art projects and resources available in the Islamic world, aimed at facilitating research studies, exchange of craftsmen between countries, execution of collaborative art projects in the Islamic countries, and other promotional activities.

Educational and Promotional Material on Islamic Arts. The Seminar recommended the establishment of a series of working groups to formulate, implement and monitor strategies for promoting the appreciation of Islamic arts through national educational systems, broadcasting services, publishing media, and production of educational films, art portfolios, books and mongraphs etc. relating to various aspects of Islamic arts.

Promoting the Study of Architecture of Islamic Countries. The Seminar noted the widespread demand in Muslim countries that the tradition of Islamic architecture be revived so that our surroundings reflect Islamic values. In view of the fact that architects working in most Islamic countries have been trained in the West, the Seminar recommended that young qualified architects in the Islamic world should be given the opportunity to increase their knowledge of Islamic architecture. It also urged the Governments of Islamic countries to give scholarships enabling architects to visit Muslim countries to study their architecture and submit reports and recommendations for the consideration of decision-making authorities.

Return or Restitution of Islamic Cultural Property. The Seminar noted that important and valuable elements of Islamic heritage are presently held in non-Muslim countries, mostly as a result of colonialism and illicit traffic in cultural property which continues even to this day. It reminded the concerned national authorities as well as the internatioal and regional organisations, of the need to make efforts for the repatriation or exchange of elements of the dispersed heritage of the Islamic world. The Seminar urged the Islamic member-states of UNESCO to encourage the Inter-governmental Committee for the Return or Restitution of Cultural Property to the Countries of Origin, and to draw the Committee's attention, whenever necessary, to difficult cases concerning the return or verification of cultural property. It requested the Islamic States who will participate in the World Conference on Cultural Policies, to be organised by UNESCO in Mexico City, 26th July - 5th August 1982, to draw the attention of the World Conference to the important problem of the return or restitution of Islamic Cultural Property to the countries of origin. In this context the Seminar also focussed attention of the Islamic countries on the urgent necessity of improving or creating not only museums, archives and other cultural centres as infrastructure, but also the training of staff required for the safeguarding, restoring, presentation and display of important collections.

Creation of an Islamic Arts Fund. The Seminar urged Islamic international and rgional organisations as well as natioal public and private bodies in the Islamic countries who are in a position to do so, to concern themselves with the acquisition and return to their countries of origin of Islamic cultural property that is put on sale at auction houses. It recommended that the possibility of creating an Islamic Arts Fund for the purchase and repatriation of objects of fundamental importance which may be put up for sale at auction houses, may also be studied.

Threat to Islamic Heritage in Palestine. The Seminar expressed its deep concern about the conditions in Al-Quds and in Palestine which are threatening the existence of monuments and places of worship and waqf property vital to Islam and to world civilization, through brutal aggression and illicit excavations, often with political motives. It noted with dismay the situation regarding the Islamic heritage in Palestine under Israeli occupation as reported to the Seminar by H.E. the Jordanian Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, and resolved to do everything possile to protect and conserve this heritage. It added its own voice to the many others in calling upon international public opinion to protest against such illegal and destructive activities. The Seminar recognised and deplored the ineffectiveness, to date, of every public censure of the government of the Zionist state occupying Palestine, to change its attitude and behaviour which is tantamount to cultural assassination in Palestine, and called upon the United Nations and its agencies to act with determination to exercise their authority in Palestine under the terms of the Charter of Human Rights.

Studies on Islamic Cities. The Seminar called upon the Islamic Arts Foundation to prepare and disseminate comparative studies, conducted in different countries, on Islamic cities, comprehending their architectural and social components, showing their unity in depth, similr to the studies undertaken by the Hajj Research Centre at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah. The Seminar appreciated and applauded the work of the Hajj Research Centre and endorsed its efforts in the field of conservation of the environment of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina and other Holy Places. It particularly recognised the valid contribution this work has made towards encouraging similar endeavours in other Islamic lands.

Living Cultural Property. The Seminar considered the arts in the countries of Islam as constituting a living force, embodied by living men and women — whether called artists, craftsmen or workers. It therefore proposed that, in consultation with the competent authorities in the Islamic countries, a category should be established of outstanding craftsmen as "living" cultural property, and means should be found to support and sustain such men and women.

Publication of a Quarterly Journal. The Seminar recommended that the Islamic Arts Foundation publish a quarterly journal "ARTS & THE ISLAMIC WORLD".

Setting Up of a Permanent Secretariat. The Seminar recommended the establishment of a permanent secretariat as and when resources become available, so as ~~to~~ follow up and implement the above recomendations.

Contact with Other Organisations. The Seminar called upon the Islamic Arts Foundation to establish contacts and cooperate in other projects in the related fields of Islamic art and culture undertaken by the existing national, regional and international organisations, including those represented at the Seminar. The Foundation should develop relationship with such organizations and institutions not only to avoid duplication but also to ensure a strong and forward-looking cooperation.

List of Seminar Papers

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Aisha Gouverneur
Islamic Text Society, Cambridge.

ISLAMIC ART OR MUSLIM ART
Dr. Lois Lamya Al-Faruqi,
Department of Religion, Temple University (USA)

A SURVEY OF ISLAMIC ART AND ARCHITECTURE
Issoufu S. Diermekoye
Under Secretary General, United Nations, New York

SPATIAL CONCEPTIONS OF ISLAMIC ART
Dr. Roland Pietsch
Art Critic, Esslingen, West Germany

WHAT IS ISLAMIC ART
Robin Ade
Rhijnvis Feithstr, Amsterdom

SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY OF ARAB ART
Dr. Afif Bahnassi
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THE CAUSE AND EFFECT OF BANNING HUMAN FORM IN ART
Nazir Ahmad
Chairman, Interlink Longraph, London

THE CRISIS OF ISLAMIC ART
James R. Gibson
Director, Umran Graphics, London

ISLAM AND ART IN ISLAMIC COUNTRIES
Dr. Nemat A. Foad
Department of Islamic History, Cairo University, Cairo

RATIONALITY AND IRRATIONALITY IN ISLAMIC IMAGINATION
Saleh Stetie
Chairman, UNESCO's Inter-Governmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to the Country of Origin

AN APPROACH TO ARCHITECTURE AND ISLAMIC CONCEPT
Prof. Hal Higgins
Architect, London

Influences and Trends

INFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE IN WESTERN EUROPE
R.A. Jairozbhoy
St. Martin's School of Art, London

THE PROPHET'S MASDJID AS ARCHETYPE AND THE ORIGINS OF THE TURKISH MOSQUE-MADRASA COMPLEX
Dr. Emel Esin
Art Historian, Istanbul

BIO-CLIMATIC PATTERNS OF ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE
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Architect, Algeria

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Dr. Hussain Haddawy

IMPACT OF ARAB-PERSIAN CALLIGRAPHY ON INDO-MUSLIM ARCHITECTURE
Dr. S.M. Imamuddin
Department of Islamic History, University of Dacca, Bangladesh

METALWORK AS A SOURCE OF CULTURAL TREND
A.S. Melkian-Chirvani
Art Historian, Paris

ASPECTS OF ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY
Ahmad Mustafa
Artist, London

Conservation and Restitution

ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IN PERIL
Dr. Said Zulfikar
Director, Aga Khan Award for Architecture, Geneva

THREAT TO ISLAMIC CITIES: THE CASE OF MADINA
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Dr. Yousuf S. Natsheh
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PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL ARTS AND CRAFTS IN MOROCCO
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TRIBUTE TO TITUS BURCKHARDT
Hasan (Gai) Eaton
Editorial Advisor, "Islamic Quarterly", London

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Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu
Director General, Institute of Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul

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Department of Cultural Heritage, UNESCO, Paris

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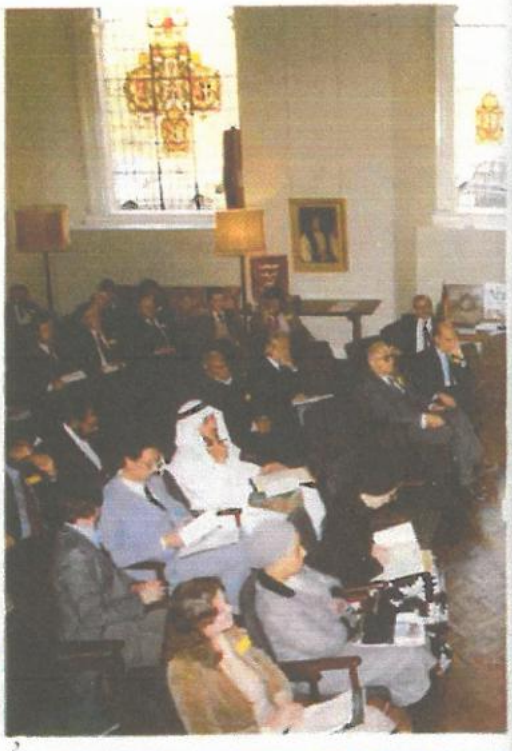
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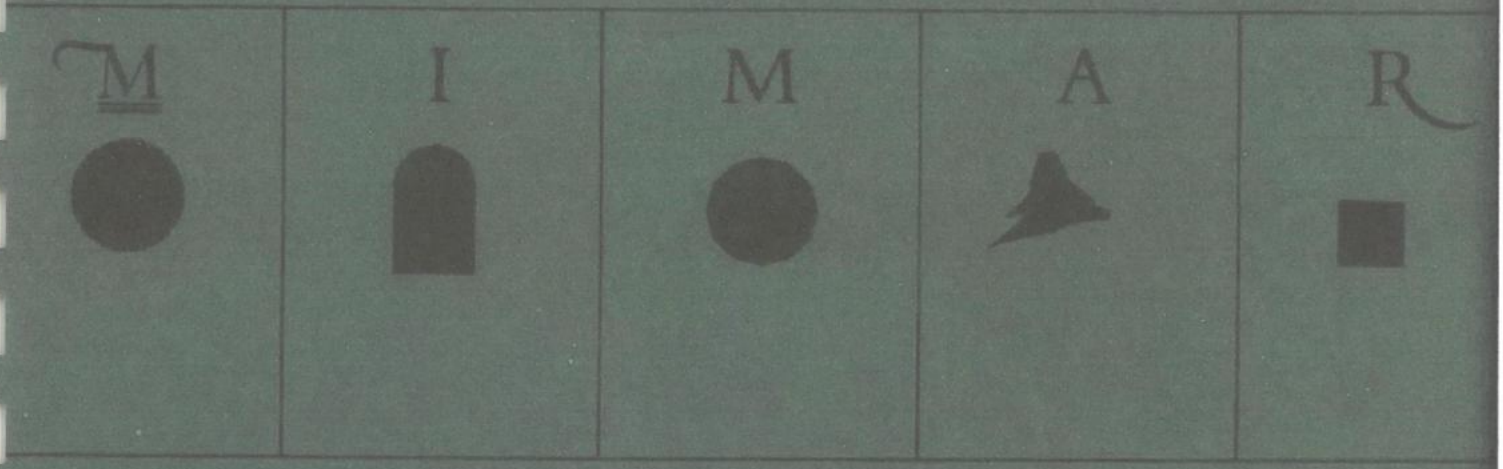
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Calligraphy

in Modern Arab Art

Buland Al-Haidari

It is quite natural for some artists in the developing countries to be captivated, at certain stages in their development, by artistic forms already perfected in the more advanced countries, and by the products of those countries in the form of artistic schools, trends and plastic adventures. It is as equally natural that such superficial enchantment should not last long and that in a moment of awakening, the value of tradtition for inspiration and confirmation of national identity will be recognised. What follows is an attempt to combine tradition with contemporaneity in order to re-inforce the striving towards genuine tradition and render possible an indigenously rooted creativity.

What has occurred in other parts of the world has also affected artists in the Arab states who have striven in various ways to incorporate traditions coming from Sumer, Babylon, Assyria, ancient Egypt, and North Africa. Compounding this rich heritage from antiquity was the Arab-Islamic tradition, from which, for a variety of reasons, they had been estranged for more than seven centuries.



Isam al-Said.

During recent years, Arabic calligraphy has assumed a special imortance in the work of our modern artists. Nowadays, as it did in the past, calligraphy journeys from one Arab country to another and throughout Muslim lands everywhere, forming as it does one of the basic ties which binds Arabs and Muslims. In the mind of Muslims, the Arabic script has assumed a sacred status since it was adopted by the Holy Qur'an to spread the word of God. The sayings of the Prophet Mohammad were recorded in the Arabic script. Thus, it became more than a means of expression; it was preferable to other scripts by virtue of its sanctity, thereby reinforcing the relationship between its formal beauty and its spiritual value.

Those excelling in calligraphy assumed the status of guides to good deeds and to deeper faith. Schools and systems of calligraphy competed for the responsibility of illuminating the Holy Quran. A student of Arabic calligraphy takes greater pleasure in the details of the script: (ا) and (ل) long, lines straight, ups and downs equal, eyes open; letter (ain) looks like an eye; (د) and (ن) dissimilar, sides equal, fringes rounded, molars small, eye balls wide. These assume for the scribe the value of ornament and of honour, something that gives impression of motion while remaining stationary (Nihayat al-Arab fi Funoun al-Adab). Or, one can read about the straight, round, and central qualities of the script where 'the black equals the white in degree, and the separation, the conjunction in sweetness of glamour.' History records outstanding names like those of Mubarak al-Makki of the 9th century who improved on the Kufic forms of the Arabic alphabet; and Ibn Muqla, a century later, who had his own school of calligraphy, highly praised by Qalqashandi (1355-

1418) in his Subh al-A'asha fu Sina'at al Insha. Here we read that Ibn Maqla ascribed the alphabet to the letter (ا) which he regarded as the basis for the formation of all other letters. The letter (ا) is eight dots long and one dot wide. The letter (ب) is formed of one upright line and one horizontal line which together count as the value of an (ا). The ج is formed of an oblique line equal to (ا) in length and a semi-circle with a diameter equal to the (ا) in length. The (د) equals to a quarter of a circle with a diameter equal to the (ا) in length.

Ibn al-Bawab had introduced ornamentation into calligraphy, and invented the Raihani form with its intermingling letters. He was probably the first calligrapher to allow himself a certain degree of freedom from tradition. Then came Yoqout al-Mustasimi (d. 1299), who was known as the Polestar of Calligraphers and whom some critics consider the first to have weighed space against lines on a page where letters are inscribed.

It is also worth considering the various names of styles - "Tomar", "Ornament Dust", "One Third", "One Half", "Two Thirds" - and the qualities ascribed by historians to each of the styles. What is really outstanding is the existance of countless numbers of letter forms some of which have ben created by calligraphers in order to gain favour in the eyes of the prince or to gain forgiveness or blessing as a requital for their creative inventiveness. It is reported that Abdullah Ibn Abbas d.687 (a cousin of the Prophet and known as the Scholar of the Nation) had said: "A man who writes 'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionte' and endeavours in writing will gain forgiveness on the Day of Judgement".

Educated Arabs formerly took as much pride in the beauty of their handwriting as they did in the degree of their knowledge. A fair hand was often helpful to a defendant while a poor hand could work against him. It is said that Abdullah Ibn Tahir (a famous governor who died in 844) once refused a man seeking a favour because he could not support his petition in a pleasing handwriting. "We wanted to accept your excuse, but we were barred from it when faced with the foulness of your hand - were you but faithful in your excuse, your hand would have helped you. Do you not know that a fair hand protects the rights, clarifies the purpose and achieves the aim?" was the rebuke he was given.

Whenever calligraphy spread and took hold there were those who excelled in it and tried to establish a continuity with calligraphic tradition in order to develop and confirm its origins and branches. Often they gave a newly developed calligraphic style the name of their own country in order to underline its distinctiveness from other styles.

As a result of the plasticity of the Arabic alphabet we come across a variety of letter formations which lend themselves to the expression of philosophical concepts. Some artists used adjacent repetition in various light or colour values to suggest a perspective of mirror reflection. Others adopted a gradation in the form of the letter or used letters to suggest forms, while some conected the form of the letter to its semantic value - hence the letter ا in One Third script looked like a sword, and the ends of some letters resembled hawk beaks. Some calligraphers gave the letters a geometrical treatment, which resulted in a wealth of cadence, especially in the script which allow the artist a certain freedom. Among these is the 'Kufic' script within which Abu-Hayan al-Tawhidi (d. 1010) enumerated more than a dozen variations called in his days; Ismaili, Makki, Madani, Andalusi, Shami, Iraqi, Abbasi and so on.

Similar to the earlir spread of Arabic letters calligraplhy today journeys in the work of our painters. Its influence has been given a new significance in a variety of individualistic explorations by Muslim artists. Paining, marked by a consciousness of calligraphy, has almost become a new school of art, recognised by various European critics. Following a visit to the Baghdad Biennale of 1974, Siegrid Calais describes this phenomenon: "It is no exaggeration to say that in various Arab Biennali I found no work expressive of its Arabic origin except that connected with the language, taking its material from the arts of Arabic calligraphy". In the words of Robrt Fernier, this extends to the significance of our artists' experience "where inscription throbs with life, becomes softer or harder, running along its lines or forming in geometrical shapes which enable the Kufic script to assume a thousand and one forms, and render new births of various styles, leading to a stage where reading becomes impossible, and ornamentation becomes meditative and educative, similar to prayer".

The Arab script which in its second journey traversed almost all of the Arab countries, including Iran, Turkey and India, tried to establish in all these areas some of its rudimentary trails in the form of "letters" of various shapes; of the "word" which can change its meaning according to the sequence of the letters in it or its syntactic position; and of the "sentence" which segments a literary work and helps it to enter into the realm of the plastic, thus giving it new dimensions of expression. Such elements are innate in the work of our contemporary artists, who thus transcend the European achievement where artists such as Paul Klee, Matthews, Soulage, Toby, Hartung and others merely use letters as such in their works. Our artists invoke the plastic potentialities of the Arabic script, and the variable forms of the letters give much flexibility to thir work. Their efforts have already attracted many followers who are trying to establish a new school of art, the so-called "One Dimension Group". The group compries emtremely talented artists who have a comprehensive vision of the letter, and have developed a theory which invokes the plastic values of the alphabet, its Islamic and mystic implications, as well as its folkloric relations and expressive potentialities.

Such concepts were outlined in the Manifesto of the Group, where Shakir Hassan al-Said writes: "In our inspiration coming from the letter, we keep alive a realization of contemporary Arabic tradition through borrowing from that main fount of our culture; the role we play is to lay the foundation of a contemporary school of Arab art where the main source of inspiration is the letter of the alphabet."

Although the theoretical aspects of the movement may not yet be called mature, the various efforts by Arab artists to exploit the plastic potentialities of the alphabet have distinguished their individual work sufficiently so that accusatins of copying current European schols or of imitating works they do not dully understand can be discounted.

The Arab artist in Iraq was probably a pioneer in this field. Some critics claim that Iraqi interest in the use of letters in painting dates back to the early 1940s and cite example from the works of Madiha Oumar and Jamil Hammoudi, both of whom were aware of European abstraction. The letter in the work of Madiha Oumar

does not reflect its form as much as it does the painter's impression of it, since she suggests the letter rather than gives it a clear outline. The 'word' in the works of Jamil Hammoudi gains its aesthetic value from the interaction of its letters in a cadence of sound and assertion. In Jawad Saleem's efforts to invoke Arab-Islamic art, some explanatory phrases spontenously find their way into his painting in a manner characteristic of the Baghdad schol of art, and of the Arabic books on science and medicine which were written in the middle ages. Saleem used these inscriptions to fill spaces in a painting and to create a kind of balance by asserting the presence of tradition into his theme and technique. In the works of other artists, the letter gradually became lost in the background, thus foregoing its explanatory function.

Shakir Hassan refers to this: "The problem of the letter as pure plastic value and not merely a thematic composition renders the necesity of considering it a field of a mental movement and a spiritual activity abounding with all the concepts of our contemporary Arab culture".

In Shakir Hassan's own work, therefore, the letter is represented in the simplest forms of children's script, where an expressive desire is conveyed into the form of the letter with a spontaneity indicative of the special emotion behind the letter or the word. Often the letter is found next to a crack in an old wall. We find, in his more recent work, an indication of two temporal dimensions: one asserted in the theme, and another for meditation as a symbol of the mental and mystic dimension of the painting. Thus, this artist combines tradition, and all its dimensions in the significance and indictions of the letter, with contemporaneity. His



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1. Nija al Mahdawi, Tunis.
2. 'Writing on the Wall', Shakir Hasan, Iraq.
3. Acrylic. Adil al-Saghir.

work emphasises that the alphabetical artist, in his human commitment,discovers salvation by enjoying both freedom of expression and objectivity of cultural attainment.

Experimentation with letter forms is an important process for Shakir Hassan and it has been his major occupation since the early 1970s. He endeavours to exploit the plastic potentialities of the letter and explore its mystic significance. This has led him to use broken-up sentences to provoke a cooperation between the artist and the beholder of the work of art. Shakir Hassan continues to strive to develop his relationship with the Arabic alphabet and to establish theoretical bases, enhanced by a conscious view of the subject in the proces of creation.

If we are to look for another Iraqi artist, who shares Shakir Hassan's views and desire to create a distinctive alphabetical art, which explores the utmost potentialities of Arabic script, then the late Dr. Qutaiba Shaikh Nouri was such an artist. He has tried to employ the letter in the expression of his most intimate feelings and ideas, and its form is therefore affected by what is alive in his own consciousness. Although Dr. Qutaiba refused to deal with the letter as a geometrical form and endeavoured to emphasise its presence as a cultural entity, the letter has nevertheless remained limited in his works to its geometrical formation. He never found enough time to develop it as a cultural entity.

Dia Al-Azzawi adopts a course quite different from that taken by Shakir Hassan. He does not seek to develop new concepts of abstraction in Arab art. In his painting, essence attracts all the entities and the artist refuses to break up or disperse these entities. He in fact calls for an assertion of the particles until one feels that time penetrates each of them and strings them together. As much as one senses an Assyrian quality in his paintings, one also is aware of its Islamic and Arabic qualities. "Within reach of possibility, the letter stands on the verge of experiene, lifting its details to asume its unity which gains its status within the new existence", says Al-Azzawi.

The letter, to him, is but one objective in a sentence. If it fails, it is then pushed up in the form of a word or a poetic phrase, or as a part of a poem, conducting a dialogue with the spaces in the painting in a language compatible with other illustrative details in the work. His distinctive style has attracted nmerous followers in the Arab world, especially among those artists who seek to find the highest expressive possibility in a painting within a framework of psychological, literary, and social concepts.

In Al-Azzawi's work this 'new presence' of the letter tries to achieve a subjective unity by mixing poetic and dramatic realities, intermingled in a swift and impassioned cadence. While the poetic aspect indicates the connection and contemporaniety of events, the dramatic aspect asserts an awareness of the event. In his more recent works, one feels a growing tendency to assert the unity and independence of detail, together with an integrity and cohesion marking the entirety of the painting. This leads the viewer of Dia Al-Azzawi's painting to make two movements: one closer to the work in order to read the words and understand the content, the other away from the work in order to render the words, the lines of poetry and the strewn letters into an integral part of a larger whole. Thus the artist wants the viewer to tke the painting apart first, and then to put it back together.

In the work of his colleague, Rafa al-Nasiri, there is a distinctive tendency to invoke the sound-association in the letter, in addition to its flexible and expressive form, thus mixing the two elements in order to make a stronger impact. When al-Nasiri represents the Arabic letter S, he does so through associations of "sword", "spearhad", and "knife" which all begin with the S-sound in Arabic. Through this process, the artist asserts the power of this letter by utilizing its sound effect, its associated concepts, and the toothed forms of the letter itself. He shatters the content of the painting through the symbol of the letter and creates an equation between visual and aural sensations, with the letter remaining an absolute symbol in the painting. The symbol, in this sense, depends for its effect on the ability of the viewer to perceive its distinctive qualities or to deveope an awareness of it as a perspective clinging to an archaeological form, thereby suggesting a perspective spreading upwards in the horizon. If we do not conceive it on this level, then we cannot see more than its illustrative façade.

With the sculptor Mohammed Ghani, the Arabic letter enters aother pioneer horizon. Life is put into a dead form as Ghani, by using modulation and concomitant shades, explores the length, contours and flexibility of the letter. The sculptor invokes various age-old Iraqi art forms, where the mind is arrested by repetition in a framework of collective composition, leaving no form to stand all by itself. He uses his expressive potentialities to achieve proportion and a symmetry between form and space, preserving the balance of forms in their collectivity and economy. This is compatible with the eye-movement and with the unity of variety in a wealth of sensation and constant movement. "Letters of the alphabet", says Ghani, "are like life: inexhaustible in meaning and inspiration, at the service of abstraction."

In his tendency towards abstraction, leaving little in the form of the letter except an inspiration of flexibility, the sculptor defies the authority of space on two successive levels, thus giving his work an aesthetic presence. He does so by modifying the form of the letter, and by mingling it with a succeeding letter and with the space surrounding it to a degree that its identity in sense or form (as well as any indication of a word or meaning) are all effected.

There are other attempts by Iraqi artists to invoke letters and script as a part of the development of a tradition such as the works of Muhammad Said Al-Saggar and Muhammed Ali Shakir both of whom are powerfully expressive painters and calligraphers. Their work combines classical rigidity of script with a general abstract quality. Another such attempt is represented in the works of Issam Al-Said which depend on a mixture of ornamental repetition and formative script, thus emphasising the details of aesthetic values in the Arab ornamental arts. Such qualities are familiar in the work of Arab calligraphers throughout the ages, especially in the use of plastic wealth, which accompanied the development of Kufic script.

Most of the work done by artists in other Arab countries does not differ from the general framework outlined by the 'One-Dimension Group' in Baghdad, apart from the occasional use of local colour, or individual modifications of abstractin, learned from European experience in this field. Mahmoud Hammad tries to support the experiment of Adham Ismail, who preceded him in the early 1950's as a pioneer in the field. He adopts the interweaving of script into large colour-blocks thus abolishing the surrounding space



Rachid Koraichi.



Neja Mahdawi.

and dispersing the original components of language. Although he attempts to replace European abstraction, the result is hardly distinguishable from it, despite his thesis that "Arabic script is a dependable plastic and abstraction element in the service of achieving works of art depending on tradition rather than depending on pure abstractins used in Western arts". Probably one aspect common to the works of both Adham Ismail and Mahmoud Hammad is their tendency to use the movement of the script, suggestive of its infinity. Their colleague Abdul Qadir Arna' out is somewhat different. His experiment is more inclusive of poetic sensibility and Eastern vision, and the presence of ornamental elements. His use of script does not put him far away from the scheme outlined by Paul Klee.

The efforts of the Yemeni artist Ali Ghadaf in the employment of Himyarite letters, and Sabaite decorations, within folklorice media, are not far from those of the Jordanian Rafeeq Al-Lakham, who directly employs Arabic or Nabatic script. The Jordanian artist uses his material to create a special atmosphere evoking local colour, and in this sense he is closer to his surroundings than is the Yemenite artist whose paintings are impregnated with decorative motifs.

Eforts by Sudanese artists to use Arabic letters and scripts date back to the early 1950s. One major representative of this Sudancese tendency is Ibraheem Al-Sulhi, who has made special studies of the aesthetics of Arabic calligraphy, using it in experimental forms and trying to assert a sensual aspect despite the formality of the script. He explains this by saying: "I am particularly interested in the basic elements of composition, especially in Arabic calligrapy and ornamentation. I have reinstated Arabic calligraphy to its basic origin as a symbol of visual forms. This is the key-note to my present occupation." This aspiration has been achieved by his contemporary, Shibreen, whose work is reminiscent of the achievement of ancient Moroian calligraphers. An examination of his work reveals a certain affinity with Kufic and Qairawan scripts, in the characteristic length and thickness of letters and a similarity of movement.

In Arab Egypt, there have also been attempts to include script in painting. This is particularly felt in some of the graphic works by Kamal Ameen Awadh, who strews Arabic alphabetical engravings about his paintings, juxtaposed with antique figures in order to create a sensation of time and a traditional atmosphere. Similar attempts can be seen in recent works by younger artists. Ahmad Izziddin frames his sentences with bird-figures, for instance, giving them a tangible directness. The lines of sculpture by Muhammad Wajeeh ae made to look more abstract by his use of iron in curves and turns and corrugations,suggestive of Arabic calligraphy, where the word does not let itself out easily.

Wajeeh Nahla is almost the only Lebanese artist who has employed script in his paintings representing the Kufic, Naskhi and Ruq'a forms, with ornamental frames using geometrical and leaf-relief, as well as shades grading in thickness. This technique give his words and letters an outstanding semantic value. A clever artsan, Nahla is moe in control of the secrets of his craft than are the artists who spontaneously project lines in a freedom expressive of subjective emotions.

At the other extreme from Wajeeh Nahla stands Faisal Sultan, who tries to mingle the swift, turning movements of the mystic Mowlawy Dance, with the cadences of the Arabic word 'Allah' (God). The word appars in a wealth of clear colours in order to show the quick movement of letter formations with their free surges and plunges into the details of the painting, thus asserting the connection between theme and script.

Contemporary Moroccan artists have developed

their own manner of dealing with letter and script in their tendency towards abstraction, thus suggesting the pages of an antique volume or invoking the geometrical values of Arabic scripts, such as Kufic, in a style which at times transcends the details of language. Their aim is to create aesthetic effects in a manner whereby letters or script have nothing to distinguish them from the other figures in the painting. The reflections of colour and gradatins in cadence assume a prime importance in creating a magical atmosphere, bringing the letter back to its vague early beginnings. The experience of the Moroccan, Ahmad Al-Sharqawi, summarises the experiences of a number of his fellow artists. In his words: "For the artist to be abstract does not mean turning potential correspondence between natural objects into experiments. It rather means the liberation of pure relations among objects - irrespective of such potentiality". Seeing the letter clearly in this case, and probing its significance, has no value for the artist. These two processes as Edmund Omran Ali-Meleh says in his study of Sharqawi, in fact, prevent the original language from uncovering itself, a languae which is further from the shape of objects or letters, because it is "the pure language of the invisible".

'Borrowing'

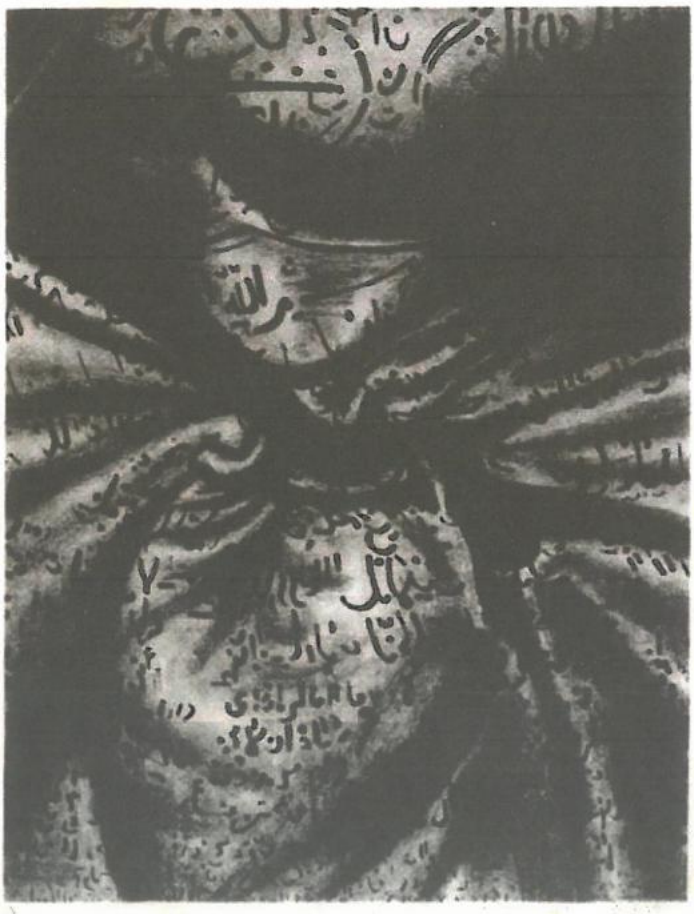
Some of the new emerging artists object to this tendency. They insist that the characteristics of a national art must grow out of tradition and the realities of time and place, and that their cadences mut be compatible with such realities. This is what the Tunisian Abdul-Hameed Ammar means when he says: "Western artists stole a lot of our tradition, and they were good at the job. They were also good at putting this great tradition to the service of the development of their arts. The new and successful Western styles were borrowed from Arabesque and Islamic decoration, and from Arab antiquities, architecture and calligraphy. Arab art exploited these techniques not to assert what is genuinely Arabic, but to borrow what has become Western, thus moving further away from genuine tradition. My visualisation of a connection with tradition lies solely in the faith artists have in this great heritage of art". Naja Al-Mahdawi comes closer to this position in his use of Arabic letters and script, depicting them in long strips and freizes, similar to what we find in the architecture of holy places in the Arab world, although his inscriptions are studies in form rather than something to be read.

Arabic calligraphy, although it has offered many modern artists new horizons to explore whether in an expressive manner, as a formal variation, or merely as a decorative device, has been the object of suspicion on the part of some of them. They see no possibility of calligraphy's transcending what European artists accomplished by utilising letters in painting. Such artists are represented by Said Aql, a Lebanese who had previously adopted the letter in a style that was imitated by a number of younger Lebanese painters. Aql views every effort along these lines as a triumph of form and feels tht present efforts fall short of the great achievements of earlier Arab-Islamic artists.

Said Aql and similar artists have not only failed to exceed the achievements of Paul Klee, they were unable to probe into the traditional arts in order to explore the spiritual dimensions of simplicity, repetitive cadence and lyricism. While such people have retreated into the or bit of adventures in European art, there are others among our artists who still find in the Olympian concepts of Greek art the prize that they seek - one where form clarifies its indication, and so renders communication with the audience a matter of significant ease.

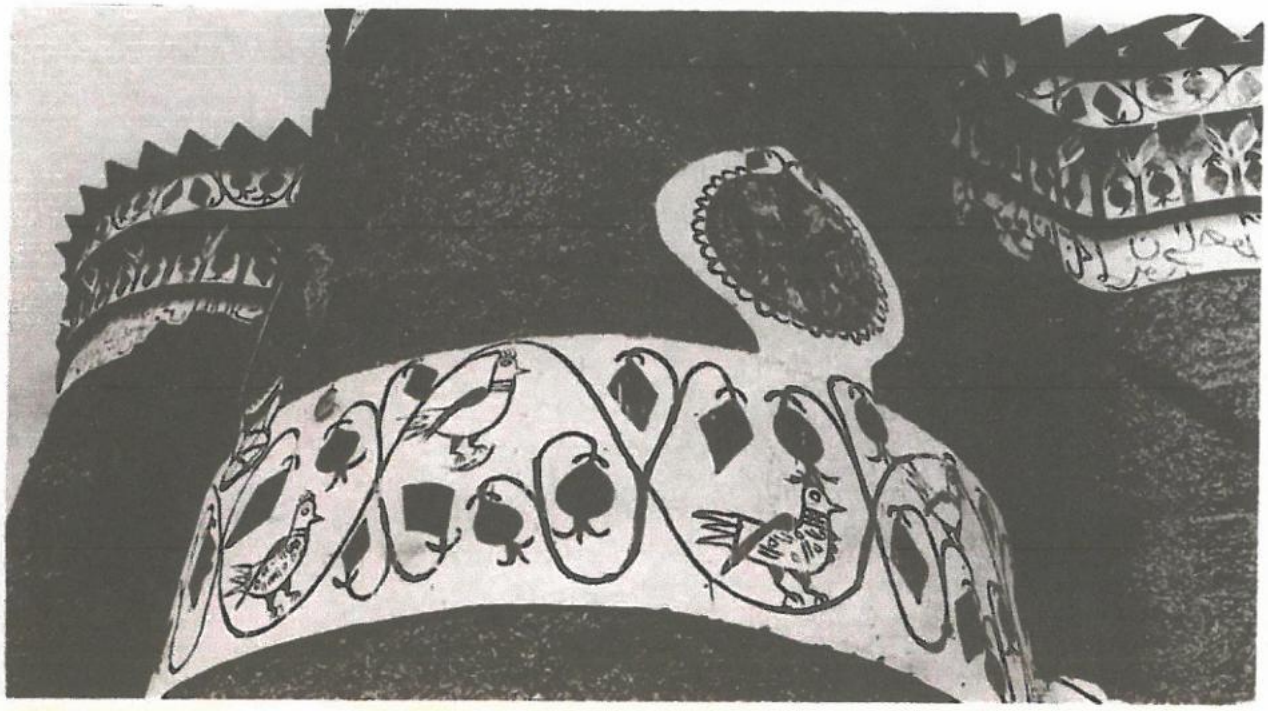
A number of successful attempts by some of our modern artists, Dia Al-Azzawi being outstanding among them, to invoke tradition, the Arabic alphabet, and Islamic ornamentation in order to express the realities of contemporary man in the Arab world, throw considerable suspicion on both of these attitudes. Have these artists really tried to live out their age through their tradition? Or have they been thrust upon this age without first being able to realise themselves in reality, tradition and time? ■

Latifa al-Tejani.



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INFLUENCE of ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE in WESTERN EUROPE

R.A. Jairazbhoy

After studying most of the cultures of the ancient and medieval world, I have come to the conclusion that the ones which are most receptive to outside influences and feel free to borrow from them, are likely to be the most dynamic cultures and those which rise to greatness. Borrowing is not an evil but a boon. A cultural absorption is not something that is caried out in a pedantic manner: what has been borrowed is transformed by a fertile imagination into something quite different — often so different that its roots and origin are all but obliterated — and only a discerning eye and careful research can identify the formative influences

Who would think that on entering a Gothic church, one was looking at an Islamic mosque? And yet Sir Christopher Wren, architect of St. Paul's Cathedral, was not inaccurate when he described Gothic architecture as "Saracenic refined by the Christians". In his day he would have been unable to explain precisely how this came about. We are rather better off.

In the late 12th Century a revolutionary transformation occurred in the Christian architec ture of Europe, when the Romanesque style was replaced by the Gothic. Round arches were no longer used, pointed arches came into favour, and ribbed vaults were introduced in place of groined vaults. Both these key features of Gothic were of Islamic origin.

After 3000 years of the invariable employment of semi-circular arches, pointed arches were invented by the Omayyads of Syria. The earliest building to have this distinctio was the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem,

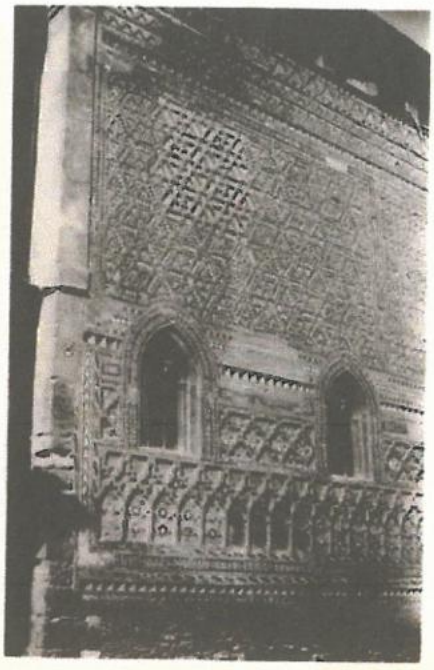


built only 70 years after the Hijra. At first the arch was not visibly pointed, as in the Omayyad palace of Mshatta, but its arc was nevertheless drawn from two centres rather than one. As time went on the separation of the two arcs became wider, and a more pronounced pointed form emerged. In the Ibn Tulun Mosque in Cairo (876) the mature pointed arch appeared two centuries before it was introduced in Europe. The earliest appearance of such an arch in Europe was in the Monastery of Monte Cassino under Abbot Desiderius in 1066-71. The knowledge of building pointed arches had been brought there by builders from Amalfi, in Southern Italy, who had been in commercial contact with the Islamic East. After Abbot Hugh had come to Monte Cassino on a visit, he took the idea of pointed arches back with him to Central France, and introduced such arches in the Third Church at Cluny in 1088-95. And from there pointed arches were disseminated throughout Western Europe.

The ribbed vault originated in a different part of the Muslim world — in Moorish Spain. Ribbed vaults were conceived and utilized for the first time in history in the Great Mosque of Cordova, built in 965-68. The intersecting ribs served to decorate and support the cupolas over the bays of the maqsura. The next use of ribs was in the Toledo Mosque, built in 999. Some of these were of the quadripartite type typical of later Gothic. In the 11th century the Mozarabic Churches of Spain utilized ribbed vaults, and these in turn were then transmitted to France and to the rest of Gothic Europe.

The change of taste in favour of the Islamic style was only part of a much larger pattern. Christian Europe was coming out of its Dark Ages, and was discovering that there was a vast body of knowledge beyond its borders. The board of translators established in Toledo in 1126 translated many treatises from Arabic into Latin, and thus assuaged the hunger of Europe. But this is a story by itself.

To resume, in Central France and in Italy one or two monuments actually began to reflect the polychromy of Arabic Andalusia. The façade of the Cathedral of Le Puy compellingly recalls that of the Great Mosque of Cordova. Its particoloured voussoirs and polyfoil arches are both borrowings from the South, and we know that Le Puy was in close contact with Spain through the Pilgrimmage route. Once again the Cathedral of Amalfi harks back to



Cordova; not only are there particoloured voussoirs, but there are blind intersecting arches, and screens of intersecting polyfoil arches that must be simplified reproductions of the Cordova maqsurā screen. The façade of the Church at Lucca belongs to a different tradition, and seems to have been inspired by the intarsia inlays of ivory caskets from Sicily. Both have animal forms silhouetted in white and set against a coloured background.

The influence of Cordova appears to have been felt as far as Constantinople. Indicative of this is the façade of the Byzantine Palace of Tekfur Serail, with its polychrome treatment, alternating voissoirs and geometric ornament in the spandrels. Could this have been a gesture of appreciation for the glass mosaics which had been sent by Nicephorus Phocas to ornament the Cordova Mosque in c.965? At the least, we have literary testimony that the Byzantines admired and emulated Arab architecture. The Constantinople palace built in c.840 by the Emperor Theophilus is known to have been an exact replica of the Caliph's palace at Baghdad, both as to its plan and its decoration.

We know that Islamic mosques had been built in Constantinople (c.720), and in Athens (c.1000), and in these local builders could have found models of the decorative writing that they emulated. Pseudo-Kufic decoration forms part of the brick façade of the 11th century Church of the Holy Apostles in Athens. Another example of floriated Kufic is to be found on a carved marble Byzantine plaque. Medieval Europe widely adopted pseudo-Arabic calligraphy for decoration. Many examples of this practice have been discovered in Italy, Spain, France and even England.

The most lasting influences of Islamic art stemmed from the two countries reconquered from the Muslims — Sicily and Spain, and we shall now look at these.

When the Normans conquered Sicily from the Arabs in 1072, there were more than 300 Mosques in Palermo, its capital. For over a century after its conquest half the population of the city remained Muslim, many of the mosques continued to function, and some of the Muslim nobility lived in castellated mansions. The Normans widely adopted Byzantine and Muslim styles in their architecture. The traveller Ibn Jubayr was most impressed by the Martorana Church (1145) which he visited in 1190. He did not notice, however, that the timber door was carved with floral arabesques in the Fatimid style, and that there was (and still is) an Arabic inscription below the cupola spelling out a Byzantine hymn. Analagous to this is the inscription placed in the same position of the cupola in the Zaytuna Mosque in Tunis built in 991. Also to be noticed is that both buildings employ squinches in the corners to ease the transition between the square room into the circular base of the dome.



Muslim carpenters must certainly have been responsible for the intricate timber ceiling of the Capella Palatina of the same date (1144) with its cofered stars and mukarnas brackets. The entire ceiling is in fact covered with miniature paintings in the style of Fatimid Egypt. The ruler, seated in typically oriental fashion must be King Roger II, the same enlightened monarch who sponsored Edrisi, author of *Geography of the World*. And it was also under Roger that the first Hindu/Arabic numerals were introduced to replace the clumsy Roman numerals. Paper

too was first introduced into Europe at this time. We know that Roger's grandson William the Good lived in the style of an oriental potentate, with black slaves and a harem, and that he enjoyed Arabic poetry.

Other Norman churches such as Santa Cataldo (1161) have Islamic features including pierced and forked crenellations and geometric window grills. The Church of San Giovanni degli Eremiti (1148) has a surprisingly oriental appearance with its succession of stilted domes covered in red plaster, recalling the multidomed Ajmer Mosque in India (1199).

The Catholic reconquest of Muslim spain took a much longer time. Toledo was reconquered in 1085, Seville in 1248, and Granada not until 1492. When the Muslims were dispossessed, the Christians moved into their houses, and, according to Makkari, wore their clothes, adopted their female slaves, and changed nothing of the painting and decoration.

The large numbers of Moors pressed into service by the Christians were called Mudejars. among these were architecs whose names we still know. They were employed in building towers, palaces, and churches in the Islamic style. The following is but a short list.

- The 14th century church tower of San Marcos in Seville is undoubtedly patterned after the Giralda, the famous minaret of the Great Mosque of Seville. The profile, the proportions, and the ornament, sparingly applied as a crocet-lace around the windows, tells its own story.

- The courtyard of a house in Seville called the Casa de Pilatos (begun 1492) reflects the style of the Alcazar of Seville, although the stucco and tile-work are somewhat prim and mechanical and something of the romanticism has gone.

- Hispano-Mauresque tile-work continued to be produced in Toledo, and the cupola of the Convent of the Conception (1422) is revetted with gold and blue tiles in a frame of interlacing bricks. The chess piece is a reminder that the games of the chess and cards were both introduced into Europe by the Arabs. Lustre pottery, and especially the deep blue ware, were exported, and they influenced the Majolica of Italy which received its name from Malaga or Malika.

- Exteriors too began to be covered with ceramics, as at the Cathedral of Saragossa. They are contained in salient brick compartments, and only the Gothic windows betray the fact that this is a church. In the interior of the church the timbr ceiling is richly gilded and wrought in Moorish fashion with mukarnas, pendants and geometric panels. Another masonry dome harks back to Cordova with its lantern of intersecting ribs forming a star.

- And finally, as if to put a seal on the Reconquest — is the entrance to the Sta. Isabel la Real monastery in Granada (1500-20). The arch is in the mixtilinear form of the Saragossa Mosque; and it seems to be held captive by the yoke and rope emblems of Ferdinand and Isabella who finally brought Muslim rule in Spain to an end.

Thus wherever Islamic architecture came in contact with the West, it startled, waylaid and captured the taste. Long before there was Chinoiserie (a taste for Chinese things) in Europe, there was Islamerie — if I may be allowed to coin a term. ■





A NUMISMATIC CONCEPT

William Horvers

"GIVE FULL MEASURE, AND BE NOT OF THOSE WHO GIVE LESS (THAN THE DUE) AND WEIGH WITH TRUE BALANCE"

The Holy Qur'an, Surah XXVI: The Poets, verses 181 and 182.

From the 7th century A.D. Islam extended the Faith from the Umayyad Caliphate right across the aras of southern France and Spain, North Africa and Egypt to Arabia; from the domain of Islam in Damascus to Syria, Mesopotamia, Eastern Turkey and the Caucasus; and on to Iran and Afghanistan to the remote provinces of Transoxania and Sind. Within the fold of Islam came also most of Russia and India and the East African coast. The geographical exent of Islamic world included later the local states in Southern Malaya and the Indonesian islands.

It is very important to the Muslim World to show their attachment to the historic greatness of their religion, culture and heritage by preserving, studying and displaying the anciet and classic coins of Islam, especially now that the gold and silver coins have been replaced by paper money and token coins.

Hutba, the inclusioon of a ruler's name in the Friday prayer and Sikka, the authority to strike gold and silver coinage, became standard practice in lands under Muslim rulers from the reign of Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik bin Marwan. It became a religious duty of a Muslim ruler to establish a just system of weights and measures and maintain a dependable coinage of sound weight and true alloy. The coinage of Muslim countries has always been viewed as a religious symbol as it is subjected to the Shari'a, the Holy law of Islam.

Already in existence are very fine collections of Islamic coins, i.e., British Museum in London, the Bibliotheque Nationale Francaise in Paris, the American Numismatic Society in New York, the State Coins Cabinets in Berlin, Vienna and Copenhagen, the Hermitage Mueum in Leningrad. In the Muslim World itself important collectins exist in Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, Intanbul, Rabat and Tunis. Most collections were formed during the last two hundred years when they were freely available. Owing to an ever-increasing interest and study of rare coins, the supply cannot keep up with the demand. Moreover, once purchased by Museums in the Western world the coins are lost for ever to the Islamic World.

On the tenth aniversary of the Accession of His Highness Emir Khalifa bin Hamad al-Thani, an exhibition of historic coinages of Islam was a special feature of the celebrations because it is under his enlightened leadership that a programme is being advanced to find and gather Islamic coinage and to take active measures for their preservation and display in a Numismatic Institute and Study Centre. Not only will it become an exciting exhibition of fourteen centuries of the Hijra but a Study Centre for all Islamic numismatics the world-over. Without this balance between loyalty to one's istoric culture and faith and the study made possible by modern technology, peoples and nations can lose their souls and wander endlessly in a wilderness that has no familiar landmarks or raliable guides.

Islamic coinages already acquired by the State of Qatar will form the nucleus of the Institute and Study Centre. The acquisition of additional materials will make the Centre famous as the world's first and leading institution devoted exclusively to the display, study and publication of these items of beauty and utility.

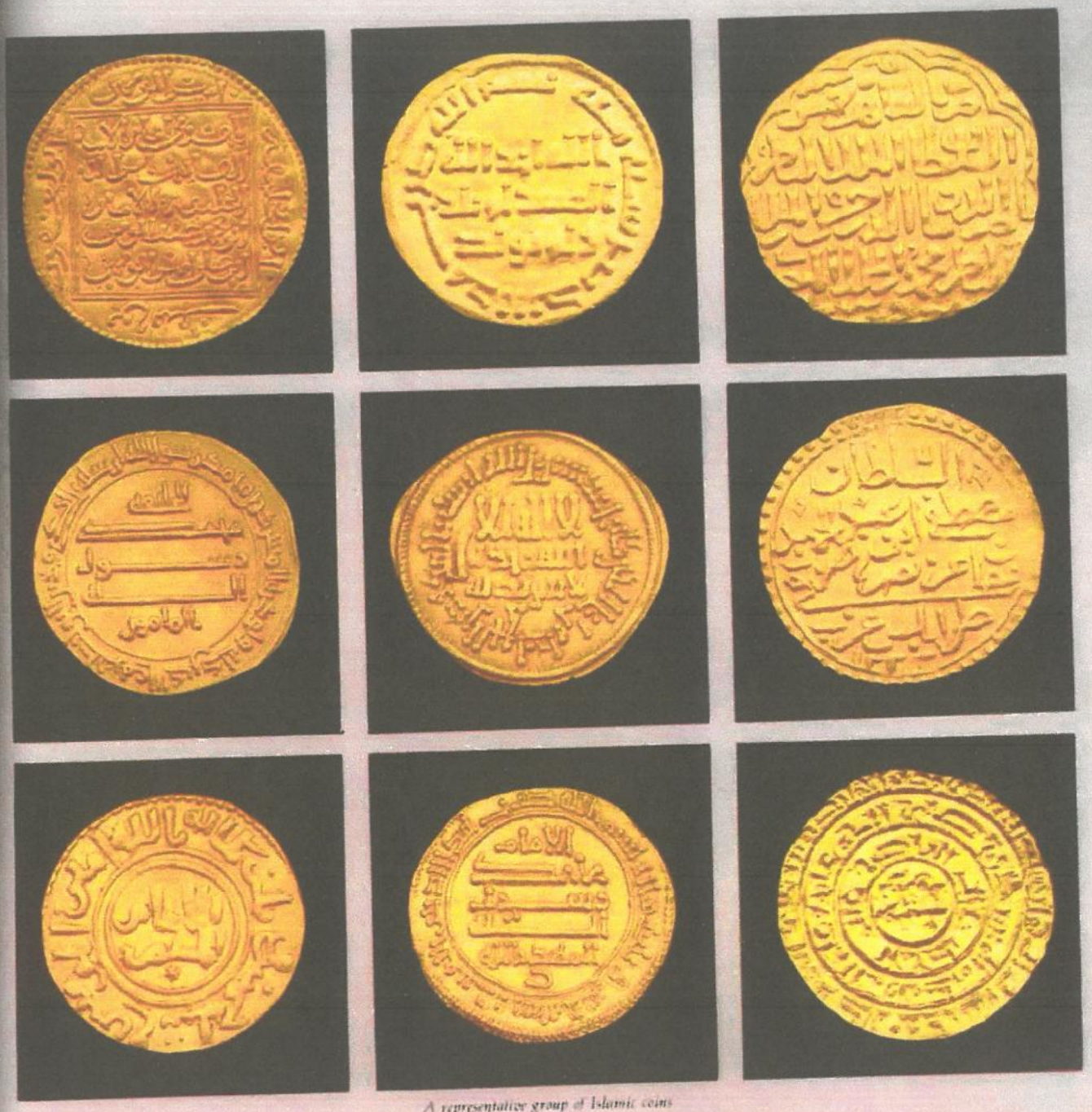
The Centre will select material that provides a representative cross-section of Islamic coinage, including both comonly encountered issues and those of minor dynasties whose rulers struck only a few coins. The Centre will span the entire history and geographical entity of Islam and the coins chosen will surprise and impress the general public whilst merchants and bankers will enjoy the sights of former wealth; economists will be able to chart the trend in economic activity over the centuries; historians will be given first-hand evidence of political development as recorded on the coins; soldiers will rejoice in the names of the cities conquered by the victorious armies of Islam; artists will be drawn to the beautiful calligraphy and designs; rulers will be enthralled in seeing coins of their famous predecessors and the 'Ulama will reverence the declaration of faith and the verses of the Holy Qur'an which are to be found on most items.

The Study Centre will carefully classify, give inventory numbers and identify its location. The coins will be grouped according to dynasties, rulers who struck the coins, date and place of minting, metals from which they are made and the names by which they are known.

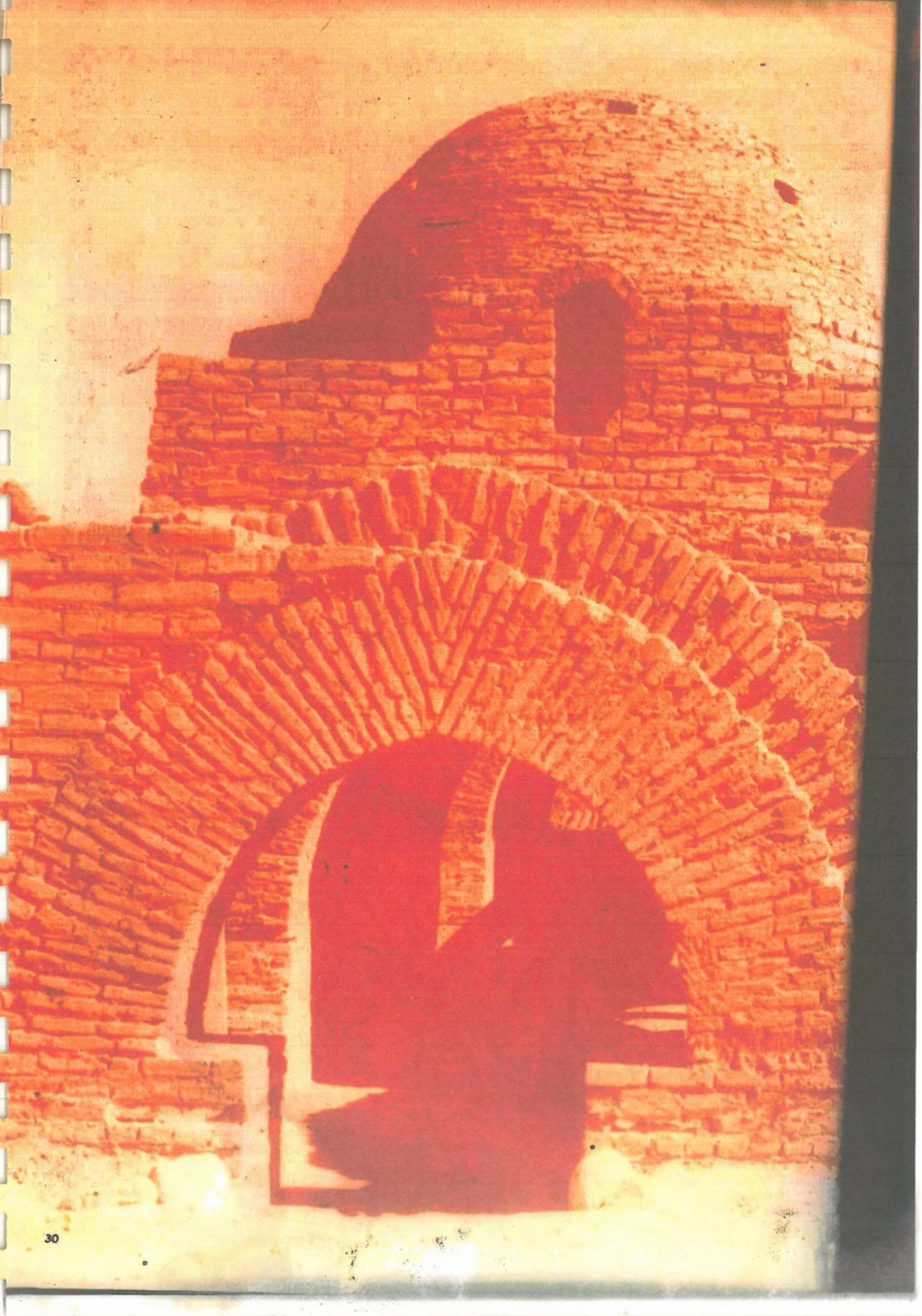
Classification and identification will be undertaken in the laboratories situated in the heart of the Centre. The most uptodate apparatus wil be used, some of which will be made specially for that purpose. It will give a stamp of authority to the coins and through the sophisticated art of metallurgy it will be possible to confirm the area in which the coins were minted.

In addition to the metallurgical tests, each piece will be accurately measured across the diameter, its weight taken to the nearest hundredth or thousands of a gram; its condition given according to accepted numismatic practice and special notes will be prepared and added as a guide to rarity, condition, similarity etc.

Once a complete detailed description has been obtained, the information will be computerised and made available to students, museums and other interested parties. ■



A representative group of Islamic coins



Hassan Fathy

A VOYAGE TO NEW MEXICO

Abdullah Schleifer



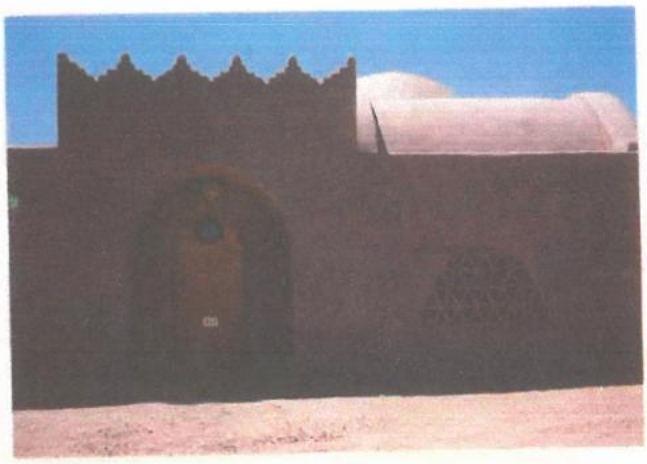
On a sun drenched, windy northern New Mexico type of early summer day in June 1981, Hassan Fathy, the 82 year old Egyptian Master of Islamic Architecture, inaugurated the first traditional mud-brick mosque in America and laid the foundation stone for a madressa (religious school) now under construction by its side.

The mosque in Abiquiu, New Mexico is not a large building but since it employs Byzantine and Sassanid domes, Old Egyptian barrel vaults and claustrawork, all built in local sun-dried mud brick and sited impressively at the edge of a mesa overlooking the Chama River — the building, the techniques and the people who made it possible have all received an extraordinary amount of favorable attention. Specialized American publications on art and architecture such as *GEO*, *Architectural Record*, *Adobe Today* as well as the local New Mexican press have praised the project. A picture of the mosque in the *U.S. News and World Report* tribute to "America's Golden Age of Church Building" and the juxtaposition of a stunning color print of the mosque with a famous photograph of the 18th century New Mexican mud brick Church of San Francisco de Asisi in a recent article on adobe architecture in the American fine arts magazine *Portfolio*, indicates that the mosque is rapidly acquiring national status as an American architectural classic.

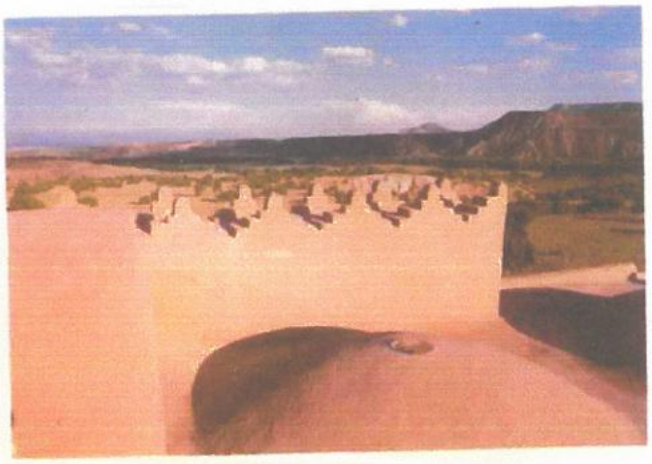
This was Dr. Fathy's second visit to New Mexico. Nearly a year earlier, Hassan Bey (as he is known in Cairo to his friends and professional disciples) had been brought to the Abiquiu site by the Dar al Islam Foundation, the U.S. based international administrative and fund-raising body that commissioned him to design its center in Abiquiu for the study and practice of Islamic Tradition in all of its dimensions.

On his first voyage to New Mexico — September 1980 — Hassan Bey was accompanied by two of his master mudbrick masons from Nubia, Allahadin Mustapha Muhammed and Abdul Jalil Mousa. For nearly two weeks Hassan Bey and his masons demonstrated the ancient techniques — how to build domes or vault across open space without benefit of woodframe supports in a series of on-site working seminars at Abiquiu. In attendance: The workforce of American Muslims and old time Abiquiu residents employed by Dar al Islam to build the center as well as dozens of adobe builders, both professionals and afficionados, from all parts of the American southwest where mudbrick (the traditional building material of American Indians and the basis for the region's famous Spanish Mission vernacular style) is enjoying a major revival as a popular building material.

They had come for Hassan Bey — not just as culture hero of the southwestern Adobe Revival, teaching a technique for roofing in mud brick instead of expensive timber — but also as culture hero to a generation of young Americans trying for more than two decades to escape impossible conditions of big city life for more peaceful countryside living, sharing concerns over the past two decads generally coded by such terms as appropriate or soft technology, passive solar energy construction, vernacular architecture and by two decades of a literature that included such titles as *Architecture without Architects*, the *Whole Earth* catalogues and E.F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful*. For some, at the most thoughtful core of this current , there was a literature of spiritual and metaphysical concern (more frequently than realized of Islamic origin) that addressed itself to those contemporary problems — spiritual and aesthetic as well as social, which derived from the encounter of man and nature.



Mosque Entrance



Mosque Crenellations and Landscape



Hasan Fathi

Many of the American converts associated in one manner or another with the Dar al Islam project in Abiquiu had been part of that same generation of artists, craftsmen and writers. Hassan Bey's literary work, and most particularly his now classic *Architecture for the Poor* appeared in America in 1972 and immediately became required reading for this intensely contemporary Western intellectual current or "counter culture" seeking social and spiritual alternative to industrial society.

The American and French editions of *Architecture for the Poor* have by now gone into several printings. By now a classic the book has transcended its initial audience to be used quite matter of factly as a text or reference in any number of American and European universities and research centers where there is an increasing willingness to explore and experiment with the most visibly relevant concerns of that counter culture.

The book records the history of Hassan Bey's great experiment at Gourna, on the western bank of Nile opposite Luxur in Upper Egypt where he first attempted on a community scale to apply traditional mud brick technology to the problem of village renewal.

Over the years Hassan Fathy has increasingly addressed himself to the task of elaborating upon, in print, the spiritual values and cosmic symbolism that are made manifest through the treatment of space in the Islamic architectural and craft tradition — that particularly Islamic sense of the sacred void that Hassan Bey has characterized as "felt space" or "created space". But what becomes quickly apparent from a reading of *Architecture for the Poor* or from listening closely to his seemingly distracted remarks in recent years at seminars or ceremonies celebrating the specific revival of Islamic architecture, is that Hassan Fathy did not start out as a revivalist, and in the most shallow sense of that revival — of tacking on domes and arches and panels of mushrabiya to a conventionally designed Western building — Hassan Fathy has never become one. There is a certain irony here since Hassan Fathy is, without doubt, the moving conscience within the Muslim world that has inspired a very uneven revival of Islamic style in contemporary building.

What Hassan Fathy was, and remains, is a man committed first to the rehabilitation of the Egyptian countryside and then by extention in the years of work, travel and thought that have followed to the rural rehabilitation of the entire Third World — the 900 million poor who live outside the cash economy and are without means to purchase the most minimal-standard housing.

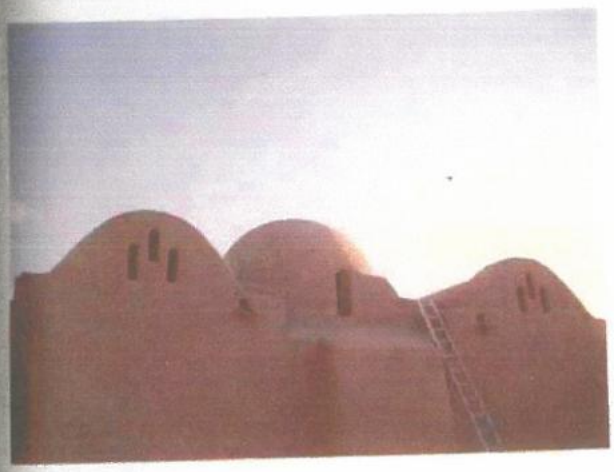
It was by taking that task to be serious or real more than forty years ago, rather than as a convenient slogan to acquire government contracts or to acquire a utopian political stance that Hassan Fathy first turned to tradition, as the only really available village resource — as the source for social strengths and vocational skills that still survived or could be revived with relative ease in what then remained of a traditional Egyptian countryside. And as a corollary, working to improve rural conditions (i.e. sanitation, social solidarity) within the context rather than against the grain of traditional values, and traditional needs.

Fathy's subsequent willingness to explore the spiritual functions and cosmological symbolism of semingly "secular" space (a misnomer in traditional Islamic society in which neither space nor time nor the behavior enacted within those dimensions have yet to be de-pecularised) stems from this working need to comprehend tradition. But no doubt Fathy's exploration of tradition (in the mot metaphysical sense of the word) was further stimulated by Fathy's friendship during the Gourna years with the great Egyptologist Schwaller de Lubicz, who uncovered the metaphysical symbolism of the Pharonic monuments.

In thee years of sporadic work in New Gourna during the late forties, Hassan Fathy managed to build the civic center of mosque, school, elementary and primary schools, souq, craft school and a model neighbourhood with sample homes and guest rooms. Valued forms of surviving local design in Old Gourna — the basic monumentality of the mosque, the strikingly designed pigeon towers, the water jar niche set off for passerbys — all of these were incorporated into the new village of domed and vaulted courtyard houses.

Hassay Fathy says this search for local forms and their incorporation in the new village was not motivated by any sentimental desire to keep some part of the old village as souvenir, but rather to restore to the Egyptian villagers their heritage of vigorous, locally-inspired building traditions.

The political background surrounding his commission from the government — it ws a command decision by the Department of Antiquities to rehouse a village of grave robbers away from the Pharonic tombs where the old village still stands —→restricted the degree that Hassan Bey could apply his "cooperative system". This system is essentially a conscious revival and refinement of clan and tribal self-help patterns, where related groups of owner/builder families, using local materials (mud, stone, timber, reeds according to climate) requiring little or no cash and an upgraded local



Mosque Domes and Vaults



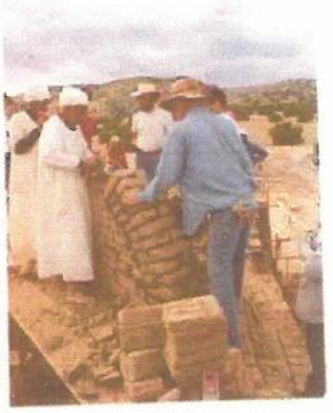
Mosque Buttresses and Clerestory Windows



Mosque Interior



Mosque Doorway



Master Craftsmen laying vault



Mosque and Community Housing Foundations

traditional building technology (again requiring little or no cash for machinery) help each other to build their own homes. In the process they acquire new or improved traditional craft skills that could not but animate the village economy; not only as mud brick masons who had acquired the secret of free-form vaulting, but also as carpenters, ceramic tile and pottery makers and as weavers.

Fathy's literary triumph is a chronicle of failure. The village was never completed and the old village population never transferred. The buildings were abadoned and none have been properly maintained, although the mosque is used by neighbouring settlements and by squattors who have moved in to the model homes over the years.

The project was not defeated just by the hostility of those Old Gourna families profiting the most from grave robbing. Also at work were circumstances that were to recurringly frustrate some of Hassan Bey's subsequent attempts at pilot rural rehabilitation.

There was the bumbling way in which government bureaucracy (especially in the Third World where appearance so often is everything and accomplishment little) has strangled projects such as New Gourna by the very inertia and arbitrariness of bureaucratic style — disrupting projects either by starving them of their promised funds and supplies, or by inundating them with useless staff.

More serious is the fundamental horror that the "modern" classes hold for a cheap, local, traditional building material like mudbrick which threatens the hidden earnings involved in so much government contracting — the "commissions" for the purchase of expensive manufactured and often imported building materials.

But at least as significant a source for hostility is the *khawaga complex*, that widespread contemporary Third World conviction bred by nearly two centuries of colonial conquest and perpetuated in the systems of formal education and mass media that remained behind when the conquests ended — that any craft, artifact or even worldview of traditional, indigenous origin is by definition second rate, unscientific and backward as compared to any imported product — material or ideological — from the modern West.

To advocate and work with mud brick instead of cement and steel; with introverted courtyard housing instead of extroverted village or highrise apartments; with local tools and traditional techniques instead of outside contractors and imported technology condemned Hassan Fathy to obscurity and a reputation in Egypt as a crank or crackpot.

King Farouk was interested in Gourna when the project was brought to his attention and more than a decade later Hassan Fathy returned from his post-Gourna voluntary exile in Athens because still another sympathetic minister during his tenure of office, had succeeded in interesting Gamal Abdul Nasser in Hassan Fathy's vision. But the support of a minister here or an undersecretary there (and even by the late sixties, official honors) was never enough to offset the overall indifference and hostility of the bureaucrary and the building industry to Gourna and to subsequent and even more ill-fated attempt at rural rehabilitation in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world.

Hassan Fathy continued to build. There were individual commissions for private village and public buildings in Egypt and Arabia that enabled him to continue to design, not only for mud brick but for other local materials — stone for the Fuad Riyadh house near Sakarra and for his own beach house at Sidi Krir; coral and volcanic rock in Saudi Arabia.

Along with these commissions came increasing international recognition; including more than half of an entire issue of *L'Arcitecture D'Aujourd'hui* (February 1978) devoted to a dossier of his designs and photos and descriptions of his work. There were honorary degrees, fellowships and awards: the American Institute of Architects, the University of Lausanne, the Belgian Academy of Art, the Union International des Architects, the Balzan Award and the $100,000 Aga Khan Special Award for Islamic Architecture.

But *Architecture for the Poor* (first published in English in 1969, in Cairo in a limited edition by the Ministry of Culture and under another title) has never even been published in Arabic. There was no interest for many years, and now the problem is that Hassan Bey wants to make revisions. That will take time, on which there are great demands, since Fathy continues to work — adjusting and refining the master plan and preparing individual building designs for Dar al Islam Foundation's center in Abiquiu as well as receiving a constant stream of old friends and new admirers at his studio-home in an old Cairo quarter — perched on the top floor of a restored 17th century Mamluk townhouse close by the Citadel and the Sultan Hassan Madressa.

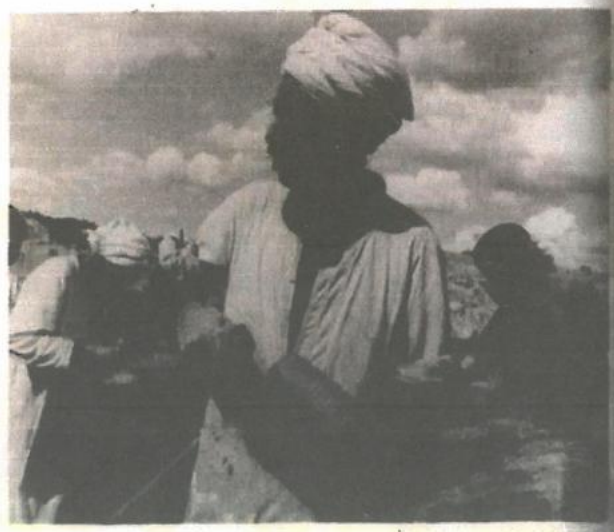
If the flood of awards in recent years has been unsettling, reports that Hassan Fathy had been commissioned to design an educational center in New Mexico set the *khawaga complex* into reverse gear. There has been a flurry of articles in the Cairo press over the past two years describing the project at Abiquiu; indignantly demanding to know why the ministers responsible for housing, or rural settlement have ignored Hassan Fathy.

While the cornerstone of Hassan Fathy's career remains his first project in community design at Gourna he strongly believes that the New Mexico project is the crowning climax. And he is too painfully aware of the way in which nearly all of the Third World elite managed over 40 years to effectively ignore the terrible, stark relevance of his work not to see Abiquiu and the critical response in America to his work there, as a public vindication.

Certainly the similarities in design, material and animating Islamic values make it almost too easy to consider Abiquiu as Hassan Fathy's "Gourna West". Yet there are profound differences — instead of a long settled Nile Valley farming community with a sense of Islamic traditions polished by centuries of practice and an intensely experienced inherited family structue, along with inherited if atrophied craft skills that could have all been awakened and mobilized in a potentially viable local economy, there is Abiquiu — still largely a site (1,000 acres) secured by generous donations of Muslim philanthropists and the vision of its highly cosmopolitan founders, Foundation trustees, volunteer consultants and a growing number of American Muslim craftsmen, artists and professionals scattered throughout the states but attracted by the possibilities for a peaceful, but spiritually and intellectually challenging life in the countryside, developing around the various educational and craft centers intended for Abiquiu.

There is Dar al Islam Foundation President Nourideen Durkee; young acclaimed avantgarde New York painter in the late fifties; rural community organizer and editor in the sixties, a convert to Islam in Jerusalem and a student in Mecca in the seventies.

In Mecca Durkee met Saudi industrialist Sahl Kabbani, who had studied in America, returned to Jeddah and prospered and now wanted to give America back the best





1. Bronze Drinking-Water Tank, Masjed-e-Jame, Herat 776 A.H./1374 B.C. Inset, Detail.

Islamic Metalwork
as a source on Cultural History

A.S. Melikian-Chirvani

Of all the art forms cultivated in Islamic lands, metalwork seems to be the least familiar even to those historians who have long been interested in the culture of that part of the world. Only a minimal proportion of the objects preserved in public institutions have been published. Thousands of pieces in private hands similarly await publication. This is one of the few fields of Islamic art where major works may be said to be discovered every year.

The discovery may be a physical one. Objects are being dug up almost every day in the East. The overwhelming majority are found by peasants or by agents working for dealers. Eventually, they turn up on the Western art market, at auction, or, more often, in the trade. Discoveries made by professional archeologists are exceedingly rare. The first large find of bronzes ever made in Iran by an archeological team took place in 1980 at Robāt-e-Sharaf in Khorasan.[1]

Alternatively, the discovery may lie in the reassessment of an object or of a group of objects that has not been correctly identified regarding regional provenance and/or period.

Factual mistakes reach staggering proportions in this field and in turn give rise to the most extraordinary misconceptions. They may concern the most conspicuous pieces, standing in the great shrines of the Dar ul-Islam. Among these, two bronzes respectively preserved in the Masjed-e-Jāmeʿ ("Congregational Mosque") at Herat and in the mausoleum of Mowlānā/Mevlana/Mowlavī (Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī to Western writers), may be mentioned here in view of their cultural significance.

that he could. They discovered they shared a dream. Kabbani, (who is chairman and treasurer of the Foundation and averages two visits a year to the site) and Durkee were further encouraged by the moral support of Dr. Abdullah Nassif, Chancellor of King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah. Nassif has known and championed Hassan Fathy's work for years, his own neo-traditional Jeddah townhouse having been designed by Hassan Bey.

But it was Fa'ard Gouverneur, a Venezuelan documentary film-maker and teacher from New York turned Muslim and enrolled at al-Azhar for several years, who introduced Durkee to Hassan Bey. Gouverneur, who is a consultant to Dar al Islam and is now based in London as the executive secretary of the Islamic Text Society, had in the early 1970's built his own mud brick dome and vault complex to grow mushrooms in Cairo, under Fathy's guidance.

Other consultants include the German architect Dr. Mahmud Bodo Rasch, author of *The Tent Cities of the Hajj* and associate of Frei Otto, and Dr. Jean Louis Michon, UNESCO expert and lecturer on the Islamic crafts and translator of the works of Sheikh Ahmed Ibn 'Ajiba.

Beyond this cosmopolitanism and the intentional nature of the inevitable settlement in and around the Abiquiu center, there are other differences. The Abiquiu center's uneven hillside site poses different problems than New Gourna's flat valley floor which never knows the winter snows of northern New Mexico and its winter requirements for energy.

Both the original design and the Foundation's own project development strategy are being refined to take all of these differences — social as well as environmental — into account.

But perhaps the biggest difference is that when Hassan Fathy embarked on the Gourna Project immediately after World War II, he saw it as a pilot project that could then quite reasonably and rapidly rehabilitae the entire Egyptian coutryside. Nearly forty years later, while the Egyptian peasants flee the countryside for the bright lights and plastic of Cairo's nightmarish poverty belts or migrate to Iraq, Jordan and the Gulf as unskilled laborers, the traditional crafts that Hassan Fathy counted on, and assumed could easily be revived and expanded are now in danger of either total extinction or surviving in increasingly corrupted forms for the sake of the tourist trade.

Now, the surviving traditional crafts desperately need a refuge. Then they must reacquire what Hassan Fathy alludes to as the aura of "prestige" with which they were once beheld in the eyes of all of the Muslims. Which means the crafts must acquire a new prestige in the eyes of the modernised elites from whom the contemporary Muslim masses invariably absorb their contemporary prejudices. But it must also be recognized that the *source* of that original aura lay not in a public relations campaign but in the intentional practice of the crafts (even to this day where they are still practiced in the full sense of tradition) as a form of spiritual perfection, by masters and disciples aware that the concentrated pursuit of the perfection of one's craft, is, as a form of meditation or remembrance of The Perfect, a vehicle for spiritual progress.



The center for Islamic tradition and technology that Dar al Islam Foundation hopes to build in Abiquiu is dedicated to conserving and then reviving the crafts on just such a footing, and a firm footing that is not dependent on the day to day vicissitudes of ministerial politics in the Middle East.

There are now American Muslim masons who can dome and vault in mudbrick. The Foundation will soon be seeking private venture capital for still other American Muslim craftsmen who propose to set up a factory producing those design lines of Islamic ceramic tile that once thrived in Turkey, Syria, Iran and North Africa. Venture capital is also being sought for an American Muslim carpenter to produce the *sabras* doors that Hassan Bey employed in Gourna and again in the Abiquiu mosque as well as to assemble *mushrabiya* — the Arab screens for wall openings made of small pieces of turned wood assembled into geometric patterns to break the glare of exterior light and provide privacy for the interior.

There are still longer range plans to encourage weaving, metal and glass work as well as calligraphy — the craft that embellishes all others and most directly supports Islamic religious life.

Fortunately, the Spanish American regional style of architecture that prevails or is at least considered fashionable in so much of the American southwest (and with its own tragic, subterranian Islamic origins so visible to the eye) suggests there is a local market for Islamic craft products in America. There are already working architects (disciples of Hassan Fathy and aware of the Abiquiu project) who wait impatiently for these craft projecs to be produced in quantity so that they may import them for use in the mosques and palaces they have been commissioned to build in Arabia and the Gulf.

To further the survival of the traditional crafts, the Foundation intends to establish an academic research and teaching center with archives, video field recording library and a lecture program by scholars as much of value to the academic student of the fine arts as to the craftsmen settled and working in the Abiquiu area. This "Center for Traditional Islamic Craft" would also generate publications and travelling exhibitions of the finest examples of traditional Islamic craft that still survive in the Muslim world.

The Center will also complement the American branch of The Sabah International Institute for Appropriate Technology which Hassan Bey is committed to open in Abiquiu as a center for training mudbrick mason in America.

Certainly in Abiquiu's favor, and in contrast to an Egytian coutryside undergoing a protracted cultural seige that denigrate anything traditional, is the northern New Mexican "arts and crafts" ambiance in which traditional as well as contemporary handcrafts are particularly fashionable, not only with local artists and craftsmen but with the social Establishment as well.

It is precisely for the beauty and craft (which in themselves address those qualities of inner peace and equilibrium that so many Americans seek) that the Muslims have brought to the region in the form of the Abiquiu mosque and its embellishments; calligraphy, carpets and *hasira* (reed) matting, geometic design in tile and glasswork that they have been so widely welcomed.

For its very cosmopolitan rather than rooted village origins, the Dar al Islam Foundation's center could, if it fulfills its promise, radiate the prestigious fact that the traditional crafts of Islam are alive and well in America, and as much available for re-export, in the form of cultural pride, as of product. ■

Footnote: Adobe is the Spanish-American word for sun-dried mud bricks, derived from the Arabic, **at-toub.**

The first one is a large size bronze water-tank holding drinking water for the believers (fig.1).[2] When it was first mentioned in Western literature in 1834 it was reported as being datable to the 12th century. Between 1834 and 1967 it was published and discussed nine times but no mention was made of the man who commissioned it - fully named in the inscriptions - nor of the verses by Sa'adī in which a word echoes the versified chronogram worded in mystical language. Although the latter, superbly calligraphed in perfectly legible *thuluth* script, gives the date in full - 776 i.e. 12 June 1374 - 1 June 1375 - this was not correctly established until the first short monograph appeared on the subject in ... 1969: previous dating erratically ranged from the time of Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Abu'l Fatḥ Muḥammad b. Sām, the Ghorid ruler who dies in 1201, to the 15th century.[3]

Similar mistakes were made concerning a splendid cover that is now fitted to the famous bowl in Konya known as Nisan Tasi.[4] In the first article dealing with the piece, the bowl, its stand, and its covers, were ascribed to the Northern Mesopotamian area, the author being apparently unaware that the cover had obviously not been produced in the same centre as the bowl. The Nisan Tasi cover was later discussed by a German-Israeli scholar who rightly called it Iranian but dwelt on the supposedly poor knowledge of Arabic displayed by the Iranian artist because she did not realize that the titulature, far from being faulty and repetitive, introduces the name of the patron which include his *kunya*-style *laqab* or given title, and his *shohrat* or given name.[5] He is Abu'l Mojāhed Shāh Sulṭān, an Iranian prince from the Muzaffarid ruling house of Fars.[6] Later awareness that the cover came from the Shiraz workshops induced some Middle-Eastern owner or perhaps a shrine attendant to have the word "Shīrāzī" engraved inside.[7]

Since objects of lesser magnitude are not much better handled in many cases, it is hardly suprising that our knowledge of the subject should be sketchy. In the best of cases, art historians have been content with identifying and describing the objects. So far, attention has focussed on questions of craftsmanship, dating and localization. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the bronzes have seldom been considered as products of a culture of which they often reflect the highly complex notions in the most elaborate form. Proof of this atitude may be found in the fact that until 1971 it was not usual to publish Islamic bronzes with the full text of the inscriptions to be read on them. The first exhibition catalogue in which a systematic effort ws made in this respect was compiled by this writer for the 1971 exhibition in Paris held at the Orangerie des Tuileries.[8] And the first attempt at a general outline of Islamic metalwork in a given cultural area of the Islamic world - in this case the Iranian world - has only just come out.[9]

A vast amount of groundwork needs to be done before definitive conclusions can be reached concerning several questions of major cultural interest: Who were the patrons who commissioned the bronzes? Precisely what kind of connexion was there between the ateliers of painting and/or calligraphy and bronze-designing? Under what influence were texts with a religious connotation or of a literary nature selected and under what circumstances did changes in the tradition occur? And, last but not least, how did influence from one area over another exert itself? To address such problems, many monographs, some dealing with individual pieces and others with regional schools at a given time, must be undertaken.

Meanwhile it is only possible to give a sampling of the wealth of information to be derived from metalwork by those who concern themselves with the history of Islamic societies and their cultures. Two questions will be considered here because in both cases metalwork provides indications that are otherwise scanty if not actually missing in our sources, historical and literary. The first one concerns the public expression of esoteric thinking in general and its particular form in the Iranian world from the 11th to the 17th century. The second one concerns the Hindustani response to the Iranian impact from early Islamic times and the varying degrees of Persianization to which this gave rise within Hindustani culture in Moghul times.

1.The expression of esotericism in metalwork

The use of calligrapic inscriptions in metalwork became widespread at a relatively late date in the Islamic world: sometime around the late 10th or early 11th century. It would seem that in this respect, Iran took the lead for reasons that remain to be elucidated.

It became standard usage to have invocations wishing God's favours on the owner who is mostly unnamed.

A typical instance in the form of a calligraphic frieze engraved in champlevé at the top of a lobed cup in the Herat city Museum (Mūzīm-i Baladiya) reads:

برکة و ایمن و اسرور و سعادة و انعمة و د(ولة)

"Divine grace/bliss/joy/felicity/divine favour/good for 'tune'[10]

It is brief as are most invocations on Khorasan bronzes of the late 10th-early 11th century, and it follows a standard order, the first two wishes being sometimes expressed alone. An early case of an abbreviation of which many examples occur from the late 12th to the 14th century is to be found here[11] (*daw* for *dawla*, "good fortune").

It is possible that such abbreviations were originally lined with the splitting of certain words to be observed at the same period. The splitting invariably takes the same form. The Arabic word *baraka* (B'R'K't) "divine grace", is broken up into S'R + W'R[12]. It is remarkable that both the group B'R and the group S'R should make sense by themselves. B'R can be read as *birr* "devotion" and S'R as *sirr* "secret", "secret meaning". On the other hand both the letter K (kāf) and the letter R(rā) occasionally appear on their own, suggesting that they were the object of speculation, and demonstrating at any rate that they had a definite meaning. Assumptions can be made - but none proved - that point to a possible connection with esotericism.[13]

Metalwork here merely raises a question that cannot yet be fully answered. On the contrary, the case of composite words, first mentioned by the writer in 1977, is now solved. Composite nouns definitely relate to Esotericism. Khorasan metalwork of the late 12th and early 13th century provides a number of instances where the beginning of one word and the end of another in an invocation (du'a) are welded into a single unit which I refer to as a "composite noun". This occurs in inscriptions which are very finely calligraphed, carefully engraved, and inlaid with silver, making the idea of "mistakes" improbable.

Here are some examples. On a footed bowl in the Mūzīm-i Rawża at Ghazni (fig.3) with no other decoration than the calligraphic border two composite nouns are to be read in succession:

الس(لامة و ا) لتامه و الشاکر(ة والت)امّة

Al salāma wa'll-tlāmma wa'l) shākir (a wa'l - kar) āmma ..."Divine integrity - fullness, tht which makes thankful to God - God's gifts ..."[15]

A portable writing-box (combining penbox and inkwell (fig.4) to be hung from the belt which was signed by Shāzī "the designer" (*naqqāsh*) of Herat around 607/1210-11 A.D. again carries three composite nouns in its invocation (du'ā) inscription:

al'a (fiya wa'l kifā) ya العا(فیه والکفا)یة

"spiritual immunity - adequacy"

al'inā(t ya wa'sh-shafā) 'a العنا(یة و الشفا)عة

"divine solicitude prophectic intercession"

al-nuṣr(a wa'l-r) aḥma النصر(ة و الر)حمة

"victory & compassion"

In the first two cases, the words could be completed differently. The missing sections, supplied on the basis of



Fig. 3

numerous invocation formulae of the period, are the most probable, not the only conceivable ones. In the third case, there seems to be no alternative. Improvements may be made to the completed readings as our collection of invocations expands and as we get to know more about composite words. However, in the cases under consideration, the notions apparently complete each other. Concerning the Ghazni bowl, the idea of "spiritual integrity" (*salāma*, the quality of that which is intact, perfectly preserved, hence "peace", "salvation") is made more thorough by the "fullness" of God's gifts. "That which makes thankful" (to God), *shākira*, is necessary for him "upon whom God bestows His "gift" or "Charisma", in Arabic *karāma*.[15]

Regarding the penbox signed by Shāẓī, the inner logic to the last two composite nouns is straightforward enough. "Divine solicitude", *'ināya*, is granted through "prophetic intercession", *shafā'a*, just as "victory", *nuṣra*, should be followed by "compassion, clemency", *raḥma*, in accordance with Quranic teachings.[16] The Logical link between the notions conveyed in the first composite noun is less apparent although not lacking according to Islamic ethics: spiritual (or even physical) immunity conditions the adequacy, *kifāya*, or one's attitude or deeds.

All this would be pure speculation were it not for some explicit comments on composite nouns in 12th century Persian literature.

In an anonymous encyclopaedia written around 1170 AD and called "The Rubies of Sciences" (*Yavāqīt ol'olūm*), a section dealing with the Arabic language briefly touches on the subject of composite words. From *thalj*, "snow", and *maṭar*, "rain", the word *thaltj* + (ma)tar will be coined to describe a mixture of snow and rain, i.e. "sleet".[17] The word *taṣawwuf*, "Sufism", explained (by some) as an acronym, the letters T-S-W-F standing for *tawba*, "repentance", *sidq*, "sincerity", *wara'*, "awe of God", and *fanā*, "annihilation", leading to eternity (*baqā'*).

The discovery of composite words on metalwork is important in confirming that these are not fantasies devised by a lexicographer but did indeed exist. Conversely the 12th century writer's instance concerning Sufi speculation expressly tells us that the device could be used in a Sufi context.

Fig. 3 Footed bowl. Khorasan, early 13th century. Muzim i Rawza, Ghazni.
Fig. 4 Inkwell signed by Shazi. Herat c.1210-11
Formerly Ata Mohammad Naqshbandi Foundation, Herat.

Indeed, precisely at that period, a number of Sufi concepts are reflected in the invocations engraved on Khorasan metalwork. Many are explicit beyond doubt, such as the formula wishing *al fanā'*, "annihilation" which leads to eternity through merging into God's Being.[18] It appears for example on a 13th century bowl in the Historisches Museums, Berne, together with a succesion of other wishes equally characteristic of Sufi notions:

Al'izz wa'l *baqā'*, wa'l hamd wa'l-thanā, wa'l*birr wa'l'ata*, wa'l *jud wa'l-sakhā'*, wa'l *hilm* wa'l *hayā'*, wa'l *nūr* wa'l *ziyā*, wa'l *luṭf wa'l ridā*, wa's *ṣabr* wa'l *dawā'*, wa'l *kiyāsa* wa'l-dirāsa, wa'l'ilm wa'l-'alā wa'l *waṭā'*, al'ulluww wa'l fahm wa'l-shafā', wa ... ... wa'l *fanā'*, wa A li-ṣā (ḥibihi).

"Might and access to eternity, laudation and praise, godliness and beneficence, open-handedness and generosity, forbearance and reserve, light and brightness, gentleness and contentment, patience and remedy, intuition and study, science, elevation, and fidelity, understanding, and spiritual healing, two illegible words and annihilation into God's being, and A to its owner."[19]

A number of Sufi concepts identifiable at a glance - underlined above for convenience - is remarkable. *Birr* "Godsend coupled with *'atā* "the gift of God", *jūd*, "generosity" coupled with *sakha*, open-handedness, *hilm*, "forbearance" and *hayā'*, "spiritual shame", *nūr* the light radiating from God (*nūr-e elāhī*), *luṭf*, "gentleness", *ṣabr* "patience-endurance", *waṭā'* "fidelity", *fahm* "understanding", and, of course *"fanā'* "annihilation into God's being" as explained, are all mental atitudes or abilities required by those who follow the Sufi way.[20] The whole invocation is undoubtedly to be understood in a Sufi sense.[21]

Like the majority of 13th century invocations engraved, it would appear, after the Mongol onslaught, this one is in rhyming prose or *sajʿ*. For some reason which has yet to be elucidated, the use of rhythmical and rhyming prose for invocations always including some Sufi notions remained in force for about a century. The latest instances known to the writer occur on early 14th century wares from Western Iran. The rhyming formulae suggest possible recitations in litany form, but evidence is lacking so far to support the assumption. It is worth noting that metalwork appears to be our sole source of information concerning the existence of such invocations.

Metalwork likewise provides some interesting evidence regarding the impact of esotericism on public life - possibly at court - in early times, long before its emergence as a major trend of thought leaving its stamp on every aspect of life as it was to do from the 13th century. Certain bronze wares carry maxims that are typical of esoteric teachings and indeed appear in several Sufi works. One of them is to be read on a large hemispherical bowl of the 11th century signed by Bū Nasr *al naqqāsh*, "the designer".[22] The bowl is engraved with inscriptions written in a compact Kufic script in which most letters are joined, including those that normally are not, such as *alifs*. To make things more difficult still, additional letters are inserted into certain words. *Manṭiq*, "discourse", thus reads *manṭliq* (with a *lam*), and so on. It is therefore hardly surprising that Richard Ettinghausen, when confronted with



the bowl, should have declared the inscription to be "garbled".[24] In view of their content, however, this was a somewhat unfelicitous choice of words. The first two maxims written in succession say: (fig.5 for detail showing first maxim).

احفظ لسانك/لا/يقول قليل/لا/انّ البلاءُ موكلٌ بالمنطـ/لـ/ق

Keep/Protect your tongue by saying little. Verily calamity is linked to discourse.

The second maxim appears in the treatise of the 10th century Sufi thinker abu'l Ḥasan al-Deylamī and is paraphrased in Persian first by another great Sufi, Hojvīrī Ghaznevī, who lived in Ghazni, and a little later by Nāṣer Khosrow, the Isma'ili esotericist.[24] It was later commented on by Jāmī, the great Sufi poet of Herat who made it the first of a Persian quatrain (*robā'ī*).[25] What gives these maxims their significance is that they are to be read on several other pieces. One is an unpublished white bronze bowl datable to the 11th century which was acquired in the Ghazni bazaar by the Italian Archeological Mission and was kept in storage for future display in The Tapa Sardar Museum when I studied it in 1976 through the courtesy of Dr. Maurizio Taddei. A third hemispherical bowl with those two maxims engraved on the outside, following the signature of the designer Abū Ja'afar was auctioned in Paris in June 1981. The inscriptions were not deciphered at the time.[26] The latter displays greater mastery than Bū Nasr's work to which it is otherwise closely related, including the heavy type of casting and bevelled style of the engraved decoration.

The existence of bowls with identical maxims signed by different masters would appear to indicate that the texts were not chosen on the initiative of the designer. On the other hand, the recurrence of certain maxims suggests that they were selected from existing "Maxim Books" used by those who designed the decorative patterns and the calligraphers to whom the designers applied in some cases.

The use of such maxims in Arabic continued through the 12the century. By that time, there are also some rare cases of Persian maxims. The only ones published so far are those that were read by this writer on a fragmentary rosewater sprinkler (*golābzan/golābzane*, in Arabic *rashshāsha*) signed by Abd al-Razzāq al-Neshbūrī probably in the later half of the 12th century.[27] (fig.6)

How many phantasies in but a single breath.	دریك نفس چندین هوس
Do the right thing - the right thing is the best.	راستی کن راستی به
Cut off your bond - it all goes.	قید بر همه بگذرد

Illusion, the necessity of rectitude, detachment from this transient world: these three maxims composed in the kind of prose known in Persian as *naṣr-e mozayyan*, "adorned prose" - they follow regular poetical metres even though they are too short to read as complete single verses - offer a striking profession of asceticism (*zuhd*) very much attuned to the Sufi way. They would be fiting on an object used by a dervish having renounced the world and performing duty as a shrine-attendant (*khādem*). This might have included sprinkling rosewater (*golāb*) on the tombstone or sarcophagus standing over the grave of an *Imam* or a spiritual master.

No evidence is at hand that would readily account for the disappearance of maxims, whether with esoteric undertones or not. This seems, however, to have coincided with the growing role assigned to Persian poetry by metalwork designers. The same remark applies to the invocations or *du'ā* which went out of fashion in the first half of the 14th century, about the end of Mongol period.[28] From then on, poetry prevailed on Iranian bronzes. With the exception of the eulogies addressed to rulers invariably worded in Arabic as were foundation inscriptions in architecture, poetry eliminated all the other forms of written expression on metalwork.

The impact of Sufism which was becoming increasingly apparent in all forms of Iranian culture left its mark on metal vessels and their versified inscriptions. Even dating formulae became an excuse for composing verses and even such factual data became inextricably interwoven with the theological concepts of Sufism. The most striking illustration of the trend is found on the large bowl-shaped watertank holding drinking water for the faithful (*mirjal*) in the Congregational Mosque at Herat.[29] At the top of the bowl, an admirable calligraphic frieze begins with the formula paraphrasing Quranic verse XVI, 98 uttered at the beginning of public ceremonies in the Iranian tradition as in that of other Islamic countries (fig.2):

اعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم

"I seek refuge with God from Satan the stoned one."
This is followed by Quranic verses that conjure up visions of felicity in Paradise:

يطاف عليهم بكأس من معين بيضا لذّة للشار بين و سقّيهم ربهّم شراباً طهوراً

"They (unnamed, angelic beings) whirl around them (the believers) with bowls of transparent whiteness for the drinkers' pleasure (XXXVII, 46). "Their Lord poured them a pure beverage" (LXXVI, 21)."

Here, the analogy of the Mosque courtyard (*ṣaḥn*) with Paradise and of the tank with the Water of the Kawthar (a Paradise river) is implicitly hinted at. The Quranic quotation is followed by the mention of the ruler's reign in such a way that, read literally, it can only be understood as "Their Lord poured ... In the days of good fortune of the greatest sultan Ghiyāṯ al-Duniyā wa'd Din Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Muhammad Adū Bakr Kart, may God make his kingship eternal and support his cohorts". Thus the eternal and the contingent are linked. Then comes this versified chronogram (metre: *mojtaṣṣ*):

هزار سال جلالی بقای ملکش باد همه شهور ارد یهشت و فروردین بسال هفصد وهفتاد و شش بداز هجرت که نقشبند حوادث نمود این صورت.

May the remainder of his kingship be a thousand years of splendor
All its months being Ordībehesht and Farvardīn (i.e. Spring months: eternal spring)
It was in the year seven hundred and seventy six starting from the hijra
That the Painter of Contingencies revealed this design/image.

"Painter of Contingencies", in Persian *naqsh-band-e ḥavādeṯ*, is a Sufi metaphor for God, who wills all that is apparent and not apparent in this world. The water tank and its patterns are thus expressly designated as an expression of God's design.

The theme is pursued in the second calligraphic border in smaller script, below the former. The first two sections tell us that the *mirjal*, as such tanks are called, was financed by one Muḥammad b. Alī b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd at-Ṭūsī "known as Qalandar al Fuqqā'ī". The next two sections record the names of the calligrapher introduced by the verb *katabahu*, "written by", Solṭānshāh b. Kāfī, and of the "maker", i.e., the designer, Hasan b. Alī Esfāhānī "known as Jamāl Hasan". Both artists must be rated as ranking among the greatest in Iranian history and, if only for that reason, are major additions to the history of Iranian art. Finally two distichs from Sa'adi's peface to the Golestan[30], much repeated in later times, echo the idea of the design (*naqsh*) willed by God (fig.7):

Our yearning is a design that shall survive us
For I do not see existence as durable
Perchance, one day a lucid one (Sufi) out of compassion.
Will utter a prayer for the sake/work of the Dervishes.

The mystical images, the interplay between the reality of the world of beyond and the world of contingencies, leave no doubt as to the Sufi background of those who ordered it. The name of the man who commissioned this work, a *qalandar* or "wandering ascetic" as may be inferred from his given name (*shohrat*) introduced by the title *"qalandar"* followed by the nickname al Fuqqā'ī "the Potter", points to his Sufi affiliation.[31] An indirect confirmation is probably to be read into the selection of the verses by Sa'adi, a great figure among Sufis, invarialy referred to in the Iranian tradition as *Sheykh*, "Master", with their explicit mention of the dervishes i.e. the "Poor" who have renounced the world. In this context, the



Fig.5

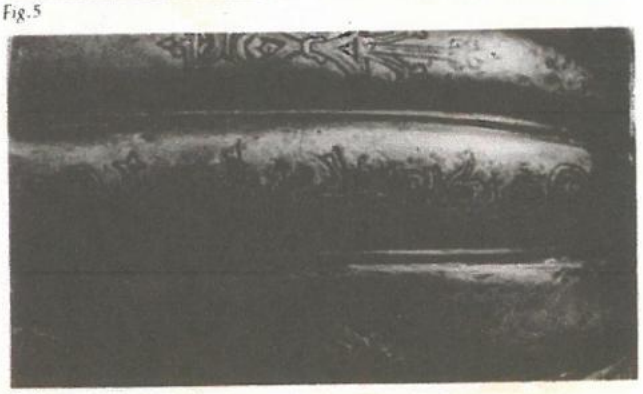


Fig.6



Fig.7

Fig. 5 Inside of 11th century bowl signed by Bu Nasr showing maxim with inserted Lam-alif groups. Formerly Mackenzie collection.

Fig. 6 Detail of Rosewater sprinkler (golabzan) signed by Abd al-Razzaq al Neshaburi showing Persian maxim dar yek nafas chandin havas.

Fig. 7 Detail of water tank

word *naqsh* (which appears in Sa adī's poem) echoes the compound noun *Naqsh-band*, "He that achieves designs/drawings", by which God is referred to in the chronogram. By stating that "God revealed this design" the chronogram thus answers the "wish yearning" (gharaz) for a "design" celebrated by Sa adi. The conection between art or, more specifically, metalwork, and God's Will is explicitly noted in mystical language. This may be hardly surprising in the city of Herat, one of the earliest centres of Sufi teaching, and under the rule of Ghiyāṯ al-Dīn Muḥammad Abū Bakr Kart, a somewhat elusive dynast known to chroniclers as Pir Ali, "Master Ali", a name coined in the Sufi tradition.[32] But without this imposing water vessel we would have no idea that Sufism could find such a spectacular expression in that stronghold of Islamic teaching - the Congregational Mosque.

However, it is in the next century that metalwork was to give the full measure of the pervading influence of Sufism on art in the Iranian sphere. By then, Arabic inscriptions appeared only exceptionally. Arabic was reserved for special occasions such as the dedication of a *masraja* or lamp-on-stand to the holy shrine by a dervish in 1459 A.D.[33] Another Arabic inscription is found about that time in the form of an unusual maxim with a strong religious connotation:

مبروك الا بتداء ميمون الا تنهآ

"When the beginning is blessed with divine grace, the conclusion is felicitous."

Inscribed in gold on a small bowl-shaped jewel casket - in Persian *ḫoqqe* - of princely quality, the maxim suggests that the piece ws commissioned as a solemn gift, possibly commemorating a wedding.[34]

Some rare *du'ās* were occasionally worded in the style of much earlier days. One is to be read on the underside of a mug (*mashrabe*) dated 1461-62 A.D. otherwise literally covered with two odes by Hafez.[35] Another, also made in the second half of the 15th century, almost certainly in Khorasan, carries wishes in the form of an Arabic poem often found from the 12th to the 14th century - "To its owner, felicity and spiritual integrity - As long as the dove coos". Some extremely rare royal dedications are also on record, such as the *mashrabe* in the British Museum incribed on the underside with the full titulature of Sulṭān Bahādor Bayqarā.[36]

But the overwhelming majority of inscriptions on Iranian metalwork from the mid-15th century on, are Persian poems, of which many deal with Sufi themes. A recurring image is that of the face of the Companion/Beloved One (in Persian *yār*) looking down at the bowl full of wine. The bowl reflects His Face and is thus turned into a Fount of the Sun (*cheshme-ye khorshīd*). The Beloved One is God and the implicit idea is that we accede to the understanding of God's Being only through a reflection.

These images are found in an ode (*ghazal*) by Helālī Chaghāta'i ("Choghtā'i"), a poet of Turkman stock who was educated in Astarabad, then a great centre of Shiite esotericism, and left as a young man for Herat where he was to die in 935/1528-29.[37]

بار چون درجام می بیند رخ گل فام را عکس رویش چشمهٔ خورشید سازد جام را
جام می بردست من نه نام نیك ازمن مجوی نیك نامی خودچه کار آید من بدنام را؟
از خدا خواهد هلالی دم بدم جام نشاط کوحریفی تا بساقی گوید این پیغام را؟

As the Beloved One considers his rose-face in the wine bowl
The reflection of His Face turns the bowl into the Top
Set the Wine bowl in my hand,
seek not a reputable Fount of the Sun
Respectability itself what use have I got for it,
I the disreputable one
...From the Lord Helali constantly begs the bowl of alacrity
Where is our partner that he/she may deliver this message
to the Cup-Bearer

These verses are actually engraved on a large bowl signed both by its maker or rather its designer, master Maḥmūd Alī.[38] The calligrapher Solṭān Mohammad, probably Solṭān Moḥammad-e Nūr, also left his signature in a cartouche engraved on the outside introducing the cartouche that encloses the poem.

The name of one of the greatest Iranian calligraphers in *nasta'alīq* is in agreement with the outstanding quality of the work of art. The signature is of further interest in helping to establish that the bowl was actually made in Herat. Maḥmūd Alī's name is followed by the date 916 - in figures as is usual at that time - /10 April 1510 - 30 March 1511. At that time Solṭān Moḥammad-e Nūr was in Herat, so was Solṭan Moḥammad-e Khandān in case the completion of the signature as Solṭān Moḥammad-e Nūr should be questioned.[39] Helālī was also a resident in the city. It is therefore highly probably that the bowl was made in Herat. The city is known to have been a major metalworking centre down to the early 13th century and it can furthr be proved to have had a brilliant school of metalworkers in the latter part of the Timurid dynasty.[40] In other words the bowl now preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum illustrates the impact of Sufi themes among the upper classes in Herat at the very end of the Timurid period.

The influence of Sufism over the Persian-speaking elite of the East spread far beyond the boundaries of Iran. It extended to Hindustan, as Islamic India was known historically. Here too metalwork helps in measuring its full impact by providing data not found elsewhere. Indeed it does a great deal more than that. Scanty as the recorded amount of material may be, it is a highly important source concerning the early stages of Islamic culture and society in Hindustan.

II. *The making of Islamic culture in India: the evidence of metalwork*

Islamic culture was carried into India from the neighbouring Eastern Iranian territories. While a good deal of information is available concerning the military compaigns led by rulers who were mostly of Turkish stock or the political events that took place in the various states set up by the victors, sources tell us surprisingly little about the process that led to the emergene of Islamic culture.

It seems to have been a complex one. In all likelihood, it should not be thought of as a well-regulated development but rather as the accumulation of layer upon layer of influences coming in from Iran and blending to varing degrees with the indigenous tradition each time a new influx of Persian or Persianized population introduced new ideas.

Each layer may be assumed to have left something and eventually dissolved itself - until the next wave.

In the early period that is certainly the picture suggested by metalwork.

There are some indications for example that one of the earliest styles developed in the Islamic peiod by Eastern Iranian metalworkers reached the North Western border of India. In Iran, the style is represented by a group of wares made from a high-tin alloy - to the average ratio of 21-22 per cent of tin - described in early metallurgical treatises (*Khwāje* Nasīr ad-Dīn Tūsī, Abo'l Qāsem Kāshānī and others) where it is called white bronze (*safīdrūy*).[41] The patterns, predominantly geometric, are executed with dividers, rulers and punches, tangent dotted circles being used in chains for framing purposes or as a background to set off motifs.

A peculiar group of related white bronze bowls could be seen in the Peshawar bazaar in the early seventies. It was sometimes given a Swat Valley provenance. The shape of the hemispherical bowls tended to have a more angular profile than those from the Iranian world *stricto sensu*. The alloy was worked - by casting and turning on the lathe? - in such a way as to have a much lighter feel in the hand than the heavily cast white bronze bowls from Eastern Iran. The writer was unfortunately unable to photograph any specimen. However one such piece was acquired in Peshawar by the late French architect Le Berre in unkown circumstances and was included after his death in a Paris auction.[42] The cataloguer reproduced it and gave it a Khorasan provenance, which is wrong. The simple decoration reminiscent of a six-rayed star was probably intended as a stylized vault-pattern. It is directly related to the Khorasan repertoire even though the motif is handled differently - note the spiky points for example.

It would be very rash indeed to offer any precise dating for a piece that does not have any archeological context and cannot for the time being be fitted into a sequence of typologically related objects. Guessing broadly, the 10th-11th century seems a possibility. It would be equally unwise to submit a definite provenance. Evidence is lacking, other than the fact tht several such pieces have surfaced on the market in Peshawar. It is therefore highly probable that the piece and many others were found in the North-Western part of present-day Pakistan. We may tentatively infer that they originated in that area and as such represent the earliest surviving Islamic artefacts of Hindustan probably made at the beginning of Ghaznevid rule. If these observations are correct, the first stage of Hindustani metalwork then appears to have followed closely although not slavishly the Iranian model.[43]

The next stage is again surrounded by a measure of uncertainty. It is illustrated by a pair of bronze stirrups which turned up on the Paris art market without any known provenence(fig.8). Theirs is a highly characteristic structure: a rectangular foot-plate is flanked at either end by plates rising vertically to be linked by an arched rod in turn topped by a grip-like device.[44]

The type seems to have reached Southern India as early as 1208 A.D. In the temple at Keshava completed in that year, some horsemen carved in the round are shown wearing stirrups that have long rectangular foot plates, with low plates rising at a right angle at either extremity to be linked by arched rods.

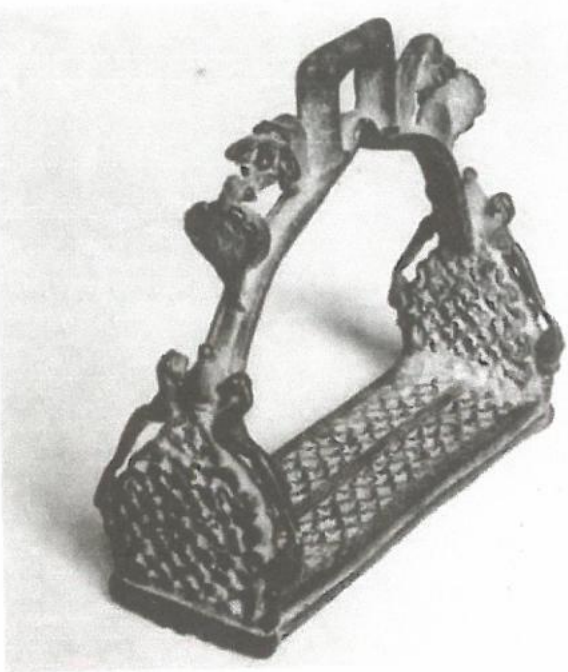


Fig.8

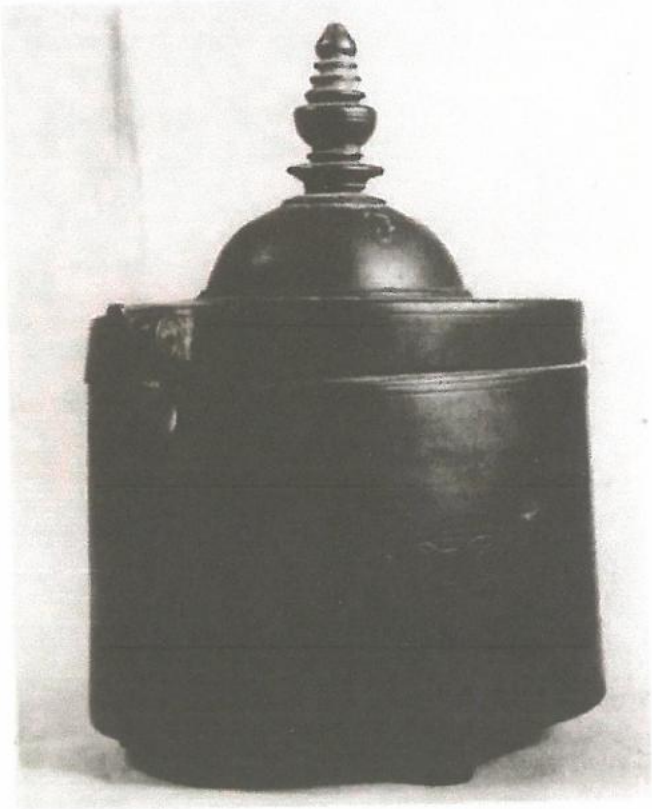


Fig.9

Fig. 8 Bronze stirrup, Hindustan, Delhi area, first half of the 13th century. Anonymous loan, Victoria and Albert Museum. (Unpublished)

Fig. 9 Inkwell, Hindustan, probably 14th century. Baroda Museum (Unpublished)



Fig. 10 Inkwell, Hindustan, 14th C



Fig. 11 Casket, Iran. 14th century.

Other details on the excavated pieces make it possible to submit a closer dating, some time within the first third of the 13th century. The pattern of tangent quatrefoils framed by poly-lobed cusped arches is to be compared with a remarkably similar ornament, despite the differene in size medium and on the first storey of the Quṭb Minār completed before 1236 A.D. The polylobed and cusped arches above-mentioned fit within the limits of an equilateral triangle on the stirrups as they do at Ajmir in the Arhai din-ka Jhompra.[45]

What makes the stirrups relevant to the history of the emergence of Islamic culture in North Western India is the combination of characteristics that parallel those of the Quṭb Minār in architecture. Concerning the stirrup, the model is based on Iranian prototypes, which can be traced as far back as the 8th or 9th century A.D.[46] The symbolism of the iconography is again entirely dependent on Iranian literary images and on the conventions used in the visual arts to convey them. But stylistically, the handling of details is purely Indian.

The parakeets perched on either side of the lotus-bud finial at the top of each side-plate do not differ in any way from similar birds to be seen on small Vishnuite bronzes of the period. The lotus blossoms stemming on either side of the upper grip and curving down are again borrowed from the indigenous Indian repertoire even though their presence here serves to express an Iranian notion - that of the *ṭāq-e nīlūfarī* or "blue-lotus vault" which symbolizes Heaven.[47] This may be compared to the bands of carved ornament in purely Indian style framing Quranic suras arranged in horizontal frieze on the Quṭb Minār - an idea imported from Eastern Iran where such friezes were commonly used in the 11th and 12th century.[48]

In terms of cultural history, the evidence of the stirrups is of great importance. Thanks to the stirrups, we now know tht the combination of an Iranian plan, Iranian ideas, and Indian details found in architecture is not just due to some practical necessity of using what manpower happened to be available. It was at least as much, if not even entirely, the result of an aesthetic option. Unlike the monument, the stirrups were executed by one man, not a whole team, and there was no material incentive to remodel the Iranian prototype in Indian terms.

No other bronzes from that early period or, at least, none that can be proved beyond reasonable doubt to predate the 14th century, seem to have surfaced so far. However, there is some definite evidence, even though of an indirect order, that the school of Eastern Iranian metalwork had a large-scale impact on north Western Hindustan at about that time, i.e. in the 13th century A.D. This subject is to be dealt with elsewhere in greater detail. Two cases may be meanwhile cited here. Both concern unpublished items which must be briefly introduced.

The first case consists of group of two closely related inkwells created at about the same time by the same atelier if not actually made in the same workshop. One inkwell is now in the Baroda Museum (fig.9) and the other was photographed by the writer while offered on the Paris market (fig.10).[49] The nearly cylindrical body, tapering very slightly, carries the same type of cover designed as a low curving dome rising from a broad platform. A highly characteristic hinged plate pierced in the centre to prevent the cover from sliding by fitting over a knob is to be seen on both inkwells. The rosette with short lobes radiating at the base of the dome on the shorter inkwell is paralleled by a similar pattern at the top of the dome, around the base of its finial, on the bigger inkwell. Structurally, the Baroda Museum inkwell is directly derived from well-known Iranian types, popular in the late 12th and early 13th century.[50] It is supported by three truncated conical legs which have no parallel on the Iranian inkwell but are known from other wares of an early period.[51] The only strikingly un-Iranian feature is the finial borrowed from the Hindustani repertoire.[52] The Paris market inkwell is shorter and would seem to have been designed by arranging differently the same modular units.[53] In proportion, it would rather call for comparison with the caskets from 14th century Fars (fig.11).[54]

The other dating elements are scanty going by Iranian parallels - Hindustan offers none. The hinged fastening plate would point to a mid-to-late 12th century date. The band of scrolling design goes back to very early times and could be paralleled from 12th century pottery. In Hindustan however comparable patterns go down to Mughul times.

But whatever the actual date of execution, it seems likely that the type illustrated by the Baroda inkwell was introduced to Hindustani metalworkers some time in the 13th or perhaps the 14th century if we are to go by the Paris inkwell: neither shape appears to have outlasted that time limit in Iran. Here the Indianization is less marked than on the stirrups. Structually, it is noticeable only in one detail: the finials. It is hardly more apparent in the sparse decoration. The rosette, at best, has a slight Indian flavour. Yet, not for a second would it be possible to mistake the Baroda Museum inkwell, let alone the Paris market specimen, for an Iranian object. The alloy has a more mauvish hue than Iranian bronze or brass (or any of the quaternary alloys: no laboratory analysis being available, the exact composition of what may be a quaternary alloy remains unknown) and is more heavily cast. Far more significant however are some construction details. The two hinge-plates projecting at a right angle from the sides of the cover are typically Hindustani.[55] On an Iranian inkwell of the 12th or early 13th century, the attachment plates would be riveted into the sides.[56]

The legs would be designed differently from those of the Baroda piece. Although short stumpy legs more or less of truncatd conical profile are not unknown in early Islamic metalwork from Iran, no instance has been recorded on cylindrical inkwells so far. When the Iranian type is fitted with legs, these reproduce the outline of a lotus-bud.[57] A third structural difference lies in the shape of the dome. In comparison with an 11th century piece from Eastern Iran (fig.12) - the latter have a more rounded dome than the covers of 12th and 13th century Khorasan types - the Hindustani dome is lower and the finial receives greater prominence.[58]

Last but not least, the decoration goes back to the Samanid tradition. It is engraved, not inlaid, and sparsely distributed. As on Samanid objects, it emphasizes the architecture of form.[59] The horizontal frieze underlines the circularity of the shape. In short, although based on Iranian prototypes, the Baroda and the Paris market inkwells are the products of an independent metalworking tradition. The concept is Iranian, the aesthetic handling certainly is not. Here again the parallel with architecture springs to the mind. One is reminded for example of the domed mausoleums built on a square plan during the Sultanate period in Delhi.[60] This is an early Eastern Iranian plan which was widely used in the 10th and 11th century in Iran and went out of fashion by the 12th century. They too differ in their materials - stone is used instead of brick as in Iran. They too illustrate an art that owes nothing to the Indian heritage with the exception of the dome finials, and yet in no way resembles Iranian architecture. The foreign aesthetic vocabulary imported from Iran is as thoroughly adopted - and transformed - in both art-forms, a process apparently completed by the 14th century.

Other pieces, often of a much later date, provide additional evidence of a massive influx of Iranian models in early Sultanate days. A splendid casket for keeping *pan*-or *pandan* to give it the Persian name coined in Hindustan and adopted in vernacular languages - belongs to a group that is probably not earlier than the 16th century (fig.13).[61] The alternate use of

rounded and angular ribs at once calls to mind the ground design of the first storey of the Qutb Minār.[62] Eastern Iranian monuments provide instances of alternately rounded and angular ribs and so do Eastern Iranian bronzes of the 12th century - ewers, among others.[64] There are no later examples on record. Here again the implication is that Iranian metal wares showing this feature found their way into Hindustan in the 13th century. It is of special interest to note in this connection that an early 13th century ewer in typical Khorasan style recently sold at Sotheby's came to light in India at the turn of the century according to the vendor.[65]

Metalwork thus tells us that the 13th century was a crucial period in the genesis of Islamic culture in Hindustan.

It also throws some interesting light on the pattern of adjustment to the aesthetic repertoire imported from the Islamic world, i.e., essentially Iran. If we consider a later period such as the early 17th century we observe that there still were varying degrees of adjustment: the quasi-unrestricted imitation of the Iranian model: the Mughul taste rendition of the Iranian prototype, copied in its shape and general decorative programme; and the thoroughly Hindustani type in which the Iranian contribution lies essentially in the technique and is only just noticeable in some details of ornament.

The first category, purely Iranian in style, is illustrated by a small group of tinned copper bowls. The engraved decoration consisting of arabesque patterns topped by a frieze of calligraphy is entirely dependent on the Safavid repertoire from Western Iran.[66] The objects are so thoroughly Iranian in appearance that one might question their provenance were it not for a combination of indications: 1) The names of the original formers who commissioned them are in Hindustani, 2) The pieces were all acquired in India; 3) On close inspection they betray slight deviations from Iranian metalworking traditions which include heavier casting on the one hand, and minor details of ornamentation on the other hand - a certain type of arch exaggeratedly tall that forms part of the arabesque pattern.

The poems engraved reflect the literary tastes of Western iran. Frequent use is made of verses by Ḥāfez in contrast to Eastern Iranian wares from Khorasan where verses by the Shiraz master are rarer: Helālī, Jāmī and other Herat poets of the late 15th century were the favourite authors in that part of the Iranian world. A typical instance is provided by a bowl commissioned by one *khwāja* Moḥammad Bājīv (?) Kashmiri in 1026/9 January 1617 - 28 December 1617.[67] The bowl which is preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum carries these verses from a famous *ghazal* by Hafez (mètre : *mozāre'*):

صبح است ساقیا قدحی پر شراب کن / دور (ی) فلک درنگ ندارد شتاب کن / ران
پیشتر که عالم فانی شود خراب مارا زجام بادهٔ گلگون خراب / کن ایام گل چو عمر
برفتن شتاب کرد / ساقی بدور بادهٔ گلگون شتاب کن

Morn has come, O cupbearer, fill our bowl with wine
The whirling heavens do not tarry, make haste
Before this perishable world is turned into ruins
Turn us into ruins with your bowl of rose-red nectar
The days of roses hastened to go as life itself
Cupbearer, make haste, pass around the rose-red nectar.

A second category illustrates the Hindustanization, so to speak, of the Iranian tradition. While they closely follow the Iranian tradition, the designers nevertheless introduce local features.

In some cases it is the shape that betrays the Hindustani provenance. A brass vase of compressed spherical form with a broad, short neck bought in 1889 by the Victoria and Albert Museum from the principal of a college in Lahore has a typical Hindustani profile (fig.14).[68] It was cast in four pieces, the lower and upper half of the body being cast separately to allow the bronze-maker to engrave epigraphic friezes on the inner face of the sides - a purely Hindustani idea.[69] The outside is decorated with lobed quatrefoils and other escutcheons enclosing half-palmette patterns in the Safavid taste and an invocation to the Five Companions of the Prophet's House (*panj ahl-e beyt*) Fāṭima, Muḥammad, Alī, Ḥasan Ḥusayn.

It is interesting to note that the invocation is worded in "Persian Arabic" as I have called Arabic constructed according to Persian grammatical rules. It is datable to the very end of the 16th century if not the early years of the 17th century.

About that time, a footed bowl now belonging to the Prince of Wales Museum was executed according to the Iranian technique.[70] The copper bowl was cast, shaped on a stake and plannished by turning on a lathe, the tinned surface being then engraved with champlevé designs inlaid with black composition. The decoration on the other hand follows the Western Iranian style layout but the figures have Mughul features and are dressed in Mughul costume. The theme is the royal hunt. It covers most of the sides in a continuous frieze topped by two bands of calligraphy, a third calligraphic band serving as the lower frame. In one scene, a horseman wearing the Safavid garb of the Shah Abbas period - including the highly characteristic fur headdress - is shown riding a horse in full gallop, spear in hand. In another, an elephant carrying a howdah ambles on, preceded by a runner in Hindustani garb.

The texts are of the greatest interest. At the top, instead of the continuous frieze normally found on Western Iranian footed bowls of this shape,[70] twelve elongated panels alternate with shorter panels. The former enclose an invocation or *do'ā* calling God's blessings on the Fourteen Protected Ones - *chahārda ma'sūm* - as the Prophet Muḥammad his daughter Fāṭima and the twelve Imams revered by the Shiites are called in Persian. In the shorter panels the Shiite prayer to Ali known s "Call Unto Ali" (*Nād-i Alī*) is repeated three times. There is therefore no doubt that the bowl was made for a patron of the Shiite persuasion like the vase discussed above.

Moreover this patron had strong Sufi leanings. This is to be inferred from the second text that begins under the band of Shiite prayers and continues below the figurative frieze. The text written in fine *nasta'alīq* is a poem drawn from a *sāqī-nāme*, i.e., a mystical poem in the form of an allegorical praise of wine. The very opening lines make reference to the ultimate aim of Sufi discipline, the "release from self" that preconditions immersion into the Oneness of God:

Come cupbearer, that fiery water of the chosen
Give it to me, perchance I might gain release from self

The closing line of the upper section touches on another Sufi notion, *Karāmat*, "the gift of God" or "Charisma". Throughout, Sufi themes recur. The bowl is thus not just linked with Shiism, but also with mysticism or, to use the appropriate Eastern denomination, *erfān*, "supreme knowledge".



Fig. 12 Inkwell, Khorasan, 11th century. Private collection (Unpublished)

The London vase and the Bombay footed bowl to which a few other pieces may be added, thus suggest that some, if not all, Hindustani workshops which produced metal wares based on the Iranian tradition, while incorporating distinctly Hindustani features, had definite links with a Shiite, highly Persianized section of society probably connected with court circles.[71]

A third group of metal wares was produced in the 17th century - Iranian in technique, purely Hindustani in shape and decoration, with only discreet touches of the Iranian heritage. A typical ewer made of hammered copper originally tinned and now covered with a tin layer of greenish oxide may serve to illustrate the group. The widening neck rather reminiscent of a baluster would seem to illustrae the impact of the European repertoire of shapes. Ample evidence that brass wares incorporating strongly Europeanizing features -a kind of Hindustani version of "Chinoiserie" as it were - were created in Mughul India is indeed provided by miniatures.[72] The ewer, like all the pieces in the Hindustani manner, has no epigraphy. One suspects that this may betray the fact that such wares could be used in Hindu as well as Muslim households. Persian calligraphy so prominent on Iranian wares was probably dropped in Hindustan on all but those wares that were intended for the Persianized highly literate aristocratic minority.

Thus metalwork in Hindustan provides some glimpses into the emergence and later the different orientations of Islamic culture on the subcontinent. Trends that could merely be surmised from the study of architecture are firmly borne out. Indications concerning the literary interests of certain groups are to be culled from the study of the texts engraved on metalwork. Needless to say, data that are, for the time being, still crude and imprecise should be gradually refined as our knowledge of Hindustani metalwork expands.

... ...

Similar remarks could be made concerning many other areas. There is a good deal to be learnt from metalwork concerning the characteristics of Arab culture in Syria and Egypt in the 13th and 14th century. In no source other than metalwork are some of the data to be found. The acceptance of some Western shapes in the 13th century and the adoption of Persian literary themes borrowed for example from the *Shāh-Nāme* in the same century show that, contrary to widely-held views, the Arab Middle-East was anything but fossilized.

It may strike the outsider as extraordinary that so little use should have been made thus far of this vast amount of material by those engaged in studying the history of Islamic society and culture. The reason primarily lies in the fact that only a minimal amount of the material available at present has been published. Huge areas remain virtually unknown quantities - Hindustan particularly. Another reason is that museum activity in the West is oriented towards building up collections, not publishing. Western keepers and art historians seldom have the literary and religious background required to delve into such matters. The material is nearly always handled in terms of typological classifications. Few are conversant with the languages involved and fewer still sufficiently trained in epigraphy - to say nothing of the historical background required to tackle basic problems of cultural history in the Islamic Middle East as in any other area in the world.

Because the preliminary and essential task of accurate, comprehensive cataloguing, including inscriptions, is so limited in all areas, much of what we write now about metalwork will no doubt appear unsophisticated or ill-founded if not outright absurd in a few years. Yet abstention is no real answer to the matter in hand. Knowledge in this field can only be acquired through a succession of approximations, each one getting a little closer to the ultimate target still far beyond our reach. ■



Fig. 13

Fig. 13 Vase. Hindustan, probably Panjab (Lahore?), c. 1650
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Fig. 14 Pan-box (pandan) Hindustan, possibly Delhi area, 16th century(?)
Formerly J.M. Cuenoud collection (Unpublished)

Fig. 14



NOTES ▶ 78



Sword Hilt. Dahomey.

Influence of Islam on West African Art

Carol Hotchkiss Malt

Did Islam influence artistic production in West Africa; and, in the larger historic perspective, was Islam responsible for the suppression, extinction or adaptation of indigenous visual and cultural expression in the area? Or, was it in fact that the religion of Islam inspired art? An historic outline of Islamic expansion can be helpful in determining the answers to these questions.

Islam spread rapidly through the northern African continent during the 7th century over two main routes. One led south from Alexandria and the Delta area of Egypt into the Sudan; the other, directly west along the African coast. After reaching Dongola in the south, the logistic and geographic problems of expansion became evident, and the conquest of sub-Saharan Africa (*Bilad-as-Sudan*), now secondary to that of the northern African coast, responded to another kind of force, that of the merchants and educators, not the armies. The sub-Saharan trade routes made this flow of information possible. Subsequent expansion around the west African coast and the eventual control of Timbuktu (1077), from which other southern areas were influenced, furthered Islamic penetration into West Africa.[1]

To the art historian, West Africa means more than a geographic area. This region, bordered by the Atlantic coast on the west and south, on the north by the Sahara, and stretching eastward to the area of the Congo River, is noted for its particular use of wood as the primary material for cultural and ritual artifacts.[3] Outside those works preserved in a handful of museums, few wooden items more than 100 years old exist today. The reason for this are many, including climate, the carpenter and, constant usage, destruction or disregard after apparent uselessness; but, not because Islam has eliminated them. These wooden carvings are used as they have been for centuries: for personal unity with nature. In this context, the carved figures and masks represent the authority and wisdom of ancestors. Answers to the daily problems of living are sought from them, as well as insight into the forces of the universe. In practical terms, these objects ensure the observance of the educational process, political and hygenic laws, and standards and maintainence of social order. They preside at trials, ceremonies and funerals, among rituals and festivals.

We often relate these African carvings to a familiar "Western" concept of art, and in so doing, separate these objects from their context of usage and creation and isolate them from their totality and intrinsic meaning. For what the "Westerner" calls art was actually used as a representational, functional object. It should not be forgotten that most African carvings were not only utilitarian, but meant to be used and seen in motion. Therefore, understanding the artistic production of Africa is more readily facilitated when one thinks of it as a language, as a three-dimensional representation of concepts, traditions, and history which is used in powerful rituals and dramatic presentations for visual communication.

The carving of objects and the masking traditions have been prevalent in the West African area during recorded time from the Sudan to Senegal. This is due, in part, to geography, agronomy, and the resources of the area, as well as the fact that there has been a relatively high degree of civilization in the area from even ancient times.

The form in which the tribesman of West Africa first encountered Islam was sympathetic to his beliefs, so far as the psychological aspects of conversions were concerned. Islam, therefore, did not at all first appear to demand a violent break with the past.

Although Islam possesses a body of legal regulations affecting every sphere of life which might be expected to conflict with local African custom, "... an examination of social forms shows that many Islamic elements fall within the framework of African customary law ..."[4]

Interestingly, we find basically a one-way influence from Islam on these sub-Saharan cultures and on their artistic expression. It was not until the early 20th century that African iconography substantially influenced other cultures when it had a dramatic effect on the European Cubists: Picasso, Braque and Gris. Therefore, one generally finds objects and other possessions such as beads and textles representative of Europe, whereas techniques such as metalsmithing and loom working came with Islam. Moreover, just as European influences tended to replace traditional forms and values, Islamic influences tended to augment the already existing traditional aesthetic values. While Christianity tended toward the displacement and substitution of one culture for another, Islamic religious activities tended toward syncretisms and adjustment of one culture with another.[5]

While references to the using and wearing of wooden masks in Africa are mentioned by early travelers and missionaries, we do ot have a concise account of either their pre-Islamic usage (because of the lack of a written language) or their disuse and discouragement. Certain areas in Nigeria, the Ivory Coast and Mali have oral traditions which have involved he use of masks which pre-date the arrival of Islam; and, with modifications, are carried on today.

An illustration of pre-Islamic mask usage is found in the oral traditions of the Bambara of Mali. The early people of Mali found their survival closely linked to the wildlife of the area, the relationship between man and nature either symbiotic or conflicting. The early hunters believed that the spirits of dead animals roamed the universe and influenced humans. Today, the Bambara people of Mali carve elaborate male and female antelope-style headdresses (*Chiwara*) which are worn attached to basketry frames. These are used during ceremonial dances when pairs of men celebrate the planting of new crops.

Another viewpoint concerning the relationship between Bambara tribesmen and the religion of Islam is expressed by Denise Paulme who states that the Bambara are the most important branch of the large Mande group, and, as such, they constitute the main mass of the population of western Sudan and of all the Mande. They have, she says, best resisted Islam and are called "Bambara infidels" by their Muslim neighbors.[6]

How did Islam influence African design? First consider that Islamic art exhibits several elements of design continuity: a concentration on the decorative arts and crafts; limited use of human representation; limited use of three dimensional representation; a tendency for size discrimination, and a predominant use of calligraphy. The use of geometric and floral design as decorative devices is also an important characteristic. It would be easy to credit such decoration as entirely Islamic; however, the use of geometric design as a basis for composition is not exclusive to Islamic art. It is found throughout the history of Egyptian, Minoan, Greek and Chinese art; and, in the stained glass windows of Gothic cathedrals; in the Mandalas which reflect the sacred architecture of India; and, in more contemporary times, in Cubism, Suprematism, Constructivism and even Art Deco. Throughout time, the same square, circle, hexagon, and triangle was used by different artisans to depict different meanings, the most basic of which was simply 'good design'. Nonetheless, the geometric models used in traditional art have nothing to do with a rational or even a rationalistic systemization of art; they derive from a geometry which is a priori non quantative and which in itself is creative because it is linked to data inherent directly of the mind. At the base of this symbolic use of geometry is the circle wherein Muslim artists attribute other meanings to these geometric designs, not only claiming the inherent perfection of their structure, but by implying deeper meanings to their order. To other artists, in different times and places, the circle, for instance, symbolized many concepts: continuity, completion and fulfillment, femaleness, or totality. "Symbols fill the ancient arts as art was born from religion, from the need to express the other reality - the realm of the divine."[8]

Secondly, the Muslim artists took geometric design to heights unparalleled before. The perfection of form they aspired to reflected the perfections of God. Decorations inside and outside mosques, including the very architecture itself, reflect this.

Islam influenced African art on many different levels. If one considers personal decoration within the scope of the arts, it is clear tht Islam has made an important contribution. In a report, dated 1455 A.D., a Portuguese explorer in Senegal, Cado Mosto, gave a description of the attire of an African noble which exemplifies the Arab influence:

"A sort of shirt, or frock of striped cotton of several colours; as yellow, blue, white, black, etc. Under the shirt they wear a thick cloth, made up after the fashion of long wide breaches by them called *jouba*, as is worn by the Arabs."[9]

Today, the dress of a Muslim in many areas is still distinctive. The garment is a long sleeved loose-fitting one. Sometimes decorated with geometric pattern, and if the wearer is a rider or traveler, it can be cut off above the knees. While the garment may also be plain, often artistic medallions and protective charms decorate it; painted, incised or tooled amulets could be attached also. Typically, a geometrically adorned painted leather 'box' is worn about the neck on a plaited leather thong which contains passages from the Qur'an. This apparently is an historic practice.[5] These protective charms, amulets and power symbols contain incantations in Arabic Script and are called 'grigris".[10]

I have chosen two sculptural pieces from the Levandowsky collection which illustrate 'grigris'. The first, a Baule (Ivory Coast) figure of a woman in Western dress complete with westernized skirt; the other, a Senufo (Ivory Coast) wooden figure wearing a hat, a small square item on a string around his neck. The Senufo figure is unclothed and the position of hands and feet (hands outstretched at the sides; the knees slightly bent) is typical of the Senufo. There are questions as to whether the articles around the neck of these two figures are 'grigris' or not for the carving of Islamic ritual symbols on figures is rare.

Many of the 'grigris' and other items of personal adornment such as necklaces, rings, bracelets and anklets which are found in Islamic West Africa show parallels in near Eastern and Mediterranean design. This is a logical extention of cultural expansion. One can actually see specific Greek, Egyptian and Ethiopian influences in the intricate silver and brass items which the women wear. The designs on the anklets, the wearing of which was discontinued in the Ivory Coast, Liberia and Mali over two generations ago, reflect indigenous Islamic and Mediterranean design styles. Although they have not been worn, many of these anklets are kept by female grandchildren as symbols of former economic stature. Each tribe had its own adaptation of style and incised design; some were permanent, others were hinged for removal.

An interesting example of the influence of Islamic art on anklet design from the Levandowsky collection is similar to a Fulani copper example belonging to Dr. Roy Sieber and pictured in the book, *African Textiles and Decorative Arts* (see page 146). The Fulani anklet is a twisted and forged copper bar ornamented with punchwork. Its form and decoration are based on Islamic prototypes.

Not only does this anklet exhibit an intricate balance and composition of varied geometric line and space but one sees this same pattern reflected in the adornment of architectural motif, ceramics and fabrics. The universality of this design appears also in the punched décoration of a leather scabbard from Dahomey from the Levandowsky collection which has an intricate pattern of rosettes and lines. The engraving on the brass hilt of the sword is also similar to the intertwining of geometric form which is often seen in the bookbinder's art.

There is a design similarity between leather items in the areas of Chad, Niger and Nigeria. Not only the dsigns, but the background colors are similar. Often this is a rusty red, a color achieved from the stalk of the indigenous millet plant, and like the Chinese glaze color, celadon (a light green/grey), it has become synonomous with identifying the origin of an object. The applique and embroidery may have developed in emulation of Near Eastern prototypes but the results are typically and recogizably West African.

Two other figures from the Levandowsky collection are interesting to describe in relation to the Islamic influence on the area. The first is Nigerian. Carved figures from the Yoruba representing twins (*Ibeji*) are of interest not only because they are taditional and perhaps reflect ancient ritual but because they clearly depict tribal scarring and the not uncommon occurrence of twin births found in the area. The practice of scarification is discouraged by Islam and mutilations, tatooing and incision, with the exception of circumcision and excision or removal of deformations, is an index to the depth of Islamization.[12] Nonetheless, the Yoruba society is characerized by tribal ritual scarring although they have been Muslim for a long time.

Another interesting example of carving from the Yoruba is of a man holding a dog. Common assumptions concerning the avoidance of dogs, and other animals, are prevalent in the Muslim world and it is therefore uncommon to see a carving of the two together in apparent harmony.[13]

One can see the influence of Islam graphically portrayed in many ways. In general, however, it becomes apparent that the preponderance of Islamic influence on African art has been on design and particularly on design forms for utilitarian objects such as embroidered and dyed fabric, household items, saddles, weaving, house decoration and personal items of adornment.

If Islam seems not to have eradicated the practice of making and using three dimensional carvings for traditional rites in sub-Saharan Africa, did it at least modify these forms so that they were less realistic and therefore more acceptable because of their new symbolic abstraction?

It is diffilcult to comment on pre-Islamic Africa because of the paucity of records, but we find no direct referene to an 'abstractionist' trend except perhaps that which has happened naturally through the continued copying of existing forms and designs over the centuries.

With an historic tradition of representative figural painting, coupled with the use of three-dimensional statues and figures, it appears that Islamic prohibition actually had little influence in West Africa. Artistic expression was formerly a vehicle of religion, and the decorative arts were not related to purely aesthetic appreciation but were directed to the world of the spirit through associative ideas.

Rene Braveman's book on the influence of Islam on Tribal art (perhaps a classic defense of the positive adaptability of Islam) stresses the continuation of the Do cult and Do dancing in the sub-Saharan area in spite of Islam. Dwelling on many early 20th century references, he cites numerous examples of early Do masks dating from the initial period of European contact in the northeast Ivory Coast and west central Ghana area which give an historical dimension to Islamized Mande masking tradition. He pictures Do masks of human and animal form which were taken at the turn of the century.[14]

Another masking tradition which is described by Bravmann is the Gbain mask. The mask itself is similar to other horizeontal masks, carved in the form of a bush cow which is seen near Bondoukou, at the Muslim Mande centre of Kong and in the Senufo area of Korhogo (Ivory Coast). Few examples of Gbain masks are in museum collections, although they exist in documental private collections. It is interesting that the Gbain was originally a Muslim Mande tradition - an instance of Islamic support of earlier indigenous pagan imagery and sculptural tradition.[15]

Since Islam affected each area and each population in West Africa differently, it therefore adapted and altered old traditions in differing ways. While some early pagan customs were completely displaced when they were in direct conflict with Muslim doctrine (polytheism); other local traditions and customs seem to have been left intact only to become obsolete in the natural course of assimilation with 20th century technology. Some traditions, of course, were blended into rituals belonging to or associated with Islam; others were simply merged into the predominant societal institutions under another name.

I would argue that the advent of colonialization in Africa and the process of industrialization which came to the area during the 20sth century have been the two major facstors to direct change in African artistic expression rather than the tenets or restrictions of Islam. And, indeed, that Islam contributed much to West African design and artistic inspiration. ■

Notes:

1. In addition to the east-west flow, Islam progressed over three main north-south trading routes across the Sahara: the western route, going from Marrakech and Sijilmasa to cities in the area of the western Niger river; the centre route going from Tunis to Hausaland; and the eastern route from Tripoli to lake Chad. The southernmost termini of these routes varied with changing political conditions. In the 11th century the most important centres were in ghana, at Walata and Kumbi. Between the 13th and the 16th centuries Timbuktu and Jenne were predominant. Later, the Hausa cities and Kukawa in Kanem-Bornu became more important. (*West African History*, K. J. Parry. Longman Group Ltd., 1979. Wing King Tong Co. Ltd., Hong Kong, p. 2)

2. The sub-Saharan area referred to in this paper contains the present countries of Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Mali, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Niger, Nigeria and Chad.

3. African carvings are, of course, visual by nature and any discussion of them should involve specific items for reference. For this purpose, I make reference to items from the Sieber collection and the Levandowsky collection. The latter, comprising some 2,500 pieces, was collected in West Africa in the 1950s and fortunately contains provenance of photographs, magnetic-wire recordings and documents on the masks, figures, jewelry, ethnographic and ritual material.

4. Trimingham, J. Spencer, *Islam in West Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961, p. 30.

5. Sieber, Roy. *African Textiles and Decorative Arts*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1972, p. 11.

6. Goldwater, Robert. *Bambara Sculpture from Western Sudan*. New York: Museum of Primitive Art, 1956, p. 7.

7. Burckhardt, Titus. *Art of Islam*. London: Islam World Festival Press, 1975. Introduction.

8. Jung, Carl. *Man and His Symbols*. New York: Doubleday & Company, 1964.

9. Sieber, Roy. *African Textiles*, p. 23.

10. Sieber, Roy. *African Textiles*, p. 52-55.

Cadamosto reports: "To say the truth, some of the principal Blacks are so well furnished all over with grigris in every part of their bodies under their shirts and bonnets that they cannot well be wounded." (Sieber, p. 53).

11. Sieber, Roy. *African Textiles*, p. 80.

12. Trimingham, J.S. *Islam in West Africa*, p. 198.

13. "Makers of figured pictures or the owning of pictures with figures was equalled with the keeping of dogs and compared with such practices as tatooing." Ettinghausen, Richard. *Arab Painting*. Cleveland: Skira, 1962, p. 12-13.

14. Braveman, Rene. *Islam and Tribal Arts in West Africa*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

15. "Although today (1974) the Gbain is found among both the Dyula and the Hwela, it also flourishes amidst such non-Muslim peoples as the Kulango, Degha, Numu, and Natana. The Gbain cults I encountered among non-Muslims in 1966-67 were acknowledged as having been imported from Muslim communities over a period of the last 30-40 years." (Braveman, Rene. *Islam and Tribal Art in West Africa*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1974, p. 128) ■



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1. *Man with Dog.*
2. *Figure with Grigri.*
3. *Painted Leather Basket, Chad.*
4. *Fulani Anklet.*
5. *Sword Hilt, Dahomey.*

PROFILE



H.R.H.
Princess of Wijdan Ali of Jordan

"I carry no message in my works, and endeavour no goal but that of interpreting what I feel, and putting it down on canvas through a technique achieved by discipline and guided by experiene and emotions."

This is how Princess Wijdan Ali of Jordon would describe her work. In a world that has suddenly awakened to Islam's heritage and culture, contemporary Muslim artists are usually judged quite harshly and the demands that are made on them can have a somewhat paralyzing effect. "We are literally torn between our historical and religious roots, on the one hand, and our occidental education, on the other," Wijdan continues. "We learn that art is international while we are asked to define our Islamic and eastern identity in a modern contemporary context." The Islamic artist, she believes, has now reached a plateau of confused identity, having been brought up in a society that is torn between its own traditions and history and the accelerating pace of an industrial race, with all its modern ideologies and trainig.

When Wijdan returned to Amman in the summer of 1958 she had no idea that one day she would be facing such a dilemma. Having completed her first year at Beirut University College, where she had started to study history and politics, she was confronted with the prospect of a three-month stay in the conservative society of Amman which had little to offer in terms of recreation for an eighteen-year old girl. She therefore decided to improve her French, contacted her former French teacher and arranged to go to her every day for lessons in conversation. The teacher, an accomplished painter, suggested that the conversation lessons would be facilitated if Wijdan also painted while they spoke. "A new vista opened in front of me," recalls Wijdan, "and after one week, the main objective of our meetings became painting, while French became a means to communicate and learn this form of art." Although painting had begun to capture her, the young girl continued her college studies as originally planned. Later, at various stages of her career, she worked with three other artists in their studios: Armando Bruno, an Italian, and Muhanna Dura and Fahrulnissa Zeid, both Jordanian. Thus, an activity that had started as a hobby became her vocation.

During her development as an artist, many schools of art influenced her work. She went through periods of impressionism, abstract expressionism, pure abstraction and even had a short flirtation with calligraphy which, as Wijdan observes, "every Arab artist goes through due to the mesmerizing effect that the Arabic letter and the written word has on us." After long years of hard work, she now at last feels that she has developed a technique and a style to which she belongs and is one which she can truly call her own. The technique is that of a textured surface which interrelates several layers of colour, thus giving them a subtlety as well as an intensity. In this manner, she has depicted the skyline of Istanbul, with its proud minarets and fastidious domes, and then gone on to interpret the vastness of the Jordanian desert. This desert, Wijdan feels, is the last refuge of tranquility and peace. In her eyes, "the desert is something unconquerable. With its changing lights and moods, it bends its head to no man and to no power but that of the elements and of God."

Wijdan's work has received considerable attention from critics. Francois Daulte, writing in *L'Oeil*, said of her: "Without neglecting problems in the nature of her medium and without becoming enmeshed in the conflict between figurative and non-figurative expressions, Wijdan seeks above all to convey certain yearnings in exploring the mysteries of the world. Her convasses, mostly of large dimensions, reconcile a

exacting technique with the most secretive poetry."

Dr. Malcolm Quantrill, Deputy Editor of *Arts International* assesses Wijdan's work as follows: "Wijdan Ali has often been described as an expressionist painter: she is really notrhing of the sort. Her paintings, of the early to mid-70's, were, however, concerned with bold images. During that period her compositions revealed conflicts, often fierce ones, through which she was struggling to escape the constraints of the painter's initial preoccupations with subject and technique. During the 70's she became aware of the tender, sentimental trap of accessible Arabian imagery. Her studies of Istanbul mosques and the city's skyline showed, in 1976, that her real interest was to dissolve those seductive images into impressionistic compositions. It was in her Istanbul studies, moreover, that she discovered the artist's El Dorado, the pure sensuality of surface in which all images and emotions can be suspended or animated at will. The two qualities that Wijdan Ali distills in her canvasses are memory of place (Image) and its recreation in paint (Existential Experience). A tourist looking at this desert for the first time is likely to see nothing remarkable - just sand and space. For the Bedouin, however, this minimal quality is remarkable because it represents his entire world. Looking superficially at a Wijdan Ali painting one is also in danger of seeing very little but paint and technique. But a closer examination reveals that everything is there, the rising, the burning and setting of the sun on an elusive sandy wste haunted by some ghost-like structure. The Arab tradition, of both thought and image, is essentially one rooted in abstraction which is often manifested in mathematical prevision. Wijdan Ali has dared to marry this spirit of abstraction with the tradition of Western Impressionism - that of Turner, Cezanne and Van Gogh. Her use of paint has a decidedly Western preoccupation with texture. This has been substantially modified and improved since the Istanbul studies. It is now a much tighter discipline, often virtually subcutaneous. Currently her main subject is the desert of her native Jordon but, as a city-lover, I suspect it will not be long before she applies her new-found confidence to a re-examination of Istanbul or another urban context. For Wijdan Ali is no longer just a local talent, her bold treatments and consistent disdain for mere recognisale reality have now assured much wider recognition of her work."

Although Wijdan has had thirteen individual shows and five group exhibitions in Amman, Berlin, Madrid, Karachi, Washington and Moscow, she still feels the pains of uncertainty and doubt. Her questions are: "As a Muslim and Arab artist, with all the influences of the West tearing at me, mixed with images and sounds from the Hadith, my strict upbringing, my social inhibitions, my new discoveries, my Western education and impressions, should I judge myself according to Western artistic standards or modern Islamic standards? If I choose the latter, then where are those standards? Who should put them for me? I firmly believe that our lost and mixed identity should be found, but how and where? And even if we find it, would there be peace? Would the search end? And if it does, then what would there be but stagnation and deterioration?"

Wijdan says that she finds repose in the "realm of the unreal." "When I am tired and torn inside," she explains, "I imagine myself a youth working securely in the Shah Tahmasp's ateliers, illustrating a page from Firdawsi's *Shahnamah*, my only worry being whether I can master the art of illumination as well as that of miniature painting and what colours to use in order to renovate my miiatures and give them a character different from the ones done in Tabriz." ■



'The Desert' Oil on canvas.



'The Desert' Oil on canvas.





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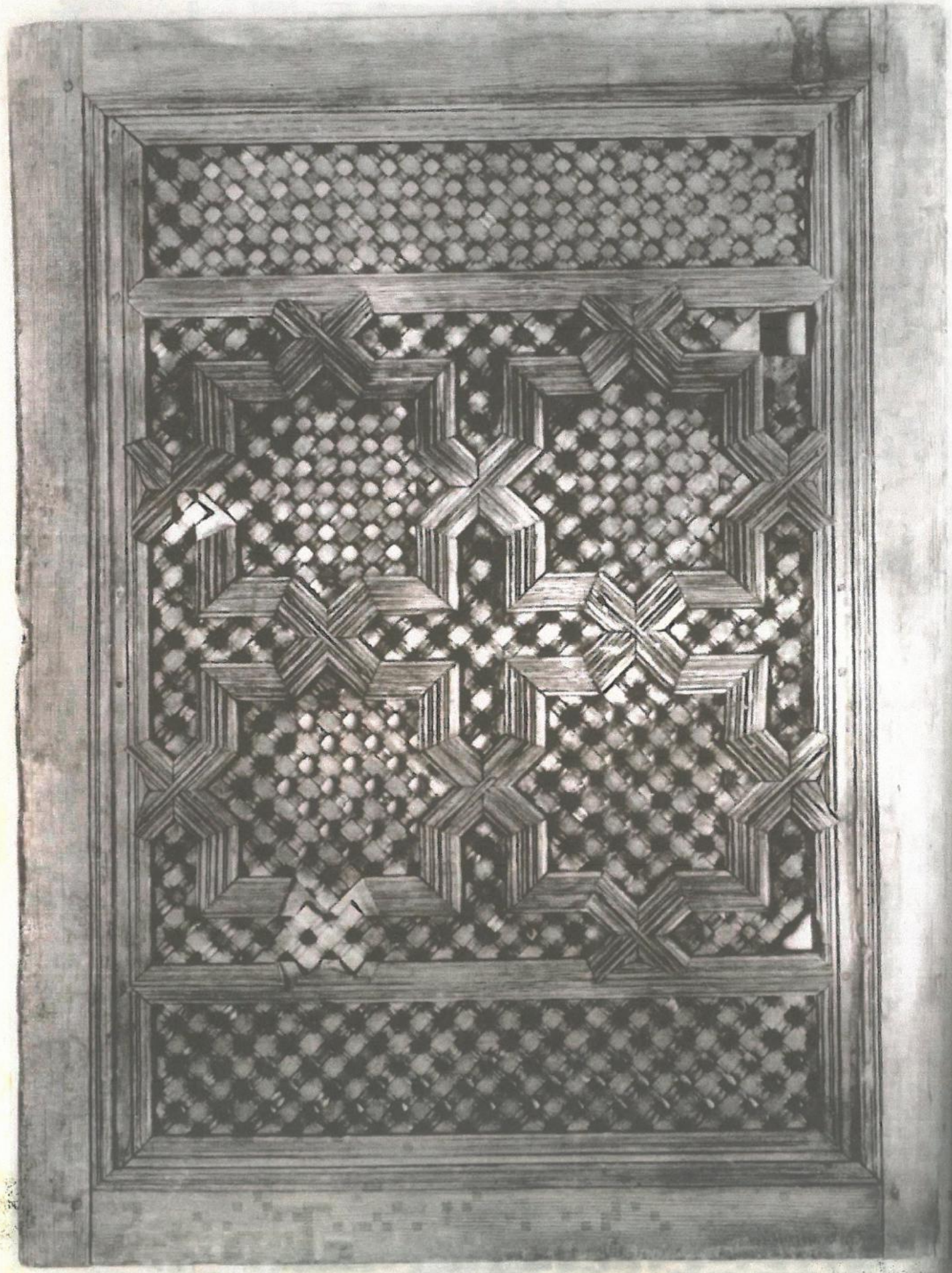
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The Heritage of Islam







The same Middle Eastern deserts fostered and nurtured the world's three great closely related religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Semitic people who shared similar languages and cultural environments constituted these monotheistic faith early followers. Even though all three religions have had vast global influence, Westerners understand Islam much less than they understand Judaism and Christianity.

Islam's birth, evolution and renaissance represent profound historic events. Spanning fourteen hundred years, Muslim scholars, physicians, astronomers, philosophers, poets and artists have deeply influenced numerous other cultures. Younger than the other two religions, Islam prescribes more completely than its sister religions the way individuals and societies should conduct their lives.

A common faith, tradition, sacred scripture, and civilization unites, in Islam, nearly one-fifth of the world's people. These 800 million Muslims live in most of the world's countries and represent diverse racial, national and political identities.

Muslims scholars inherited earlier Classical Greek, Roman, Asian, and African cultures. Successive Muslim generations adapted these rich legacies, preserved them, built upon them, and passed them to Estern and Western civilizations. Existing societies and Islam interacted, producing new cultures, each unique yet united by Islam. Islam contributed enormously to the European Renaissance and today continues to exert its profound influence across the world.

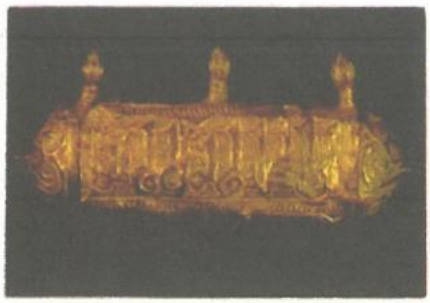
Now this rich culture is surveyed for the American public. Islam's beginnings and contemporary life, its art and sciences, have been organized by the National Committee to Honor the Fourteenth Centennial of Islam as a stunning and unique exhibition called *The Heritage of Islam*. This significant worldwide artistic and scientific exhibition demonstrates 1400 years of tradition and tells the story of 1400 years of a culture and people.

Islam's roots rest in Mecca, now in Saudi Arabia, where in 570 A.D. the Prophet Muhammad was born. At God's command Muhammad preached the new faith. Only a century after his death in 632 A.D., Muhammad's followers created an empire stretching from Spain to India. Commerce, conquest and conversion all spread Islam quickly in every direction. Each indigenous culture integrated Islam's ideas and motifs while maintaining many pre-Islamic concepts and artistic ideals. This synthesis is visible again and again throughout the Islamic world. Common design elements are expressed differently in Turkey and in Indonesia, but common Muslim elements and feelings underlie each of them.

Today, Islam, the world's fastest-growing monotheistic religion,stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the China Sea numbering over 800 million people. Between one and three million Muslims live in the United States, yet, for far too many American Islam remains a mystery. Less familiar than Judaism and Christianity Islam continues to be remote, even exotic. *The Heritage of Islam*'s scientific and cultural artefacts show that Muslim acievements are important today. Building on an accumulated and translated body of knowledge, Islamic science evolved from roots in Greek, Roman, Indian, and Persian thought.

Mathematical, astronomical, and medical advanes rank among Islam's most notable accomplishments. Returning from India, Muslim scholars brought with them a number system including the decimal concept which they expanded by adding the notation from zero. This number system is the basis for the Arabic numerals we use today, and is a vast improvement over the Roman numerals that might otherwise have been our legacy. The addition of zero had made possible solving complex mathematical problems, a capability that has profoundly affected Western Civilization. These Muslim advances provided the tools for further sophisticated mathematical development. The 10th century saw Muslim mathematicians refining algebra (a word of Arabic origin) as well as developing and proving theorems in geometry and trigonometry

Particularly sophisticated in using natural remedies to cure sickness, Muslims expanded pharmaceutical and medical knowledge by applying sound





scientific methods to their careful observations, controlled environments and systematic experimentation. This scientific yet humane study of human health - unlike the relatively chaotic and barbaric methods common in contemporary Europe - included rigorous standardized physicians' training and licensing of health professionals. Also, standard Muslim hospital practices isolated contagious diseases, treated the mentally ill humanely, and organized patients by category of illness. Avicenna, a 10th-century genius, wrote a remarkable encyclopedia that dominated Western medicine for nearly 600 years. Avicenna's genius is furthered by his reputation to have memorized the Qur'an by 10 and having been, at 18, personal physician to an emperor.

The Islamic astronomical investigation legacy is considerable. Muslims needed to determine the direction of Mecca, announce times of prayer and predict their lunar calender. Scientists conducted many celestial observations and improved and developed such tools as the astrolabe, the quadrant and navigational maps based on stellar observations. These maps subsequently made possible the European voyage of discovery. Muslim scientists inherited Ptolemy's astronomical laws and observations made in classical times. Through use and careful observation they made corrections in Ptolemy's theories. Islamic astronomers built large-scale observatories and compiled astronomical tables and charts.

The Islamic world's "Renaissance Man", well versed in mathematics, astronomy, medicine and botany preceded by several hundred years his erudite Italian counterpart. Muslim scientists did not confine their activities to a single field, rather, they routinely mastered several disciplines.

As impressive as the scientific accomplishment, Islam's rich artistic diversity shows a similar remarkable unity. They reflect a distinctive repertoire of forms and decorative motifs: plants, geometric pattern, human and animal figures, and calligraphy. The Muslim world's objects and architecture dramatize the imagination and creativity of artists from Morocco to Indonesia. Masterfully crafted and beautifully embellished, Islamic arts united wide-ranging regional styles with a common spirit.

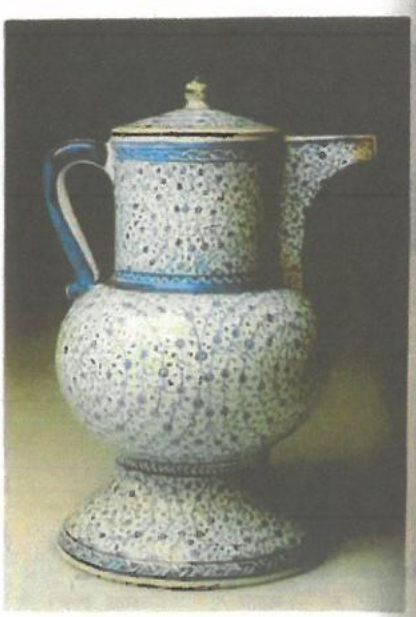
Muslim artists expressed their skills in many ways using all possible mediums of expression. Calligraphy, pottery, glass, metal, wood, ivory and architecture captured the imagination of Muslim artists around the world and through the centuries.

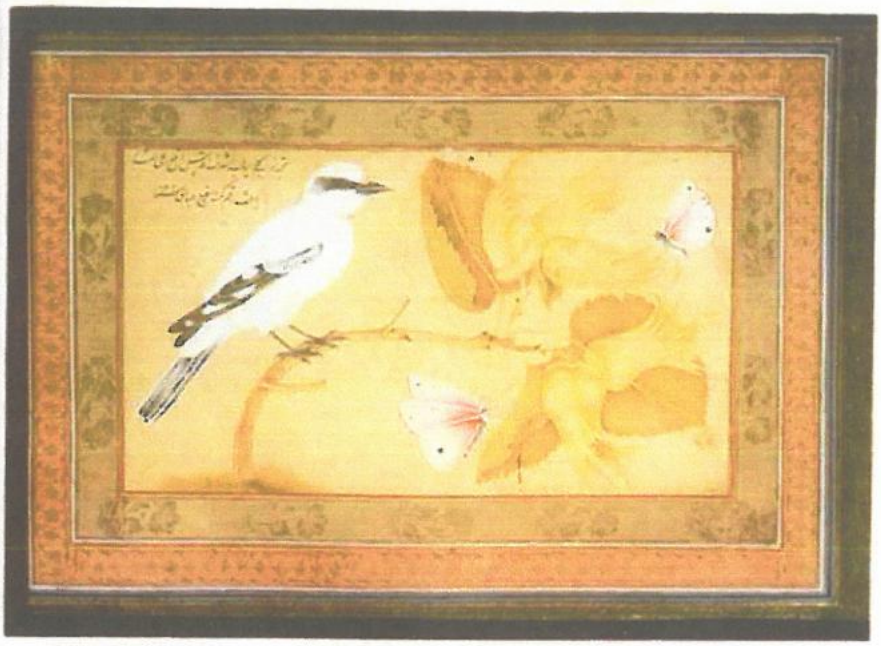
Beautiful writing, or calligraphy, along with architecture,rankat the top of Islam's artistic heredity. Calligraphy had special value because it made visible the Qur'an revealed word. Arabic calligraphy is written on every kind of object and in all mediums. Read right to left, Arabic calligraphy can be written in straight lines, circles, squares and interlacing patterns. Leaf forms, braiding, knots, geometric forms, even whimsical human or animal faces, frequently embellish individual letters and even whole pages of manuscripts and books.

Books, however were more than just texts in the Islamic world; they were created as complete sumptuous objects: total design and construction masterpieces. For example, a particularly luxurious 15th century Persian Qur'an would have had elegant calligraphy written on gold-flecked coloured papers with gold-tooled leather bound with filigree.

During Islam's fourteen centuries, all types of objects for every possible use have been created from clay: bowls, jars, boxes, small tables, wall tiles and figurines. The designs embellishing these objects reflect every motif associated with Islamic art. Incised, moulded orpainted, glazed wares show Muslims' love for varied colours and textures. The most distinctive and prestigious pottery made in the Islamic world was *luster* ware. A complex and expensive process that included double firing created luster's sumptuous surfaces. Luster, a characteristically Islamic technique, was used in different centres from Persia to Spain.Examples of luster ware abound with geometric patterns, vines and calligraphy.

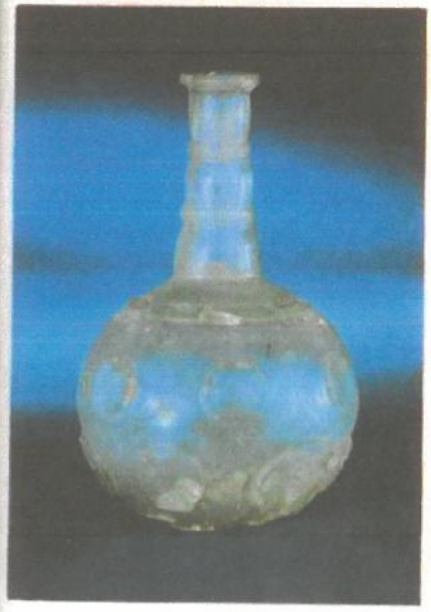












Another fragile meterial beautifully crafted by Muslims was glass. Surviving since the 13th and 14th century, enamelled and gilded pieces exhibit delicacy and fragility that was only later seen in European objects. Mosque lamps, beakers, vases and other vessels mark the Egyptian, Syrian and Persian craftsmen's creative energies at the mediaeval glass-making zenith. Glass also played a very specific mercantile role. Carefully calibrated glass tokens marked with official stamps were used as standard coin weights and commercial measures.

Demonstrating the same expertise, Muslim craftsmen employed bronze, brass, copper and steel for both artistic and utilitarian purposes. Surviving objects formed solely from precious metals are rare. Silver and gold were used delicately and with refinement as inlays. Basins, pen-boxes, pitchers, candlesticks, and incense burners were made by Muslim metalworkers and became, like other objects, valuable commodities in international markets.

The Muslim craftsman was not limited to indigenous materials. For instance, Muslims in Egypt and Spain used East African ivory decoratively with wood. Only small objects such as combs, knife handles, mascara vials and inkwells could be formed totally of such a soft material as ivory.

Wood alone, however, is both practical and verstile, and was used by Muslims largely for architectural purposes. Beams, columns, doors and major building supports were frequently wood. In addition to architectural fittings, mosque and home implements were also crafted from wood. To construct bulky items such as book stands, pulpits, decorative screens, and furniture, woodworkers joined together many small panels to create larger pieces. Furniture made this way could more easily withstand temperature and humidity changes; damaged individual sections could be readily replaced.

Perhaps one of the most dramatic Islamic art forms was and continues to be architecture. The architectural forms that we call Islamic developed in the North African and Middle Eastern hot, dry zones, where relentlessly hot days and cold nights meant that shelter had to protect against the climatic extremes. Building barriers and enclosures controlled the effects of sun, wind and temperature changes. Traditional communities in the Islamic heartland reflected their history as well as their harsh geography. There were enclaves with a few basic features: the minaret, the fundamental landmark; the walls for protection against invasion; gates for controlling entry and departure. The streets did not yield any directional sense to the stranger. Street life and home life were, and are, two very different worlds. For centuries the household's heart and activity core has been the courtyard. The courtyard was orderly, quiet, green, and included splashing fountains and singing birds. Today, even contemporary forms frequently reflect these traditions and often the same traditional materials blend with modern techniques.

Istanbul's Sulayman mosque is one example an Islamic public building designed for both flexibility and comfort. Incorporated into this centre of worship is a hospital, a lodging house, several schools, a central feeding facility, a water distribution station, a public bath, a college of advanced studies in religious law and a tomb for Sulayman the Magnificent.

More than any other art form, architecture proclaims the faith. Silhouetted against the skyline, the dome and the minaret announce Islam's vital presence. The mosque walls carry the Qur'an verses, an intimate message for the believer. The minaret, symbolizing the call to prayer, and calligraphy, evoking God's words, epitomize Islam's rich and varied traditions.

Today, around the Islamic world, rapid political and economic change has disrupted the centuries-old cultural traditions and social patterns. Concerned Muslims across Asia and Africa are actively exploring many routes to find the balance between tradition and change. In responding to the complex challenge of today's world Muslims are united in their common art, belief and rituals. Their rich cultural heritage is vital to this search.■

Problems of Creative Artists
A Pakistani View

Agha Abdul Hamid

A creative artist always lives and works in a particular age and social milieu. He is invariably the product of his age and of his environment and his creative work is mainly determined by the values current in his society. The artist may accept these values either wholly or partially, or what is equally common, he may rebel against them. He cannot, however, escape them nor can he ignore them altogether. He may decide to turn his back on society and write about ages long past; he may write about persons and things which seem remote from life around him; but he cannot escape the fact that his point of view and consciousness have been shaped by the society in which he lives.

An artist or a writer may find himself in circumstances which facilitate and encourage his creativity or he may encounter conditions which have a detrimental or inhibiting influence. For a creative artist, however, circumstances can never be wholly propitious since the act of creation is inherently the result of conflict and thus an artist must always be in a state of tension in order to be able to create at all.

The three major factors that affect an artist's life are the political and social institutions of the country in which he lives, its economic system and his own religion. These combine to create a milieu which determines an artist's attitude toward life and its problems and ultimately influence his creative work. While an artist is always faced with problems, he is likely to find these more intractable in a developing country, particularly one where a religious revival is taking place. For reasons which will be discussed later an artist or a writer invariably feels more frustrated in a developing country since the problems which face him are certain to inhibit creativity.

Pakistan is a developing country which is making a determined effort to establish an Islamic social order and the artists working in this country are no exception to the general rule mentioned above. They find themselves in a very difficult situation and unless efforts are made to facilitate their work they cannot be expected to produce their best.

Although an artist feels compelled to create in order to resolve his inner conflicts his work is produced in order to be appreciated by others. And thus the artist's need for creating is equalled only by his need for communication. In a pre-industrial society, which is dominated by a landed aristocracy, the problems of the artist are relatively simple. Whether he is a painter, a poet, an architect or a musician, he is likely to be dependent upon a patron - a king a noble, a religious leader, a land-owner or even a rich merchant. His public will be limited to a comparatively small number of his society's educated elite and his own patron will quite often be a man of taste and discrimination.

If one looks back over the history of Pakistan this becomes clear. The Mughal era is a convenient historical period from which to start. The Mughals were great patrons of art and during their rule over the Indian subcontinent there was a flowering of the arts which can be favourably compared with any other period in world history. Mughal architecture is something unique, marked by a distinctive simplicity and grandeur. Mughal painting is also famous. And although the Mughals were primarily interested in the visual and auditory arts, literature was by no means neglected. A galaxy of Persian poets adorned the Mughal courts and many famous ploets from Iran and Central Asia were attracted to Delhi, Agra and Lahore because of generous patronage offered in these cities.

As pointed out earlier, the artist during this era depended almost wholly on the patronage of the aristocracy, while folk art continued to flourish due to support given to it by the common people.

When the Mughals declined, however, the arts also deteriorated. On the one hand taste was debased due to over-refinement and effeminacy and, on the other, the resultant insecurity made it difficult for the aristocracy to patronize the arts. There are very few buildings of any real consequence built after the death of Emperor Aurangzeb. Similarly, Persian, traditionally the language of literature, also declined in importance as its place was gradually taken up by the vernacular language and by English.

When the British came to the subcontinent they found a country which was divided into many warring principalities and where the central power had, for all practical purposes, disintegrated. Industry, in the modern sense, did not exist and communications, highly developed during the Mughal period, were seriously disrupted. Travel was not only difficult but dangerous. The horizon of the artist was narrow and limited. Nevertheless, the tradition in architecture, painting, music and literature were still alive though somewhat moribund.

Alien rule has always resulted in a sapping of the mental vigour of a people, bringing a severe blow to their self-confidence and hence a loss of faith in their own social and political institutions. The first and foremost concern of a colonial government is the mainten-ance of law and order and the establishment of a stable administration. Such a government therefore invariably supports the most conservative and even the most reactionary elements of society. The result of such policies is that the *status quo* with its outmoded institutions is preserved but that a gradual atrophy afflicts the vigorous and creative expression of the intellectual energy of the people.

The Muslim aristocracy, traditionally a patron of the arts, was systematically annihilated by the colonial rulers and received its death blow during and after the Mutiny of 1857.

This resulted in a complete break-down of traditional painting and architecture and of creative writing in Persian. Urdu, which gradually replaced Persian as the literary language of the Muslims, had come into prominence during the 18th century and developed further during the 19th century. Urdu literature had been deeply influenced by Persian literature, unfortunately at a time when the latter was no longer at its best. Later Persian poetry was greatly marked by the political instability and anarchy prevailing in areas where Persian was spoken. For nearly six hundred years there was an intermittent rise and fall of dynasties in a setting of general instability. The kings were autocrats, given to flattery and whims. The people generally accepted their hard and often unpredictable lot and had no option but to resign themselves to their fate. Persian poetry of this period is full of nostalgia, pessimism and complaints against injustice and the cruelty of fate. Every lover is bound to be rejected by his beloved or else a combination of circumstances will certainly prevent the union. Every intelligent man is to suffer because of his intelligence and every deserving human being will be spurned by fate.

At the time that Urdu literature developed the Muslims were no longer the ruling class in India. They had no real understanding of the events which had deprived them of their power and they had no reserve of energy to fight back. There was a feeling of impotence and helplessness. In this mood they were more than willing to accept the traditions of decadent Persian poetry. In the history

of Urdu literature, leaving aside one or two poets like Nazir Akbarabadi, the majority of poets before Hali are traditionalists in this sense. The popularity of *Marsiah* or the poetry of lament is also sigificant.

This is not to deny that despite these limitations poetry of a very high order was produced. The eminent example of Ghalib proves this. Nevertheless the work produced by the overwhelming majority of the famus poets no longer made rewarding reading. There is a curious deadness and unreality about their attitudes and their view of life and its problems. As part of this change from a medieval world into a modern one, with its new system of administration and education, its widening horizons of travel and commerce encouraged by the building of roads and railways and its growing prosperity created by the digging of canals and the establishment of stability, came an introduction not only to English political and social institutions but also to European literature and Western philosophy which made much of oriental literature seem quaint and out of date. The older writers clung bravely to the old traditions by ignoring all new knowledge but this could not last. Slowly, a new generation arose at the end of the nineteenth century which, while fully acquinted with the old traditions, also studied Western literature and philosophy as well as Western science.

Gradually the influence of European thought increased. The last group of writers to be in touch with the oriental classical languages and the older traditions were those who started writing in the thirties and forties. They were followed by a generation which in many ways had cut itself off from the past - this being more true in the case of painters and architects than of poets. Painting and architecture in Pakistan are wholly under the influence of the West and in these two arts there is very little, if any, influence of the old traditions. The handful of painters who have tried to revive traditional styles have not been influential on the younger generation. Literature too has been influenced by the West but its impact has caused more of a slow change than a sudden break.

The creative artist was just about to recover from the almost devastating experience of alien rule when he received a traumatic chock as it was about to end. This was the division of the subcontinent into Pakistan and India. In all cases it meant a change of mental environment and in a large number of cases a change in physical environment as well. While the creative artist did understand the factors which made the division of the country inevitable he could not understand the events which followed the decision. Above all he was horrified by the bloodshed and the savagery and they seemed to him completely senseless. This is one reason why, with very few exceptions, no really satisfactory literature dealing with the partition has been produced.

The extremely unsettled conditions in the country following partition made creative work still more difficult. The government and the people were preoccupied with bringing the country to a state of normality after the shattering experience of partition and mass migration. On top of this they had to plan and execute vast development schemes. People had vaguely imagined that with the achievement of indepen-dence a golden era would dawn. The bitter realisation was not late in coming that everything worthwhile had to be worked for. During those years the creative artist needed help, it was not available, since both the people and the government were enmeshed in the more important task of overcoming the innumerable difficulties facing the country. Authority, moreover, was impatient with what it considered discordent voices. Criticism, it felt, was a luxury which, at that juncture, the country could not afford. Anything which appeared to hamper the work of development was unwelcome. In fact it was thought that only those who were really hostile to the aspirations of the people of Pakistan would voice such criticisms. It was not realised of course that all creative art, if it is of any true value, is disturbing and that what appears to be destructive criticism is in essence a call to think more clearly and to feel more deeply.

But it was not only government and the common man who held doubts about such work. The artists and writers themselves were in a quandary. Being as much concerned with the welfare of the country as any other citizen, they themselves wondered whether perhaps there might be some validity in the official attitude and they in fact feared that inadvertently they might do something which would work against the interests of the country.

At this stage a word or two about the economic problems of artists and writers may not be out of place. A creative artist has, like anybody else, to eat and therefore to earn a living.

Even before partition there were few serious artists or writers who could live by their creative work alone. Most of them earned their living by working as journalists, teachers or taking government jobs. Immediately after partition unsettled conditions made the struggle to provide one's basic needs even more difficult.

Pakistan's landed aristocracy, with a few exceptions, had been created by the colonial rulers and it had never been a patron of the arts. The *nouveaux riches* (in Pakistan their wealth come from the development of industry) have in every part of the world been known to be more concerned with making still more money than with wasting their time on culture. In any case the culture which would interest them is that which can be bought for cash.

In such circumstances - and providing that he has access to a minimum income - a poet can still write poetry, a novelist can still write novels, and a painter can even paint (if he can afford to buy canvas and paints) but an architect, a dramatist, a composer or a film producer can do nothing. Making a film, producing a play or presenting a musical composition can only be done by a group of people and some monetary backing is required. An architect can only build if he is commissioned to do so. In developing countries where moribund traditions have to be reactivated or else new ones created none of these functions are easily carried out.

In addition to all of these problems, a further demand on the artist - that his work must be Islamic in character - had made the situation even more complex. While the demand is reasonable, difficulties arise when an attempt is made to define Islamic Art. And it seems tht there is no real agreement as to what constitutes "real Islamic art".

I will take upexamples of only two arts, namely architecture and music. With regard to music, the extremists say that Islam forbids all music and that musical instruments are the works of the devil.

But for the moment I will talk about architecture only. In Pakistan there has been a widespread demand that the tremendous building activity going on in the country should reflect not only our aspirations and our ideals but also the fundamentals of our faith in Islam. The government has been spending millions on public buildings which not only show a bewildering variety of styles but appear to have no features which can be called either Pakistani or Islamic. There is undoubtedly a distinct style of

architecture which is Islamic despite variations of detail in its Mughal, Moorish, Iranian and Central Asia branches. In the Islamic style of architecture, the arch, the dome and the minaret play an important part. Probably the most beautiful domes and arches that exist in the world have been made by Muslim architects.

While this is true, it also has to be pointed out that both the arch and the dome are technical solutions of architectural problems. They existed in pre-Islamic times and there are countless ancient temples and churches which have domes and arches. The most holy building in Islam, the Ka'ba, has neither an arch nor a dome. Almost all the earliest mosques had flat roofs and had no arches or minarets. The use of domes and arches became necessary when buildings increased in size and Muslim architects naturally made use of the most up-to-date methods and materials available to them. As time passed new techniques and materials came into existence. The use of steel and concrete made it possible to build very large buildings without having recourse to domes and arches.

The tradition of building which existed in Pakistan and India was one of the richest in the world, as is well demonstrated by Mughal masterpieces such as the Taj Mahal and the Fatehpur Sikri complex. But the tradition declined with the deterioration of the Mughal Empire, and it died when the subcontinent was conquered by the English. In its place came a totally alien tradition and our architects today are trained in the Western tradition.

The mere imitation of old masterpieces is never successful. When an artist is imitating he is not undergoing a creative process and the result is always disappointing. During the past hundred years a number of buildings have been erected which are supposed to incorporate the traditional motifs of Mughal architecture. But the results, on the whole, have been very disappointing. Even if the common man has a sentimental or emotional attachment to some traditional architectural features these should not be used unless they fit into an integrated whole.

Under the circumstances, the most rewarding activity would seem to be a careful study of the principles that have given Islamic architecture its distinctive style and subsequently the incorporation of these principles into existing tradition.

Islam lays great stress on the unity and Oneness of God, on human brotherhood, on the ability of the humblest man to approach and worship his Creator directly and on the utmost balance and simplicity in all things. Islam is totally opposed to waste, luxury and useless decoration. Pervading all these is an attitude of seriousness, austerity and humility - qualities which have been beautifully expressed in Islamic architecture. If a typical mosque is compared with a typical Hindu temple what has been said above becomes quite clear.

In Islamic architecture, line is more important than texture, and the design of a building is based on a rhythmic continuation of line with no sculptural effects sought as in the case of Hindu temples and Christian churches.

Surface decoration, however rich and intricate it may be, is always sub-ordinate to the main lines of the building. Islamic architecture is marked by simplicity and an austere grandeur. There is no unnecessary complexity, no great variation of levels and no multiplicity of small rooms and enclosures. No other architecture uses such large open spaces enclosed within a building.

Accentuation and rhythmic balance are obtained through a symmetry which is exemplified in Mughal gardens. The use of static and running water in or around a building is another notable feature of Islamic architecture. Lastly comes the aesthetic siting of a building in relation to its environment, to buildings nearby, with gardens and parks forming part of the overall plan.

Before we go any further, it is perhaps necessary to answer a question. Why should one bother about the problems of a creative artist? It is sometimes argued that the artist creates because of an inner urge which for him is something of a compulsion. This urge is the result of inner conflicts and tensions and if these are strong enough the act of creation takes place. Surely some of the greatest writers, poets, painters and composers lived in practically impossible conditions and yet created immortal masterpieces. The examples of Cervantes among novelists and of Van Gogh amongst artists are well known, and other cases can easily be cited.

The answer to this question contains several important elements. First, it must be emphasised that art and literature are not merely decorations added to a social order and to its products but a basic and important element of the social fabric itself. Great art acts as a beacon for creativity, widens the mental and spiritual horizons, and encourages clear thinking, maturity and wisdom. Artists are the pathfinders and harbingers of a brighter future and the discoverers of new dimensions in life. In the final analysis a civilization is judged by its cultural achievements. You cannot have a great civilization without having great art and literature since these are the true mirrors of the health of a society. The work of a creative artist is therefore of the greatest importance to society. If a social order fosters and assists a creative artist it does so in its own interest. As has been repeatedly said, an artist is second in importance only to a prophet.

Great artists, poets and writers do not develop in a vacuum. They bring to fruition the work of a host of lesser writers and artists. Shakespeare himself had a host of Elizbethan dramatists to prepare the ground for him. Even if a great genius can produce masterpieces against all odds - and this is a debatable point - the majority of creative artists are not capable of this. A society therefore ignores and discourages an artist at its own peril. It is not so much the genius, who, in any case, is unpredictable , but the serious and talented creative artist who needs encourage-ment and care by the society in which he lives.

All development means change and development which is planned and financed by a government results in catastrophic change. An artist must be free to find his own soul in order to say something meaningful and authoritative to his fellow beings.

What has been said above gives some idea of the problems faced by creative artists in Pakistan. These problems are of two kinds, economic and, if I may be permitted to use an unfashionable word, spiritual. It is well known that, throughout the ages, pseudo-artists have fared better than genuine ones. In an age of rapid change, crumbling values and lost traditions, this continues to be the case. Work that is original and daring does not easily find a publisher or buyer. Formal training of artists is impaired by shortages of schools for art, architecture and music.

That is why it becomes necessary for a government to step in and create conditions in which genuine art can flourish. The Government of Pakistan has recognised this and is giving financial aid to encourage the arts.

But the spiritual problems of the creative artist in Pakistan are perhaps more important. And these he must solve without outside help - by wrestling with his own soul. To begin with, he must find a link with his past heritage and then develop new forms which can become adequate vehicles for the expression of his deep feelings. This does not mean a rejection of the West. On the contrary, all that is valuable in Western creative work must be gratefully accepted. But a total and indiscriminate acceptance of Western values has not been found satisfactory in the past and is not likely to be found so in the future. Iqbal is a good example of learning from the West and making it a part of an Eastern heritage. Such assimilation and synthesis is the need of the hour. It is true that the world has shrunk and no country today can live in isolation. But it is equally true that a people, like an individual, has certain distinctive qualities which if properly developed will add to the rich variety of cultural activity that surrounds us.

In order to emphasise the significance of the creative arts, let me finish with a quotation: "So far from having to do merely with statues, pictures and symphonies, art is the name for the whole process of intelligence by which life, understanding its own condition, turns them to the most interesting and exquisite account. The art, properly important, would be, as Aristotle pointed out, politics. Its theme would be the whole of experience; its materials are its theatre the whole of life."■

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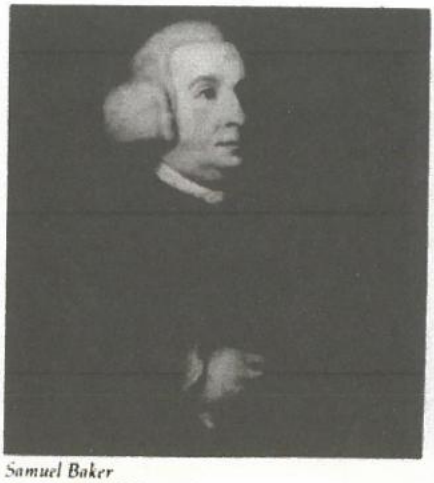
LONDON
International Art Market

Saleem Shahed

In the ancient world a public auction or a sale at which articles were sold to the highest of successive bidders was an accepted method of trading in people or plunder which one had acquired, accumulated or inherited in excess of one's own needs. Herodotus wrote about the auctioning off of maidens for marriage as long ago as the Babylon of 5th century B.C. Auctions of prisoners of war as slaves and other goods looted in the course of battle were also quite common. But in modern times an auction (from the Latin word 'auctio' meaning increase) conjures up very different pictures in our mind. It can be the sale of a business because of closure or bankruptcy, of household effects for non-payment of debts, of prize bulls and race horses at a country market or of an old painting, an antique rug or a rare manuscript for hundreds of thousands of pounds at Sothebey's, Christie's or Phillips in London, New York, Rome, Geneva or one of their many other salesrooms round the world.

All these three international auction houses started their business as modest old English firms in 18th century England. Today they dominate the fine arts market worldwide. In the last twentyfive years or so, they have vastly enlarged its scale and revolutionized its nature by becoming multinationals. Whether you are a buyer or a seller, they will appraise your goods, advise you on their authenticity and value, advertise and publicise them sell them wherever in the world they are likely to get the best price, pack them, insure them and transport them and also help you with your income tax and foreign exchange problems. For the seller, they represent a sophisticated commercial operation with a record of achieving the highest prices for works of fine art. For the buyer, dealer or collector, they represent a market of infinite variety where price trends can be clearly observed, new areas of collecting identified and where the excitement and sense of occasion can still be experienced. They employ specialists, many of them world authorities in their own field, who plan and put together the sales after careful research and study. Their sales rooms are like museums of cultural and academic interest in which the exhibits are constantly changing.

Samuel Baker, whose firm evolved into Sotheby's and who initially set up as a bookseller and publisher in 1733, began his business as an autioneer with the sale of the library of Sir John Stanley in 1744. It set the pattern for growth for more than a century. Baker and his successors handled all the great libraries that came up for sale including those of Prince Talleyrand, John Wilkes, John Bright, the Marquis of Lansdowne, the Earls of Sunderland, Hopetoun and Pembroke and the Dukes of Devonshire, York, Roxburghe and Buckingham. On Napoleon's death, they disposed off the books he had taken with him into exile on St. Helena.



Samuel Baker
Founder of Sotheby's in 1744



Left to Right: Nabil Saidi, Oriental Manuscripts & Miniatures. Charlotte Chesney, Islamic Works of Art (Pottery, Metalwork etc.) Alidad Mahloudji, Carpets, Jack Frances, Overall Department Director



John Sotheby, nephew of Samuel Baker



Sotheby's main entrance in New Bond Street.

In 1767, Baker went into partnership with George Leigh, a larger than life character who soon became well-known and popular for his theatrical performances as an auctioneer, his snuff box and ivory gravel and his actor's sense of timing.

On Baker's death in 1778, his estate was divided between Leigh and Baker's nephew John Sotheby whose successors were to lead the business for more than eighty years. During that time the company extended its functions to take in the sale of prints, coins, medals and various antiquities. Last of the Sotheby's died in 1861. There were other owners and partnership deals until in 1977 its board decided on going public but it still carries the name of Southeby's. With the lease on its Wellington Street, Strand premises due

to expire in 1917 they moved house to its present address at 34, New Bond Street in the West End, which had become a fashionable area and a centre for the selling of fine art.

Christie's, too, had been selling works of art of all kinds for over two hundred years. When James Christie founded his firm in 1766, with the sale of the household effect of a "Noble Personage" there were over 60 auctioneers in



James Christie, the founder's portrait painted by Thomas Gainsborough.

London. However, his enterprise, personality and natural flair helped him to eclipse his rivals.

By 1770 Christie's was well established and moved to 125 Pall Mall, next door to Thomas Gainsborough who painted James Christie's portrait on the condition that it was hung in his salesroom. During the next 30 years James Christie became well-known in London society and was described as "Elegence or King of Epithets" by a contemporary cartoonist. He came from nowhere, but he was tall, handsome and mannerly, a great favourite with fashionable ladies and his men friends included David Garrick and Sir John Reynolds. In 1778 when he was chosen to arrange the sale of part of the Walpole collection of paintings at Houghton, he became the most eminent auctioneer in London. He also sold Madame Dubarry's jewels.

After his death in 1803 James Christie was succeeded by his eldest son James Junior who moved the firm to its present premises at 8 King Street, St. James's, in 1823. Since James Christie's time, the firm has enjoyed an orderly succession in terms of management. The last member of the founder's family retired in 1889. The firm, like Sotheby's, is a public company today, but continues to carry on business under the original name of Christie's.

The firm of Phillips was startd by Harry Phillips in 1796 with the sale of "neat and elegant" household furniture held in Crown Street, Westminster. Phillips had jut resigned, when he was thirty years of age, as James Christie's Chief Clerk and could not afford a venue of his own. But he was very able, friendly and entertaining both on the rostrum and at social gatherings which brought him quick success. Just a year later, in 1797, he established his own sales room at 73 New Bond Street. By the time Harry Phillips died in 1840, he had sold goods that had belonged to Ben Brummel, Marie Antoinette, Napoleon and



Christies main entrance.



Mr. Tom Craig, Director.

Standing: Mr. Anthony Thompson, Head of Department (Indian and Islamic Works of Art) Miss Caroline Bluth, (Indian and Islamic Manuscripts)

Sitting: Mr. William Robinson, Assistant to Mr. Thompson Miss Liz Leigh, Secretary



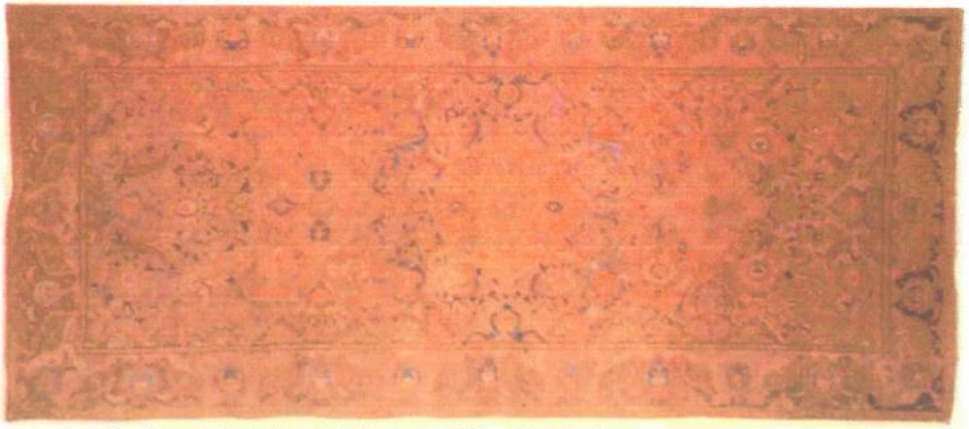
Talleyrand. On his death his son William Augustus became head of the firm and ran it successfully for forty-seven years. It's fortunes declined in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1937 it was bought by another auctioneer, G. Hawkings who suffered a severe setback when, in 1939, the firm's headquarters were destroyed by fire. Phillips moved into its present smaller quarters at nearby Blenstock House, 7 Blenheim Street. But the prospects did not look very hopeful until 1954 when the possibility of a truly international fine arts market opened up suddenly and set these three very English firms on their way to becoming the multinational monoliths they are today.

London had already become important as an art centre following the French Revolution. The wealth which the Industrial Revolution had brought to Britain encouraged the collecting of works of art. The Grand Tour became the fashion of the day and led to vast quantities of pictures, furniture, silver and other objects of art being brought back from all parts of Europe and later from all parts of the Empire. This process continued throughout the 19th century and with it the growth of fine art trade in London. Since the last war London has continued to dominate the international art market even though other centres such as New York, Amsterdam, Geneva and Rome have also increased their importance. London's success is due to a combination of factors. Britain has a penal taxation system which brings works of art on to the market. It has fvourable customs duties with no sales taxes as those which exist in most of the other continental countries. Works of art over 100 years old enter the country duty free, while there is no duty on pictures of any date. The result is that the normal commission rate of ten per cent charged to sellers or buyers is far lower than that charged by auctioneers elsewhere in Europe or in the U.S.A.

Southeby's have an annual worldwide turnover of over £207 million. The company hs a network covering 24 countries. Christie's annual total sales are in the region of £172 million. They too have subsidiary compaies and representatives in 18 countries. Phillips remain a more centralized operation but they, too, have come a long way from their beginnings. Phillips followed Christie's to America in 1977 and now have sales rooms or offices in 5 countries and an international sales turnover of £33 million. The last few years have seen many more new ideas and innovations in fine art auctioneering. Specialised sales, use of satellites for the transmission of bids across the Atlantic during a sale and simultaneous auctions in different countries by television indicate a market which is expanding and ever-increasing new areas of collecting from lead soldiers and mechanical toys to phono- ▶ 80



Quran section: Juz 7
(Probable Kairouan: 9th or early 10th Century)
Sold at Christie's Spring 1982 sale for £73,200.



Polonaise Silk and metal thread Carpet. 17th century. Sold at Sotheby's Autumn sales for £231,000 – a world record auction price for any carpet.

Boston Seminar on Historic Muslim Cities

The history, culture and rhythms of cities reflect the cultures of their people. In each culture, the long history of the cities and art of city building deposits an invaluable urban and physical heritage combined with a tradition of renewal and adaptation to suit the changing conditios of existence in such a way that allows the cities to retain some imprint of each passing generation. But in this continuity and change, the fate and fortunes of the cities have ben inextricably linked to the fates and fortunes of their builders, and like them, they rise and become centres of cultures and civilisations or fall, decay and wither away.

For over a century now, the great Muslim cities have been languishing in decay and urban stagnation, and what little is left of them has ultimately reached such a state of pitiful degeneration, that there is now a universal paralysis where to do nothing and leave alone seems to have become simply the only gnerally accepted cure for the problems. There have, however, been some recent debates and examinations of the plight of these cities, most of them admittedly generated outside the Muslim countries and among the international cultural agencies. There was considerable work done during 1978-79 at The Organisation of Islamic Conference in Jeddah for he establishment of an International Commission for the Care and Conservaion of the Muslim Urban and Artistic Heritage, but unfortunately without any positive results. This was followed in 1980 by an International Symposium on the Preservation and Conservation of the Islamic Urban Heritage held at Lahore, Pakistan. The Symposium was jointly orgaised by the UNESCO and the Pakistan Department of Archaeology. The conclusions of the Symposium were presented to the Muslim Foreign Ministers Conference held in Islamabad later that year. The outcome of this submission, if any, is not yet generally known. The International Seminar on the Arts in the Islamic Lands early this year was aranged by the Islamic Arts Foundation, London and in a number of papers the dismal plight of the Muslim historic cities, including special reference to the recent changes in the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, was brought into focus.

The most recent related event took place as a seminar in Boston during August this year under the Aga khan Programme for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusettes Institute of technology. The seminar entitled "Adaptive Reuse: Integrating Traditional Areas in the Modern Urban Fabric" was the third in a continual programme of seminars on topics related to the Islamic Arthitecture and the City. The seminar was attended by over a hundred international participants — architects, urban planners, economists and sociologists; administrators, teachers and by representatives from International Agencies such as the World Bank.

The seminar was to concern itself with the present problems of Muslim historic and inner cities, and put forward its diagnosis and possible prognosis in a way as to revitalise the cities' economic base and urban and social fabric so that these could become a positive element in the strategy of the development process and contribute to the cultural and historic identity of the area.

The historic cores of the Muslim Cities were formed by spontaneous and cohesive layers accommodating a variety of functions of trade, commerce and manufacture; religious, administrative and educational and housing for the rich and poor alike. The first half of the nineteenth century saw developments of new areas under Western influence to house the colonial administrations away from the indiginous populations and for the rising native middle classes. These new areas, with their modern industries and commercial and vehicular facilities reduced the economic and commercial importance of many of the older areas. With the emigration of the better-off population of the old city to the new areas, the latter became more fashionable, thus resulting in considerable loss of image for the old city. In time, the reduced economic base of the old city, with only traditional small scale industries, had to function in parallel and compete with new industries of the modern city. In recent decades, the accellerated development of the modern city, the huge influx of people from rural areas, the increase of traffic and general lack of overall planing strategy combined with the continuing physical and economic decay, lack of private investment and government services and the consequent environmental degradation have made the historic districts increasingly unattractive places in which to live. Due to the cheaper accommodation these areas have become the natural destination for rural immigrants, thus creating serious overcrowding and demands on the limited basic services which still exist and function.

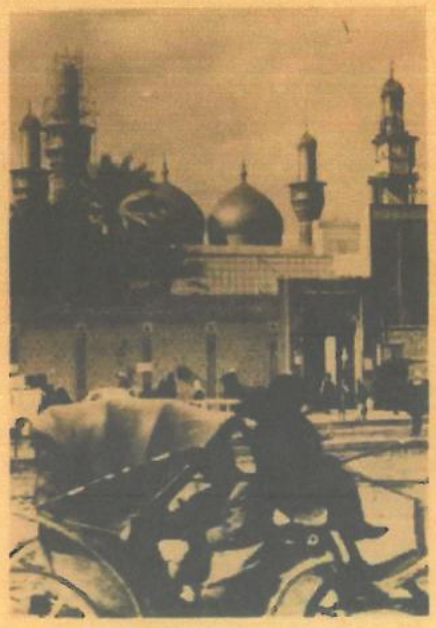
Under these pressures, the older districts continue to change and decay, engendering serious environmental and social problems and breakdown of existing services and often vanish altogether. Due to overcrowding, lack of maintenance and make-shift additions and alterations, the buildings are deteriorating rapidly. Buildings of historic importance are either suffering from neglect and pollution or, quite often, threatened by the ill-considered new structures and road widening schemes. The historic districts, now socially, culturally and economically deprived and with not much political influence, are set apart from the mainstream of a rapidly uzbanising and developing society as increasingly derelict symbol of an undeveloped and shameful past, and as far as the evidence suggests, the only official gesture made towards these districts is their wholesale demolition for traffic mprovement schemes or their replacement by ill-conceived multi-storey blocks of commercial and tenement buildings without much overall environmental improvement.

With the awareness of this general background, the seminar participants were given presentations by the Guest Faculty members on a number of historic cities and districts identifying the general circumstance of each area, the specific problems, objectives, and their findings and recommendations. The major areas dealt with were as follows:

1.Revitalisation of the Kadhimiyeh, Baghdad. Kadhimiyeh is one of four historic cores of Baghdad located about five kilometres north of the city centre. It developed as a separate community on the edge of the original city of Baghdad. The name of the







district is derived from Imam Musa al-Kadhim (d.799) who was a distinguished religious scholar. Imam al-Kadhim and his grandson, Imam al-Jawad (d.835), two of the twelve Shia Imams, are buried in the cemetery. The tombs later became shrines and by the late Abbasid period, Kadhimiyeh became a small walled township in its own right. The centre of the town is dominated by the mosque of Kadhimiyeh, itself a unique and outstanding monument. Most of the present structure, about 140 metres squares on plan, dates back to the 16th century when it ws completely rebuilt. The mosque complex togethr with the tomb buildings forms the central focus of Kadhimiyeh with winding pedestrian streets and alleyways, a typical feature. Arab city which has survived reasonably intact till recent times.

In 1970 a master plan for the city was prepared by the Polish State Planning Services (POLSERVICE) proposing the then fashionable approach of demolition of slums around the shrine of Kadhimain and around a number of othr shrines. The demolished areas thus created were to be laid out as gardens and landscaped squares. In 1980, the recommendations of the Master Plan were followed and substantial areas on the North and West of the shrine including a mosque, public baths and some of the finest houses were bulldozed. In the East and West of the shrine furthr demolition was carried out for roadworks. At a planning conferene later that year this wholesale destruction of the Iraqi heritage was called into question and a re-assessment was instituted. Soon after, an English firm of Architects and Planners' was appointed to evaluate afresh the problems and put forward its proposal. The firm's approach as described at the seminar could best be summed up by quoting from their seminar report - "the choice facing such historic cities lies between the alternatives of radical change destroying their special characteristics, and patient, careful adaptation to the demands of the new technologies Traffic pressures, demands for growth and the urge to imitate more advanced societies have often produced violent changes befoe the cities are even aware of the need for a positive choice." The proposals are for he demolished area to be rebuilt in harmony with the scale and grain of the historic city, accommodating multiple functional uses, in a process of additions rather than repetitive multiplication, so common in the modern cities. The layout of the new area and its architecture will take an informal rather than imitative approach and will incorporate the restoration of historic buildings, upgrading of social structure and new residential accommodation with house forms based on remodelling of traditional arrangements adjusted to incorporae modern services and amenities.

2. SHAHJAHANABAD, DELHI, INDIA

The origins of Delhi, the capital of modern India, go back to the tenth century B.C. It has been the seat of many a ruling dynasty controlling Northrn India, and historically, it is not so much a city but a succession of cities overlapping and intermingling with each other. Modern Delhi has two distinct parts: old Delhi, which grew around the Moghal walled city of Shahjahanabad and New Delhi, the capital city designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens early this century.

In 1638, Shahjahan decided to shift his capital from Agra and build an entirely new capital at Delhi. The Lal Quila (Red Fort) and the Jama Masjid (Central Mosque) together with the Fatehpuri Mosque and the Begum Bagh form the major historic elements

of the city. Since its inception, Shahjahanabad had its ups and downs like any other city. From its high point under Emperor Aurangzeb (1659-1707) to its sacking by Nadir Shah in 1739 and again by the Afghans in 1756, and then as the capital of British India when considerable major changes such as the demolition of the area around the Red Fort, major new road works through the old city and the further demolition to make way for the Railway took place. There have been significant and dramatic changes since Independence in 1947 including the resultant massive population re-location. The Shahjahanabad of today embodies all the stresses and strains of a historic city under pressure from increasing population, dwindling economic base, lack of investment and maintenance of its rapidly decaying urban fabric combined with inadequate sanitary services. The 1961 Master Plan attempted to protect some areas from the spreading slums and recommended rehabilitation of partly blighted areas and advocated redevelopment for nearly a quarter of the city by demolition of the more dilapidated structures. The present situation within the walled city is extremely precarious, complicated by its large population, high density, complex land tenure system and encroachment of commercial activities into the residential areas. Above all the lack of any coherent policy of care and upkeep has lead to misguided and token efforts at piecemeal make-shift interventions often in conflict with the historic and social character of the city and its scale.

3. FEZ, MOROCCO Fez was founded in 808 A.D. by Mulay Idriss of the Umayyad Dynasty on a site by the Oued-Fez river. During its earlier period, it asimlated many cultural and architectural influences, particularly of Arab Andalusia and Granada. With the influence of the Qarawiyin Mosque and University, it became the religious and cultural centre of Morocco. After the establishment of the Aghlabid rule, Fez reached its zenith as the capital of an empire stretching from Algeria to the high Atlas Mountains. In the quality of its urban culture and refinement, it was rivalled only by Cairo of the Mameluke.

With the movement of the Capital of Marrakesh in the mid-sixteenth century the city entered its calm period, but its economic prosperity and cultural life based on prosperous business conections with the European textile industry continued till the beginning of the 20th century, when it again became the seat of power under the Fench Protectorate. As was happeing to great many other Muslim cities in similar circumstances at the time, a new Colonial city "La Ville Nouvelle" was sited a few kilometres south west of Fez to house the Colonial administrative and political functions and European residential districts away from the old city. This abandoning of the historic city and the creation of a New City as the seat of political and administrative power and new economic functions has been at the root of problems faced by many historic Muslim cities. The deprivation of the power and economic base of the old city together with the emigration of its elite and well-off professional population, in time, robbed the old city of its desirable image, and created the still widely accepted notion of the old city being undesirable and bad, and the New City as being good and fashionable.

After independence in 1956, the rising middle classes began to move out of the Old Medina of Fez into the New City now vacated by the French "Colons". The vacuum created in the old city was rapidly filled by the poor rural migrants looking for cheaper accommodation near the sources of employment, thus destroying the city's heterogeneous social structure and accelerating the decay and degeneration of the historic Medina.

The old city comprises the Medina, Fez-el Beled and it's extention, Fez-Jadid. At 220,000 people, the Medina houses more than half of the total population of the city with a population density, in some areas, of over 1,000 persons per hectare. Despite such demographic pressure, the traditional fabric of the Medina still survives and represents one of the very few intact models of Islamic Urban Form and Structure. The established hierarchy of spaces elegantly reflects in its scale and arrangements the notions of separation between the public and private domains. The predominantly pedestrian main streets with their commercial and production activities provide access to secondary routes, alleyways and dead ends leading to the semi-private areas and living quarters. The arrangements of buildings and the scale and sequence of spaces altogether combine into a coherent cellular whole so representative and expressive of private and social life of a living Muslim city. The rooms around a courtyard to form a house, the cluster of houses with their semi-private alleyways to form a neighbourhood, the string of neighbourhoods connected to the main street with Mosques, Madrassas, shops and businesses combine together to accommodate the private, the religious and the commercial to symbolise the unity of a special way of life.

Concerned about the rapid deterioration of such an outstanding and unique heritage, the Moroccan Government asked UNESCO to assist in a preliminary evaluation. This led to considerable study and research by both the Morocan and international experts eventually resulting in a Master Plan in 1978 covering not only the Medina, but the city as a whole. The Master Plan dealt not only with the problems of the decaying fabric of the Medina but also with other aspects of growing population pressures, change in traditional production methods, increased demands for employment and the social and economic dualism induced by population imbalance and a shifting economic base.

The objective of the Master Plan, as they relate to the Medina, aim to conserve and maintain the significant heritage of traditional architecture and to adapt it to modern needs, develope and upgrade social and community facilities within the traditional pedestrian system,. and re-structure commercial and trade facilities with special regard to traditional artisan activities. The regeneration of traditional facilities and the development of new modern facilities must form part of a unified strategy for the whole of the Metropolitan area, thus producing a new social coherence reflected in the organisation of community structures and urban spaces which will give a new life to this unique and historic city.

4. LAHORE, PAKISTAN According to the archaeological evidence, the ancient city of Lahore dates back to the 4th and 5th centuries AD. It served as a seat of power for a number of Muslim ruling dynasties from the tenth century onwards, and under Moghuls, from 1526 to 1849 AD., When it fell to the British, it reached a population of half a million inhabitants, although the Persian invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali during the 18th and early 19th centuries left the city considerably de-populated and devastated. At present, the old city of Lahore has a population of about a quarter of a million with its one square mile land area.

Socio-economically, the old city is still an integral part of the metropolitan Lahore; has a well integrated social fabric with a very low level of crime. It has some 20 protected monuments of national importance and about 4,000 buildings of cultural and historic value. The population densities, at around 1,100 persons per hectare, are considerably high. Nearly half the buildings are in an advanced state of decay, with an increasing proportion becoming structurally dangerous. The original wall of the old city was demolished soon after the British take-over, but nine of the origial twelve gates still exist and serve as points of transfer from vehicular traffic from the exterior to the predominantly narrow and winding pedestrian streets. Since the expansion of the metropolitan area, the old city has increasingly become poor. Nonetheless, about half the working population is still actively involved in









trade and commerce and retains a consideraable proportion of skilled craftsmen. Most of its residents still work within the old city or a walking distance from it.

An overall study for Lahore, called the "Lahore Urban Development and Traffic Study" was prepared during 1978-80, and included the upgrading and conservation of the old city as an integrated component of the total strategy. The study recognised the long standing social, cultural, historic and economic value of the city to the metropolitan area as a whole and took account of the changing needs and expectations, upgrading of the building stock and infra-structure, increased employment in small-scale enterprises and, in view of the limited resource, a framework of methodology based upon the concept of total cost recovery. Socio-economic surveys to establish demographic characteristics, educational facilities and occupational skills, employment patterns, income distribution and motivational atitudes toward community projects were conducted. In addition, detailed information relating to the type of constructin and materials, land use, ownership and tenue was collated. From the information gained, primary objective for action were outlined thus:

- *Identification of the major problems and essential elements in the city's physical, and functional structure which required positive intervention.*
- Possible alternative futures for the city.
- Outline of objectives and policy framework.
- A conceptual development plan and a five year action plan.
- Detailed study and design proposals for two selected pilot project areas.

Following detailed work on two selected Pilot Projects, the proposals were submitted to the Government for approval. Currently, overall financial arrangements are being worked out between the various Statutory Authorities and Financial Agencies with some involvement of the World Bank. In the meantime, some essential work on the water supply, drainage and sewerage has been started, generating considerable interest among the residents, and it is to be hoped that sooner rather than later, positive momentum will prevail for this historic city to regenerate itself and play an enriching role in the life of the metropolitan city.

In concluding this summary on four historic cities, it will be remiss not to be reminded that there are scores of similar historic cities spread all over the Muslim world with their ultimate fate precariously hung in the balance and constantly threatened by natural decay

or the bulldozer, one often preceeding the other. I have not summarised the seminar proceedins on the city of San'a in the Yeman Arab Republic, which for its uniqueness as a citadel town, the substantial totality of its existence and the scale and seriousness of threats to it, deserves an article by itself. The commentary on the four specific cities above gives us a sampling of problems faced by most of the historic Muslim cities. Specific detailed approach to the resolution of these will be as different as the cities themselves. The essential problem will always relate to the regeneration of life and life-styles in a way tht the cities could sustain and maintain themselves while satisfying the changing needs and expectations of their inhabitants in a way that we mend a valuable cloth to stitch a pattern together rather than to weave-in a totally unsympathetic new dsign. The historic city cores are places of life and urban memory and vital for the cultural survival of their people. Culture is not something which is dusted and brought out on special occasions. It is continuously made by people living in an environment conducive and compatible with their sense of being and sense of dignity. There are no reasons whatsoever why the people of a historic city cannot preserve the social and urban elements of their historic memory that they wish to preserve. Contemporary knowledge and modern tools give them the benefits not available to them so far to enrich the quality of their own existence and of those around them.■

Ayyub Malik

Istanbul Meeting of Experts on Arab-Islamic Art and Asia

This meeting was held in the context of the decision taken at the general conference of UNESCO held in Belgrade in November 1980. The Istanbul meeting followed from the plan laid down at the initial meeting on 'mutual relations between the Arab culture and other cultures'. The first meeting in the series had taken place in Lisbon on the theme 'Arabic Literature and Europe'.

The papers submitted by the participants included the following: Ali Louati: 'Reflexions on the Muslim concepts of space in architecture and the plastic arts'; Abou Saleh El-Alfi: 'The criteria of Islamic art and its general characteristics'; Nevzat Ilhan: 'Methodological approaches for the cultural history of Islam'; Oktay Asianapa: 'Turkish carpets'; Aptullah Kuran: 'Turkish architecture'; Günsel Renda: 'Turkish miniature painting'; Cinucen Tanrikorour: 'Turkish music'; Zelfa Jourani: 'The inter-relation of styles in the painting of Central Asia, Persia and the Arab world'; Jabaroglu Kerim Kerimov: 'Islamic Art in the Muslim Republics of the USSR'; Shaukat Mahmood: 'Islamic architecture in Pakistan: characteristics and influence'; Mulk Raj Anand: 'The Islamic legacy in the mosque architecture of India'; Abdul Matin Sarker: 'Islamic art in Bangladesh: characteristics and influences'; Othman Bin Mohd Yatim: 'Islamic art in Malaysia: characteristics and influences'; Ahmad Sadali: 'Arab-Islamic art and South East Asia: A view of the Islamic art of Indonesia, characteristics and influences'; Buland Al-Haidari: 'Craft in contemporary Arab art'; Hossein Zenderoudi: 'Arab-Muslim legacy of calligraphy in my art'.

The Istanbul meeting was organized by the representative of the Director-General of UNESCO, Mohammed Aziza, who in his opening address characterised the choice of Istanbul for the meeting place as symbolic of the contiuity of Europe and Asia whose two shores meet in that prestigious city.

There were two main themes that emerged in the papers and discussions. The first comprised factual and historical accounts of Islamic art and civilisation in Turkey, Central Asia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Malaysia and Indonesia. These papers contained much hitherto unknown information about specific architectural monuments and sites. A common theme also was the danger to many of these monuments from neglect and destruction, and one of the resolutions adoptd urged UNESCO to extend the scope of its present activities in the field of conservation.

The second theme was an attempt made by the participants to define the specific characteristics of Islamic art in its broadest sense, both in relation to Islam as a religion and in contrast to western concepts based on the Greek, Roman and Christian traditions. A number of papers emphasized the importance of calligraphy, not only as a decorative art but also as an art form in its own right. The Iranian artist and painter Zenderoudi went further still and explained his use of forms inspired by Arabic letters but not representing them accurately and not forming words, but only impressions which he hopes will strike the imagination as lightning flashes illuminate the sky. This is perhaps an extreme example of the extent to which Arabic calligrahy symbolises for the non-Arabic speaking world the very essence of Islam, which is inextricably linked to the Arabic language. At the other extreme ws the complaint of Ahmad Sadali, himself also an artist, that the Arabic script is fast disappearing as a means of communication. Buland Al-Haidari, Iraqi artist and writer, devoted his entire paper to Arabic letters as an art form.

The most systematic and all-inclusive study of the basic concepts of Islamic architecture and the plastic arts was contributed by the Tunisian, Ali Louati. Basing himself on the cosmological concepts of Islam he analysed and explained the significance of the use of space in terms, not only of the mosque, but also of the Islamic city; he pointed out that the mosque is not just a monument but an integral part of the life of the people living in the city. He thus put his finger on one of the principal dangers which the Islamic heritage now faces in many countries - namely that in their zeal to 'preserve' their monuments, governments and town planners may demolish building and dwellings around the mosques and thus destroy he heart and turn the mosques into museums. ■

Zelfa Hourani

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Four Artists from Jordan

The Wraxall Gallery, London

The current revival of interest in Islamic Arts, both in Europe and America, excludes the work of the modern painters from the Muslim countries. It is passed over or put aside by most critics as imitative or not true to tradition. Acceptance of such views or verdicts would imply that art is and should be static, immune to any outside influence or interflow of ideas and incapable of growth and development. In some of the Muslim countries themselves there is a tendency to under-rate or disown it which is understandable as an awareness or assertion of new-found national pride in their past; but the atitude of the West, in this respect, is illogical and unreasonable. If it was alright for so much of European architecture to be influenced by the Muslim architecture in Turkey and Spain; if there was nothing wrong in Paul Klee turning to the Arab art of calligraphy for his inspiration, why can't a Muslim painter of today fall under the spell of a Picasso or a Pollock without compromising his claim to originality or even greatness?

The initiative taken by the Wraxall Gallery, London in having an exhibition of the work of four of the most prominent artists from Jordan was most welcome. Princess Wijdan Ali, Munira Toukan, Mohanna Durra and Mahmoud Taha are considered to be among the pioneers and leaders of the modern art movement in Jordan. Though their medium and styles are different they represent the spirit of Jordanian culture and art as a living tradition. These four contemporaneous artists share a common root and yet are totally individualistic in their styles. Each one draws, in a unique fashion, on the light, shade, expanse, tension and materials of his or her environment to express a fresh visual experience. They have all lived and worked abroad. The influence of modern trends and techniques in Europe and America is very obvious in their work; but in its shape and form and quality of mystical serenity it is still very traditional.

WIJDAN ALI'S large canvasses are beautifully bold expressions of the tranquility, brilliance, intensity, subtelity and strength of the desert scene. MUNIRA TOUKAN'S paintings present a harsh dichotomy of light and dark relieved by earthly brown colours and show a deliberate absence of the strong sense of perspective one perceives in her bronze scluptures. Yet both draw upon the same strength and tension in their rendering of clear lines and delimited form. MOHANNA DURRA exhibits a mastery of materials and technique which breaks down images into polychromatic planes and shafts of intense energy and colour. And MAHMOUD TAHA'S smooth ceramic vessels not only maintain an ancient tradition but show various innovative combinations of new textures, glazes and form. ■

S.S

Faces — Munira Nusseibah Toukan



Carl Haag and his contemporaries

The Mathaf Gallery, London

In the 19th century England, illustrators of Middle Eastern life and Orientalist paintrs were very much in vogue. But many of them, inspired by contemporary accounts in prose or poetry, romanticized the subject. They were mostly sketching or painting scenes they had never witnessed first hand. The Bavarian born Carl Haag was an exception. After studying at the Academies of Nuremburg and Munich and acquiring a good reputation for painting miniatures, he arrived in London in 1847 via Antwerp and Brussels. The main reason for his visit was to take a closer look at the British watercolour technique which was being widely acclaimed abroad. After a thorough investigation of existing methods and materials, he evolved his own technique. He never mixed colours but applied them in a pure state in layers of washes, stippling afterwards with the point of a brush where required or "scratching out" — the system employed by Turner which obtained the highlights from the paper itself. By doing so, he succeeded in



'A Bridal procession in Damascus' Carl Haag.

transposing the richness inherent in oil paintings into his water-colours.

In 1858, after returning to England from a winter in Munich, he set out on a longer journey which took him to Cairo, Greece, Turkey and back to Cairo where he set up a studio in the Coptic quarter with another English painter friend of his, Fredrick Goodall. The two made many sketching expedetions into the desert on horse-back. Next year Haag travelled to Jerusalem and was busy sketching the Holy Places. He returned to Cairo via Samaria, Galillee, Damascus and Palmyra During these travels he studied in detail the life, manners, customs and character of the desert tribes which he depicted in his water colours. When he returned to England in 1860, he was already acknowledged as one of the leading Orientalists and exhibited over 400 water colours in various galleries and institutions. He constructed and decorated his new studio in Lyndhurst Road, Hampstead, London completely in the Egyptian style using moucharabies and oriental rugs. After another visit to Cairo in 1873, he retired to Oberweisel on the Rhine in 1903 and died there in 1915.

The paintings at the Carl Haag and his Contemporaries exhibition at the Mathaf Gallery, were chosen for their accuracy as well as their artistic merit. Besides Haag's masterly "A Bridal Procession in Damascus" and "Mecca Pilgrims Returning to Cairo" both of which illustrate the perfection of his use of materials as well as his technical skill, it included Charles Robertson's "A Carpet Sale, Cairo", Giuseppe Aureli "the Harem" and many other paintings of his contemporaries, all of which showed an exactness of detail and strength of colour suggesting that they might almost be oils. The mystery of the Orient-combined with the mastery of the water-colour medium have produced these works of rare beauty and lasting value. ■

S.S

Arts of the Mughal Empire

The Indian Heritage exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (April 21 - August 22, 1982) was a reminder of the fact that, during the era of the Mughal Dynasty, Islam held sway over a far larger part of India than is now the case. From the 600 or so objects displayed we were asked to imagine the manner in which the Mughal emperors and their entourage of nobles lived. As we entered the exhibition, we experienced the relief that shade suddenly brings when one escapes the hot sunlight, much as the Qur'an describes the final abode of the blessed:

"We shall admit them to a cool shade" (IV,57).

We were surrounded by *jali*, pierced geometrical screens, not pieced together in the intricate joinery typical of Persian craftsmanship in wood, but carved out of solid slabs of marble or sandstone — a method more suitable to the dessicating heat of India. As we entered the darkened room we were made to feel that we were the women in the royal *zenana*, looking out onto the brightly-lit courtyard below. The hot brilliance shone in from behind the screens, and revealed the beauty of their structure expressing thereby God's measured laws. Here was a first example of the truly imaginative presentation that marked the entire exhibition, injecting life into a collection of museum objects.

We then entered a second, less enclosed room, and to our right stood a pavilion decorated with the panoply of imperial splendour. It evoked images of a raised platform in the Public Audience Chamber and the Emperors Babur, Humayun, Jahangir, Shahjehan, Akbar or Aurangzeb could well have been about to enter this Chamber and sit cross-legged on its *durbar* throne. Around the throne were suspended four standards with heraldic finials, one of which was shaped as an imperial sunburst, and the spectator was asked to imagine the finely dressed courtiers who would be grouped behind the throne. We also had to imagine the courtier who would be wielding the fan made of thickly packed peacock feathrs on one side, and the other courtier whose role it was to flick the chowrie (yak-tail) or royal fly-whisk. Later in the exhibition we could imagine, too, a group of musicians playing the various musical instruments displayed behind glass cases, while danceers whirled on some of the finely woven carpets (catalogue no.204).

Suspended at the back of the throne were panels of cloth, printed with coloured floral designs, which formerly served as interior hangings in the tents of encampments set up while the Emperor travelled within his kingdom, or, more often engaged in battles to annex still more territory. In view of the fact that Babur, the first Mughal emperor, came from the nomadic tribes of the Samarqand area, frequent movement on the part of the court was not surprising and many of the affairs of state were conducted in just such tents. Near the pavilion, a typical courtly tent was displayed. Simple on the outside, its interior was beautifully decorated with printed floral panels. This particular tent had been brought back to England by Lord Clive of India, and it called to mind the early kings of England who were also frequently on the move, taking with them a vast retinue of servants who travelled on ahead to prepare food and arrange the portable furniture in time for the royal party's arrival. The travelling seat of government in Mughal India was highly organised and functioned on a more grandiloquent and sopisticated scale, than had the English court during the period when it frequently moved around the country. A direct chronological comparison, however, is unfair. The illustrious reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) coincided with the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir, and by that time such nomadic parades had stopped in England. Elizabeth competed with her Muslim contemporaries in artistic magnificence and, indeed, sent her ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, to approach the Mughal court at the time the British East India Company was being organised.

The way in which Mughal emperors were dressed when they prepared for an appearance in the audience chamber were clearly depicted in many of the painted miniatures at the exhibition. These, apart from being excellent portraits, show us the kind of clothing they wore, the games they played, the cups they drank from, and the weapons they hunted with. In addition, the examples of the clothing and implements that the exhibition had drawn together reveal an extraordinarily high standard of craftsmanship and one can easily understand why Mughal art is viewed as the product of the patronage of aesthetes, who treasured a single flower as much as a precious gem, making almost a religion of possessing and appre-ciating beauti ful objects. Theologically one could find fault with their priorities, and from the sociological point of view, one is aware that the collection of taxes often had the purchase of art as their purpose rather than the welfare of the people. But let us not arrive at too hasty a judgement. Let us admire, with moral judgement suspended for the moment, the inventiveness and magnificence of the attire of the Mughal emperors, and its imitation by lesser nobles.

The emperor often wore a fitted robe, and never the loose ghalabiyyah characteristic of the more westernly areas of the Islamic world. Other costumes, derived from the Persian and nomadic background of the dynasty, comprised tightly tailored Turkish trousers over which a coat, closely fitted at the top and finishing in a full skirt was worn, with the fastening at the side. India, was a land of cotton weaving, and the coats in the exhibition were all made of finely woven cotton, dyed in the wonderful mustards and mandrake purples that are the gifts of India's plants. Often simple paisley or plant-cluster patterns gaily decorate the cloth. The smaller versions of such costumes made for the youger princes are in still perfect condition. Perhaps the most impressive example of needlework in the collection was a riding coat made for a prince of the house of Jahangir. Embroidered througout with such fine stitches that they can hardly be seen, the design is one of a hunting terrain with flowers, bushes, birds, gazelles and lions, all waiting to be caught by its wearer. As can be seen in the miniatures, shoes were made in such a way as to have very high points which curled up over the big toe. One pair was on show with such long points that they flop over onto themselves.

The Mughals devised a unique version of the traditional turban that

very much resembled a peaked cap, with its baggy pouch at the back of the head and tight binding on the forepart. Not only did they use cloth to cover their heads in this manner but they often also had metal helmets fashioned to exactly the same shape (no.456).

The emperor's turban could not of course be limited to a simple piece of cloth covering the head. Elaborate ornaments would be attached, and several such turban ornaments were displayed — usually tulip (paisley) shaped, and broken up into many florets, each floret being a ruby, emerald, pearl or diamond. Tassels and plumes would also be added, or else strings of precious stones were draped over the head-gear to add to its magnificence. Beneath the turban the Mughal emperors did not think it effeminate to wear elaborate earrings, armlets, necklaces and rings, examples of all of which were abundantly present among the exhibits. The favourite type of ring worn was a thumb-ring, a peculiarly Mughal invention, with its thumb-shaped opening, and made of ivory or different colours of jade studded with coloured stones. In some miniatures, the emperor has two or three hanging from strings round his waist. He might have a handkerchief (no. 246) of the finest muslin patterned with gold dots. Around his stomach the emperor would wrap a magnificent sash, versions of which would often be presented to his nobles as gifts. Examples of bautifully patterned patkas, or court girdles, show the amount of inventiveness expended on belts alone.

Into the sash a dagger would be thrust, and here again we come to a realm of design that bears the distinctive mark of the Mughal approach to design. Most of the daggers have jade or rock crystal handles, carved in animal-headed forms and studded with rubies and emeralds to create flower patterns. The blades are often finely watered — the art of damascening was known to be the forte of the Persians and Indians from earlier times — and close inspection of the blades shows the watered-silk ripple of the various metals that had been beaten and tempered, folded, beaten and then tempered over and over again with a hammes, thus forming hand-fashioned blades, stronger even than those of today. These handles and the blades, however, are rarely straight. They curve gracefully like streams of stone and metal — the end of the blade resembling a streak of liquid that has become adamantine, suited to slip between the ribs of an assailant (no.412, 418, 419). The swords are equally impressive. Those which are the most Indian in inspiration have a steel handle representing an elephant's head whose trunk entwines a grappling tiger, the ensemble being decorated with flowers and rampant animals, all overlaid in gold and silver. The blade is fashioned in a watered ladder pattern and the scabbard is of velvet-covered wood (no.435). Even the powder horns used by the Mughals were carved out of ivory retaining the original shape of the tusk, but marked by an intricate chain of various creatures all swallowing one another (nos. 439, 449). As the Mughals began to switch over to guns due to European influence powder horns were still needed. Instruments like ceremonial elephants hooks (nos. 448, 449) still kept their place well into the nineteenth century.

Starting in the 16th century the European influence increasingly gained strength until finally by the mid-nineteenth century Mughal art had lost its native genius. As the Europeans, preponderantly the British, penetrated even deeper into Indian life, such bizarre products as the silver-covered teak throne and footstool (nos. 474, 475) modeled after a Victorian rococo-style drawing-room chair appeared on the scene. A design for another rococo drawing-room chair with tigers for arms (no. 188) calls to mind the extravagances that had ben shown at the Great Exhibition in England some thirty-five years earlier, where wolves formed the arms of an equally hideous design carved out of Irish bogoak.

But borrowings went in both directions and the exhibition also showed some of the signs of British colonials "going native". A miniature (no. 93) depicts a European lady dressed as an odalisque (a reclining beauty of the harem) attired in oriental dress with a parrot on her finger, although behind her on a vestal altar there appears a statuette of the comfortingly familiar "Three Graces" in order to account for her European complexion. Another painting records how Col. Antonie Polier succumbed to the charms of the Mughal way of life. He is shown reclining on a lobearched verandah with his hookah beside him while the nautch girls dance before him (no. 90). Indeed, as early as 1838, one English gentleman, no less than a certain General Allard, was bold enough (in the face of Victorian disapproval) to have himself portrayed in a gouache with his Indian wife, children and servants. Such infiltration enriched European life, but watered down the pristine freshness of Mughal art in its prime.

Tobacco was probably introduced by the Europeans but the Indians devised an eminently more pleasurable manner of inhaling the smoke. It was bubbled through water, often perfumed with rosewater in the Persian manner, before it was inhaled. Much time was devoted to designing hookah bases. The most attractive in the exibition was one made of silver, patterned with flowering Mughal plants enamelled in blue (no. 340), The most interesting, in view of its association, is a hookah base made of nephrite jade inlaid with nephrite, lapiz lazuli, ruby flowers and leaves' one of a pair owned by William Beckford, the 18th century collector who built Fonthill Abbey.

Although the Mughal emperors were the patrons who commissioned such splendid work, the real heroes of the exhibition were the anonymous craftsmen and it is to them that praise is due. Their intricate work and their accurate eye and touch of the tool is to be seen in every aspect of their creations. Many of their highly developed skills, filtered back to England, and had a powerful effect on the Arts and Crafts Movement there.

The paisley patterns of the famous Kashmir shawls are an outstanding example and many of the motifs in William Morris's work which seem to be English turn out to be traceable to Persian or Mughal prototypes.

In order to appreciate the exhibition fully, an informative and engagingly presented catalogue, places all of the objects of art in their historical perspectie more completely than has ever been done before. It is available in a hardbacked edition "The Indian Heritage—Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule" published by the Herbert Press at £11.95, providing lasting record for scholars, libraries and enthusiasts. More than half the objects shown are illustrated in black and white or colour, and the introductory essays and catalogue notes are written by a team of ten experts in the field, led by Robert Skelton, Keeper of the Indian Department at the Victoria & Albert Museum.

Ayesha Abdel-Halim

'Timur hands his Imperial Crown to Babur' by Gobardhan, Mughal c.1630
Victoria and Albert Museum.



The Unappreciated Dhurrie

Edited by David Black & Clive Loveless. Text by Steen Cohen. David Black Orietal Carpets, London, 1982. 23 Colour Plates, 14 Figs; 64 pp. Softbound price £15.

This book is the catalogue which accompaied an exhibition, "The Unappreciated Dhurrie", arranged by David Black and Clive Loveless to coincide with the Festival of India, in spring 1982. London has been the venue for a series of exhibitions arranged by Messrs Black and Loveless in recent years and these have focussed attention upon some of the less well-known groups of oriental textile. Their talent for seeking out beautiful and unusual pieces was evident in the very fine display of Indian dhurries which are illustrated in the book with full-page colour Plates. Many people, I am sure, will find themselves taking a fresh look at these traditional cotton carpets, with their lovely pastel colours and huge range of geometrical and pictorial designs. The choice of title for the book, wich will puzzle those who have long appreciated a dhurrie at home, is explained by the editors in their introduction where they admit the aim is to attract the attention of 'collectos and enthusiasts for oriental carpets' who have shown scant regard for this particular group of textiles so far.

This is the first publication to present a comprehensive discussion of Indian dhurries and therefore makes a welcome and valuable contribution to our knowledge of textiles. Dhurries have ben the subject of a long-term study undertaken by the author, Steven Cohen, and the reader is immediately drawn into his enthusiasm for them as, in a brief ten pages, he gives a fascinating introduction to their history, manufacture, design and varied uses, from the borders of Afghanistan to Bengal. Twenty-two dhurries are illustrated in the final section of the book, with a full description and details of provenance, materials and structure given on the facing page. Eleven Figs. are shown in black and white in the text and three more in colour, but unfortunately some are numbered in random order; I found this confusing and it was awkward to track them down whilst reading. My goodwill was restored by the first Fig. (number 11), a marellous photograph showing two prisoners in a Bombay jail, weaving a dhurrie on a horizontal loom. This has been reproduced from H.J.R. Twigg's "Monograph on the Art and Practice of Carpet Making in the Bombay Presidency", published in Bombay in 1907 and now difficult to find. It is no surprise to discover the book is dedicated to the prisoners in India's jails when we read "the finest, most skilfully woven and most technically sophisticated dhurries are not those of the ancient past but pieces produced between 1880 and 1920 in Indian prisons".

For the cover the editors have chosen a format similar to that used for one of their earlier books, "The Unappreciated Kilim", 1977, but this time showing a pile of folded dhuries. It is appropriate to link these two groups of textile, despite their differences in materials and texture, since the use of the same weaving techniques for both has considerable interest. Mr. Cohen makes brief reference to some possible conections, for example with European tapestry, Egyptian Coptic weaving or Chinese K'o-ssu, and further research in this area could be rewarding.

The origin of the dhurrie is still a topic for speculation, although they must have a very long history. These traditional cotton weft-faced flat woven carpets of Afghaistan, Pakistan and India are made in a wide range of sizes and qualities, suitable for their many uses in religious, public and family life. Large number of dhurries have been made in jails, but this type of weaving has always been a village craft with the women working in their homes. Pieces with simple stripes appear in miniature paintings from the second half of the sixteenth century and a blue and white dhurrie with this design is shown in the painting reproduced in the Frontis-piece.

In India, the colours and fine workmanship of the cotton carpets were noted and admired by early European travellers and many pieces were brought by them to the west. More recently, in the 1960s and early '70s, antique examples were sought by interior decorators in Italy and North America who found their colour and design and excellent complement to modern furniture. The fashion spread and for the last ten years, or more, a wide range of dhurries has ben stocked by large department stores in the west. Additional information on the history, design and production of dhurries in India can be found in an editorial article published in HALI, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1982; little has been written about these textiles in the past.

Steven Cohen is to be congratulated for publishing what must be the first detailed structural analyses of dhurries and these are especially interesting since they reveal the use of techniques more often asociated with tapestry and kilim weaving. These techniques, the structure of the dhurrie and the materials used, are clearly described and illutrated with diagrams and photographs. It should be noted, however, that in Fig. 5, showing double interlocking, warps in the diagram (a) are at right angles to those in the photograph (b) , and this could be misleading. The text is supplemented by a structural analysis for each of the twenty-two dhurries shown in the Plates and those who are involved in this type of research may like to note the following points. On page 20 under 'Notes', the description of yarn becomes clear if 'strand' is used to replace 'fibre'; size is given in both metres and inches, whereas metres and feet would be more consistent; the cotton wefts are described, for example, as 8 shoots per row and 160 rows per 100 mm — this is ambiguous and probably should read '8 strands per shoot and 160 shoots per 100 mm'. These are minor criticisms and do not detract from the importance of this new data on the structure of oriental textiles.

It is interesting to discover that a mixed colour, red and yellow, has been used in the finely woven dhurrie shown in Plate 2, as mixed colours were sometimes used in Indian pile carpets. This dhurrie, and the similar piece in Plate 1, are superb examples of weaving with lovely designs. Carpet patterns copied in this flatweave technique seem less successful, to me, than simple and traditional geometrical designs such as the beautifully austere prayer rug (Plate 15) woven in blue and white enhanced with small amouts of

pink, or the large Festival dhurrie (Plate 6) with a simple tile design, again in blue and white, and the blue and terracotta room dhurrie (Plate 19). Pictorial dhurries have a special charm all their own as, for example, the Noah's Ark shown in Fig. 14.

Anyone with an interest in oriental textiles will enjoy reading this well-produced book with its wealth of information on a previously little-known group of oriental flatweaves, and specialists will appreciate the new data to be found in the sections on structure. The price may seem a little high, but the large number of excellent illustrations make this extravagance worthwhile. ■

Shirley Jarman

Art of Building in Yemen

By Fernando Varanda, AARP, London, and The MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass). 1982. Colour Plates, Figs, Photographs. 292 pp.
Hardbound $50.00

As a collection of photographs of Yemen's extraordinary architectural heritage this book is sure to attract general interest. But Mr. Veranda's lucid explanatory text, plus nemerous groundplan diagrams, give it a practical dimension which should also prove of value to architects and all those concerned with the living traditions of Islamic building.

The book is divided into two parts. The first, following an informative introduction to the history and culture of Yemen, deals with basic issues of building under the heading "Controlling the Environment", "Shelter and Settlement", "The House" and "Materials and Techniques". Attractive photographs are accompanied by short, informative essays on each subject. Strategies of siting of various types of buildings, including places of prayer and other communal areas, are also dealt with in this section.

The second part consists of a survey of buildings in different parts of Yemen's varied coastal region: the Mid- and Highlands, the Eastern Highlands and the Eastern Plateau. A final chapter headed "Synthesis" details the ways in which the main materials — mud, brick and stone — are used in combination with each other, as well as with newer types of building materials such as concrete. Techniques such as stone cutting and the building of arches are shown in text and illustration.

The black and white photos cover the whole dramatic range of Yemeni architecture, including awesomely situated hilltop towns, great six-storey tower houses, ancient communal wells, and the high-rise buildings which give traditional Yemeni towns a curiously modern air.

At a time when so many cities in the Muslim world are undergoing a voluntary destruction more effective than all the wars of the centuries, the need to link the best of the past with that of the present grows ever more pressing. The architectural information so attractively presented by Mr. Veranda should have relevance far beyond the borders of the Yemen; and the reasonable price of this large book should add to its general appeal. ■

Robin Ade

MIMAR: (Master Builder/Architect) ARCHITECTURE IN DEVELOPMENT DESIGN ALTERNATIVES UNIFYING BUILDING AND CULTURE.

(A quarterly international architectural magazine exploring environments in developing countries)
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If one were to survey the most noted architectural magazines available in the Western world, one would immediately think of those most displayed on the coffee tables in trendy offices of the cognoscenti and architectural aesthetes such as: Architectural Review, International Architect, Bauen and Wohnen, Architecture Aujourdhui, Architectura, Domus et al. All these journals of the architectural establishment portray the 'high' architecture of the Western world from 'high tec' to the monuments of Western historicism ranging from Bramante to Waterhouse. Occasionally, the more fey may adventure into oriental romanticism.

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James R. Gibson

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NOTES
Islamic Metalwork

1. G. Fēhērvāri and M.Y. Kiyānī, *Fetezzāt-e makhsūfe az Rōbat-e Sharaf* in M.Y. Kiyānī ed., *Discoveries from Robat-e Sharaf*, Tehran, 1981, pp.72-77.
2. A.S. Melikian-Chirvani, "Un bassin iranien de l'an 1375", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, VI période, LXXIII no.1200 (January 1969), pp.5-18.
3. Most revealing of the lack of attention given to the piece is the passing reference made by Galina Pugachenkova, *Iskusstvo Afganistana, Tri Etudi*, Moscow, 1967, p.235. The plate in which the object is illustrated on p.236 actually shows the name and genealogy of the Kart (or Kurt) ruler Ghiyāṯ al-Dīn who died in 1378 which rules out a 15th century date. The slip may have been made easier by the politically-motivated fashion of extolling the Timurid age and its supposed Renaissance. Sadly enough the vessel proves on the contrary that metalwork in Iranian lands was at its zenith ten years before Timur set foot in Herat.
4. Z. Oral, *Nisantasi* (Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi) Ankara 1954, 24 pages, 18 figs.
5. E. Baer "The Nisan Tasi - A study in Persian-Mongol metal ware" in *Kunst des Orients*, IX, 1/2, 1975, p.1-46. On p.37 Mrs. Baer writes that the inscription on the rim eulogizes an illustrious sultan without naming him.
6. Khwāndamīr in the *Ḥabīb al-siyar*, Tehran 1333 s./1955 III p.289 writes that "In the year 755/26 January 1354 - 15 January 1355 *amīr* Mohammad-e Mozaffarī - the Muzaffarid ruler Mohammad - appointed his nephew Shāh Soltān governor of Shiraz". The anonymous *Muntakhab al-Tavārīkh-e Mo'īnī* mentions Shāh Soltān as being sent by Mohammad b. Mozaffar to besiege Isfahan held by the rebel Amir Sheykh. Later, Shāh Soltān plotted with Mohammad's sons Shāh Shojā' and Shāh Maḥmūd, assaulted and blinded Mozaffar, and shared the spoils of the deposed ruler with them: *Montakhab al-tavārīkh-e Mo'īnī*, ed. J. Aubin, Tehran 1336 s./1957 p.184 and 186 respectively. The poet Khwāju Kermānī, *Divan*, ed. A. Soheyli Khwānsarī, Tehran 1336 s./1957 records the *kunya/Konye* "Abo'l Mojāhed" as that of Sultan Abu'l Mujahid Muhammad Shah" p.36-7 whose title - *vāreṯ-e takht-e keyān* shows him to be the Fars ruler.
7. Baer, *op.cit.*, p.37 records the *nesbat* but draws no conclusion from the observation.
8. A.S. Melikian-Chirvani, "Les bronzes et les cuivres des pays islamiques", in *Arts de l'Islam*, Orangerie des Tuileries, Paris 1971, p.94-139. Issued as a separate booklet under the title *L'art du métal islamique dans les collections publiques françaises*.
9. A.S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, London, Victoria and Albert Museum catalogues, 1982.
10. For further details on the cup and illustrations, see A.S. Melikian-Chirvani, "The White Bronzes of Early Islamic Iran", *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 9, 1974 (printed 1975), p.135 (illustrated fig.15); "Les Bronzes du Khorassan 3. Bronzes inédite du Xe et du XIe siècles", *Studia Iranica*, 4,2 (1975), pp.190-91 (illustrated fig.2,pl.VI) for a discussion of the group it belongs to.
11. The use specifally of *daw* for *dawla* is demontrated:

1) by the occurence of the abbreviation in a formula such as *bi'l yumn wa'l-daw* (For an example, of a pen-box signed by Shāgī the designer around 1210 A.D., see i) A.S. Melikian-Chirvani "Les Bronzes du Khorassan I.", *Studia Iranica*, 3,1 (1974), p.32 (illustrated fig.9 pl.IX); ii)"Les Bronzes du Khorassan VII. Sazi de Herat, ornemaniste", *Studia Iranica*, 8,2 (1979) for a discussion of the designer's complete oeuvre (three signed pieces) and his background;

2. by the occurrene on the same object - an early 13th century candlestick from Khorasan, on which see *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, p.112-13 - of the word *dawla* in three different forms, all in the same formula *al baraka wa'd-dawla* - first as *daw*, then in full (*dawla*) and finally as a simple "D" letter.

12. For an example of the 10th-11th century from Khorasan see A.S. Melikian-Chirvani, "Les thèmes ésotériques et les thèmes mystiques dans l'art du bronze iranien" in S.H. Nasr ed., *Mélanges Henry Corbin*, Tehran 1977, p.380-81.
13. See "Les thèmes ésotériques", *op.cit.*, p.391 and pl.8: the letter *rā'* is carefully engraved in two rows of six each, on the "facade" of a ewer formerly preserved in a private foundation in Herat. On the letter K used separately, see for instance a *du'ā* inscribed on a ewer in the Mūzīm-i Baladiya (City Art Museum) in Herat, also discussed in "Les thèmes ésotériques" p.378. The ewer is reproduced on pl.5.
14. A.S. Melikian-Chirvani "Les Bronzes du Khorassan V. De quelques coupes inédites du Khorassan", *Studia Iranica*, 6,2 (1977), p.192 and 196. The bowl is reproduced in pl.7. Further examples in Shāgī's work discussed in "Les Bronzes du Khorassan VII", *op.cit.*, p.231.

15. *Salāma* usually rendered by "peace" is actually the noun corresponding to the adjective *sālim*, "that which is intact, unharmed", spiritually or physica-lly.
16. The exact meaning of words such as *shākira*, on the mod *fā'ila*, eludes me.
17. (Anon.) *Yavāqīt ol-olūm*, ed. M. T. Danesh-Pazhuh, Tehran 1345 s./1967 p.69.
18. *al fanā' wa'l baqā'* "annihilation and perpetuation" are two concepts developed at length by early authors and would require a full-length paper for an appropriate definition. See among others Abu Nasr as-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-Luma fī'l-Taṣawwuf*, ed. R.A. Nicholson, London 1963 p.213-14. In the 6th/12th c. *sheykh* Rūzbehān Baqlī Shīrāzī, *Ketāb-e'abhar ol-āsheqīn/Le jasmin des fidèles d'amour*, ed. H. Corbin and M. Moīn, Tehran/Paris 1337 s./1958 p.162, 1.9, talks about *towḥīd wa fanā' fī'llāh wa baqā' bi'llāh* "unification and annihilation into God's Being and perpetuation in God." Fana considered alone is one of the fundamental concepts of *taṣavvof* ("Sufism"). Attār in the *Tazkerat al-asliyā'* (ed. Dr. M. Este Lāmī, Tehran 1346 s./1968, p.441) quotes Abū Sa'īd Kharrāz as saying *Fanā' motelāshī shodan ast be Haqq va baqā' hozūr ast bā Haqq*, "*Fanā'* is dying in God and *baqa* is being present with God."
19. Bowl illustrated in *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, Ch.III, fig.52, p.146. For details see footnote 46, p.154. The present translation submits a modification regarding *birr*, previously understood by me as "godliness". *Ḥayā'* is translated here as spiritual "shame" rather than "reserve".
20. Many other wishes with unquestionable Sufi undertones are found on metalwork none more striking perhaps than that of *sirr*, "(knowledge of the) secret". I shall deal with the matter in a forthcoming paper.
21. *'Ezz* is understood as "spiritual might" Ebrahim Sheybani teaches that *azz dar tavāzo ... ast*, "spiritual might ... is in humility" (*Tazkerat*, p.719). *Baqā'*, "perennity", is associated with *'ezz* in wordly terms but the context shows it is to be understood here as "spiritual perennity" reached through *fanā'*, "annihilation leading to oneness with God". The wish of "laudation and praise" (*al-ḥamd wa'l-thanā'*) to God is in reference to the obligation felt by mystics to celebrate God, which pervades all Sufi works. *Birr* is a complex notion which I have rendered in the past by the English "piety". I believe, however, that coupled with *atā'* it is to be understood in the earliest (and only) conception found in early Arab-Persian dictionaries such as the *Mirqāt* compiled by Adīb Naṭanzī, ed. Dr. Sayyed J. Sajadi, Tehran 1346 s./1957, p.167, *ānche kasīrā ferestad*, "that which is sent to one". *'Atā'* is the gift of God, made "every night, every day, every moment" says Sahl b. Abdollāh (*Tazkerat*, p.316, the greatest gift being that "He inspires you to mention (*zekr*) him". Later Abu'l Abbas Sayarī differentiates two kinds of *karāmat*, "everything that it confers upon you", and *estedrāj*, "everything that comes from you" (*Tazkerat*, p.779). *Al birr va'l atā'* is therefore "God-sends and divine gifts". *Jūd*, "generosity" is a virtue cultivated by the Sufi-led fraternities - "*fotovvat*" movements - M. Sarrāf, *Rasāyel-e Javanmardān*, preface by H. Corbin, Tehran/Paris 1973, p.43. *Sakhā'* is more often used in the pseudo-Arabic form *sakhāvat*. According to Abū Alī Daqqāq quoted by Attar (*Tazkerat*, p.655) "whoever gives preference to God over his intellect (*nafs*) is endowed with *sakhavat* and whoever gives preference to God over his soul (*del*) (literally "heart" - the seat of perceptions and emotions) is endowed with *jud*." *Sakhāvat* is one of the requirements of spiritual brotherhood (*fotovvat*). Omar Sohravardī defines it in his *Fotovvat-Nāme* (M. Sarraf, *Rasā'el-e Javānmardān*, p.96). *Ḥilm* (or *Ḥolm*), "forbearance", is again, a cardinal virtue required by a memsber of the *fotovvat* according to 'Omar sohravardī (*Fotovvat-Nāme*, p.118 l.7). *Hayā'* is made a condition of salvation at an early date. Khwāje Abdollāh Ansārī, *Tabaqāt al-Ṣūfiya*, ed. A. Habībī, Kabul 1341 s./1962 p.105 quotes Joneyd as saying in Arabic *mā najā man najā illā bi ṣidq il-hayā'*, "He that is saved is saved only by the sincerity of his spiritual shame". Shibli according to Attār (*Tazkerat*, p.634) declares that "*hayā'* is the highest of stations (*manāzil*) of hope (*rejā'*)"; *Nūr*, "light", is another key concept of Sufism. Abū Sulaymān Dārā'ī from Syria who died in (*Ṭabaqāt al-Sūfiya*, p.39) teaches that the sun fills "your human eye with the light of excellency and your soul (*del*, on which see above) with the light of proximity". *Loṭf* is the gentleness displayed by God towards man, particularly the *awliyā'* or friends of God (*Tazkerat*, p.69). It is associated with God's question to man: *alastu bi rabbikum*, "Am I not your Lord?" ( ) *Riḍā'*, "happiness is adversity". Żu'l Nūn al Miṣrī is quoted by Attār (*Tazkerat*, p.154) as saying *rezā shād budan-e del dar talkhī-e qazā'*. "*Riḍā'* (riza) is the joy of the soul in the bitterness of fate (litt. the divine decree)". *Ḥāreṯ Muḥāsebī* (ibid.273): *rezā' ālīm gereftan ast dar taht-e majārī-e aḥkām*. "*rezā'* is keeping calm under the implementation of the divine decree" and *ṣabr* is to be the target of calamity's arow. Abu Soleymān Dārā'ī (ibid., p.280) introduces a subtle distinction: "*ṣabr* is man's patience, ability to endure vis à vis himself, *reza'* is man's contentment vis à vis God". *Davā'* is short for *davā'-e del*, which while ot a concept, *stricto sensu*, is a typically Sufi phrase "the remedy of the soul". Aḥmad Anjākī says it is five things: the company of good men, reading the Koran, having an empty stomach at the time of night prayer, lamenting at the time of dawn prayer" (*Tazkerat*, p.412). *Kiyāsa*, "direct knowledge", and *dirāsa*, "studying", i.e. knowledge acquired through study, are the common forms of knowledge. *Kiyāsa*, however, is also one of the attributes of God (e.g. B Utas ed., *Tarīq ut-taḥqīq*, Lund 1973, p.15 l.260. This important *masnavi* of uncertain authorship may be the work of one Ahmad al-Nakhjavani active in the 8th/14th century). *'Elm*, in this context, must be understood as the "science of the Sufis, who are called *ahl-e 'ilm*, "the people endowed with science" (e.g. *Tazkerat*, p.227). In the *Ṭarīq al-Ṭahqīq*, (p.133-34) *elm* is characterized as *elm-e dīn* (p.16, line 269) and the following advice is given: *'elm āmūz tā be Haqq be resī*, "Acquire science to reach God". *Wafā'*, "loyalty to the Pact of Revelation" as defined by 'Abd ol-Razzāq Kāshī Samarqandī, is one of the key ethical concepts of the Sufi-led *Fotovvat* movement (M. Sarraf, *Rasāyel-e Javān-mardān*, p.39).

22. First mention of he bowl in R. Ettinghausen "Interaction and Integration in Islamic Art" in G.E. Von Grünebaum ed. *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization*, Chicago 1955. The American scholar refers to the "Kufic writing, garbled though it may be" as ornamental. He naturally overlooked the signature. First publication (in French translation) of the signature and maxims in A.S. Melikian-Chirvani "Les calligraphes et l'art du bronze", in *Iran* (collective volume published by the Institut National des langues et civilizations orientales, I.N.A.L.C.O.) Paris 1972 p.140. First publication of full text of the maxims and prayers in A.S. Melikian-Chirvani "M.C.A.B.I.XIV Les thèmes ésotériques et les thèmes mystiques dans l'art du bronze iranien" in S.H. Nasr ed., *Mélanges offerts à Henry Corbin*, Tehran 1977, p.369-372. Details of inscriptions on ol. 1 and 2 facing p.384.
23. The idea that artists, particularly metalworkers, were semi-literate and kept making mitakes has been expressed many times by Western scholars whose own ability to read Arabic and Persian and general familiarity with Middle Eastern cultural history should have warned them against making sweeping statements. Mistakes are, on the contrary, exceedingly rare. They would surely not

have beeen made by the *naqqāshān* or designers who were highly literate people and calligraphers in their own right. On this subject, see A.S. Melikian-Chirvani "Les bronzes du Khorassan-VII", p.238-41. Several bronzes signed Abū Naṣr are now known. The differences in style suggest that there might be two artists signing themselves "Abū Naṣr *Naqqāsh*" on metal, the designer of the Mackenzie-Kevorkian bowl, and that of a shallow bowl in the collection of Mohsen Foroughi Tehran. The latter is reproduced by A. Soheyli Khwānsāri in his edition of qāżi Mir Aḥmad Monshi Qomi, *Golestān-e Honar*, Tehran 1352 s./1974, introduction, page twenty-seven. Soheyli Khwānsāri did not hesitate to identify this "Abū Naṣr"d with the famous astronomer at the court of Maḥmūd, "who was good in the art of representing" according to the historian Beyhaqi (quoted page twenty six).

24. Hojviri Ghaznevi, *Kash ol-Maḥjūb*, ed. V.A. Zhukovski, reproduced by Ṭahūri with preface by Q. Ansāri, Tehran 1358 s./1979 p.463 1.2-3. On his life see introduction o.5-6. Nāṣer Khosrow, *Rowshanāi-nāme*, ed. M. Gharizāde, Tehran 1341 s./1963 p.7 1.6.

25. Jami, *Arba ūn Hadith* manuscript - possibly Jami's own approved original - Bibliothèque Nationale, Pers.251 folio 5A.

26. C. Boisgirard, A. de Heeckeren, *Art d'Orient*, Hotel Drouot, 8 July 1981 lot 511 (reproduced).

27. The type has not been previously described as a rosewater sprinkler called *golābzan/golābzane* in Persian and *rashshāsha* in Arabic, on which see *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*. A complete specimen is illustrated ibid. fig.6, p.31. The body of the *golābzan* now in Berlin was first published by F. Sarre, *Erzeugnisse islamischer Kunst I. Metall*, Berlin, 1906 p.9 and the signature read by E Mittwoch although with a minor mistake. Mittwoch could not read the maxims and did not realize that the text was Persian. He misread *nafas* as "*naqsh*", thereby giving rise to the mistaken idea that the "engraver" had signd separately, an idea which found its way into the Survey of Persian Art.

L.A. Mayer, *Islamic Metalworkers and their Works*, Geneva 1959 p.23 went so far as to coin an artist's name "Jand ibn (misreading of *chandīn*) Hush (misreading of *haves*)". For an easily acessible reproduction of Sarre's *golābzan* see *Survey* pl. 1311 E.

28. *Du'ās* continued to appear as late as the 16th century at wide intervals although seldom alone. There is a dated instance of such a *du'ā* engraved and inlaid on the underside of a mug (*mashrabe*) in the Victoria and Albert Museum which has long been noted for its date (861/1461-62). The inscriptions, which include an Arabic poem on the neck, two *ghazals* by *Khwāje* Ḥāfez on the bulbous body, and the *du'ā*, have only just been published by this writer in *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, p.249-250.

29. The vessel is by far the finest piece of metalwork to have survived from the second half of the 14th century. It has been known since it was first recorded in 1834 in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* by Mohun Lal. It has been variously dated to the "12th century" (La'l), the "late 12th century" (Niedermayer, Hartmann), "1368" (*Survey of Persian Art*), the "early 14th century"(Sauvaget, Wiet recording Sauvaget's reading under the date in the *Répertoire Chronolo-gique d'épigraphie Arabe*) "the year 720", (L.A. Mayer following Hartmann), the "15th century" (Pugachenkova), the early 14th century once again (Scerrato, apparently following sauvaget) and the "Timurid" period by Grabar. This writer published in 1969 the full inscription which indlude 1) a dedication formula (ar. *waqfiya/per. vaqfnāme*) in Arabic cast on the everted rim, 2) the conjuring formula against Satan in Arabic followed by Quranic verses, the full titles and names of Sultan Ghiyāṯ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad abī Bakr Kart, the dating formula in Persian in the upper frieze, 3) the dedication formula in Arabic fully naming the donor, the signature of the scribe Soltānshāh b. Kāfi, and the maker (i.e. designer) Ḥassan b. ali b. Ḥasan b.Alī-e Esfāhāni known as Jamāl Ḥasan, and finally a quatrain by Sa'adī. See A.S. Melikian-Chirvani "Un bassin iranien de l'an 1375", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, Vi periode, b XIII, nr. ç 200 (January 1969), p.5-18.

30. Sa'adi, *Golestān*, ed. E. Abbās M.A. Forūghi, Tehran 1340 s./1962, p.11.

31. I have been unable to find any record of Muḥammad b.'Alī at-Ṭūsī who must have been prominent in his time. Almost certainly his tomb must lie somewhere in Herat.

32. See Mo'īn al-Dīn Moḥammad al-Zamchī al Isfizāri, *Tārikh-Nāme-ye Herāt*, Rowżat ol-Jannat fī Awsāf-e Madīnat-e Herāt, ed. *sayyed* M. Kāżem Emām, Tehran 1339 s./1960 p.391-92.

33.*Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, p.239.

34. *Ibid.*, reproduced fig.59a p.234. See text p.233.

35. *Ibid.* p.249-50. Profile reproduced pl.109 p.249. *Du'a* - in Arabic - on underside framing signature - in Persian - reproduced pl. 109A.

36. Reproduced by E. Grube, *The World of Islam*, London, 1966, p.74 p.135. Christian era wrongly given as 1497. The full titulature and correct signature are published in *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, p.244, note 10.

37. Hetāī Chaghaṭā'ī, *Dīvān*, ed. S. Nafīsī, Tehran 1337s./1959 p.7.

38. *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, p.279-82.

39. On Soltān Moḥammad-e Nūr see M. Bayāi, *Khoshnevīsān. Nasta alīq-nevīsān*, Tehran 1345 s./1967 I p.272 ff. Nur, or rather Nūrollāh, was the name of the calligrapher's father. A discussion of his biographical data will be found on p.273. Soltan Mohammad-e Nur died in Bokhara and was buried in that town. The formula introducing the calligrapher's signature on the bowl *mashaqqa*, literally "striving", often appear in manuscript but has not been previously recorded on objects.

40. *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, p.238-39.

41. A.S. Melikian-Chirvani "The White Bronzes of Early Islamic Iran" *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 9/1974 (printed 1975), p.123-51.

42. P. Pescheteau, *Céramiques islamiques. Bronzes orientaux. Estampes japonaises*. Drouot Rive Gauche 10 May 1977 lot 52 reproduced p.19.

43. The existence of a Persianizing school of metalwork in pre-Islamic times may account for the prompt adaptation of new fashions coming in from Iran. A forthcoming paper will deal with this school which has not been previously defined in those terms although some of its specimens have long been known, e.g. O.M. Dalton, *The Treasure of the Oxus*, London, pl. XXXIII nr. 204: silver-copper alloy dish found near Buddhigharra, four miles west of Tank in Panjab. Unpublished white bronze bowls with engraved designs showing them to be of Indian origin, not later than the 7th-8th century A.D., will be discussed in the forthcoming paper.

44. A.S. Melikian-Chirvani "Studies in Hindustani Metalwork - I. on some Sultanate stirrups" in C. Adle p.177-195. Stirrup now cleaned illustrated fig.65, p.178, fig.66, p.179.

45. For the carved pattern on the Qutb Mīnār, see M. Hürlimann, *Delhi Agra Fatehpur Sikri*, London, 1965, pl. 3 or A. Volwahsen, *Living Architecture/ Islamic India*, London, 1970, pl. 19 or (Anon.) *Delhi and its Neighbourhood. Archaeological Survey of India*, Delhi 1964, pl.X A. For the arch in the Ajmer mosque, see P. Brown, *Indian Architecture/* Islamic Period), Bombay 1956, pl. IV, (line drawing) and VI, 1 (side shot of the arch).

46. "Studies in Hindustani Metalwork - I", fig.72 p.183.

47. *Ibid.*, p.192.

48. The earliest datable minaret showing such a horizontal frieze is standing in Damghan. the exact date and patron's name have ony been recently established: C.Adle and A.S. Melikian-Chirvani, "Les monuments du XI siècle du Damgan", *Studia Iranica*, i, 11972, 2 illustrated in pl. XXVI(minaret attached to the so called Tari Khane) and XXVII (Masjed-e Jame minaret). The dedication text of the former, previously undeciphered, is published p.264. On this basis, C. Adle successfully demontrates p.269-70 that the minaret was erected between 1026 and January 1032, very probably around 1027-28 (p.273).

49. Baroda Museum no. A-8-359 IA 1024. Overall height: 16 cm. Diameter: 11.2 cm. Paris market piece: overall height, with cover 7.45 cm. Diameter of base: 8.6 cm.

50. *Survey*, pl. 1311 A,C,D (in the Louvre not the Harari collection as stated in the caption) F (previously in the Harari collection, not the Louvre) and *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, pl. 51, p.123, pl.56, p.128.

51. None of the pieces showing this early feature have been published. Specimens to be published in the writer's forthcoming book, *L'argenterie et le bronze iraniens* (7e-11e siècl).

52. It can be traced back to Hindu architectural finials as early as the 11th century: see L. Frédéric, *L'Inde*, Paris 1959 pl.280, p.314 (left-hand side monument).

53. The use of modular units in Iranian manuscripts has been established by C. Adle "Recherche sur le module et le tracé correcteur dans la miniatue orientale", *Le Monde iranien et l'Islam* III (1975) p.81-105. Its application to metal-work has been analyzed in A.S. Melikian-Chirvani "Les bronzes du Khorassan - VI", *Studia Iranica*, 8 (1979) pp.15-18 on the basis of an ablution pail signed by Hasan Ba Saht, a Khorasanian designer (*naqqash*) possibly fro Herat, active in the 12th century.

54. The casket reproduced in fig.11 is in the Walters Art Gallery (inv.54 516. Height: 9.2 cm. Diameter of underside 9.2 cm. It carries a typical Ilkhanid anonymous titulature on the sides.

"Glory to our master the greatest king, the most exalted sultan, knowledgable, equitable, triumphant". On the shoulder, a Persian *do-beyti* is engraved.

Large-size specimens are reproduced in the *Survey* pl.1361,1362. The most marked difference lies in the slightly tapering sides separated from the flaring base of the cover by a rib. The type is otherwise essentially comparable. On the Fars school see "M.C.A.B.I. IX. Bronze et cuivres iraniens au XIV siècle", *Journal asiatique*, 1969 (printed 1970 pp.19-36 and latterly for further evidence *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, pp.147-52.

55. A similar device is used for instance on a ewer and a ritual jar from Kollur which have been dated to the early 14th century A.D.: M. Chandra, "Ceremonial Utensils from Kollur" *Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India*, 8 (1962-64), fig.3a and 3b. On the dating, see p.3.

56. Handles still in place on the inkwell reproduced in the *Survey* pl. 1311 A and on the cover in the Muzim-i Melli Kabul reproduced in *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, fig.39, p.69: there they are seen to be carefully fitted at 120e intervals each prolonging the axis of a roundel engraved and inlaid on the sloping shoulder.

57. E. g. the Victoria and Albert Museum piece inv.1435-1902 (*Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, pl.56 A, p.128, showing the underside).

58.The 11th century inkwell from Khorasan illustrated here was sold at auction at the Hotel Drouot on 16th November 1978 as lot 306 (Mes Laurin-Guilloux-Buffetaud-Tailleur, *Art d'Orient-Antiques* sale catalogue). The object was acquired on the Kabul market by an Italian dealer, resold to a Swiss dealer and finally auctioned in Paris. Height with cover 8.9 cm. Height of well 4.8 cm. Diameter of base 7.4-7.5 cm. The epigraphic border engraved in champlevé on the platform consists of a succession of *lām-alif* letters linked horizontally by a stroke with a motif in the centre. The piece is to be published elsewhere in greater detail.

59. This subject has been dealt with at length by this writer in an unpublished book, *L'argenterie et le bronze iranien* (7e-11e siècles). Doctoral dissertation, Paris IV (1972) Ch. VI. For illustrated comparative material of the Samanid period, see A.S. Melikian-Chirvani,"Les calligraphes et l'art du bronze", in *Iran* (collective volume published by L'Institut National des Langues Orientales Vivantes) Paris 1972, pp.140-41, fig.3-5, showing the epigraphic frieze of a 10th century ewer from Khorasan in the Museum für islamische Kunst (Berlin).

60. P. Brown, *History of Indian Architecture - The Islamic period*, Bombay 1975, pl.XI, fig.1 (tomb of Ghiyāṯ al-Dīn Tughluq, 1325 A.D.).

61. Brass or quarternary alloy made from four separate brass sheets, 1) the sides, 2) an inner band projecting above the sides to hold the cover, 3) the base, 4) the cover. Hinge plates and front clasp added some time after completion. Base diameter from rib to opposite rib:15.6 cm. Height with cover:10.1 cm. There are 16 ribs.

62. Excellent reproductions in Hürlimann, *Delhi* (see note 45), pl.1 and 2.

63. A minaret with alternate rounded and angular ribs was recently recorded in Eastern Sistan. The tradition continued for centuries in Khorasan, e.g. the tower-shaped mausoleum at Kāshmar: *Survey*, pl. 347 B and color plate showing upper section in partially restored condition in A. Hutt and L. Harrow, *Iran I*, London, 1977, pl.17, p.49.
64.*Survey*, pl.1326, where the Khorasan provenance is not specified. Regarding the evidence for that school, see *Islamic Metalwork* from the Iranian World, ch.II.
65. The ewer has been published by J.W. Allan *Islamic Metalwork The Nuhad Es-Said Collection*, London 1982 p.46-53. I owe the information concerning provenance to the kind-ness of Miss C. Chesney of Sotheby's.
66. *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World*, p.350-55.
67.*Ibid*, p.350-51.
68.*Ibid*. p.348-50.
69.For another instance of cailigraphy engraved on the inside of a vessel see the dervish bowl preserved in Hyderabad, Deccan, *The Indian Heritage*, London, Victoria and Albert Museum 1982 pl.492, p.145c.
70. First published by M. Chandra "Two early Mughal metal cups", *Bluiletin of the Prince of Wales Museum*, no.5, Bombay, 1955-57. Published again by this writer in *The Indian Heritage* with a discussion of the verses, drawn from a *Sāqī-Nāme* which are explicitly Sufi in character. They were probably composed by one "Bīdel" whose given name (*shohrat*) would seem to be included in the last distich. At that period this could only be Bīdel Gīlānī known to have been writing under Jahāngīr.
71. The Bombay bowl, as I have shown - *The Indian Heritage* p.14, see note 70 - is engraved with a scene illustrating the Royal Hunt and with verses that contain indirect but transparent allusions to the royal character of the patron.
72. See the famous miniature illustrating the allegorical encounter of Shāh Abbās and Jahāngīr now in the Freer Gallery reproduced by R. Ettinghausen *Paintings of the Sultans and Emperors of India in American Collections*, New Delhi, 1961, and C.M. Beach *The Imperial Image Paintings from the Mughal Court*, Washington 1981, colour plate p.78 (Cat.no.17c) discussed on p.170-71. ■

LONDON
International Art Market

graphs and photographs.

The re-emergence of the Islamic world as a new economic as well as a political and spiritual force has resulted in a considerable increase of interest in its arts and its cultural past. The leading auction houses of the art world were quick to realize this and recognize the commercial opportunities it offered. Sotheby's were the first to organise sales devoted exclusively to Islamic art. They now have a separae Department of Islamic arts headed by Jack Franses who for six years from 1976 was head of Sotheby's Oriental Rugs and Carpets Department. He has been in the carpet trade since 1950 when he joined his father's well-known London business now run by Jack's brothers. Their grandfather, Zia Franses, was also a dealer in carpets and textiles in Salonika (Greece) and Istanbul. Oriental Miniatures and Manuscripts come under Sotheby's Book Department, catalogued by Nabil Saidi. Islamic works of art (pottery, metalwork etc.) are catalogued by Charlott Chesney, carpets by Alidad Mahlōudji, with Jack Franses in overall charge of the Department.

At Christie's the department dealing with sales of Islamic works of art is directed by Sir John Figgess who is also director in charge of the Far Eastern Art Department. Islamic manuscripts and miniatures are catalogued by Phillipa Vaughan and fine eastern rugs and carpets are supervised by Anthony Thomson Acknowledging the growing importance of the Middle East, Christie's have organised a regular series of visits to the area by one of its directors, Tom Craig. He travels regularly throughout the Middle East, the Gulf states, the Lebanon and Saudi Arabia and is able to offer advice to potential clients on the acquisition and disposal of works of art, on auction procedures, and the timing of sales of interest to them.

At Phillips there is no separate department of Islamic art as such, but their activities and sales in this area are gradually increasing. They are supervised by Nicholas Hilder and Finlay Wilson who are incharge of the Oriental Department.

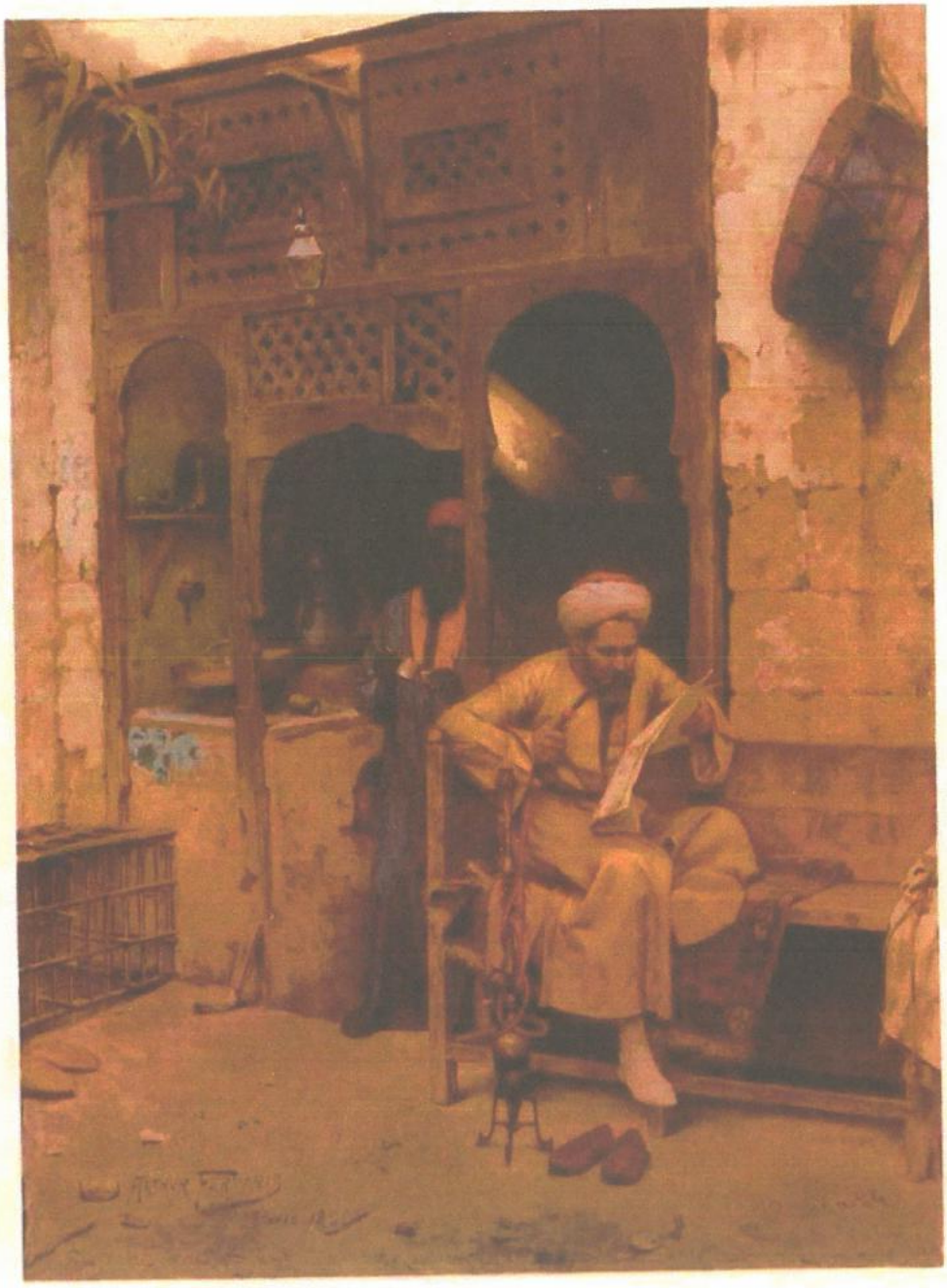
International art dealers and experts have been expecting a boom in Islamic art sales which, judging by the experience of the much publicised last autumn sales in London, both at Sotheby's and Christie's, has still not arrived. Sotheby's failed to raise a bid on one of the finest manuscripts of Firdausi's Shāhnama written and illuminated in Shiraz in 1436-37. It had been acquired by the first Lord Dufferin and Ava, who was Viceroy of India in 1884-88, and remained in the family's possession until sold at an auction in 1968 for £50,000. This time Sotheby's had estimated a price of £150,000 to £200,000 for the manuscript, but finally bought it in against the reserve at £65,000. Subsequently a private sale, known to be somewhere above £65,000, was arranged after the auction. At Christie's 49 per cent of the sale went unsold including a Qur'an dated 1278, the earliest known manuscript written in Persia under the Il-Khans. Christie's had estimated it would fetch £30,000 to £40,000 but the highest bid for it was £18,000. A wide range of similar valuable items had been tempted in for these sales. The buyers included many from the Middle East too but, according to the dealers, they did not buy the right things. Carpets were the only exception which registered a return of healthy enthusiasm after the market fluctuations following upon the political upheavals in Iran and Afghanistan.

According to Jack Frances, Islamic works of art fetch only about ten per cent of the prices of comparable works of Western art. Compared with the phenomenal price of £1,176,000 paid for the Autenberg Bible at Christie's in New York or £1,200,000 for a circular Mosan enamel medallion at Southeby's in London, Islamic art is certainly undervalued. Tom Craig's view is that the situation will not change until the Islamic world itself becomes fully aware of its own rich heritage and starts reclaiming it by buying it back. Besides what lies still undiscovered or unexcavated in the Islamic world there is a great wealth of Islamic works of art, in the West. The Western owners, however, would not sell them to Muslim countries or collectors who don't realize their intrinsic worth and true value and won't pay enough. Perhaps they have not started as yet to look upon the acquisition of art objects as an instrument investment or an easily available method for the restoration and restitution of national heritage.

There are a few hopeful signs like the plans for a Numasmatics Museum in Qatar, the Museums of Arcitecture in Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar, Sheikh Nasir's proposed Art Museum in Kuwait and Nahad Es-Said's collection of islamic Metalwork in Beirut, but, it looks, we are still far away from the expected boom. The formation and development of the multi-national auction houses has brought a wide range of services to buyers and sellers and served to make the world more concius of the value of its works of art and thus, perhaps, more eager to acquire and preserve them; but unless a race, a people or a nation recognizes the value of its own contribution to the cultural heritage of mankind, it has little chance of being appreciated by others. ■

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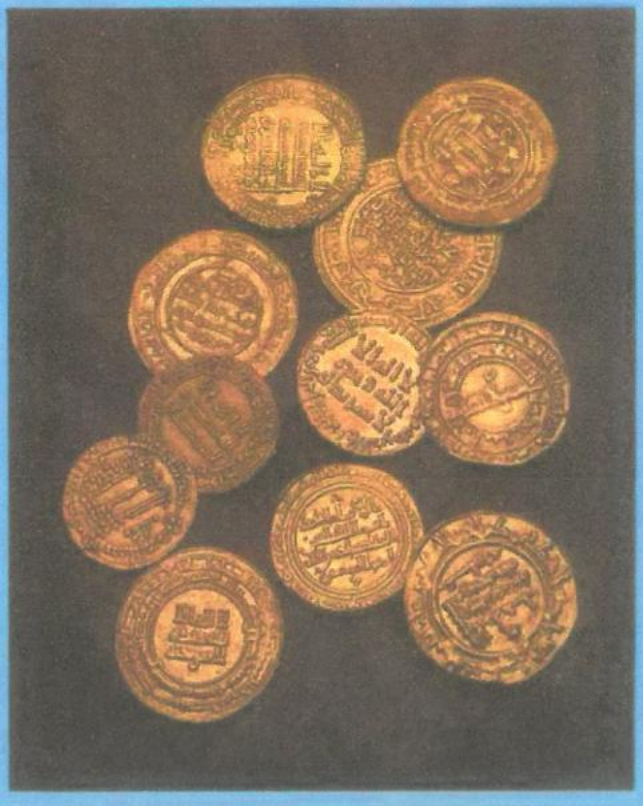
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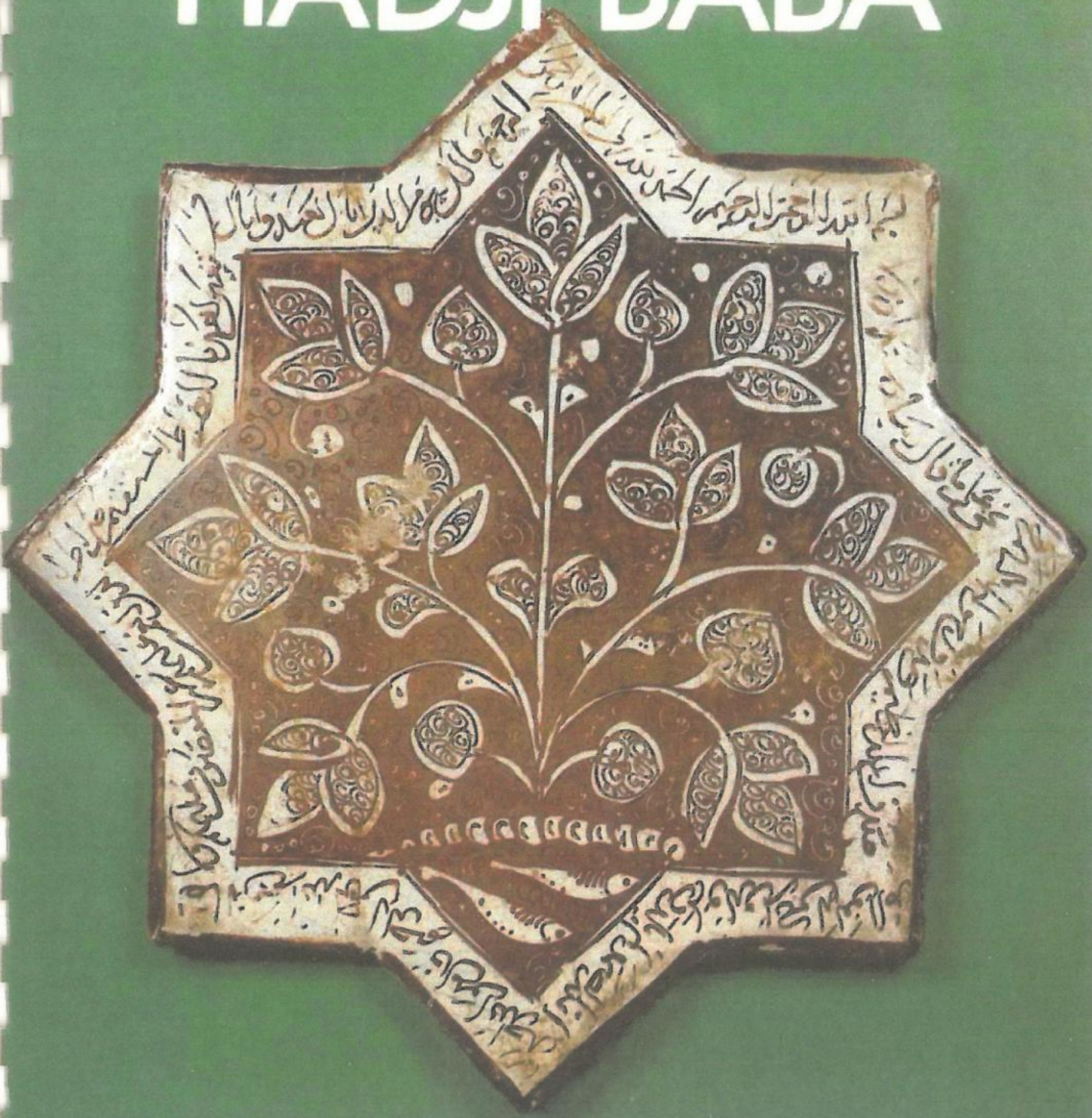
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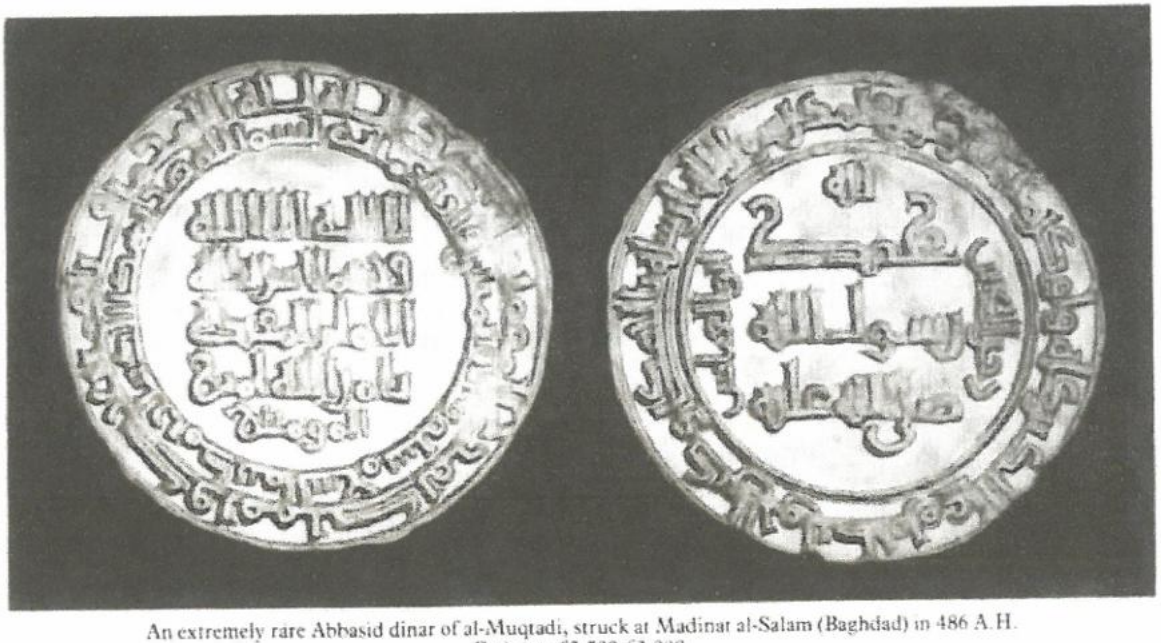
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Editorial

This issue of *Arts & The Islamic World* comes in the wake of the formal opening of what has been widely acclaimed as the most comprehensive new collection of Islamic art in the Muslim world — the Al-Sabah Collection of Islamic Art in the Kuwait National Museum. In devoting to it the opening pages of this issue, the aim is to bring to the attention of the readers what is undoubtedly one of the most outstanding art projects in the Islamic world and points to a welcome development of interest in this field.

The Al-Sabah Collection is unique in its range and aesthetic merit, and comprehensive in its volume and historical spread. Indeed it is a tribute not only to the generosity but also to the vision and connoisseurship of Sheikh Nasser Sabah al-Ahmed al-Sabah and his wife Sheikha Hussa, that having built the extensive collection over a short period of time — in less than 8 years — they have placed it under the aegis of their country's National Museum and have emphasised that its primary function should be an educational one. With this end in view, a large reference library has also been put together with more than 40,000 art publications and monographs. At the same time, provision has been made for courses in restoration and conservation of art objects, and preparation of a series of publications focusing on Islamic calligraphy, ceramics, glass, textiles, jewellery and other subjects.

The Islamic Arts Foundation is happy to see this development as echoing one of the major recommendations of the International Seminar on "The Arts in Islamic Lands" organised last year, which urged the setting up Museums of Islamic Art and Heritage in the Islamic countries where these did not exist. At the same time it had emphasised the urgent need for creating educational and professional facilities as well as technical training programmes in the Islamic world itself to ensure highest standards of upkeep and maintenance, and optimum utilization of these Museums.

It is a happy augury that plans have since been announced by a number of Islamic countries, including Indonesia and Pakistan, to set up Museums of Islamic Heritage. In Pakistan, the President has already set up a high-powered board for this purpose, along with provision of substantial funds for the project. An interesting aspect of the proposed facilities is an Islamic Arts Documentation Centre which would aim at preparing a Catalogue of Islamic art objects available in Eastern and Western collection.

This is a most laudable initiative indeed as there are several hundred public and private collections of Islamic arts in various countries of the world. Very few of these have updated catalogues available. Even in the case of major museums and galleries, the total number of Islamic art objects listed in the existing catalogues is only a small proportion of those actually held in the respective collections, and in many instances the information available about specific items is far from adequate. Some of the Islamic art dealers and auction houses have also a great wealth of items which may usefully be included in a running inventory of Islamic art objects as part of the proposed documentation.

Of course the compilation of what may develop as a Master Catalogue of Islamic Arts would require the pooling of data as well as resources at various levels, national, regional and international. It can only be a collaborative effort, involving art historians and experts, museum directors and curators responsible for specific collections of Islamic arts, and organisations and institutions such as UNESCO, ALECSO, and the recently established ISESCO. The Islamic Arts Foundation itself should be willing to play a coordinating role in brining together the relevant documentation from all over the world as a first step towards preparing such a multi-volume Master Catalogue of Islamic Arts, and keeping it constantly updated as new material comes to light.

The need is for a beginning to be made, however modest it might be. Its time scale and cost projection may be difficult to predict at this stage, as the investment in terms of effort and resources is likely to be very considerable. However, it should be a good investment by any standards, and the end-product would not only fill a long-felt gap but also, hopefully in the longer term, pay for itself. ■

The Al-Sabah Collection in the Kuwait National Museum

Huon Mallalieu



James Willis

The Museum of Islamic Art in the Kuwait National Museum.

Most of the great Museums and Galleries of the world, especially those that are accorded National status, owe their existence to generations of collectors and benefactors and are the products of a long tradition of individual connoisseurship and accumulation. Usually the collections which will ultimately go to the nation have been in existence well before the building, or even the idea, of a state museum.

Equally, the creation of a private collection of major international importance, in whatever field, is usually the result of at least one lifetime's activity. These general rules can be applied neither to the new Kuwait National Museum, nor to the Al-Sabah Collection of Islamic Art which has been lent to it. A competition for the design of a museum was held in 1958, at a time when no one can have had any idea of what might be displayed in it, and the building of the winning design by the French architect Michel Ecochard was carried out between 1976 and 1981. In 1958 Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah was a schoolboy, and he only acquired the first item in his remarkable 20,000 piece collection in 1975. Over eight years, if one leaves the 13,000 or so coins out of the calculation since many of them were bought from a single Egyptian collection, this makes an average of seventeen purchases each week. There is also a reference library of 40,000 The formation of such a collection in such a short time might well lead one to expect that quality had been sacrificed, but when the display of 1,000 outstanding items was opened at the Museum in February, the assembled curators and Islamic scholars of the world could find little to carp at.

In fact, the collection is not just the fruit of one man's energy and enthusiasm, but also of an unusual partnership between husband and wife. Sheikh Nasser's interest began during his schooldays in Jerusalem with a love of calligraphy. This led him to appreciate the greatness of the architectural design and the beauty of the decoration of the holy places, and, in his own words, 'to observe the walls, gates and water system of the Eternal City, all of which testified to the scientific knowledge and the technical skills of the Muslim craftsmen.' Visits to other historic cities of the world of Islam, such as Damascus, Cairo, Baghdad, Konya, Fez, Granada, Qayrawan, San'a, Delhi and Bukhara showed him how vast and varied was the artistic heritage of the Muslim world, and how little it was known and appreciated in its own heartland. All this time his taste

1. *Linen tiraz. Baghdad. 9th century AD. 133cm by 19cm. letters 2½cm high*

2. *Double page from a Qur'an Manuscript. ink on parchment. probably Arabia (Makkah or Madinah?). 8th century AD. Height 31.5cm.*

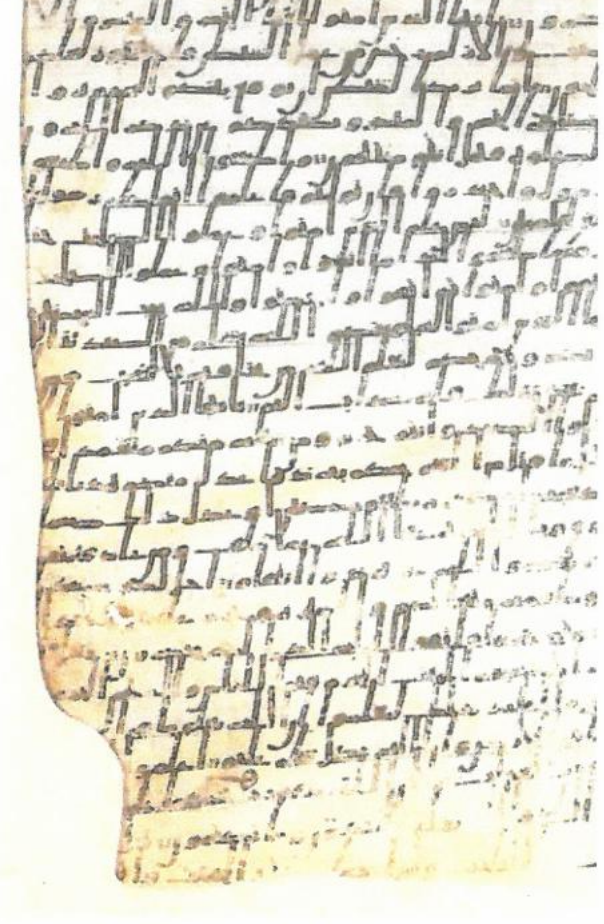
3. *Astrolabe. Bronze. cast and engraved. Iraq. dated 315 AD/AD 927-28. Diameter 17.5cm.*

4. *Stand. Ivory (originally inlaid) on modern base. Egypt or Syria. 14th century AD. 43cm square.*

5. *Hunting Horn. carved ivory. Italy. late 11th early 12th century AD (fittings not of the period) Greatest length 42.7cm.*



1



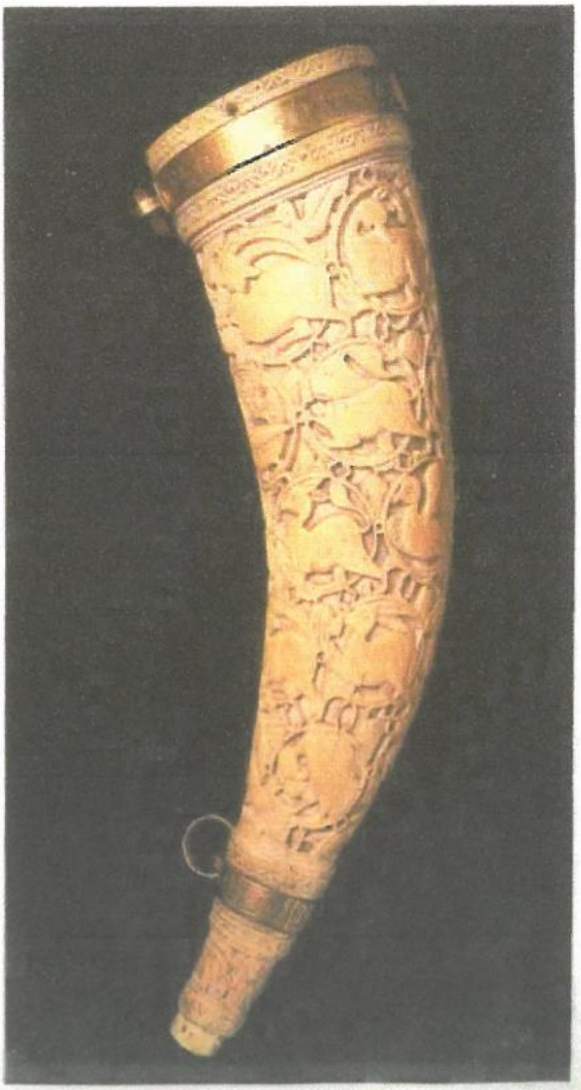
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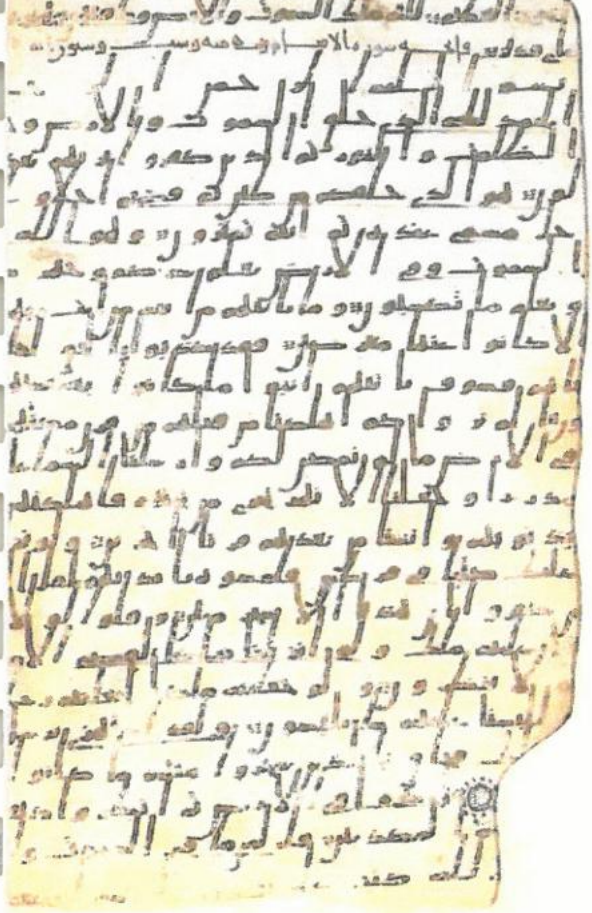
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6. Dagger and Scabbard. Steel blade overlaid with gold; solid gold hilt; wood scabbard engraved and set with pearls, rubies, emeralds and other precious stones. Mughal India; first quarter 17th century AD. Total length 35.5cm

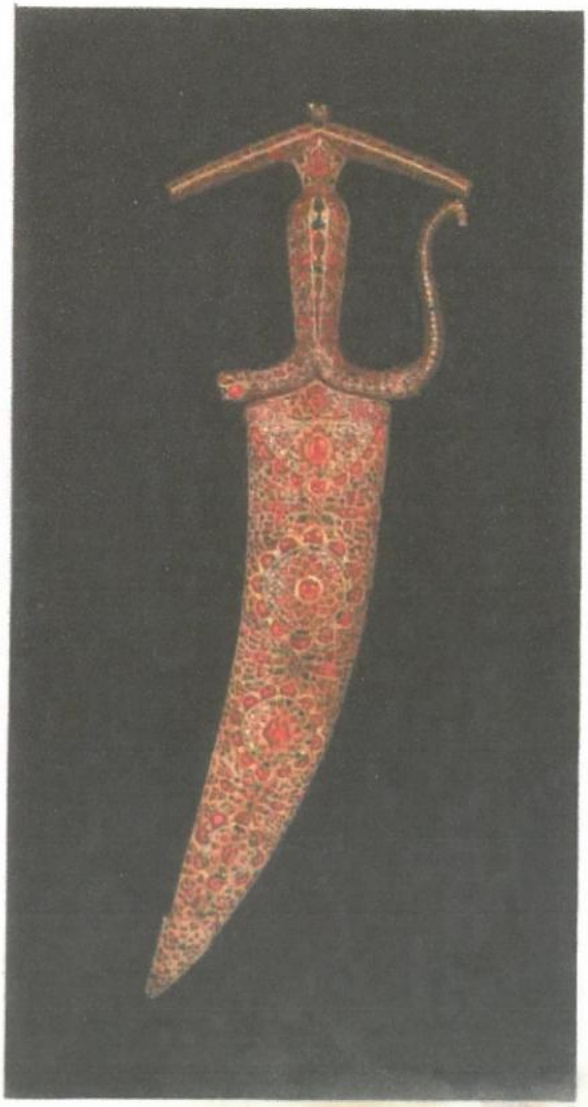
7. Bowl. Composite body, underglaze and lustre painted and incised. Iran, Kashan, dated Shawwal 614 AH/January 1218 AD. Diameter 23.2cm.

8. Pair of Earrings. Gold, fabricated from sheet, wire and grains, set with cloisonné enamels; originally outlined with strung pearls and/or stones, probably Spain, 12th century AD. Height with earwires 4.8 and 4.65cm.

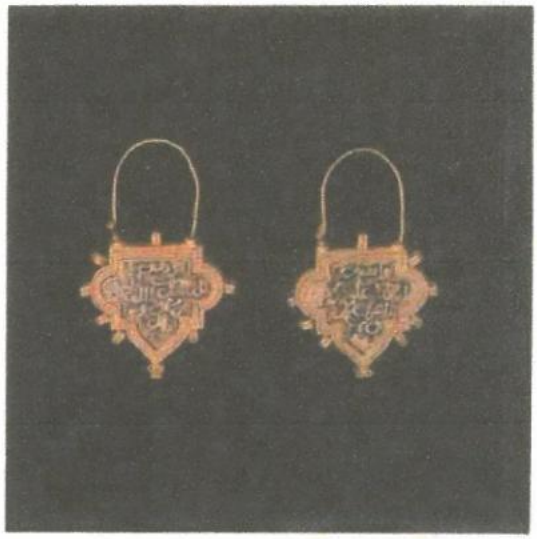
9. Candlestick. Bronze, raised from a single piece of sheet, engraved and inlaid with copper and silver. Iran, Khorrasan, 12th century AD. height 31.7cm.



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until 1975 that his wife, Sheikha Hussa Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, a daughter of the late Amir of Kuwait, persuaded him to put them to practical use.

Together they make a formidable team, her quiet elegance and determination complementing his exuberant dash and enthusiasm. She is now the Director of the collection in its new home, and the post will be no sinecure. She has played a great part in the cataloguing, and on the night before the opening ceremony she, together with members of her family and friends, was sweeping out the building and making sure that the lavatories were in impeccable order. Her progress in art appreciation moved in a different direction to that of her husband, an early love of modern Western painting, in particular the Cubist and abstract schools, leading to the artefacts of Islam. Her seriousness as a connoisseur and a collector is indicated by her determination to understand the techniques of the artists and craftsmen. Having studied pottery, she is shortly to take a course in glass-blowing.

The first piece in the collection was a Mamluk enamel-decorated glass bottle dating from the fourteenth century AD, but as the collection grew, the couple took the decision not to specialise in any one area, but to try to make it as wide-ranging and comprehensive as possible. Inevitably there are gaps, and one or two geographical areas such as the Far East are completely unrepresented, but in scope there is nothing to compare with the resulting collection in the Middle East, and for scholars the Kuwait National Museum will now be as essential a centre as the Metropolitan Museum, the British Museum and Library, the Louvre, the museums of East and West Berlin and the Hermitage. In time too, the gaps will be filled, and the task of selection, cataloguing and arranging what is to be displayed, has provided the couple with an opportunity to see exactly what they will have to search out in the future.

In general they have bought in the established centres of the art and antiques trade, in the sale rooms and galleries of London, Paris and New York, and Sheikh Nasser emphasises that one of his major aims is to bring back Islamic works to the culture in which they originated. He does not want to deprive other Islamic countries of their heritage for the glory of the collection and of Kuwait, although he will do his best to rescue anything that is in danger of being destroyed. At the same time he does not regard the European and American collectors of the past as despoilers of Arab and Islamic culture; rather they were guardians of that culture at a time when the Arabs themselves had little interest in their artistic history.

As the collection grew Sheikh Nasser and Sheikha Hussa considered building their own private museum to house it, and they went so far as to commission a design from an Egyptian architect. However, the National Museum project was then nearing completion, and there was still very little to be displayed in it, and the Ministry of Information, headed by Sheikh Nasser's father, the Deputy Prime Minister, approached them with the idea that they make a loan of their collection to the state for an initial period of five years.

A year of intense activity followed. Dr. Marilyn Jenkins, Associate Curator of Islamic art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, who had already advised the couple, was seconded to direct the project, and the designer Charles Ryder was brought in to prepare one of the four wings of the Museum

advice was taken on conservation from international museum curators and other aspects. This was a vital consideration, since the climate and industrialisation of Kuwait could pose a danger to some of the artefacts. The architect Michel Ecochard has said that museums had always made him feel tired, and that he was determined that he should not be wearying. In this he has proved successful, and the spacious and gentle open-plan interior largely eliminates both visual indigestion and museum limp.

In fact the open plan layout is also ideally suited to the display of a comprehensive Islamic collection because it does not disguise the remarkable unity of themes, styles and even techniques over a huge geographical area and a long period of time, which can come as a surprise to an eye trained in the Western European tradition. Dr. Jenkins quite rightly emphasises this unity as a justification for such a collection: 'By means of a thread with numerous strands, the objects made for the Umayyad caliphs and those made for the Safavid shahs, Ottoman sultans and Mughal emperors are thus inextricably linked over the more than 1,000 years which separate them. By using four basic decorative elements and continuously repeating the processes of adoption, adaptation and creation throughout thirteen centuries, the artisans of the Muslim realms caused the remarkable unity inherent in Islamic art to be attained in spite of the great diversity implied in its temporal and geographical expanse.'

The interior is in fact designed on three levels connected by gentle ramps, and thus as one looks or drifts from one to another these links and parallels become plain almost without conscious effort. It seems entirely natural to look down from Umayyad Spain, for instance, onto a great 'Garden' carpet woven in North West Iran in the 18th century AD.

Naturally enough, given not only Sheikh Nasser's earliest preoccupation and the very basis of Islamic culture, the collection is particularly strong on calligraphy, and the written word is omnipresent. Through and over all the designs, in metalwork and carved wood and stone, on glass and pottery, in carpets and the miniatures flow and surge the majestic inscriptions of the Koran. The early *ma'il*, western and eastern Kufic scripts are represented together with the cursive, and it can be a frustrating business even for scholars to attempt to unravel the distortions of the alphabet which were made by the artists for purely decorative purposes.

Another of his early interests, the details of architectural decoration, also makes a number of very effective contributions to the impression given by the collection as a whole. In fact one of the main strengths and pleasures of the collection is that it remains a private one, shaped by one couple's taste, despite its institutionalisation. Thus pieces which would be kept in the vaults of a traditional museum, or at most act as small parts in a larger display, are here given star treatment, and they can lead us back in time and place in ways that their grander bretheren sometimes fail to do. One such for example is a fragment from an eleventh century Egyptian bowl, showing the head of a turbanned man. Not particularly uncommon, but distinctly evocative of the past. Other items are displayed because of their intrinsic attractiveness, rather than for their rarity or academic interest.

While it would be invidious to single out a few pieces for detailed description, and for most of us impossible

until the projected scholarly catalogue replaces the well-produced but vestigial souvenir booklet at present available, it is worth making a tour of the exhibits, lighting here and there on the most striking.

The first piece to greet the visitor is, rightly, one of the earliest, a double page from a Koran manuscript written in Mecca or Medina in the eighth century AD. Another page from this manuscript is in the British Library, and this one provides a very suitable introduction to the collection as a whole. Soon afterwards, both in time and the order followed by the visitor, comes a very rare and lovely red-ground glazed and lustre ninth century earthenware bowl from Iraq. It is particularly fascinating to trace the progress of lustreware from Syria and Iran to Spain and the West, both in ceramics and glass, although in some cases the brief descriptive notes are misleading. Another example, with the stylised inscription 'Blessing to its owner' comes from tenth century Egypt.

Large, early and more or less complete lustre decorated glass pieces are rare, and the eighth century Egyptian glass bowl here, despite damage, is only paralleled by one example in the Metropolitan Museum. A tenth century glass ewer, broken but reassembled, probably from Nishapur in Iran, is of interest because trailing decoration has been applied to a blown body.

Another rarity is a tenth century amulet case from Iran, one of the smallest pieces apart from rings, in the collection. It is made from gold sheet and wire, and the Metropolitan has only examples made from silver. Of the vast collection of coins, 110 are on view. They have been selected and arranged by Michael Bates of the American Numismatic Association in New York. Two other examples of early metalwork are notable for a combination of their date, size and condition. They are elegant bronze ewers from eighth century Iran, measuring 35.5 cm and 25.5 cm in height.

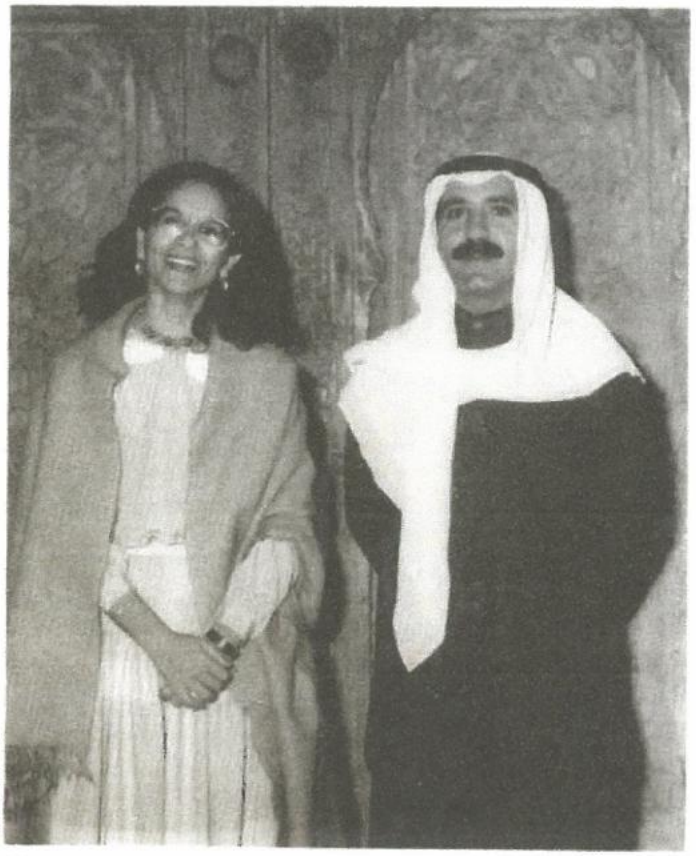
Clothes of any kind are seldom found in even passable condition, although there are a number of Mamluk examples in the Islamic Museum in Cairo, and here there is an impressive Egyptian or Syrian silk green and gold cap, and a sixteenth century Egyptian linen and silk embroidered robe. More of documentary than of sartorial interest is a linen and silk fragment from an Egyptian eighth century presentation garment, which is dated and inscribed.

Also inscribed and dated 972 AD (362 AH) is one of the first of the architectural relics, one of a pair of carved marble capitals from Umayyad Spain. This was probably from the Madinat al-Zahra near Cordoba, and more immediately had come from a Paris sale in December 1976, when several Western museums had shown interest in acquiring it. It is a splendid Islamic variation of a Graeco-Roman composite capital, swirlingly cut with leaves and flowers. At a later stage of the tour one comes to another architectural feature, and one of more purely Islamic inspiration. This is an imposing pair of fourteen foot high fourteenth century carved and painted wooden doors from Morocco. The story of their acquisition underlines the fact that Sheikh Nasser is not just a reader of catalogues from sale rooms and dealers. When in Fez he insisted on taking a walk with Sheikha Hussa through a slum district, and they returned with the doors, having saved them from the demolisher.

The application of calligraphy to architectural and other practical features is further shown by a crudely made, but beautifully decorated earthenware plaque. This was presumably a surround for a drain or water-pipe, and the repeated inscription 'happiness' is almost completely blended with a curling tendril motif. Tendrils, and a Gothic bestiary, appear on a splendid carved ivory hunting horn made by Saracens in Italy in the late eleventh or early twelfth century. There is a similar, but more damaged example in the Louvre.

One of the gaps in the collection seems to be great works by the Arab metalworkers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, although there are lovely gold rings and brooches from eleventh century Greater Syria, and some very fine Iranian twelfth century bronze candlesticks inlaid with copper and silver. There is too a very beautiful pair of twelfth century Spanish gold earrings set with cloisonné enamels; any early Spanish jewellery is rare, all the more so anything Islamic and cloisonné.

Another weakness is in the field of Iranian and Indian miniatures, although here too there are treasures,



James Willis

Sheikh Nasser Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah with his wife Sheikha Hussa Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah

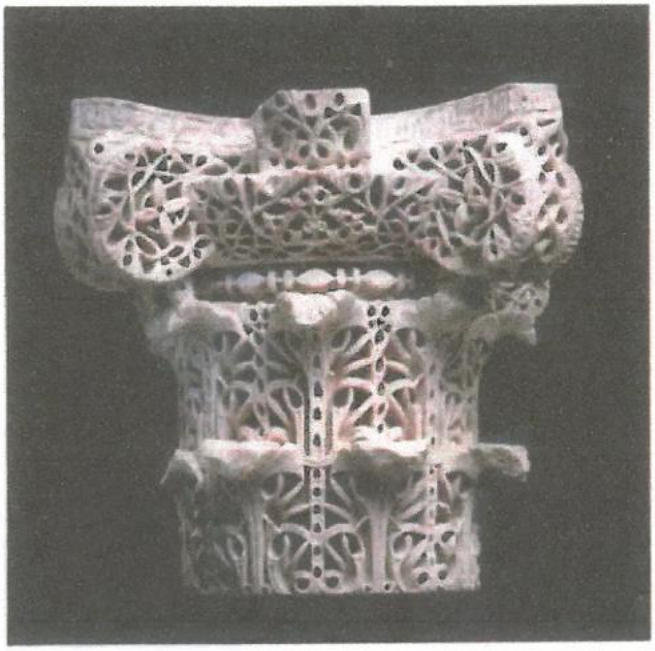
including what has been described as 'one of the world's most important Iranian miniatures of the fifteenth century', showing a princely couple and attendants on either side of a stylised tree, which had disappeared from scholarly view for half a century. An amusement among the miniatures is a drawing of an automaton of a girl offering wine to the king by the Heath-Robinson of fourteenth century Egypt, al-Jazari.

One of the glories among the carpets is a fifteenth century Cairene example in mellow red and green and gold, which is said to rank only with the specimens in Vienna and New York, and for me the display of the carpets and fabrics was one of the highlights of the Museum. On the other hand some of the specialists at the opening criticised the degree of restoration of some of the fragments. As a tyro, I found it most instructive.

The strength of the Mughal section is in the jewelled



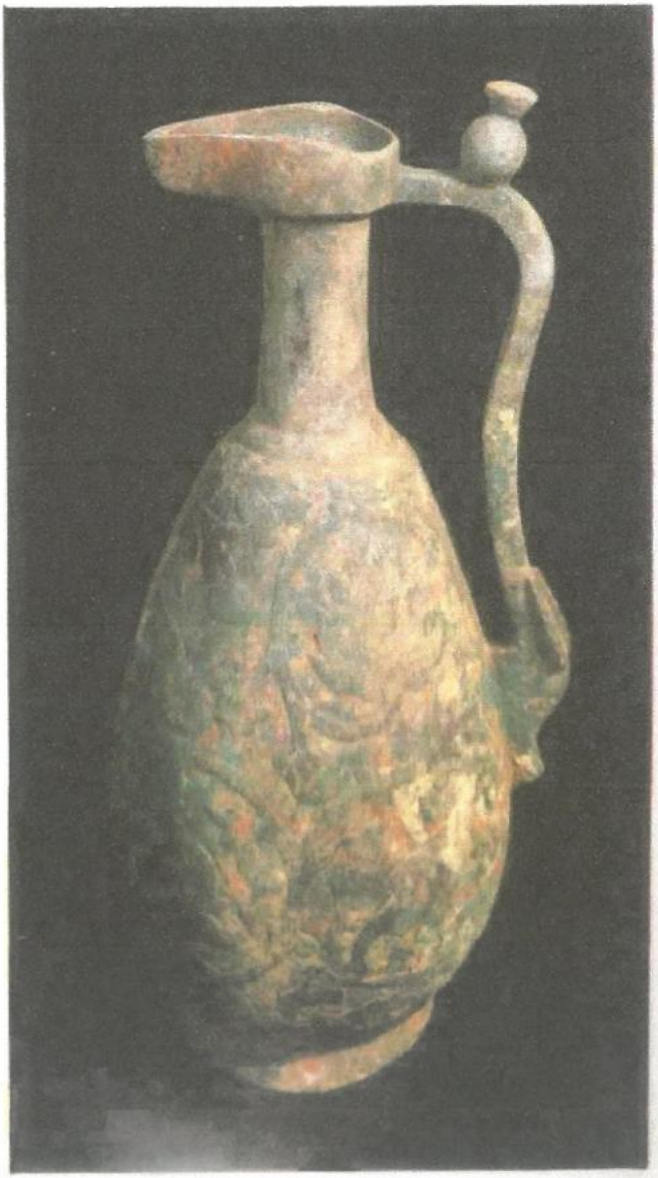
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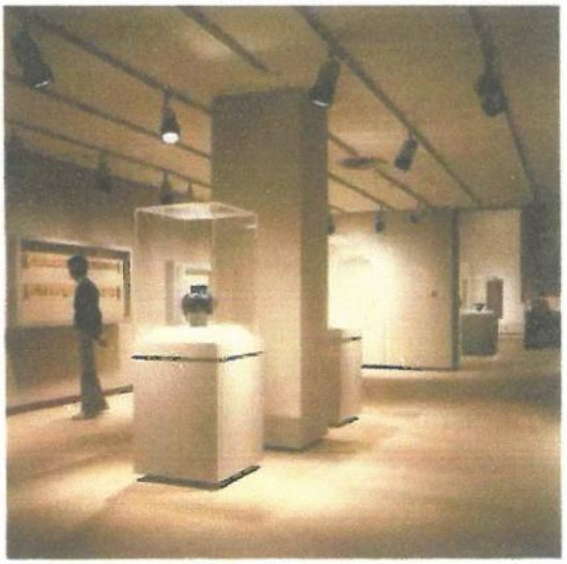
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isolation. Largely owing to the inspiration and prompting of Sheikha Hussa it is to be at the centre of a wide educational programme. The reference library is not just for the use of visiting international academics, but to encourage the local population to develop an interest in the arts of their past. Curatorial and conservation courses will be set up, with travelling scholarships, and the history of Islamic art and culture is to be introduced into the syllabuses of primary and secondary schools.

Since the popualtion of Kuwait is largely made up of short-term expatriates from other middle and Far Eastern countries — at the last count only 42 per cent of a population of rather more than 1.5 million were Kuwaiti citizens — this will have an ever-widening effect. Traditionally the society of the desert and the Gulf has not been an acquisitive one. In the 1970s Sheikh Nasser and Sheikha Hussa had only one serious Kuwaiti rival in the collecting field, Jassim Al-Haomaizi, who has gracefully been made Honorary Curator of the Al-Sabah Collection, and it remains to be seen whether others in neighbouring countries will emulate them, now that the success of their activities has so triumphantly been displayed to the world. ■



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1 and 2. The Museum of Islamic Art in the Kuwait National Museum.
3. Pair of Doors. Wood, mitred, rabbeted, mortised, carved and painted. Morocco, Fez, 14th century AD. Height 443cm.
Opposite page: Miniature from a manuscript by al-Jazari. Ink, colours and gold on paper. Egypt 1315 AD. Height 31.2cm.

1. Ten Chess pieces, carved rock crystal, Egypt, 10th century AD, greatest height 7cm.
2. Capital, Carved marble, Spain (probably from Madinat al Zahra, near Cordoba), dated 362 AH/AD 972-73, Height 38cm.
3. Ring to stabilise Huqqa bowl, Gold, hammered, engraved and enamelled Mughal India, 1635 AD, Diameter 14.5cm.
4. Ewer, Bronze, cast and engraved, Iran, 8th century AD, Height 25.5cm
5. The Museum of Islamic Art in the Kuwait National Museum.

objects, carved emeralds the size of a child's fist, and ruby encrusted daggers and scabbards, explanations in themselves for the pride of race and royalty of the maharajahs, several of whom viewed them with approval at the opening ceremony.

Naturally enough, given its predominance in the artistic life of Islam, Iran has the place of honour in the collection. One example which should not be overlooked is a carved and painted wooden casket for a Koran, dated November 1344. Very few of these Koran boxes have survived, and this one came from a distinguished French collection. The undogmatic nature of Sheikh Nasser's colelcting is demonstrated by the inclusion of funerary relics such as a carved marble tombstone from tenth century Egypt or a fine wooden cenotaph from fifteenth century Turkey. While the Sheikh himself is scrupulous as to the provenance of what he buys, it is to be hoped that his known interest in this field will not encourage others to remove such things from their proper sites to offer them to him.

Almost as interesting as the collection itself are the social and political effects which its formation, and its display in a National institution, may have, both on Kuwait and in the neighbouring states. The display of the collection in the Museum should not be seen in

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الشراب فى اعلى الخزانة
وعليه ك فمن الواضح انه
متى مليت الخزانة شرا!
فانه يقطر الى الكفة فتمتلى
فى مدة ثمن ساعة ويفرغ
ما فيها الى حوض الكفة
فينصب دفعة واحدة الى
قدح زجاج فى كف الجارية
فيثقل القدح ويرفع عطفه
القضيب من السفود فتجرى
الجارية وتدفع المصراع
الايسر بيدها اليسرى
وفيها المنديل فينفتح المصراع
الايمن ولا يماس القدح
وتقف بحالها فيأخذ الملك
القدح من يدها ويشرب
ما فيه وان شاء مسح فاه
بالمنديل ثم يضع القدح فى
يدها ويحطها الى اسفل
ويدفع الجارية برفق الى ان
يمنعها مانع ويرفع يدها الى





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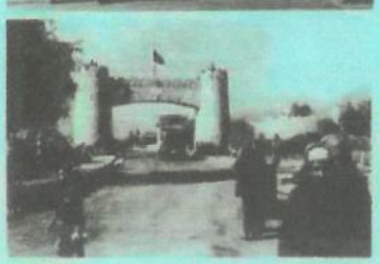
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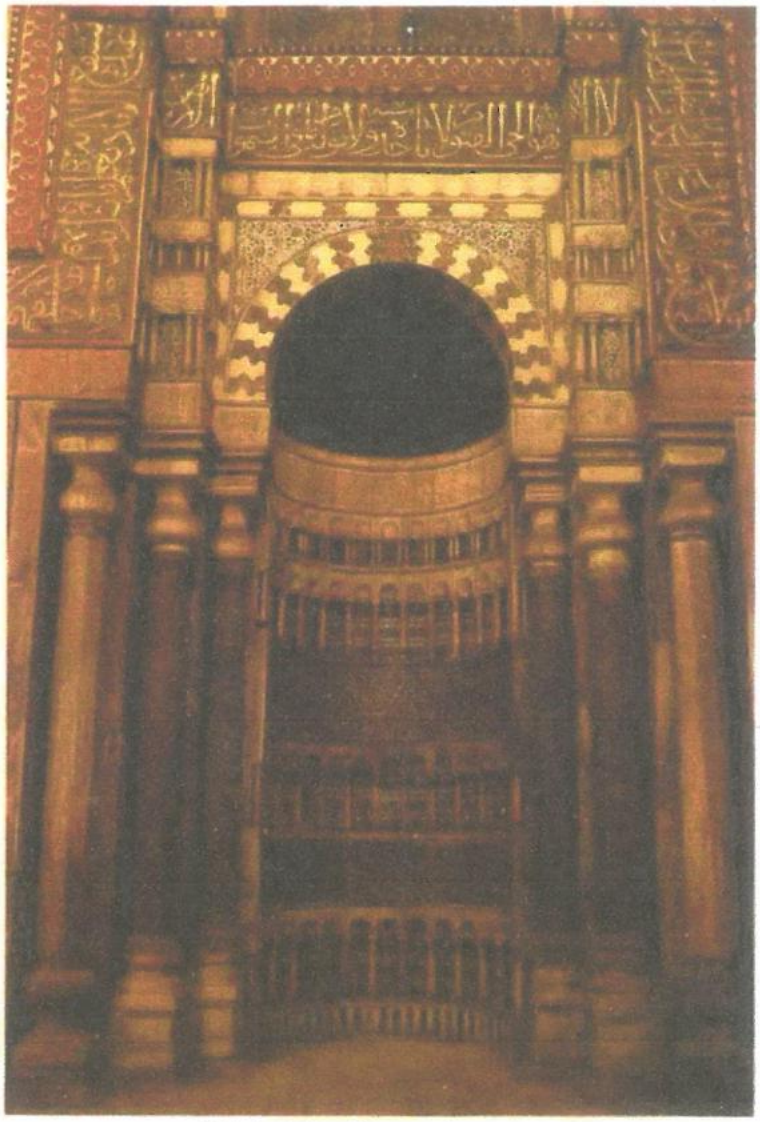
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Mehrab, Qala'un Mosque 13th century AD

CAIRO

Preservation and Restoration of Islamic Monuments

John Rodenbeck

Larger than any city in Europe, enriched by a network of trade and culture that stretched from Spain to China, fifteenth-century Cairo was probably the greatest metropolis of its time. Its splendour is still physically attested by some four square kilometers of largely intact medieval streets and buildings, a legacy that, with international support, twentieth-century Cairo is seeking to preserve and restore.

In Egyptian terms Cairo is a young city, dating essentially from the seventh century, when Arab invaders took the garrison town known as Babylon and built a new city around it. Under subsequent regimes the city became a centre of empire, each regime over the next several centuries adding new quarters in an enormous pattern generally extending toward the north. Although much construction in each successive period was carried out on or with materials looted from older sites, the general habit of expansion into new areas left most existing streets and buildings to their own



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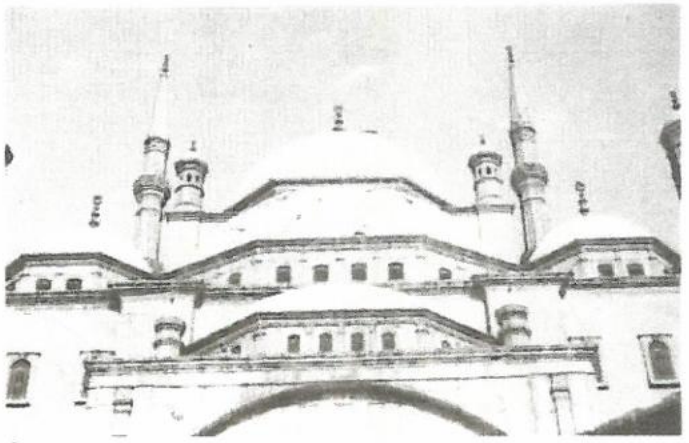


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devices, and thus conserved an unparalleled range of architectural forms. From 1303 onwards many Emirs and governors were active in restoration and conservation, even during the long economic decline of the eighteenth century. The Napoleonic expedition maps of 1800 show a city diminished and surrounded by ruins, but still almost identical in its essential configuration in the late fifteenth century.

For an understanding of this configuration, it is necessary to know that Cairo (al-Qahirah in Arabic) is not the real name of the city as a whole, but refers only to the imperial quarter built by the Fatimids, fifth of the eleven major regimes to rule in Egypt since the Arab conquest. In Egypt itself, the term al-Qahirah has come into common use only since the First World War, the traditional, popular and historically correct name being Misr — which is also, of course, the name of Egypt herself. The walled palace compound of the Fatimids, which the Italian merchants who invented the name "Cairo" saw as a city like their own, was never more than a portion of the total Misr. The city founded by the Arabs sprawled for five miles south of where the Fatimids later built their gates, while the city of the Mamluks stretched three miles further to the northeast to Qubbah, where the President of the Republic continues to receive foreign visitors just as his Mamluk predecessors did. At no time has Cairo ever belonged to the type of the walled Medina, that city-model beloved both by the Orientalist theoreticians of the "Islamic city" and by the Egyptian neo-traditionalists.

As in Europe, and according to roughly the same time-table, the nineteenth century brought rapid change, particularly under the Khedive Ismail (1863-1879), when major public works, like the installation of water, gas and sewerage systems, were carried out within the same decade as their counterparts in Paris and London. A master plan à la Haussmann was imposed, which included not only the development of new quarters but also the driving of new boulevards through older parts of the city. Meanwhile, Ismail's brilliant Minister of Public Works, Ali Mubarak, conducted a survey of buildings that is still an invaluable source of documentation and suggested, in accord with the



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taste of his times, that although the modernization of the city would require the razing of entire districts, a few exemplaires should be preserved for historical and aesthetic reasons. It was with such thinking as its mandate that in 1880 the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe was established, its chief task being the creation of an Index of Monuments worthy of preservation. The Comité was also charged with overseeing the restoration and preservation of these selected monuments, many of which had been showing alarming symptoms of dilapidation and decay, especially since the reform in 1852 of the mortmain endowment system that had hitherto provided their upkeep.

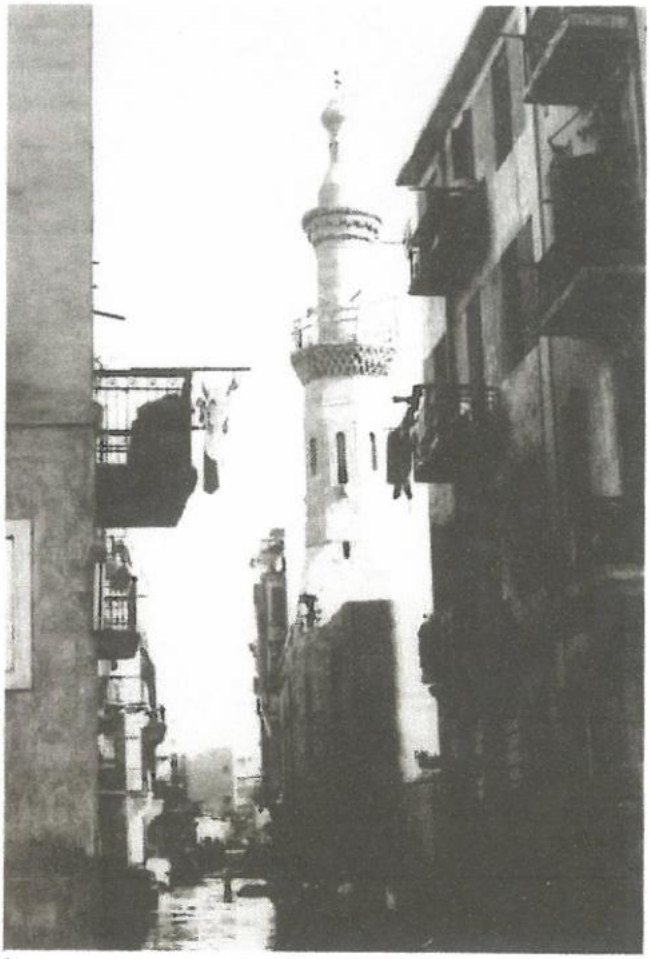
The Ministry resulting from this reform, the Ministry of Wakfs, to which the Comité was designated to act as official advisor, retained ultimate sole responsibility for the state of the buildings. In the nineteen-thirties this responsibility was transferred to the Ministry of Culture, but without transference of endowment funds or deeds of ownership. The Ministry of Wakfs has therefore continued to exercise a degree of control, especially over religious structures, that has not infrequently led to administrative confusion even in recent years.

Mamluks and Ottomans had carried out extensive restoration in their time. With a membership that included outstanding architectural historians, the Comité was not only one of the first modern organizations of its kind, but also an inheritor and a revivor of a tradition. Until 1952, when its functions were taken over by the Islamic Section of the Antiquities Organisation under the Ministry of Culture, the Comité supervised works ranging from the minor to the prodigious on more than five hundred buildings.

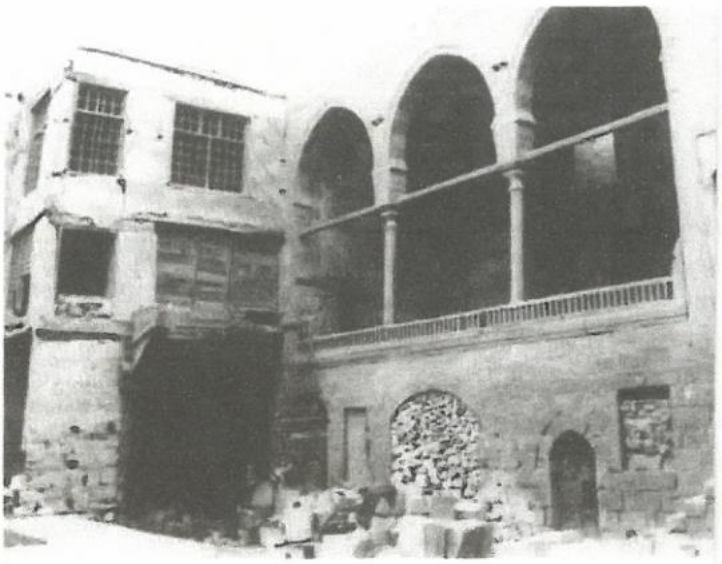
The policies that governed the Comité's selection for the Index, during the last three decades of its activity were laid down by a law passed in 1918, which acknowledged that while Pharaonic monuments might be claimed to have "intrinsic" worth, monuments of the Middle Ages worth preserving must embody some special "artistic, archaeological or historical interest." Limited by these guidelines, typical of the

This page:
1. Mausoleum of al-Ghauri, 1503-4 AD, shows portion of Sabil-Kuttab with vulgar modern sign designating the latter as a "center culture"
2. A view down the Qasabah in the Ghurriya with the mosque of al-Ghuri on the right and the mausoleum of al-Ghuri on the left.
3. View of portion of Qasabah called Bayn-al-Qasryn in the Gamaliyya.
4. A view down the Qasabah towards Bab Zuweyla. 1092 AD.
5. Mosque of Mohamed Aly. 1848 AD.

Opposite page.
1. A pervasive problem is high groundwater, the result of increased water consumption and defective drainage.
2. An elegant mag'ad, typical of Cairene domestic architecture, dominates the second court of the palace of al-Razzaz.
3. Informal construction jostles monuments throughout the historic zone.
4. Restoration by the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation in progress at the house of Zaynab Khatun. 1125 AH/AD 1713.



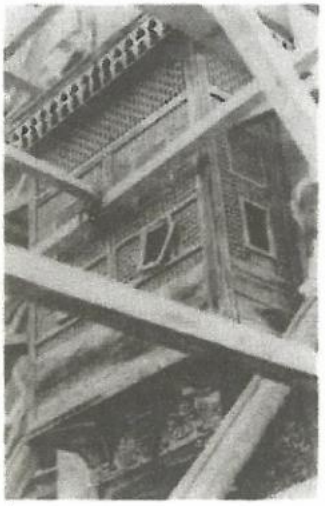
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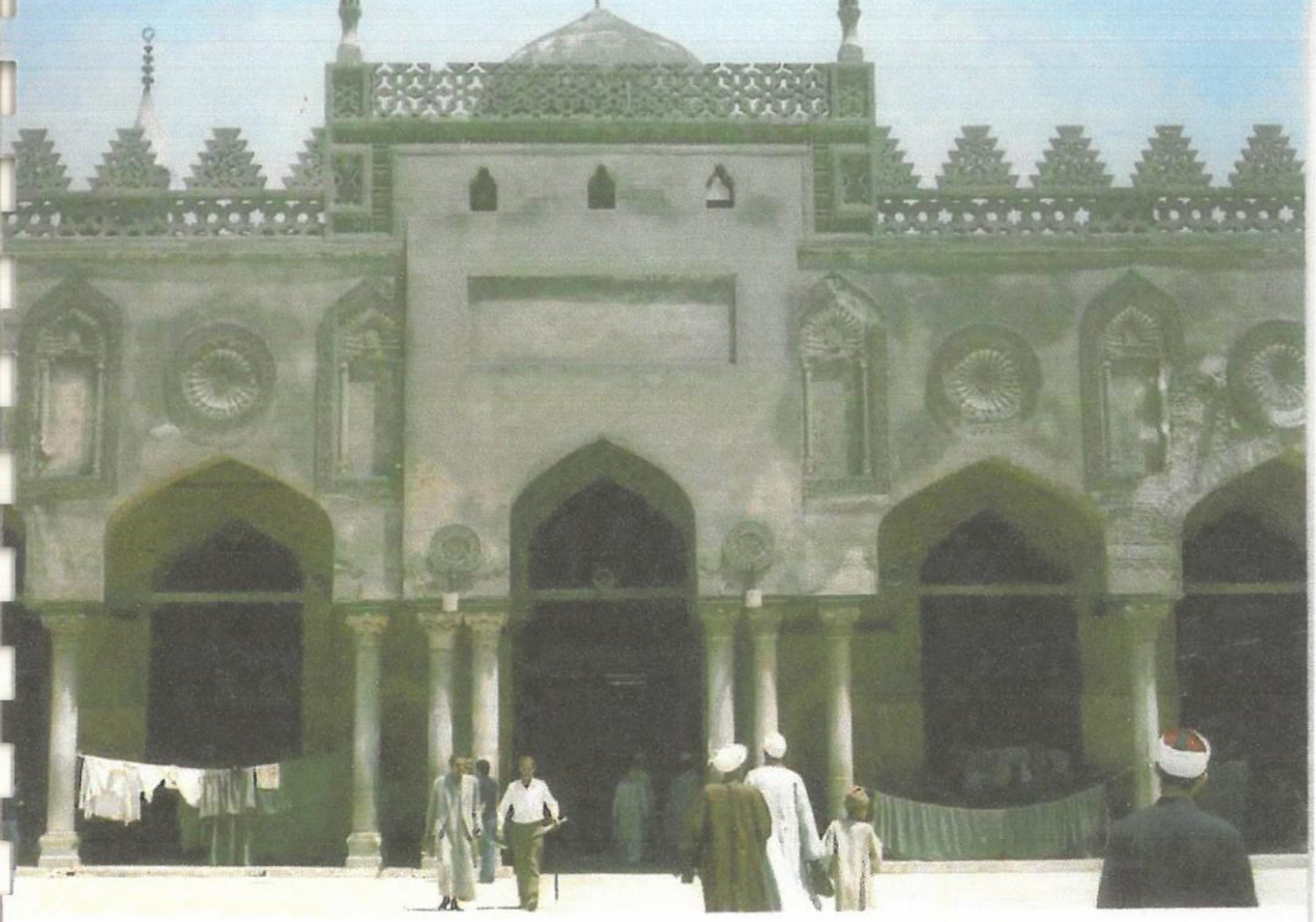
period and not unexpected in a country either so rich in architectural remains or so respectful of the rights of property owners, the Comité's program confined the number of buildings listed throughout Egypt to a maximum of 622, including some in the provinces or the outskirts of the city. In one small area within the Fatimid quarter, however, a recent survey conducted on more up-to-date lines has shown that in addition to 69 buildings already listed, 33 should be additionally indexed. Also missing from either the Index, last published in English and Arabic in 1951 and 1952, or from the record of the Comité's deliberations is any evidence of interest in area conservation or in its necessary adjunct, city planning. Replacing the old-fashioned concern with monuments themselves in isolation from their surroundings, the preservation of which would presumably serve some vaguely museum-like contemplative or "instructive" purpose, the conservation of entire streets, spaces and zones, has become international standard practice, accompanied by city-planning that seeks not only to retain the appearance and flavour of historic areas, but also to enlist them in the active economic life of the city or nation as a whole.

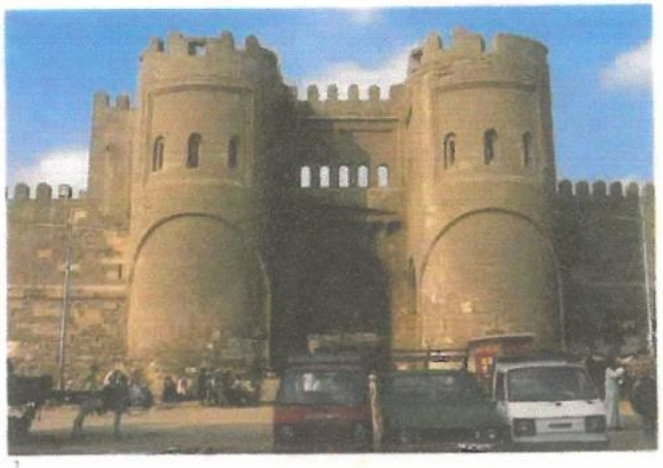
Old-fashioned though the attitudes of the Comité now seem, it at least ensured by constant inspection and attention that the physical fabric of all the buildings in its charge remained in decent repair, while its larger undertakings, for example, the restoration of the northern Fatimid gates and walls, preserved major glories of the city. The record of the Comité's successors during the three decades since its demise seems, by comparison, to have nearly resulted in cultural tragedy. Customarily supplied by the Minister of Culture with a budget of which four-fifths went to pay administrative expenses, the Islamic Section of the Antiquities Organisation was unable, until quite recent times, even to keep indexed buildings clean, much less regularly inspected and physically intact. A brief alert to what was happening occurred in 1969 during preparations for the celebration of the millenary of the Fatimid quarter, when a scheme to convert the heart of the historic zone into a parking lot, for people who had come, presumably, to see what would no longer be there, was shot down at top committee level.

Passive decay would assure the disappearance of Cairo's medieval heritage within a very few years. The Comité's use of cement on roofs decades ago has led to waterlogged ceilings and eventually to the collapse of rafters and beams. The rising groundwater, since 1965 when the last large scale emergency repairs were made by the Egyptian army, is the result of the government's failure to replace a drainage system laid down in 1915 to serve a city of a few hundred thousand that now has a population of 13 million. It has undermined or oozed over granite foundations, crept into walls, infected woodwork, and dissolved limestone and marble, leaving salt deposits on blank rough surfaces where even five years ago intricately carved and polished designs used to gleam.

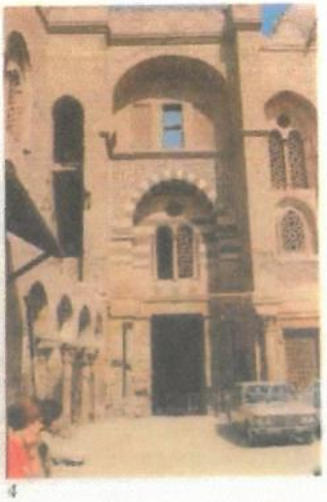
Inadequate inspection from 1952 onwards allowed all such natural accidents and decay to accelerate unchecked and often unheeded. Coupled with inadequate law enforcement, it also allowed an increase in various kinds of vandalism: the destruction of a woodwork frieze or the smashing of a carved stucco window to make way for a new loudspeaker or a fluorescent light; the application of heavy oil paint over delicate plaster; theft of any removable ornamentation, or even the demolition of entire buildings.

Meanwhile large portions of the historic zone that were solidly middle class fifty years ago have become transformed into rubbish-strewn slums awash with sewage. In some areas this appearance belies the actual wealth of the inhabitants, artisans and small entrepreneurs, appalled like any visitor by the conditions in which inflation forces them to live. In other areas, however, the tale is a sadder one. While the dilapidation or collapse of older residential structures has increased population density, the indigenous working population is









actually in decline, as the able-bodied and able-minded move out to wherever they can, leaving behind a growing residue of defectives, misfits and impoverished transients.

Essentially, in other words, the historic zone of Cairo suffers the same ills as the rest of the city and even the rest of Egypt: the lack of public services which, either from population growth or from neglect, have become inadequate to provide what elsewhere would be regarded as the basic decencies of life; the lowness of local wage-earnings, which narrows not only economic, but also social and cultural horizons; the lack of investment potentialities, which means that disposable capital earned abroad can only be invested in houses and land, with inflationary effect; a lack of vision at governmental and leadership levels, which encourages attitudes that would give parking lots priority over a priceless heritage, stealing it, in effect, from future generations. The difference between the historic zone and the rest of Cairo, of course, is that it is the home of that heritage, and is, without rival, the greatest architectural site in Islam.

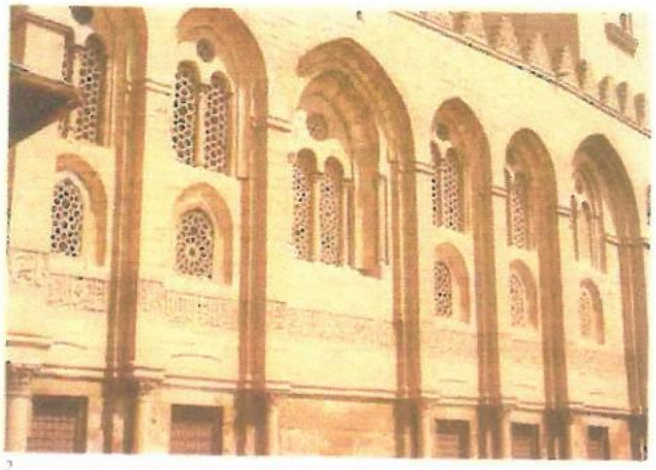
In 1977, dismayed at last by what seemed the inevitable destruction of their heritage, Egyptians and interested foreigners began an informal appeal to the international community. The Architectural Review was alerted and obliged with a major article. In September 1978 the Goethe Institute in Cairo enlisted the collaboration of UNESCO and the Antiquities Organisation to sponsor a seminar that drew together local and foreign expertise. A few months later SPARE (The Society for the Preservation of the Architectural Resources of Egypt) was founded, with headquarters in Cairo

This page:
1. *El-Azhar Mosque, 10th century AD.*
2. *Bab El-Futuh, 11th century AD.*
3. *Minaret of Qala'un, Bayn al-Qasrayn, 13th century AD.*
4. *Entrance to Qala'un complex, 13th century AD.*

Opposite page:
1. *Interior of the mausoleum of Sultan Hassan, 14th century AD.*
2. *Facade of complex of Qala'un, 13th century AD.*
3. *Dome interior of Qa'a Katkhuda.*
4. *Inside Qala'un complex, 13th century AD.*
5. *The Sabil-Katkhuda*

and London and the specific aim of arousing international concern. A major step was the foundation in mid-summer 1979 of the Egyptian Society of Friends of Antiquities, under the active chairmanship of Mme. Jihan Sadat, with a membership that was soon to include not only concerned Egyptians and foreigners, but also the President of the Antiquities Organisation, the Ministers of Education and Culture, the head of the State Information Service, and the Governors of Cairo and Giza. With such obvious encouragement, the Antiquities Organisation was quickly enabled to take two initiatives. It nominated "Islamic Cairo", the historic zone, to UNESCO's Cultural Heritage list, thus giving it protected status; and it requested, in February 1980, that UNESCO provide a team of experts to recommend a conservation strategy. Four outstanding men were chosen for this team — Michael Wellbank, Jim Antoniou, Stefano Bianca and Ron Lewcock — all well known in the field. In December 1980 their report was submitted for the



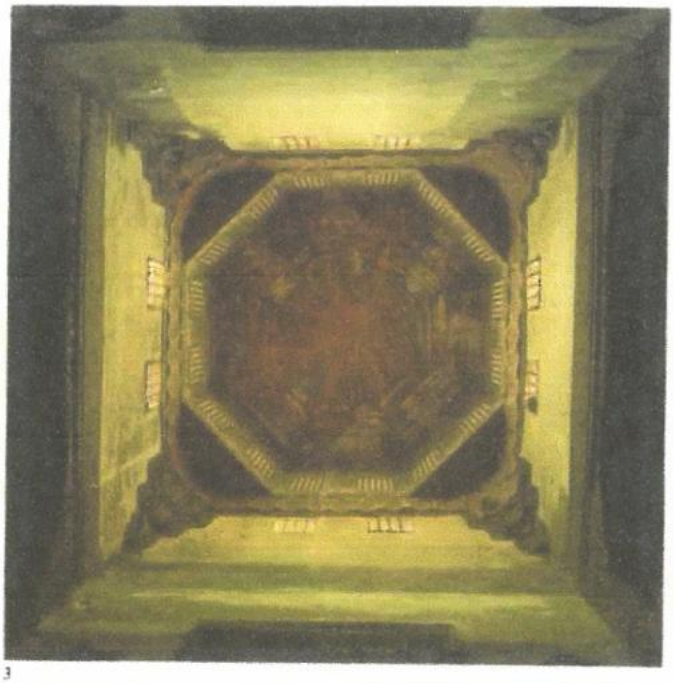


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consideration of all participants at The First International Conference for the Conservation of Islamic Cairo, sponsored jointly by the Egyptian Society of Friends of Antiquity and the Antiquities Organisation.

In approving the report, with its basic proposal to begin conservation with six clusters of monuments situated at crucial points within the historic zone, the Conference made a series of 14 recommendations, tantamount to a programme, beginning with the establishment of a Cairo Conservation Agency. Pointing out that international practice had been defined as long as 1961 by the Venice Charter promulgated by the International Council of Museums and Sites under UNESCO auspices and that in 1980 the Symposium on Conservation and Restoration of the Islamic Cultural Heritage at Lahore, had issued the Lahore Statement on a revision of the Charter with particular reference to Islamic buildings, the Conference recommended that both the Venice Charter and the Lahore Statement be adopted as this Agency's official guidelines for all future work. In addition, it recommended that a regular programme of inspection be reinstituted, with priorities assigned for emergency repairs, and that the Index be radically expanded to include not only buildings of the period between the Arab Conquest and 1880, omitted by the Comité, but also any other significant buildings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

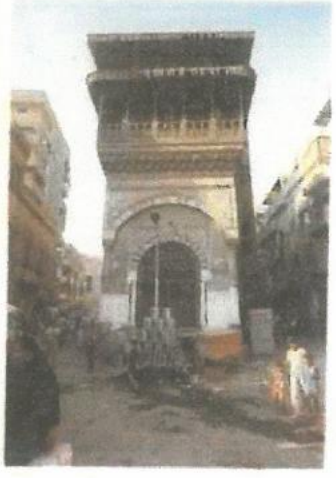
Action on all the recommendations of the Conference that fell within the purview of the Antiquities Organisation was immediately taken by Dr. Shehata Adam, the then-director of the Organisation, whose retirement came only one month later. Having earlier brought the international campaigns to



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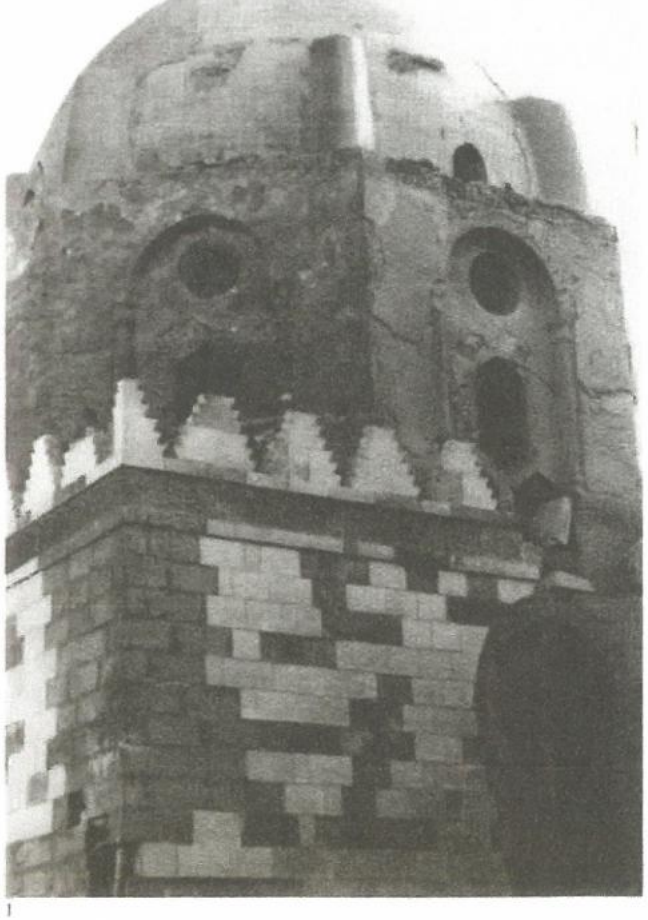
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save Abu Simbel and the Philae Temple complex to triumphant conclusions, Dr. Adam proved equally energetic on behalf of the Islamic monuments. He had arranged, before his departure, that a team of experts should come to Cairo from the International Centre for the Study of the Conservation of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the UNESCO-sponsored, Rome-based agency that is generally regarded as the foremost clearing-house for conservational expertise. The team was to have been headed by Dr. Bernard Feilden, the head of ICCROM and a major participant at the Cairo Conference, now retired. Dr. Adam meanwhile set up advance Egyptian inspection teams to survey monuments in collaboration with the ICCROM team when it arrived.

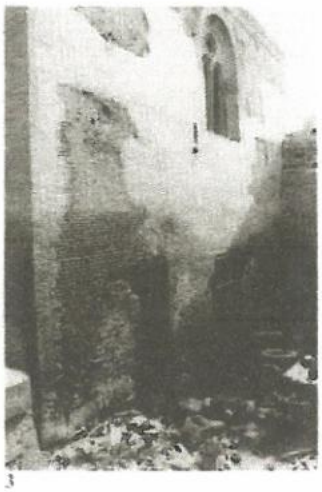
Here intervened what one official of the Antiquities Organisation has described sardonically as "our Third Intermediate Period", in reference to the two periods that are known in the history of Pharaonic Egypt as the First and Second Intermediates and are identified with chaos and anarchy. Arrangements with ICCROM lapsed, correspondence with UNESCO itself was lost, including even the



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Antiquities Organisation's own document submitting the historic zone to the World Cultural Heritage List, and the entire programme envisaged by the Conference's recommendations appeared unaccountably to have been shelved.

This period came to an end with the appointment of Dr. Ahmed Kadry as the new head of the Organisation, late in 1981. Rectifying as quickly as possible the errors of his immediate predecessor, Dr. Kadry has been confronted with major problems elsewhere — the impending collapse of the Sphinx and the Solar Boat at Giza among them — but has nevertheless announced that the restoration of Islamic Cairo has top priority among all other projects. As testimony to this end, a list of nearly forty buildings scheduled for restoration

This page:
1, 2, 3 and 4. Negligence is only one factor leading destruction and decay.
5. Typical delapidation begins with the disappearance of roofs and upper storeys.

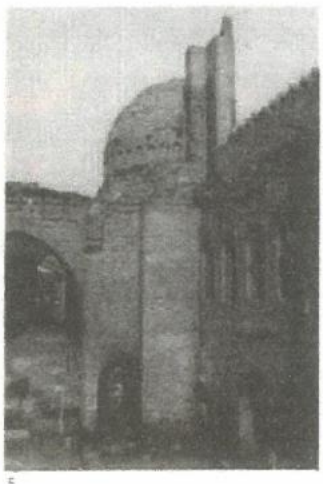
Opposite page:
1 and 2. The sparkling restoration of the Fatimid mosque of al-Hakim has given rise to technical and philosophical controversy.

measures has been published. In many instances the work has actually begun, complemented by work on the part of several foreign missions. The Organisation is meanwhile in the process of being upgraded to an Authority, as the 1980 Conference recommended, a move that will give it far more power and autonomy than it has ever enjoyed before.

Of the 72 monuments in six zones targeted in the UNESCO report, however, only 14 monuments in five zones appear on the Organisation's list, a sufficient disparity to indicate that the UNESCO programme approved by the Conference has not yet been adopted wholeheartedly. There is likewise no Cairo Conservation Agency. Without such an agency, without a strategic goal of the sort that is implied by the programme proposed in the UNESCO report, and hence



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without a budget, it is quite unlikely, as officials of the World Bank, the Ford Foundation, and USAID have already pointed out, that any funds for restoration will be forthcoming from them or any other similar sources. The total budget proposed by the UNESCO team for the restoration of the six areas with 72 buildings designated in their report amounted to forty million Egyptian pounds, approximately the cost of the "rescue" of the colossi and temple at Abu Simbel.

It therefore clearly remains out of the question for the moment to launch an international campaign of the sort that "saved" Abu Simbel or Philae, though it had been expected that precisely such an effort would be the chief result of the Cairo Conference, of which the final resolution was an appeal to all interested local and foreign individuals and agencies to participate in a forthcoming campaign under the leadership of Mme. Sadat.

The events of October 1981 put an end to that particular feature of the scheme. Mme. Sadat resigned in December as chairman of the Egyptian Society of Friends of Antiquity, which had already failed to meet since the preceding May, has never met since, and is presumably moribund, as is its special role, that of a forum conducted at such a level of power that discussions leading to voiced decisions also led to immediate action followed by its consequent special impetus, without which the Antiquities Authority alone will undoubtedly find that its hands are often tied, as they have been in the past, even as it tries to carry out its present piecemeal and very limited programme.

If a more serious programme is contemplated a Cairo Conservation Agency will have to be created, along the lines of similar agencies in Tunisia or Saudi Arabia, not to mention Europe and America. It is a historic irony, of course, that Egypt, whose Comité was one of the first official bodies of its kind in the world, should now have to look abroad for administrative models. Not since Aly Mubarak, however, has Cairo had an actively implemented master-plan or a personality at ministerial level capable of uniting interests now represented separately by the Cairo Governorate, the Antiquities Organisation, the Ministry of Wakfs and the Ministry of Development. Not since Mubarak has there been, with the possible exception of the construction of the Hilmiyya under the Khedive Abbas Hilmy II, a single

sustained effort at neighbourhood upgrading or rehabilitation, the ultimately vital component in any modern programme of area conservation.

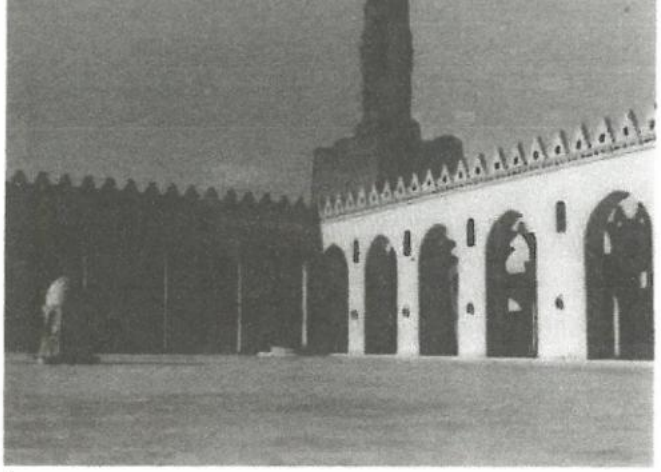
For the Antiquities Authority alone to undertake such an effort would be to exceed its present mandate, which appears to confine it merely to the guardianship of monuments, a function that is elastic enough to give it control over huge hitherto deserted areas, such as Fustat, where there are few standing structures, but where excavation might yield more, while limiting the power it can exercise to areas that have remained built up, which are, of course, precisely the areas where the greatest monuments stand, along with the historic streets and spaces that give them meaning. Acting on the advice of a committee of the High Council for Culture, a policy-making body founded by the Ministry of Culture to offset some of the confusion of 1981, it can provide rough guidelines for the design of new buildings, but exercises no power over their ownership or function. This committee has also been given the job of prescribing spaces to be cleared around monuments, an ominous charge rather than an encouraging one, since it suggests not only a retreat from area conservation, but a willingness to repeat mistakes already elsewhere in the Islamic world, most notably in Iran, where Mashhad, Hamadan, and Shiraz, in particular, have been disfigured by monuments placed in artificial isolation. The model followed here is a nineteenth-century Western one, already familiar to Aly Mubarak a century ago. Fortunately, the committee contains members well aware of such dangers.

Neither the Venice Charter nor the Lahore Statement has yet been translated into Arabic, however, and no Egyptian official has been present at any of the important conferences on urban conservation that have taken place during the past four years, either in the West or, far more importantly, within the Islamic world, excepting those held in Cairo. Though the recently appointed director of the Restoration Division of the Organisation, Hussam ed-Din Ismail, is fully conversant with the theory and standards of area conservation that are embodied in the Lahore Statement, and has in addition a deep love of the city and its dynamics, his efforts may well turn out to be sterile. The disparity between the Organisation's list of projects and that approved by the Conference of 1980 implies no official recognition of the meaning of area conservation at any policy-making level, nor any consciousness of the extent to which attitudes have changed nearly everywhere in the Muslim world.

A number of the projects on that list are, in fact, being carried out in collaboration with some foreign missions. In October, for example, the German Archaeological Institute officially returned to the Antiquities Organisation the keys of the restored mosque of Tatar Higaziyya and very soon a Danish Mission will follow suit with the Madrasa of Gawhar at al-Azhar. They will continue work on Qasr Beshtak and Bayt al-Suhaymy respectively.

Dutch interest in the Wakala Bazara and American interest in Bayt al Razzaz have thus far proved abortive, but the World of Islam Festival Trust, based in London, still retains its interest in the complex of Qalaun, the centre-piece of what could be an area development in the Gamaliyya. The Polish Archaeological Centre has already been at work for several years on the complex of Qurqumas al-Kabir, in the Northern Cemetery. The French, meanwhile, through teams allied with the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, the University of Aix, the French Institute for Oriental Archaeology, and the Centre de Documentation et d'Etudes Economiques, Juridiques et Sociales have continued a remarkable effort at documentation, an enterprise that will prove all the more valuable if efforts at physical conservation fail.

The Italians have for several years maintained a training mission, which combines instruction in restoration techniques with actual work on the premises, at the Hasan Sadaqa complex, a Mevlevi 'tekke' that represents nearly every conceivable problem. An Italian expert, Professor Roberto di Stefano of the Instituto di Restauro of the



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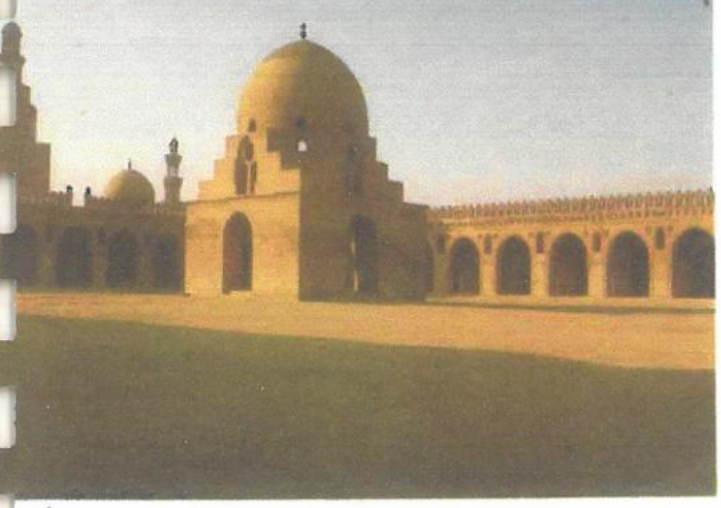


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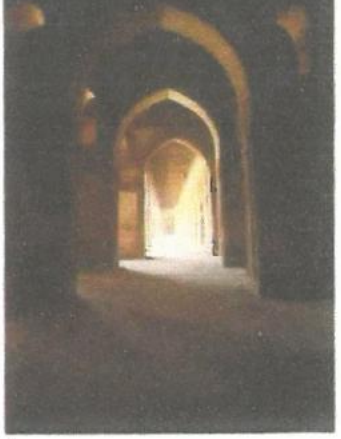
University of Naples, has made two separate visits to Cairo under UNESCO auspices during the past year. The only private project among all those so far undertaken, the reconstruction of the al-Hakim mosque by the Bohras, a Shi'i sect based in Bombay, has been rather controversial. Their critics have pointed out that although they have shown remarkable spirit in mustering their own university students to serve as labourers and have created an area of startling cleanliness in a site that was neglected beyond belief, they have, in the process, violated every particular of the Lahore Statement. The most eloquent of their critics has been an Egyptian expert, Professor Saleh Lamei Mustafa of the Arab University in Beirut, who has singled out the use of Portland cement for particular comment.

The use of Portland cement was condemned at the Cairo Conference and alternative traditional materials, chemically and physically compatible with medieval buildings, were described in an appendix to the proceedings written by Dr. Bernard Feilden, then head of ICCROM, and Professors Farid Shafei and Saleh Ahmed Saleh, both of Cairo University. Discontinued for a brief period, it has since been revived. To the dismay of every local or foreign expert who has had an opportunity to become acquainted with the work, Portland cement is now the basic material used in all restorations carried out by the Authority on its own.

Nothing, of course, has meanwhile been done about streets and infrastructure, which will presumably remain quite outside the Authority's control. The new Cairo Waste Water system being built by an Anglo-American consortium avoids the historic zone almost altogether. In mid-1981 the Ministry of Development submitted to UNESCO draft terms of reference for planning the reconstruction of the historic zone



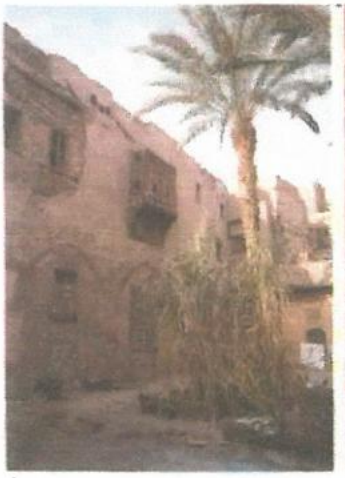
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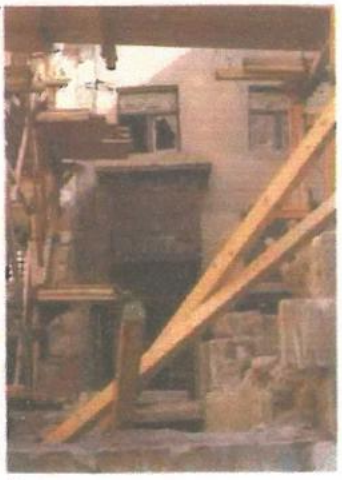
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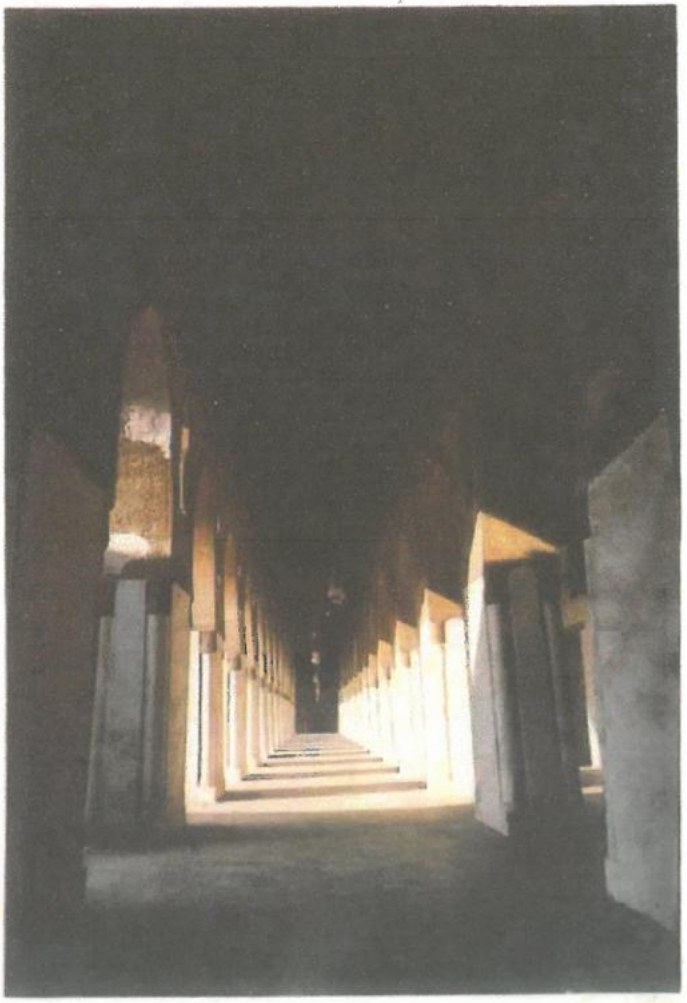
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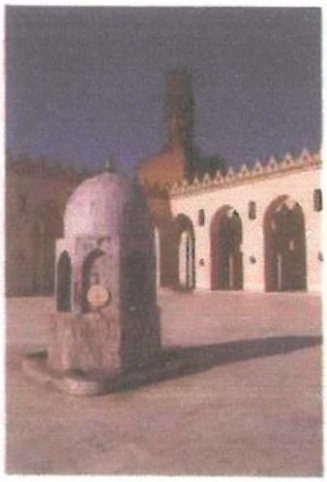
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for examination and comment and is reported to have received a favourable reply. These terms, however, which go only so far as to outline requirements leading to a planning framework and do not encompass an executive stage, have not yet been acted upon.

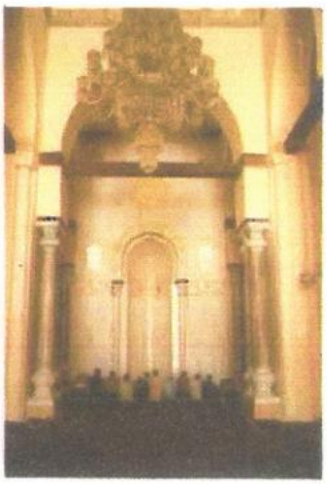
The strategic thought behind the UNESCO scheme to begin restoration and rehabilitation in six small separate sub-zones was that, with these clusters as nuclei, amenities would prove contagious and spread through the historic zone by attracting both public and private sector investment. The Antiquities Authority would meanwhile carry on its usual work, with particular attention to emergency cases. Although the UNESCO strategy has not been adopted, it is very clear that under Dr. Kadry's direction the Authority's activity has intensified. Contact with UNESCO has been firmly re-established and Iim Antoniou, of Iim Antoniou Associates in London, UNESCO's chief consultant, has paid two extended monitoring visits to Cairo during the past year, both of which have led to extensive additions to the report filed by him as Field Director of the first UNESCO mission in 1980.

A beginning could well be made by concentrating upon one or two of the six "clusters" originally designated in that report. In the Gamaliyya, for example, the work of the German Archaeological Institute has already been directed along the lines of area conservation for many years. Major monuments have been avoided and attention has been given instead to using conservation as a means of upgrading an entire small neighbourhood. The result thus far is that two small Mamluk mosques, an Ottoman 'sabil-kuttab' and an Ottoman tomb have been restored. The next project is a Mamluk palace that links together most of the neighbourhood and acts as a kind of keystone. All work has been carried on in close collaboration with the Antiquities Organisation. Nearby are several other buildings in which other foreign missions have shown interest. With encouragement by a new Authority, further collaborations could restore the entire area, which includes two of the zones designated in the UNESCO report, and several major monuments such as the Qalaun complex, in which the World of Islam Festival Trust has been interested for several years. A start along recommended lines would thus have been made even without the founding of a Cairo Conservation Agency.

Dr. Kadry recognizes that in an Authority allied with such an agency his task would be larger, but much easier — though never very easy. For example, there are more than five times as many monuments in Cairo as there are in Damascus, where an active programme of area restoration has been going on since 1979. The scale of problems involved is of a similar comparative magnitude. From such smaller but similar projects elsewhere in the Muslim world, however, there is a great deal Egypt could learn, negatively as well as positively. A decade ago, destruction in the name of "development" was commonplace throughout the entire Dar al-Islam; the cultural heritage was routinely bulldozed away and replaced by high-rise concrete, with perhaps a few



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selected monuments kept in reserve, tarted up and converted into "tourist centres", as local and national governments attempted to rebuild their cities in the image of Los Angeles, Frankfurt, Rio or New York. The historic centres of such cities as Isfahan, Aleppo, Jiddah and Medina all suffered dismemberment far more drastic than any that had been inflicted on Cairo during its own cotton-based building booms, many decades earlier. Projects such as the campaign to save Fez, or the effort to renovate historic Tunis were regarded as either quixotic experiments at beautification or attempts to increase tourist trade. Little thought was given to the cash value of what was being destroyed, much less to its intrinsic worth.

Today all that has changed. A new generation of widely travelled and much more knowledgeable young architects and city planners has appeared on the scene, where they have received encouragement from such international bodies as UNESCO, ICCROM, the Aga Khan Awards and the Aga Khan Programme, as well as from public and private interests of their own countries. UNESCO's Said Zulficar, now Secretary General of the Aga Khan Awards, has worked tirelessly to promote the cause of conservation for several years and is representative of the energetic intellects that have gathered at conferences and seminars throughout the Muslim world and beyond, in places ranging from Istanbul, Dammam, Medina, Lahore and Jakarta to Cambridge, Massachusetts and London to hammer out a new vision of the Islamic cultural heritage's value and meaning. Thanks to such efforts, cash, will and expertise all await Cairo's disposition, as soon as it decides how it wishes to restore and conserve what has been in the past perhaps the most neglected, yet still remains certainly the most important medieval urban architectural site in the world.

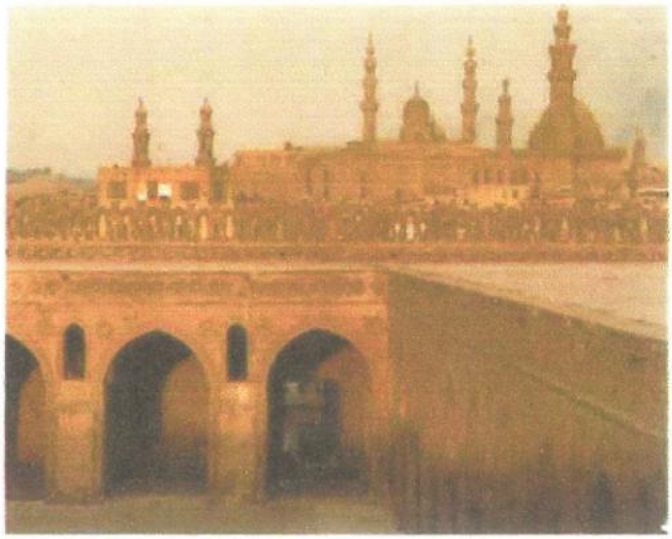
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1. Mosque of Ibn Tulun with dome and minaret, 13th century additions.
2. Ibn Tulun, 9th century AD.
3. Detail of soffit of arches, Ibn Tulun, 9th century AD.
4. The first court of the palace of al-Razzaz, the lower storey probably served as stables with guest apartments above.
5. Restoration by the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation in progress at the house of Zaynab Khatun, 1125 AH/AD1713.
6. The great mosque of Ibn Tulun, Cairo's noblest architectural masterpiece (263-65 AH/AD 876-79).

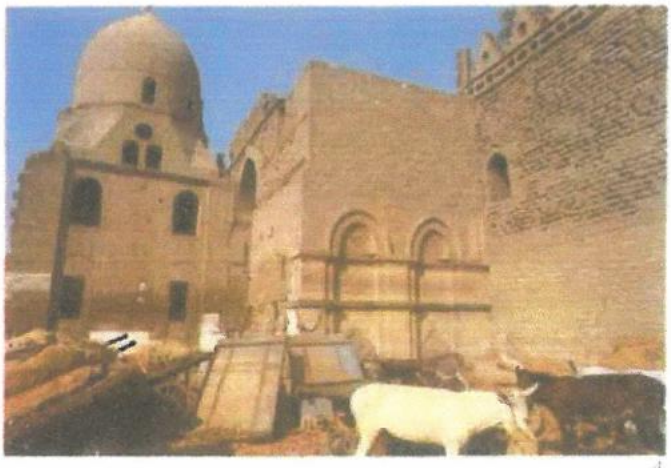
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1 and 5. Mosque of El-Hakim after restoration.
2. Mehrab of El-Hakim after restoration.
3. Ibn Tulun Mosque arcades, showing minarets of Sultan Hassan and al-Rifai mosques.
4. Mosque of El-Hakim before restoration.
6. Interior of Sultan Hassan complex, 14th century AD.

Photographs: D. Schleier/T. Swellim



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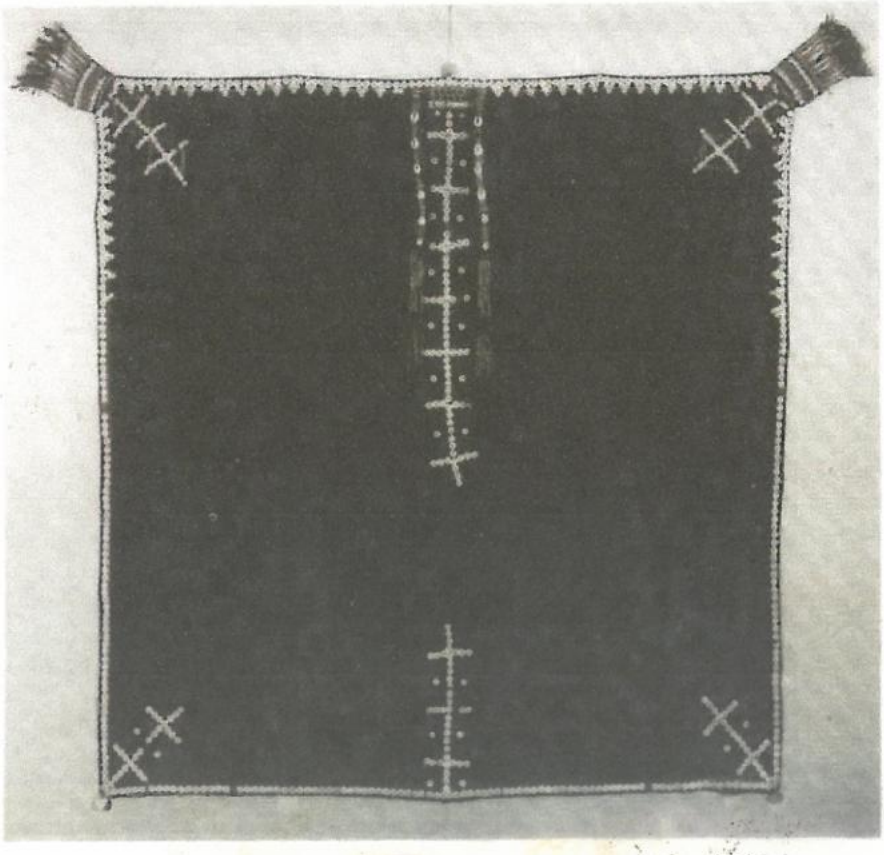


6

Collecting Handicrafts in Saudi Arabia

John Topham

Headdress. Head shawl (milta) from the Harb region in the Hijaz (Bani Salim tribe) is plain black cotton with appliquéd brown and red cloth. Mother of pearl, glass buttons and metal beads are used for decoration of the cloth and leather tabs. On either side of the top of the head are attached two tubes of twined leather and metal beads with cowrie shells. A coin hangs from the centre over the forehead. It measures 41 by 43in.



When I first went to Saudi Arabia in early 1977 as manager for a large construction project, it was my first visit to the Middle East. As it invariably would be to one brought up in the green Eastern United States, everything seemed strange — the heat, the dust, the difficulty of finding one's way about. But I found that if a newcomer takes the trouble and cares he will soon get to know the Arabs and much of the seeming strangeness disappears. Since most of the labour staff is imported and the supervisors are usually Westerners there is little opportunity to get to know Saudis at work; but on chance occasions, outside of work, all one has to do is to speak pleasantly to a Saudi and one will often be invited to have a Pepsi or a cup of tea and talk. The average Saudi in fact, seems to like, or to want to like, any American. Perhaps the cause for this lies in the lack of an American colonial history in these areas or it might be that we are the beneficiaries of a good impression made by early American oil geologists. Apart from these possible reasons for Saudi friendliness towards Americans, I have the feeling that there is a considerable similarity of spirit and outlook between the two countries. The United States grew quickly from what was then called wilderness. The Arab world is evolving even more quickly from what too many had so far regarded as another wilderness.

One trait the two areas definitely do have in common: their attitude towards and treatment of their heritage. Until recent times Americans showed little respect for, and discarded, the arts and crafts of their recent past. The Arabs have done and are doing the same. Fortunately for the Americans many of their artifacts were made of quite durable materials, there were more buildings in which to leave them behind, and the sun was kinder. Most of the artifacts of the traditional Saudi culture were fashioned from wool and leather and most have now been discarded in favour of manufactured goods, or destroyed by the harshness of the climate.

In the United States, although countless buildings of historic interest have been torn down to make way for new construction, usually of less aesthetic value, there are still some representative of their variety and quality, which have been saved from destraction and left to enjoy. In Saudi Arabia, there were

fewer such buildings because the country's population has always been small. Those that did stand in the towns are being torn down at a breathtaking pace. In fact there is hardly, a dense concentration of old buildings left. In Riyadh there was a great square of mudbrick buildings which I liked to pass through. It was gone between one Friday and the next. It's only relics left were tractor treaded dust and splinters. By the following Friday, these too were gone and the foundations for some new construction were being dug.

In Jeddah there are only a few old vistas left un-distrubed by the new. To find one of the much-pictured romantic screened balconies you have to make an effort and search now. In the downtown area there stood a small ancient mosque with a crooked minaret. It was a beloved landmark to many Westerners and, I suspect, to many Saudis. One evening while strolling from the waterfront towards the town with a friend, the sky line suddenly seemed to look wrong. My friend recognised the tragedy as I gasped, "The little mosque with the crooked minaret is gone!" We were both too distressed to walk over and examine the smashed body of this holy, odd, pleasant structure. I had taken a number of pictures which I now cannot bring myself to look at. I do not like to be reminded of the tragedy. I do remember, however, that some air-conditioning equipment company had been apparently using the mosque for storage. Their plastic sign over the entrance was perhaps the first sign of its death.

Nevertheless, in the country's towns and villages, especially in the Asir area, there are still many traditional buildings that have remained intact. One can only hope that Saudi pride in and protectiveness for their great ethical and moral tradition is extended to their physical heritage before it is too late. There are reports that efforts have recently been made to save some of the remaining old buildings in the cities and that the necessary regulations have been or are being drawn up. I hope this is the case and that they will be rigorously applied.

An ordinary individual, like myself, can hardly collect and preserve buildings, even doorways or more than the smallest fragments of architecture. He can only try to locate and preserve movables. Before going to Arabia I had a considerable interest in printed, descriptive Americana — books, maps and pictures of the days of early exploration and settlement. I also had a special liking for the things people made for their own use, especially weaving. It seemed to me that the weavings of the American Indians and of nomadic peoples in the Middle East had the common, appealing trait of creations made by people living under difficult conditions. When I went to Saudi Arabia I was eager to see what was being done in weaving there which might be different from the textiles of Jordan, Syria, and Egypt, with which I had become reasonably familiar through photographs and exhibits.

During my first posting in Arabia I was too busy with work to be able to concern myself extensively with Arts and Crafts. But by perusing through the few shops in Al Khobar which sold curios as well as some weavings and embroideries, I began to be able to distinguish between what had been locally produced and what was imported. On Friday mornings, I would go to the Dammam market to buy fruit and vegetables for the coming week. On one such trip, on the sidewalk in front of the gold souk I came upon some Bedouin or village women selling flatwoven rugs of their own or their friends' manufacture. I obtained a few of these to use in my house and thereafter searched every week for variations on the standard simple striped patterns. One day a woman had for sale an older, more complex rug of the Najd type, which I bought. Occasionally palm frond mats and baskets would also be available. In addition, I located a walled area which was called the 'used' souk, to which the gates were erratically open. In the course of repeated visits, I acquired a few worn weavings of more complex patterns. At the same time I had opportunity to learn something about old metal work and costume and acquire some examples of the same.

I had to spend many months in the Eastern Province before I could find the time for a trip to Hofuf in Al Hasa. A self-appointed guide took me to a place where a variety of relatively new camel gear and rugs were sold. The colours seemed so garish to me and the prices so high that I bought very little. Since then, however, I have come to understand the love of the desert people for colour. Later that day, while looking through a small rug shop, I was fortunate to find the corner of an old twill weaving among great piles of folded new rugs and cloths. As I bought it I managed to make the shop owner understand that I would be interested in acquiring other examples of this type. I wandered off further on my fortuitous meandering and found a very old tinned copper eating tray with wrought iron handles, reminiscent of New English Seventeenth Century vessels. When I dropped by the rug shop again, I was delighted to hear that the owner had found three more very old light-weight twill weavings, which he said had been woven in Hofuf. Although they have some resemblance to nomadic Kurdish products, the patterns are not quite like any I have seen pictured and therefore I am convinced that they are indigenous.

By the time I next returned to the United States I had acquired more than twenty weavings, mostly contemporary, and a sampling of costumes, jewellery, and metal wooden ware. The choice of returning to several different places in Arabia was open to me, and in considering the options I was greatly influenced by my interest in learning more about local craftswork. While in the United States I tried to track down books on and collections of the arts of the Arabian Peninsula, but found that there was virtually no printed information available and there were no known collections. The curator of the Textile Museum in Washington told me that the greatest gap in their knowledge of textiles throughout the world was the Arabian Peninsula. He urged me, if I returned, to acquire as many examples or photographs of textiles as I could. This was one of the determining factors in my decision to return to Jeddah, which, situated on the coastal plain, serves as the gateway to Mecca, and has fast access to Taif, bordering on the edge of the great nomadic areas as well as to Asir.

In Jeddah I soon become familiar with the used souk, the downtown 'tourist' souk, and, of course, with the rug souk across from the old airport, where fortunately, I became quite friendly with many of the rug dealers. In the old days this souk had been a traditional stop for pilgrims to Mecca when Muslims coming from many nations brought things to sell to help finance their pilgrimage and also to buy souvenirs. The Hajj is now so thoroughly organized that very little such trading is done. People still come

from many nations but only to buy objects to commemorate their pilgrimage, seldom to sell.

The airport rug souk in Jeddah offers the greatest variety of arts and craft wares that can be bought in Saudi Arabia. The most common rugs are now ones made in Pakistan in the Bokhara and Caucasian patterns. These rugs are hand made and durable but their routine and precise patterning combined with colours that are too-often incompatible, make them not very interesting. Since some have been treated to achieve a silk-like texture and their tags are marked 'silky', the less knowledgeable dealers, without apparent intent to defraud, will sometimes sell them as silk.

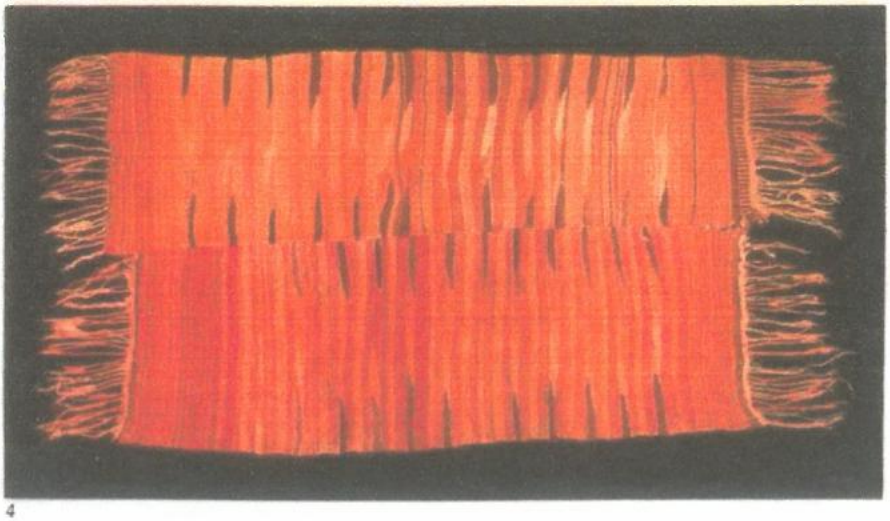
Heavy long-pile rugs with indistinct Shiraz patterns are also common. They were called 'Arab' rugs, but I had difficulty in finding out where they were made. I suspect they are from Iraq or West Iran, or perhaps the Shiraz area. These were usually about five by seven feet, and were dark brown, with some reddish brown and orange as well as figurative patterns in blue and white. I saw some rugs of similar construction, but more bulky and larger. They also contained a considerable amount of brown, but also pinkish reds, and were said to come from Afghanistan. None of these had any obvious tribal or regional identification — they were just vaguely Persian-looking rugs. Modern Baluchi rugs were also common, often in flat weave.



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2. *Rug. Made of soft brown and naturally dyed wools, this rug comes from Baha (probably Zahran tribe). It consists of two loom widths, sewn together at the centre, of weft-faced interlock tapestry and weft-faced plain weave stripes. Made before 1950. it measures 4ft 11in by 8ft 2 1in.*

3. *Rug. Probably woven in Hofuf, this twill tapestry rug is made of soft sheep's wool, finely woven and naturally dyed. It is balanced twill and tapestry and tapestry twill with bands of weft-faced double interlocking tapestry. It measures 2ft 8in by 7ft and was probably made before 1940.*

4. *Rug. Sheep's wool rug from Baha, made before 1950, is woven with naturally dyed yarns. It consists of weft-faced slit tapestry and weft-faced plain weave stripes in two loom widths sewn together. The curvilinear elements are weft inserts; the fringes are warps braided with extra yarn. It measures 3ft 9in by 6ft 9in.*

5. *Pair of Bracelets. Made in Najran before 1920. these finely worked bracelets are high grade silver. Formed from twisted metal rods, their ends have granulated decoration and coral in bezel settings. The darker areas, applied for contrast, may be pitch. Both bracelets are 3¼in in diameter.*

6. *Tent deviding curtain. Made before 1960 in the northern Neid, is constructed of black goat hair with white cotton bands and red wool stripes (probably naturally dyed with pomegranate). The five woven panels are warp-faced plain weave with bands of weft-faced tweed tapestry. Twined tapestry woven fringe flaps alternate with a braided fringe and have wrapped warps sewn to their sides; mostly chemical dyes are used. Tassels are looped through uncut warp ends and wrapped. The curtain is 5ft by 12ft.*



Factory-made simulated originals were everywhere, usually in Tabriz patterns with brilliant scarlet or emerald green fields, generally used to cover the earth under tents. The rugs which appeared to be most favoured by the rich were the Nain. These, while not plentiful, were nevertheless not uncommon, and came in a great variety of sizes. They almost always had creamy backgrounds with blue acroll designs. Although they were substantially and precisely made, for me they had no personality.

I noticed that some of the most serious purchases of rugs were made late at night. A limousine would stop at one of the more important shops and discharge two or more veiled women for a quiet, usually quick showing. Everyone stayed out of the way during such visitations and usually a large bundle would then be put in the trunk of the vehicle. These women meant business when they came and did it with dispatch, but very quietly.

Once, when lunching at the Intercontinental Hotel near Taif, I discovered a huge exhibit of Persian rugs displayed in the great meeting room, which had been brought in by rug merchants from Riyadh. These were predominantly Nain, and among them was one remarkable for its size — about 25 by 45 feet priced at something over 900,000 SR. One of the dealers told me that he had a similar rug twice as large under manufacture in Nain and that he had commissioned it on speculation, not to fill an order. This was in late 1978 — I wonder what has come of that rug.

The older, more desirable Persian rugs are now scarce in Jeddah. I saw very few in the other cities. The al-Zaharanis, with whom I became particularly friendly when I was first there, had a better collection than the other dealers. Their stock included an exceptionally fine small Kashan, which I believe a Frenchman living in Sanaa finally bought after coming back to inspect it many times. A dealer from Iran took a shop in the Jeddah rug souk for some months, but he was mostly interested in trading for or buying up the older Persians. Being quite astute he took away about seventy old rugs. I warned several of the dealers they were foolish to let themselves be traded out of such old rugs because resupply from Iran could be difficult, and that they might find they would have to go to London or New York to find more. But at that time their more active customers favoured rugs such as Nains and Kermans, so they shrugged off my warning.

Weaving from all over the Middle East, and even from Eastern Europe, could be found in the Jeddah souk. Often there were only one or two examples; Caucasians were unusual, and I remember only two or three Chinese. Kilims were available, but were usually oversized and faded, except for a few brilliant Turkish examples. I missed one unique buy — a very old kilim probably Besarabian, which I knew nothing about but quite liked, with a repetitive pattern of large simple pots with flowers. It stayed in stock for a long time, and I had made an offer. When I returned from a short trip to America it was gone.

All kinds of other artifacts could be found in the Jeddah souk, although many were in bad repair, or were just remnants of the original. I saw some pieces of old Cantonese China, parts of a heavily embroidered Turkish court costume, elephant tusks, even some French candlesticks. The items of common traffic, however, were new brass coffee pots from Pakistan; antiqued Syrian copper; inlaid coffee tables; chess sets from Damascus; rugs and souvenirs from Ethiopia — mostly what we would call tourist trade items, but these were primarily what the Westerners as well as other visitors bought.

The souvenirs of Saudi Arabia taken away by Westerners are most commonly coffee pots, daggers, 'Bedouin' jewelry and camel bags. Decorated camel bags of the older Saudi type are scarce. Some local people are making replicas but they can usually be distinguished by their inferior weaving, garish colouring and the poor fastening of their sashes. Balefulls of such bags are also brought in from Syria and Egypt. They look wonderful when seen singly, but the sight of a stack of them, all alike, reduces their appeal.

I, of course, was unable to go to Mecca or Medina, but knowing that a great variety of people had settled there over the years, I tried to locate examples of their crafts in Jeddah and Taif.

I was told, however, that nothing was made in Mecca and Medina any longer and that almost anything now to be found there was a relic of the past, or had been imported from Syria, Baghdad, or Pakistan. They were the same arts and crafts which filled the "antique"-souvenir shops throughout Arabia. Mecca was still a source for the older imported rugs which I would see occasionally in the rug souk in Jeddah. Also one would occasionally come across carved woodwork such as sections of screens which the dealers obtained from Mecca, as well as older jewelry, often Turkish or Egyptian and sometimes "Bedouin". A few merchants made regular trips to Mecca to find goods for sale to the increasing tourist trade with both Western clients and pilgrims.

Dealers who had long experience, such as the al-Zahranis, were able to identify, and I believe correctly, genuinely Mecca-made pieces. Out of some thirty copper and brass items of various ages Abdullah al-Zahrani assured me that three were Mecca made pieces, and these I bought — two trays and a bowl. All three have the general characteristics of Islamic art, but have design details such as rows of geometric figures which seem to relate specifically to the details found in Bedouin and village weaving in Saudi Arabia. The copper is heavier and the incising deeper than it is on the usual imports. Although the design and workmanship are perhaps not sophisticated, they are, nevertheless, strong and effective. I also located an incense burner of more sophisticated workmanship which Abdullah al-Zahrani was quite certain had been made in Mecca. Perhaps the artifacts of Mecca manufacture best known in Arabia are the Mecca chests. Made of imported wood, such as teak, their panels are carved and have heavier ornamental brass decoration than is to be found on the famed Kuwaiti chests. Those I saw were usually of a dark, almost black colour rather than the brown that seems characteristic of Kuwaiti chests. The carved patterns are very carefully done and are usually foliate. Similar chests are made in Medina and I believe the patterns there are more likely to be geometric rather than foliate. Good examples are now hard to find and I do not have one. The famous antique dealer Suleiman, in Riyadh, had a number in various states of repair in storage.

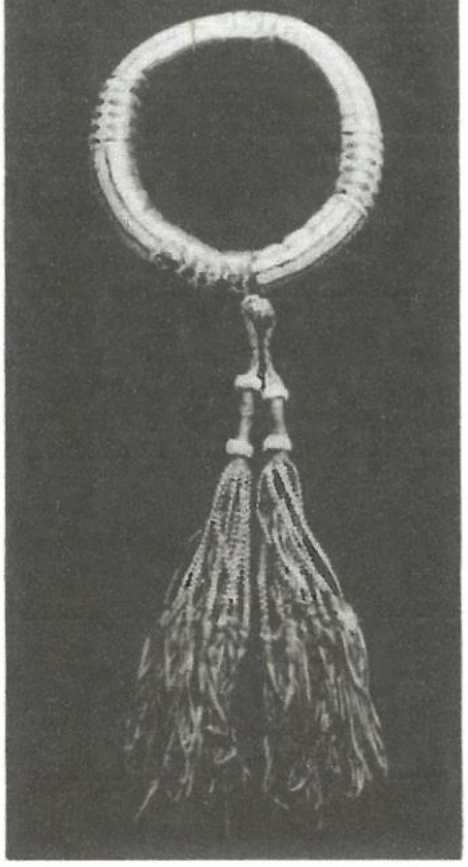
Weapons are being collected by the Saudis as well as by Westerners, and have become absurdly expensive. Average matchlocks and flint-

ocks with the stocks decorated with patterned metal dots or carving command a higher price than the very fine American flintlock and percussion cap rifles. Even an ordinary late-nineteenth century breech-loading gun will have an asking price in excess of $500. Daggers are more common than guns but any dagger of good workmanship will cost $1500 or more, and the ordinary over $500.

Shops dealing in rugs, 'antiquities,' and souvenirs nearly always stock silver Bedouin jewelry as well. This has been much collected by Westerners as the Arabs have come to prefer manufactured gold and costume jewelry. Good, well-made native jewelry has become very hard to find. The women's souk in Riyadh is traditionally the best source in Arabia for it, but one must make repeated trips there in the hope that a good piece will show up, most often in the possession of Oum Abdullah, the doyenne of this souk. As in the past, much of the jewelry comes from Yemen and Oman. I suspect their stores are now being shipped to Saudi Arabia to satisfy the higher-priced demand there. In Riyadh on one occasion I stood by while a German bought over 40,000 SR worth of such jewelry in less than 45 minutes. He said that he would keep the better pieces for himself and sell the rest. This was before the big boom in silver prices, so undoubtedly he did well.

Despite collectors' interest in old jewelry, I found only a few lonely silver smiths in run-down shops. They were not making any new pieces but repairing and rejoining some old ones. Some dealers in more remote locations tried to make the old jewelry attractive to the villagers and Bedouin, and perhaps to Westerners, by soaking it in acid to make it shiny white — another tragedy: the soft rich patina was lost.

Pottery made in Saudi Arabia is seldom found in the markets. It is still made in the same manner as has been the case for centuries, and has very simple conformations. As late as 1979 a very old pottery wheel was still in use in the caves near Hofuf. The output was dried in the sun for some days until enough had been accumulated to warrant firing the kiln, using palm stems for fuel and keeping it at a low temperature. This pottery has almost no glaze. Near Jeddah there is an active pottery where unglazed pots are



Headpiece. This rare headpiece (agal) from the Hijaz (Bani Salim tribe) is said to have been worn by women for dance. It is made of thin leather strands, plain weave and weft-twining, with woven-in cast metal beads. The leather is woven in a tube around a core of wool covered with cotton cloth; leather tassels with clamped metal decoration hang from the back. Made before 1930, it measures 8½in in diameter.

made by the coil method. The primary products of this pottery are water pots with sufficiently porous walls to allow the water to seep through and make an evaporative surface to keep the water in the pot cool. They also manufacture attractive plant pots.

I did not see any tanning or leather working operations, but hides and some newly-manufactured items such as bags and slings can be found which shows that there is still some activity of this type. Some products once made of leather are now made from old automobile tires and inner tubes. I saw several shops in Taif turning out unattractive buckets and other containers from these materials. The Arabs are ingenious in adapting to new materials. I saw camels carrying inner tubes filled with water around their humps.

The primary craft extant in Saudi Arabia is weaving. The contemporary rugs available in the east are usually ruggedly but loosely woven of wool, cotton (when white is wanted) and goat hair, and have often stripes of natural camel hair. Almost always these rugs are of warp-striped patterns with little use of the traditional series of geometric designs. Sometimes they have cross bands at the ends with brightly coloured simple figures such as diamonds or crosses.

Hofuf was long famous in Arabia for the manufacture of cloaks — the abayas and bishts for women and men. These were woven, in solid colours, out of wool, but sometimes from fine camel hair which produces a gossamer-like cloth. They were often embroidered with gold at the neckline. Travellers and explorers in old Arabia, such as Philby, would take some of these cloaks with them as gifts for Sheiks they might visit, and as presents for the Bedouin who guided them. They were much valued, but the industry had virtually died out until recently, when the Saudi government employed a German firm to help restore it. I understand that one can now see an automated modern loom working side by side with an ancient pit loom, both weaving the same traditional products.

Many of the women weavers are diligently pursuing their crafts, and some, especially at Taif and in al-Jowf, are turning out very finely woven items such as bags in the traditional coffee bean bag conformation fans, and wall decorations, some of which are used as window shades. Although the designs are intricate most of these weavings are unfortunately made from fibers with synthetic dyes or from imported fibers in such strong and even garish colours, that they have little appeal to most Westerners.

The only place in Saudi Arabia where I found pile weaving being done was in al Jowf in the north. The Emir of this area and his son, members of the Sudairi family, encourage weaving and organise an annual competition for originality of design and quality of workmanship which is judged by locals. Generally, these pile weavings are similar to the Qashqai designs, but with many original variations. The colours usually are rather harsh synthetics, but some made of natural camel hair pile with linear patterning, are very pleasant. I questioned one of the leading weavers about this work and she said that fifteen to twenty years ago she and some other weavers decided to see if they could do pile weaving, and now they have

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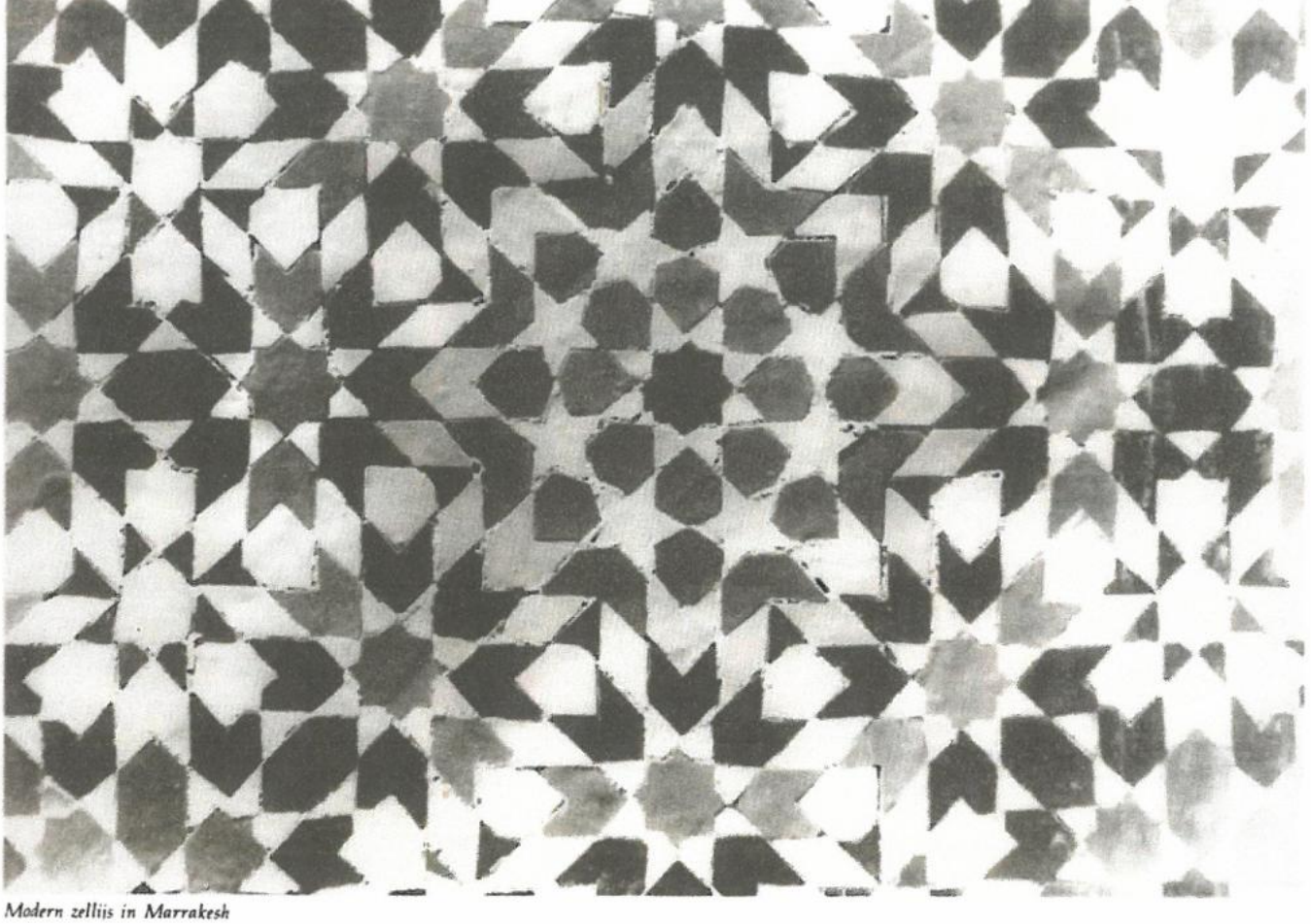


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Modern zelliis in Marrakesh

Decorative Arts in Moroccan Architecture today

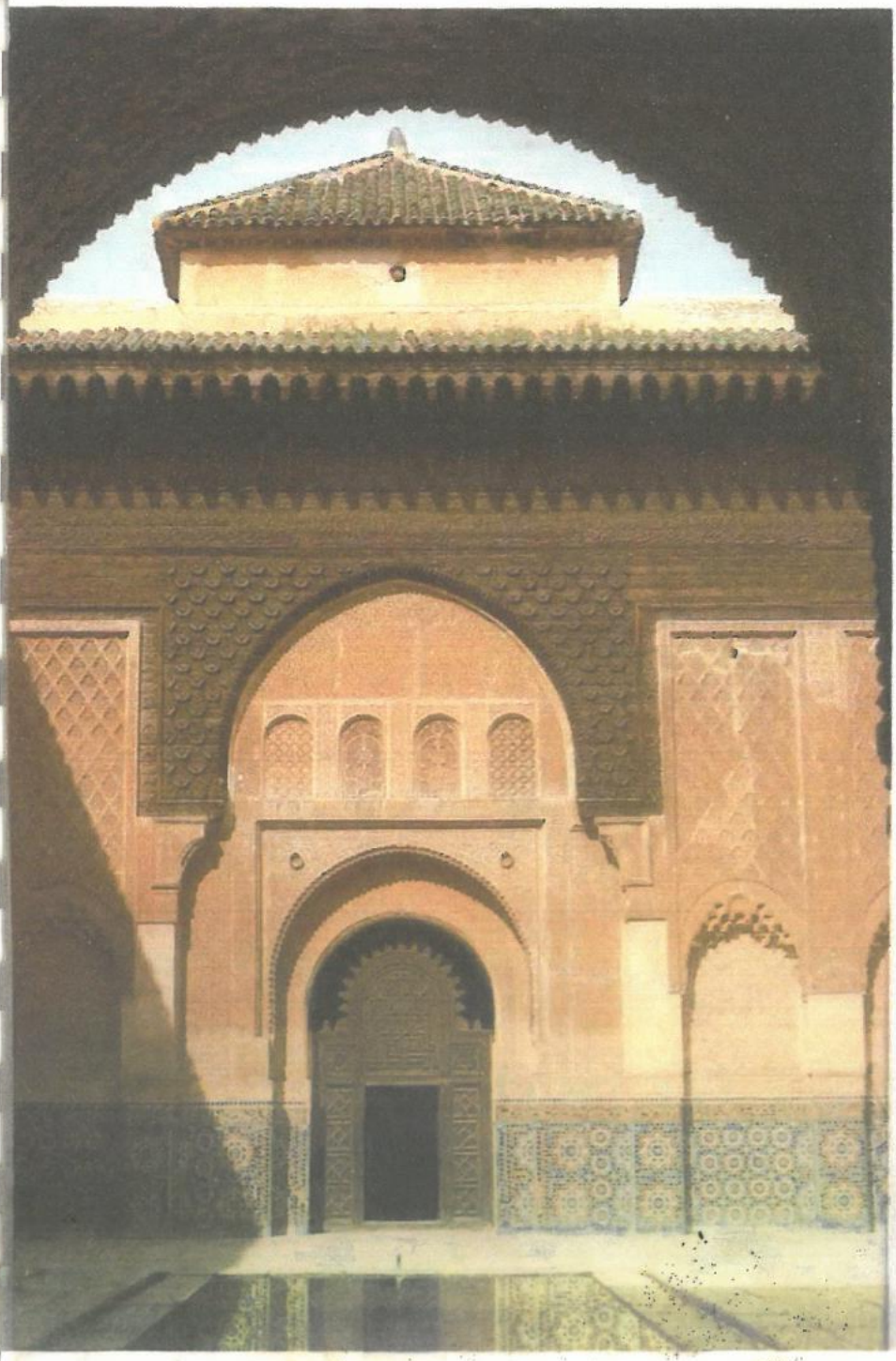
Shirley Kay

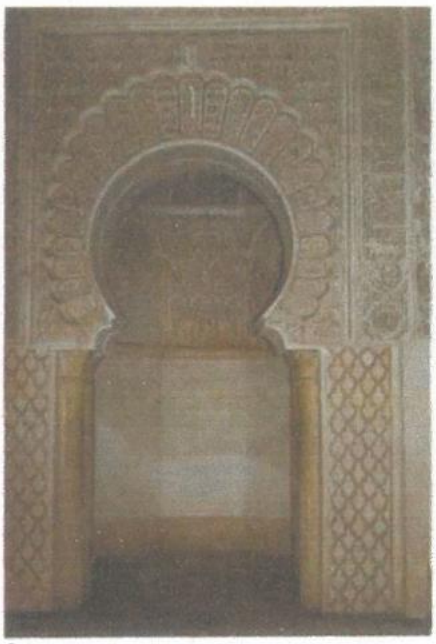
The clean concrete lines of Morocco's new hotels and public buildings have the modern looks of such structures all around the world, from New York to Hong Kong. Yet their contemporary facades invariably conceal an interior enriched with traditional elements which are unmistakably Moroccan: a courtyard with glazed mosaic tiles and marble fountain, a salon with sculpted stucco-work on the walls and painted wood ceiling, a coffee room with low lighting, small round tables and an unexpected richness of decor.

The decorative features of today's Moroccan salons are of course the direct descendants of the techniques of ornamentation developed from the early centuries of Islam in the Hispano-Moorish tradition of architecture. This western Islamic architecture was originally nourished from its cradle in Damascus, but so fertile was the artistic soil of Arab Andalusia, and later of Morocco, that architecture in those closely related kingdoms soon developed a style of its own. Moreover, since Morocco was one of the few Arab countries never dominated by the Ottoman empire, this style perpetuated the pure influence of archaic Islam of the Arab heartlands.

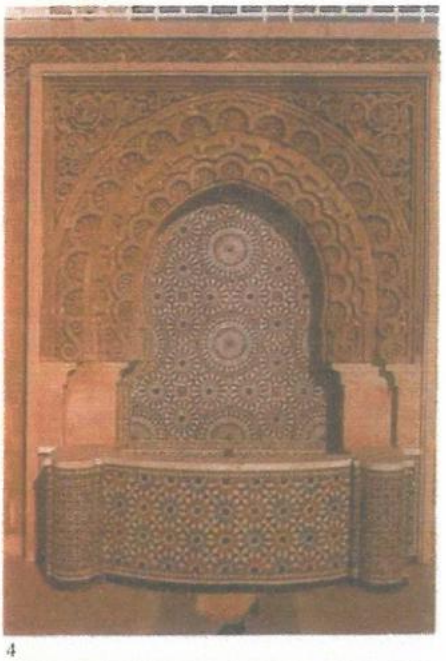
Through the Middle Ages the

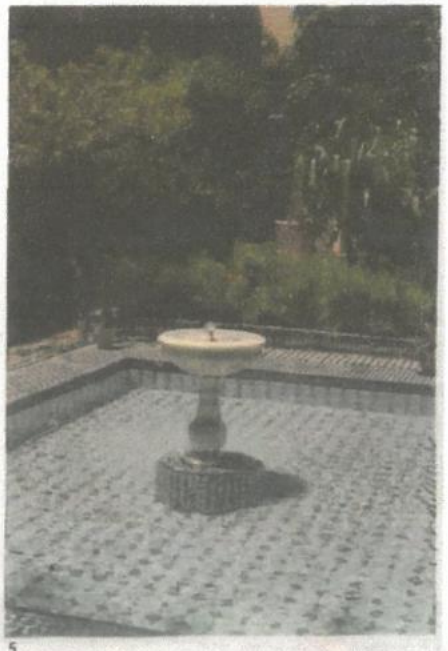
1. *Courtyard of Medersa Ben Yusuf showing zellijs, stucco, cedarwood.*
2. *Mihrab with rich stucco decoration. Medersa Bin Yusuf, Marrakesh.*
3. *Fountain in courtyard of recently renovated traditional house.*
4. *Modern drinking fountain, Rabat.*
5. *Fountain and glazed tiles in courtyard of 19th century Palais Jamai, Fez.*

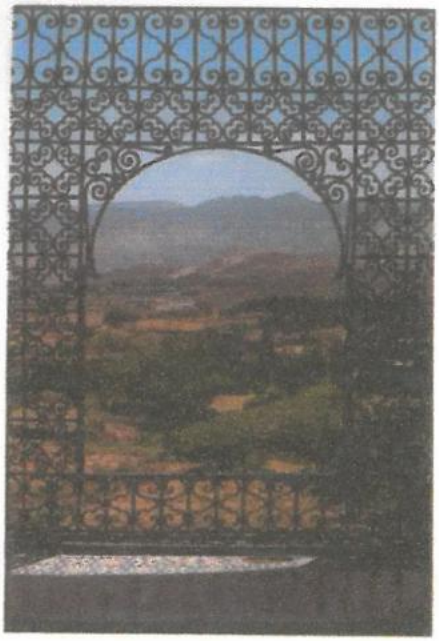

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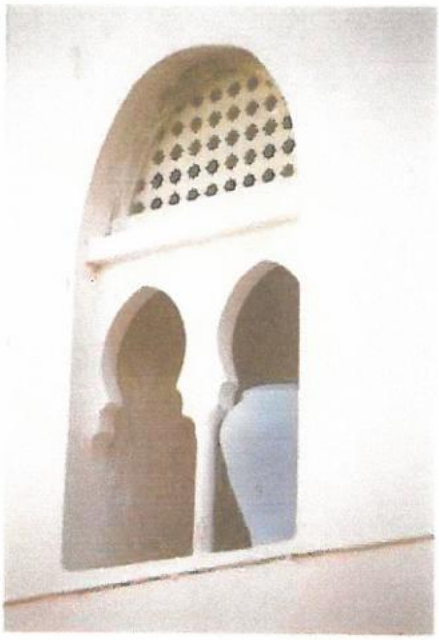

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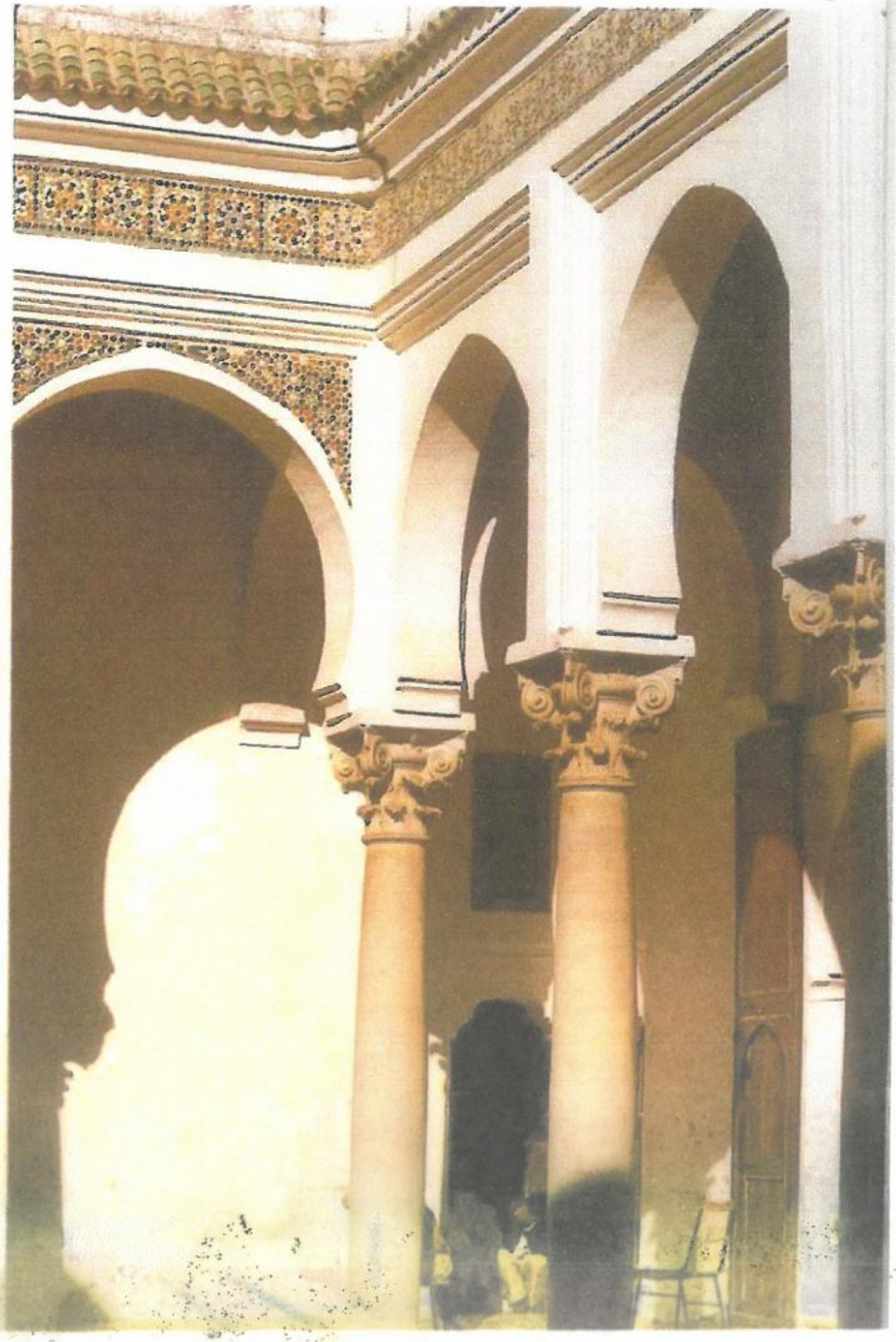
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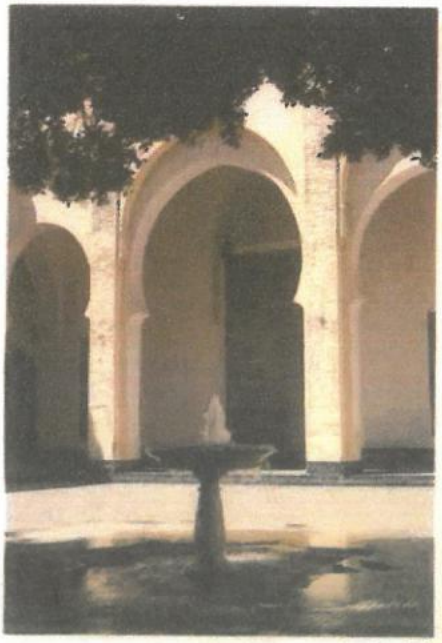
6. *Wrought iron window grille. Telouet castle.*
7. *Traditional arches in window of modern house. Tangier.*
8. *Zellij. Bab al Assa fountain. Tangier.*
9. *18th century columns and zellij in Sultan's palace. Tangier.*
10. *Fountain in courtyard of Dar Batha. Fez.*

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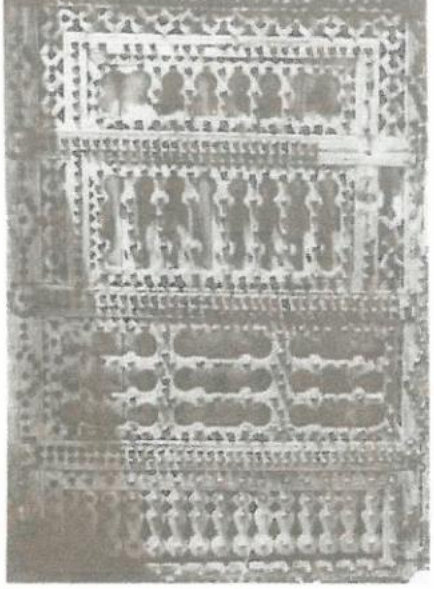


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current of architectural inspiration ran sometimes stronger in Andalusia, sometimes in Morocco. On the Spanish shore the superb eighth century mosque of Cordoba is one of the most satisfying buildings in the Islamic world, while the relatively late, 14th century palace of the Alhambra is a sumptuous example of the elegant decorative techniques of western Islam. It was a Moroccan sultan, however, who in the 12th century provided Seville with the beautiful minaret of the Giralda while building the companion minarets of the Tour Hasan in Rabat and the Kutubiya in Marrakesh.

At the end of the 15th century the Muslims of Granada withdrew to Morocco, especially to Fez, and Morocco alone became the torch bearer of the architectural tradition which had been elaborated in the two realms. Her cities were enriched by the skills of craftsmen who had fled from Spain and who made the 16th century a late high water mark in Moroccan architecture, producing especially the Ben Yusuf medersa, Badi palace and Saadian tombs in Marrakesh.

Over the past few years Morocco's historic buildings have been extensively restored and work is continuing today. They are remarkable for the skill which combined a number of rich, ornate decorative arts in an harmonious whole. The basic concept of the building was similar whatever its purpose. Rooms were arranged around a central courtyard in which the play of sunlight, reflected on glazed tiles and on water splashing from a marble fountain, was an essential feature. The walls around the courtyard were decorated with *zellijs*, glazed mosaic tiles in a variety of colours, arranged in a dado rising to about the height of a man, the tiles were often topped with a border of calligraphy worked in glazed ceramic excised from a terracotta background thus left unglazed.

Above the tile dado intricately carved stucco clothed the walls in complex patterns of swirling arabesques, geometric designs and calligraphy, and lined the interiors of domes with a cascade of incised stalactites. In monumental buildings the stucco panels were crowned by heavily carved, almost black cedar wood lintels, panels and corbels reaching up to the roof where a border of green glazed tiles closed the view.

Columns of marble with finely carved capitals, or cased in ceramic mosaics, often supported a balcony running around the courtyard at upper floor level. The courtyard floor was also covered in glazed tiles, of a simpler design and colouring to the wall dadoes, or with marble. The sixteenth century commerce which traded Moroccan sugar weight for weight with Italian marble certainly gave more long-term pleasure at the Moroccan end of the route.

The medersas (colleges) built in this style from the 13th to 17th centuries are perhaps the most exquisite of Moroccan monuments. They group students' rooms around a central courtyard in a plan which recalls the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge (though Fez is a far older university than these); the medersa courtyard however are more intimate, more colourful, more closely attuned to the hot sunshine of the Maghreb.

The exuberant decoration of these interior courtyards comes as a complete surprise to the visitor penetrating from without. A walk along the old alleyways of Fez or Marrakesh does not immediately reveal a mansion or medersa, nor even a *funduq* (inn) or a mosque. The exterior of Moroccan buildings was discreet and their plain walls made no show of the wealth within. The entrance to a private house usually involved a quick double turn which hid any view into the courtyard from the passer-by in the street.

Only occasionally does the fine craftsmanship of *zellijs*, carved cedar wood or sculpted stone appear in public. The public fountains in the old city streets with their mosaic tiles, cedar lintels and glazed tile roofs are an obvious example. While superb sculpted stonework appears in monumental gateways and medieval minarets, the latter were embellished with a different design on each face, incorporating interlacing arches and lozenges, sometimes picked out with blue or green glazed tiles.

Such buildings, religious or secular, depended on wealthy, generally royal patronage. Morocco was fortunate in the number of its open-handed rulers, such as the 14th century Sultan Abou Inan who, on being shown the accounts for his medersa in Fez, paused to recover his breath, then remarked philosophically: 'An expensive thing which is beautiful is not expensive; one cannot pay too much for a thing which pleases.'

In recent years traditional decorative crafts have again been given a great impetus by royal patronage, beginning with the construction, completed in 1971, of the mausoleum of King Mohammed V. This elegant mausoleum, close beside the Hasan mosque in Rabat, is extremely richly decorated inside and out and has been described as a masterpiece of traditional Moroccan art. The long years of its construction led to the revival of craft workshops in all the old cities; the apprentices trained at that time have since been able to make a significant contribution in the decoration of public and private buildings throughout the land.

Traditional arts have been actively encouraged by King Hasan II who has employed large numbers of craftsmen on the construction and renovation of royal palaces in Rabat, Casablanca, Fez, Marrakesh and Ifrane. So minutely detailed is

1. Carved wooden doorway, Telouet castle.
2. Excised glazed inscription on terracotta tiles, Ben Yusuf Medersa, Marrakesh.
Opposite page: Ultra modern villa, Casablanca. Such houses usually include a traditional 'Moroccan room!'

Photographs: Topham/Kay

their task that, for the restoration of *zellijs* in the palace of Marrakesh alone, 80 craftsmen were employed for 7 months. In that time they laid 12½ million individual pieces of ceramic mosaic. The experience which such craftsmen have gained has enabled some of them to find work in other Islamic countries, while others have been employed on buildings commissioned in Morocco by owners from the Middle East.

While palaces, hotels and public buildings all have their traditional reception rooms, private domestic architecture has not been left behind in the trend towards the traditional. At first sight this may seem unexpected for in recent years the taste in house design has undergone a total revolution in Morocco. Today's well-to-do home builder dreams not of a secretive, enclosed town house turned in on its courtyard as in his grandfather's day, but of an open sunny villa set in a flower-filled garden in the suburbs, with as futuristic an exterior as his architect can devise. Such houses, of white washed concrete, exploit curves and turrets, terraces and balconies to provide originality. Family life there definitely looks out onto the garden.

And yet, more often than not, entertaining centres on the 'Moroccan room'. Guests may be greeted in a western-style drawing room, seated in deep armchairs, their glasses perched on coffee tables. But when the meal is announced they are ushered into the traditional salon, the *piece de resistance* of the house. Here the walls are plastered with decorated stucco sculpted in traditional designs. The ceilings may also be adorned in the same way, or may be of painted woodwork. Guests sit on long benches covered with brightly coloured cushions, and lean forward to eat from low, circular tables. The most original of such rooms which I have visited was in a modern house built like a mushroom, its main living area cantilevered out from a central 'stem' in which was sited a circular 'Moroccan room'.

The Moroccan room is the owner's pride and joy, and well it may be for the labour and skill which go to its creation are almost unbelievable. This work has recently been described in detail by Andre Paccard in *Le Maroc et l'artisanat traditionel islamique dans l'architecture;* this French architect worked in Morocco for ten years to produce his richly illustrated account of every aspect of traditional building crafts.

The stucco, for instance, is applied in a smooth plaster layer to the walls. When it has hardened slightly the design is traced with the aid of a compass by a specialist who needs to be a true artist. He draws endlessly repeated, often very complex motifs, each of which must be true to his original design based on squares, triangles, circles, polygons enriched perhaps with stylised flowers, almonds, fircones, scallop shells, stars etc.



Craftsmen then laboriously sculpt this plaster, dampening the surface again if it becomes too hard to work. Their task is at its most back-breaking when they are sculpting ceilings, working above their heads. The stucco work is sometimes finished by picking out the elements of the design in colour, gold, green or blue. In Marrakesh the stucco acquires a slightly pink colour from contact with the local red clay.

The *zellijs* are, if anything, even more time-consuming to produce. First clay tiles 10cm square are prepared, baked then coated with a coloured glaze. The colours are produced by grinding together different ingredients to powder which is then mixed with water (e.g. zinc, lead and sand gives white; Casablanca stones, lead and sand gives blue). The glazed tiles are baked again at 800° above a fire fed with olive stones. They must then be cut into a myriad of small pieces of all shapes and sizes, which will be fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle to create an harmonious whole.

The designs for the pieces are traced in ink on the tiles and chipped out with a hammer with flattened ends. Each piece is filed smooth and stored according to colour and shape (of which there can be more than a hundred choices). The pattern is built up by laying the pieces of mosaic face down on the flat ground and fitting them together to form a panel. Cement and mortar are then poured over the back of them to hold them in place and, once set, the whole panel is lifted and mortared to the wall. Joins between the separate panels have to be carefully matched. An infinite number of designs may be contrived from these pieces shaped as lozenges, squares, stars, triangles, crescents and so forth.

The oldest *zellijs* were limited to fairly simple, sombre colours, whites, greens and blues (their name probably comes from the Spanish *azulejo,* meaning tile, from the word for blue). Then other colours were added — turquoise, yellow, black and brown. Modern *zellijs* often have brighter colours than the old ones and include a new colour, red. But the patterns in which they are laid faithfully reflect the traditional ones.

Such complex tasks are slow to execute and high of cost. The effect in a modern room which lacks the play of light and water can also at times seem heavy and over ornate. But today's housebuilders, like Sultan Abou Inan of old, feel it to be worth while. Their room is a source of pride and they have the satisfactioin of having fulfilled their King's request to encourage the traditional arts; with the 'Moroccan room' they have played their part. ■

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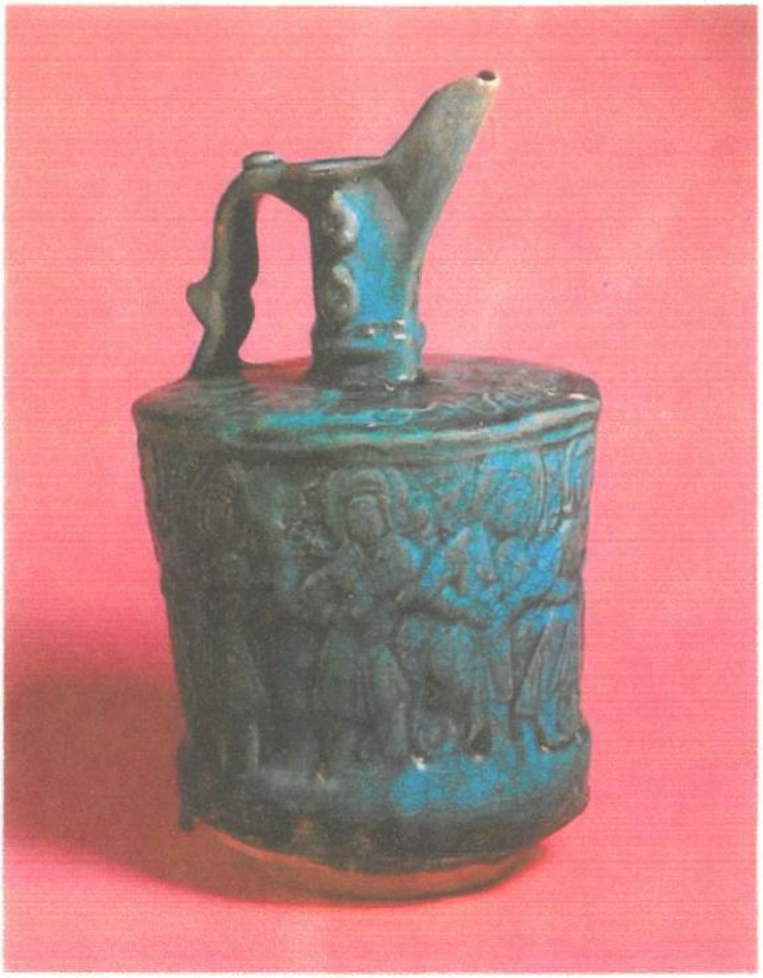
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Islamic Nishabar pitcher. 10/11 century AD. In fair condition with ten dancers and Kofic inscription in relief. Height 30cm. Width 17cm

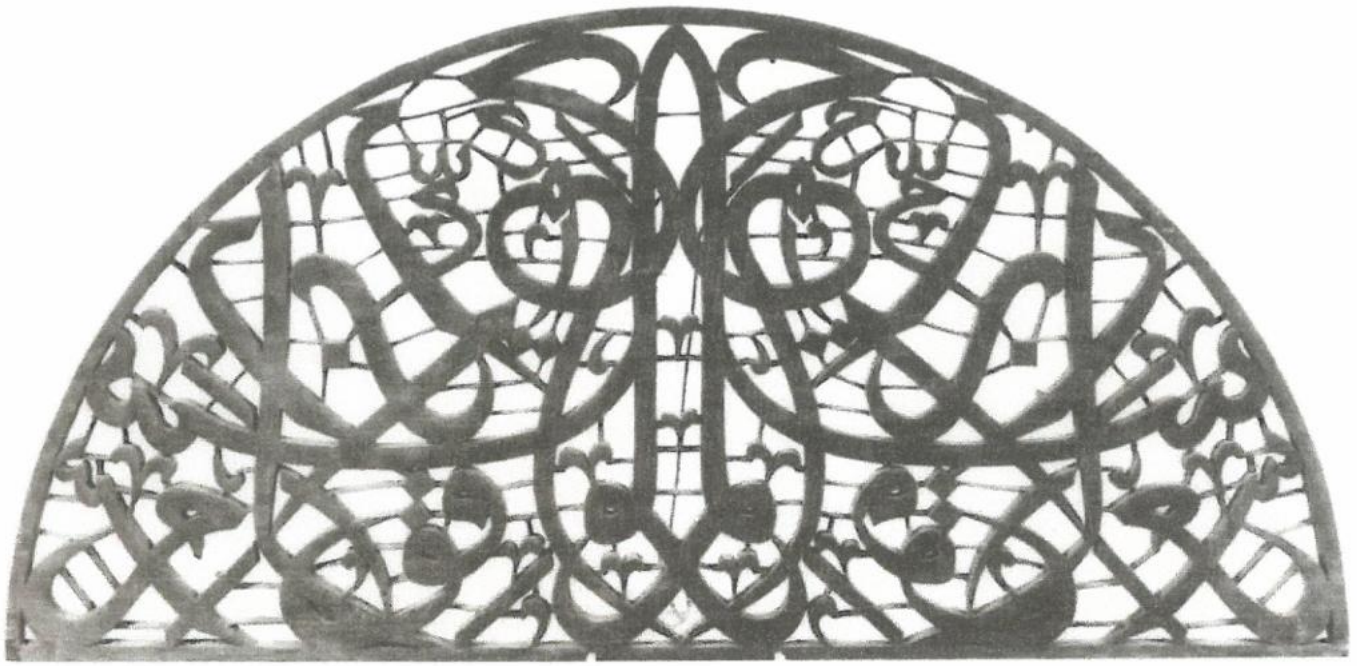
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1

Islamic Arts in Malaysia

Othman Bin Mohammed Yatim

Studies of the Islamic arts in Malaysia have just begun although Islam came to Malaysia nearly seven hundred years ago.[1] This lag is due to the paucity of archaeological and historical traces of Islamic works of art in Malaysia — especially as compared with the situation in other non-Arab countries such as Spain, Turkey, Pakistan and India, where numerous, well-maintained Muslim monuments attest to the past and present of Islamic influence.

Although early Indian, Chinese and Arab writings affirm that Islam reached various parts of Malaysia as early as the 9th century, the exact areas where the religion first took hold have not yet been ascertained. Even the major questions as to when, how and from where Islam came to Malaysia have still not be resolved.[2] The absence of Islamic architectural and structural remains in Malaysia can (perhaps at the risk of sounding apologetic) be explained by three main factors — environment, history and the teachings of Islam itself.

The fact that, in the past, most buildings were constructed of wood — an abundantly available material — meant, however, that in Malaysia's humid tropical climate, such structures soon perished. Furthermore, during the area's successive colonizations by various European powers (beginning with Portugal's capture of Malacca in 1511 A.D.)[3], many palaces and mosques were dismantled[4] and their stones were used for the erection of a fortress. Parts of this fortification still stand in Malacca, serving as a reminder of the struggle on the part of Malaysia's Muslims to defend their religion.



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Another historical factor which must be mentioned is that because of its location the Malay Peninsula served as an entrepôt for both maritime and overland trade between the Near East, India and the Far East and thus naturally became a meeting place for Muslim traders and Islamic missionaries. Through the work of these dedicated missionaries, Islam spread widely not only in Malaysia but also to neighbouring countries such as Indonesia, especially during the early 15th century, when the Malacca Sultanate was at the height of its power and prosperity. When, due to pressures from the Portugese, Malacca lost favour among Muslim traders as an entrepôt, its role as a centre for Islamic studies and culture was taken over by Acheh, located on Indonesia's island of Sumatra.

Furthermore, the teachings of Islam have been regarded as one of the factors responsible for the lack of material testimonies to the strength of this religion in Malaysia, despite the fact that, prior to European encroachment on the region, Malacca played a key role as

an Islamic centre. Islam does not oblige a believer to idolize something in order to prove his faith and there is no necessity to have a proper building for the performance of prayers. What is of the utmost importance is the sincerity of religious commitment and belief. In contrast, the implantation of Buddhism in Malaysia a few centuries earlier than Islam is attested to by the presence of several temples and shrines in Kedah, one of Malaysia's northern states. Further proof of the importance of religious structures in the Hindu and Buddhist faiths are similar temples to be found on the island of Java, and in the area of Indochina.

Islamic Art in Malaysia — Specific Features

In general terms, Islamic art means "all the arts of the Muslims peoples, whether those arts be religious or non-religious".[5] Thus, any artifact that has been used or is still being used by Muslims can be regarded as Islamic art.[6] But in this paper the concept of Islamic art will be confined to objects which used the Arabic script, either as the main motif or for unspecific reasons. In fact, the study of Islamic calligraphy has been regarded as an "essential preliminary to any truly penetrating study of Islamic art".[7] Significantly, the same author, David Talbot Rice, comments that the prime unifying bond that linked Muslims together, regardless of linguistic and racial differences, is the "adoption of the Arabic script which, in one or another of its forms, became more than anything else the factor which made the art of the Islamic world into a distinctive style, the distribution of which coincided with the bounds of the faith".[8] Indeed, "the Arabic spirit is present everywhere in the world of Islam, whatever mother tongue this or that Muslim people may use. Everywhere the Quran is quoted in Arabic and, just as the everyday life of a Muslim is punctuated by Quranic formulae, his environment — the mosque, the house, the place of work — is decorated with inscriptions whose text is usually taken from the Sacred Book".[9] Artifacts not having Arabic script as decoration will also be discussed in cases where they have a connection with religious activities or themselves have a religious significance.

Islamic art in Malaysia can be



3

divided into four main categories — inscribed stones, woodwork, metalwork and textiles.

The Inscribed Stones

(a) Batu Bersurat Trengganu (Trengganu Stone)

The earliest inscribed stone discovered in Malaysia is the "Trengganu Stone" dating back to 702 AH (1303 A.D.) In 1902, following a major flood, it was found half-buried on a bank of the Tersat River, near Kuala Brang, about 32 km inland from Kuala Trengganu.

The inscription is in the Malay language written in Arabic characters. It is the oldest Malay inscription in Arabic script as yet discovered in Malaysia and the earliest confirmation of Islam being the official religion of the ruler of the Malay Kingdom.

The inscription proclaims Islam as the state's official religion and promulgates Muslim law relating to offences, wantonness and the giving of false evidence. It aso sets forth specific punishments for law-breakers of various social ranks. Part of the stone had been broken off before it was discovered and thus a section of the inscription is missing.[10]

(b) Gravestones or Grave markers

The other type of inscribed stones discovered in Malaysia are tombstones or grave markers, which have been found in the states of Perlis, Kedah and Perak in the northern areas as well as in Malacca and Johore in the south. On the east coast of Malaysia, such tombstones are found only in the states of Pahang and Kelantan.

These tombstones are unique in the sense that not only was their design borrowed during the 15th to 18th centuries from India and Indonesia, but also that they testify to the important role played in Malaysia's history by the Achenese of Indonesia. Reputed to have been brought by Gujeratee traders from Cambay in southern India to Acheh, Indonesia, these stones were later imported to Malaysia by Indonesian merchants. Beautifully carved and ornamented with Kufic script, such tombstones have been found marking only the graves of rulers

44 ▶

1. Window panel-Wood carving with the Arabic inscription
2. Gold coin of Sultan Abdul Jalil, Johore.
3. Window panel, wood carving with the Arabic inscription.
4. Masjid Kampung Laut, the oldest mosque in Malaysia
Photographs: Negara Museum.



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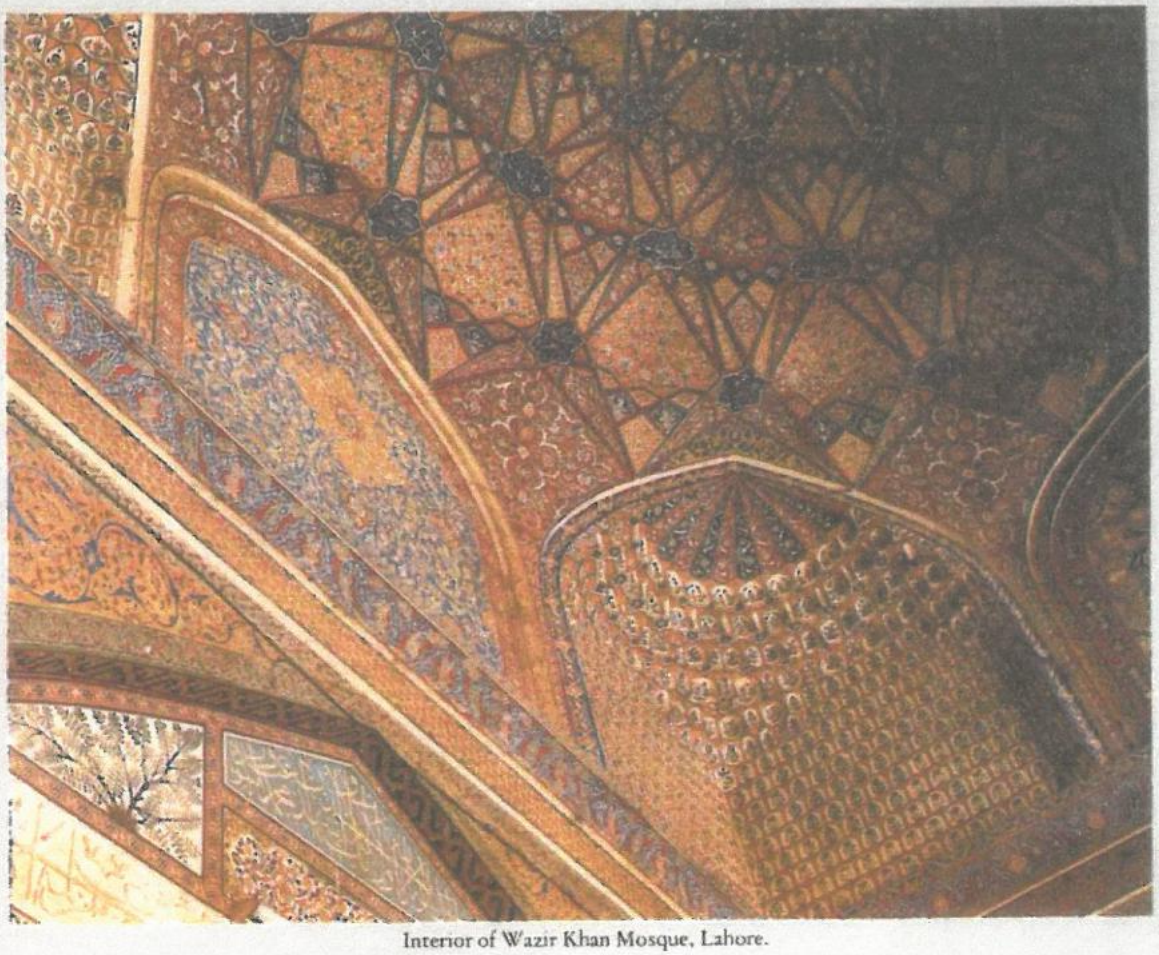
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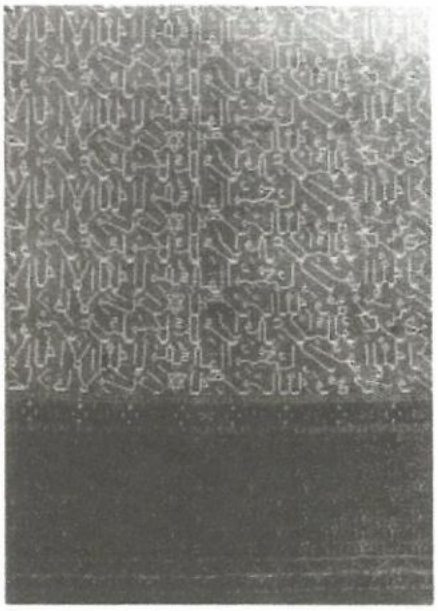
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and local chieftains. Undoubtedly their expense was beyond the reach of ordinary people. Not all the tombstones brought into Malaysia were through trade, the tombstones of the royal family in the state of Pahang were the exception, having been sent on the specific instructions of Acheh's ruler.[11]

The earlierst examples of such tombstones still reflect an Indian influence, with the Buddhist lotus a favourite motif combined with floral and sometimes pseudo-Kufic elements.

Woodwork

Since wood is abundant in Malaysia most of the earliest building, both religious and non-religious, was constructed in wood. But in this paper concern is limited to religious building especially of mosques and associated objects.

Mosque architecture has always been the main focus of Islamic art and it still occupies a central position in the complex of religious and artistic activities of Muslims the world over. An institution where Muslims gather together to widen their religious knowledge, the mosque is also a place where problems faced by Muslims in the region are discussed. Thus, the mosque has traditionally been regarded as a meeting place that unites believers.

With the development of more structured institutions in Malaysia to deal with the daily administration of the country, including religious affairs, the traditional functions and role of the mosque is gradually diminishing. Now, it is used only five times daily by Muslims to perform their obligatory prayers. It is also crowded twice a year when the Muslims perform their *Idil Fitr* and *Idil Adha* prayers. Occasionally it is utilized for other religious ceremonies, such as *Maulid il Nabi*, celebrating the Prophet Mohammad's birthday.

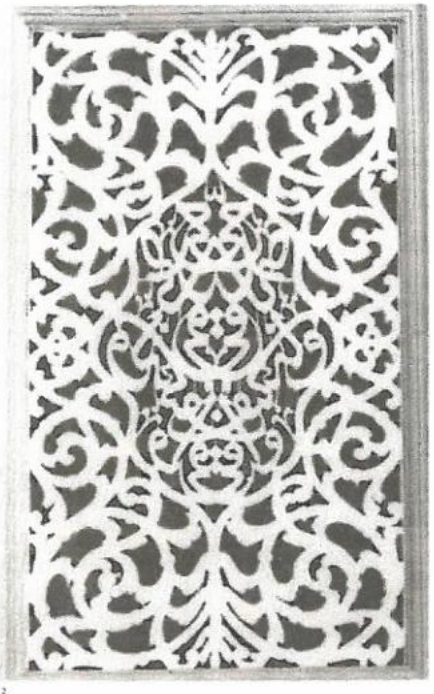
The mosque is not only a centre for religious and cultural activities but the building itself is the symbol of Muslim knowledge and faith. It is a form of architecture with its own characteristics. Almost every aspect of a mosque, ranging from its minaret and its dome or roof, to its carpeted floor, is imbued not only with meaning but also a blend of artistic beauty and functional utility demonstrating an amazing imagination and inventiveness on the part of early Muslim architects. As one writer has commented, "a considerable number of elements that had originally a structural meaning were transformed into purely decorative devices and as such played a part in vast ornamental compositions."[12]

A number of Malaysian scholars have made various attempts to precisely define the meaning, philosophy and significance of decoration in Malaysia's early mosques. In fact, philosophical and mystical reasons derived from Islamic philosophy and mysticism have been advanced to explain the key role played by decoration in Islamic art.

Islam came to Malaysia at least seven hundred years ago, and we know that in 1303 A.D. the ruler of Trengganu was a Muslim. There is, however, no mosque that has survived from that period, although a few very old wooden mosques can still be seen on the east coast of Malaysia. The oldest of these is believed to be the Kampong Laut Mosque,[13] situated about 1.6 km upstream from Kota Bharu, in the state of Kelantan. Kampong Laut is now about 6 km from the sea, and near to the Kelantan river but four centuries ago the coastline may have run close to it. There is a strong local tradition that this old mosque was built by Muslims who came from the sea. After building it, they then sailed on to the island of Java and constructed a similar mosque at Demak, which is also considered to be one of the oldest mosques in Indonesia. While mosques in the Kelantan and Trengganu region show an Indonesian influence, early mosques in the state of Malacca reflect a combination of the Indonesian and Chinese influences.



2



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1. Kain Lemar with the Arabic inscription.
2. Gantang, used for measuring rice.
3. Wood panel with the Arabic inscription.
4. Wooden mimbar from a mosque in Trengganu.
5. Masjid Trengkera, Melaka which shows Indonesian and Chinese influences.
Photographs: Negara Museum.

The oldest mosque in Malacca is the Trengkera Mosque built in 1728 A.D. (1141 AH).

The configuration of early mosques in Malaysia is usually similar to that of the local ruler's palace since traditionally, and even today, the rulers are patrons of Islam in every Malaysian state.

Throughout most of the Malay Peninsula, mosques generally reflect the traditional Malay style of architecture, in that their roof is *meru*-shaped. Composed of three to five tiers, this type of roof is very wide at the base and gradually narrows towards the peak. Its design is particularly suitable for the tropical climate of the Malay Peninsula since rain will flow down its slopes easily and thus not cause



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erosion to building materials such as wooden pillars. Furthermore, this particular form has a special philosophical significance: its wide base represents the masses while the uppermost tier represents the climax of one's struggle towards achieving the blessing of Allah. (A number of Orientalists believe that this type of roof reflects Hindu-Buddhist influence based on a relief from one of the *Chandis* in Jago, Sumatra which has a similar tyape of roof.)

The function of the panel inserted between the tiers of the roof is for ventillation during the hot season and to prevent rain from entering the mosque during the rainy season. The window panels are normally embellished with Quranic passages making them not only functional but beautiful. As noted by one scholar "Islamic writing appears as an inescapable motif of Islamic architecture".[14]

One particular characteristic that marks Malaysia's early mosques is the customary absence of a minaret and *mihrab* (a niche indicating the direction of Mecca). Occasionally, there is a minaret, from which Muslims are called to prayer, but it stands at quite a distance from the mosque itself.

Other objects associated with Malaysian mosques are the *mimbar*, a platform where the imam stands when he reads the *khuthah* (sermon) and the *rehal*, a support for the Quran. Customarily both the *mimbar* and the *rehal* are beautifully carved with floral patterns and Arabic inscriptins.

With British intervention in the affairs of the Malay states during



5

the 19th century another type of mosque architecture was introduced in Malaysia, especially in the states of Kedah, Penang, Perak and Selanagor. The new style, commonly called "Moorish", was utilized not only in building mosques but also in designing various pubic buildings during that period, such as the Secretariat building in the state of Selangor and the Headquarters of the Malayan Railways. Buildings in a similar style can also be seen in the southern part of India.

Metal Work

The origins of Islamic metal work can be traced to Byzantium and Persia.[15] But the history of its development in Malaysia has as yet not been clearly ascertained. It is possible, however, that a first century A.D. Dong Son dagger, from the Gulf of Tonkin in Indo-China or South Vietnam, provided the prototype for later arms. The *kris* is by far the most important of the weapons used by the Malay as well as the Indonesian people and it is no wonder that it usually commands the attention of those who wish to study the armourer's art in this region. The Malay *kris* was probably in general use in the northern Malay Kingdoms prior to the founding of the Malacca Sultanate in about 1400 A.D. and by the end of the fifteenth century A.D., the *kris* had been adopted throughout the Malay-speaking region, including some parts of the Philippines.[16]

With the introduction and spread of Islam in the Malay Peninsula, the ornamentation of the *kris* was altered as quotations from the Quran in Arabic script were used to embellish the blade and, in some cases, the name of the owner was also inscribed.

Traditionally, the *kris* served not only as part of the personal adornment of its wearer, but was also a symbol of his authority. Before the end of the nineteenth century, however, the *kris* and other Malay weapons,[17] ceased to have any aggressive usage and large numbers of them were melted down or allowed to rust away. Today it is



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seldom possible to find an old Malay *kris* of fine workmanship except in a ruler's residence or in one of Malaysia's museums.

Other types of metalwork typical of Malaysian fabrication are the bronze pail used in the early mosques on the east coast of Malaysia and the *qantang* measure, a receptacle for measuring rice which is believed to have originated in Brunei. Arabic script invariably ornaments these pails and the *qantang*.

Textiles

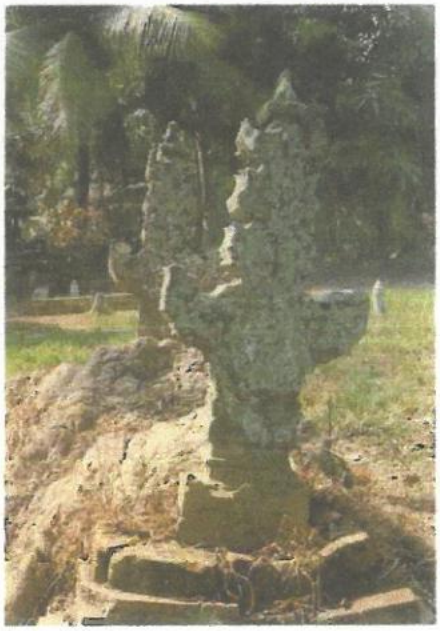
The Islamic world was noted for the creation of remarkable decorative textiles, and many records testify that during the Middle Ages, Muslim weavers exported textiles to non-Islamic areas and also supplied patterned silks to Europe[18]. However, as is the case with metal work, the exact time when the technology of textile-making was introduced in Malaysia, has not yet been definitely established. The type of textile most popular with Muslims on the east coast of Malaysia is called *kain lemar*. In weaving it a floral pattern is combined with the repetitive inscription, "There is no God but Allah and Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah".

The application of Arabic script to textiles was not limited only to *kain lemar*, it was used also on canopies belonging to Muslims in the coastal regions of Sabah and Sarawak. The presence of Arabic script not only appealed to the taste of Malaysia's Muslims but it was also regarded as a means for invoking God's protection.

Other Islamic Art

(a) Islamic coins

Long before the advent of European powers to the country, the Malays already played an active role in the trade of the region. History has it that Sultan Muzafar Shah (1455-1459 A.D.) of Malacca and Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah (1623-1688 A.D.) of Johore, issued their own gold coins



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embellished with Arabic script.

(b) Combs

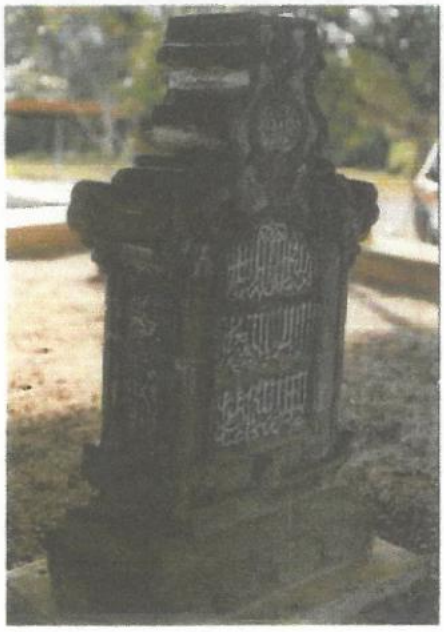
The Arabic script is also found on items of ordinary and daily use such as combs. Muslim women living in coastal areas such as Sabah and Sarawak until very recently used hair combs made of horn which were beautifully carved and also carried inscriptions in Arabic.

Islamic Art in Malaysia — Influence

The existence of a variety of types of Islamic art in Malaysia can be explained by the fact that the country is situated along the ancient East-West maritime trade route. Like the spread of Indian cultural influences to Southeast Asia before it, the introduction of Islam to the region can be largely attributed to maritime trade. Arab and Persian traders were known to have been living in some of the major southern ports of China, notably Canton, since at least the ninth century and in the Sung period (960-1368 A.D.) there was a lively trade between Arabia and the Malay archipelago.

With the rise of Islam, the Arab lands became a centre of empire, wealth, population and culture; they also became an important commercial market for the products of India, China and Southeast Asia. To a great extent, the Arabs acted as intermediaries between European merchants and other Asian traders and, like the earlier Indian traders, they were outstanding transmitters of culture.

As has been noted above, although a few trading colonies had been established along trade routes in the Malay Archipelago as early as



5

the seventh century, there was a decided increase in their number during the ninth and tenth centuries. It should be noted, however, that the Muslim traders — Arabs, Persians and Gujeratees — did not found colonies for their mother countries. The settlements were simply communities where traders could exchange goods, rest, resupply and await the changing monsoons, often requiring a delay of several months, before continuing their journeys. It was through these Muslim trading stations that the expansion of Islam was made possible, for it was to these settlements that Muslim missionaries came, particularly during the 13th century, to reinforce the faith of believers far from home. Eventually, by the early fourteenth century, Islamic influence became very pronounced and, during the following two centuries — especially in the period of the Malacca Sultanate — its spread was further accelerated. Today Islam is the official religion of Malaysia.

78 ▶

1. Tombstone of Sultan Abdul Jamil of Pahang.
2. Tombstone of Raja Fatimah of Pahang.
3. Comb, made of horn with Arabic inscription. Sarawak Museum.
4. Tombstone of one of the Acheh's warrior in Kedah.
5. Tombstone of Sultan Alauddin of Johor, 1477-1488.



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Collecting Coins for Pleasure and Investment

Saleem Shahed

Like so many other art treasures of the Islamic world, rare and historically important Islamic coins are scattered all over Europe and America, not so much as a result of the greed or artistic apetite of generations of Western colonists and Empire-builders but because, during that period, the Islamic people themselves neglected their own cultural heritage and were taking no pride in it. It is only after the attainment of independent nationhood, and aided by rapid economic progress and prosperity, that they are becoming more and more conscious of the worth of what they let go out of their land so easily.

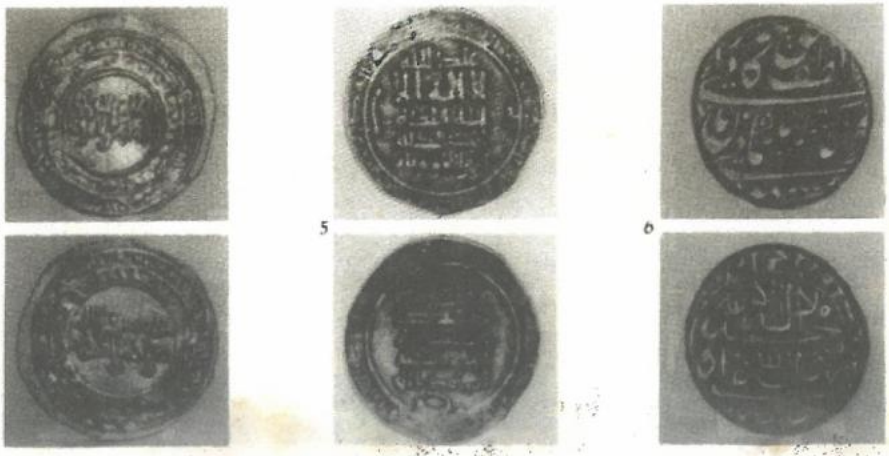
Important collections of Islamic coins now exist in Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo, Istanbul, Rabat and Tunis. But, inspite of UNESCO's efforts aimed at restoration or restitution of cultural properties to the countries of origin, there is little hope for the return of the very fine and precious collections of Islamic coins in the British Museum in London, the Bibliotheque Nationale Francaise in Paris, the American Numismatics Society in New York, the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad or the State Coins Cabinets in Berlin, Vienna and Copenhagen.

There are, however, still a very large number of important Islamic coins from private collections which are available in the market and can be freely bought — for pleasure, profit or investment — in the sales and auction rooms of Europe and America. Ancient and rare gold and silver coins are continuously increasing in value. They are sought by collectors for their rarity and beauty and by others as a hedge against inflation. Those chosen specifically for investment are, naturally, always the best quality available.

Spink's second floor coin room in King Street, St. James's, London SW1 is one of the best known centre for Islamic numismatics in the world. They deal in Islamic coins from the time of the Ummayadds upto the contemporary issues of the Muslim world of today. A very fine Bahri Mamluk Dinar (1) which was valued at £35 in 1970/71 and £85 in 1975/76, was sold at £750 in 1981/82. A Dinar of the Saljuq Sultan's of Rum, Anatolia (2) priced at £60 in 1970/71, rose in value to £150 in 1975/76 and £4,000 in 1981/82. An Egyptian Five Guinea the Ottoman Sultan 'Abd al-Aziz (3), one of the only 56 struck, was sold by Spinks for £250 in 2970/71, for £375 in 1975/76, but at a phenominal price of £7,500 in 1981/82.

Christies, who are next door to Spinks in King Street, St. James's, London SW1, in their sale of Ancient, Islamic, English and Foreign Coins, Medallions and Bank notes on 8th March this year, included a collection of 44 coins of the Fatimid dynasty in North Africa, Egypt and Syria and 60 more coins from other Islamic dynasties. They had for sale an az-Zahir (A.D.1020-1036) Dinar, al Mansuriyah, A.H.425 issued under the Hammadid governor al-Qa'id (4) of very fine and rare quality, valued at £300/340; a very scarce and fine Ubaydallah al-Mahdi (A.D.909-934) Dinar, al Mahdiyya A.H. (5) valued at only £160/180; and a very fine safavids, Suleiman II (A.H. 1163; A.D. Dec 1749-Jan.1750) Double Muhar Ashrafi, Mehshed (6) valued at £1,200/1,500.

Since 1978, specialised coin auctions have been a feature of weeks of Islamic sales, held regularly twice each year in Spring and Autumn, at Sotheby's, 34/35 New Bond Street, London W1A. Their sale of important Islamic Coins on 20th April, 1983 has been described as "unquestionably the



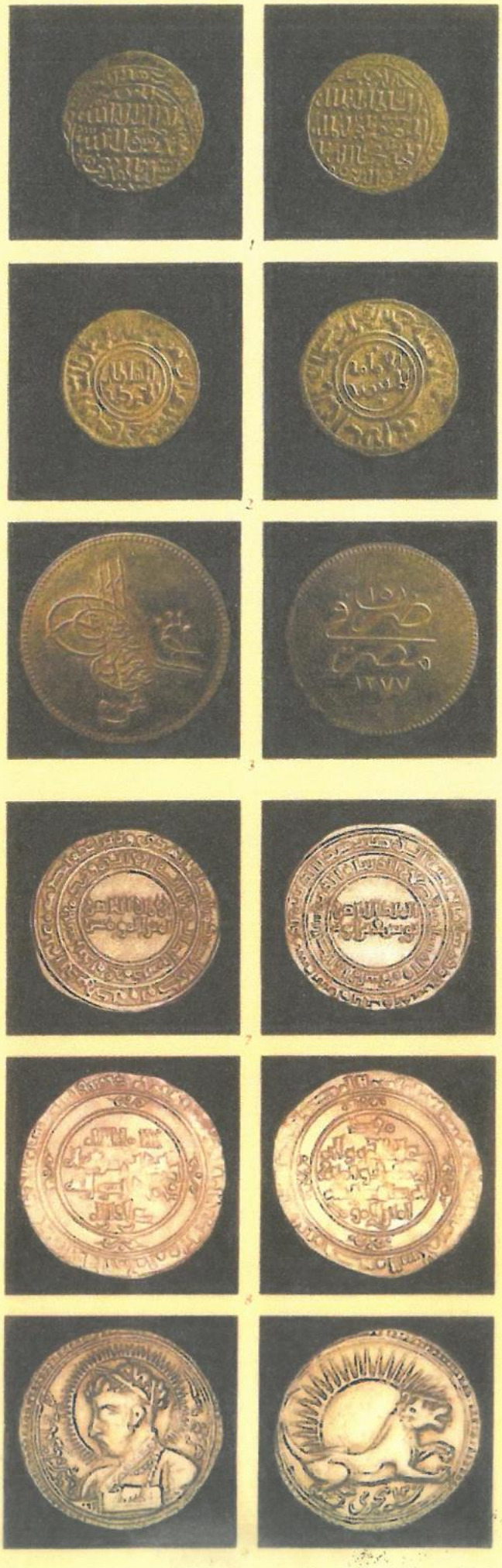
finest and most important sale of its kind ever to take place in London or elsewhere. Almost every coin is of great numismatic and historical interest and rarity. The span ranges from the earliest issues of the Ummayadds to modern times and from the farthest eastern outposts of Islamic rule under the Mongols to the most western regions of North Africa and Moorish Spain. Many of the pieces are unpublished and several types have never before been offered for public auction.

Great names and events of Islamic history reverberate through the catalogue of the sale, one of the greatest being that of Saladin, Sultan of the Saracens who fought the European Crusaders of the 12th. century in Palestine. A gold Ayyubid dinar struck by Saladin in Damascus in the year 583 A.H. (7) is one of only six known to exist and is thought to commemorate the Saracen's re-capture of Jerusalem in that year from the Crusaders, who had taken it 88 years before in 1099 A.D. The inscription on the coins is elegantly composed so that Saladin's 'laqab' rhymes with the titles he is given on the coin. The Saladin coin is estimated to fetch £7,000 to 10,000.

A dinar struck at Baghdad by the famous Fatimid partisan Arslan al-Basasiri in the year after he had taken over the city from the great Saljuq ruler Tughral Beg (8) is estimated to fetch £7,000 to £10,000. It must have been struck shortly before al-Basassiri was deserted by his followers at the end of the year 451 A.H. and was forced to flee the city. It is one of the two known coins of this kind.

A coin of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir (1014-1037 A.H., 1605-1627 A.D. (9) recorded as having been ordered by the Emperor to be "given to the honoured Amirs or most devoted servants and that they were to wear it respectfully on the sash of the turban or on the breast-front as a life-preserving amulet", is estimated to fetch £1,500 to £2,000.

There is total of 134 rare and fine coins in Sotheby's Islamic Sale (Spring 1983) all of which are of great historic interest and artistic value for the Muslim world. All such coins should be acquired by the national museums and art institutions of the Islamic world or by a Muslim citizen of any Islamic country who cares and takes pride in his or her Islamic heritage. Such sales and auctions are opportunities for investment, not for profit but in ones cultural heritage. ■



established a small industry.

Pile weaving is also reportedly done in the Tabuk area. I travelled there, but apart from some examples belonging to the Emir, I could not locate any other specimens. However, when I recently attended the opening of the exhibit of Saudi crafts in Colorado Springs, I met an army colonel who had been posted in Tabuk. At his house I found two shag pile rugs of unusual and attractive design which he had acquired in Tabuk from local people who said they had been made there.

The rug souks in Jeddah, Taif, and Riyadh are accessible, but one has to visit them repeatedly to have the good fortune of finding an unusual item. Few Westerners have the time or inclination to investigate the back alleys and the areas where trade is predominently local. You might find a desirable item in an unlikely place. The best of my contemporary coffee bean bags was hanging in a spice shop. My favourite rug from Asir was the dirty cushion of a part-time rug dealer in Taif who had no other Saudi-made things in his stock. Very few Bedouin or village weavings, except for some gaudy "tourist" items show up in the Jeddah rug souk, despite a proliferation of native jewelry, daggers, and coffee pots.

I found only one shop in Saudi Arabia, in Taif, that dealt primarily in native weavings, and most of their trade was with people of the area. The shop was in the old rug souk which, I have recently heard, has now been torn down for a roadway. The two half-brothers who ran the shop were of a very gentle disposition and were not only hospitable but helpful. I would leave with them some item I had bought elsewhere and they would look after it. They made their shop a home for me whenever I was in Taif.

In trying to get sufficient information to put together a book whose objective was to give a well-rounded picture of weaving and other representative crafts, I had no framework within which to present material other than the criteria I developed for myself as I found things. Visits to Bedouin tents, of course, made me better understand the use to which things I had seen or acquired were put. My Arabic was limited to a few polite expressions, key words, and numbers. On my trips, whenever possible, I would take an Arab friend with me but such companions were often not available.

I would carry objects with me in my car to show to knowledgeable Arabs, and seek from them information on their use, tribal origin and so forth. My inquiries were sometimes a source of amusement to my Arab friends. I had acquired a very long piece of worm cloth which culminated at one end in a profusion of long sashes and tassels. A Bedouin I encountered said he would show me how it was used, and got me to bend over. He folded the weaving over my back, and then started beating and prodding me with a stick, accompanied by uproarious, good-natured laughter. Fortunately I saw immediately that I was the butt of a joke, and laughed too. The weaving, of course, was too big for any camel. I then learned that it was used as a tent dividing wall and that the sashes would cascade over the front tent rope.

I became reasonably sure of regional identifications of weavings. The primary tribal distinction among Beduin weavings was most often colour. The Utaybah favoured red; the Asman, orange, often dyed with Henna. Weavings from the Nejd were usually tighter and finer, but fine weavings might come from any location. After accumulating many, I would carry colour photographs of all of them with me and at every opportunity would attempt to certify their tribal origin. This necessitated an almost statistical approach. If the Arab to whom I showed the picture liked it and thought I liked it too, he was likely to say that it was from his tribe. So I would have to ask as many different people as possible, discounting dubious identifications. When I had finally gained enough information, I felt more confident in asking more specific questions. In my book, I feel certain of most regional identifications, but, perhaps, of only half the tribal attributions. I hope that more work is done in this area before such information is completely lost. Although many Arabs are still proud of their tribal origins they are relocating so often, and the entire country is changing so quickly that I am afraid precise delineations, if they ever were precise, well never be determined.

The most frequently found and best known weavings in Saudi Arabia are those called Bedouin, although often these have actually been woven by villagers rather than Bedouin. They are almost always warp-faced weavings done on ground looms, seldom in wider than thirty inches strips. The ground loom was simple to unstake, roll up, and carry on the nomadic migrations. The larger weavings, such as tent cloth which might be over fifty feet long, were usually done in the summer when the Bedouin would be forced to camp near water. The tents were normally made of black goat hair, and since goats are usual to villages and towns, this serves as a further indication that tent weaving was most likely performed during long encamments or by villagers. Intricate work such as camel bags, if not acquired in a village or town, might be done at any time, as was most dress embroidery. The weavings of the Bedouin are tough and durable, and demanded very hard work from the women who made them. Collectors and weavers in the United States mared at the variety of techniques represented in the tassels and ornamentation of Bedouin weaving.

The weavings of the mountain area of Asir, in the southwest, reflect its settled economy of farming and sheepherding. The design motifs are quite diverse and the only frequently found patters are stripes across the narrow dimension as opposed to the lengthwise stripes typical of the Bedouin. The fiber is almost always soft wool, in thick yarn, and tapestry woven. The colours are pleasant, except for the new ones which are too often gaudy. All examples found were rugs made for use in the home and as donkey saddle bags. Most pieces were made of two strips up to thirty inches wide, with matching patterns.

The most intricate flat weavings I found were twill rugs which I acquired in Hofuf and Riyadh. They were light in weight and were probably used as blankets or coverings. These were predominently red and had cross-bands with tapestry-woven patterns in several colours. Again, the woven strips seldom reached a thirty inch width and were usually sewn together in pairs. All examples were of soft, fine wool. These were almost certainly town-made pieces since twill weaving is most easily done on four-harness looms, and therefore unlikely to have been made by nomadic people. Some, I am convinced, were made in Al Hasa where four-

THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Michael Darby

In spite of the long and widely held view that the Victorian period was an artistic melting pot in which many different styles struggled to impress themselves on public taste, the nature of many of these influences still requires to be analysed. Those categories which have been established, 'gothic', 'classic', 'aesthetic', or even 'rogue', for example, succeed in providing a contextual framework which embraces many of the disparate strands in 19th century art, but there remain others which have not been adequately considered, perhaps because no classification exists to include them. The influence of Islamic art on Victorian architecture and design is, I believe, a case in point, the abstract, conceptual and experimental concerns engenedered by the Islamic experience have proved difficult to interpret, and much of what was built has now been demolished. Consequently, when Alistair Duncan and the Trustees of the World of Islam Festival Trust invited me to organise an exhibition on this theme at Leighton House this summer I accepted gladly.

The Islamic Perspective sets out to examine in detail a short period, essentially the twenty five years between 1830 and 1855, when Islamic art became the focus of attention of a small group of architects who believed that its study could revolutionise contemporary standards of design. The best known member of the group is undoubtedly Owen Jones (1809-1874), the author of the *Grammar of Ornament* (1856), and it is to his designs and philosophies that a large part of the exhibition is devoted. But, Victorian attitudes cannot be properly understood if viewed in isolation. The influence of Islamic art on British architecture and decorative art can be traced back to the formation of the Levant Company in 1581, and even earlier, and it is to this period that the first part of the exhibition is devoted.

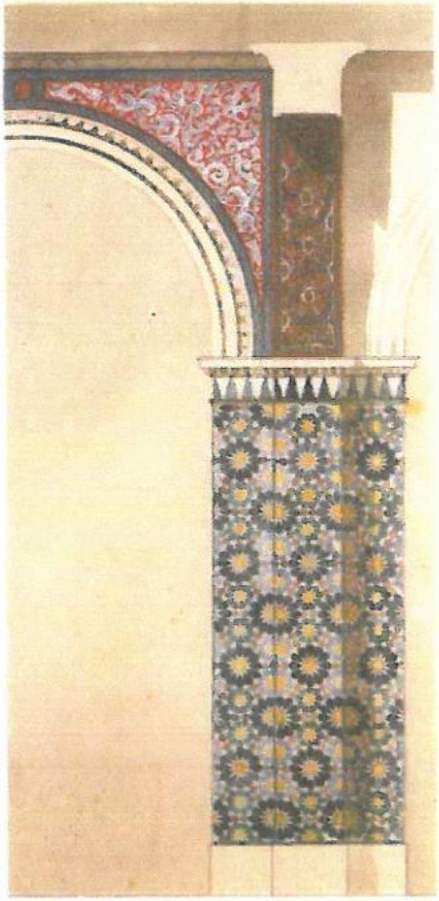
Perhaps the most tangible evidence of early influence was the setting up of many coffee houses and Turkish baths from the 17th century. John Strype, when revising Stowe's *Survey of London* (1720), noticed a Turkish bath, which had opened off Newgate Street in 1679, as a 'neat contrived building after the Turkish mode ... much resorted into for Sweating, being found very good for aches, etc.', and Bryant Lillywhite, *London Signs* (1972), records the presence of more than one hundred 'Turk's Head', and 'Sultan's Head' coffee houses and inns in London before 1850. The first object in the exhibition is a design by J.H. Muntz for the 'Alhambra' in Kew Gardens, which was eventually built by Sir William Chambers for Frederick, Prince of Wales, in 1758. Like so many of the 'Turkish tents', 'Mosques' and other exotic structures which adorned country house parks in the 18th century, this has now disappeared. These insubstantial buildings establish clearly the nature of interest in Islamic architecture at this time, concerns of silhouette and picturesque quality which subsequently led to the design of John Nash's Royal Pavilion at Brighton and Samuel Cockerell's 'Moghul' Sezincote House in Gloucestershire.

John Martin did a series of engravings of Sezincote shortly after it was completed, and perhaps this experience may have influenced him in his later work. Many of his large Biblical paintings like that depicting the Fall of Nineveh certainly contain 'Moghul' elements, but are chiefly interesting for revealing how little serious information about Near Eastern architecture was available for reference in the early years of the century. William Murphy's large volume of architectural drawings, *The Arabian Antiquities of Spain* (1815), pretends to careful scholarship and great accuracy, but as Richard Ford quickly pointed out 'it is difficult to believe that Murphy was even ever on the spot ... the plates ... are beneath criticism for their gross inaccuracy'.

The discovery and publication of so many of the ancient Egyptian sites in the early 19th century inevitably persuaded many architects to extend their Grand Tours to include journeys down the Nile. Most stopped in Cairo, and it was apparently there that the first real awakening of interest in Islamic architecture took place. Cairene buildings were not only visually attractive but they were domestic, rather than colossal, in scale, and that must have added to their appeal, for it was by building houses rather than enormous monuments that most architects made their living. Furthermore, such buildings had not been the subject of previous study. The French architect Pascal Coste, whose meticulous drawings of mosques and Cairene houses were subsequently bought by the Scottish Egyptologist Robert Hay, adheres to the same pattern of meticulous draughtsmanship and careful observation which distinguishes many 18th century books devoted to Classical ruins.

But, perhaps the most important element in this burgeoning interest in Islamic buildings, was their bright polychromy. Discoveries of traces of colour on the Greek temples increasingly fascinated a new generation of young architects who

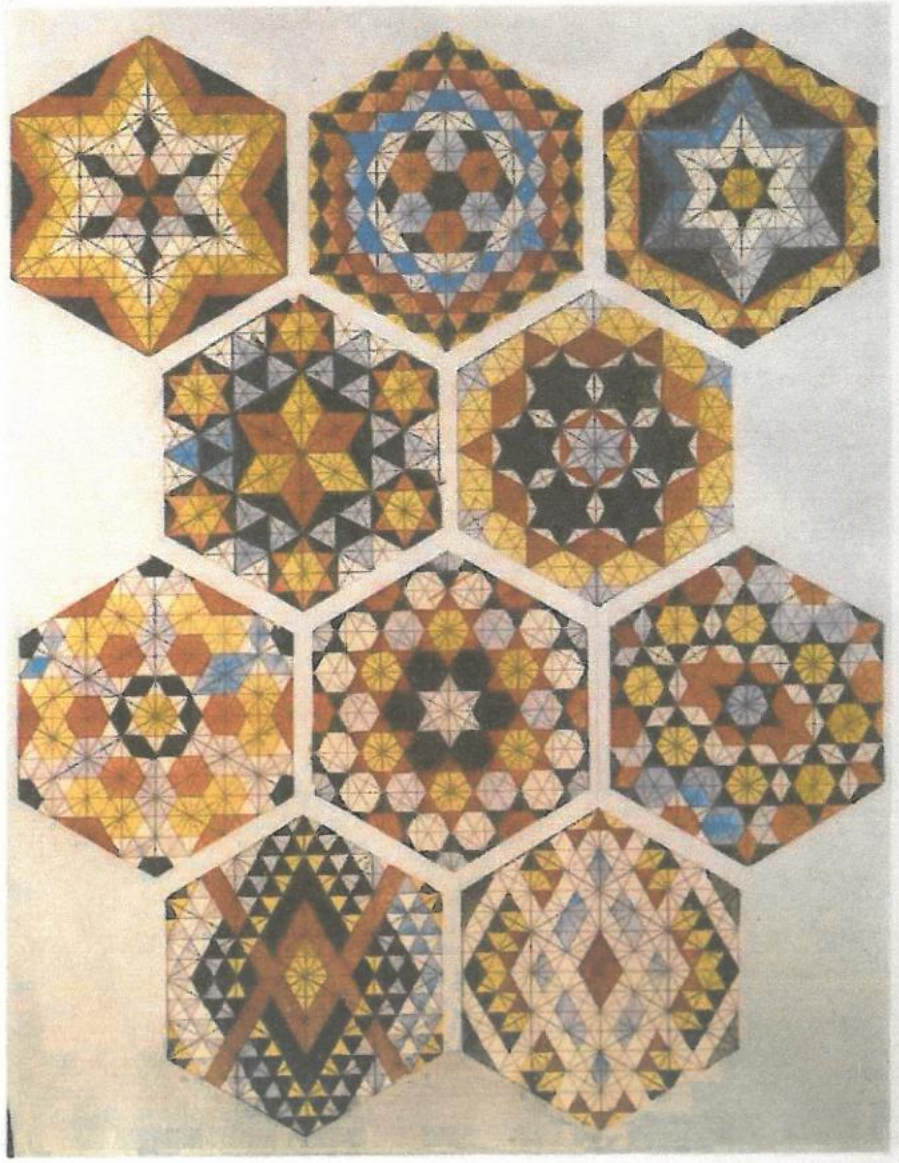
had been brought up in the belief that the play of light and shade on white surfaces was fundamental to the Periclean ideal of beauty. Now, their eyes were opening to effects of pattern and colour in building which had been ignored for centuries. The evidence of Classical polychromy was meagre and difficult to interpret, however, and it was for this reason that many turned to Islamic buildings instead. Girault de Prangey, Charles Texier, Jules Goury and Owen Jones all produced important volumes on Islamic architecture with coloured plates in the 1840s. It must be remembered that colour printing at this time was virtually unknown. When Owen Jones approached the London publishers with his scheme for a great volume in colour on the Alhambra in 1834, none had



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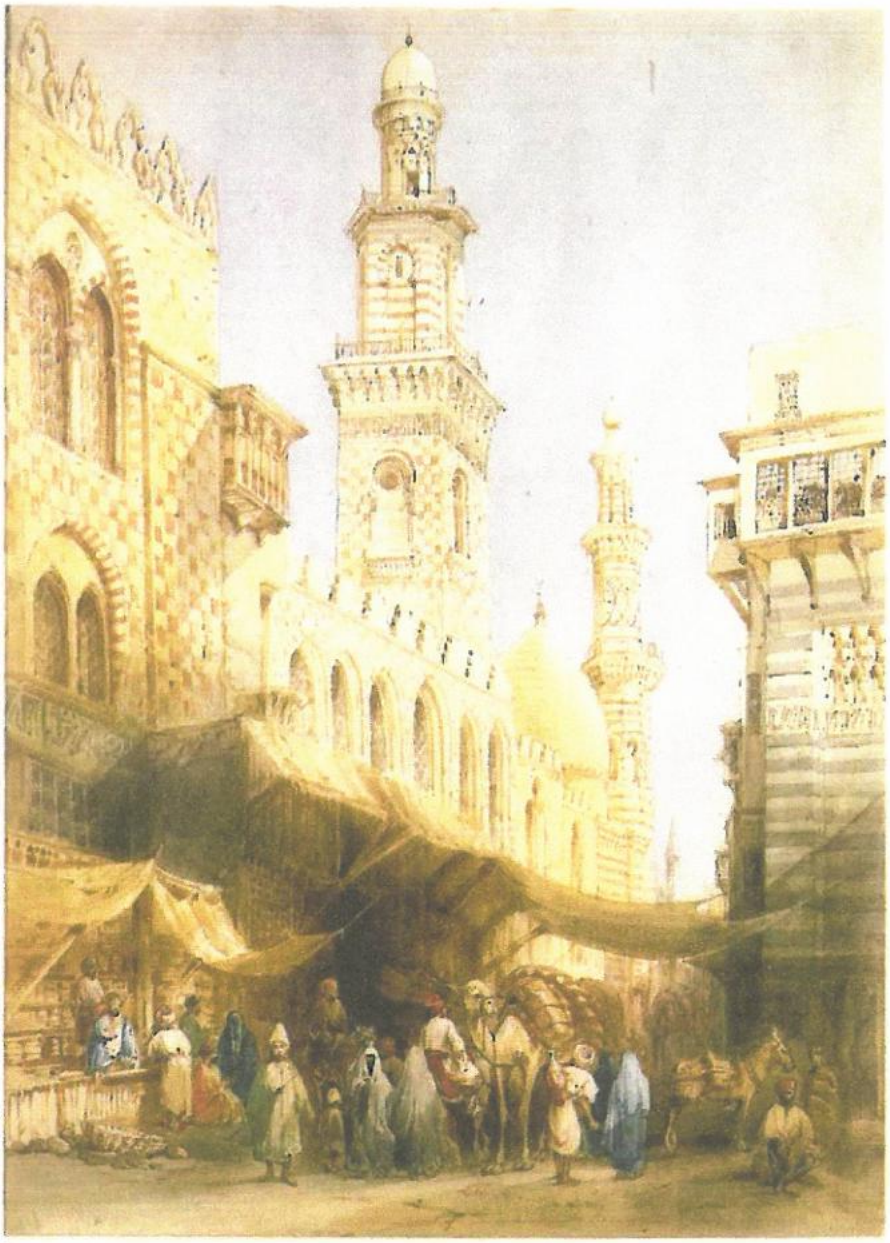


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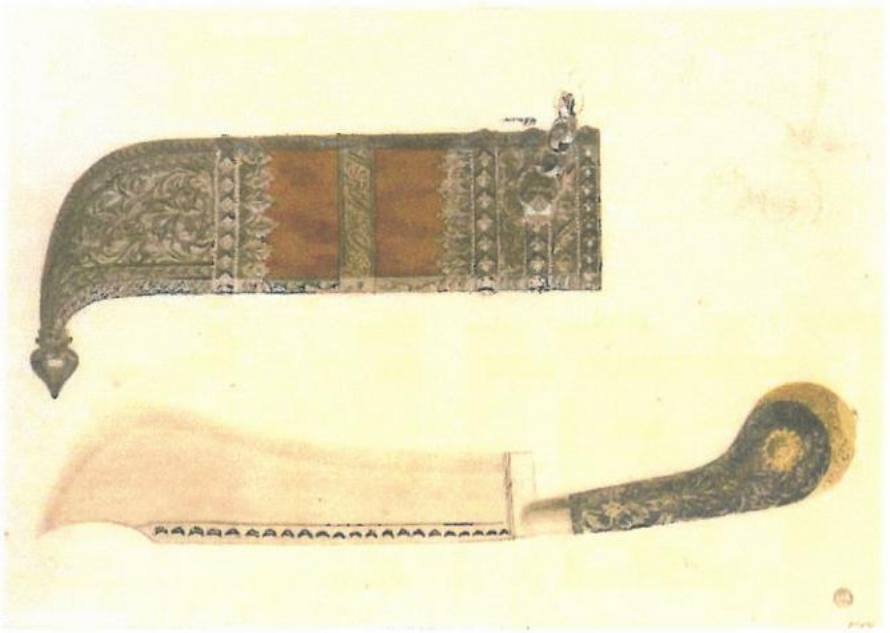
1. Design for the decoration of one bay of the oriental courts, South Kensington Museum, 1863.
Stamped "Science & Art Department, 7 May 1863" and numbered "6803".
Pen and ink, and watercolour. Sight size 45cm x 46.4cm.
Victoria & Albert Museum.

2. Section of the Yeni Valide Camii, Istanbul, 1833.
Stencilled Ieni Djami Stamboulda and inscribed with measurements and a scale in metres.
Pencil, pen and ink, and water colour 70cm x 47.7cm. Victoria & Albert Museum.

Designs (10) for tile patterns, c.1855.
Lithograph and watercolour. Each hexagonal 10cm x 11.6cm.
Victoria & Albert Museum.



1



2. Indian knife and sheath, 1852. Signed C. Dresser.
Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour and silver paint, 29.2cm x 21.1cm.
Victoria & Albert Museum.

trated edition of J.G. Lockhart's *Ancient Spanish Ballads* (1841), is frequently cited as the first of the 'Illustrated Gift Books' which were later to become so much a feature of the Victorian publisher's market.

Just as Islamic architecture can claim to have been influential in book production, it was also instrumental in the development of several new architectural materials. It would have been surprising if the young architects who interested themselves in polychromy had not attempted to apply what they had learned in their own works. Jones, for example, became involved with a number of manufacturers of ceramics in the development of coloured tiles in the 1840s, and was responsible for introducing fibrous plaster some years later. In both instances these new materials were intended to assist in the production of effects of harmony and repose like those which he had experienced in Islamic buildings.

In an age which was concerned



3

sufficient knowledge or machinery to undertake it, and he was obliged to set up his own presses and devise his own methods. As a result, his magnificent *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra* (1836-1845) is generally regarded as the first colour printed book to have appeared in this country, and with it he is said to have founded colour printing as an industry. After he had completed the *Alhambra* Jones went on to produce other books, often with Islamic designs, and his illus-

1. Watercolour by William Henry Bartlett (1809 - 1854).
A street, in the Shari'a el Gohergiyeh, in Cairo, with the mosque of Ibn Kalaun, the Medreseh and tomb of Mohammad-en-Nasir, and the Barkukiyeh. 30.5cm x 42.4cm. Victoria & Albert Museum

3. Design for part of the drawing-room ceiling, 8 Kensington Palace Gardens, 1843.
Water colour. Octagonal 47cm x 47cm.
Victoria & Albert Museum.

style of architecture which would reflect its aspirations and achievements, Jones's works were seen to rely too heavily on their Islamic prototypes. 'Mr Jones's designs consist of a flowering over the walls with a sort of Alhambra pattern', or 'Mr Jones has not been able to forget his favourite Alhambra', were criticisms frequently levelled at him throughout the 1840s. His brother-in-law, the architect James William Wild, who lived for almost ten years in Cairo, was more successful with his Christchurch at Streatham of 1841. A sophisticated essay in polychrome brickwork and the careful use of source material, it is undoubtedly one of the most successful works in the idiom. Similarly, Ludwig Zanth's Villa Wilhelma near Stuttgart, which was designed for the King of Wurttemberg using English sources for the elaborate Moorish interiors, was also considered an appropriate manifestation of the style.

While Islamic architecture may be said to have gained its first secure foothold in British design in the 1840s, in the 1850s it was to impress itself so indelibly onto our culture, that Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt, in an article entitled 'Orientalism in European Industry' in 1870, wrote: 'We work now in almost all departments of production, especially in carpets, rugs, tiles, floor cloths, mural decoration, paper hangings, shawls, and to some extent in jewellery and mosaics, in the spirit if not in the forms of Oriental Art. Its influence is a growing and, as I believe, a highly beneficial one'. By 'Oriental' Wyatt meant, for the most part, Muslim. The reasons that prompted him to make this sweeping claim involved an extraordinary twist in 1840s attitudes, which took place in 1850. Owen Jones was the crucial figure again, and the catalyst was Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace built for the Great Exhibition of 1851.

As a result of his friendship with Henry Cole, one of the Exhibition's promoters, Jones was asked to decorate the huge iron and glass building. Realising that it would not be possible to apply the Moorish forms with which he had been experimenting previously, Jones relied instead on the principles underlying Islamic design to guide him in the choice and application of colours. Initially, his proposals were much criticised, and what was dubbed 'The Great Paint Question' occupied the letter pages of the national press for several weeks, decorators, artists and others all writing to correct Jones's 'mistaken' views. As the painting of the building progressed, however, so more and more his detractors were won over, and by the time that the work was complete praise was heaped upon him from every direction. When the building opened ecstatic commentators confirmed his success in creating a vibrant, atmospheric interior which evoked the grandeur and luminosity of his earlier Islamic experience. The story of the commission is told in detail in the catalogue. Put simply, Jones's scheme involved the use of primary colours in proportions which produced white light. This, he claimed, was what the Islamic artists had done when decorating the Alhambra, and it was justified by modern scientific research into the nature of light.

The important concept in Jones's reasoning was his reliance on 'principles'. If Islamic art provided guidelines which could be used to facilitate the decoration of modern structures involving the most advanced materials and methods, then could it not also provide rules for design in general? Jones believed that it could, and with help from Cole, who in 1852 took over responsibility for a new section of the Board of Trade called the Department of Practical Art, which was set up to administer art schools and the establishment of museums, elaborated his first tentative principles into thirty six specific axioms. These were subsequently published as the doctrine of the Department, and became the guiding force for a whole generation of art students. Amongst them was the young Christopher Dresser whose work cannot be understood without prior knowledge of this rationale. Although not all the principles related specifically to Islamic art — some were derived from the work of contemporaries on Gothic and Classic architecture and others from recent scientific advances — the enigmatic quality of 'repose', which Jones claimed to be the special virtue of Islamic design, was the main intention of their application. At the same time as working out their doctrine, Cole and Jones ensured that the early collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum were weighted heavily in favour of Islamic art — the exhibition includes several of the actual objects which they bought at this time — and Jones devoted no less than one quarter of his monumental *Grammar of Ornament* (1856) to Islamic patterns. This book was intended to form a portable 'museum' so as to extend the teaching programme of the Department to the provinces.

The rigid philosophy of the Department of Practical Art undoubtedly had its influence, particularly on flat pattern design as Digby Wyatt noticed in 1870, but it also had many critics. Richard Phené Spiers found the 'exuberant richness' of Islamic design 'palled' upon him and he sought refuge in more muted colours, while John Ruskin thought the ornamentation of the Alhambra 'detestable'. Their views presage another era in Victorian design when figurative art based on Rannaissance models, and the floral patterns of William Morris and others, held away. As Lewis Day pointed out at the close of the century, such designs were more acceptable simply because they were more natural. Islamic art did continue to influence British building at this time, and the exhibition ends with a number of extraordinary schemes, from Thomas Hayter Lewis's Panoptican, later the Alhambra Theatre, in Leicester Square of 1856, to George Aitchison's Arab Hall at Leighton House of 1880 and Imre Kiralfy's flambouyant designs for the White City of 1908. Many of these were inspired in their detailing by earlier publications, but few embodied the radical concepts and serious purpose of the architects of the mid century.

The exhibition will include paintings, books, prints, photographs and three dimensional objects, many of which have never been seen before, and is accompanied by a lavish catalogue. There will also be a lecture series running concurrently which will explore the influence of Islamic culture in the fields of literature, painting and music in the 19th century, as well as architecture. ■

Photographs by Sally Chappell

Further information about the exhibition is available from The World of Islam Festival Trust, 33 Thurloe Place, London SW7 and the catalogue (A4, 160 pp.118 plates) from Scorpion Communications, 377 High Street, London E15 4QZ, price £5.00 plus post and packing.

Masterpieces of Islamic Art and Architecture

An outstanding video presentation

J.R. Gibson

More than 300 slides from all over the Islamic and Western world have been put together in 'Islam: A Pictorial Essay in Four Parts', the first comprehensive 90 minute video programme on the subject, which has been recently produced by the Islamic Text Society, Cambridge.

Aiming at a high degree of accuracy and depth and comprehensive in its range and scope, the video presentation includes some of the finest specimens of Islamic art and architecture including illuminated Qur'ans, calligraphy, the historic mosques and details from Persian, Turkish and Mughal miniatures in the manuscript collections of the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, the British Museum, London and the Freer Gallery of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C. Other photographs include important sites and subjects from all over the Muslim world from the Philippines to Nigeria. The musical programme has been composed and performed especially by Mr. Salman Shukur, the world famous lute (oud) player.

Contributors to the script include eminent scholars of contemporary Islam. Foremost among them is the Grand Sheikh of Islam, Sheikh al-Azhar, the late Dr. Abdul-Haleem Mahmoud, Rector of Al-Azhar University, Cairo.

Other eminent scholars include Dr. Martin Lings, retired Keeper of Oriental and Arabic Manuscripts at the British Museum Library; Dr. Sayyed Hossain Nasr, former head of the Iranian Imperial Academy of Science and Philosophy, now Professor at Temple University, Philadelphia; Dr. Victor Danner, Arabist and Chairman of the Department of Islamic Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington.

People who are in the business of pursuasion and advocacy must come to grips with the basic rules of the art in order to have any impact. A fundamental rule must be that in order to propogate a particular viewpoint, the character and nature of the people to be approached must be deeply understood and even sympathised with. In propogating Islamic culture to the various peoples of the world, cognizance of the cultural background and foibles must be taken into account. The spread of Islamic culture has had considerable success in Asia and Africa, but virtually no, or even negative, impact in the western world of Europe and America, owing to a high resistance phenomena.

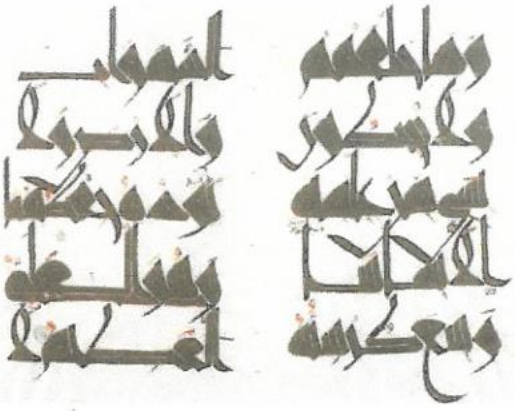
It is, thus, forever an abiding complaint of professional Muslim propagandists that the popular antipathy in the Western World towards Islam is directly attributable to the historical legacy of the Crusades and persistant adverse propaganda. However, these very propagandists can never, and will not, recognise their own major contribution to anti-Islamic phenomena owing to the extreme narrowness of their interpretation, their self-righteous exclusivity and mindless militancy which is often combined together in the populist literature of modern Islamic movements. Contemporary Islam, as expounded by the visionary pamphleteers, is seen by Westerners to be only narrow, myopic and re-actionary, concerned only with the legalities of mere ritual, the punitive enforcement of morals, weak on morality and devoid of ethics. In brief, Islam of the activists is viewed as being dull, repressive and reactionary.

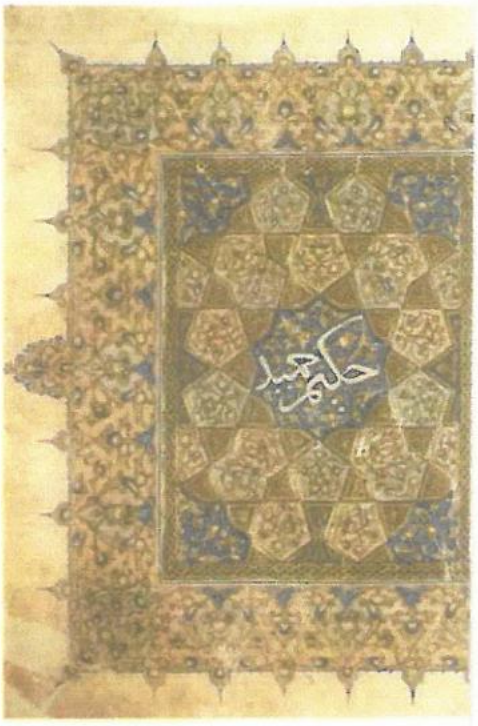
Thus anyone of willing and innocent intent wishing to learn more about Islam from contemporary Muslim sources soon confronts a literature of rhetorical hyperbole

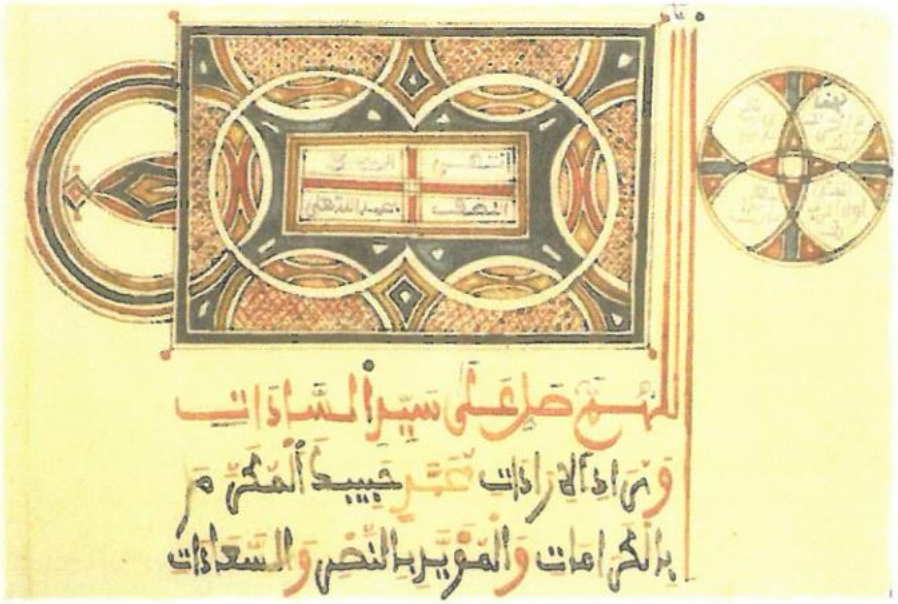
and patronising pedantry. It is quite plain, therefore, that the whole genre of propogating the Islamic point of view in today's western world demands a totally new approach which appreciates and loves Islam as both religion and culture in all its dimensions and levels with a truly devotional sensitivity and breadth of vision. It is a uniquely refreshing experience, therefore, to view the video presentation produced by the Islamic Texts Society of Cambridge which successfully portrays Islam as a relevant religion and deeply rich culture in a form which sophisticated non-Muslim westerners can easily appreciate and relate to.

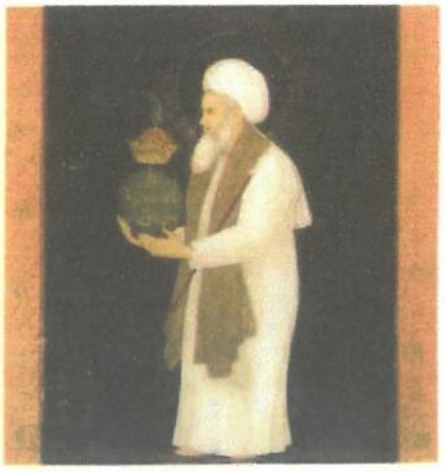


The presentation is divided into









four parts viz:

1. The Doctrine.
2. The Life of the Prophet and the Faith.
3. The History and Culture.
4. The Arts and Sciences.

each part being approximately twenty minutes long giving a total viewing time of ninety minutes thereabouts. The photographic technique of using a rostrum











camera viewing still pictures has been employed to great effect and interest. The majority of the pictures are taken from Islamic painting and miniatures punctuated with real life photographs which make for visually stimulating and compulsive viewing.

Briefly, the content of each part can be described as follows:

1. The Doctrine.

The first part of the presentation addresses the questions of basic belief such as 'What is Islam', 'the Nature of Revelation', 'the Islamic view of History', 'the rôle of the Qur'an' and the 'function of the Prophet Muhammad'. These questions and others are eloquently tackled by an intimate rleationship between the sequence of pictures and an extremely well written and narrated script. The language of revelation, Arabic, is beautifully calligraphed in various styles and certain important notions are sensitively illustrated such as the nature of humankind and its potential for sanctity by the close focus upon a man contemplating a mirror (frames 15 and 16). The Islamic view of History as a process of revelation and as the vehicle of establishing a

just and God-fearing society (despite Man's waywardness) is portrayed as a series of societies and cultures in which Man has been constantly reminded by Divine Messangers of his eternal duty to God. The ruins of Phara'onic Egypt are used to illustrate the decay of a civilisation in which the contemporary world view became obsolete. The Nicene Doctrine of Trinity is described as a veil which hides God's true nature and the tribal exclusivity of Judaism seen as a barrier to the universal appeal of religion. It is only Islam in which the Oneness of God and the universal brotherhood of belief are combined together in a universal religion.

2. The Life of the Prophet and the Faith.

The second part of the programme which deals with the life of the Prophet and the times in which he lived likewise uses miniature painting to illustrate the contemporary situation and the life experiences of the Prophet. Where the physical and bodily prescence of the Prophet is deemed to be appropriate to the script, the film follows 'traditional' practice of showing the visage of the Prophet either veiled or enveloped in divine flame (Frame 21). The latter part of the sequence explains the merits and purpose of Islamic ritual and duty in that the whole purpose of life on this earth is to gain entry into Paradise.

3. The History and Culture

The third part portrays the growth and expansion of Islam since the death of the Prophet beginning with the 'Khulafah ar-Rashidun' (Rightly Guided Caliphs) and tracing the developments through to the 'Dawla Othmaniyah' (Ottoman State). The whole variety of Islamic culture in the various parts of the Islamic world is illustrated echoing the constant theme of the presentation which is 'unity in multiplicity' bound together by a common practice and belief since the days of the Prophet.

4. The Arts and Sciences.

The fourth part of the presentation explains the function of the arts and sciences from an Islamic perspective. The arts are essentially viewed as sacred and devotional endeavours pursued for the memory and glorification of God. Calligraphy is, of course, the most sublime art form in that the Qur'anic revelation was transmitted in the divine language of Arabic. Pious Muslims devoted great effort and spirit into the pursuit of perfection in their art. Architecture is presented as the supremely majestic artform in that it allows infinite permutations on a theme and is imbued with divine proportions and symbols concerning the nature of the cosmos. Unfortunately, however, the other arts such as carpet weaving, bronze work, pottery and glassware and the manufacture of military and ceremonial artifacts such helmets, swords and daggers are not included. The sciences are approached as a source of revelation and confirmation of the existence of God and are presented as having a social relevance and utility for mankind.

The presentation ends with the observations that the holistic approach to Cereation and Man's existence in Islam is beginning to appeal to eminent non-Muslim thinkers who have become increasingly disenchanted with the current world views in other parts of the globe.

In an hour-and-a-half's careful viewing a real understanding may be gained of the beliefs, culture and history of the Islamic world.

Before publication the programme was shown with much success at various schools, universities and conferences. Twice it served as the core for university seminars and teacher training courses. Recently it accompanied lectures delivered in Austria and the United Kingdom by the Director of the London Office of the Muslim World League of Makkah.

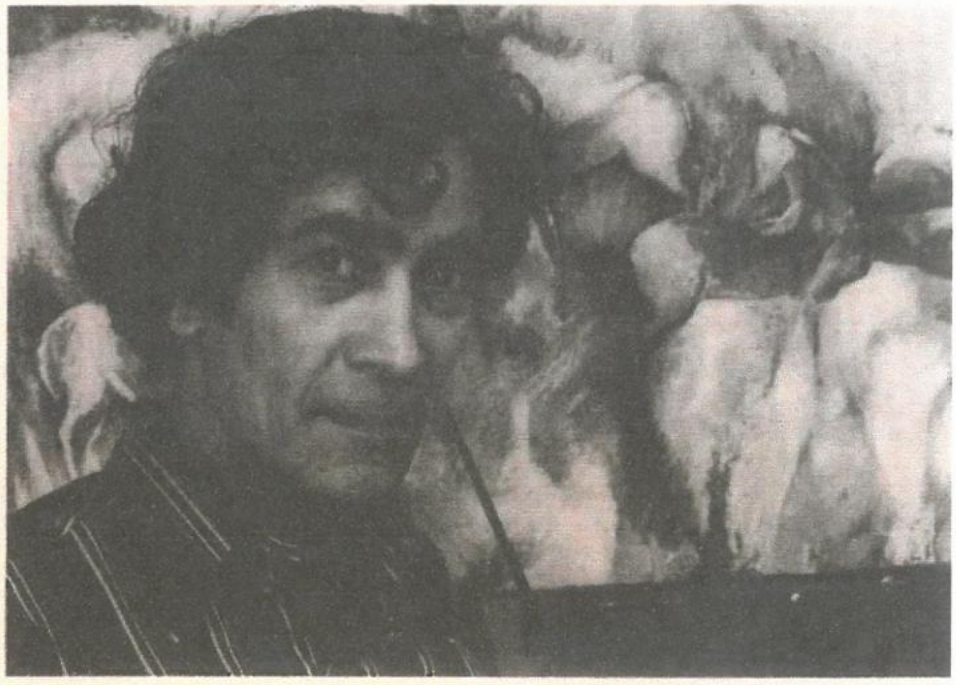
The programme is thus appropriate for use in secondary schools and universities and it can profitably be viewed countless times and is an excellent basis for group discussion, making it particularly useful to teachers. It is essential viewing for anyone interested in gaining an understanding of the Muslim world, such as diplomats, travellers and businessmen. For those with a special interest in Islamic art and culture it is highly recommended and is of particular value to those who are in contact with Muslims at home and abroad.

The scope and quality of the programme was made possible by the generous funding of Dr Abdullah Nasseef and Dr Fatima Nasseef, Rectors, respectively, of the Men's and Women's University of King Abdul Aziz in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

harness looms have been found. A man from the northeast told me that several of this type were used by, if not made by, the Mutair and Shammar tribes. Since several Arab merchants identified them as "Raqii" and north Najd, it is likely that some of these were made in the far northeast, and possibly in Iraq, areas into which these tribes traditionally roamed for grazing. They also resemble some of the work of the Kurds. It is even possible that some examples were traded from them. They are well designed, colourful pieces, and deserve further attention.

In 1978, having found that very little had been published on the weavings and other crafts of Saudi Arabia, I became determined, although I was neither a scholar, nor a crafts expert, nor even a writer, to put together an illustrated book describing what I had learned. A book of this type requires much work and the involvement of art and craft oriented people. They not only found the subject fascinating but came to admire the objects for their design and workmanship. Very few of them had had exposure to Saudi Arabia, or to the almost unbelievably difficult circumstances under which most of these things were produced. The same respect for these artifacts is now often expressed by many of the people who come to view the currently touring exhibition of Saudi craftwork. I am especially pleased that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is building both regional museums and a national museum to house and preserve fine examples of local crafts. I also hope that the artisans continue their admirable work — whatever colours they use. ■

Photographs:
Traditional Crafts of Saudi Arabia
John Topham and others
Stacey International, London.
ISBN 0 905743 30 X



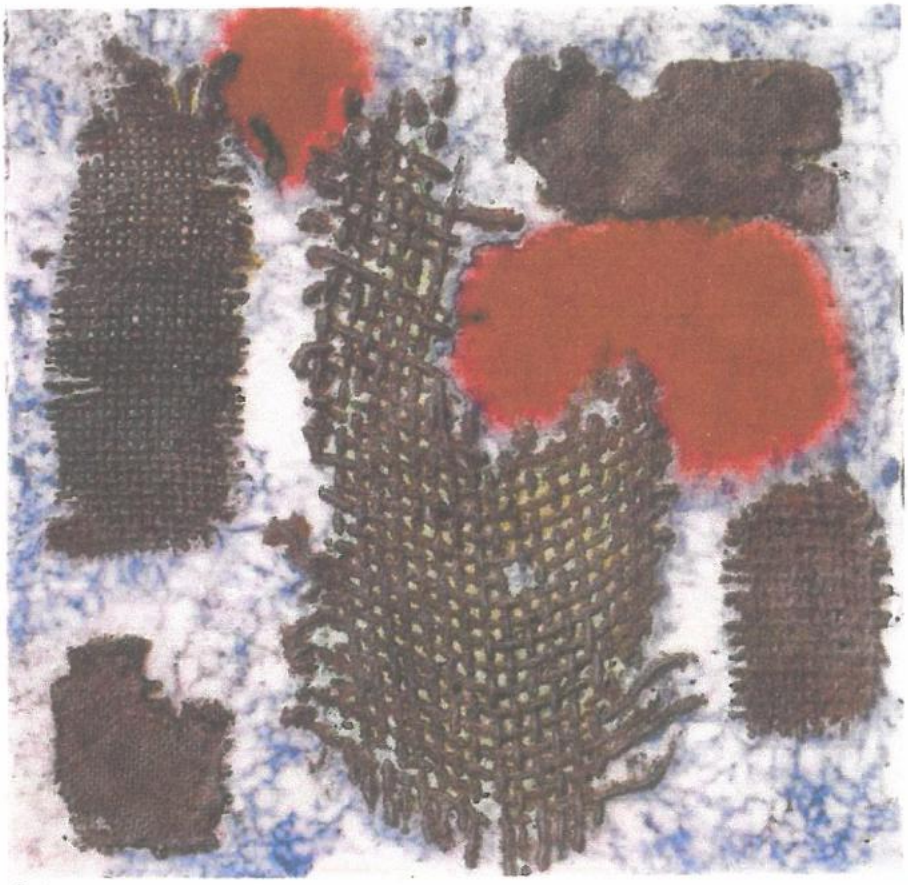
KOHARI

A Painter in Clay

Saleem Shahed

"I am a painter and will remain a painter" asserts Masood Kohari who does not like to be referred to as a ceramist. "The clay, stone, dust and electric kiln are only my tools. I have come to discover that these tools are better suited than brush and canvas to express my abstract compositions" However, he acknowledges his debt to the old craftsmen of pottery and ceramics from whom he learnt and then perfected his technique. But, as a matter of fact, he might have been neither a painter, nor a ceramist, but a sculptor.

Masood Kohari was born in a little village near Poona, India. His forefathers had come to the subcontinent as traders of diamonds and horses. His father was a very religious man, like everybody else in the family. But they had settled amidst a predominantly Hindu community. There were many Hindu temples around which, out of childish curiousity, he often visited secretly and was fascinated by the beauty and workmanship of the statues of Hindu gods and godesses. Sometimes he would manage to steal a little statuette and take it home. The family did not approve of it. They would rebuke him and throw his precious stolen treasures out of the house. Shivaji who fought so valiantly against the Moghuls was a local hero, while he had heard the story of the Emperor Aurangzeb's general Afzal Khan who was treacherously stabbed in the back to death by Shivaji. His heroes as a Muslim were Aurangzeb and Afzal Khan. He would have liked to make their statues but that was heresy. When the family migrated to



Centaurus



Nepun

Pakistan after partition, his dream of becoming a sculptor vanished for ever. To give expression to his artistic talents and inclinations he decided he would become a painter.

He never went to an art school or college but his several exhibitions between 1952 and 1963 were very successful. Art critics and fellow artists recognised his talent. Once he did think of joining the National College of Art in Lahore but Zain-ul-Abedin's advice was: "You don't want a diploma to be an artist. You have to work". Shakir Ali, who was then the Principal at the National College of Arts in Lahore, after looking at his work, told him: "You should think what your heritage is. How can you carry on that heritage. That's the challenge. Then find the medium which suits you. You don't



Monoceros



Icarus

have to restrict yourself to painting with a brush on canvas". That advice brought him back to clay and ceramics.

Kohari still protests he does not think the medium is the important thing. "Each medium has certain advantages and certain disadvantages. I am basically a painter. What provokes me is colour. My expression is limited by the medium. In painting, I can express immediately and directly with colour and brush on canvas. In ceramics I have to wait and see what comes out of the fire. I use fire too, just as I use colours and clay. What is important to me is time — time in which I am involved".

Reflecting on his heritage, Kohari turned to miniature painting and ceramics. He visited Hala and Thatta, two of the oldest archaeological sites and centres of traditional pottery and tiles. Here, for centuries, artist-craftsmen have designed and created beautiful, intricate patterns on clay using only blue, brown and white as the basic colours. Kohari was fascinated.



Theta Orionis



The Moon

Perhaps the sculptor in him had never died. He borrowed some tools and materials from the potters and tile-makers and designed a few experimental pieces. They were in his own figurative style, not in the traditional geometric patterns. The result did not satisfy him. Foreign experts, who were working on the site, told him the materials being used were not good enough. The experience, however, re-kindled his interest in clay and kilns.

To get away from the social shell in which he was imprisoned as a successful painter, Kohari quietly disappeared from the Karachi scene, travelled north and spent three years in two small towns in the Punjab, Shahdra and Gujranwala, famous for their fine pottery. To learn their secrets, he decided to work and live with the local potters whose trade has been handed down from father to son for many generations. And to win their confidence he ate with them, lived in their mud huts and learnt how to shape wet clay into beautiful toys, jars and vases, and fire and glaze them into works of ethnic art.

Writing about this period of Kohari's apprenticeship in the Punjab, Zafar Masud says "Gaining their confidence was not easy. At first they were highly suspicious of this city dweller who had left his comfortable, modern world to live in their mudhouse, eat their simple food and sleep under the stars near their cows and buffaloes. But Kohari's sincerity and passion for pottery changed their minds. Gradually, they gave in as they found in Kohari a receptive and willing pupil. They were pleased to see that he had mastered the techniques of firing and glazing but, on occasions they were mystified by their enigmatic student who was doing so many strange things which they had certainly never taught him. For instance, Kohari would deliberately craze the fine sheen on the surface of his works by overfiring or underfiring them. Or he would deliberately ignore the conventional use of oxides and let them run wild into strange, unusual patterns. He would not shape his wares with care. They would either crack at the edges from overfiring or he would deliberately distort them into absolutely non-functional shapes with his hands. They would shake their wise grey heads sadly. He had forgotten all their fine education, they would say. However, they were pleased enough with their obstinate students when he portrayed their life. On his tiles and pottery, they would see vivid pictures of their farmers, their cows, their houses, their children and their womenfolk, pictures that almost looked alive."

When he returned to Karachi and presented the first major exhibition of his ceramics, critics and art lovers were dazzled and thrilled. Writing in the catalogue of the exhibition Jalal Uddin Ahmed said "It is not enough to have something to say: one must also know how to say it. And young Kohari has found a beautiful technique of saying in ceramic colours on burnished tiles, vases and pillars, what would otherwise pass for mere figurative exercise on conventional hardboard and canvas. Kohari's experimental learning-by-burning introduces to art lovers here the first flush and glory of serious painting on fired clay, embellishing in a million ways ceramic shapes and form as such. His new-found interest in ceramic colours has already initiated him into the ceramist's feeling for the third dimension. It has also sharpened his linear images and imparted to these the quality of a vignette, filling two-dimentional spaces with quick hardetched sketch work, with colour thrown in for shading rather than for modelling. He has learnt as much from well-established methods and techniques as from accidents of uneven heating with which some of the yellows, greens and other soft colours tended to turn brownish. But the reds, blacks and blues stayed clear and fast even under high temperatures. The accidents then became deliberations."



Andromeda

A year later, early in 1969, going to America, he stopped in Paris on his way. He fell in love with Paris and decided to stay. "Paris is not a centre of art like London, New York, Munich or even Tokyo, which are more commercial", he says. "In Paris it is very difficult for an artist to survive — but, still artists from all over the world go there. It accepts or

rejects all new manifestations of art. Wherever in the world that may be happening, Paris gives its judgement and stamp of recognition which is accepted and honoured by the rest of the art world".

In 1970, Kohari had an exhibition of his paintings in Paris at Galerie Simone Badiner about which the French art critic Jeanine Warnod wrote: "Kohari frees himself of figuration by giving more importance to movement, rhythm and to the relation of colours than to the subject. His warm colours, dominating his blues and ochres, sing a melody, sometimes soft, sometimes far away. And sometimes violent and impetuous with themes that repeat themselves swirling about in space".

His success as a painter in Paris did not make him forget his real mission and medium as an artist. He spent some time at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and at Savigny, two of the best-known ceramics institutes in France, learning both the traditional and the modern techniques of the medium. In 1970, he exhibited his works at the Galerie Bernahiem in Paris and had Honourable Mention in Salon des Artiste Frances for his ceramic reliefs.

Kohari says "I carry a heritage and it is clay which came from China to the Islamic world including the South Asian subscontinent. And it takes its form through me as an artist."

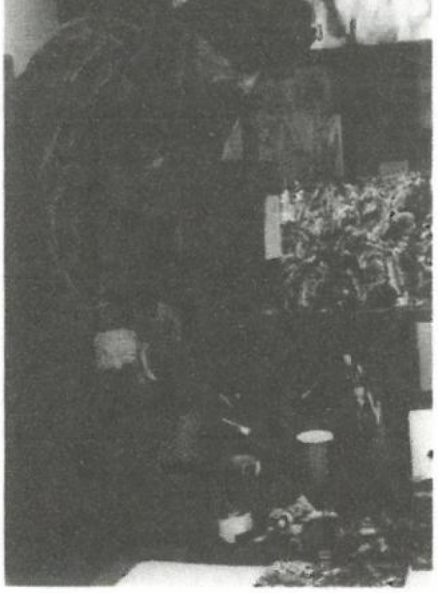
He visited Pakistan in 1972 for a couple of months and then returned again to Paris in 1973 for about 3 years, because according to him "Foreign artists in Europe are accepted only if they are from the Judo-Christian world. Spirtually the Europeans are not racist — practically they are. But in Pakistan or anywhere in the Third World or the Islamic World, an artist works only for the very wealthy. I went back to my country not to work for them but to continue and contribute to my heritage. Like all other people who live and work in foreign lands, a creative artist's absence from his country creates a vacuum — not only for his country but within himself".

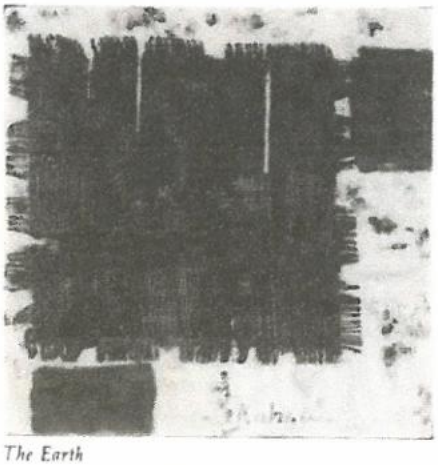
For the next three years he had a number of one-man exhibitions and many group shows in Pakistan. In his major exhibition "Kohari Fire Paintings" at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts, Karachi, all his 'paintings in clay' were very contemporary compositions. He had now mastered the chemistry of colours and materials. Mixing various colours and chemicals on a clay base, he had fired them to a degree that creates new abstract designs. His materials included wire netting, creating collages with amazing new textures.

Nasir Shamsie, in his monograph on "Kohari's Collages", said: "Kohari has introduced 'collage' into ceramics in his recent work. The introduction of alien elements in painting aroused criticism early in this century and serious doubts were raised whether such 'collages' could be called paintings. However, the viewers got over their initial shock of one more attempt to desecrate the art of painting. Collages came to be accepted as a form of art. Masters like Juan Gris and others pasted clippings from newspapers on their canvases and incorporated them as a vital element in their paintings. Soon, pieces of cardboard, bus tickets, cuttings of cloth and lace found themselves stuck on a canvas. Abstract painting was endeavouring to reject any reproduction of the outside world of visual experience. Collage contributed towards this goal, firstly by demolishing the sanctity of the object, and secondly by denuding an object of its sentimental associations. A bus ticket incorporated in a painting ceased to be a ticket and lost associations with our normal visual experience. Wire in Kohari's recent work has become a line, and wire-net has become surface texture".

Kohari had also started to use pieces of glass as collage material along with wire and wire netting. They provide their own shades and hues besides the greytones of the burnt wire-netting. Crystalised glass provides varying textures in transparency. Nasir Shamsie concludes: "Perhaps it would take us some time to accept what he has to say. Kohari presents us a non-specific organisation of shapes without association or reference beyond itself. His work with colour planes, more often than not, in clear colour contrast, refraction of the surfaces and rough textures, regardless of the medium in which it has been executed, deserves, to say the least, serious consideration from its viewers."

Kohari's vision of the world is that of a perpetual clash between power and poverty resulting in suffering. "The condition is akin to fire. In expressing my suffering through my work, I am at ease with fire. I



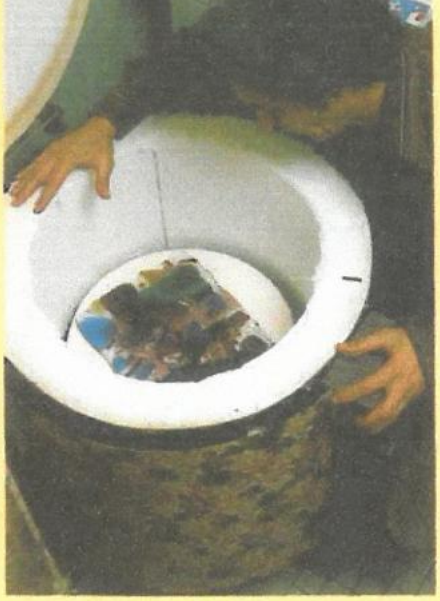


The Earth

find more satisfaction in dealing with fire than with water or oil. I added metal to ceramics for textural qualities as well as to express the torture and suffering of the society in which I live. When I was working I was not conscious; but later I could see I was expressing my suffering, my burning, the fire within me through my work".

Kohari returned to France in December 1976. He has visited London and Sweden but now lives and works in Auffay, a small and picturesque village in Normandy, France, about 100 miles from Paris. He has rented a 150-year old farm house, fitted it with an electric kiln and is very happily settled in his self-imposed seclusion where he can reflect in peace on his life and concentrate on his work. He still has arrangements with the well-known Paris galleries — Mure de Nomads for ceramics and Simone Badinier for paintings.

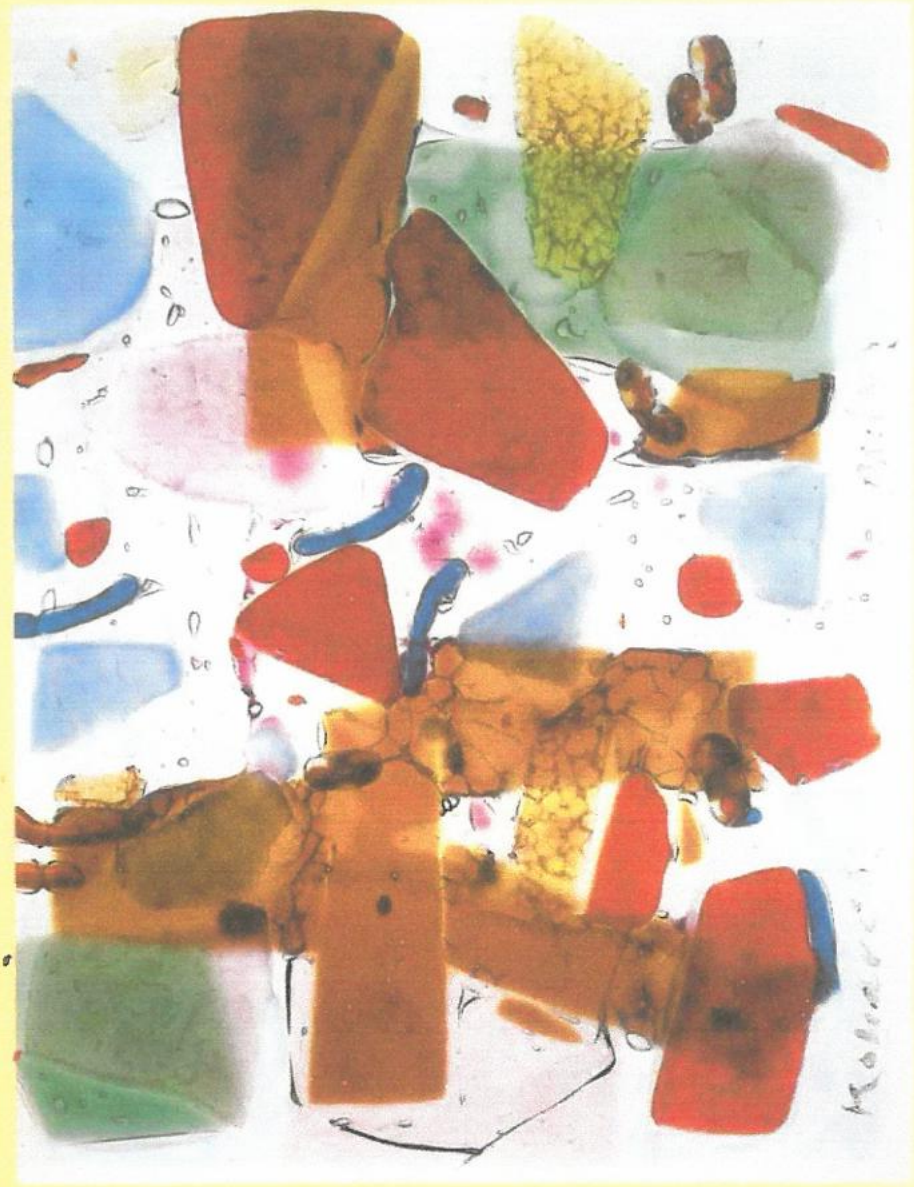
Talking about his latest work Kohari says: "Since a few years, I have started the process of elimination. In the beginning I explored clay by itself in the form of relief. By adding colours and glaze, it became a painting. I added the two and it



Supernova ▶

became both a relief and painting. Now I have started elimination: I have eliminated clay from my work and am left with glaze (glass) which gives reflected light and transparency. I am experimenting with seeing it with a front light which shows up colours. But when I put a light behind, it becomes translucent and the colours change." It is not stained glass, he insists. "In stained glass you use pieces of different coloured glass with a lead armature which gives the line to give it form. I use layers of glass, colours, other materials and fire too for my form and my visual impact".

Kohari is currently working for a major exhibition in Paris and hopes to bring it to London later. ■



THE ARTS IN ISLAMIC LANDS

Papers presented at the International Seminar
held at Farnham Castle, U.K.
March 26-28, 1982

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Launching of "Arts and the Islamic World"

The first issue of an international quarterly journal *Arts & The Islamic World*, published by the Islamic Arts Foundation, was introduced by the Foundation's Chairman, Mr. Muazzam Ali, at a luncheon in London on January 24, 1983. It was attended by media representatives and diplomats, art critics and historians, art dealers and galleryists, bankers and business houses with special interest in Islamic arts. The Chief Guest was Dr. Ibrahim Kamel, Executive Vice-Chairman of the Geneva-based interest-free Islamic Bank, Dar Al Maal Al Islami, who warmly welcomed the publication.

The Foundation itself is a non-profit Trust aimed at creating a wider interest in the arts of the Islamic world. Last year the Foundation organised an international seminar on 'The Arts in Islamic Lands', at Farnham Castle in the UK, which was attended by more than 50 scholars and experts in Islamic arts from the Islamic and Western world. The journal, produced as a follow-up of the Seminar recommendations, has a broad-based panel of Contributing Editors drawn from several Eastern and Western countries.

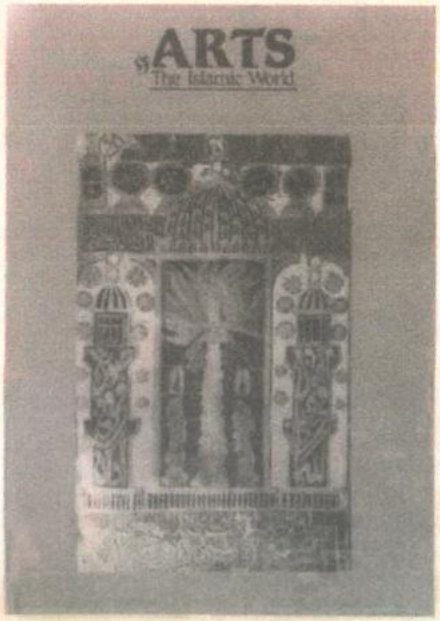
In his introductory remarks, the Foundation's Chairman said he was "very happy that among our distinguished participants here we have as our chief guest an Islamicist whose expertise in economics and banking is only matched by his passion for the arts: Dr. Ibrahim Kamel. It is an all too rare and most welcome combination indeed, and for a symbolic launching of this magazine I take this opportunity to present to him the first copy of the first issue of *Arts & The Islamic World*".

The Chairman emphasised that the journal was in many ways an "experimental" venture. He recalled that over the last 20 years, since the demise of the art historical review *Ars Islamica*, the need has been felt for a serious scholarly journal dealing with the arts of the Islamic world not only in the *historical* context, but also as reflecting and reviewing the *contemporary* elements and expressions. This, he said, was by no means an easy task, and added: "The Editors of *Arts and the Islamic World*, drawn from various countries and varied disciplines, have vastly different views of the relative importance of tradition and change, of continuity and innovation, of technical skill and creative ingenuity, of classical values and modern trends. Above all, the editorial nuances and preferences notwithstanding, the contributors themselves have their own independent and strongly argued points of view".

He said that in attempting a so-called "balancing act" and reflecting a broad spectrum of contemporary thinking on the subject, the journal may appear to lean a little more on one side or the other, "but the objective is indeed to build bridges of understanding and interpretation, not only between the Islamic arts of yesterday, today and tomorrow, but also between the arts of the Islamic and the Eastern and Western worlds".

The first issue of the journal concentrates on Islamic architecture, metalwork and calligraphy. Art critic Abdullah Scheleifer writes an in-depth feature on the 82-year old Egyptian







architect Hasan Fathy who has design-built a traditional mud-brick mosque and madrassah in New Mexico, USA, as part of a whole new township known as *Dar us Salam* (City of Peace); architecture historian R.A. Jairazbhoy describes the influence of Islamic architecture in western Europe; art editor and poet Buland al-Haidari writes on traditional calligraphy's impact on modern Arab art; art historian Souren Melikian-Chirvani shows how cultural history of the Muslims has been influenced by Islamic metal-works; art director Carol Hotchkiss Malt writes on the influence of Islam on West African art; and there is a profile of the Jordanian artist, Princess Wijdan Ali, introducing the well-known figure in Arab art to a still wider audience.

There is also an interesting critique by Agha Abdul Hamid dealing with the problems of the contemporary artists, which are both "economic" and "spiritual". While it may be necessary for a government to step in and create conditions in which genuine art can flourish, "the spiritual problems are perhaps more important and these he (the artist) must solve without outside help by wrestling with his own soul". The artist "must find a link with his past heritage and then develop new forms which can become adequate vehicles for the expression of his deep feelings". This does not necessarily mean the rejection of the West. "On the contrary, all that is valuable in Western creative work must be gratefully accepted. But a total and indiscriminate acceptance of the West has not been found satisfactory in the past, and is not likely to be found so in the future.

The 80-page journal, well illustrated with several plates in full colour, is prefaced by documentation relating to last March's Islamic Arts Seminar, and also includes a number of regular features like art news and notes, art publications and exhibitions, and art sales etc. ■

Istanbul Seminar and Exhibition on Islamic Arts

The OIC Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul, (IRCICA), is organising an International Symposium on "The Common principles, forms and themes of Islamic Art" in Istanbul from April 18-22, 1983. The Organising Committee of the Symposiums, comprises the Director General of IRCICA, Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, as well as three other scholars, Dr. Nadjmoud-Din Bammate, Dr. Afif Bahnassi and Dr. Oktay Aslanapa. The papers presented at the Symposium will be published later in book form.

On this occasion, an exhibition of Islamic Arts is also being organised in Istanbul (April 20—September 20) by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism as part of the 15th Century of Hijra celebrations. The exhibition will comprise sacred relics, tiles, manuscripts and rare examples of Islamic art from various Turkish museums. Traditional as well as contemporary Islamic tiles will be exhibited in the Tiled Kiosk (Cinili Kost) of the Topkapi Palace Museum. Hand-written manuscripts, miniatures and royal decrees ("fermans") will be on show at the Suleymaniye Library. The Vakiflar Hali Museum will house an exhibition of traditional rugs and 'kilims'. Prayer-rugs, headscarves, prayerbeads, ewers, oil lamps, embroideries and book-holders are to be exhibited at the Topkapi Palace Museum. The Ataturk Cultural Centre will house an exhibition of colour photographs of Islamic architectural works. The exhibits will include famous architectural examples from various Islamic countries. The section of the Topkapi Palace Museum housing the Sacred Relics will be rearranged and opened to visitors. Examples of metal and woodwork in Islamic Art will be exhibited at the Turkish Islamic Arts Museum. Printed copies of the Qur'an will also be exhibited.

It will be recalled that IRCICA was formally inaugurated on May 23, 1982 as a subsidiary organ of OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference). Its objective, as outlined in its statute, is "to strengthen the historical and cultural links among the Islamic peoples and create an environment of sincere and brotherly friendship based on the inexhaustable legacy of the great Islamic civilisation and culture".

The proposal for the establishment of the Centre was put forward by the Turkish delegation at the 7th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), held in Istanbul in May 1976. The ICFM examined the proposal, realized its immense utility and agreed in principle to the establishment of the Centre. The Turkish delegation was requested to submit a detailed draft resolution to the 8th ICFM, convened in May 1977, and subsequently the draft was submitted by the ICFM to the Permanent Finance Committee of the Islamic Solidarity Fund for its review and approval. It was at the 9th ICFM, held in Dakar, Senegal, on May 1978, that the amended establishment statute of the Istanbul Centre was accepted.

The Centre has a Governing Council which was appointed at the 12th ICFM in Baghdad comprising 10 eminent scholars in the field of art and culture from the member states of the OIC, with Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu as the Director General. An agreement was formally signed between the Turkish Government and the OIC, and in April 1982 IRCICA became an international organisation with diplomatic status.

ICRICA is at present housed in "Seyir Kosku" a small pavillion in the Yildiz Palace complex, which had been the seat of the Ottoman government during the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1878-1908). To accommodate increases in the Centre's staff the Turkish Government recently granted the Centre an additional building, "Cit Kasri" (Cit Palace), in the Yildiz Palace area. The latter building, however, requires extensive restoration and repair and member countries of the OIC have been requested to assist in financing this work.

Though formally inaugurated in 1982, IRCICA became operational in May 1980 and it has since initiated research studies in various areas of Islamic history, art and culture. Its activities include the compilation of a bibliography of translations of the Holy Qur'an in various languages of the world. The dimension of the project is indicated by the fact that some 640 full and partial translations of, and commentaries on the Holy Qur'an have been traced to the Urdu language alone, and thus the completion of the study is a very long-term goal.

Another project is the preparation of a Guide Book to cultural institutions in the member countries of the OIC. The Centre has already published a pilot booklet on this subject which is available on request. Another of the Centre's projects is a study of Islamic history. The initial project has concerned the history of the Turks, the first volume of which, starting with their conversion to Islam and going through the Seljuk era, has been completed. Work on the second volume is now in progress. This will be followed by studies of Muslims in other lands, and historians of member countries of the OIC have been invited to contribute to this project.

The development of Islamic calligraphy presents a fascinating aspect of Islamic art. The Centre is undertaking a study on the subject which will not only cover the art of calligraphy but will also give attention to the equipment used in this art. In connection with this study a documentary film is being prepared on the life and works of the late Hamid Aytac, much respected in the world of calligraphy and thus the film will undoubtedly acquire historical importance.

Also in preparation is an illustrated work on the swords used by Muslim armies from the First Century Hijra to the 10th Century. The utility of this project is highlighted by the dearth of studies that have hitherto been made on weapons in the Muslim world.

Still another priority project undertaken by the Centre is the preparation of a "Guide Book to the Ottoman State Archives", since the archives are an important source of information regarding the history and administrative structure of a large number of

Islamic states and communities. The project has been assigned to a group of experts who will be working on contract for the Centre and, in view of its importance, a special budget has been allocated to it by the OIC.

Future projects under consideration by the Centre include the deciphering of waqf documents relating to "Palestine", "Al-Quds Shariff" and "Harameyn" and the publication of the same with an index and explanatory notes; the establishment of uniform standards for libraries in the Islamic world; a study of the contribution of Muslims to the development of sciences; and the preparation of an incunabula of Islamic culture. The preparation of a catalogue of the *Mushaf* copies found in the museums and libraries of Istanbul up to the 9th Century Hijra is also being carried out.

The Centre publishes a bi-annual Newsletter, of which two issues have so far appeared, projecting the activities of the Centre, and giving special coverage to OIC news and to cultural news of the Islamic world generally. The development of a reference library is also in progress, consisting of principal reference books, as well as rare books related to the Centre's areas of interest. In assembling the library, preference is currently being given to encyclopaedias, bibliographic works, catalogues and atlases. The Centre is interested in establishing and cultivating bilateral relationships with other institutions and with scholars working in similar fields. ■

Oriental Carpets: ICOC 1983

The 4th International Conference on Oriental Carpets, billed by its organisers as "the most impressive array of carpet expertise ever assembled", will be held at the Barbican Centre, London, from June 9-12, 1983, where some 60 international experts "will share their knowledge with 1000 or more participants".

Twelve sessions are planned dealing with various aspects of Turkoman, Caucasian, Persian and Turkish carpets, as well as Flatweaves and carpets from neglected areas. Three special sessions will be devoted to the Mediterranean countries.

Apart from dealers' exhibition and specialised carpet sales by leading auction houses, three major exhibitions are planned. These include an international loan exhibition at the Hayward Gallery (May 18—July 10) entitled "The Eastern Carpet in the Western World" organised by the Arts Council, display of "Carpets in Painting" at the National Gallery (June 1—July 24), and an exhibition of village and tribal weavings, "Carpet Magic", at the Barbican (April 26—June 19).

ICOC itself is a non-profit making, non-incorporated association of members whose carpet interests include the academic, museum, collecting and publishing fields. An outline programme of the Conference and a Calendar of Events organised by auction houses and private galleries in London during Summer 1983, is given in the ICOC leaflets enclosed with this issue of *Arts & The Islamic World*. ■

Hasan Fathy Exhibit in Cairo

A two-week still photo and video tape exhibit "Hassan Fathy in New Mexico", devoted to the most recent work of the internationally acclaimed Egyptian architect, opens at the American Cultural Centre in Cairo on May 17.

The exhibit honours Hassan Fathy's design and work at Abiquiu, New Mexico, U.S.A. for the Dar Al Islam Foundation (see *Arts and The Islamic World* Vol. 1 No. 1) where a Centre devoted to Traditional Islamic Studies and Crafts is under construction in the Chama valley, just north of Sante Fe.

The exhibit consists of 38 mounted colour photographic enlargements of original slides taken on the site by three photographers: Walter Chappell (some of whose pictures first appeared in *Geo*), Cradoc Bradshaw, whose slides were published by *Portfolio*), and Barry Iverson, the Gamma photographer whose photo essay on the Dar Al Islam project was syndicated world-wide.

On the opening night Hassan Fathy will inaugurate the exhibit and the documentary film "Hassan Fathy", produced by the Haj Research Centre of King Abdul Aziz University, will be premiered. The film includes sequences taken at Abiquiu when Hassan Fathy visited the site in 1981.

At the same time, video reports on the project, originally prepared and broadcast by CBS in 1980 and 1981, will be screened on a monitor in the exhibit hall, along with a documentary tape, "Roofs Underfoot", produced by the New Mexican *adobe* (mudbrick) expert, Bill White. There will also be a photo display of traditional architectural uses of *adobe* in the regional architecture of the American southwest, where Dar Al Islam Foundation has made its home. ■

Congress on Architectural Conservation

"The architectural heritage, cultural identity, and present trends in the civilization of Islam" is the theme of one of the lectures at the First International Congress on Architectural Conservation (University of Basle, Switzerland, March 28-31, 1983) dealing broadly with the subject of "Historical buildings, their significance and their role in today's cultural setting".

The Congress is being organised by the Institute for International Art Festivals, in cooperation with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Centre for the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICROCOM). As the Director of the Institute for International Arts Festival, Mr. John M. Calabrini explains, the object of the Congress is to create a suitable platform for the regular exchange of all the most recent ideas on the preservation of the architectural heritage. A series of biennial congresses are planned dealing with the cultural and historical, as well as the technical aspects of architectural conservation on a world-wide basis.

In an introduction to the main theme of the Congress, the President of ICOMOS, Prof. R.M. Lemaire, argues that despite the movements towards a single world culture and general acceptance of the principles underlying conservation, there are differences of approach, perception and feeling. "Each civilization sets its special seal on the dialogue between man and the remains of his past, between the person in the street and the meaning of where he lives, between a religious believer and the visible symbols of his faith. The very variety of the architectural heritage is an obvious proof of this. The differences to be found in the inexhaustible wealth of creative art perforce influence our awareness of the value and meaning of the resultant heritage". The dialogue between past and present takes one form in the Western world, another in Asia, another in Islam, another in black Africa. Each area sees slightly differently the basic fact that a cultural heritage has unchallengeable value".

There is no doubt that the Venice Charter of 1960, the document embodying contemporary thinking on the subject, needs calm reflection, specially, as Prof. Lemaire emphasises, in relation to non-Western cultures, to discover whether the Charter is valid for them or to redefine its aims and limitations for different social, religious and cultural groups. "The Basle Congress aims to undertake that calm reflection. It intends also to initiate an ugently needed dialogue. The result should be that every culture, according to its own criteria, will become more deeply aware of the meaning of its architectural heritage. The Basle Congress will approach the subject in various ways, show subtlety in its appreciation of the values at stake

Islamic Calligraphy at the Metropolitan

The Celestial Pen: Islamic Calligraphy in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, an exhibition of about 45 objects selected from the Museum's comprehensive collection of Islamic art to illustrate the great calligraphic tradition of Islam, which opened at the Islamic Art Special Exhibitions Gallery last Fall, has been extended to run until July 3, 1983.

The exhibition includes examples of scripts on parchment, paper, metal, ceramics, textiles, wood, and stone dating from the 8th to the 19th century and from the many regions of the world of Islam. It has been organized by Annemarie Schimmel, consultant for Islamic Art, with the support of Stuart Cary Welch, special consultant in charge of the department of Islamic Art. It has been coordinated by Carolyn Kane, assistant curator, and other members of the department of Islamic Art.

Calligraphy is considered the supreme art in the Muslim world. The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in Arabic through Gabriel, and it was from the wish to write down the divine word as beautifully as possible that Arabic calligraphy developed. The first revelation of the Qur'an states that writing is a gift of God and there are frequent references to writing and the pen in the Qur'an. The growing needs of the administration in the expanding Islamic empire also gave impetus to the development of calligraphic style. No major aspect of Islamic life can be fully appreciated without considering the importance of the 28-letter Arabic alphabet which has remained essentially unchanged for thirteen centuries, and was adopted by all people who embraced Islam.

The Arabic script by its nature lends itself to decorative use. Rather ungainly at first, its central role in an Islamic context from the 7th century on led to the development of calligraphy as an inspired art form. The Arabic script not only became the vehicle to express religious devotion, but also enhanced the beauty of any object made of whatever material — brick, stone, cloth — and whether ordered by a princely patron or made for everyday use.

Calligraphers were not always bound by strict rules, and infinite and fascinating variations in ornamental and abstract design were invented in Arabic lettering. Two main script styles predominated, cursive and angular. Kufic, or angular script, was generally used for Qur'an in the first centuries and was also the style most used for inscriptions in buildings, vessels, metal and cloth. The simple cursive style was first used on papyrus, and several variations developed either regional in origin or for different writing purposes: *naskh, thuluth, muhaqqaq, rihani* in the Arabic tradition, *nasta'liq* and *shikasta* in the Persian tradition, and *maghribi* in Spain and north Africa. The exhibition includes examples of all these styles■

define its aims more exactly, and so reach a truer understanding of the importance to man everywhere of the architectural heritage". ■

Islamic Glass at Ceramics Fair

A survey of the world of Islamic ceramics and its origin, by Prof. Dr. Rudolf Schnyder, Curator of the Swiss National Museum, is one of a series of lectures by academics and experts in ceramics and glass at the 1983 International Ceramics Fair and Seminar in London at the Dorchester Hotel from June 10-13, 1983.

Examples of Islamic glass will also be on view at the Cinzano Glass Collection at the above Fair in which more than forty exhibitors will be taking part. The Fair, launched last year, has been described as "an entirely new concept in the field of ceramics", combining an international platform for the leading dealers specialising in all periods of porcelain, pottery, glass and enamels, with a series of lectures given by eminent scholars. Further information available from Sue Bond, 5, Niton Street, London SW6 6NH Phone 01-381 1324. ■

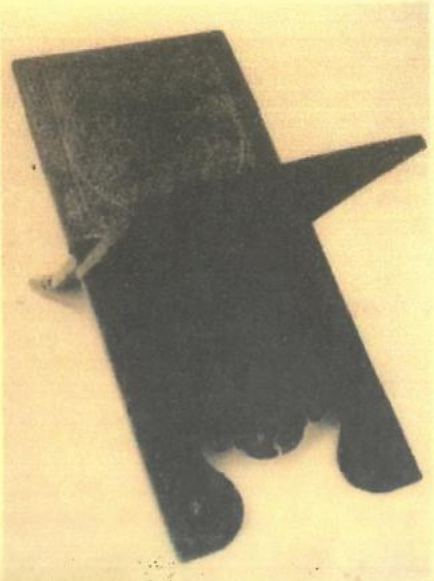
The Anatolian Civilisations, Turkey

Architectural decoration, ceramics, metalwork, and carved wood from the Seljuk period as well as manuscripts, textiles, carpets and embroidery from the Ottoman period will be included in a comprehensive presentation of the history of Anatolian civilisations from prehistoric times to the present day, in Islanbul (May 22—October 30).

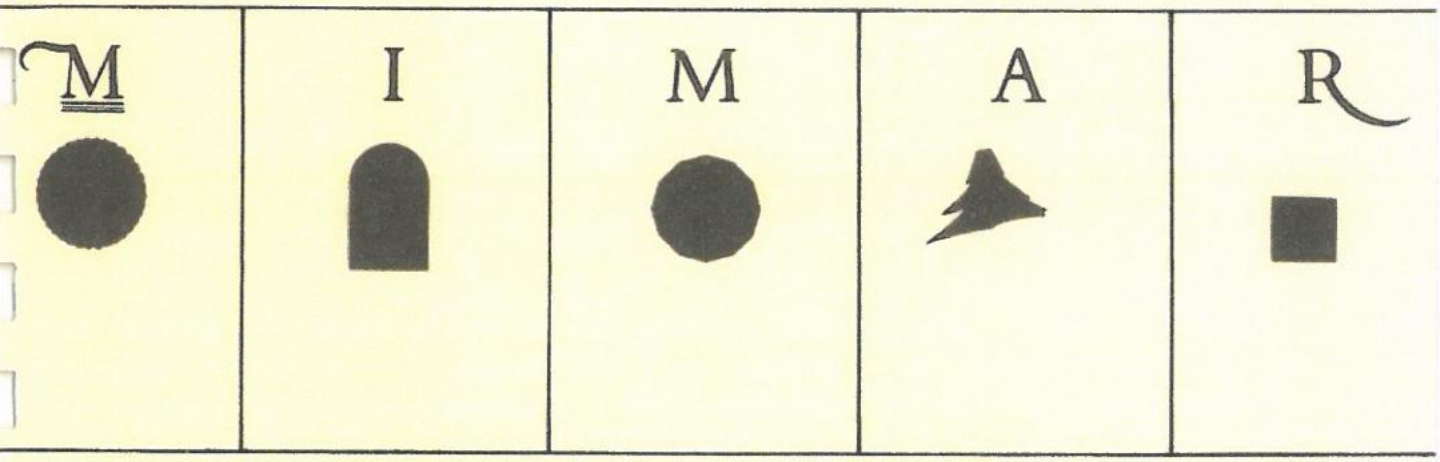
It is being organised by Turkey under the auspices of the Council of Europe as the 18th in the series of major European Art Exhibitions, and will be composed of two sections: a "formal" exhibition, and a parallel "didactic" one. Both the early archaeological discoveries in Anatolia, which include some of the oldest finds in the world, and the art treasures of the later Islamic period, will be covered.

About 5000 art objects will be on display, the majority of these from 50 museums in Turkey, but a number of highly-prized items are also being lent by some of the member states of the Council of Europe. ■

Seljuk Qur'an Reading desk, 13th century. Konya Museum.



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San'a, An Arabian Islamic City

So here it is at last! The book that Arabists have been eagerly looking forward to for nearly eight years. And now that it has finally emerged, four and a half kilos of it, 631 pages, a vast collection of photographs in black and white and colour, 27 chapters, copious maps, 3 separate indices and a staggeringly comprehensive glossary of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Hebrew and Himayarite words and expressions – confronted with all this I, who have spent four years in Sana'a and felt I knew it fairly well, am bound to say, like the Queen of Sheba, "Behold, the half was not told me!"

In attempting to review this, probably the most weighty and exhaustive of all the *magna opera* that have appeared in English on the Middle East since the War, I feel like a climber who has hitherto faced nothing more daunting than the peaks of Snowdonia, gazing up at the summit of Everest. But the very vastness of the book surely makes some sort of analysis all the more necessary. I shall therefore attempt to take it chapter by chapter, dealing particularly with those parts covering areas where I feel most at home and can, perhaps, offer some observations of value.

Even the most cursory glance will reveal this book as a quarry for scholars rather than a coffee table book for tourists. Heavier than the average full shopping bag, it could never become a handy *vade mecum*, to be slipped into a pocket when roaming the *suqs*, or the type of soporific one finds in spare bedrooms. But what a quarry! Even if I live another twenty years, I doubt whether I shall be able even to explore all the treasures it offers, especially to one who has spent the greater part of his adult life in the Arab world.

But superb though this book is in many ways, it suffers, inevitably, to some extent, from the fact that much of the information in it was collected up to twenty years ago. Indeed, on page 172 we read "In general, our study of Sana'a does not aim to take us beyond September 1962". Since then a fair amount of research has been done, e.g. on the tribal structure, social customs etc, which would have enriched the book and made it of more interest to the general reader. For example, in the fascinating chapter on "Sana'a Dress 1920-75" (chapter 25) we are told on p.536, referring to marriage, mourning and other ceremonies in which women take part "It is impossible in this chapter to deal with these ceremonies in any detail". Why? Would not a chapter on weddings, dances etc. which foreigners, Christians included, are frequently invited to attend, have been of considerably more value than, say, that on the Statute of Sana'a dating from 1716, chapter 13? But of this more later.

And so to a chapter by chapter analysis. Chapter 1 is entitled "A Geographical Sketch", but in fact it covers climate, plant geography, water supply and other related subjects, every one of which could, I think, have been covered in more detail. Three brief examples will suffice. In winter (p 14 & 16) frost is by no means unknown, and I experienced, between 1977 and 1981, several violent hail storms, with hailstones larger than marbles. The plant geography of the Sana'a plain (p.16) is so rich and varied that a short note by one of the botanists from the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, who made a detailed survey of the Yemen Arab Republic in 1977 would have been welcome. Similarly, the section on water supply (p.17-18) should have been brought up to date, to describe the increasingly serious depletion of the water table since 1972, resulting from agricultural expansion and the widespread drilling of wells by foreign companies, which has almost entirely replaced digging by hand.

Chapter 2, a fascinating and remarkably well researched essay on the *ghayls* (subterranean water channels), is typical of the immense, painstaking labour that has gone into all parts of this book. All the *ghayls* (the Arabic plural generally used, incidentally, is *ghiyul*, not *aghyal* as given in the text) feeding Sana'a are described in great detail, most of the chapter dealing with historical references to these channels. But it is unfortunate that the writer did not include the splendid short *ghayl* feeding 'Asir near the main Sana'a-Hodaidah road (see map on p.21) which still flows for most of the year with great force, unlike some of the others mentioned, which have not been so well maintained. One very small error: the *ghayl* is known as *qanat* or kariz in Iran and *falaj* (pl. *aflaj*) in Oman and the United Arab Emirates, as correctly given on p.19; the reference to the Yemeni equivalents on p.17b is therefore incorrect.

Chapter 3, entitled "Calendars, the Time of the Day and Mathematical Astronomy", is a delightful excursion into the past, most of it irrelevant today. It is particularly unfortunate that the section on Festivals, p.33, could not have been brought up to date: most people in Sana'a have probably never even heard of the Id al Nasr or the Id Jum'at Sana'a, and the Id al Fitr should, of course, be referred to as the festival celebrating the end of Ramadan. The two greater secular festivals, 13 June, commemorating Ibrahim al Hamdi's coup in 1974, and 26 September, the Yemen Arab Repubic's National Day, marking the beginning of the revolution in 1962 that ultimately overthrew the Imams, are totally omitted!

It would be presumptuous of me to offer any comment on chapters 4 (Pre-Islamic Sana'a), 5 (Sana'a The 'Protected'), 6 (The Church of Sana'a), but when we come to the arrival of the Zaydis in chapter 8, I cannot help feeling — with the greatest respect for the scholarship of Professor Serjeant — that an opportunity has been missed. The origins of the Zaydis, how their creed came to the Yemen in the first place, their establishment in Sa'adah (their first real power base) in about 893 AD, and, above all, how Zaydism differs from the other Shi'a offshoots — none of these important points is covered adequately, if at all (see p.50a). For example, it is surely relevant to record that the Zaydis add to the Call to Prayer the words "*Hayy ila khair al 'amal*" (literally "come to good works") after the traditional "*Hayy ila al falah*". Since the Zaydi-Shafei split had such important repercussions on the history of the country, one could have wished for a clearer definition of the dividing line between the two sects. (p.50b) In fact, this runs well north of Dhamar, only 30 or so miles south of Sana'a. Although Zaydi-Shafei hostility has diminished over the years, it is by no means dead: many drivers from the south, for example, show the

greatest reluctance to visit the Zaydi north, and one I know described the Zaydis as "worse than the Jews". Chapter 9 is a valuable outline of the writings of Western writers on Sana'a from 1510-1962; then we have three chapters (10-12) on the urban development of Sana'a, its administrative organisation and "the market, business life and occupations and the legality and sale of stimulants" — all splendid stuff. But I must pause at the fascinating section on *qat* chewing (p.171-175). This contains much valuable information about this extraordinary habit, which seems to dominate the private life of most Yemenis; and foreign visitors have discovered that if they are to make any progress with their Yemeni friends, socially or commercially, they must attend the daily *qat* sessions described on p.171b. The author might have mentioned that many Yemenis now spend up to a third, even more, of their income on *qat*, which is an indispensable sequel to a luncheon party. The price of a bunch (*rabta* — a common word which ought to have been included) often exceeds Yemeni Riyals 50 (some six pounds sterling at present rates of exchange), and it is by no means uncommon for a rich host to spend £120 or more to provide *qat* for all his guests. The price varies in accordance with the quality: for some of the better varieties, like Rida'i which comes from the town of Rida' in the West, one may have to pay nearly £10 for a bunch. In many areas, the cultivation of *qat* is encroaching rapidly at the expense of coffee. A final point: in the last paragraphs of this section (p.175a) the writer refers to an ordinance of 1977 banning the consumption, sale and purchase of *qat* in Aden. In fact, this has now been replaced by a law confining *qat* chewing in the Peoples' Democratic Republic of Yemen to Thursday and Friday (the modern weekend).

After two chapters on the Statute of Sana'a (p.13 & 14) to which I have already referred, we come to an exhaustive "Analysis of the Sana'a Market Today", followed by an equally detailed and scholarly presentation of "The Buildings of the Suq (Market)", chapters 14 and 15. These two chapters, extending to 52 pages, with copious black and white photographs and drawings, are one of the high water marks of this book. Probably no other Arab market in the world has been so painstakingly described.

Chapter 16, "The Mint of Sana'a: a historical outline" will fascinate the very small band of scholars who can apreciate it. This is followed by three chapters on the mosques of Sana'a (17-19). Here, once more, it would be the height of presumption for me to do anything but doff my hat in humble awe and wonder. Many of the mosques in the Yemen Arab Republic, particularly the older ones, are accessible to Christians if they remove their shoes. Not so the Great Mosque in Sana'a. I managed to peep at its interior from one of the doorways, but was asked, with great politeness, to leave, despite protestations, in Arabic, of my admiration for Islam and its architecture. How sad it is that this superb presentation could not have been extended to cover the hundreds of other beautiful, historical mosques in the Yemen Arab Republic, most of them dating from Ottoman times, some (e.g. that at Dhafar east of Raidah) even from the 12 century.

In Chapter 20 we have a splendid historical survey of the Jews in Sana'a. But it would have been relevant to mention that historians regard the Jews as having come first to the Yemen in AD70, after the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem by Titus. And the author could have added that a small group of Jews remained in Sa'adah, in the north, after the exodus of the majority to Israel in 1949/50 "on the backs of eagles" in fulfillment of Israel's prophesy.

Chapter 21, "The Hindu Baniyan Merchants and Traders", calls for no comment. Then come two more magnificent chapters (22 and 23) on the houses and baths of Sana'a. And once more one finds oneself overwhelmed by the wealth of scholarly detail, supported by page after page of superb photograph, including eleven in colour. In the chapter on houses, which describes in the greatest detail the layout of the different rooms and their furnishings. I found the section on construction (p.468-484) particularly fascinating. Despite the advent of the ferro-concrete building, most houses and even office blocks are still built of stone, much of it brought to Sana'a from the quarries of Qa'adah near Ibb, and boys and men are still to be seen chipping away at the great blocks of stone — white, black, blue, grey and even russet from dawn till sunset. The toughness and cheerfulness of the children so employed never ceased to amaze me. These modern houses are built entirely of stone, contrary to the impression given on p.436. The chapter should have included a reference to the widespread use of crushed stone blocks (*blukat*) manufacatured by machines which one sees all over the city. These "factories" (*masana' al blukat*) are tended, in the main, by men who come in from the countryside, camping in little huts made of the blocks.

To me, the greatest joy in this book — and there are so many — is the chapter on the public bath. Having been to one of the great baths, the Hammam Shukr, in the company of some Yemeni friends, I can support the accuracy of the detailed description of the various rituals, except that, on my visit, these were somewhat simplified. But the overwhelming impression one gets is of the dignity and decorum of the bathing process: nothing smacking in any way of immodesty would be tolerated, and I was told never to look at my fellow bathers below the shoulder! This is surely the finest study of the traditional Arab *hammam* ever to appear in English.

And so the last three chapters (24-26), on Children's Games, Dress, and Food and Cooking. And here, as I mentioned earlier, we come to the first, probably the only major, defect of the book: the lack of any but the most cursory reference to any of the various ceremonies — weddings, circumcisions, funerals, the observance of Ramadhan and the Eid festivities, dances and so on — that are still so very much a part of the Sana'a scene, often involving foreigners. So why treat children's games so fully? In over four years in the Yemen, involving quite extensive travel, I was never aware that these were played to any extent, whereas one was frequently coming across dancers. And yet the only reference to the important *bar'ah* and other dances — and the variety of these dances in the Yemen is amazing — is in a footnote on p.521. But I would be churlish if I did not single out for further praise the splendidly comprehensive and accurate coverage of Yemeni dishes and their preparation.

Finally, I regret the absence of a more comprehensive selection of courtesy expressions than that given on p.543. For example, in reply to the conventional "*tisbah ila al khair*" (good night) one is expected to say "*wa enta min ahl al khair*" (you are one of good people). And why could we not have had even a short piece about the peculiarities of Yemeni Arabic, for example the use of the double plural (*biyutat, turuqat* etc) and of words of Levantine origin (e.g. *burra*, outside or backwards) not found elsewhere in Arabia? ■

Martin Buckmaster

Arts of the Islamic Book

The collection of Islamic art, accumulated through the years by Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, is "one of the most important in private hands," according to Anthony Welch and Stuart Cary Welch, the curators who recently organized a selective exhibition of his treasures for New York's Asia Society and are the joint authors of this book.

In his introduction, Stuart Welch (unrelated to, but a longtime friend and collaborator of the co-author) points out that Muslim collectors of Islamic art are few in number and that their

acquisitions are usually highly specialized. Prince Sadruddin's aesthetic taste, however, reflects his broad range of interests as well as his sensitivity to beauty in many media and of diverse origins. A visit to his home, the Château de Bellerive near Geneva, immediately reveals the Prince's approach to art. Amidst furniture, for the most part of the 16th and 17th centuries, and objects of such diversified provenance as Africa, Tibet and the Eskimo areas of North America hang paintings by De Chirico and Munch interspersed with works by Muslim masters from all parts of the Islamic world.

Prince Sadruddin is the younger son of the late Aga Khan who, in 1957, was succeeded in his role as religious leader of the twelve million Ismaili Shia Muslims by his grandson, Prince Karim — Sadrudin's nephew. Sadruddin himself, however, has continued his family's tradition of service and leadership in the various functions he has undertaken for the United Nations and its affiliated agencies. He also serves as president of New York's Council on Islamic Affairs and is the founder of two organizations that bring together specialists from various fields to discuss problems, such as the spread of nuclear weapons, that gravely threaten the future of mankind.

The genesis of Prince Sadruddin's important collection of Islamic art lies in the modest and hesitant purchases he made during the years that he was a student at Harvard some three decades ago. During the 1950's, New York was a propitious source for initiating such a collection since several of the city's art dealers always had on hand large and ever-renewed stocks of miniatures, calligraphies and objects, most of outstanding quality. On his visits to the city, the young student would invariably forage through the crammed metal cabinets of Adrienne Minassian's store room on Manhattan's 55th Street. Some of the cabinets contained drawings and miniatures of Timurid, Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal times, others were jammed with folios from the Qur'an and other volumes, calligraphed in scripts that range from Kufic to Shikastah. Pottery in the deep blues and greens of the Timurids, Safavid and Ottoman eras was stacked in still other cabinets, while architectural fragments, including bits of stucco from the Alhambra, littered the floor. In addition to making occasional purchases, some of which are included in the Asia Society's exhibit, the young Prince used such opportunities to educate his eye and thus gradually define his personal taste. Another excellent source for collectors at that time was H. Khan Monif, the son of an Iranian general, who had come to New York in the 1930's. Arriving with a large stock of Luristan and Islamic bronzes, pottery, glass and miniatures, Mr. Monif set himself up in business. His trade was brisk since he set his prices to include only a mark-up over the price he had paid, regardless of variations in the quality and historical importance of the objects he had for sale. These indices he was content to leave to the determination of specialists, restricting his own concern to making a steady profit. Visitors to his premises, however, could also count on other benefits, since Mr. Monif had become a specialist in detecting forgeries and retouching, and such shortcomings in a miniature or an object for sale were always pointed out to potential customers, often accompanied by tales denigrating his rival dealers.

This then was Prince Sadruddin's initial schooling in the acquisition of Islamic art. After completing his studies at Harvard, the Prince spent more time in Europe, studying the collections of others and buying from dealers on the continent as well as from auctions. Commensurate with his increasing experience came improvements in the quality of his collection. And as interest in Islamic art spread, specialized dealerships sprang up in London, Paris and New York, with sleek, spotlit galleries replacing the jumbled storerooms of the 1950's. In this new environment, important dynastic collections, such as that of the Rothchilds, were put up for sale and, with such superb works suddenly put on the market — and offered in quantity, private collectors eagerly bid against one another. Many of Prince Sadruddin's prime acquisitions, including folios from Shah Ismail II's *Shahamah* (Book of Kings) and such treasures of Indian miniature painting as "The Geneology of Emperor Jahangir" and the portrait of Shah Abbas, were purchased when these private collections were broken up.

The trait that makes the Welches' volume on the exhibition particularly valuable to the general reader is the clarity of the explanations they provide regarding the historical and social context of the paintings. The book begins with a focus on the key role calligraphy has played in Muslim artistic expression. As the authors point out: "In most periods the scribe ... occupied a more exalted position than the painter, whose figural art, due to orthodox strictures against 'graven images,' was almost entirely restricted to expressions of secular culture. It was the scribe who could perform the most pious of arts, the copying of God's words."

In the discussion of Ottoman art which follows, the authors maintain that, although the Turkish sultans could lure talent from all parts of the Muslim world, the art of the empire very soon acquired its own aesthetic momentum. In calligraphy, some of Islam's finest masters, working under Ottoman patronage, formulated styles that endured for centuries. Court painters were commissioned to illustrate not only epic poetry but also the conquest that marked the expansion of the empire. Its rulers and key officials were commerorated in a brilliant school of portraiture. But Ottoman concerns stretched beyond mere victories. As the Welches have commented, they "were equally fascinated with the content of their vast state — its geography, history, structure, peoples, and social strata, and, as in Mughal India, painters delineated the expansion of the empire and the forms of its myriad elements with an exactitude that delights historians of society as well as art." It was an art which, nevertheless, in time changed course. While, in the early centuries, Ottoman painting was characterized by naturalistic depictions of military campaigns, court ceremonies and official portraits, at the beginning of the 18th century, the sophisticated taste of Sultan Ahmad III (1703-30) veered it from such formal content toward, as the book points out, "themes of worldly elegance, courtly amusements and idle beauty," a fashion that had been set by 17th century Iranian painting.

The third section of the volume is devoted to the art of the book in Iran. By the late 9th century, some 250 years after coming under Muslim rule, Iran had emerged as one of the dominant centres of Islamic culture, particularly in the realms of calligraphy and ceramics. Although decades were required for artistic activity to recover from the Mongol invasions of the early 13th century, Iran's Ilkhan rulers, descendents of the Mongols, soon became enthusiastic patrons of calligraphy and manuscript illustration, and their reign later came to be regarded as "the formative period of Iranian figural painting." The Timurid rulers of the 15th century continued the tradition of royal patronage, and Tabriz and Herat came to be the most important of the many Iranian centres where painting flourished.

With the advent of the Safavid dynasty in 1501, Iran turned from Sunnism to Shia'ism. During the first two decades of his long reign (1524-76), Shah Tahmasp was a fervent patron of the arts, and it was during this period that the "most sumptuous manuscript of the Shahnamah ever produced and one of the greatest treasures of world art" was created by the artists of his atelier. In the middle of his reign, however, the Shah lost interest in the arts, thereby prompting a number of court artists to emigrate to the Ottoman and Mughal empires where they were influential in creating new styles for their new patrons.Under the later Safavid monarchs however art came to be

ptronized in social circles wider than that of the court. Thus, in the late 16th and 17th centuries — in addition to shahs and princes — merchants, officials, professional and military men could also be counted on for commissions. This widening support for artistic creation brought with it a change of style: illustrations of lengthy manuscripts tended to be abandoned in favour of less expensive, topically-unrelated paintings and drawings destined to be bound in albums. A similar trend occurred in India during these centuries. The result in both countries, according to the authors, was a "heightened sense of self-awareness, expressed through more signed or ascribed work." In the 17th century, Iranian painting came under the influence of Eurpean and, to a lesser extent, Indian art. But it was two centuries later that the impact of European influences, combined with the introduction of printing, finally caused the traditional arts of calligraphy and painting to embark on a serious decline.

One of the most interesting paintings in Prince Sadruddin's collection is "Marks of Love," a mid-17th century creation by Afzal al-Husayni. It was evidently the custom for a suitor of the time to inflict deep burns on various parts of his body, wounds which he would then dispay to his beloved. She, in turn, would provide him with silk and linen bandages which he would wear until the wounds healed. Eventually, the suitor who could manifest the most scars, endured in the name of love, would be the man chosen by the damsel for marriage. As the volume comments: "The young man in this painting must be a prime matrimonial candidate. He is a model of ideal late Safavid beauty: smooth, slightly puffy, round face; softly curving arms, legs and torso that disavow all implication of muscle; almond-shaped eyes; curving eyebrows that meet over a straight but not too prominent nose; reddish, cupid's bow lips; a hint of double chin; and a listless sensuous posture. His lady is slimmer but no less soft and languorous, and both equally are fashion plates in dress."

The final section of the book is devoted to India. Although Islam had gained a foothold on the subcontinent with the Arab conquest of Sind in the early 8th century and had become permanently entrenched with the establishment of the Delhi sultanate in 1191, it was only after the late 13th century that a distinctive Indian Islamic culture began to evolve. And during the centuries of Mughal rule (1526-40 and 1555-1858) developments in the arts were very much influenced by the personality, aspirations and aesthetic bent of its rulers.

Attracted by India's fabled wealth, Babur left his Central Asian stronghold to conquer Delhi in 1526 and thus became the first Mughal sovereign. The reign of his indolent and erratic son, Humayun, however, was marked by setbacks and he had to take brief refuge in Iran before re-invading India in 1555. While the guest of Shah Tahmasp, Humayun became acquainted with some of the Safavid painters whom he subsequently invited to India. Although these Iranian masters were instrumental in launching Mughal painting, the Welches explain that, in its subsequent development, Mughal painting could be distinguished from Iranian in that "its Persian elegance (was) amplified by the figural fullness, naturalism, and sense of depth characteristic of Mughal painting."

The nascent Mughal empire and its artistic characteristics at last took on a definitive form during the reign of Humayun's brilliant son, Akbar (1556-1605). The territories of the empire were expanded during this half century to include nearly two-third of India and came to be administered by an efficient centralized bureaucrary. A relentless builder, Akbar ordered the construction of new cities, mosques, forts and palaces, thus transforming India's architectural landscape. Although himself illiterate, the emperor generously patronized literature and throughout his reign maintained a vast staff of painters, calligraphers and other artisans concerned with the production of manuscripts. Akbar, thus, according to the authors, "oversaw the emergence of a Mughal synthesis of Iranian, indigenous Indian and European styles of painting." They also point out that, from its beginnings, Mughal painting was "dynasty-oriented and inclined to realism and truthful observation of the natural world."

Akbar's son, Jahangir (1605-1627) was less flamboyant and devoted his reign to consolidating the gains made by his father. He was less interested in architecture and he took steps to reduce the size of the enormous imperial atelier, encouraging artists to seek quality rather than quantity and to concentrate on single-page paintings rather than illustration of lengthy manuscripts. The volume points out the difference in their characters: "Akbar had been fascinated with the depiction of action; Jahangir focussed more on forms and their inner essence, and the production of his atelier tended to portraits — highly personal studies of people, animals or plants that reflect the emperor's refined taste and his eager fascination with the forms of life around him."

With the next ruler, Shahjahan (1627-1657), "the inner warmth and vitality of earlier Mughal painting," the Welches explain, "seems restrained, replaced by crystalline formality. Like the immaculate beauty of the Taj Mahal with its jewelled inlays, pictorial arts take on a lapidary aspect, immobile, set and the people depicted seem to move with increasingly courtly dignity."

But although the Mughal empire was at its apogee of wealth, bitter rivalries for power and civil wars had started to sap its strength. The reign of Aurangzeb (1657-1707) was marked more by a concentration on piety and concern for the empire than by patronage of the arts — an interest that the emperor abandoned early in his reign. Aurangzeb briefly brought almost the entire subcontinent under Mughal rule, only soon to see various Muslim states again shrugging off centralized control. With the Mughal empire weakened, European powers, which had long coveted India's wealth, vied with one another for influence in the area. In the late 18th century, Britain successfully rebuffed her main rival, France, and increasingly strengthened her hold until complete domination over the subcontinent was achieved. But even during the period when India came under the shadow of Europe, her "pictorial tradition remained vital, preserving past achievement and absorbing and transforming the new" is the concluding assessment made by this very perceptive volume. ■

Irene Ertugrul

A New Look at Islamic Arts



The first important Islamic sale of 1983 was in the Nouveau Drouot in Paris on March 10.A splendid collection of Islamic books and manuscripts belonging to a mysterious Mr. X were auctioned in a lively and relaxed atmosphere by Monsieur Picard. It was the largest collection of books on Islamic Art that has been auctioned in the past four years.

In London the Islamic season will start with the Sotheby's sale of coins, 18-20 April. The manuscripts and miniatures sales are also scheduled for the 20th April. Christie's are not planning a Spring sale this year, and will be holding their Islamic sale on 23rd June.

The exhibition Vers l'Orient at the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, (March to April 1983) shows how the West is casting a new look at Islamic Art. The manuscript section is interesting in that it combines science, history, literature and religious books to give an integrated view of the Muslim civilization from the fourteenth century. The manuscripts are not all originals, but copies and facsimiles are used effectively to give a historical perspective of the Ottoman Empire. There is also a selection of coins, costumes and musical instruments.

For over a decade now dealers and experts in Islamic art have been struggling to establish and identify trends for this Cinderella of Culture. The patronage of scholar-collectors like E.G. Browne and F.R. Martin seems to be a relic of the past, as academics descend in the economic scale and the affluent decline in taste. In the West the gap left by rich collectors has been adequately filled by museums and foundations.

Islamic art, however, is still homeless and undervalued despite the national resources and individual wealth found in the Muslim world. The major sales organised by Sotheby's and Christie's in October 1982 indicate clearly that Islamic material is on the market; and the fact that many lots failed to reach the reserve shows that Muslim money is still unimpressed by manuscript and miniature.

Wealth develops many immunities but it would be interesting to find out why Islamic finance is ultra-resistant to the written word. This is ironic for a religion born with the exquisite phrase (Read in the name of your God). Sotheby's, aware of this dyslexia, launched a 'spectacular Gala Sale', hoping to attract desert-dwellers. The main salerooms in Bond Street were draped and dressed in priceless carpets and rare textiles, a special Sunday viewing was arranged, and on the whole it was magnificent theatre, giving much freedom of movement to manuscript viewers next door, who had ample opportunity to look at the precious Ava-Dufferin Shahnamah which had to be bought in.

It was evident from these sales that the Persian market was buoyant again, but the expected Arab response was not visible. However, the opening of the Kuwait Museum early this year has added a new perspective to Islamic Collections in the Arab World.

Another very significant event has been the Cornell University publication of the *Arts of the Islamic Book*, which documents the superb collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. Today the two remarkable Muslim Collections are those of Prince Sadruddin and Shaikh Nasser. Perhaps these will encourage other discerning individuals, and bring some kind of realistic valuation to the Islamic art market.

From the varied and often important material that was on sale last autumn it was clear that the life of Islamic art is in the *word'*. Ottoman tughra, Mamluk metal, Kashan carpet all proclaimed the supremacy of the word. A meaningful upsurge in the Islamic market will begin when Muslims recognise the important symbol of an *Ummi* (unlettered) Prophet transforming and vitalising a society with the power of the word. In this sense also, the Muslim Rennaissance should emerge from the Holy Qur'an.

It is obvious, yet needs to be stated that the nucleus of an Islamic collection must be the Qur'an. It is fortunate that hand-written manuscripts of the Qur'an are easily available, and often less expensive than some contemporary printed books.

This means that great wealth is not necessary to become a collector of Islamic art. Last year a nineteenth century hand-written Qur'an was sold at auction for £27. That such works of devotion and beauty should wander, neglected refugees from saleroom to saleroom, is a sad comment on Muslim apathy. There are not many Katibs now who will dedicate a lifetime to writing out the Qur'an; and all these manuscripts need to be preserved and valued. It was a happy day for Islamic art when the important Qait Bay Qur'an was bought at Sotheby's and donated to the Regents Park Mosque in London.

For visitors to London it would be interesting to see some of the Islamic galleries. Ahuan, Aaron, Mansour, Hadji Baba, Mahboubian, Khalili, and Bashir Mohammed are all in the vicinity of Bond Street. These are all rather upmarket, and have good collections of ceramics, glass, metal, manuscripts and miniatures. There are other more modest collections scattered all over London, besides the numerous carpet dealers on every high street. London is still the centre of the Islamic art market, and it would be helpful if there were some guide to the various dealers and experts who specialise in Islamic art■

Yasmin Hosain

members of a higher social class, who were given the privilege of performing their ablutions in private. To the south of the Bath is a large building known as the Assembly Hall, which was possibly used as an audience chamber. Its main feature is a stately hall (almost 90 ft in breadth), flanked by the ruins of a finely paved room and a walled courtyard.

It has been suggested that the preoccupation with personal cleanliness, undoubtedly connected with ceremonial ablutions that so marked Indus Valley Civilization makes it likely that the area was ruled by a priest-king, or perhaps by a monarchy sustained by a priesthood.[1] In fact, the famous stone and paste statuette unearthed at Moenjodaro may well be the portrait of a priestly ruler. His eyes are half-closed, as if in meditation, and his left shoulder is uncovered — a way of showing reverence that continued in India into the lifetime of Buddha (c.563-483 B.C.), long after the Indus Valley Civilization had passed. On the other hand, the absence of important temples may be an indication that worship was considered largely a private matter. Many small images, in bronze, clay and stone, have been found at Moenjodaro. The majority of them are of a mother-goddess whose power it was to bestow fertility on men, animals and plants. Associated with her are a variety of carved sexual symbols. Other gods are also depicted and some of these may be prototypes of later Indian dieties.

The presence of huge granaries in the citadel area has given rise to a series of assumptions. One scholar[2] calls the granary "a sort of Public Treasury," a central storing arrangement in Moenjodaro "from where grain was disbursed to finance barter trade with lands far and near, as well as to meet local requirements in times of famine." Another author[3] speculates still further and argues that food storage was a keystone for the maintenance of social order since authorities would have paid labourers, either free or enslaved, in kind. At Moenjodaro, the granary was a wooden superstructure resting upon 27 brickwork supports, a design which facilitated preservation by allowing air to circulate. While Harappa had two huge granaries, complemented by five rows of working platforms and clusters of barracks, most likely inhabited by slaves whose lot it was to grind flour for the city's inhabitants.

Indus trade with other areas, in raw materials and luxury items, was extensive. Many imported goods have been unearthed during excavations at Moenjodaro. A brick dockyard and warehouses at the coastal city of Lothal, facilitated overseas commerce. From this port, vessels also sailed to Bahrain, which served as the centre of exchange for articles from India and Western Asia. The primacy of Indus merchants in this trade is reflected in the fact that it was their system of weights and measures that was utilized in commercial transactions conducted on this cosmopolitan island.

As obscure as the origins of the Indus Valley Civilization are the factors which led to its effacement. Archeology has shown that after 1900 B.C. the cities had begun to degenerate. Houses had ceased to be meticulously constructed but were rather hastily assembled from old bricks. The population of Moenjodaro declined sharply from its estimated peak of 40,000 and the preoccupation of its inhabitants seemed to lie in building up the city's level so that it could withstand renewed flooding. Accompanying the deterioration of city life, farmers in the surrounding area faced increased hardships due to overgrazing, deforestation and perhaps neglect in maintaining irrigation works. Pressure from hit-and-run raids by Aryans, a people who were infiltrating the subcontinent from Eastern Iran, was another possible factor in hastening the ruin of Indus communities.

Studies have determined that by 1700 B.C. centralized rule of the Indus region had ended and its various centres had embarked upon an autonomous existence. Within the following two centuries, however, the entire Indus region came under Aryan control and thereafter it was the Aryans who imposed upon it their own stamp.

Undoubtedly, a wealth of information concerning Indus civilization still lies buried at Moenjodaro since only one-third of the site has been excavated. But before further large-scale excavations are undertaken, there is a pressing need to eliminate the conditions that have caused such damage to monuments already unearthed.

One of the most serious factors threatening Moenjodaro is the perniciously high level of ground-water, which has risen from a depth of 25 feet below ground level in 1922 to its present height of 5 feet below ground level in October 1981, to 12 feet below in May 1982. Ironically, it was man's pursuit of abundance through recourse to modern agricultural techniques that was responsible for this striking change. Artificial irrigation was first introduced to Sind and the Lower Indus plains in the 1930's. Within two decades, however, it began to pose a serious threat by making it necessary to withdraw waterlogged and salt-infested lands from cultivation and by seriously damaging housing as well. Faced with this urgent economic crisis, it is understandable that the authorities could spare little concern for the fact that the monuments at Moenjodaro were also crumbling under the impact of altered hydrological conditions.

Because the foundations of buildings at Moenjodaro stand permanently in water-logged soil, there is a continuous rise in moisture, through capillary action, upward into the brickwork, where it sometimes reaches the height of 30 feet above ground level. The moisture itself quickly evaporates due to the high temperatures and aridity prevailing in the region, but the dissolved salts it carries remain in the pores of the bricks. As these salts crystallize they cause the bricks to exfoliate and eventually fall into dust.

Above the ground, Moenjodaro's unearthed buildings are continually attacked by wind, sun and rain. A further threat to this priceless monument is the fact that the capricious Indus River, running very close to the site, is slowly changing its course in a direction that would inundate the excavations.

It was only in the 1960's that the Government of Pakistan could give its attention to the importance of preserving this outstanding archeological heritage. Preliminary studies were made but it was soon realized that the costs of implementing effective measures to preserve Moenjodaro were beyond the country's resources. An appeal was therefore made to UNESCO, both for technical advice and for financial aid.

After a series of experts had examined the problems of the site, a master plan was drawn up in 1972 through the joint efforts of foreign and Pakistani specialists. As described by Dr. S.A. Naqvi, at that time Pakistan's Director of Archeology and Museums, the plan deals with the problems "in three directions, namely ground-water control, protection against the Indus River, and physical conservation of the structural remains. The groundwater is to be lowered in three stages. In the first stage, a ring of 14 tubewells are to be installed, which will lower the water-table by 20 feet. Twelve additional wells, in the same circle, will help reduce the water-table by up to 32 feet in the second stage and, finally, 30 tubewells, installed in a second ring, should be capable of maintaining the watertable at 65 feet below ground level by operating at 74 per cent operation factor."[4] When the water-table is lowered to 65 feet, not only will existing excavations be completely protected from further damage, but deeper excavations can be made to delve into the pre-Indus history of the site.

To deflect the Indus River permanently from its current movement toward the site, the installation of seven training spurs is planned, but this phase of the conservation effort will not be started until the programme to lower the groundwater table is completed.

A variety of measures are already being taken to repair and protect the monuments that have been excavated. These include the underpinning of decomposed portions of structures to

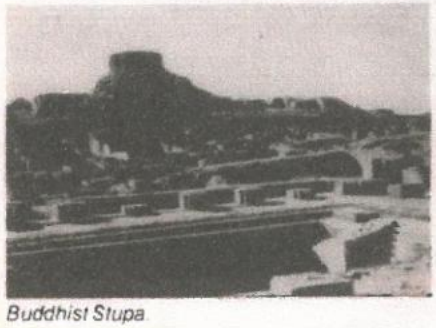
prevent their collapse, the provision of damp-proof courses to block further capillary rise of groundwater into brickwork and the coating of excavations with a layer of mud-plaster. In reply to protests that such a coating would hide the attractive red-brick colour of the ruins, specialists have pointed out that the original construction techniques at Moenjodaro had included the provision of a protective coating over the brickwork, only a trace of which, however, remains.

Early in 1983, two of the 14 tubewells required for the first stage of the ground-water control programme had been installed and were in operation. The additional 12 will be installed as soon as sufficient supplies of fibreglass are received. Considerable progress has also been made in providing the various civil engineering and electrification facilities needed to operate the tubewells. As a first stage in the plan to reduce the drifting of salts and their carriage by wind at the site, extensive tests have been made of pollen present in the soil with a view to ascertaining which salt-tolerant trees and grasses should be planted there.

The total cost of measures that are indispensible if Moenjodaro is to be saved from decay and eventual disappearance will come to $17 million, but by late 1982 only $2.7 million had been donated to the UNESCO-managed Preservation of Moenjodaro. Trust Fund which had been established in 1974.

Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, UNESCO's Director-General, visited Moenjodaro early in March 1983 and from the site he made an impassioned appeal to the international community and to private donors for additional contributions. He also pointed out the need to "sensitize world opinion" as to the importance of Moenjodaro which, although it is a key archeological milestone in man's social evolution, has received all too little publicity throughout the world.

Various programmes, however, are in the planning stage to make Moenjodaro better known. A group of journalists will be invited to visit the site, with the expenses being shared by UNESCO and the Government of Pakistan. Specialists in museum exhibits are currently collaborating with various institutions in Pakistan to prepare a travelling exhibition on Moenjodaro. The main feature of the exhibition will be a display of brickwork from the site, the theme being the link between the Indus Valley Civilization and the present-day urban life. To supplement the brickwork display, photographs, a plan of Moenjodaro and explanatory texts will be mounted on free-standing panels and perhaps be accompanied by a model of the city. In addition, a "museum kit" is envisaged to provide background material for teachers and school-children visiting the exhibition. Replicas of some of the outstanding artefacts found at Moenjodaro are currently being amde by craftsmen in Pakistan and these will be put on sale. Books and pamphlets on Moenjodaro, outlining its history and its current plight, will also be widely distributed.



Buddhist Stupa.

It is hoped that this combination of programmes and efforts will make this most remarkable site of the birth of a civilization better known to governments and people throughout the world. Only a wider awareness of the value of Moenjodaro can stimulate the flow of contributions so necessary for its preservation. ■

Irene Ertugrul

Footnotes:

[1] Arthur Cotterell, "The Indus Civilization," *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Civilization* (edited by Arthur Cotterell). Windward, London, 1980, p.181.

[2] Pervin T. Nasir, "Barter System in the Indus Valley Civilization," *Proceedings of International Symposium on Moenjodaro, 1973* (edited by Ahmad Nabi Khan). National Book Foundation, Karachi, 1975, p.122.

[3] Cotterell, op. cit., p.179.

[4] S.A. Naqvi, "Introduction," also in *Proceedings of International Symposium on Moenjodaro, 1973*, pp.31-32.

◀ Islamic Art in Malaysia

Conclusion

The Muslim traders not only introduced Islam into Malaysia but they also made many cultural contributions. The culture of the Muslims in this country is the blend of various influences — Indonesian, Indian, Persian, Arabian and Chinese. Indonesia and India contributed much to the early Islamic architecture as well as a heritage of inscribed stonework. The Arabs and the Persians provided trading skills, and introduced new musical instruments, as well as various artistic innovations, as can be seen in the glass and ceramic artifacts found at archaeological sites in Kedah.[19] From China came the pagoda-shaped towers upon which early mosques in Malaysia were modeled, as well as the usage of ceramic products.[20] This rich blend of historical influences, added to indigenous Malay traditions, has made the country's culture what it is today. ■

Notes

[1] Detailed documentation on this subject can be obtained from Fatimi S.Q., (1963); Majul, C.A., (1978) and Wan Hussein Azmi, (1980), pp.135-157.

[2] Special seminars organised both in Indonesia and Malaysia have not reached any definitive conclusions on this subject. See seminar papers on the coming of Islam to Indonesia, Jakarta, (1963); seminar papers on the coming and the spread of Islam to Acheh and Nusantara, Medan, (1980); and seminar papers on the coming and the expansion of Islam to Trengganu, Malaysia; see also *Utusan Malaysia*, 20 Mei 1981 and *Utusan Malayu*, 7 June 1981.

[3] Malaysia became an independent nation in 1957.

[4] See *Suma Oriental*, Vol.2, p.286 by Tome Pires; and see also *"Sejarah Masjid-masjid Dalam Negeri Melaka,"* p.16.

[5] See *The Arts of Islam*, p.31.

[6] Islam is the official religion of Malaysia but other religions can be freely practiced by other races in Malaysia. In this context, anything that had been produced and used by the Muslims in Malaysia can be regarded as Islamic art. In order to avoid any confusion on similar items which might also have been used by non-Muslims, this paper will concentrate on objects which are definitely of Islamic origin. In this case the deciding factor is the Islamic calligraphy.

[7] See David Talbot Rice, (1979), p.8.

[8] *Ibid*, p.9.

[9] See *The Arts of Islam*, *op.cit*. p.33

[10] For a detailed study of this inscribed stone, see Blagden C.O., "A note on the Trengganu Inscription", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 2(3), Dec. 1924, pp.258-263; Prof. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas; *The Correct Date of the Trengganu Stone*, Muzium Negara, 1970.

[11] See Linehan, W., "A History of Pahang", JMBRAS, Vol.14, pt.2 1936 pp 38-39 and Haji Buyung Adil, *Sejarah Pahang*, (1973), p.65. For a brief survey of ancient gravestones in Peninsula Malaysia, see Othman Mohd. Yatim, *Federation Museums Journal*, Vol.21, (New Series), 1976, pp.1-24 and see also *Arts of Asia*, September-October 1982.

[12] See Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, (1964), p.80.

[13] This mosque was moved to its present site in 1970 on the initiative of the Malaysian Historical Society. Its removal was due to the

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At a time when London is replete with rug exhibitions aimed to attract the many who attend the 4th International Oriental Carpet Conference, it is interesting to look back on those of earlier years and, of these, one in particular: Vienna, 1890.

Assiduous reading of rug literature will reveal to the perceptive that it was not till the second half of the 19th century that the rug trade really expanded into the sort of business that we, today, are accustomed to. This development was paralleled in many fields, and was undoubtedly triggered off by the growing prosperity of the ever increasing middle class. The new rich then, as their forebears earlier and as the new rich of today, wished to show off their newly acquired prosperity and this they did through the homes that they bought, and the furnishings which they lavished upon them. Of these, undoubtedly paintings and carpets were the most showy. And carpets had the added advantage of being both exotic, because of their oriental origin, and rather light on the pocket.

The perceptive will also have noticed that then, as now, the greatest single market for the Oriental Rug was Central Europe, except that in the late 19th century this area was rather bigger and (relatively) rather more prosperous than it is today for it also included the whole of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Indeed, it can probably be argued that culturally speaking the centre of gravity lay in Vienna rather than in Berlin. Thus it is not altogether surprising that the greatest exhibition of rugs till then was hosted by the Viennese, though it might come as a surprise to many to learn that from the evidence which has come down it was also the greatest single exhibition of rugs ever held anywhere.

The evidence to which we refer is to be found crystallised in the publications of the period. First there was the magnificent handbook to the exhibition proper, with all the exhibits listed country by country: so widely was the net cast that there was even a category for Japan! Of the items on loan of course most of the prestigious ones came from the aristocracies of Europe and from the extremely wealthy. But most of the others came from commercial houses such as Ph. Haas of Vienna (a firm which is still in business on a large scale, and still has a most excellent reputation!) and their goods were for sale. The handbook printed the price and these make very interesting reading today.

The second publication was issued over a period of years: it was a luxurious folio showing all the major carpets in monochrome, some two thirds of them repeated in full in colour and the others having a segment only repeated in colour and this segment tipped in over a corner of the monochrome. The calibre of this colour printing was such that one could believe that one was studying the textile itself and not a printed illustration. By way of introduction the Museum had commissioned a series of papers, all but one of which were issued in the first fascicule. And the whole was issued in a limited edition: 200 in German, 100 in English and 100 in French. The papers themselves were subsequently re-issued in book form in German only. The missing paper was the one on the History of Oriental Carpets Before 1800 which had been commissioned from F.R. Martin, then one of the world's greatest art historians. It is, indeed, a measure of his stature that he should have felt obliged to indulge in very extensive research in the field before he committed himself to paper, so that his own paper did not appear until 1908, by which time it had grown into a whole volume almost as bulky as the original folios. This too was lavishly illustrated in colour, with pictures tipped in on text pages adjacent to the relevant texts and with two fascicules of additional full size plates. Lastly, the young Sarre under the editorship of von Scala, produced a supplementary folio of plates also in 1908.

From the bibliophile's angle there are several interesting comments that can be made. For example the illustrations in the first papers, showing carpet weaving in Sultanabad, were to be repeated endlessly almost as though no-one ever again went to Iran with a camera. The last such re-issue of the pictures known to us was in the handbook on Persia, issued by the British Admiralty in 1940 ... Then there is the matter of the numbering of the plates: in the original folios the publishers allotted the same roman number to both the monochrome AND the full page colour plate. This makes for some irritation when collating the contents and one has to remember that everything was in monochrome and that there either has to be an additional colour plate to go with it or that the monochrome itself has to have one or more coloured pieces tipped in. In addition one notes the irony of the Viennese having to call upon the services of a Swedish art historian to write the history, and then of publishing his work only in English despite the fact that its calibre was so great that it has remained in the forefront of rug scholarship for three quarters of a century.

Having got the bit between his teeth, Sarre did not let go so easily and by the 1920's he, together with Trenkwald, re-worked the original folios of plates and produced a revised second edition of these with the first part being published in 1926 and the second in 1928.

The works to which we refer are so splendid, and their reputation rightly so high, that they are have inevitably acquired nick-names. According to one's language the original folios of plates, with their supporting papers, are described as the "Vienna Books" ("Die Wienerwerke" or "Les Livres de Vienne"); the history itself is universally called the "Martin" and the second, revised, edition as the "Sarre & Trenkwald". Can there be any greater accolade?

All this series of works is obviously out of print and with only 400 copies of the original folios, and a mere 290 of the history, it is evident that copies are hard to come by. However most major Museums have them in their libraries where they can be studied though not, normally, borrowed. Much thought has been given to re-issuing them and indeed an American publisher has recently brought out a paperback with some fifty colour plates based upon the originals but their calibre is a mere fraction of what it ought to have been and the result is utterly disappointing. The grapevine has been buzzing for years with news of a second, revised, edition of the Martin but so far as we know, nothing has yet been crystallised. Those who would learn about rugs thus have to content themselves with more recent publications and, incidentally, do so at far less cost to themselves.



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ARTS Letters

ISLAMIC TOMBSTONES IN MALAYSIA

I enclose herewith a photograph of one of the early Islamic tombstones discovered in Malaysia. In the local tradition, these tombstones which can be found abundantly in the states of Malacca, Johore, and Pahang, were believed to originate from Cambay, Gujarat, Western coast of India. Perhaps there might be some truth in the local tradition because historically there have been trade connections between Malaysia and Gujarat specially when Malacca was at the height of its



supremacy in the 15th century. Indeed Gujarat carried on a flourishing trade with the Islamic maritime countries including Malaysia until the Portugese won control of the Indian Ocean in the early 16th century. That is about all I know about these tombstones. If you could publish this letter, perhaps your learned readers can shed more light on this.

Yours sincerely

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condition of the mosque after the Great Flood in 1966. The Executive Committee of the Malaysian Historical Society decided that this very ancient mosque should be preserved, not only because of its history but because of its unusual design.

[14] See Derek Hill and Oleg Grabar, *ibid.* (1964), p.81.

[15] See *The Art of Islam*, *op.cit.* p.157

[16] See Mubin Sheppard (1972), p.125.

[17] For more details regarding Malay weapons, see Mubin Sheppard, *Ibid.* pp.124-139

[18] See *The Art of Islam*, *op.cit.* p.65.

[19] See Alastair Lamb, (1961), p.26

[20] For more details about Chinese Islamic ceramics, their types and usage, see Othman, Mohd. Yatim, (1981).

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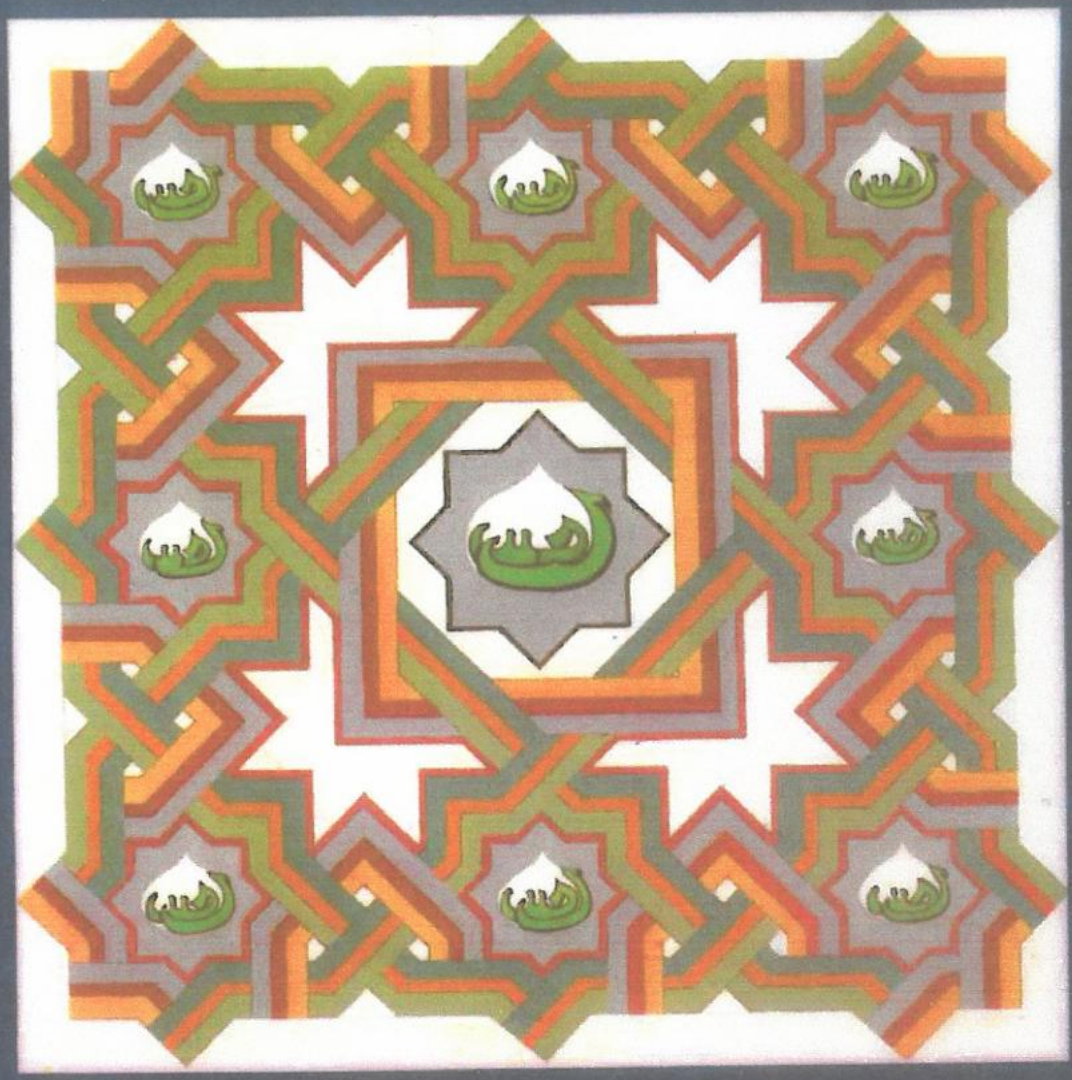
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