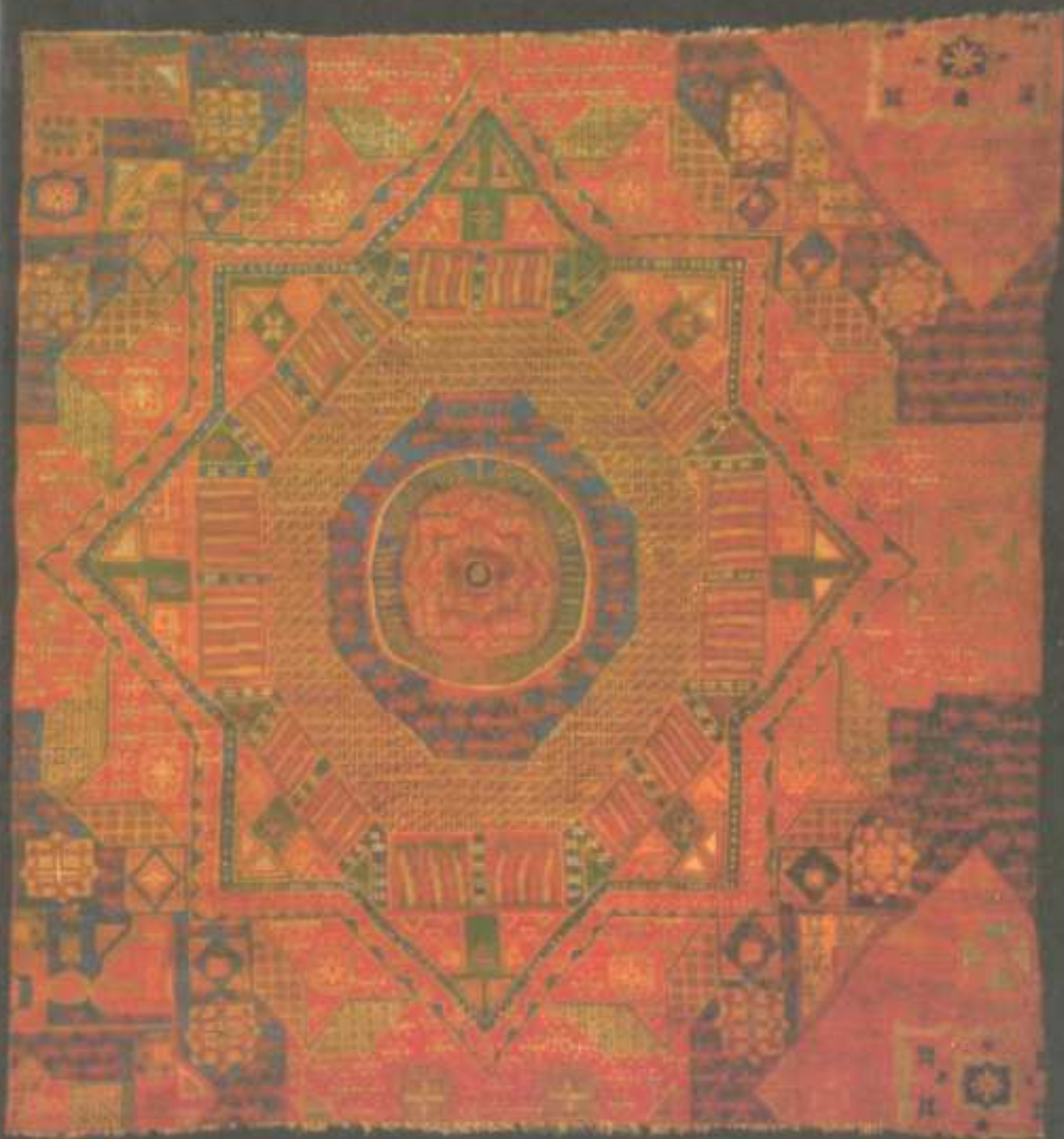


ARTS

The Islamic World

VOLUME 1 NO. 4 SUMMER/AUTUMN 1988





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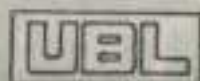
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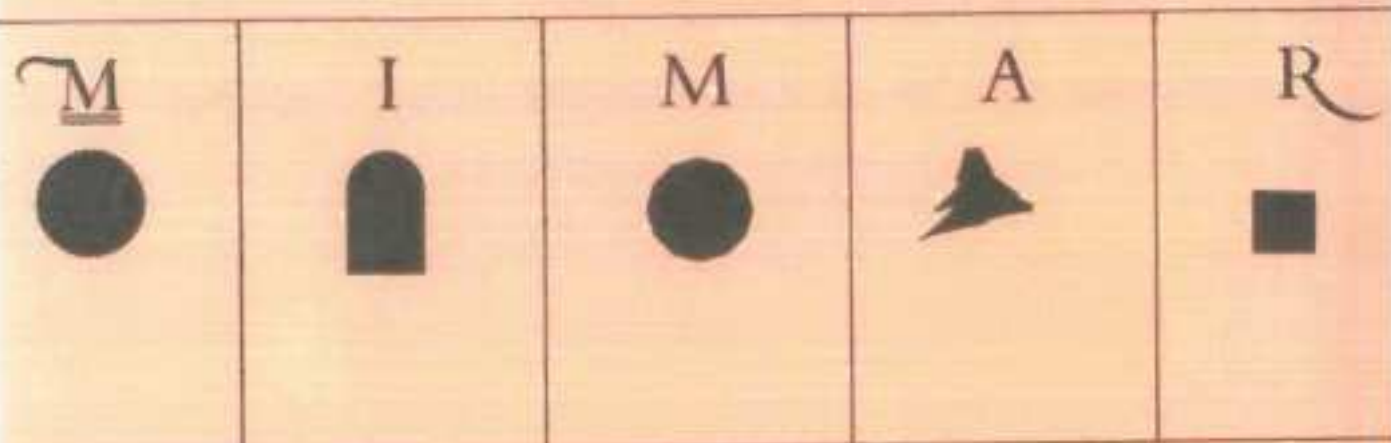


A Safavid silk tomb cover, late 17th century, 157 by 91 cm.

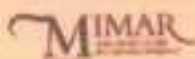
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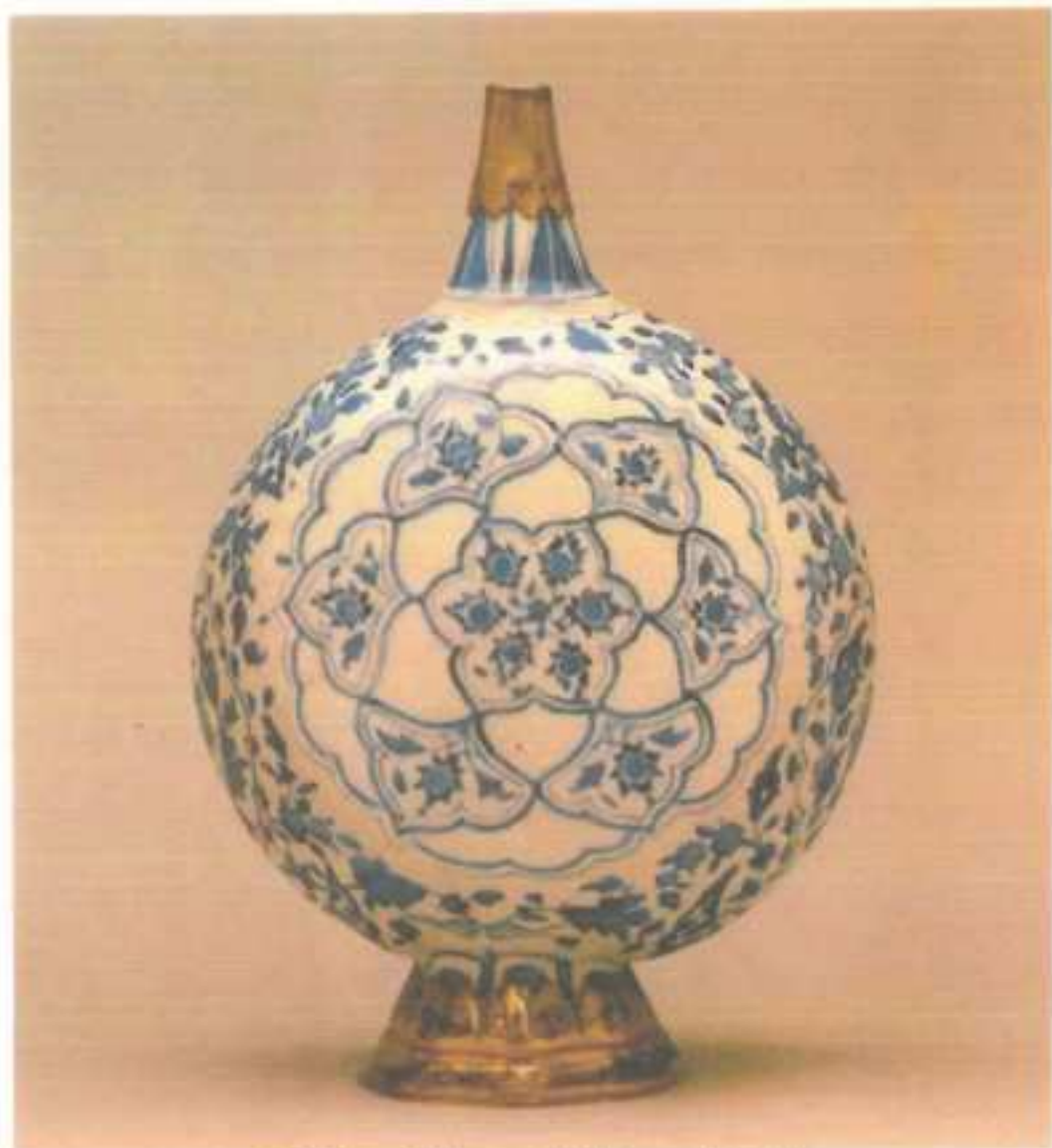
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Editorial

This issue of *Arts & The Islamic World* is a combined one for the Summer and Autumn of 1983 and marks two significant events: the Fourth International Conference on Oriental Carpets in London, and the announcement of the 1983 Aga Khan Award for Islamic Architecture.

In a series of spectacular exhibitions this summer, London paid homage to Oriental and Islamic carpets. Apart from three major presentations at the Barbican Art Gallery, the Hayward Gallery and the National Gallery (reviewed on pages 11-13), there were a number of special displays, including those of *Islamic Textile Design* (Spink & Son), *Oriental and Islamic Textiles and Costumes* (Christie's South Kensington), *Fine Rugs and Textiles* (Sotheby's), *Carpets in the Persian Style* (Zadah Persian Carpets), *Important Examples of Islamic Art* (Leferve and Partners), *Early Islamic Textiles* (Clive Rogers at Vigo Carpet Gallery) and *Rugs of Kurdistan* (Thornborough Galleries).

Though many of the questions concerning the origin of the carpet and its evolution are still being debated, there is no doubt that, as one scholar put it, "the craft of the carpet is essentially an expression of Islamic culture". Indeed, the areas constituting the "carpet country" have the Islamic world as the traditional heartland. But the tradition of handknitted carpet itself is confronted with the twin dangers of fierce commercial competition from machine-made carpets on the one hand, and poor copies of traditional designs with inferior materials from the get-rich-quick establishments on the other. There is need for an imaginative and artistic approach to preserve and develop traditional skills without ignoring the new technical and technological facilities and resources which must be geared to meet the vastly increased needs and demands of our time. This is an area that needs State support for design and craft institutions as well as for individual artists and craftsmen.

In September, the tri-annual Aga Khan Award for Islamic Architecture was presented to 11 winning entries at an impressive ceremony in Istanbul. In making the nominations, the Master Jury underlined the important role of architecture in helping to improve the social environment. The winning projects were thus chosen not only for their aesthetic value but also for the way in which they demonstrated a response to the "social, economic, technical, physical and environmental challenges" in the world today. The winners were both varied and diverse in their approach to the problems of architecture. They reflected the most contemporary aspects of design and the most classic — with due recognition being given to outstanding Islamic restoration projects. In choosing the Great Mosque of Niono in Mali, for example, the Jury acknowledged the vitality and viability of traditional forms when put within the contemporary context. In contrast comes the selection of Sherefudin's White Mosque in Visoko, Yugoslavia, whose design, according to the Jury's statements, "extends the architectural vocabulary of the mosque into the 20th century", and the Haj Terminal at King Abdul Aziz International Airport at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, which "has pushed known building technology beyond its established limits, while demonstrating that such a massive structure can still be light and airy: a 20th century echo of the traditional tent structures that have worked so well in desert climates".

The selection of winners could not have been easy. There was a similar situation with the 1980 award held in Lahore, Pakistan, when some 15 projects were nominated for prizes. While some critics feel that the prizes should be restricted to just a few entries, others argue that because the Award scheme is still in its infancy and criteria are still being established, this may, in fact, be the best solution. By commending a wider spectrum of ideas, the Jury highlights the variety of styles and approaches to be used in tackling the problem of modern Islamic design, thus providing a more comprehensive model on which architects can base their work. An introduction to the 1983 award winning entries, and an assessment of the Award itself is included in this issue, along with an architect's overview (pages 49-60).



Oriental Carpets in London

Michael Spink

The Eastern carpet has long held a fascination for collectors and connoisseurs. The finest examples of carpet weaving were highly valued in Persia and Turkey, and a strong trade between East and West helped spread them across Europe from the fifteenth century onwards.

The first major exhibition of carpets was held in Vienna in 1891, and this drew the attention of collectors to Oriental Carpets as works of art. This interest continues today, and in June 1983, London hosted the Fourth International Conference on Oriental Carpets also first held in London in 1976. The Conference covered a wide programme, ranging from 19th century Turkman and Caucasian carpets back to sixteenth century carpets from Turkey and Egypt.

To coincide with the Conference, a number of carpet exhibitions had been arranged in London, which revealed something of the splendour and mystery of the Oriental Carpet. These exhibitions were the first to be held in London since the Hayward Gallery held an exhibition in 1972 of carpets from the McMullan Collection. Each of these exhibitions had a catalogue, written by leading experts in the field. In addition, exhibitions of carpets and textiles were held in several of the private galleries in London in June. London thus provided the setting for a major Festival illustrating the art of the Oriental Carpet.

"Carpet Magic", at the Barbican Art Gallery examined the art of carpets from the tents, cottages and workshops of Asia. There were over 100 exhibits dating from the seventeenth century to the present day, accompanied by a fine full colour catalogue. The author of the catalogue and exhibition organiser, Dr. Jon Thompson, had structured the exhibition on a framework of 'layers', such as first suggested by Professor Kurt Erdmann in his 'History of the Early Turkish Carpet', and divided carpets into groups classified according to circumstances of manufacture and by quality of technical achievement.

To the beginner, the field of carpets appears huge and confusing, and it is difficult to form any firm idea of the types and variations that are encountered. The framework suggested by Dr. Thompson was based on four categories: tribal weaving; products of the cottage industries; carpets made in town or city workshops; and luxury court carpets. This broke away from the traditional geographical groupings, and enabled one to compare a tribal rug with a sophisticated workshop carpet, and, ignoring the obvious technical differences, examine them as individual works of art in their own right.

The traditional art of the knotted carpet originated in the tents of the nomadic tribes from the steppes of Central Asia. Over the last 450 years, they have migrated westwards towards Asia Minor, towards the Caucasus, and into Persia and Afghanistan. Their art was to create weavings for daily use, not for commercial resale. These they naturally made as beautiful as possible, working from memory and according to tribal tradition. Each tribe uses different motifs and designs. These motifs and traditions have altered with time, under various influences originating outside the tribe. Thus some items are no longer used, while others have changed greatly from the original pattern, colour and design. This was illustrated by a Yörük rug from south Turkey, which has decorative motifs from Turkoman rugs of Central Asia, employed with Turkish colours and design.

The functional nature of tribal weavings was apparent with the fine knotted pile tent door rugs, which have fallen from use in the last 100 years. An example of Salor workmanship exhibited the splendour that such tents must have enjoyed when hung with such pieces. Other functional textiles included camel trappings, horse rugs and storage bags, with varying designs and colours, often woven by young women. A notable group of these were woven by young girls before their marriage, for the wedding dowry, traditionally used in the tribal tent and on beasts of burden, the specially made trappings often have a white ground: a fine example being the only known piece of Saryk workmanship, was exhibited to illustrate this group. These pieces were



Detail 'The Annunciation' Carlo Crivelli.

very important to the weaver, and carry much of the artistic remembered traditions of the tribe in their design. They are individual works of art, far from the repetitions commercial productions of carpet factories.

In contrast to the tribal weavings are those of the cottage industry, which were produced expressly in response to the demands of the market. Designs found in more sophisticated rugs were copied in rather coarser fashion. Thus a prayer rug from Mujur, in central Turkey, copied an Ottoman court piece, interpreting the motifs in a rural manner. The cottage industry in Persia and the Caucasus was exemplified, and the links with both ancient tribal designs and those from the courts were illustrated. An interesting example was the Kazak illustrated here. Although most Kazak rugs have tribal Turkic patterns, this example uses an originally Persian motif, and expands it into the 'sunburst' design, with strong colours and a very bold design, characteristic of the cottage industry.

The third category to be examined

was the workshop carpets. These were manufactured into carefully controlled designs, often reaching a very high technical level. The carpet weaver works from a cartoon and different craftsmen work on each stage. Sometimes the dividing line between cottage industry and workshop designs is unclear. Thus the rug from Qum, of high quality, was woven in the weaver's house to a design, and a standard specified by the contractor. It is in this workshop tradition that modern factories in Turkey, Persia, China and Nepal continue to make carpets, often of very high quality, such as those of Kum Kapu in Turkey.

The court carpets, which made up the fourth group of Dr. Thompson's classification, were not examined at length in the Barbican exhibition. They were amongst those shown at an exhibition held at the Hayward Gallery, 'The Eastern Carpet in the Western World'. This exhibition showed over 80 of the world's greatest carpets, imported to Europe between the 15th and 17th centuries.

Carpets are mentioned in Western documents as early as the fourteenth century. Archduke Ludwig of Orleans purchased 12 carpets from Turkey in 1398, and the Duc de Berry in 1410 owned two carpets. By the sixteenth century, Oriental rugs were well known in England, with several portraits of Henry VIII showing the king standing on Turkish carpets. In 1520 Cardinal Wolsey received 60 'Damascene' rugs from the Venetian envoy in London, and the inventories made in 1547 of property of King Henry VIII show details of a number of carpets, mainly Turkish.

Carpets first began to be exported to the west in some quantity in the fifteenth century, and one of the most important fragments from this period is exhibited. The Marby rug, found in a church in Sweden, was made in Anatolia in the first half of the fifteenth century. Similar in technique, colours, and size to a carpet in Berlin, which depicts a dragon and phoenix combat, of a type found in 15th century paintings, it shows that there was trade beyond Italy in these carpets from the mid 15th century.

The exhibition examined the development of Turkish rugs from the 15th to the 17th centuries. The rugs have been traditionally classified, rather misleadingly, after European painters such as Holbein, Lotto and Memmi, who used them in their work. The variations of design in the geometric pattern of the Anatolian rugs known as Holbeins were well illustrated. They were very popular in Europe, being imported for about 150 years. An example from the Wher collection had the distinctive interlaced octagons in the field, with an angular 'Kufi' border. The 'Lotto' pattern, named after its appearance in paintings by Lorenzo Lotto (1510), was produced in the Ushak area of Anatolia, like the Holbein rugs. Again, several examples

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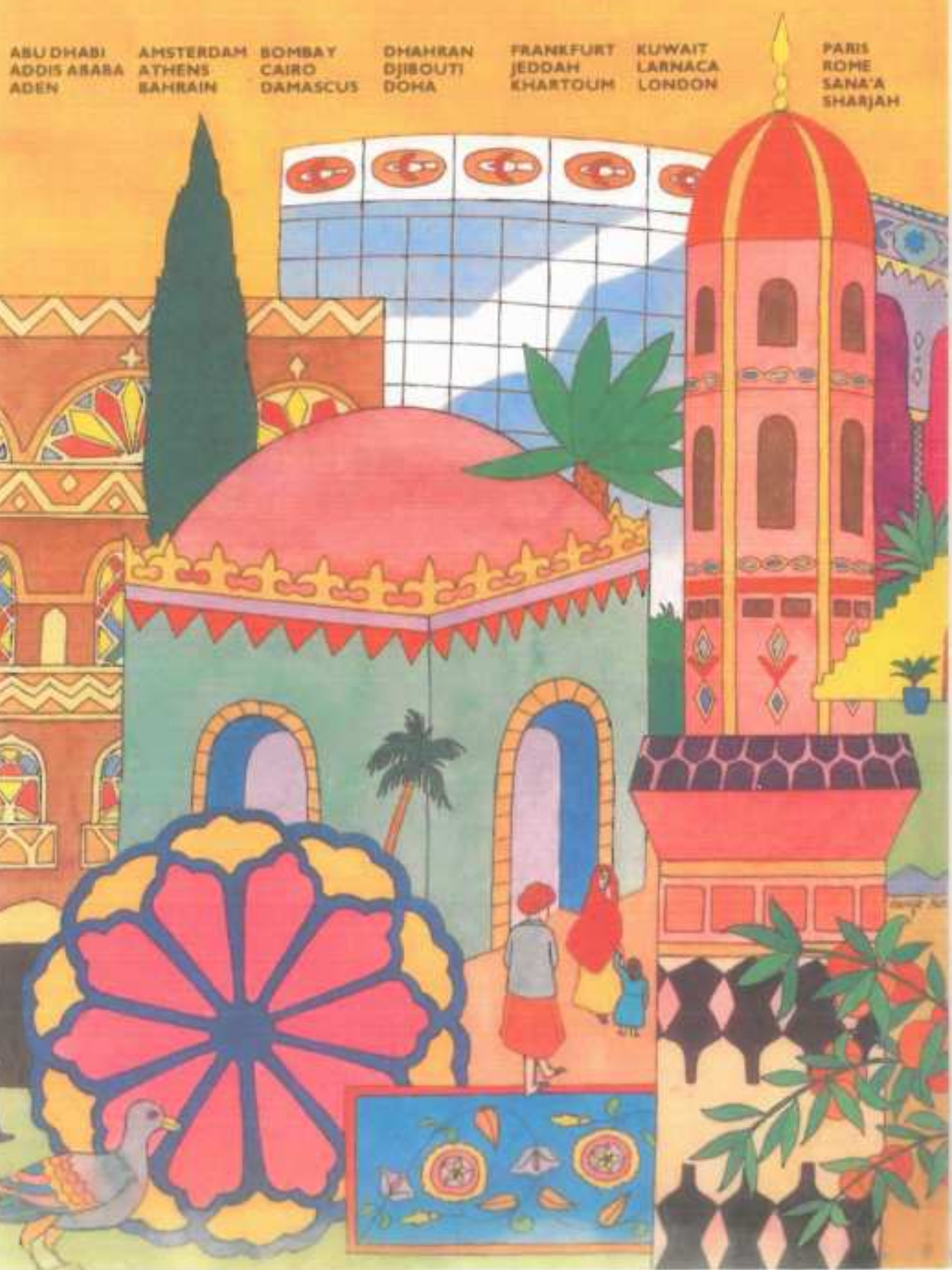
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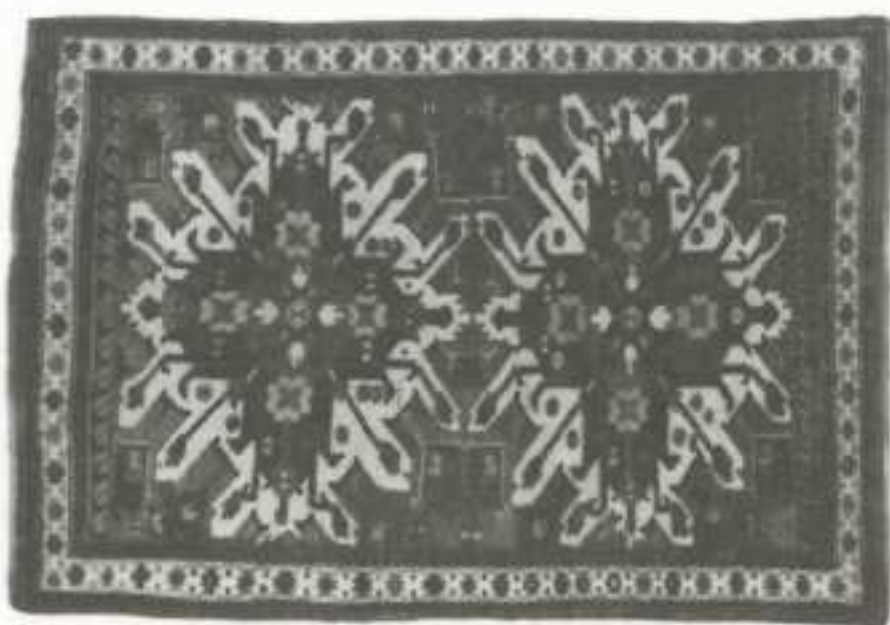
were shown. Also from the region came the medallion and star Ushaks, and the white ground 'bird' rugs. There was also Persian influence on the Ottoman arts, and another magnificent medallion carpet from Ushak, now in the Thyssen-Bornemisza in Lugano, with a strong blue ground, dating from the 16th century was an exhibit in this group.

A group of the intriguing geometric rugs known as Mamluk carpets were displayed, including a large carpet only recently discovered in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence, which once belonged to the Medici family. While the date of these rugs is controversial, it is generally accepted that they were made in Cairo. They do not appear frequently in paintings although frescoes in Venice, dating from 1530, show Mamluk rugs hanging over parapets. Despite such uncertainty, they are without doubt some of the most beautiful carpets to come from the Islamic world. Also Cairo, following the defeat of the Mamluks in 1514, produced an Ottoman group of carpets. These have a similar range of colours to the Mamluks, but have totally different designs, being based on extravagant floral patterns, with carnations, tulips and broadly curving leaves. These carpets were made in the mid-16th and early 17th centuries, although the Cairene workshop was still active in 1663, and was described in detail by the French traveller Thevenot.

The carpets of Persia were illustrated by some extremely fine examples. The Behagne Sanguszko carpet, again from the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection, has a central medallion with arabesques, surrounded by groups of fighting animals in the field, and a border with phoenixes and kyllins, separating medallions of lions fighting, which combine to make it one of the most striking of Persian early 17th century carpets. The animal theme was maintained with the Swedish Royal hunting carpet, leaving Sweden for the first time, which dates from the late 16th century, and in the silk tapestry-woven Fjodor kilim. This piece dates from the late 16th century, and was probably made in Kashan; European travellers in Persia greatly admired these Safavid textiles, and the King of Poland is known to have ordered an example in 1602.

Amongst the most luxurious carpets from Persia are the so-called 'Polonaise'. Made from silk, and brocaded in gold and silver, they were sent as royal gifts to Denmark in 1639, and to Venice in 1622, while King Sigmund Wasa of Poland commissioned a group in 1602. Examples of this type were also included in the exhibition.

Finally, a group of carpets woven in Mughal India were shown including animal carpets, carpets with designs of naturalistic flowering plants, and the beautiful Aynard prayer rug, which is of the finest quality of knotting, and has the characteristic splendour of Mughal



A Kazzak rug from the Caucasus, so called 'sunburst' or 'chaharbad' design, 19th century

colouring.

The exhibition was an unrivalled opportunity to see together a group of rugs that are normally in collections around the world, inaccessible to lay observers. It was an event of the greatest importance for those interested in rugs from the Islamic world because many of these were commissioned by Islamic rulers for their courts or as diplomatic gifts.

Many of the carpets seen in the Hayward Gallery exhibition appear in

Many of the carpets seen in the Hayward Gallery exhibition appear in contemporary paintings. An exhibition at the National Gallery 'Carpets in Paintings' illustrated the history of early Turkish carpets, with 24 paintings on show together with rugs and carpet fragments. Paintings have long been used to help date carpets, and to identify carpets of types that now remain only in fragmented condition. Thus the early animal rugs from Anatolia and early Spanish rugs appear in Siennese paintings of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which provide evidence of date, and also the movement of exported carpets.

By the end of the 15th century, more complete rugs remain of the types illustrated in paintings. Thus the group made in Anatolia known as 'large pattern Holbein' rugs are shown in Hans Holbein the Younger's 'The Ambassadors' of 1533, and a painting by Carlo Crivelli, 'Annunciation with St Emidius', an altarpiece painted in about 1486.

Crivelli's painting shows three rugs. The Virgin Mary is shown kneeling on an indistinct type. Above her, held down by a potted plant, is a large pattern Holbein rug, while in the background, two figures stand by a parapet over which is an Anatolian animal carpet of the late 15th century. A piece of this type was exhibited at the Hayward Gallery.

Another clear example of a Turkish rug is seen in the 'Family Group', by Lorenzo Lotto, of 1547, which has an arabesque design in yellow on a red field, with a stylized Kufic border. Carpets of this type have been given the group classification of 'Lotto's'. Ushak rugs of this type and also medallion Ushaks are found in Dutch paintings of the 17th century such as those by Gerard ter Borch (1637-1681), Godfried Schalcken (1643-1706), and Willem Duyster (1599-1635).

Persian rugs are seen less often, but a painting by Peter Paul Rubens 'A Roman Triumph', shows a 17th century Herat carpet on the back of an elephant, with the characteristic dark red colour, arabesques in the field and large floral designs in the border.

The exhibition provided a valuable and interesting view of some of the rugs in the Hayward Gallery exhibition, and showed the use the rugs found after their export to Europe.

The exhibitions at the Barbican Gallery, Hayward Gallery and the National Gallery were augmented by a series of exhibitions held by the private galleries in London. Exhibitions of rugs and textiles were at the Grosvenor Antiques Fair, organised by Heska and the Textile Gallery, while Spink and Son held an exhibition of Islamic textiles at King Street. Other exhibitions included Pre-Columbian textiles, Early Islamic Textiles and Kilims.

London is rich in carpets and related paintings — carpets such as the famous Ardebil, dated 1539-40, which can be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, while the National Portrait Gallery has 'The Somerset House Conference', a painting by an unknown artist done in 1604, showing a fine small pattern Holbein. The Festival of Oriental Carpets held in London did help to heighten interest in one of the most fascinating fields of art, and bring it forward into the public eye. ■

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ORIENTAL RUGS

Their care and preservation

Majid Amini

People in the East are not alone in their deep-rooted love and appreciation of oriental rugs; many people in the West also value the great contribution made by rug weavers to world culture. They treasure their rugs and respect them; they use them and enjoy them and they want to take care of them yet, sadly, many of these rugs and masterpieces of art often fall into neglect. This is not wilful neglect, but the result of a basic lack of elementary knowledge regarding the care and first-aid needed by handmade rugs. Rug owners often take no action at the first signs of wear, or worse still, they ruin their rug by attempting to use their own amateur methods of repair. Most people have probably seen the results of such untutored actions — antique rugs washed in an everyday washing machine and dried to a lustreless rag by a tumble dryer; silk rugs ruined with dirt and grease after years of use on a kitchen floor; fine old rugs with a part cut out to accommodate a putting fireplace, and so on. The sight of these once beautiful and valuable rugs is painful. Yet, these disasters are

brought about by rug lovers who do not know any better and who are unaware of the various ways in which their rugs could be protected, maintained and, if necessary, repaired at home.

As the art of rug weaving is slowly dying, a practical guide on the care of rugs is needed now more than ever before. Fewer and fewer rugs are available and those that are deserve the same respect and attention given to any work of art. Correct care and maintenance will keep a rug in good condition, lengthen its useful life, assure its increasing investment value and enable it to be enjoyed and used by generations to come.

Each handmade rug is unique; it is an individual creation of an artist and craftsman. The genius who creates a rug has to follow up his initial concept with months, and sometimes years, of hard and patient work to embody his moment of inspiration. Thus, every rug is a testimony to the infinite care, enthusiasm, skill and pleasure of an often unknown artist who may have worked far away in a different age and place and yet

whose aesthetic values can still be vividly experienced and shared today.

DAILY CARE AND CLEANING

The day-to-day care of an oriental rug is no more complicated than looking after any other household furnishing. Most home items carry a label giving a few recommendations as to the care that should be given to them — unfortunately, this is rarely the case with oriental rugs.

Cleanliness is perhaps the most important factor concerning the long-term preservation of any rug. As shall be seen further on, dirt — if unlodged and ground into the rug's foundation — can cause untold damage. Cleaning a rug makes it look good and it also prolongs its life.

For daily removal of surface particles of dirt and dust, a good hand broom should be used. It is also essential that the rug be moved and the underlying area swept clean. A non-electric hand carpet sweeper may also be used for this purpose.

Any earnest rug preserver would not favour the daily use of a powerful, electric vacuum cleaner (although one can appreciate the time-saving service it renders) which can pull the knots out of the rug with its strong air suction. With today's *frenetic* pace of life, I concede to the use of a vacuum cleaner about once a month, provided it is not too powerful and does not have rotary brushes. A low-powered vacuum cleaner with a nozzle attachment can be most effective when used on stair rugs.

A warning to vacuum-cleaner users: only vacuum the pile of the rug, not the delicate fringes. The fringes will not last long if a vacuum cleaner is used on them regularly. Use of the vacuum cleaner, with a built-in 'beater', on the back of the rug every six months is an excellent idea for removing ground-in loose fibres, sand, dirt and grit.

With the increasing importance, value and scarcity of handmade rugs today, there is only one method of cleaning that I can recommend without reservation: hand cleaning. Quite simply, a rug made by hand needs to be cleaned by hand. No two rugs are exactly alike and each rug requires individual treatment. Even within a single rug different areas need different care, depending on the amount of wear and tear to which they are subjected. Such individual attention is only possible with careful hand cleaning and can never be given by a machine.

Cleaning a rug by hand is a time-consuming process and, when carried out by an expert, will be more expensive than machine cleaning. Therefore, as a second and cheaper choice, a rug may be taken to professional, specialized oriental rug-cleaning companies (not to be confused with companies cleaning machine-made carpeting) which have years of experience and most sophisticated machinery, especially designed for the cleaning of handmade rugs. I must stress however, that no old, antique or silk handmade rugs should be cleaned by machine under any circumstances.

Cleanliness is probably the best defence against any damage. Regular cleaning, of course, protects the investment value of the rug; the money spent on cleaning is fractional, compared to the rug's constantly appreciating value.

Oriental rugs should be sent to a specialist for cleaning; your dealer would always be willing to advise

in this respect.

Alternatively, your rug could be cleaned at home. After removing all dirt, grit and stains from the rug, a colour fastness test should be carried out. Mix a carpet shampoo solution of 1 part shampoo, 8 parts luke warm water and 1 tablespoon white vinegar. Brush the mixture into the pile of the rug using a small brush with soft bristles. After cleaning, the carpet should be immediately and completely dried before use or storage.

Turning: The term 'turning' means turning the rug around one hundred and eighty degrees to change its position; thus ensuring even wear all over the rug. The turning of a rug is a protective measure and all rugs need to be turned regularly during their use on the floor. The heavier the traffic, the more often the rug should be turned. Oriental rugs in an entrance hall and those used as doormats obviously need more regular turning than bedroom or study rugs. From time to time, it is advisable to replace rugs which have been subjected to a lot of tread with others which have had lighter wear.

Heavy furniture: Where possible, avoid placing heavy furniture on oriental rugs for long periods of time. The weight of such items crushes the pile and can damage the rug's foundation. The placing of furniture cups (similar to small ashtrays) under the furniture legs helps disperse the pressure from a concentrated area and also prevent sharp furniture edges from damaging the rug. Every few months, the furniture should be moved slightly (lift the furniture to move it; do not drag it across the rug) to allow the crushed pile to breathe. When the furniture is moved, the pile of the area on which the furniture rested may be matted together. To rectify this, dampen the matted area and gently play with the wool with your fingers until the pile springs back into shape.

Placing furniture on an oriental rug is often unavoidable. To diffuse the weight of furniture and reduce possible damage to the rug, wooden or plastic cups should be placed under the feet of heavy or sharp pieces.

Moths: Damage from moth larvae should not occur if a rug is properly cleaned and turned. Moths favour undisturbed areas such as: underneath grandfather clocks, under beds and undisturbed areas on which a rug may lie. Regular cleaning is therefore essential.

An added protection from moths can be provided by airing a rug out-of-doors, turning both the back and the front of the rug to the natural sunlight. The rug should be laid flat on a dry surface for some hours.

Damp: Dampness is the enemy of an oriental rug and care must be taken to ensure that rugs are not used or stored in damp areas. Moisture is easily absorbed by the rug and will eventually rot the foundation and make the rug brittle. Dampened dirt in a rug is also dangerous. Like glue, when dried it forms splinters that cut the knots and foundations. As it is impossible to repair a damp-rotted rug, it is absolutely essential to prevent the rot in the first place.

Intense heat: Any form of direct or intense heat — heat from an open fire, heat from a radiator, and the worst, that from heated flooring, is damaging to handmade rugs. Such high-level heat dries the natural oils in the wool, making it brittle and lustreless. Care should be taken to avoid placing rugs in these undesirable conditions.

Direct sunlight: Rugs should be used and kept in light areas to avoid possible moth damage, but strong, direct



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sunlight over a long period will fade the colours. This is yet another important reason for turning the rug periodically, thus ensuring that any fading will occur all over and not just at one end or corner of the rug.

Domestic animals: Most animals seem to love oriental rugs. Untrained animals or animals that are not properly exercised create a problem. They will often select a leg of furniture or a rug as their urinating spot and will return to the same spot time and time again. The acid in the urine can severely affect the colouring of the rug. Continual urination will eventually rot the rug altogether. Any urine must be cleaned up immediately. If the urine is left unattended for some time, it is almost impossible to remove at a later stage. It is, therefore, best to keep untrained pets away from rugs.

Bumps and wrinkles: Bumps and wrinkles in an oriental rug occur most frequently where the foundation is of wool, as in Afghan, Kurdish and certain modern Pakistani rugs. The woollen fibre of the warp and of the weft stretches and pulls with use and does not contract again. Wrinkling may also be the result of the use of unevenly spun warp or weft thread fibres; mishandling by folding a rug for transporting; or possibly continuous traffic on one side or part of a rug which has been used without underfelt.

Unfortunately, there is very little that can be done to rectify the wrinkling in oriental rugs. Where the bump is minor, a professional rug restorer can insert new foundation threads if the old ones have been stretched or damaged. If the damage is more extensive, the specialist may have to remove the wrinkled section of the rug and reweave it in order to enable it to lie flat.

When the first sign of a bump or wrinkle is noticed, the most effective home remedy is to remove the rug to an area where it will be trodden on much less. This will not cure the problem, but it will certainly prevent the bump becoming more acute.

VALUATIONS AND INSURANCE

Most oriental rug owners, like lovers of other arts, view their art form primarily as an object of aesthetic pleasure, its value taking second place; yet a feeling of contentment comes with the realization that beautiful things around the home also have an investment value. For mundane purposes a strictly monetary value can be attributed to such works of art. For insuring oriental rugs and for probate or family division, a professional valuation or appraisal is an absolute necessity.

Where to Obtain an Oriental Rug Valuation: Professional valuation is a highly skilled and specialized task which comparatively few people are qualified to undertake. Correct identification of a rug, as well as a detailed knowledge of prices and the market are required, in order to give a realistic valuation for whatever purpose. A satisfactory valuation of an oriental rug is unlikely to be obtained from an antique dealer or a general country auctioneer. Even a licensed appraiser would have difficulty in assessing the value. Most of these people cover a wide spectrum of items in the general world of art from silver to furniture and paintings. They would freely admit that they do not have the necessary experience which comes from the daily handling of rugs, nor the time to devote to absorbing the pertinent information concerning the fluctuating oriental rug market.

For a correct valuation, the rug owner must seek out an authority with extensive knowledge in the field. Either a reputable rug dealer or a firm of auctioneers

holding regular specialist rug sales with rug experts on their staff or on call, should be approached. The importance of obtaining a valuation from an experienced and professional party cannot be overstated. Valuations can be made at the valuer's premises or, by prior arrangement, at a local designated by the owner.

Valuation for Insurance: Oriental rugs, like jewellery, paintings and other works of art, require to be insured against possible damage or loss by fire, theft and other risks. Rug loss or damage can be catastrophic when the item concerned is not properly covered by an insurance policy, especially with the continuing escalating price trend.

Most insurance companies place a limit on the value that may be attributed to any individual item among the overall contents insured. Over and above this specified figure (which may be a set figure or a percentage of the total cover), a list of individual items and their values is necessary. To back such a list of values, a professional appraisal by a skilled expert is looked for by the insurance company. This is required for the cover of oriental rugs, particularly in the case of antique rugs where values for unique pieces are not easily established. Unless the item is backed by such expert appraisal, the insurers are unlikely to pay the full amount claimed, and previously covered, in the event of loss. In short, oriental rugs (unless of minimal value) usually cannot be properly insured under general cover or under a blanket policy. However, it is important to discuss this point with your insurance adviser.

The basis for valuation for insurance purposes differs from that adopted for valuation for probate or family division. It is the valuer's estimate of what it would cost the owner at full retail price (plus current purchase taxes where relevant) to replace the rug with one of equivalent type, quality, age, size, condition and rarity on the ordinary retail market. It represents a current replacement value.

A written valuation should be updated in accordance with basic inflation every year. However, the item needs to be revalued every three to five years by an expert as the price of oriental rugs is rising rapidly (some rugs more so than others) and the market is constantly changing.

The Valuation Certificate and Photographic Record: All valuations prepared for formal purposes should be in writing and issued on the valuer's official letter head. Three copies should be prepared: one for the client, one for the client's insurance company, and one to be kept by the valuer. The valuation should be dated and should state the location and the ownership of the rug. Each rug should be described individually in sufficient detail to establish its distinguishing characteristics and its general condition.

It is vital that a colour photographic record of each rug is kept, in addition to the valuation. This is particularly important in the case of rugs with a high value. Photographs may be taken by a professional photographer, or the valuer or owner and even the most amateur photograph is better than none at all. A photographic record is essential in the unfortunate case of theft, as it can be circulated by the police to all parts of the world if necessary, and the chances of locating the stolen goods will be much improved. For added protection, and in anticipation of fire damage, it is advisable to keep a duplicate valuation and photograph of each rug at a location other than that at which the rugs are situated — a safe or bank vault is ideal. ■



Yazda (Nomads), Vehbi Koca

MODERN TURKISH PAINTING

J.D. Norton

Modern Turkish painting is one of the surprising fruits of military modernization begun in 1793. At that time, Ottoman Commanders, whose armies lagged far behind those of their European rivals, saw the need for accurate field-sketches and added drawing lessons to

subject presented peculiar problems to a people generally unfamiliar with the skills required. European instructors were eventually brought in to teach it, and, in course of time, the most promising young Turkish officers were sent to Europe to develop their artistic talents. From these unlikely beginnings Turkish painting has now progressed to the point where Turkish artists have achieved international recognition, sometimes with works that express a distinctive national, regional or Islamic theme in a modern western style.

Such works are not a continuation of the distinguished Ottoman miniaturists' tradition. That tradition had virtually ended with the Tulip Era in 1730. In any case, the miniaturists' achievements were scarcely known beyond the walls of royal palaces. Sultans, conscious of religious objections to painting, normally kept their miniatures and their portraits from the eyes of their people. When, in departing from this



Ottoman Interior, Osman Hamdi *Woman gathering lilacs, Osman Hamdi*



The Koran Reader, Osman Hamdi
(1842-1912)



Ahmet III's Fountain, Istanbul, Huseyin Zekai Pascha (1859-1907)



Lulus (SW wind) in Istanbul, Ganiye Gelenuk (b. 1928)

1 *Portrait of his son, Abdulmecit Elendi*
(1868-1944) (The last Caliph)

2 *Portrait of the Artist himself, Seker Ahmed*
Pascha (1848-1907)





Sea and Clouds, Altan Gorman (b. 1938)



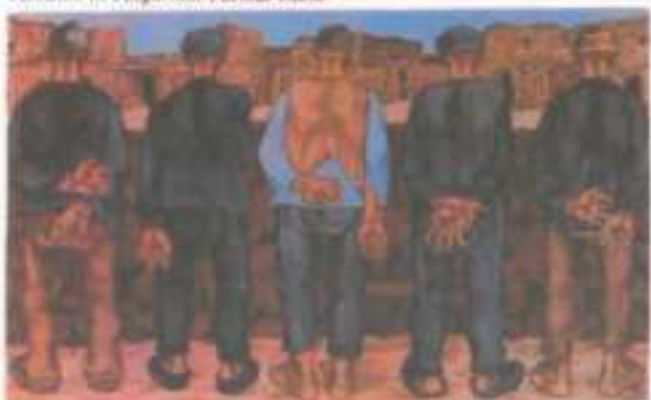
Shepherds, Cemal Tollu (1899-1968)



Autumn in Akpınar, Hamza Inanc



*Istanbul landscape, Nazmi Ziya Güran
(1881-1937)*



Labourers, Neut Gunal (b. 1923)

practice as part of his westernising policies. Mahmud II (1808-1839) had his portrait hung up in barracks, the 'ulama stirred up a bloody revolt in Istanbul to demonstrate their abhorrence of representational art.²

The first Turkish students of drawing did indeed face great difficulties. In the civil schools a child caught in an attempt to draw anything resembling a living being could expect punishment with the bastinado. In their world, unlike our own, they were not surrounded by photographs or reproductions of pictures on posters and postcards, their periodicals were not full of illustrations, they had no exhibitions - let alone permanent galleries - displaying the works of acknowledged masters. Thus, ignorance and inhibition stood like twin sentinels barring the way of any would-be artist. So it is understandable that the military schools were perhaps the only places sufficiently sheltered from popular prejudice and receptive to new ideas to allow the seeds of drawing and painting to take root.

In 1835, forty two years after the start had been made at the Artillery School (*Mühendishane-i Berri-i Hümayûn*), drawing lessons were also added to the syllabus of the Military Academy (*Mekteb-i Fünunu Harbiye*),³ and subsequently similar instruction was given at military middle schools and high schools. In the nineteenth century it became the practice to send the most promising Turkish scholars to Europe for advanced education. The first to be selected for art training under this scheme were two young lieutenants, Ibrahim and Tevfik, who went to Europe in 1835. Ibrahim subsequently attained the rank of lieutenant-general and was the first Turk to paint in oils. These two were followed in 1848 by Hüsnü Yusuf and in 1864 by Ahmet Ali and Süleyman Seyyit.⁴ Sultan Abdülaziz (1861-1876), himself an artlover who bought paintings from Paris and London to adorn the walls of Dolmabahçe Palace,⁵ encouraged artists and took a lasting interest in Ahmet Ali, whom he met at an exhibition in Paris in 1869.

The young Turks sent to improve their skills in Paris arrived when the art world was in ferment. The division between the Romantics, whose chief French exponent was Delacroix (1798-1863), and the Neo-classicists, led by Ingres (1780-1867), persisted; Realism, represented particularly by Courbet (1819-1877), was at its height in the 1850s and 1860s,⁶ and the Impressionists were shortly to make their impact with their first exhibition in 1874. The Turks studied under Louis Boulanger (1806-1867) and Jean Léon Gérôme (1824-1904), who trained them along academic lines. With the military students was a civilian, Osman Hamdi, who had abandoned his law studies in favour of art. He and Ahmet Ali, on their return to Turkey, both became important figures in the advancement of Turkish painting. Ahmet Ali (1848-1907), who, because of his sweet nature, became generally known - even to the Sultan - as Seker Ahmet Pasha, arranged the first public exhibition of paintings in Turkey,⁷ was art advisor to the Sultan, and by maintaining his contact with Gérôme, began importing European paintings. As an art master at a number of Istanbul schools he helped to spread the love of painting in the capital. He himself painted mostly still lifes and forest scenes, his work being markedly different from paintings by a group of Turkish primitive artists such as Hüseyin Giritli, Salih Molla Aski, Münip, and Sevkî, who at about the same time were painting in meticulous detail pictures of Istanbul parks and

palaces.⁸ Seker Ahmet Pasha introduced the Istanbul public to painting in European style.

Osman Hamdi's influence was even greater. As founder and first director of the Fine Arts Academy (*Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi* - later the *Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi*, and, since 1982, the *Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi*) he is owed an inestimable debt by subsequent generations of Turkish artists. A man of wide learning, Osman Hamdi also gained distinction as an archaeologist, museum director, administrator and as a practising artist. Oxford University acknowledged his eminence by awarding him an honorary doctorate.

The new Academy, which opened in 1883, needed a man of Osman Hamdi's quality to see it through its early years. Most Turks at that time still considered painting as sinful and sculpture the work of infidels. Osman Hamdi therefore had to proceed with caution. For many years his students were not allowed live models; they had to make do instead with copies of classical statues. Even these became a target for zealots who entered by night, breaking what statues they could and draping the rest in bath robes to prevent any display - even in stone - of the mysteries of the human form.⁹ Not until 1908 was the first live model brought into the Academy, and he was a man clad in a bathing costume.¹⁰ Therefore a number of moustachioed labourers were also engaged to pose for portraits. One group of students, tiring of such subjects, brought a gipsy woman into the Academy intending to draw her dancing, but Osman Hamdi caught and severely rebuked them before they could proceed. Explaining that Turkish society would not tolerate such an outrage he sent the girl packing, but consoled his students with the prospect of further training in Europe where they would have unlimited opportunities to paint women.¹¹

In Osman Hamdi's own paintings the influence of his training under Boulanger and Gérôme (himself an 'Orientalist painter') is evident. He used the skills he had learned in Paris to produce careful studies of colourfully dressed Turks in attractive surroundings. Rather than work from direct observation he often preferred to use photographs from which he would draw enlargements on his canvas to ensure an accurate representation.¹² The harmony and freshness of his colours and the interest of his subject matter gave his work an enduring appeal.

Not all aspiring Turkish artists in the second half of the nineteenth century were able to go to Europe for training. Among those who nevertheless gained distinction were Hüseyin Zekâi Pasha (1858-1919), Hoca Ali Raza (1857-1930) and Abdülmecit Efendi (1868-1944). The first two both learned drawing at the Military Academy. Hoca Ali Raza graduated in 1883 and was immediately engaged to teach drawing there. He spent the rest of his life drawing, painting and teaching so successfully that he fired many young officers with an abiding love of art. He produced albums of drawings of still-lives and real or imaginary scenes for his pupils to use as models. He used various materials - watercolour, oils and gouache - to paint attractive views of Istanbul streets and countryside. Hüseyin Zekâi Pasha was a successful painter of still lifes and architectural features of Istanbul. Abdülmecit Efendi is of particular interest as he was the last Caliph of Islam. He had a genuine love of art, painting landscapes after the Romantic style of Delacroix, as well as portraits. He also encouraged other young artists - on the recommendation of Osman Hamdi he sent Hüseyin

abstract painter, producing his first work of this sort around 1960. His wide range of interests included mosaics and textiles and he also achieved distinction as a poet. His wife, Eren (b. 1913), was a fellow student of his at André Lhote's Academy and she, too, turned to abstract painting in the 1960s. Zeki Faik İzer (b. 1905) studied under André Lhote and Othon Friesz. He subsequently became director of the Academy from 1948 to 1952. Turgut Zaim (1906-1974) exhibited with both the Independents and the D Group though he did not join them. His distinctive paintings of Turkish peasant scenes made him one of Turkey's most popular artists. He and Cemal Tollu are the only modern Turkish painters mentioned in the Larousse Encyclopedia of Modern Art.¹⁹

Turgut Zaim's influence is evident in the work of his daughter Oya Katoglu, another artist popular for her depiction of rural scenes and peasant houses. Other women artists who have achieved some distinction in Turkey include Sükriye Dikmen (b. 1918),²⁰ who is well known for her Gauguin-like paintings, Leyla Gamsız (b. 1920), Naile Akıncı, Kristin Saleri, Nese Erdok, and, more recently, Tomur Atagök the Deputy Director of the Istanbul Museum of Paintings and Sculpture who trained in the United States,²¹ and Tülin Onat, who teaches at Marmara University.²²

Fikret Mualla (1903-1967), a Bohemian character who settled in Paris producing brightly coloured pictures of people at play, circuses, landscapes and the streets of Paris in a style that led him to be dubbed the



Village and Town, Jale Gön



Mevlen Dervishes, İbrahim Çallı (1882-1960)



Interior of Rustem Pasha Mosque, Istanbul, Serket Day



Portrait, Esref Uyes



Fields, Kahruman Celik



National Dancers, Semra Akkaya

Avni Lifij to study in Paris – and gave permission for pictures to be painted of Mevlevi dervishes, a theme that remained popular for several years.

Lifij (1886-1927) was one of several young Turkish graduates of the Istanbul Fine Arts Academy studying in Paris in the years immediately preceding the First World War. Others were Ibrahim Çalli, Ruhi Arel, Hikmet Onat, Nazmi Ziya Güran, Feyhaman Duran and Namik Ismail. Most of them studied under Cormon at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, but Avni Lifij and Nazmi Ziya Güran were attracted by other masters too.¹³

On the outbreak of the First World War these Turkish artists had to return to Istanbul. There they continued painting and put on the first exhibition of paintings exclusively by Turkish artists. Most of them painted with free brush-strokes, laying colour upon colour in a style that became known as Turkish impressionism. They were dubbed the "Çalli Group" after their leading exponent, Ibrahim Çalli (1882-1960). Their themes included still-lives, landscapes – particularly views of the Bosphorus – portraits and patriotic subjects.¹⁴

Throughout the war Turkish artists continued to paint, receiving a special boost when asked to send works for an exhibition staged in Vienna and Berlin to promote unity among the war partners. A request for paintings by women to be included in the 143 works that were sent led to the discovery of Harika Hanım, a recent graduate from a teacher training college. This resulted in her meeting and marrying Hüseyin Avni Lifij.¹⁵

After World War One the Çalli Group's dominance was assured when its members were appointed to teaching posts at the Academy. One of them, Nazmi Ziya Güran, was appointed director. It is ironic that his own graduation from the Academy had been delayed for a year because he aroused the enmity of a European instructor, Salvatore Valeri, by producing a painting in the impressionist manner. He had greatly admired the style of Paul Signac, whom he met in Istanbul in 1905, and tried to emulate it, but under Valeri's influence the Academy was then vehemently opposed to any sort of impressionism. As Director, Nazmi Ziya continued to paint landscapes in an impressionist style although his colour technique showed some differences from that of most European impressionists.¹⁶ Although starting some thirty years after the appearance of impressionism in Paris and after post-impressionism and Fauvism had also emerged there, Nazmi Ziya achieved fame in his own country as "Turkey's first impressionist".

The Çalli Group made their early reputation during a traumatic period of Turkish history. The First World War ended disastrously for Turkey; the Ottoman Empire collapsed, and the nation began a bitter struggle for survival in the war of Independence before winning through to establish the Republic in 1923. Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), the first President of the Republic, placed a high value on the arts as part of his package of reform, modernization and westernization. With his active encouragement several promising students who had been taught by the Çalli group at the Academy were sent to Paris and Munich for further training. There they came into contact with Fauvism, Cubism, Expressionism and Constructivism, receiving tuition from Fernand Léger, Marcel Gromaire, Hans Hofmann, Othon Friesz and André Lhote. Between the wars the Turkish students there became part of the international group known as the School of Paris, and

most of them attended the academy of André Lhote (1885-1962), a Cubist who had exhibited with Picasso, Léger and Delaunay at the Salon d'Automne but never achieved their fame. Nevertheless, he was a successful teacher who greatly influenced young artists from many nations. His teaching sometimes approached mathematical precision and he had very clear ideas about his subject, defining painting as follows: "The painting is a flat surface covered with allusive signs and metaphorical colours whose conjunction, made coherent by the effect of strict composition, produces the only reality acceptable to modernity."¹⁷ Though he was at pains to ensure that his pupils developed their own individual styles, the work of all his Turkish students bears his own distinctive stamp.

On their return to Turkey, successive waves of artists began to transform the art scene there. The first to make an impact was a group calling themselves the "Independent Painters and Sculptors Union" that came into being in 1928, though its members had staged an exhibition in Ankara a year earlier. Among its leading members were Ali Çelebi (b.1904), Refik Epikman (1902-74) and Ahmet Zeki Kocaçimeni (1902-1959). They amazed the Turkish public with new techniques they had learned in Europe.

In 1933 five painters, Nurullah Berk, Abidin Dino, Zeki Faik İzer, Elif Naci, and Cemal Tollu, plus the sculptor Zühtü Müridoglu, formed what they called the "D Group". By 1943 the membership had grown to fourteen, including Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu and his wife Eren, and Esref Üren and Sabri Berkel. This group became the dominant influence at the Fine Arts Academy and Turkish painting at large until its members went their separate ways in 1947 to develop along individual lines. André Lhote was the predominant influence upon their work, and soon it became difficult for any Turkish artist to make a name for himself unless he could say he had been taught by Lhote.

Ibrahim Çalli did not stand in the way of these rising artists: on the contrary, he did his best to encourage them, refusing state prizes himself so that the younger generation might be rewarded. Unfortunately they, in their turn, were less generous and open. Their enemies accused them of degenerating into an exclusive clique that chased after every new trend without properly understanding any of them and blocking progress in art and sometimes even a livelihood to other artists.¹⁸ Nevertheless, most of the major Turkish paintings produced between 1930 and 1970 were the work of artists who were at some time D Group members. For example, Cemal Tollu (1899-1968) achieved distinction by painting Turkish scenes, redolent of pastoral traditions, in a style combining elements of cubism and constructivism. Nurullah Berk (1906-1982), a student of Fernand Léger and André Lhote, also embraced cubism and constructivism and produced memorable paintings of such subjects as narghile-smokers, women ironing or doing embroidery, and spiky plants. Esref Üren (b. 1897), a pupil of Othon Friesz and André Lhote, remained very much under Lhote's influence. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he did not settle in Istanbul but preferred the new capital, Ankara, where in addition to painting landscapes, portraits and nudes he established a reputation as a critic. Elif Naci (b. 1898) did not train in Europe but drew inspiration from Islamic calligraphers as his style developed from impressionism to delicate abstracts. Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu (1913-1975) is regarded as Turkey's pioneer



Woman with water melon. Turgut Zaim (1900-1974)



Abstract. Adnan Turani (b.1923)



Jetty at Beyler Beyi, Istanbul. Bedri Rahmi Eyuboglu (1913-1973)

Turkish Toulouse-Lautrec, deserves mention as one of Turkey's most highly regarded artists at the international level.

The Fine Arts Academy has in recent years been more open-minded in its attitude towards art education. No longer does it send all its best graduates to the same European academies but deliberately disperses them so that Turkey may be attuned to all important developments in the art world. The teaching staff today includes several of Turkey's leading painters. Özdemir Altan (b. 1931), head of the Department of Painting, established his reputation



Two Yoruk Brides going to market. Nurettin Ergonen (b.1905)



Houses. Niyazi Teztoprak

with a form of expressionism. Devrim Erbil (b. 1937) reflects in his work that of the sixteenth century miniaturist Matrakçı Nasuh whose cartographic pictures made a deep impression on him. Dinçer Erimez (b. 1932) conveys the struggles of daily life in a unique style. While he was himself a student at the Academy he was influenced by Cemal Tollu. He has since studied in Rome and Paris and his pictures have been exhibited in many parts of the world. Neset Günel (b. 1923), one of the so-called 'Realist School' of Turkish painters, depicts the horny handed sons of toil in the Cappadocian landscape in which he was born. His paintings leave a lasting impression on the mind. Adnan Çoker (b. 1925) is best known for his careful compositions that are the result of long experiment.

Although Mimar Sinan University, to give it its new title, remains predominant with 227 teachers and some 2700 students (322 of them studying painting), it is no longer the only institute of advanced art education in Turkey. In Ankara, for example, Hacettepe University has a Fine Arts Department under the celebrated abstract painter, art critic and art historian Adnan Turani (b. 1925). The major teacher-training institutes, too, have long emphasized the importance of art and provided several young artists with the basic skills of their craft.

More and more exhibitions are held in the major Turkish cities to cater for the growing interest in painting. Many of the works in these exhibitions reveal the persistence of styles adopted by earlier generations of Turkish artists as well as the emergence of new ones. Those with a distinctive Turkish flavour maintain their popularity. Examples of these are the works of the "Turkish Realist School", whose best representatives rise above mere sentimentality to portray the grim realities of rural existence. As well as Neset Günel mentioned earlier, Nedim Günsür (b. 1924) and Nuri İyem (b. 1915) follow this tradition. Pop art has arrived in Turkey, but its exponents have not yet established solid reputations. There are other trends too, and good artists too numerous to mention in a short article, though their reputations are growing in Turkey.

Patronage naturally plays an important part in this growth. Many wealthy Turks take pride in their collections, but the banks remain the major patrons of the arts. All the main banks have large collections and their cultural publications give prominence to painters and their work thereby helping to increase public appreciation. For example, Turkey's largest bank, Türkiye İs Bankası A.S. has some 1500 paintings and is constantly adding to its collection, displaying these works at its permanent galleries in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Trabzon and abroad. At the time of writing an exhibition comprising 77 paintings from this Bank's collection is touring Britain. The Bank also holds competitions for artists and awards prizes and scholarships to artists.

Thanks largely to such regular support and encouragement since the early days of the Republic, painting is now firmly established in Turkey, and much of the old prejudice against this form of art has died away. Indeed, abstract painting, often inspired by Islamic calligraphy, has been eagerly adopted by some Turkish artists who find it a medium in which they can express their religious as well as their aesthetic feelings without inhibition. Exciting developments can confidently be expected in Turkish painting as the artists' experience accumulates to match their already great enthusiasm and energy.

NOTES

1. N. İslimyeli, *Asker Ressamlar ve Ekoller*, Ankara 1965 p.11.
2. T.W. Arnold, *Painting in Islam*, New York 1965 p.38.
3. İslimyeli, *op. cit.*, pp.11-12.
4. *ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
5. N. Berk, *Istanbul Resim ve Heykel Müzesi*, Istanbul 1972 p. 3.
6. A. Hill (Gen. Ed.), *A Visual Dictionary of Art*, London 1974 pp. 37-40.
7. Z. Güvemli "Seker Ahmet Pasa" in *Çağdas Türk Resminden Örnekler*, Istanbul 1972 p.5 gives the date of this first exhibition as 1872. İslimyeli, *op. cit.* p.39 says 1873. In N. Berk and H. Gezer 50 Yılın Türk Resim ve Heykeli, Istanbul 1973 p.22 the date is given as 1874. Unfortunately this is typical of the discrepancies to be found in Turkish reference books on painting; all dates in such works have to be treated with caution.
8. N. Berk, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.
Seker Ahmet Pasha's work was also different from that of the various artists who had produced the wall paintings in various palaces, large houses and even some provincial mosques. For further details of these see R. Arik, *Estililasma Dönemi Anadolu Tasvir Sanati*, Ankara 1976, and Günsel Renda, *Batılilasma Döneminde Türk Resim Sanati 1700-1850*, Ankara 1977.
9. Berk and Gezer, *op.cit.*, p.18.
10. Güvenli, *op. cit.*, p.6.
11. Berk and Gezer, *op. cit.*, p.18.
12. Berk, *op. cit.*, pp.10-11.
13. Berk and Gezer, *op. cit.*, p.18. S. Kosan "Hüseyin Avni Lifij" in *Çağdas Türk Resminden Örnekler*, pp.20-21.
14. Berk and Gezer, *op.cit.*, p.27.
15. Kosan, *op.cit.*, p.21.
16. Z. Güvemli "Nazmi Ziya Güran" in *Çağdas Türk Resminden Örnekler*, Istanbul 1972 p.18 gives details of Nazmi Ziya Güran's style.
17. R. Huyghe (Gen. Ed.), *Larousse Encyclopedia of Modern Art* London 1980, p.279.
18. İslimyeli, *op.cit.*, pp.19-20g Berk and Gezer, *op.cit.*, p.54.
19. Huyghe, *op. cit.*, p.425. However, this encyclopedia's information concerning the Independents and Group II (*sic*) is inaccurate.
20. For recent appraisals of her work see *Sanat Çeşmesi* 55, May 1983, pp. 4-12.
21. See Berk and Gezer, *op.cit.*, p.86, and *Sanat Çeşmesi* 52, February 1983, pp.24-5.
22. See *Sanat Çeşmesi* 54, April 1983, pp.16-19.
23. *Ibid.*, pp.26-27.



1



2



3

ISLAMIC ART

Common Principles, Themes and Forms

Ayyub Malik

As part of the continuing celebrations of the 15th century of Hijra, the above Symposium was organised by the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) under the auspices of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to expound upon the Common characteristics, Principles, Themes and Forms that, despite the cultural and geographical variables within the Ummah, have continued to be the manifest expressions of unity in the various branches of Islamic arts. It was indeed most appropriate for such a Symposium to be held in the historic city of Istanbul, itself so prolific, not only in its excellent museum collections, but also in its generally well tended historic architecture, from Justinian's Aya Sofia to the works of the

1. General view from the opening ceremony of Islamic Arts Exhibition, organised by the Turkish Government.
2. Inauguration ceremony of International Commission for the Preservation of Islamic Cultural Heritage.
3. Guests at the opening ceremony of IRCICA symposium.



great Turkish architect Sinan (1489-1588) who, starting with Sultan Selim I, served under five consecutive Sultans and as their Chief Architect, was directly and indirectly responsible for 81 large and 51 small mosques, 26 libraries, 17 public kitchens, 35 palaces, 25 baths, 7 aqueducts and numerous tombs, Caravanserais and fountains.

After the formal inauguration of the Symposium at the Ataturk Cultural Centre in Taksim Square, a documentary film, prepared by the IRCICA on the life and works of the outstanding Turkish calligrapher, Hamid Aytac, (known also as Hamid Al-Amidi) who passed away in Istanbul in May last year, was shown. The five day Seminar itself was punctuated by a number of related exhibitions and events including visits to specialist museum and historic buildings and Mosques. There was an excellent display of traditional glazed tiles and ceramic arts at the Cinili Kiosk at the Topkapi; an exhibition of calli-

graphy, manuscripts and Imperial edicts at the Suleymaniye Library; outstanding display of historic rugs and carpets at Vakıflar Museum adjacent to the blue mosque; an exhibition of worship articles at the Topkapi and one of metal and wood-work at the Turkish Islamic Works Museum.

The headquarters of the IRCICA itself are located in the "Cit Qasr", one of the main sections of the Yildiz Palace used as a reception hall and library during the reign of Sultan Abdulaziz and Sultan Abdulhamid II. Parts of the "Cit Qasr" are being restored and adopted under the supervision of architect Nevzat Ilhan, a member of the teaching staff of the Yildiz University and Conservation Consultant to the IRCICA and UNESCO, and are an excellent example of the involvement of staff and students in active restoration and conservation of heritage as a learning process and at the same time, and economic and practical way of upgrading and

recycling redundant buildings into contemporary use. The Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture itself started functioning according to its establishment statute accepted by the 9th Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference (ICFM) convened in Dakar in 1978, submitted its works programme to the 11th ICFM in Islamabad in 1980, the governing council of the Centre being appointed by the 12th ICFM in Baghdad in 1981. The main aim of the Centre is to strengthen the historical and cultural links among Islamic peoples and create an environment of sincere and brotherly friendship based upon the inexhaustible legacy of the great civilisation and Islamic culture. It is to act as a meeting place for historians, writers, scientists and artists from the Islamic world in order to examine and study the common rich legacy and to stress the contributions of Islam to the universal civilisation. Under its first Director General, Dr. Ekmeleddin

out through the creative skills of the artist and the designer. Muslim creativity, if it is to have a wider social and historical significance, must be rooted in the proper understanding of the evolution of the language and symbols of the Islamic arts and architecture to establish a sound conceptual basis that unifies theory and practice as a valid source of inspiration for the future. It is essential to study Islamic arts, architecture and the city in their own right and within their own social and historical existence and NOT in comparison to similar activities of others, as has been the case over the recent centuries. It is indispensable to approach Islamic arts not as mere objects of investigation and materialistic evaluation, and the traditional environment as mere exotic accretion, but as a living reality, as an expression of faith and a total resource for inspiration that seeks its validity serving those who

should not, and must not, separate their cultural identity and ethical values from their need for social welfare, distributive justice and human dignity for a fulfilling quality of life within the contemporary process of socio-economic development ■

Samples from Islamic Arts Exhibition, organized by the Turkish Government.



Ihsanoglu, the centre has already published a Guidebook of Islamic Cultural Institutions, addresses of cultural institutions in OIC countries, a publication on the Muslim Pious Foundations and Real Estate in Palestine, a documentary on Calligrapher Hamid Aytac and has collated documents relating to repairs and constructions carried out in the Holy cities from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Some of the other important works in an advance state of preparation relate to a Bibliography of Publications on Arabic, Turkish and Persian manuscripts in the libraries of Turkey, a guidebook of Ottoman Archives, cataloguing of nearly 3,000 manuscripts in the Koprulu library in Istanbul, a series of books on Islamic history and systematic cataloguing and publication of hitherto unpublished historical photographs. From its address at Barbaras Bulvari, Yildiz Sarayı Seyir Kosku, P.O. Box 24, Besiktas, Istanbul, the centre publishes a regular newsletter on its ongoing activities.

Given the broad range of the Symposium subject and the limitation on the time available, considerable ground was covered in the various fields of Islamic Arts: substantial heritage of calligraphy, not merely as an art form and surface decoration but as communicator and disseminator of the eternal message and of knowledge; the geometric and floral arabesques with their multiplying, interlocking, meandering and expanding characteristics and infinite capacity to dissolve and unify the surfaces, equally of a small utilitarian object as well as of monumental space enclosing architecture; dramatic and theatrical arts and miniature paintings with associated problems of figurative representation, their prohibition and transfiguration; the art of the book and of book binding; illustrated historical text in Islamic manuscripts and their illuminations and calligraphies; the art of the coin, evolving through several iconographical experiments based on existing models, culminating in 79AH in the first purely epigraphical dirham. The art of the handmade carpets and carpet weaving is another continuing, unique form of Islamic art embodying skills and techniques evolved over generations. The exhibition of Turkish carpets, opened during the Seminar at the Vakıflar Carpet Museum, together with the collection in the Istanbul Museum of Turkish and

Islamic Arts and the Konya Mevlana Museums represents richest collections of knotted handmade carpets.

A Special photographic exhibition of Islamic architecture underlined the importance of photography as a recording and communicating medium. Following recognition of photography in Turkey in 1880, photographic albums were prepared for the Yildiz Palace recording everyday life in the various regions of the then Ottoman Empire and interior and exterior views of significant buildings in cities such as Yemen, Damascus, Alexandria, Cairo and Aleppo. There are over 1800 such albums which, if and when appropriately catalogued and published, will prove to be invaluable sources of information for the research and proper understanding of recent Islamic Heritage.

The Muslim cities have gone through dramatic metamorphosis during the last few decades, and due to the pressures of demographic change and lack of appropriate infra-structure and planning, the large metropolitan cities have become increasingly unmanageable. Both the architecture and city planning continues to be influenced by and imitative of the irrelevant and by now outdated occidental concepts with some efforts here and there at naive application of historically familiar elements often resulting in mere archaic regurgitations. Some efforts at exploring the basic issues and form determining factors in Islamic architecture were presented, and an interesting paper, using hitherto unpublished material, compared records of individual houses and residential clusters to explain the factors of unity and variety in the domestic architecture of Islam, often ignored due to modesty of its scale, and in favour of monumental buildings for scholarly studies and examination. The art of architecture and of city making is the most social of the arts, and since most human activity takes place in and around buildings of one form or another, the most inescapable. A bolder and more confident dialectic between tradition, innovation and contemporary aspirations is necessary to determine the essential nature of Islamic architecture, and an overview of the built-environment, what it is, how it is to be built, how it works and grows and how it is to be used, managed and looked after; and indeed, what policies are

to be actively pursued towards the urban heritage and scores of historic cores of metropolitan cities still languishing in a state of progressive decay and rapid depletion. The collective urban and artistic heritage is vital for the cultural identity and survival of the Ummah and must have a positive role in the strategy of future development, and it must therefore be with some degree of optimism that we should welcome the inauguration, during the Symposium week, of the International Commission of Islamic Cultural Heritage.

The material presented at the Symposium, often illustrated with slides and visits to the various concurrent exhibitions together with formal discussions and informal debates are all part of the fruitful and stimulating function of such a gathering — to inform, exchange ideas and experiences and share concern and anguish at the present state of the arts and, by extension, of architecture. It must be reassuring that such events take place and generate increasing awareness of the valuable heritage, but there is no denying that considerably more needs to be done, and urgently, to give a clearer purpose and direction to the Islamic arts within the ethos of its own peoples and within the epistemology of Islam.

There cannot be a role for art for its own sake, nor can there be any division of arts, sacred and profane, major and minor, elite and otherwise. They must seek excellence in the service and submission to one God, celebrate his creation, enoble and enrich human life at the widest possible level, and must concern themselves with the sharply defined social and human concerns. Mere abundance of words, however scholarly, cannot be a substitute for true knowledge and proper understanding. The essential sources of Islamic arts lie in the perennials of submission, unity, human equality, mutual responsibility and obligations, distributive justice and balanced and beneficent use of resources. It is in the awareness and compliance of these notions, and in the proper understanding of the collective total resource of the artistic and architectural achievements of the Ummah that answer to the present predicament can be sought. It is with this awareness and through the practice of art and architecture as a conscious social art that a new synthesis can be worked

OPA - LOCKA

American City with Islamic Design

Carol Hotchkiss Malt

Florida offers many examples of Islamic architecture: several buildings incorporating Islamic design, many edifices and interiors displaying Islamic influence, and one entire city of Islamic architectural design — Opa-locka.

Most ancient cities in the Middle East grew in a rather haphazard and uncontrolled manner out of earlier settlements in relatively defensible locations, where a reliable source of water was available. Planning initially was limited to the ramparts, the water supply, the temple and the palace. More comprehensive town planning schemes in Syria date mainly from the late Bronze Age.

In ancient times, certain characteristics of city development were evident: the towns appear to have been fully developed before defensive ramparts were deemed necessary. These were high and massive, many meters thick, but of mud-brick or unworked stones and they were strengthened by earth embankments as at Tirzah and Beth Yerah or by additional walls as at Jericho.

In modern architecture based on Islamic design, do these same characteristics still apply? More importantly, is there such a thing as 'Islamic architecture' and when did it begin?

It has been argued that "the pre-Islamic Arabs had but the crudest notions of building", and that a distinctive Islamic architectural tradition crystallized only in the course of the 8th century. Today, of course we speak about Islamic architecture as a definable style. It is characterized, among other things by: symmetrical abstract patterns, a rectangular site orientation and

axis, an enclosed court area, aisles with columns (*Qibla*), the *mikrah*, minarets, horseshoe-shaped arches, colored tiles in abstract patterns and a geometric clarity of the whole design, which often was emphasized by severe external wall surfaces.

It is true that initially Islamic architecture reflected the taste and patronage of those living in the Arabian peninsula. But gradually, various styles developed which combined indigenous styles, differing religious contexts, and cultural expressions. One thing did not change: concentration and focus on the functional, inspirational and aesthetic aspects of the mosque.

Oleg Grabar has stated that 'classical' Islamic architecture, if it existed, had to have some of the following characteristics: wide cultural acceptance of certain forms as identifying the culture's functional and aesthetic needs, repetition of standardized forms and design, quality of execution at various levels of artistic production, and clarity in the definition of viable forms. Using this formula, it is easy to extrapolate to more contemporary, even out-of-context Islamic inspired architecture.

In America, interest in Muslim architecture has taken many forms, and inspired many architects, but the clients and builders of these inspired buildings were different from those in other cultures who were seeking a perfection of design, aesthetics, and religious satisfaction.

Although mosques were built in the large Eastern cities, most of the architecture which exists today which we call Islamic, Muslim or Moorish in style relates to secular buildings and is derivative rather

than exemplary in style. These buildings are for purely visual pleasure, collages of 20th century structural necessity, building code requirements and Middle Eastern fantasy. Many strain the architectural association/designation of 'Islamic' for they have lost any association with spiritual or even religiously functional identity. But they are fascinating in revealing an American taste, an American need.

In the 1920's, Islamic architecture and art inspired this secular production and often served the private and Masonic needs of Orders such as the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (Shriners). Even more popular were the 'atmospheric' movie theaters in which the exterior facade resembled a Moorish palace and the interior walls an Islamic townscape complete with dark blue sky and twinkling stars. Later, responding to the 1929 discoveries of Howard Carter in Egypt, the U.S. experienced a wave of 'Egyptomania' — this word denoting a generic term for all things appearing 'Middle Eastern'.

This 'mania' could only have happened in the affluent boom days of the 1920's. Buildings, and yes, cities were designed by American entrepreneurs promoting new frontier settlements and in search of imaginative gimmicks or design incentives which would make them rich. In south Florida, promoters often billed the desert-like scrub pine areas as oasis, and Islamic architecture was theatrically appropriate. Boom time. Sell time. Carnival time.

But Florida had many individual buildings of historic merit which



City Hall entrance gate, Opa-locka



City Hall, Opa-locka

were embellished by Islamic design or architectural plan — such as the Dallas Park Hotel in Miami and the Zorayda Castle in St. Augustine. Purity of vision or pride in Islamic tenets took a turn in boom-time Florida, however. The result was purely American — an association of magic, of the beautiful, of environmentally adaptable design, of enchantment, and should be of interest to scholars and historians.

Where is this best exemplified? In Florida there exists a fascinating city which was conceived to be the "Baghdad of south Florida" by its developer, Glenn H. Curtiss. The entire city — not just one building — was designed in the Islamic architectural style. That is what makes the city of Opa-locka unique.



Hotel, Opa-locka



Railroad Station, Opa-locka

How does Opa-locka differ from the historical settlement example previously mentioned? The city's buildings have walls, as did ancient cities of the Middle East; the city is located where there are sweet water wells, as did ancient cities of the Middle East; the city is in a defensible location — the busiest airport in America is located there, and it has served as a major military facility; the City Hall is surrounded by high, thick walls; furthermore most buildings are rectangular on axis; they are decorated with hand painted geometric and floral tiles, have horseshoe shaped arches, arched arcades and minarets.

Opa-locka is actually a prehistoric site. The Tequesta Indians were there about 500 years before the

Europeans came. And, long before that, this area was an ancient hammock. Nineteenth century records indicate it was called *Opatishawakalocka* by the Indians. In 1921, the land became part of the Curtiss-Bright ranch. Clever Mr. Curtiss coined the present pronounceable name from the beginning and the end of the Indian word. Some say, however, that the name came from *Opatish*, the Seminole Indian word for 'hammock' or 'big swamp'. Today it is a sleepy city northwest of Miami.

Of the hundreds of buildings conceived and built in the 1920's, few remain that are Islamic in design: the City Hall, the Opa-locka Hotel, the Archery Club, the bank, the Seaboard Railroad station, the

archeological museum, the fire station and several private homes. Continuation of the theme has not been actively promoted.

The most important building, City Hall, is still being used today. It was inspired by the stories of the *Arabian Nights*. All of the architectural motifs are represented. Windows: some inset in pointed and semi-circular blind arches; balconies: wood, turned balustrades and a central entrance space, between the second floors of the wings at either side (there is a smaller balcony offset on the left, the facade is supported on brackets); roof: the tiled shed roof is held by novelty wooden arches with medallions and impost blocks; scalloped crenellations appear on

the roofs; large rain spouts and scuppers indicate the hot wet climate; alternating voussoirs on central arches extend to form horizontal restication bands; minarets; decorative with conical, pavillion and onion shaped caps, and the stucco is interrupted in patches throughout the facade to expose decorative rough brickwork.

A tall square tower, with crenellated top, protects the striated facade of the main building — bands of alternating dark and light dance in the sunlight. Three round minarets with conical tops surround the five domes of the building, all dwarfed by one large octagonal minaret. It is a fascinating masterpiece of hidden charms and crevices, attentive to the designer's every dream and fantasy. The minarets are silver capped, the turrets, parapets, and arches are all shocking pink. It is on Sharazad Boulevard.

Other streets, called Aladdin, Sesame and Caliph, lead one to the City's other design treasures. East from City Hall, down Ali Baba street is the railroad station. It is less spectacular in size than City Hall, but more splendid in detail. Rectangular in design, its crenellated roof supports twin silver domes and the area of public accessway is marked by huge horseshoe arches. Exquisite hand painted tiles with geometric and floral designs cover the exterior walls.

The station reminds one of a silent sister in Jordan, Qusr el Amra which basks in memories of a past glory while baking in the merciless sun, waiting to be used again. Like splendid Amra, it is a cool arched haven visited by travellers, resplendent with artistic creativity and scarred by visiting vandals. Perhaps more than any other single factor, the railroad helped develop the city. Developer Curtiss convinced the Seaboard Line Railway to curve its main tracks out to Opa-locka on its route between Miami and New York City and it was only after the railroad was built that promotion of the City began in earnest.

Standing unused and isolated now like some abandoned fortress, the station belies the arrival of that first train in 1927 — when the town promoters bought authentic Arab costumes from a theatrical company in New York and prepared a festival to greet their guests.

In his book, *A Dream of Araby*, Frank S. FitzGerald-Bush writes about the arrival of the first train

and the 'Arabian Nights Fantasy' created for it:

The great day of the Arabian Nights Fantasy which was to mark the first stop of the Orange Blossom Special in Opa-locka must also mark the highwater of the town's success. The many varieties of tropical trees which Mr. Curtiss, with the advice of Dr. John C. Gifford, had caused to be planted along Opa-locka's streets were not yet a year old. Potted palms by the hundreds and potted flowering plants of every available kind, were placed about the city's main buildings and along its streets.

Opa-locka bore a remarkable resemblance to an Arabian village at festival time when the train arrived on that Saturday afternoon of January 8, 1927. Turbanned sheiks on snow-white chargers rode to greet the train, from which alighted, perhaps somewhat shaken, the Governor of Florida — and a score or more of officials and notables of every degree —

Another building, the Hurt building, renamed the Opa-locka Hotel after World War II, is the most successfully symmetrical of those remaining. As designed, it was to have had offices, apartments and a social hall on the second floor. Its major dome (now awaiting repair) is flanked by two minarets and arcades of horseshoe shaped arches appear to the right and left of the entrance.

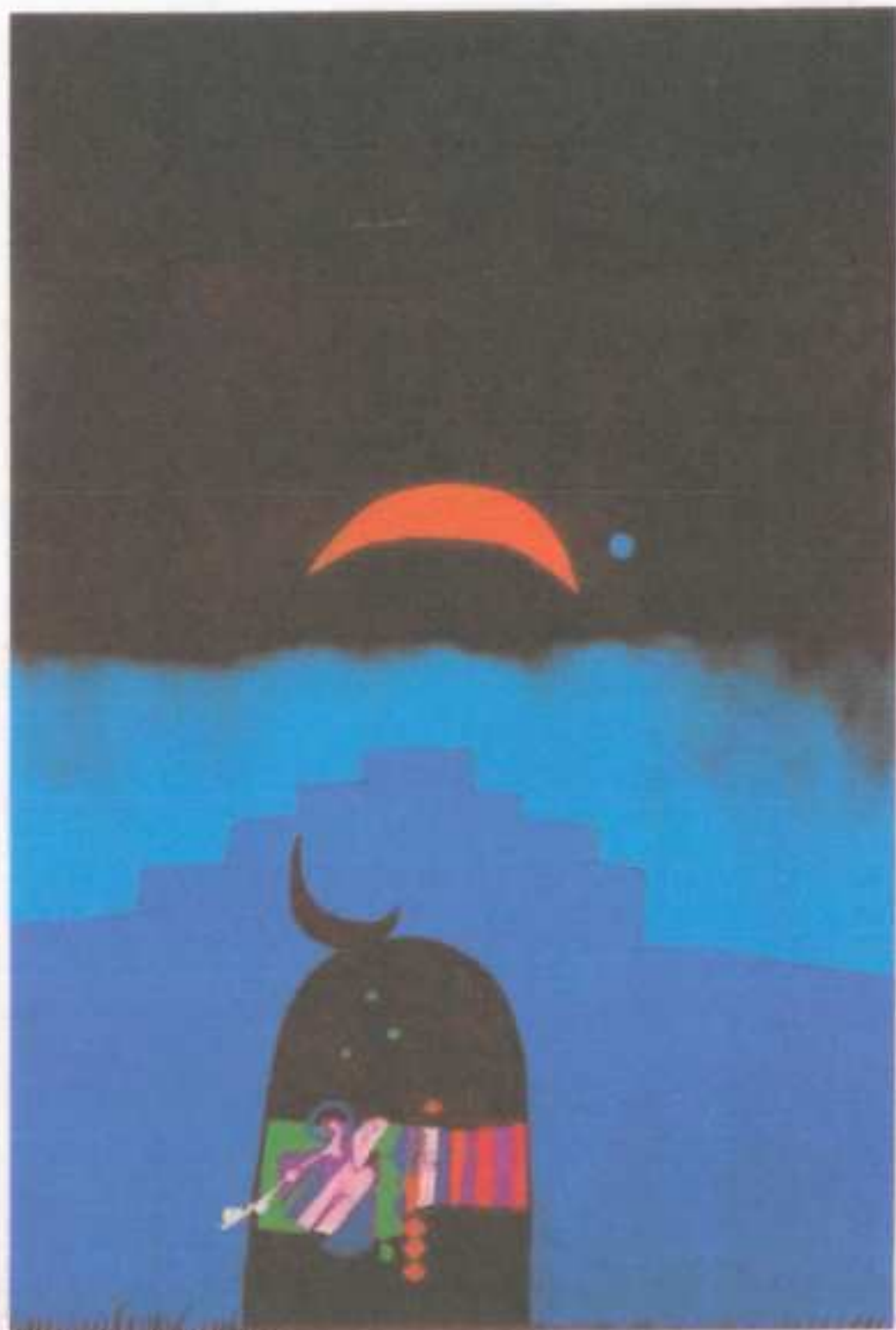
All of these theme buildings of Islamic design were conceived by the architect Bernhardt Emil Muller. He studied at L'ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris in 1903 and thereafter established his practice in Manhattan. Designs for the buildings were based on tales from the "Arabian Nights", "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" and "Aladdin and His Lamp". When the theme was established, some of the buildings proved difficult to design. The bank, for instance. The inspiration came from the "Tale of Layn al Asnam." He solved the dilemma between whether to express security or fantasy by designing it to resemble an ancient Egyptian vault — an interesting compromise. The columns, never actually created from the drawings, with their lotus capitals, were modelled from those at the Temple at Karnak. The building is now a Baptist church and is located at the intersection of Caliph and Bahman Streets. The

front facade actually simulates the architecture of an early Egyptian mastaba, but a Gothic style window was later inserted.

The Opa-locka project was a success, whether it was the creative geniuses who rode the horses to greet the new visitors at the train station, or the timeless architecture, the excitement and fervor of the dream set a standard for other community developments in this country, and if it had not been for the disastrous combination of hurricanes, the death of the developer Glenn Curtiss, and the Great Depression, Opa-locka would be today the prosperous and unique showcase of Islamic architecture and Middle Eastern design it was envisioned to be.

Change came to the city after Curtiss's death in July of 1930. The aviation property was used to establish the U.S. Naval Reserve Aviation Base. Its purpose was to train student naval aviators. This development, as well as the establishment of an airship mooring facility, brought new people to Opa-locka and also changed the economy of the city. A new Opa-locka company was formed and began to produce dwellings of non-descript and non artistic design which could satisfy only the United States Government housing appraisers. The Navy aviation activities increased and expanded, chewing up the rest of Opa-locka's original purpose; the park, golf course, archery club, all fell prey to Naval expansion. In 1949, with World War II coming, land was acquired from the area and a large station was established. Its influence and importance ended with the war, leaving the city bereft of dreams and economically barren.

Today, however, there is appreciation in the eyes of city historians, residents, and city planners to save the city's treasures. A Comprehensive Plan for the restoration and preservation of existing buildings has been adopted. Many of the important theme sites have been placed on the National Register for Historic Places, thus enabling preservation groups to request funding to preserve, rebuild and even readapt these buildings for today's needs. That there is a call for the restoration of these buildings and a respect for their Islamic design goes beyond mere local historical preservation. It honors the past, promotes the present and satisfies our dreams.



Die Azzurri, gesucht (Galerie Tarek)

Arab Artists in Paris

Shirley Kay

Paris, with its elegant turn-of-the-century terrace and wide tree-lined boulevards, has an aesthetic appeal which has long acted as a lode-stone to artists from throughout the West. Or has it been the stimulus of an environment in which the arts are part of everyday life, rather than the beauty of the place, which has proved so strong a draw for creative spirit?

Certainly for the new generation of Arab artists, who have chosen to make their homes there, it is the latter that has attracted them. "Paris is a crossroads where one meets people from all cultures", says an Algerian theatre director who is launching an international arts centre there; "when I first visited Paris as a student I was overwhelmed by the breadth of music here. I felt I must come back", recalls a young Egyptian composer; "it is all the artistic currents here which are so vital to me", comments a young Lebanese sculptor.

A few artists, notably from the Lebanon, have been in Paris for many years now. Others, from a wide variety of Arab countries, have joined them in more recent years. Among the painters, at any rate, the doyen must be the charming Lebanese abstract artist, Shafic Abboud, who abandoned engineering studies for art and came to Paris back in 1947 to learn more about it. Working now from a delightful Ali Baba's cavern of an artist's studio beside the Parc Montsouris, a tiny place crammed with paints and brushes, large canvases, ceramics and textured murals, engraving equipment and easels, he paints in oils his bright, cheerful abstracts made up of blocks of colour and design. Abboud has exhibited in France, Germany, Lebanon and Holland and in recent years provided a large ceramic and copper mural, commissioned for a sports complex by the Ville de Paris. Until recently he kept close links with his home country, returning to Beirut to teach for four months each year, thus providing a current of cross-fertilisation for aspiring young Lebanese painters. A good selection of his paintings can be seen in the Lebanese-owned Galerie Schéhade, near the Place des Vosges, in Paris.

Although Lebanon has long been in the forefront of Arab painting, it is by no means the only Arab country to have enriched the Paris art world. While I can only mention a few of the many Arab painters working in Paris, anyone interested



Hussein Chouder "Duality"

in exploring this field could not do better than start at the Galerie Faris in the old artists' area of the Quartier Latin. This gallery is owned by an Iraqi who specialises entirely in Arab painters and sculptors, having some 30 artists currently on his lists, from countries as diverse as Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Morocco and Algeria.

Adam Henein, from Egypt, is one of the best-known artists exhibiting there. His abstract sculptures and strikingly original paintings have long been popular in Egypt and in Europe where he has exhibited in Germany, Yugoslavia, Holland and Italy as well as in France and also in Morocco. Henein's paintings also are abstracts, but with a very special texture and colour range, for he paints on papyrus. He once spent two winters in Luxor and was delighted by the palette of ancient Egyptian painters. Then someone gave him a couple of pages of papyrus and he liked that too.

Henein, however, uses the restful, subtle tones of Egypt's ancient past to create evocative, very modern images, recalling at times the work of Paul Klee. He has used the inspiration of one of the world's most ancient civilisations as a basis for a totally modern output, and he is not alone of Arab artists in Europe to draw on this heritage. Several of the musicians are inspired by the traditional themes of Andalusia and Egypt, while a Syrian poet and playwright, Abed Azrie, drew on 4000-year-old Sumerian texts in the construction of a contemporary play put on last year at the Iraqi cultural centre.

Henein was a sculptor before



Choukri Choukri "Textile wall hanging"

becoming a painter. He started sculpting at the precociously early age of eight and his work in this field has continued to evolve, becoming increasingly more symbolic and technically ambitious (he uses a mixture of clays with granite, basalt, schist or copper fired at high temperatures); in 1968 he won the Grand Prix International at Monaco for his work. Another Arab sculptor in Paris who has been rewarded with a French artistic prize is Choukri Choukri from the Lebanon. Choukri sculpts his abstract, evocative works largely in wood, sometimes in marble or other stone. In his (often very large) sculpture, the vertical lines are strongly marked, frequently by an almost detached strand of wood recalling the string of a lute. He works in a high, light modern studio, purpose-built to house a young artist and his family in a southern suburb of Paris. In 1978 he was a prize winner at the young sculptors exhibition in Paris.

Perhaps the most recent award winner among Arab artists in Paris (and I do not wish to imply that



Des Azures, gouache (Galerie Faris)

have given them the chance to exhibit their works, or to perform. For the painters and sculptors the galleries mentioned above, the Syrian and Egyptian cultural centres and, until recently, the prestigious Iraqi cultural centre facing the Arc de Triomphe, have provided a forum. This year two new arts organisations, destined to help on a broader basis and both, as it happens, founded by Algerians, are opening their doors.

The Association des Artistes Originaires de l'Immigration aims to provide help and information to foreigners working in the plastic arts in Paris, and to mount



Adam Henin, design for a tapestry (Galerie Faris)



Adam Henin, painting on paper (Galerie Faris)



Nada Akk, "Steps" (Galerie Faris)



awards shower effortlessly on painters in Paris, they do not - they have to be earned! is Solange Tarazi who received the medal of the Ville de Paris at her exhibition this spring in the Unesco headquarters. Tarazi paints imaginary, near abstract landscapes in luminous water-colours, strongly influenced by the crystal clear light of her native Lebanon and perhaps even more so, that of Iran - a land with which she fell in love some years ago.

Imaginary landscapes are also the domain of another Lebanese artist, Jean Pierre Watchi, whose sources include, perhaps, the vibrant colours of Mali where he was born. His canvasses are certainly vibrant, painted in shining lacquer and brilliant primary colours, often with a subtle blue-mauve "reflection" picture hanging below. In these imaginary landscapes he inserts imaginary figures, flying in space like little butterflies, or a flock of Arabic letters. His paintings are shown in another Arab-owned gallery in the Latin Quarters, that of Samy Kinge, and can be seen far afield in wall panels in Switzerland

and Saudi Arabia, where he designed a sensitive set of panels, 21 metres long, for the Hotel Carlton in Dammam. Large panels also figure prominently in the work of the Algerian painter, Abdallah Benanteur, whose abstract paintings are produced in sets, to be mounted as screens.

While Watchi's paintings evoke Arabic letters, Dia Azzawi's actually make use of them in glowing, exciting abstract gouaches with a very marked Islamic character. Azzawi was born in Iraq and now lives (I must confess) in London, but I mention his work here since it is regularly on show at the Paris gallery and has achieved an interesting blend of Islamic shapes and symbols in a style of modern art which also draws on western influences.

The crisp, structured lines of his paintings would still not preface us for the ultra sharp focus of the work of the youngest painter whom I shall mention here. Nada Akl is a Lebanese painter, still in her twenties, whose canvasses are painted with such detail, such minute realism that at

first sight one must be reminded of a photo. And yet they clearly have a story to tell and one is immediately involved in deciphering the secret message. Her technical control is already extraordinary, her imagination strong and surprising. Inspiration comes to her, she says, in listening to music (though this has nothing to do with the fact that her brother is the well known pianist, Walid Akl).

Music, she maintains, because of its purity is the source of all artistic inspiration. It is a source, in any case, which has not been neglected by Arab artists in Paris. Hussein El Masry, for example, is a young Egyptian composer and lute player who came to Paris to broaden the basis of his own musical experience. He draws strongly on traditional Arabic lute music (he likes to intersperse his own compositions with short renderings of traditional Egyptian pieces), enriched with western melodic lines. Since the lute came to Europe from the Arab world (the name derives from 'al-ud'), European renaissance music (among others) provides an interesting source for the extension of Arab inspiration. El Masry feels that his own work has benefited greatly and is now interested in proposals from Cairo that he should contribute to teaching there. Last year he gave the first solo lute recital in Cairo, at the invitation of the Ministry of Culture. He has made two records in France, 'Nile Flood' and 'Desert Sands', and has played in theatres and on the radio. Next year he will be giving courses at the Conservatoire of Pantin and will play in May at the Theatre de la Ville.

Anouar Ibrahim is another young lute player who has settled in Paris, very recently, coming this time from Tunisia. He has played already in a number of countries and his music has an international quality which is difficult to place. Ibrahim and another well-established North African musician, Nour-Eddine Boukhatem from Algeria, have been playing recently in a series of concerts organised by a new arts centre, the Carrefour de la Différence, in Paris. Boukhatem plays percussion instruments, drawing his inspiration from three dynamic sources, the music of Arab Andalusia, that of the golden age of Baghdad, and the music of Africa to the south of his homeland.

Arab artists in Paris have been helped in recent years by a number of Arab galleries and centres which



Dha Azizani, gouache "Desert Forms" (Galerie Faris)



Azouine Aïme. Black dress in courtly with three-quarter length skirt

Clouds Cloudier. Sculpture in wood

exhibitions. The Association was founded in January and held its first exhibition in March with paintings from all over the world. Its president, Latif Djeddi (known always as Latif) is himself an accomplished and sensitive water colourist whose paintings unexpectedly recall the works of Turner, the favourite painter - it turns out - of this son of the edges of the Sahara, who had originally studied economics and politics.

Yet more ambitious is the cultural centre of the Carrefour de la Différence, being set up with the help of a French government subsidy in a former timber factory in the 11th district. The moving spirit behind this venture (and the great deal of work going into it) is Diden Oumer, a theatre producer from Algeria. The centre, which is nearing completion and should open in September, is the realisation of a dream which goes back some 20 years, to a time when Oumer produced at the Festival of Nancy alongside companies from many other countries. He conceived the belief that culture must be the key to peace and understanding in the







Jean Fievet-Watkins, painting on paper in



Jean Fievet-Watkins, "Images of Elsewhere"



Abdallah Benousser, "The Eighth Day", 1.2m panel for series (Galerie Schéhade)



Shabir Ahluwalia, large abstract (Galerie Schéhade)



Jean Fievet-Watkins, "Impressions"



Shabir Ahluwalia, cottons and textile wall hanging

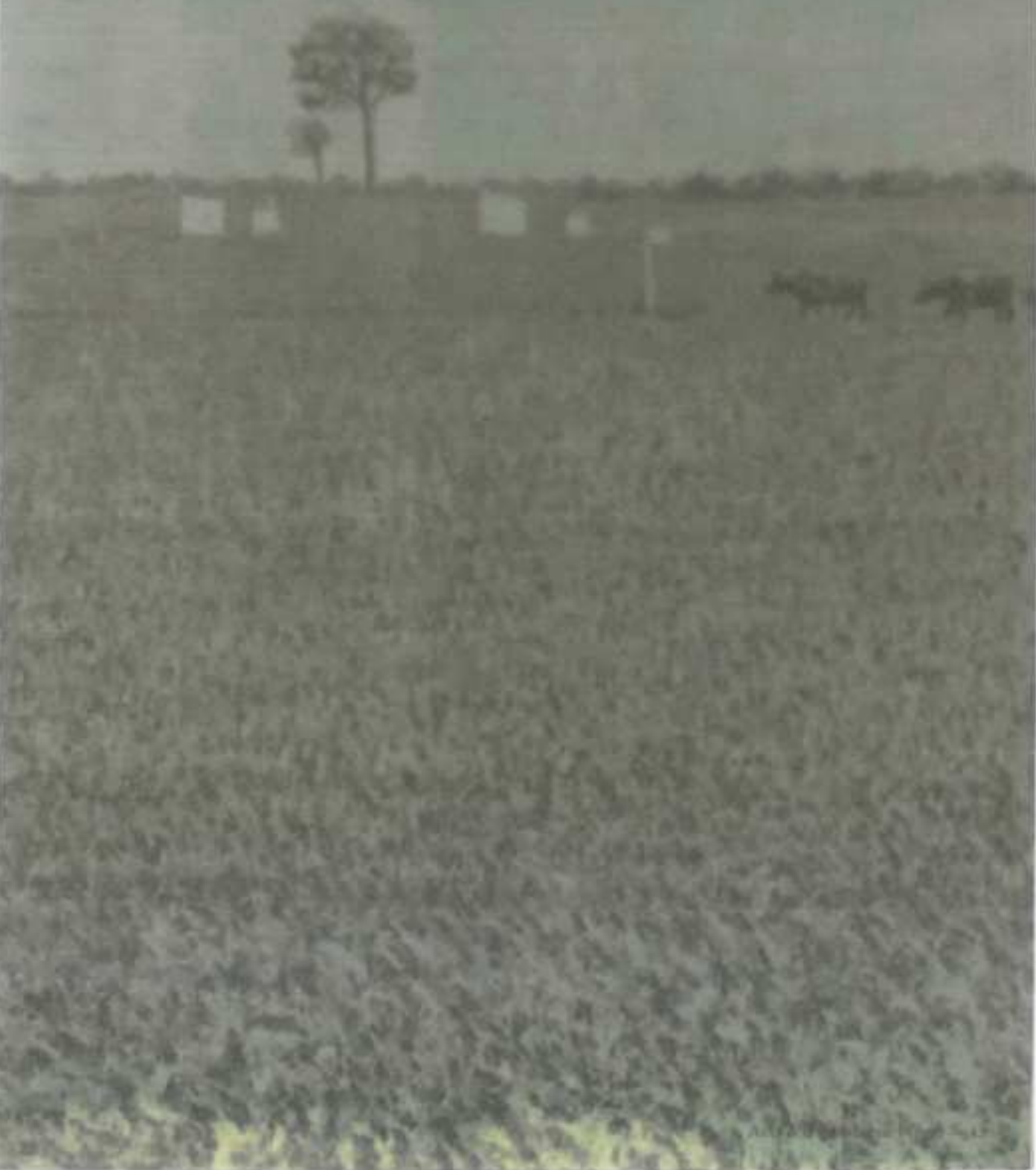
world, that if people from different cultures were given the chance to see and appreciate each other's artistic production, they would grow to understand each other. It is this dream which he hopes to be able to put into practice at this centre where one floor will be devoted to music, another to the plastic arts, and a third to a theatre with seating for 250. Meanwhile he is organising a limited programme in neighbouring halls.

The attraction of Paris for artists from all over the Arab world has increased markedly in recent years and the facilities available to them are expanding accordingly. The galleries mentioned above have all opened within the past six years, and for those who wish to establish contact with these organisations and galleries, here are their addresses: Galerie Faris, 50 rue de l'Université, 75007 Paris; Galerie Kinge, 54 rue de Verneuil, 75007

Paris; Galerie Schéhade, 44 rue de Tournelles, 75004 Paris; Carrefour de la Différence, 1 Passage du Bureau, 75011 Paris; and Association des Artistes Originaires de l'Immigration, 43 bis rue des Entrepreneurs, 75015 Paris. Meanwhile, for the future, the prestigious Institut du Monde Arabe, now under construction, offers the promise of library and exhibition facilities on an imposing scale.

PUNJAB PANORAMA

Miriam Habib



The lush and fertile land of Punjab in Pakistan has been mother to many an artist, with Lahore, its ancient capital, serving as a cultural hub. Green plains, clear skies, the quiet pace of rural life are perennial themes for the brush, rendered in



Shaker Ali



A.R. Chughtai



Semi-abstract, Ghulam Rasool



Mosaic, A.J. Shamzu



Court scene, Aftab Ahmed



Allah Baksh



Realistic, Khalid Iqbal



Impressionist, Anwar Mulla Ahmad



Portrait, Poet and Verse, Saad Akhtar



Modern Calligraphy

moods of varying perception. At the frequent exhibitions at the Alhambra Arts Centre, one can survey a panoramic view of the leading personalities, the styles and groups that have given the painting landscape its history and character. Combined and retrospective exhibitions and one-man shows continue through the viewing season at which each practising artist of significance portrays his progress



and change in his interpretation of the aesthetic experience. Private galleries, like the one run by pioneer painter and art teacher Moyene Najmi, provide another outlet for the exhibitor as an alternate to the state-managed Art Councils, and has in the last several years arranged small shows featuring established artists and new hopefuls. The combination and co-operation of both sectors makes for a happy diversification and pluralism to form the basis for a living art expression. Add to these the presence of two flourishing art schools enjoying distinctive traditions which frequently open to public view the creations of students and staff.

Having said this much, it may be admitted that in a young country seeking to enter the contemporary world, old traditions, social and artistic, have been interrupted and modified as influences from West and East make themselves felt. Pakistani painting is therefore eclectic even in its traditional modes. Apart from the miniature that preserves the techniques and themes of the Moghul epoch, there is no pure style exclusively the possession of this Muslim state that looks to both the Islamic heartlands and Asia for its heritage.

Three great masters have left a lasting imprint on the painting scene. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, unique in his imagery and the subtle tones of his graduated water colour washes, has bequeathed a legacy of several thousand paintings and etchings now housed in a private museum managed by his heirs since his death in the seventies. Lyrical in coloration his forms are designed in flowing lines, and literary symbols, such as the lamp and nightingale, impart a depth of meaning. He has many imitators but no equals. His individualised style goes by the generic term "Chughtai Art". The late Allah Baksh was another veteran artist, prolific in an altogether different mode, who migrated to Lahore before independence to set up a studio and found a school. Using oils and guache he turned out canvases of rustic life, peasant festivals and typical portraits of beloved folk heroes and heroines. His treatment is in the realistic, somewhat idealised manner.

The phenomenon known as Shakir Ali entered Pakistan in the fifties to eventually make Lahore his artistic base. Trained in India and

Europe, a modern in the international idiom he made art history as principal of the National College for two decades. A circle of friends and admirers worked under his inspiration as he liberated succeeding waves of art graduates from the inhibitions of academic realism. His technique was Western, the content often indigenous, but in the more imaginative abstract canvases, space, texture, economy and balance become the predominant elements.



Still life "Leaves", S. Sajid Ali.

A second generation is at work, extending over a wide range of articulation from the avant-garde to those who favour more representational canvases. Anna Molka Ahmed, a pioneer art educator and painter, employed a light suffused impressionist language of the brush. Her former pupils, Khalid Iqbal and Ghulam Rasul, make their own explorations. The first, trained at the Slade School of Art, uses a fine academic discipline to recreate the mundane landscape into an almost mystical harmony of form, light and colour; the latter juxtaposes flat shapes with satisfying economy.

The credit for keeping the miniature alive and well in the Punjab goes to that grand master the late Haji Sharif and his disciples who retained the technique of this exacting craft as it was practised

three hundred years ago for the pleasure of Mughal emperors. A handful of young men have attained proficiency but the problem is one of application and subject matter. A few miniaturists have experimented with present-day themes, yet the scale and technique seems intrinsically wedded to the content and matter of its heyday — it was a palace art and today is a pleasing historical relic rather than a living form.

By contrast, calligraphy has witnessed an unprecedented efflorescence. The classical masters of pure form are coming into their own in a climate of Islamic cultural renaissance. However, a fascinating development is calligraphy as expressionism, as abstraction, as modern painting. Classic and free forms embodying Quranic texts are integrated into two-dimensional compositions. An entire community of painters has adopted the genre as an artistic vehicle, though not always with aesthetically well-realised results. Aslam Kamal is among outstanding practitioners of creative calligraphy.

Artists of the Punjab function within an ambience of curiosity and courage, pursuing with vigour the on-going process of growth and communication that is painting. ■

THE AGA KHAN Award for Architecture

— An Assessment —

Maureen Ali

The prize-giving ceremony for the 1983 Aga Khan Award for Architecture — the second in a three-year cycle — took place on a mild September evening in the grounds of the historic Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. The Turkish President honoured the occasion with his presence and initiated the prize-giving, which was then presided over by His Highness the Aga Khan. Also attending the ceremony were the Begum Aga Khan, His Highness Prince Aynur, and various Turkish and foreign dignitaries, as well as professionals working in the field of architecture, officials from the Award scheme and members of the Turkish and international press.

Each winner was presented with a specially designed Aga Khan Award and a framed certificate, and later, a cheque for his share of the substantial US \$500,000 Award money. The prize-giving was followed by a formal dinner inside the Topkapi Palace, overlooking the moonlit Bosphorous. After dinner guests were invited to enjoy a late night cruise on the Bosphorous, giving the visitors a unique perspective of Istanbul by night.

The eleven winning entries, (separately listed and introduced), varied in their approach to the problem of building today, offering a whole spectrum of solutions, from the most traditional, with the mudbrick mosque in Mali, to the most technologically advanced, with the Hajj Terminal in Saudi Arabia. They also included low income housing project and luxury hotel, as well as examples of outstanding restoration projects to safeguard the future of some of the most important Islamic monuments.

None is to be seen as the absolute solution to any one problem but

rather, as the Aga Khan put it, as valid steps in the process of search. "The Master Jury's selections", the Aga Khan pointed out in his Award speech, "are merely the most visible aspects of a large number of activities which are designed to impact upon as many as possible of the constituencies influencing the built environment: constituencies which include not only architects, planners and engineers, but academics, the media, the civil servants who formulate policy, the intelligentsia, the financial institutions who lend money for construction and, as I have said before, the national leaders."

However, in selecting eleven winners for the 1983 Aga Khan Award for Architecture the Master Jury touched off a series of debates in which several aspects of the wideranging Award scheme have come under scrutiny. Important questions have been raised and the answers, when formulated, should have a positive effect on the Award programme.

The decision to award eleven prizes caused surprise and in many cases disappointment. Even some members of the Jury were unconvinced that this was the correct course of action to take. Although there were four less winners than in the previous Award ceremony in Lahore in 1980, the premiating of so many projects was seen by some as having a highly detrimental effect on the reputation of the Award.

Two distinct schools of thought have, in fact, emerged and their views have yet to be reconciled. There are those who advocate a single major prize which they say would give the Award much more impact on the international level. Others believe that the purpose of the Award — to recognise and

promote what is worthy in the built environment in the Muslim world and propagate what is good so that those who follow may be similarly inspired — can be better served by awarding a larger number of prizes over a wide range of projects, taking in, where possible, the different geographic regions in the Muslim world.

Ismail Serageldin, Chairman of this year's Master Jury, feels strongly that the broader distribution of prizes has a greater impact on the people living in the Muslim countries. It is almost impossible, he maintains, that a single award, no matter how well publicised or substantial, would have this same impact.

Other members of the jury, such as Rifat Chaderji and Habib Fida Ali, disagree. This year's entries, they say, were not of a high enough standard to merit eleven awards. It is their contention that by declaring so many winners, the Award almost certainly loses impact. It is better, they suggest, to settle for between three and five winners, thus substantially rewarding the very best entries. An idea once more challenged by Serageldin on the basis that while this would certainly increase the prestige of the Award at the international level, again it would have less meaning at the grass roots level.

The decision of the jury is entirely its own and it stands no matter what, but there are indications that in future the jury will be given more specific guidelines to help it select the winners. The Aga Khan gave some hint also at possible changes to come. Seriously under consideration, for example, is the idea of a major prize for excellence, followed by a series of awards, possibly some in specific categories, such as a prize

for low income housing projects and one for restoration. There is also some talk of 'honourable mentions' to give additional encouragement.

But it is not just a question of how many to award. Members of the jury were even split over what they perceive as the purpose of the Award. While some see it purely as an architectural award recognising, above all else, excellence in design, others, perhaps mindful of the Award's broader mandate — to place great value on social, cultural, environmental and economic aspects of building — feel that much encouragement should be given to those projects highlighting the social consciousness of architecture, such as the 1980 award-winning Kampung Improvement Programme in Jakarta. There were no such projects among this year's winners — a fact which prompted comment. Indications are, however, that renewed efforts will be made to seek out such schemes.

While everyone actively involved in choosing the Awards is concerned that they should not become restricted by a system of categorization, it seems likely that a limited number of categories will be introduced into the prize-giving.

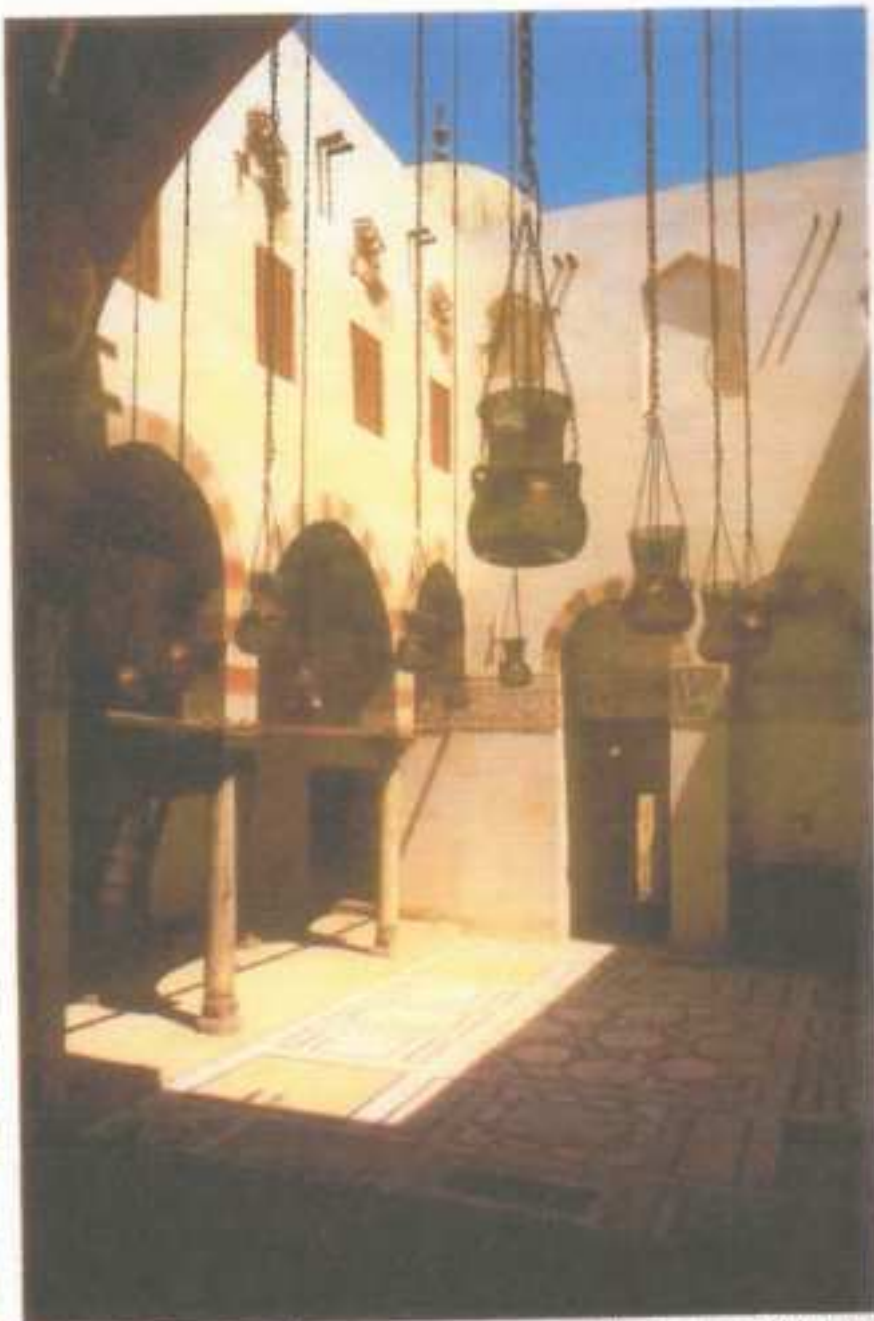
This year three prizes were given for restoration, which some felt were too many. It could be argued



Detail, Great Mosque, Niamey

that under normal circumstances, restoration projects do not qualify for architectural awards, but in the case of the Aga Khan Award, devoted as it is to maintaining continuity and an awareness of the cultural heritage, restoration projects seem certain to be included. What still needs to be agreed is how the jury should approach the subject of restoration in order to achieve consensus on the matter.

As an award scheme for architecture, the Aga Khan Award is also unique in the extent to which it is committed to rewarding the work of the "non-qualified" builder. When this aspect was challenged at the Award Press Conference in Istanbul, the Aga Khan was categorical that this would remain the



Darb Qismic Quarter, Cairo Δ



▽ Hajj Terminal, Jeddah Airport



Azem Palace, Damascus

policy. In an area where 90 per cent of the building is still carried out by builders without formal training, he said, the Award accepts the premise of excellence without architects. This view was illustrated by the jury's choice of the prize-winning Nail Cakirhan Residence, designed and executed by a Turkish poet/journalist.

But not everybody agrees and the Turkish nomination sparked off considerable controversy in Istanbul where the 1983 Award ceremony was held. The consensus among Turkish professionals and even some award officials was that there were other more suitable Turkish projects meriting an award and questions were raised about the Award nomination procedure and the lack of public information concerning the process of selection.

As it is, nominations from a wide variety of sources — architects, schools of architecture, government bodies and so on — are invited to be submitted to the award's office where they are screened by the Steering Committee before being presented to the Master Jury to draw up a short list of, in theory, 25-30 entries. This year 220 nominations were presented and a short list of 36 was drawn up. Once this is done, the technical review

team is despatched to prepare on-site reports. The completed dossiers are then presented to the Master Jury for its final decision.

Despite such a thorough and meticulous approach, however, there is a growing feeling that the type of nominations received are not always up to standard. Considerable discussion has gone into ways to improve the nomination system and to extend the network to include the many small, individual projects which illustrate the true state of architecture throughout the diverse lands of the Muslim world.

Among the suggestions put forward have been the idea of using roving nominators or charging members of the Steering Committee with the task of trying to pinpoint superior examples in specific categories. In future, more nomination invitations will be despatched, including inspecting individuals to make submissions. Response in some areas is still poor, however. Among the Schools of Architecture, for example, out of 42 approached, only two submitted nominations.

The problem is a vexing one and several members of the Jury have voiced their dissatisfaction with the level of some of the projects they were asked to assess. As Ismail

Seragledin declared 'The single most frustrating fact in reviewing many of the projects, especially in categories where the most creative entries were still flawed, was the feeling that there may well be somewhere 'out there' in the Muslim world much better examples. Nevertheless as Rifat Chaderji pointed out, given the terrible state of war in so many parts of the Muslim world today, it is astonishing that so many good nominations were received.

The jury, of course, is an essential element in the Award process. So far it has comprised nine members, both Muslim and Western, from different social and professional backgrounds. It changes for each three-year cycle. Unlike the first one, the second jury was made up almost exclusively of architects (with one social scientist) and as a result, the awards chosen were more visual in quality and impact. By contrast, the 1980 prizes reflected, in the words of the Aga Khan, "social, aesthetic and historic objectives."

Obviously the chemistry of the different juries and the individual and collective experience they bring to their job is going to continue to have influence on the nature of the awards. It has been suggested that

nine is too large a number to achieve any real consensus and that by continuously changing the entire jury there is little chance of continuity. This is another matter to be resolved in the intervening period before the next set of nominations is invited. But it is interesting to note that in the two Award results so far there has never been total unanimity among members of the jury about a single award.

The Aga Khan's own assessment of the Award is fairly broad-based. He perceives it as successful in promoting new confidence and ideas among Muslim builders. He also expresses satisfaction at the level of response and co-operation the Award has received at governmental and national levels which, in his opinion, is an important step in the consciousness-raising aspect of the programme.

But like others, he is aware of the fact that still more people should be reached and the network for nominations should be extended. Looking ahead, the Aga Khan sees the Award as one continuing to encourage and promote solutions rather than becoming actively involved in formulating them. "It is the task of the Award to maintain a balance between its own aims and objectives, the judgements of outsiders, and the multifarious activities and accomplishments of the whole Islamic world. It is not a school of architecture, nor an executive agency engaged in the restoration or the development of sites. Were it to become activist in its approach, it could too easily lose its independence of judgement." In essence, the Award is to remain a catalyst and a motivator, which the Aga Khan says, "was the role on which the case for its existence rested originally and still rests".

While the prize-giving is an incentive to those actively involved in building, the Award has achieved considerable impact in other areas. To date, eight in-depth seminars have been sponsored in different parts of the Muslim world to discuss various aspects of the built environment. These have been attended by architects, historians, social scientists, planners, designers and government officials bringing together the whole spectrum of people confronted with contemporary development problems.

The seminars were complemented with site visits and followed up with publications which



Tomb of Shah Rukn-i-Alam, Multan



Court Mosque, Niamey

have been widely disseminated. More recently, a series of regional seminars has got underway and the Award has just initiated a new series of country surveys to collate information on the state of Islamic architecture.

As an offshoot of this work, the Aga Khan Programme for Islamic Architecture has been established with an US \$11.5 million endowment at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to promote research and teaching in Islamic art, architecture and urbanism. To complete these activities the inter-

national quarterly magazine *Muslim Architecture in Development* was launched. Its contents reflect the aims of the Award scheme.

Just how far the Award has reached down to the man-in-the street is debatable. True it has recognised and rewarded the work of humble masons, unknown craftsmen and ordinary builders, but in general the issues it tackles still have not had time to have any effect on the life of the ordinary citizen. Hopefully, however, as the findings and ideas begin to filter through, they will inspire new ideas in an up and coming generation of builders.



Detail, Tomb of Shah Rukn-i-Alam, Multan



Hafsa Quarter, Tunis

Certainly the seminars are going a long way towards trying to define the actual needs of the communities in different geographical regions of the Muslim world and in trying to come up with suggestions to meet these needs.

It is easy to pick holes with the Award scheme, especially in terms of the Awards themselves which are wide open to criticism. But it would be erroneous to dismiss it for these reasons. Even in the three years since the scheme was officially launched with the first prize-giving ceremony in Lahore, it is possible to define new depths in the level of discussions surrounding the awards and to follow a dialectic which will generate certainly a number of new ideas. Interest in the Award is growing and more people are

becoming involved. And with the Award procedure under re-evaluation in preparation for the 1986 Awards, the future programme may take on further dimensions.

In a culture as old and as rich as Islam, six years spent trying to instil new confidence into one of its foremost art forms is too short a time for anyone to start making final judgements. Similarly, the award itself is still young and naturally enough is suffering a few growing pains. But the process of change and evolution is a positive one and by 1986 some of the benefits should be obvious. ■

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture

WINNERS

The great mosque of Niono, Mali:

A magnificent mudbrick structure, largely the work of one man, an aging master mason who, with little help and even less funds, devoted several years of his life to enlarging and embellishing a community mosque to an outstanding finish. The techniques and materials used were almost exclusively traditional and the mosque stands as an enduring testimony to those techniques. It was cited by the Master Jury as reflecting "the deep and powerful tradition of vernacular architecture." Recognition was also given to "the conscious volition of the master mason and community of Niono to continue their tradition in a contemporary building, thereby retaining indigenous cultural identity."

Sherifudin's White Mosque in Visoko, Yugoslavia:

A stark, white modern mosque rising up in the midst of a traditional rural setting, was commended by the Jury, "For its boldness, creativity and brilliance... Whilst acknowledging the tradition and necessities of a 'Bosnian' mosque, the design extends the architectural vocabulary of the mosque into the 20th century and therefore contributes to the changing architectural heritage."

The jury goes on to cite the unique way in which the mosque combines the modern and traditional architectural elements in terms of lighting and ambience, and the use of materials old and new.

The Ramses Wissa Wassef Arts Centre, Giza, Egypt:

A mudbrick complex designed by the late Egyptian architect Wissa Wassef and executed by his students, boys from a nearby village. The complex was built to house this group of young weavers being trained to express themselves in tapestry form. The works that emerged are the renowned Harraniya Tapestries. Other art forms such as pottery, sculpture and batik work were later to evolve. The centre became famous more for its products, while visitors enjoyed the feeling of peace and harmony they experienced when shopping in the secluded mud-brick compound. It is only now, with the Master Jury's citation for the centre, that its architectural qualities have been acknowledged. The jury commends it "For the beauty of its execution, the high value of its objectives, and the social impact of its

activities, as well as its influence as an example.

The project is perfectly adapted to its environment, enhancing the role of earth as a building material and demonstrating imagination in the organisation of volumes and in the subtle use of light. The quality of the spaces, the generosity of the forms, and the ambience created by light, all reflect architectural excellence.

The Nail Cakirhan Residence, Akyaka Village, Turkey:

A private dwelling designed by a Turkish poet for his own use was cited by the Jury "For the purity and elegance in design and decoration resulting from the direct continuation and reflection of traditional values. The design of the house goes well beyond the simple reproduction of past models; its ornaments are judicious, sober and genuine. Its extraordinary harmony with nature, and its multipurpose use and ambience of inner space give it great distinction."

The Hafsia Quarter, Medina of Tunis, Tunisia:

Part of a large-scale renovation project designed to upgrade and revitalise abandoned parts of the traditional medina. The Hafsia was the former Jewish quarter of the Medina which had suffered extensive damage over three decades. A project design for 95 housing units, 22 shops and a souq of about 100 shops was finalised in May 1973 and was ready for occupation when construction was completed in 1977. The jury cited the project "For a noteworthy attempt to deal with the problem of urban public housing in a sensitive and humane fashion. The Hafsia quarter represents a considerable effort in achieving the scale of the old medina, sensitively inserting new 'infill' housing into the urban tissue of the medina." It goes on to point out that though flawed in design and execution, the project is an important model from which others can take their cue.

The Tanjong Jara Beach/Rantau Abang Visitors' Centre, Kuala Trengganu, Malaysia:

An environmentally oriented resort area and nearby tourist visitors' centre, comprising a sea life museum, botanical garden and bazaar featuring local crafts, has been cited by the jury for a number of reasons. Built in the style of the old istana, wooden palaces of the early

sultans of east coast Malaysia, and laid out in the traditional Malay village style, the project is commended, "For the courage to search out and successfully adapt and develop an otherwise rapidly disappearing traditional architecture and craft and at the same time meet the demands of contemporary architecture." Recognition was also given to the fact that the development has brought employment opportunities to an otherwise depressed area and has revived a number of dying crafts and traditional construction skills.

Residence Andalous, Sousse, Tunisia:

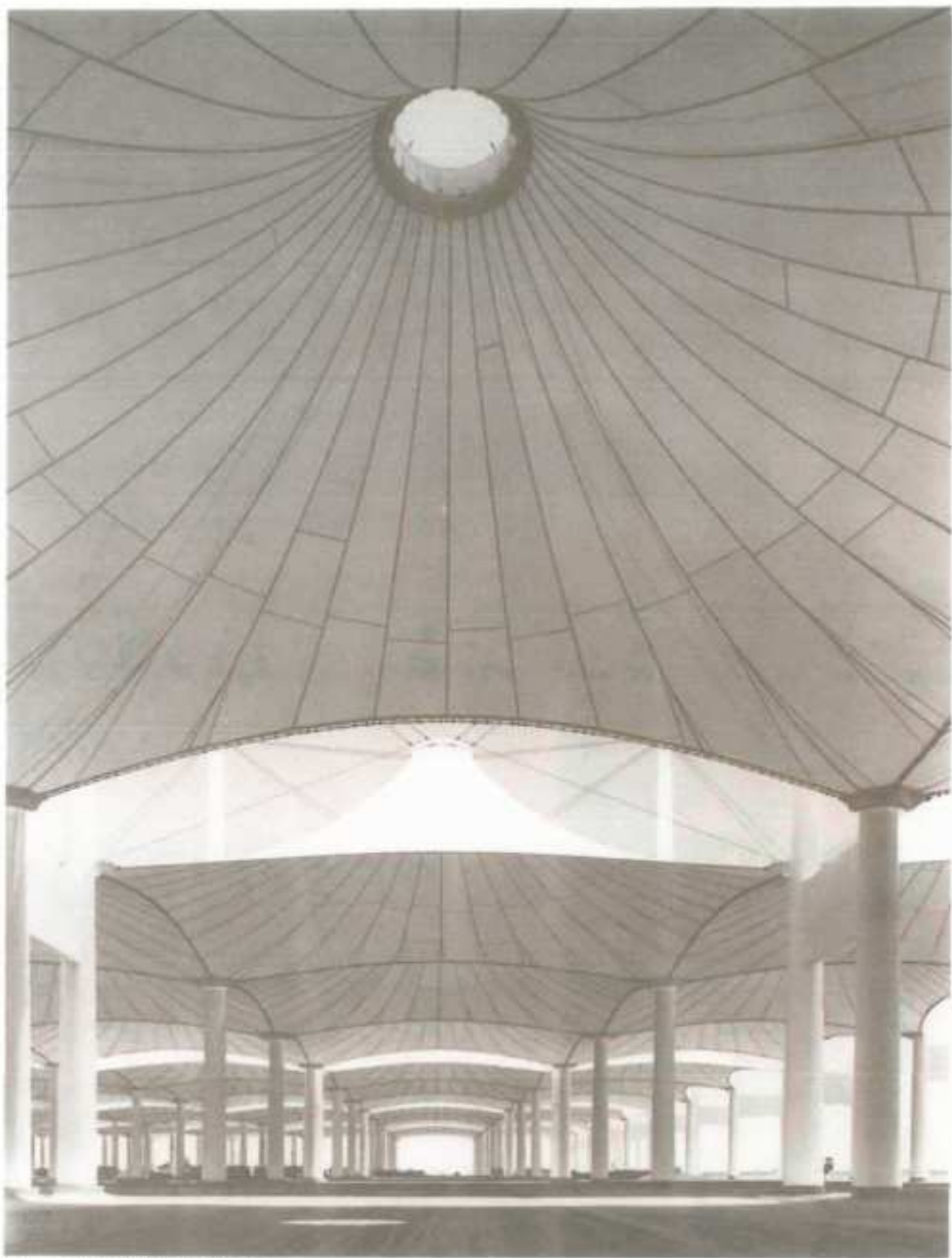
Part of a larger hotel recreational complex was commended by the jury "For the search towards contemporary expression of the structural principles underlying traditional architecture. The simplicity and functional elegance of the design, the successful use of local architectural elements such as courtyards, interior gardens, pools, stream-water, and of traditional materials such as tiles, make this apartment hotel one of the best examples of the search for a new synthesis of the traditional and modern architectural vocabularies."

The Hajj Terminal, King Abdul Aziz International Airport, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia:

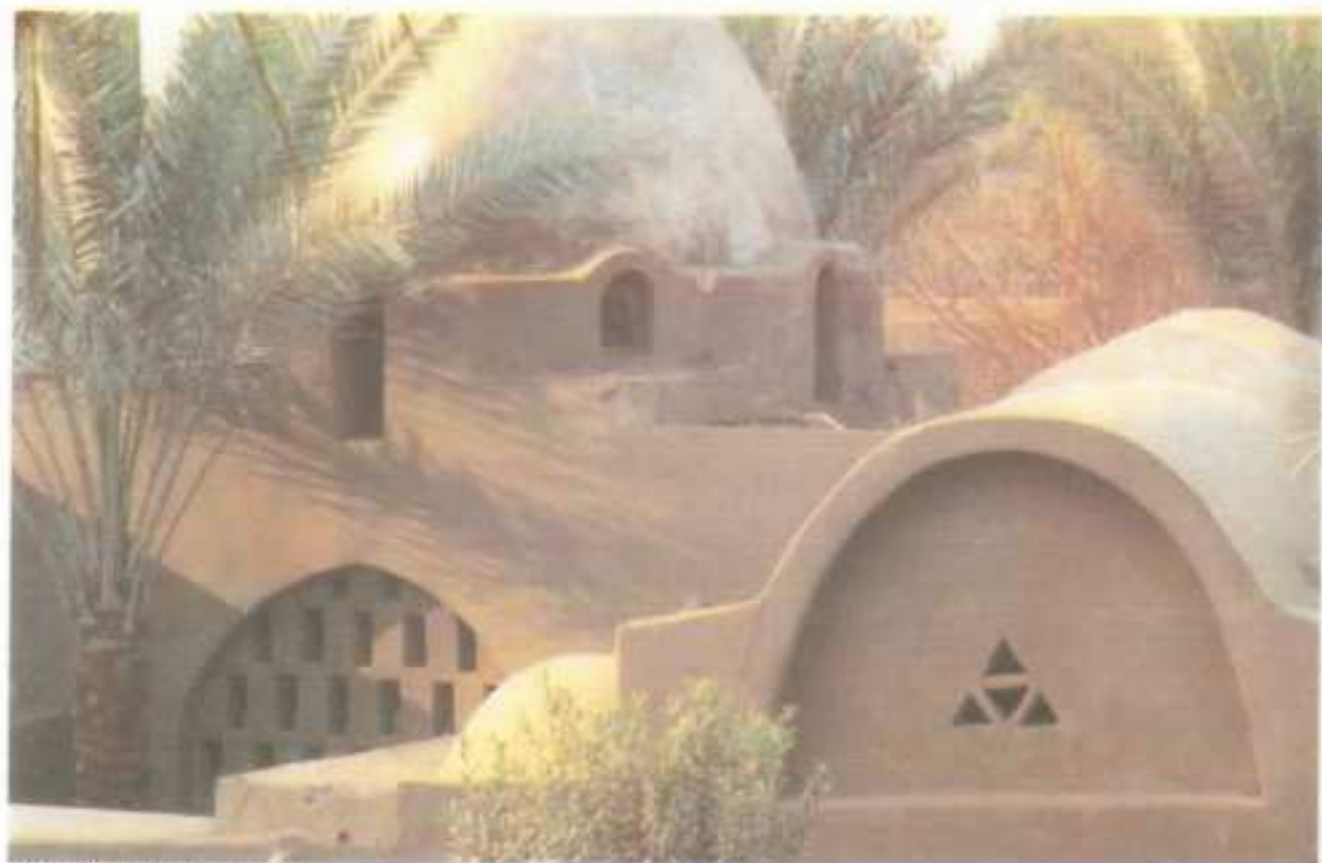
Was perhaps the most popular of all the projects premiated. Covering 40.5 ha with a unique tent structure comprising over 100 teflon-coated, fibreglass tent forms, suspended from pylons and held by steel radial cables, the building is unique and almost certainly can never be replicated. It is cited by the jury "For the brilliant and imaginative design of the roofing system which met the awesome challenge of covering this vast space with incomparable elegance and beauty. The Hajj Terminal structure has pushed known building technology beyond its established limits while demonstrating that such a massive structure can still be light and airy; a 20th century echo of the traditional tent structures that have worked so well in desert climates."

The Tomb of Shah Rukn-i-'Alam, Multan, Pakistan:

Restoration work on this important 14th Century monument took six years to complete during which time extensive renovation as well as restoration took place. In the course of the restoration work several important crafts were revived and the standard of workman-



Interior, Hajj Terminal, Jeddah Airport



Wassaf Arts Centre, Gaza



Nail Cebirhan Residence, Akya Village



Shaykh al-Muqim, Visoki



Dar El Andalus, Sousse

ship achieved by the new craftsmen was almost identical to that of their fellow workers six hundred years earlier. They have since gone on to find other work or set up their own businesses thus keeping the crafts alive. The jury gave special commendation to the work of Muhammad Wali Ullah Khan whose brainchild the project was: "The commendable effort of Mr. Muhammad

Wali Ullah Khan has not only resulted in the rescue of a great monument from decay and thoughtless disfigurement, but has led to an awareness of the need for conservation of other great monuments in the country."

The Darb Qirmiz Quarter, Cairo, Egypt:

An ongoing restoration programme for a residential quarter in the centre of Fatimid Cairo. The quarter contains some seven monuments the oldest dating from the 14th century, as well as 22 residential buildings most of which have been reconstructed since the 18th century. According to the jury, "The effort made to restore seven important monuments which had fallen into considerable disrepair is exemplary. The high quality and purity of the restoration work is evident throughout, as is its positive value for the surrounding community." Like the Tomb of Shah Rukn-i-'Alam, the work has helped revive and sustain rapidly disappearing skills and like it, stands as an example to other restoration projects throughout the Muslim world.

The Azem Palace, Damascus, Syria:

The third of the restoration projects commended by the 1983 Awards jury, is the result of 34 years work to restore and preserve a badly damaged 18th century palace. The jury is particularly mindful of the "The high quality of the restoration, complemented by imagination in dealing with the destroyed parts of the building." The palace is now used as a popular museum and the jury commends this move as "an additional cultural service" which has helped to make people conscious of the beauties and values of the Islamic Architectural heritage."



Interior, Nail Çakırhan Residence, Alpaka Village

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture

An Architect's Overview

J.R. Gibson

Architecture is the most sublime, yet socially subversive of all the art forms: you cannot choose to look at it or read it but your behaviour is forced into its dictates whether you like it or not. Yet the majority of people are completely unaware as to how completely it frames their lives. Of course, it is more acceptable if the eventual occupants have some say in the design or selection of buildings they inhabit, but unfortunately, most of humankind have the built environment imposed upon them by the triumvirate of architect, government planner and the speculative developer; a tripartite alliance whose world views and values have little in common with those of the intended occupants in that their priorities and objectives are those of the accountants' amortisation sheets rather than a respect for the social and cultural values of society. The proofs of this are littered across the inner cities of Europe and America in the form of high rise blocks in Birmingham, Liverpool, London, New York, Tokyo etc. In these concrete jungles the lives of families have been reduced to mere existence: young mothers and their babies are isolated from the community, youths have been dehumanised and old people are doomed to spend their later years in an inhospitable world. Such people have been shorn of their dignity and identity which had been slowly nurtured over the years by the accretion of cultural values inherent in their rich history. Even their spirit has been drained from them.

By way of example, the decade of the 1960's in Britain witnessed the wholesale demolition of the central areas of many towns and cities and the disintegration of traditional communities which were replaced by dismal concrete developments of high rise flats and cheap shopping centres. The effect has been to dislocate large sections of the community from their cultural roots by removing the visual images and memory of their collective

identity. Even the torpor of the abject squalor of the Industrial Revolution did not sever English society from its cultural roots in the countryside. Of course, the political consequences of severing a nation from its cultural roots are enormous in that the people have to find a new morality on which to base their lives and for unscrupulous activists there are opportunities...

Likewise, in a world of ephemeral and man-made values, the identity of the Islamic world is being torn between Red Square and Manhattan in that basic beliefs are being challenged by and polarised between these two. But the Islamic world is being transformed in a more subtle and insidious way in that the behaviour of the people is being changed into different patterns and rhythms by modern urban development. Wilfred Cantwell Smith in his book on Islam astutely observed that Islam was an essentially orthoprax religion meaning that patterns of behaviour and manners are of great importance. Thus in changing Islamic patterns of behaviour, the belief becomes empty and meaningless and will eventually be discarded for alternative value systems. In the Islamic world, therefore, architecture and its consequences in urban and community design assumes a special significance.

Within this context, therefore, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture is an extremely important contribution in cultivating a renewed self awareness and esteem stemming from a deeper appreciation of Islamic cultural heritage and philosophy. Furthermore, such an award initiates a high regard for the cultural heritage of Islam among those outside the Islamic world. Indeed, the Award itself announces that it is concerned with 'nurturing a heightened awareness of the roots and essence of Muslim culture'. And the significance of such an award can be gauged by considering the occidental equivalent: the Archbishop of Canterbury's Award for

Christian Architecture. The Aga Khan Award, therefore, does recognise that even in their dispirited and enervated states the Islamic peoples are concerned about their identity and future.

Before looking at the awards themselves, it is pertinent to ask what are the unique qualities in Islamic architecture. Essentially, Islam is based on a complete cosmology and balanced world view in that it recognises the three essential relationships in human existence: Man with Creator, Man with Man, Man with Earth (encompassing both Flora and Fauna). Muslim traditional architecture possesses a certain humility stemming from a devout sense of the greatness of the Creator, a respect for the human scale and inspiration from the natural world of plants and animals. Of equal importance is the mystical quality of grace arising from the craftsman's 'dhikr' or benedictions uttered during his creative endeavours. In contrast, modern western architecture is the antithesis of all this. It is strident in its gross pomposity, it is overbearing and dwarfs humankind and takes no inspiration from the natural world; in other words it dislocates man from his wider environment, his natural cosmology. It 'atheises' humankind. Titus Burckhardt, the eminent Islamic Art historian observed: 'Sacred Art makes you love it'. Whilst the obverse may not be true, a lot of modern architecture makes you hate it. It is impossible to cherish the Nat West Tower or to feel 'delight and commodiousness' in the Arndale Centre of Manchester, England. Thus, the Aga Khan Award is the first and most important step in the Muslim world beginning to re-understand the nature of human existence.

In the Awards themselves, the consistent themes and qualities in the buildings have been these essentially Islamic qualities spoken of above, but there has also been the token acknowledgement of high

tech and spurious modernism in the Hajj Terminal and the Sherefuddin's White Mosque respectively. Moreover, in addition to the 'three essential relationships', nearly all the awards have a respect for history and tradition, a respect for the time dimension.

Therefore, by these 'Islamic' criteria, the awards for brilliance must go to the Tanjung Lela Beach Hotel/Rantau Abang Visitors' Centre (without coke bottles next time), Darb Qirmiz, Azem Palace, The Great Mosque of Niamey and the Tomb of Shah Rukn-i-Alam. In this grouping, it is significant that the Tanjung Lela Beach Hotel is the only completely new modern building and it is superb in its sensitivity to nature, historical tradition and the scale of man. At long last, the Egyptian government is beginning to do something about the appalling condition of Cairo's Old City and the Islamic buildings after devoting so much care and attention to the Pharaonic monuments and the Syrian authorities deserve glowing praise for the restoration of the Atram Palace. Similarly, the Government of Pakistan needs many more devoted people like Mr. Muhammad Wali Ullah Khan for his magnificent work on the Tomb of Shah Rukn-i-Alam. Perhaps, the Pakistani Government could now turn its attention to the Red Fort and Old City of Lahore. The Ramses Wissa Wassef Arts Centre is an exemplary model for the development of the Islamic crafts in addition to being a very human building. There is an eternally sublime quality about Great Mosque of Niamey and it is certainly quite amazing that such an architectural tradition is surviving to-day. This building seems to have elicited a grossly patronising tone from some of the jury by the phrase 'it was not in a class with the architecture of more sophisticated societies'. One can hardly believe that modern western societies are more sophisticated than the community at Niamey.

The awards concerned with housing are, perhaps, not as stunning as those buildings mentioned above, but the Nail Cakirhan Residence deserves special mention for its sensitivity to its setting and the quality of its detailing and the Residence Andalous is an excellent example of a modern building respecting the local architectural vocabulary.

The Hajj Terminal is described in



Tanjung Lela Beach/Rantau Abang Visitors' Centre

the Preamble to the Award's Report as being 'in a class by itself, its structure a magnificent achievement of 20th Century technology'. That is precisely what it is and no more. Sherefuddin's White Mosque pays undue lip service to Jeanneret's chapel at Ronchamp which is mere modern baroque in its theatricality. The building takes no cue from the surrounding houses and appears to be quite contrived in its design and shallow in its inspiration. The Great Mosque of Niamey is far more relevant to the future direction of Islamic architecture as is Hassan Fathy rather than the pompous Jeanneret.

In conclusion, the Aga Khan's endeavour in encouraging an

interest in Islamic architecture via the Award and the Chair of Islamic Architecture at Harvard is going to have tremendous impact in the theory and criticism of architecture because it is moving towards helping define a new human architecture by bringing together all the elements and dimensions which impinge upon the human consciousness into an harmonious whole. Already in the Western world, harsh criticism is being levelled at sheer ugliness and inhumanity of modern architecture. Architects are becoming increasingly despised for their thin pomposity and their meaningless aestheticism. An 'Islamic' approach to architecture has a very bright future indeed. ■



SUAD AL-ATTAR

George Sorley Whittet

After almost half my lifetime devoted professionally to viewing and reviewing international contemporary art in exhibitions in London and overseas I find it increasingly common for the titles of many much-publicised displays to include the debatable adjective 'the new'. 'Towards a New Art', 'A New Spirit in Painting' and 'New Art at the Tate Gallery' are examples which despite their ambitious claims to a major breakthrough in painting styles almost inevitably fail to live up to their promise. Fortunately, for all the artists whom I admire and respect, the new represents only what they have distilled in their work personally through practice, the study of admired masters of the past and, most important of all, a fidelity to their own belief in themselves.

Suad Al-Attar is for me a recent discovery who epitomises a victory for individual vision and concep-

tions which neither seek to deny her predecessors nor compromise her integrity as an artist. She is Iraqi, born and brought up in Baghdad. For the past seven years, she has lived in London with her husband, whose supportive role has been indispensable to her. From their comfortable home in a south-western suburb they look across to the green horizon of the North Downs. An alert little dog and a dignified cat underline their cultivated domestic interior. On the walls hang not only paintings and prints by Suad but works by their youngest daughter — the third — who although just graduated in Fine Art at the Central School of Art and Design has already sold one to a discriminating collector. This description of the pleasant and relaxed environment is essential for an understanding of the basis on which Suad creates her distinctive elegant images.

On the ground floor is the room where she works and in it, all around, is the evidence of what makes her what she is as an artist. Paintings and lithographs line the walls, the materials and tools of her profession are ready for use: brushes in pots, tubes of colour, bottles of diluents and medium. Significant too is the small replica of the *divite* figure of the shepherd-king Gudea in the Louvre, Paris, dated from about 2250 B.C. and one of the few great works of Chaldean statuary as yet excavated. From this and many books on the shelves and bookcases dealing with those successive civilisations centred in the basin of the Tigris and the Euphrates one begins to grasp something of Suad's ethnic and cultural identity.

To become a painter was for Suad almost pre-ordained. As a child she was captivated by drawing, by the



Baghdadi Tale, oil on canvas



Detail: Oriental Garden

age of eight she was painting in oils and in her teens though still a student she held her first individual show. She studied at the University of California where she earned her Diploma in Fine Art. On her return home to Baghdad she took her B.A. degree in Fine Art at the University there. She was actively involved in the local art scene and became a regularly exhibiting member of the Society of Iraqi Artists. Coming to London she concentrated on print-making; she has her postgraduate diploma in the subject from the Wimbledon School of Art. Later she produced interesting etchings and lithographs at the Central School of Art and Design. She has held a dozen one-woman exhibitions at galleries in the Middle East, Paris and London and has contributed to many group shows all over the world.

In earlier works of ten years ago one sees the free and graphic treatment of her chosen motives, compositions where a single figure, usually a woman, stands thought-



Tree of Life, oil on canvas

fully, sometimes semi-nude or with her long hair blowing in the wind flying across an architectural background its rigid arches and panels and doors broken by the curving arabesques of trees with flatly silhouetted leaves. It is possible to read in the pictures an unforced comment on the role of woman in

Arab society emerging to modernity while retaining her place in a setting that embodies traditional buildings and the omnipresent palm tree. This tree is a powerful symbol in Iraq which has seventy per cent of all the palm trees in the world growing within its borders as well as holding special importance for Muslims — as



Paradise Garden, oil on canvas



Garden of Birds, oil on canvas



Detail: Bushes

recorded in the Hadith the Prophet even calls the tree his aunt.

For Iraqi artists after 1945 the influences that came from former students at the Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad, derived from their studies in London, Rome and Paris and in an early canvas of a woman by Suad one may detect a passing experiment with Cubism in the

modelling of planes in the body and face. But Suad's drawing remained comprehensively aligned in conventional perspective. Her print-making studies resulted in a mastery of etching and lithographic techniques; in one example she drew with graphic austerity the leafless trees in a deserted forest revealing the roots spread beneath the earth

to support the massive trunk, a study of surreal atmosphere suggesting in its emptiness an alien presence arriving or departed.

Earlier this year, Suad showed etchings and aquatints at the Iraqi Cultural Centre, the active display venue for Arabic art in London. In them she included the theme of the dream garden seen extended and enlarged in the medium of paint at her later, stunning one-woman show at the Graffiti Gallery. This latest phase can now be regarded as central to the development of her output to date. The paradise conceived in those canvases is of a luxuriant and impenetrable garden without paths or signs of human dwellings. In *Paradise Garden*, for example, the blue of the foreground vegetation spreads across the middle distance in a misty purple to



Oriental Garden, oil on canvas

revert to blue again in the sunset sky above the profiles of the ubiquitous palms on the skyline. Peacocks and crested birds perched impassively around the idyllic scene augment the essence of timelessness. The flowers have no horticultural accuracy, they are from her imagination. Says Suad: 'Every one has a place he wants to escape to'. The garden is a place of solitude, of privacy.

When I remarked on the human head that regarded the spectator questioningly from the depths of several paintings she explained their characters, so different from the landscapes filled with myriad flowering plants, devoid of humans though alive with birds stalking intermittently through the leafy terrain. 'There are so many stories...' And truly enough there is need to the stories that abound in Mesopotamia's ancient past before Iraq existed as a state. For here was created in Sumeria the first cuneiform script of a literate culture, here grew the grass roots of Middle Eastern legend, the Garden of Eden,

the Tower of Babel, the Songs of Solomon, the Thousand and One Nights of Haroun el-Raschid and many, many more.

Far removed from any current abstract painting fashion, Saud's dramatic and poetic themes are developed in series that continue for three or four years at a time until the idea has been worked out. In one such cycle there appeared the recurring figures of men and horses and other motives where the artist suggests a story taken from history such as exists in the relief images carved on the ancient palaces of the region. Some are half-man half horse akin to the centaurs of mythology. In others we see the outline of a wandering knight against an empty background painted in a broken monochrome surface that heightens the mystery of the scene. As with all her conceptions the treatment is conditioned by her dominant idea: here in her own words 'The simplicity of the background emphasises the intensity of those images and the feeling'.

Thus Suad performs in the arena of international art not only as an outstanding and identifiable Iraqi artist but in universal terms as her own image-maker. Arab literature, the ancient sculptures and frescoes and the Baghdad school of painters that influenced her earliest painting again provide renewed creative stimulation. Horsemen take on symbolic roles as they ride in richly caparisoned cloaks in central plaques of canvases of stylised floral patterns and here and in others called *Flower Hunters* they ride brightly draped horses carrying not falcons but peacocks, hunting not the leopard but flowers. Small detailed motives are repeated and enlarged in compositions expressed in a sometimes naive but otherwise sophisticated jewel-like brilliance. They evoke the incalculable mystery of dream scenery and like dreams they raise questions that intrigue the viewer. They are the fascinating rubrics illuminating Suad Al-Attar's indomitable progress, each picture creating a suspense so one awaits expectantly the sequel in her beguiling artistic saga.

An Urdu play in London's West End

Kamal Ahmad Rizvi's play *Chore Machaye Shore* — loosely, 'The Quarrelling Thief' — at the Arts Theatre in London in April, is an oversimplified adaptation of Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. It was written 20 years ago and has been presented many times since: many of the gags which were funny and topical then and could have been very easily flicked out of the script for the London audience had for some reason been left in. But this did not bother the audience as was proved by their enthusiastic response.

Just like the Moliere's character, Rizvi's A.D. Chaudhry is a self-made man whose great wealth does not efface, to his profound regret, his cultural and social nullity. His speech is thickly and provincially accented and his manner is vulgar. Rizvi, who played the role himself, brought this out with natural ease and all the uncouthness worked like a charm upon the audience. To remedy this serious flaw, the upstart employs the services of a secretary who apparently is well-known among television's beautiful people but who, to make things more complicated, is in love with Chaudhry's step-daughter.

From here onward, the plot takes leave of its famous French model. The farce is spread rather thinly around the conclusion that everybody in Chaudhry's household is a thief in one way or the other. The much harangued wife who helps herself from Chaudhry's wallet from time to time, the manservant who does likewise but as a totally independent enterprise, Chaudhry's stepdaughter, a TV starlet who is staying as a guest and the stepdaughter's boyfriend, are all trying to break into a safe to get hold of a dubious document, and the private detective who has been hired to unveil the suspicious goings-on does exactly the contrary.

A hurriedly picked-up cast that ranged from pure amateur to semi-professional did the job reasonably well, notably Rosaline and Harook Massy, who were quite at home in their roles as Panjabi provincials, and Agha Ziaullah, who, playing the moonstruck secretary, could have been given a more Groucho Marx-like authenticity by a mere trim of his moustache and the addition of round glasses and a cigar.

The meagreness of dramatic material and an unstable plot were more than evident. But that, unfortunately, is beside the point. The presence of Rizvi himself on stage, which he was nearly all the time,

electrified the audience. The response to his repartees and his antics was uproarious. The message was more than clear. If the genteel Pakistani folk of London could find Kamal A. Rizvi's play hilarious, why didn't he try the suburbs and provinces, where the Asian population is denser and the need for like entertainment higher.

How far the play represented the present-day Pakistani theatre is another story. That the need for laughter exists in many of the less-than-gay third world societies is undeniable and hilarious plays with a social, political or cultural point to make are not altogether nonexistent. Kamal Rizvi himself has been much credited with a cynical eye and insight into the wrongs in the social structure. To quote from the brochure:

"Kamal's main instrument for bringing to the surface the hypocrisy and deceit inherent in human nature is satire. He uses it like a surgeon's knife to expose the anomalies, paradoxes and exploitation prevalent in the establishment and society at all levels. But his satire is mixed with an abundance of his robust humour, with which he makes his audience roar with laughter at their own follies before they feel any pain. He voices the grievances of the decent common man bewildered by the cunning and craftiness of the world. He has become the hero of the 'have-nots'."

One has difficulty in finding evidence of the said sympathy and identification with the "have-nots" in this play. Although the "quarrelling thief", an innocent passer-by who is arrested and accused of all the crimes committed in the rich man's house, appears to be the only sane person among a whole riot of clamouring individuals, any suggestion as to the honour of his class is vague, not to say invisible. Another "have-not", the bribe-accepting policeman, is at best funny but at no point honourable. But Kamal A. Rizvi's claim of presenting the first Urdu play in a West End theatre is justified and his reputation as a dynamic and witty theatre worker unquestioned. Might the event become the founding of a regular theatre for the Asian audience in London?

Zafar Masud

Seminar on Art & Craft Design

The needs of the Middle East in art and craft design were brought into focus at a two-day seminar held in London on 23 and 24 May, 1983. It was organised by Islamic Artpost of London, which runs a postal slide service to the Islamic world through which artists and designers can promote their work.

The object of the seminar was to enable craftsmen to ascertain the needs of the Islamic world for their services and products. Mr Michael Wall, managing director of Islamic Artpost, said, "This market contains the fastest-growing economies of the last and present decades. The demand for a wide range of design and craft products far outstrips supply because the technical, commercial and financial sides of the economies have grown faster than the ability of the services."

He described his company as a linking service, clearing house and market centre, to bring together British suppliers and potential customers. One of his plans is to establish a centre which will offer study facilities and at which the work of British and Muslim artists will be exhibited. This will provide a central point for customers seeking designs — whether of traditional architecture, ceramic tiles, furniture or jewelry. ■

Oriental Museum, Durham



The Durham University Oriental Museum was opened in 1960 to house the teaching collections of the School of Oriental Studies and, like the School, has an interest in all parts of the Orient. The basis of the Durham University Oriental Museum was formed in 1949 when the University purchased the Egyptian antiquities collected by the 4th Duke of Northumberland in the early 19th century. To this was soon added a collection of Chinese ceramics assembled by the Rt. Hon. Malcolm MacDonald.

These two collections and the need to house the teaching collections of the school of Oriental Studies provided the stimulus for the erection of a purpose-built Museum which was eventually opened in 1960. At the same time a third collection, this time of Chinese hardstone carvings, was presented to the Museum by Sir Charles Hardinge.

Unfortunately the Museum has never had the opportunity to acquire any large group of objects that might form the basis of an Islamic art collection.

Hamburg Symposium on European and Arab Cultures

The Symposium on the Relations between the European and Arab Cultures which took place from April 10 to 15 in Hamburg had been planned for more than five years. It was the first cultural event to be held within the framework of the Euro-Arab Dialogue which was launched in 1973. Originally created as a means of encouraging political cooperation between the Arab World and the European Economic Community, the Dialogue organization has been under increasing pressure from the Arab side to emphasize its political content. Arab delegates also frequently expressed the view that improved inter-cultural understanding was an essential prelude to greater political cooperation.

The decision to hold a symposium on relations between the two civilizations was taken in 1977. The Dialogue was suspended in March 1979 as a result of Egypt's exclusion from the Arab League, following the Israeli-Egyptian Treaty, but it was resumed again in November 1980, partly under the impetus of the EEC Venice Declaration. This cleared the way for the holding of the Symposium in April 1983.

The conference was extremely well organised by the German Oriental Institute under its dynamic young Director Dr Udo Steinbach and took place at the renowned Atlantic Hotel on the Alster. It was inaugurated by Mr Klaus Dohmanyi, the First Mayor of Hamburg, Mr Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the German Foreign Minister, and Mr Cheddi Kibbi, Secretary-General of the Arab League. The scholars, diplomats, writers and journalists attending included many distinguished figures. To name a few — on the Arab side Dr Moukhtine-Saber, Secretary General of the Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation of the Arab League (ALECSO), Professor Antoine Magdissi and Abd al-Karim Yafi from Damascus, Dr Mohammed Arkoun, Director of the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies in Paris, Professor Abdullah Aroui of the Arabization Research Institute in Rabat, Dr Abd al-

Qadir Zabadiya and Professor Ezz al-Din al-Madani from Tunis and Dr Kamal Abul-Magd, the former Egyptian Minister of Information, who now acts as legal adviser to the Government of Kuwait. A notable feature of the Arab participants was the strong representation of the Maghreb countries.

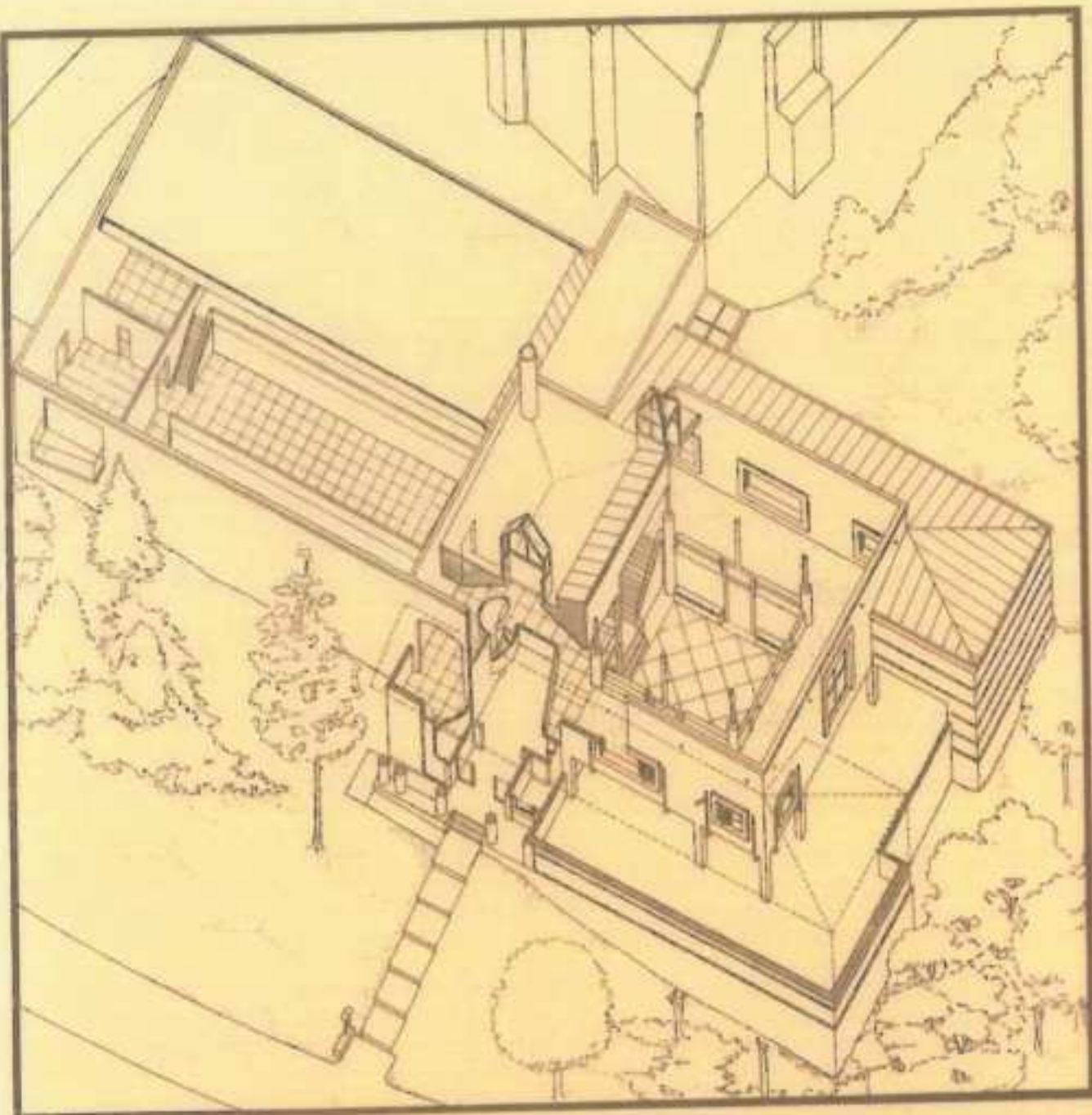
Among the Europeans were Dr Norman Daniel, leading historian of Islamic-Christian relations in the Middle Ages, Edward Mortimer of the Times, author of the recently published *Faith and Power*, Professor Antoine Vergote of the Catholic University of Louvain, Prof. Alessandro Bausani of Rome, Ambassador Francois-Regie Bastide of France and Paul Balta of Le Monde. As might be expected, the papers delivered during the five days of the Symposium were evenly balanced between Arab and European viewpoints with a strong emphasis on their respective images of each other's culture. Thus Edward Mortimer discussed 'The Post-Modern Civilization of Western Europe and the Significance of 'change' for the Euro-Arab Dialogue' and Dr Zabadiya did the same for 'Arab Civilization since the European Withdrawal'. Similarly, Ambassador Bastide and Dr Ezz al-Din al-Madani spoke respectively on 'West European and Arab Literature, Theatre and Film' and 'The Symptoms of a Cultural Change in the Public Debate'. The discussions were animated and reasonably well focussed considering the large numbers who were present. There was perhaps an excessive tendency of the Arab delegates to dwell at length on the past cultural achievements of Arab-Islamic civilization and the failure of Europe to appreciate them. Although a lack of awareness of Islamic culture may be characteristic of Europeans in general, it hardly applied to those attending the Symposium.

When the main Symposium was not in session, three Workshops were actively engaged in discussing and preparing their recommendations. The Workshop on Prospects for Cultural Exchange proposed that a general cultural agreement should be concluded between the Arab League and the EEC, within the framework of which more specialized agreements could operate. Among the specific projects it proposed were the publication twice yearly of a Euro-Arab journal, the conclusion of agreements

between Arab professional unions and their members with their European counterparts, the convening of small specialized or professional seminars on selected themes and the urgent publication of the catalogue of cultural and scientific institutions which has already been started under the auspices of the Dialogue. The second Workshop devoted to 'Co-operation in the Field of Language-Teaching for Arabic and European Languages' proposed a Five-Year Working Programme covering the diffusion of the Arabic language and culture in the ECC countries and the formation of Arab experts for this purpose as well as the teaching of European languages in the Arab World. The third Workshop was convened to consider the 'Social and Cultural Consequences of the Migration of Workers and Intellectuals', but found itself primarily considering the problems of the two million Arab migrant workers in Europe, most of them North African Arabs living in France. Some progress has already been made on this subject within the Dialogue and because of its vastness and complexity the members of this Workshop recommended that it should be accorded priority consideration. It was felt that the essence of the problem was to assist the Arab migrants towards social integration in their host countries without their losing their cultural identity. An important requirement was to make the general public in the host countries more aware of the immigrants' background.

Everyone at the Symposium was aware that finance is the key to the many excellent proposals that were made. In the past, much the greater proportion of the finance has come from the Arab side but the Arabs have finally rejected a European proposal that, with the exception of certain seminars and cultural projects where costs should be shared equally, costs for all activities should be borne 80 per cent by the Arabs and 20 per cent by the Europeans. Instead, they have suggested that the division should be two-thirds Arab and one third European. If a satisfactory agreement can be reached on this point, the Dialogue could flourish and achieve a number of highly positive results. ■

Peter Mansfield



but by judicious purchases and a few gifts it has been possible to assemble a modest number of attractive items.

These include examples of work in metal, wood and lacquer and a range of 9th/14th century Persian glazed bowls, dishes and tiles, through 13th-century Syrian lustre ware to a pair of fine 18th-century faience jars from Meknes. Given the wide extent of the Museum's interests it is good to be able to show examples of interconnections between different parts of the East, for instance in the form of a Safavid vase imitating Chinese famille verte ware of the K'ang hsi period and a Safavid painting on leather in Chinese style. One is reminded too of the widespread influence of Islam by a Chinese bronze vase made for the South East Asian market and decorated with a text from the Koran.

As funds permit the Museum continues to add to these collections. Recent purchases in the Islamic field include a striking 10th-century Nishapur bowl decorated with a Kufic inscription and a delicate panel in Thuluth and Naskhi scripts by the 17th-century Ottoman calligrapher 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Hami. Both these pieces form part of a display on the history and development of writing in which, of course, the Arabic scripts figure prominently.

It was evident from early days that these were more than just teaching collections — they contain pieces which are outstanding works of art and others that have particularly interesting associations; and as its treasures have become better known the Museum has acquired a world-wide reputation.

It is now difficult to reconcile the conflicting demands of a teaching and research establishment with those of a public museum of national importance in its particular field and in an attempt to resolve this the first steps have been taken to increase the exhibition space.

The design of the new building was the subject of an architectural competition sponsored by the National Federation of Building Trades Employers, judged by two leading British architects, Ted Cullinan and Michael Wilford, with two lay assessors appointed by the University and assisted by a panel of museum and building specialists. From 126 entries six finalists were invited to prepare more detailed drawings which were judged in March 1983.

It was the unanimous decision of the judges that the design submitted by

Contemporary Arab Artists in London

There was a certain feeling of quantity at the expense of quality at this summer's exhibition of Contemporary Arab Graphics and Works on Paper, the second to be organised by the London Gallery, Grattis. Not only were there more artists involved—the number had jumped from 10 to 15—there were also more works on show as a result, with prints packed rather more closely together than was perhaps best. And there were some obvious discrepancies in standards as a result of opening up the field.

Nevertheless, it was still an attractive show and quite interesting in terms of themes and ideas. Although a number of artists are now living in the West (and most of them were trained here), in many cases it is still possible to identify the Arab or Islamic influences underlying their development.

Inevitably, calligraphy continues to represent an important theme. It is the dominant motif for Algerian artist Rachid Koraichi, whose striking black-and-white etchings are directly related to the artist's early education in a traditional Quranic school, where lessons were painstakingly copied onto well-worn wooden boards.

Koraichi's compositions are usually inspired by the works of Arab poets and writers, such as Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish or the Lebanese writer Elie Adnan. More often than not, he restricts himself to the use of black-and-white, with just the occasional touch of colour, red or gold.

By contrast, the Iraqi Rafa Nasiri is distinguished by a skilful blending of rich yet subtle colour combinations, including deep blues, unusual greens and warm yellows. He is a master printmaker for whom the use of colour is of paramount importance but for whom calligraphy also plays a central role. In his use of calligraphy, Nasiri explores the plastic, visual qualities of the alphabet, allowing letters or fragments of words to melt into each other, as if seeping through the background colour or flowing down into a reflective pool of colour beneath. The meaning of the words used is unimportant, indeed they are usually



Rachid Koraichi, Calligraphy Etching.

unreadable, it is their form that matters.

Iraqi artist Shafiq al Nawab recognises the purely functional aspect of calligraphy—the Arabic alphabet as an everyday form of communication—and considers it in just that context in a composition reflecting the task of letter-writing. For his fellow-compatriot Salah-al-Jumaili calligraphy provides a detailed background against which aspects of daily life are superimposed. Together they provide a statement on events happening around him.

Calligraphy also provides the theme

for the works of Libyan artist Ali Omer Ermes, Qatari artist, Yusuf Ahmad and the Iraqi Isam el Said and Salah Al Ali.

An awareness of their heritage (*taraf*) is just as important to Arab artists as calligraphy and it helps distinguish them in their work. Hence the colourful etchings of young artist, Rima Farah: Carpets and Arches; Cushions; Tent; and Horse, which draw heavily on aspects of the Bedouin tradition. Paris-based Syrian painter Ghayes Akhras chooses to explore the past in the form of indistinct, mythical

figures, evocative of earlier ages and traditional lifestyles. In the work of Omani artist, Walid Abu Shakra, past and present blend together in his drypoint studies of the timeless landscape of the region of his birthplace.

In all cases where the figurative or representational appears, it is inevitably in an abstract context, ill-defined, shadowy, or otherwise incomplete. In Muhammad al-Rawas's screenprints, for example, tellingly fragmented photographs or newspaper cuttings are juxtaposed to provide a political comment. In Ahmed Nawa's outstanding *Peace* series, an as yet indistinct figure struggles against a sombre yet luminous blue-black background, striving to emerge almost as an embryo growing in the darkness of the womb. Indeed, in one of the prints, a dove also appears in embryo form, not yet ready to emerge as the fully-fledged bird of peace.

For Suha Yusuf, life becomes an intricate dreamlike composition, far removed from reality. For Hachmi Azza, figures or fragments of objects appear as occasional touches of colour in an otherwise stark black-and-white surreal composition.

When the Iraqi artist Dia al-Azzawi occasionally introduces the figurative, it is an essential part of a striking abstract composition – the hallmark of his work. Azzawi is well known for his use of bold colour in an assertive yet at the same time restrained manner. Like Koraichi, he is often inspired by the writings of the Arab poets and his work frequently includes anathemes of poems

or words. Like other Arab artists, he is acutely aware of traditional influences which have helped shape his work. Time spent in London however sees Azzawi experimenting not only with these ideas but also with new approaches in terms of shape and depth. This is best expressed in the Graffiti exhibition in a striking gouache which reflects his recent experiment with free-standing, three-dimensional pieces.

At the furthest extreme in abstract composition are Mazin Sami's compositions *Pencil on Paper* and *Green Mixed Media*, works devoted purely to the interplay of line, colour and texture and in some way reminiscent of the leading Iraqi artist Hassan Shaker, whose work, in many cases, brings to mind the idea of carelessly scribbled graffiti against a rough stone wall.

The geometric influences of Islamic art can be seen most specifically in the works of Mervat Helmy, whose abstract compositions explore the possibilities to be achieved in recurring patterns and colours. In a more subtle way, in Nawa's *Peace* series, a complex interplay of lines guides the viewer's eye inwards and to the centre, from where the struggling being strives to emerge.

While a number of the works at Graffiti would stand up well to criticism in any exhibition, others would not get far outside the Arab context, which is where Graffiti could have been more careful. Nevertheless, the very fact that the exhibition has been held for the second year in succession should be

encouraging to artists from the Arab world and it certainly should be encouraged by those interested in promoting Arab art in the West. ■

Muhsen Ali

Coptic Textile Art

As with many of the galleries in London opening their doors with shows to coincide with the international carpet conference, Paul Hughes, 3c Pembridge square, London W2 offered a stimulating show, concentrating on Pre-Columbian and Coptic textiles.

The term Coptic is derived from the Greek word "aigyptios" meaning Egyptian and is commonly applied to all Greco-Roman or Medieval textiles that have been found in Egypt. But I will use the term "Late Antiquity" to discuss textile production in Egypt between the 3rd and the 7th century. Late Antiquity ends with the spread of Islam in the 7th century. The Byzantine empire exhausted by a long war with Persia was unable to resist the invading Arabs and in the brief period between 634 and 641 lost Syria, Palestine and Egypt. These losses were permanent, imposing an eastern boundary on Christendom and marking the emergence of Islam as a great power, arguably the dominant power in what had been the Roman World.

A very important and yet neglected development in Late Antiquity textiles is perfectly of the "interlace" effect. The term "interlace" refers to patterns composed of bands which seem to pass over and under one another, creating the illusion of a third dimension. However this aspect of Roman art has largely been ignored by art historians and is almost unknown to the general public. This may seem surprising since "Late Antiquity" ornament was an important source both for Islamic art and for the art of Early Medieval Europe. The most obvious reason is that Islam and the Dark Ages of Europe are known to have placed, each for its own reasons, a very strong emphasis on non-representational patterns and Roman Art, being representational, was totally the opposite.

The rise and fall of stylistic groups within it and especially the evidence for its decline in the sixth century, all suggest that its final extinction is part of the internal history of Egyptian textile manufacture rather than an effect of the Muslim conquest of the early 7th Century. In other media, notably sculpture and metalwork, interlace continued for centuries to play an essential role in both Christian and Muslim art throughout Europe and much of Asia. ■

Dia Al-Azzawi, *Memoria II* Etching.



Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World: 8-18 centuries

By Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani. 445p. Map, copiously illustrated. Bibliographies in Eastern and Western languages, 2 annexes, 8 indexes, foreword by Mr. Claude Blair. £30.

The Victoria and Albert Museum has one of the most important collections of Iranian Metalwork in existence. Like so many other great Islamic collections it has awaited the arrival of a scholar suitably qualified to catalogue such riches. Dr. A.S. Melikian-Chirvani is ideally, almost uniquely qualified for such a task and the Museum can count itself fortunate that he had found the time to produce such an outstanding reference work, the first in a series devoted to Islamic metalwork. This volume is concerned with bronze, brass and copper ware of Islamic Iran. A second volume, dealing with Arab metalwork over the same period is now being prepared.

Dr. Melikian-Chirvani is well known to the wider public as the author of pithy and penetrating articles on the world art market in which he demonstrates a wealth of knowledge on diverse subjects. However, it is in the field of Islamic bronzes, that his special interest lies. This expertise is backed by copious photographic notes of largely unpublished pieces in private and public collections, some of which may now have been destroyed as a result of the wars being waged in the Middle East, particularly the bombing of Ghazni by Soviet forces. With the aid of these records Dr. Melikian-Chirvani makes comparison with the Victoria and Albert pieces thereby greatly increasing the scope of the book. He modestly refers to the volume as a collection of 175 monographs, whilst noting that some two-thirds were unpublished at the time of writing. There are in fact a selection from the pieces held in the Victoria and Albert collection. The collection is sufficiently comprehensive to enable the catalogue to constitute a history of Iranian metalwork as known to date, though it is generally acknowledged that many years of study will be required before



all the lacunae can be filled satisfactorily.

The catalogue is uneven in that the pieces described do not reflect the author's choice so much as the content of the collection. Thus the first chapter deals broadly with the first four centuries of Islamic Iran. Although the number of pieces illustrated from the collection are few in comparison with

later periods, some of the pieces are of fine quality, for example the bull-headed ewer of 10th-11th century A.D. (No. 16) (see illustration). The dating and attribution of No. 8, a jug (Mashrabai), is more controversial. It is inevitable that a work on this scale will contain contentious attributions but it cannot be denied that they are backed by impressive, scholarly argument. Of

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particular importance in the discussions is the author's careful study of the epigraphy and poetry found on these subjects, a field in which no other historian of Islamic metalwork can match his knowledge.

Because of the large number of Safavid pieces contained in the collection the author has devoted his final chapter to this neglected period of metalwork. The result is a portrayal of a flourishing craft with insights into contemporary Iranian society. The evidence of a hitherto unknown school of metalworkers in Hindustan 'working in pure western Safavid style' is of considerable interest, evidence of the powerful cultural influence that Iran had on her neighbours.

In conclusion a mention must be made of the annexes, indexes (the author clearly preferring the Anglo-Saxon to Latin indices) and bibliographies. In the 1970's Dr. Melikian-Chirvani occasionally used my South Kensington flat as a base whilst working at the Victoria and Albert and I well recall the voluminous indices in proof form which the author carried in a heavy case in order to snatch a few minutes to work on them when his appointment permitted. The effort was worth it. Many works of scholarship have suffered from inadequate reference aids. This volume has quite the most comprehensive indices known to the reviewer. Credit too must be given to H.M.S.O. for agreeing to include them in such generous form, together with the innumerable photographs meticulously taken by the author. At £60 a copy the book is scarcely cheap but no one could claim it does not amount to value for money. An excellent work of scholarship setting severe standards for the author's contemporaries in this field. ■

Robert Elgood

Islamic Metalwork: The Nuhad es-Said Collection

by James W. Allen.

Sotheby, London, 1982. 128 pp., 44 coloured and 42 black-and-white illustrations.

The time when almost all the items in this sumptuous catalogue could have been acceptably described simply as 'Saracenic', though little more than a generation ago, now seems infinitely remote. In the same antediluvian era, we find miniature paintings described boldly as 'Timurid School' or, less confidently, 'Indo-Persian'. The close study of all branches of Islamic art has indeed made enormous strides since the great Burlington House exhibition of Persian art in 1931. Publications have proliferated. Researches by scholars of many different countries have

effectively classified the material, isolated a variety of schools and styles, and narrowed down the dating possibilities of any given object to an extent which would have seemed unattainable a generation ago.

In the field of metalwork, such refinement was slower in coming than in that of ceramics or painting, but it may now be said to have drawn level. Harari's pioneer work in the *Survey of Persian Art* (1938) was followed up by Barrett in 1949 with his catalogue of the British Museum's collection. Rice took up the tale in the fifties with a valuable series of detailed studies of individual pieces, in the sixties, Melikian-Chirvani began his impressive series of articles, books and catalogues, which still continues, reaching a peak of single-minded scholarship and epigraphical expertise in his recent work on the Persian metalwork in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The author of the present work, Dr James Allen of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, is no newcomer to the field; metalwork has always been his favourite branch of Islamic art, and his enthusiasm and wide research come through very clearly in his text. To be entrusted with the recording of such a collection as this is the dream of every aspiring scholar, and Dr Allen has risen to the occasion in fine style. Nuhad es-Said himself contributes an engaging Foreword in which he candidly admits to being a compulsive collector from his early youth. After abortive enthusiasms for maps, old watches and impressionist paintings, he turned to Islamic pottery, which led inevitably to an interest in metalwork. This interest was at first academic, but soon became shamelessly acquisitive, and so began the present collection in which, as he writes, 'every single piece would have to include magnificent engraving, lavish inlay and beauty of form'. A glance at the superlative illustrations, covering twenty-seven hand-picked objects, is sufficient to demonstrate the triumphant success of his quest, and those who were lucky enough to see the collection, recently exhibited at the Ashmolean Museum, will not easily forget the impression it made.

Dr Allen makes clear in his Preface that underlying his meticulous catalogue is a consuming desire to discover and explore the symbolism which, he is convinced, inspired the decoration of these objects. No doubt it did, to some extent, but one sometimes wonders whether this conviction is not sometimes pushed to extremes. Can we really accept, for example, that the Islamic craftsman in metal adorned his pieces with suns and planets with the conscious idea of assimilating his patron to them, or even, in one case (p.25), to Allah himself? It may perhaps have been so, but it may also be possible that he was merely reproducing traditional designs

thought to be appropriate in the circumstances. In the same way, Sultan Muhammad's famous and magnificent painting of 'The Triumph of Bacchus' from the Carter Hefiz manuscript has been held up to us as an intensely spiritual manifestation of Sufi ecstasy, whereas the more immediately acceptable impression it makes is that of a masterly and distinctly earthy evocation of universal drunkenness. However, this must remain a matter of opinion, or approach. We have no means of telling what passed through the minds of such craftsmen as Ahmad al-Dhaki and Husayn ibn Mubarakshah in the course of their labours.

Of the merits of the catalogue itself, at all events, there can be no question. The Introduction sets the scene and sketches in the background, historical and cultural, symbolism being again heavily stressed. Dr Allen directs our attention to the extraordinary efflorescence of decorative metalwork, especially inlaid pieces, in the middle of the twelfth century, and aims to 'amass and organize the reflections perceived in these objects, and to build up a more comprehensible and comprehensive picture of the societies which produced them — above all through an understanding of the symbolism inherent in the decoration of these priceless works of art'. This he proceeds to do, harnessing rosettes, arabesques, interlaces, animals, birds, and the Arabic script itself to his purpose. Even our old friend the Tree of Life makes an appearance (No. 3).

The chief areas of production of these splendid objects were at first Khurasan (especially Herat), and a little later the Jazira, more familiar in the West as Mesopotamia (especially Mosul and Sirt). Dr Allen points out the differences between them, particularly the prevalence of astrological designs on Herat work, and that the profusion of fine pieces at this time followed on a great shortage of silver (attested by numismatic evidence) in Iraq and Iran during the previous century. Syria and Egypt joined the production line towards the middle of the thirteenth century. Decline set in with the fourteenth century, and with the rise of the Safavids in Iran and the Ottoman conquest of Egypt, inlaid metalwork of this kind virtually disappears.

The catalogue entries are distinguished by clarity of presentation. Each comprises a succinct description, readings and translations of all inscriptions, provenance when known, and publications, followed by a discussion of the various points and problems raised by the piece in question. Each object is illustrated by one or more colour plates, with black-and-white photographs of details; these are of outstanding quality. One may perhaps observe that, in the context of vinery, the term 'falconer' is preferable to 'hawker' with its normal connotation

of street traders and tawdry goods, and that Tamerlane (not Tamerlan) is the usual English designation of the great conqueror Timur. But there is little to carp at in this admirable catalogue, and Dr Alan has made a worthy and valuable record of a magnificent collection. ■

B.W. Robinson

Islamic Patterns: an Analytical and Cosmological Approach

By Keith Critchlow. Thames and Hudson.
2nd edition.

Islamic pattern is certainly among the most noble ornamental traditions mankind has evolved. The subtle balancing of complex and diverse elements entice the observer into an appreciation of the beauty contained in the intricacies of the smallest details, as well as in a sense of exaltation in the gestalt of the whole. Nowhere in the decorative arts is there a more consistent expression of the total integration of part to whole and whole to part. Moreover, this essential harmony of design is the foremost characteristic whenever the Islamic genius for pattern has been applied, be it a page of Quranic illumination or a beautifully decorated building.

The strong influence which Islamic pattern has had upon the European decorative traditions is undisputed. However, despite this influence Islamic pattern did not become a topic of scholarly study until the mid-nineteenth century. It was during this period that a number of Europeans first endeavoured to catalogue Islamic patterns primarily with the intention that their work should serve to inspire and uplift the Western decorative arts of that period. The results of this nineteenth century fascination with Islamic ornamentation are regarded by many as providing a valuable contribution to the rather staid design aesthetic of neo-classicism. However, for all the positive influences that such interest brought forth, it is clear that scholars and practitioners of the decorative arts largely ignored the whole question of how this area of artistic expression fits into Islamic culture as a whole.

It was not until the relatively recent publications of such scholars as Tübsi Burckhardt, Sayyid Hossein Nasr, and Frithjof Schuon that the general topic of Islamic art has been dealt with from the perspective of Islam itself. The publication of Keith Critchlow's book *Islamic Patterns: an Analytical and Cosmological Approach* in 1976 provided a more traditional understanding of this specific aspect of Islamic art, and one is happy to see that Thames and Hudson have recently

reissued this book in its second edition.

There are few current artists with so comprehensive a knowledge of geometric principles as Keith Critchlow. Coupling this with his many years of studying Islamic patterns as well as his interest in the many world traditions of cosmology and mysticism, his book on Islamic patterns is unique among the many which have recently been published on this subject. Its strongest aspect is the thorough step-by-step analysis of rangeometric patterns — drawing the reader into sharing in the sense of wonder at the beauty and complexity of these patterns. In this way, through both the text and the fine illustrations throughout, it helps to bring the reader closer to being able to experience these patterns in a manner for which they were likely designed — that of providing inspiration from beauty.

The cosmological emphasis of this book is best regarded as purely an introduction; the overall thesis being the idea that numeric elements in Islamic philosophical doctrines are reflected in the arts by way of systems of symmetry — this being especially apparent in the geometric patterns. There are a number of problems here. For one, Islam contains so many different religious, philosophical, cosmological, and mystical doctrines, all of which have, to a greater or lesser degree, some numeric element. To bring so many together in so brief a manner within one work can at best provide the reader with a realm of possibilities. Alternatively, it could result in the reader taking out of context various portions of doctrinal traditions and fabricating a more or less fictional symbolism around Islamic pattern. Certainly the intent of this aspect of the book has been to open the eyes of the reader to a realm of possibilities, but greater emphasis could have been placed upon divergence of symbolism within the many traditions of significant numbers referred to.

Some scholars of Islam may take umbrage with the basic assumption that significant numbers as found in various doctrines were employed as a source of symbolism in the tradition of pattern design. Certainly it is only a thin thread of evidence which would indicate that this is so. It is the personal belief of this writer that the tradition of Islamic pattern and design must have employed the use of symbolism, but of course it is necessary for this area of study to be well researched and documented. For instance, a thorough study of the texts associated with one particular sect of Sufis who included number and possibly colour into their doctrines, and a corresponding study of the architectural decoration upon buildings associated with such a sect, would do much to explain the extent and manner of such a relationship. It

could be said that the approach which Keith Critchlow has taken in his work has been to go straight to the heart of the matter and leave the documentation as a follow-up for others. Scholars of course will not appreciate this.

The subject of Islamic pattern is still open to further research. Despite the growing number of publications on this topic in recent years, there has been very little real advance in the understanding of these patterns. Mostly these recent works have concentrated upon the analysis of the geometric patterns, and of these without doubt the best are both this book of Keith Critchlow's as well as *Geometric Concepts in Islamic Art* by Isam El-Said and Ayse Parnahi (World of Islam Festival Publishing Company, 1976). Yet next to no work has been published on the far more significant question of the methods of derivation employed in the design of these patterns. Even more surprising, to date there has been no comprehensive study published which details the chronological development of these patterns and their dispersion throughout Islam. We can hope that such works will be forthcoming.

As regards books which are already in print, this book *Islamic Patterns: an Analytical and Cosmological Approach* by Keith Critchlow does much to spark the imagination of the reader and is well worth reading for those with an interest in this subject. ■

Jay Bonner



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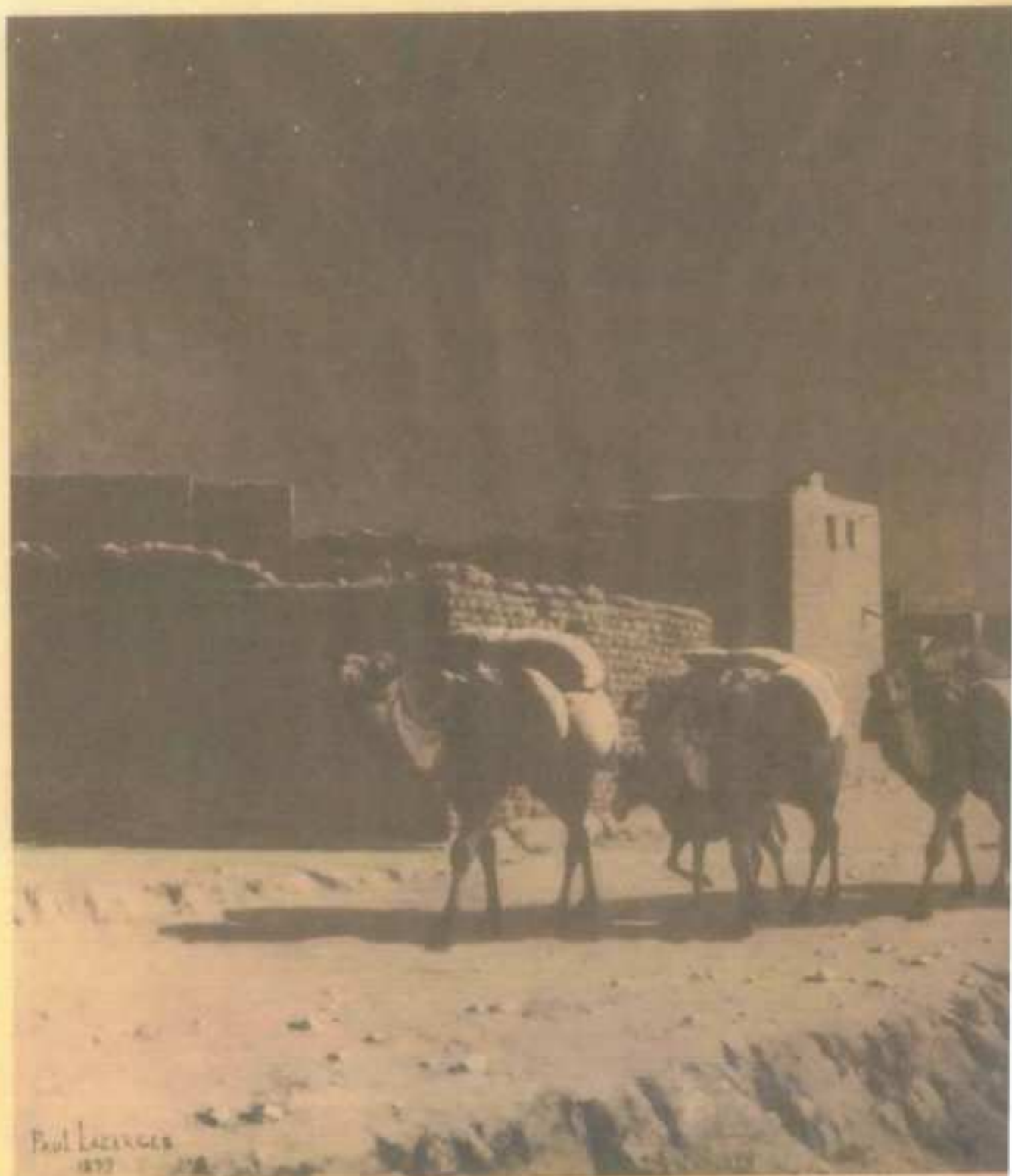
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Orientalist Paintings at Mathaf Gallery London

The Mathaf Gallery, which specializes in 19th century Orientalist paintings of Arabia, had a successful Summer Exhibition which is still on in August, and displayed many important works by famous Viennese and Parisian artists of the last century. The most outstanding works included a painting by Rudolph Ernst (1854-1932) of Arab Musicians in a Courtyard, and a large oil painting by Franz Koster (1864-1905) of Entertainers performing outside Cairo. Another painting to receive much attention was a fantasia scene by the American artist Aubrey Hunt, who lived in England painting scenes of Morocco and the Middle East. The Arab and British critics were extremely complimentary in their views.

A novel idea of the owner of the gallery, Mr Brian MacDermot, was to produce a video tape in Arabic, recording the opening of the exhibition and giving some short explanations about the paintings. Mr MacDermot always emphasises that the would-be Arab buyer must be careful in his purchases and should always, if possible, consult a recognized expert on the subject, to make sure he is buying genuine paintings. Reputable British galleries such as Mathaf automatically guarantee the authenticity of every painting sold.

There will shortly appear a book on Orientalist painters, written by the French expert Lynne Thornton and this should also assist future collectors with useful advice. ■

Autumn Sales at Sotheby's London

Sotheby's annual Autumn sales of works of Islamic arts take place on 17, 18 and 19 October 1983. The fine oriental manuscripts and miniatures (17th October) will include two fine 17th century Mughal miniatures, mounted on royal album pages, indicating that they come from the royal collection of the Mughal emperors. One, a portrait of a courtier, is expected to fetch £10,000-15,000, while the other, depicting a meeting between Shah Abbas of Persia and the Mughal Emperor Jahangir, is estimated at around £15,000.

Islamic Coins (18th October) include coins from the collection of Virgil M. Brand. Other highlights include an extremely rare Umayyad dinar struck at Ifriqiya in 104AH (estimated at £12,000-15,000).

Among the Islamic works of art, carpets and textiles (18th October), the star of the sale will be fine 18th century Mughal *mille fleur* carpet in soft Kashmir wool, from North India, in superb condition, which is estimated to fetch £150,000-200,000. Also in the sale are a 17th century Central or East Anatolian rug in the so-called 'Holbein' design on a camel hair ground (£10,000-15,000), an 18th century Bergama rug (£3,000-6,000) and a very good selection of nomadic and traditional rugs and carpets.

Works of art will include a rare silver-inlaid bronze bowl of the 12/13th century (£20,000-30,000), an 11/12th century Persian alabaster calligraphic tombstone (£7,000-12,000) and a 17th century Safavid blue and white flask (£4,000-6,000). There will also be a good selection of pottery, metalwork and arms and armour. ■

Paul Lazerges, 'Camel Train by moonlight' oil on canvas dated 1899

quotation on the same theme appears in the beautiful book by Ulya Vogt-Göknil on the mosque, published in 1975: "Perfection of an inner space, this enclosed world, in the freshness of which the visitor is enveloped as in a crystalline body. The primitive conception of space has not been modified by the introduction of outside walls." The mosque appears, then, as an interior space open to the sky. It is also propped against the market, against a whole city, which receives shelter from it. The most notable feature of a mosque is its orientation. It is turned towards the qibla, towards Makkah, as the faithful must turn towards Makkah when they pray. Such an orientation can be had anywhere. I shall always remember a migrant worker in an airport. Voices were shouting all around, announcing planes, giving hours and minutes of take-offs and arrivals. Meanwhile the worker had turned a small low table towards Makkah. He climbed onto it and, thus separated from the outer world, he offered his being to prayer. This noisy place became a mosque. In the same manner, I remember the captain of a small fishing boat in the Red Sea summoning his crew like a muezzin. This boat, balanced on the sea, was also at that moment a sacred building. This does not mean that beauty has no place in Islamic architecture. An awareness of beauty contributes to the concept of the Islamic heritage, and aesthetic considerations play a part in the movement for the conservation of that heritage. But for the moment let us note two primary characteristics. Firstly, the organic character which links a building to a city, to its whole environment, and which ties it to a way of being, to a civilisation as a whole. Secondly, there is a link with certain attitudes and values. Architecture, truly understood, appears mainly as 'cosa mentale', the expression of a way of thinking. These qualities explain no doubt why nowadays historic buildings



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are so tightly bound up with the survival of certain values and civilisations, why they are so immediately seized upon as examples of cultural identity and why they can be directly related to contemporary expressions of that identity. In fact, buildings are the most apparent emblems of our cultural heritage. This is why Mohamed Mzali, Prime Minister of Tunisia, speaking here about 'l'avenir du passé' could also quote a statement made by President Michel Parent about the protection of the heritage: "a new right, a right to knowledge, knowledge of the origins, of the reasons for living and a certain way of choosing the future, but different from what is meant by a single, impersonal model. It is a right both for ourselves and for others — a right to gain access to different heritages." The encouragement of a concern for the plurality of cultures, buildings and experiences has been one of the main tasks of Unesco. This concern exists within every authentic culture. Universality is not an abstraction. It does not lie in the dominance of an outlook or an ideology or a nation. It is not present in self-assertion, or in the conquering power of technology or the communications media. Universality is contained in the unique, in individual buildings, beings and consciences in specific cultures. A great culture is not necessarily a powerful one, but a culture which is loved, cared for, respected by the humble and meaningful to all the people. Among other cultures, Islam is such. Therefore, a self enclosed, aggressive, parochial Islam is a contradiction. But look at the historic buildings from Foz to ancient Cairo, from Timbuctu to Sana'a, from Central Asia, Herat, Samarkand, to South East Asia. You see a recognisable style, in spite of all the differences. It has to be studied and preserved as such. Our sacred buildings make a meaningful whole. They are a concrete

sign of a transcendent reality — and a shelter for the community. The mosque unites what we call 'dine wa duniya'. It has another worldly quality — a spirit of light — and an immediate everyday reality. Purity is reached through splendour and both are fused into a single experience. This is one of the characteristics of Islamic art, in architecture, town-planning, calligraphy and decoration.

At this point it might be useful to quote from a Western pioneer of modern architecture — Le Corbusier. He engineered to a large extent the Charter of Athens, which was a triumph for western rationality. Then came the war, destruction and the horrors we know, by which universal reason was silenced. Then came another feeling for universality which brought cultures together, but respected them as different from each other. Today historic buildings are respected for themselves and each single building belongs, in its uniqueness, to the world. Le Corbusier already had this feeling before the First World War. He was a very young man, still a pupil of Behrens, and he wrote of his experience in Ottoman Turkey in *La Feuille d'Avis de la Chaux de Fonds*: "There must be a silent place with a face towards Makkah. It must be vast so that the heart may feel at ease, high so that prayers may breathe. There must be simple diffused light so that there is no shadow, and the whole must possess a perfect simplicity, an immensity must be contained in its forms. The floor must be larger than a city square, not to hold the crowd, but in order that the few who come to pray may feel joy and respect in this large house. Nothing escapes the gaze. One enters, one sees the immense square with its mats of fresh golden straw — no furniture, no chairs, only a few desks at floor level with Korans on them, in front of which one crouches. At a glance one perceives the four corners, one senses

their clear presence and one constructs the large cube pierced with small windows from which rise the four gigantic ceiling beams joined by pendentives. One sees the bright crowns of a thousand little windows sparkling in the dome. Above is a vast space whose form cannot be discerned, for the hemisphere escapes measurement. The mihrab opposite the entrance is a doorway only to the Ka'abah. It has no actual projection, no body at all. The way the axis of every mosque in the Muslim world points to the black stone of the Ka'abah is a great symbol of the united in faith."

What is remarkable is that Le Corbusier, born at La Chaux de Fonds in the Jura, not very far from Basel, perceived at first contact a different civilisation, and expressed in a single architectural vision some essential realities about Islam as a faith and as a culture. The doorway to Makkah is the axis of all mosque building. It points the faces of the faithful in the same direction. The architecture of the mosque is a single symbol of unity. In fact the gaze of all Muslims converges five times a day towards one place. Muslims build a great invisible woven fabric and they launch it through space. This spiritual structure could well be called the main architecture of the Islamic civilisation. Le Corbusier had perceived a whole world of culture through the design of a building. He certainly did not try to reduce Islamic buildings to mechanical abstractions. He saw them as they were, living in their own world of values. Such an outlook appears to us as contemporary.

If this Conference in Basel acts as a stepping stone towards the recognition of every culture in its own universality, as expressed in its cities and historic buildings, then this Conference will have reached an essential goal. ■

Najmuddine Bammale

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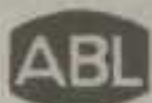
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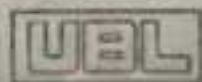
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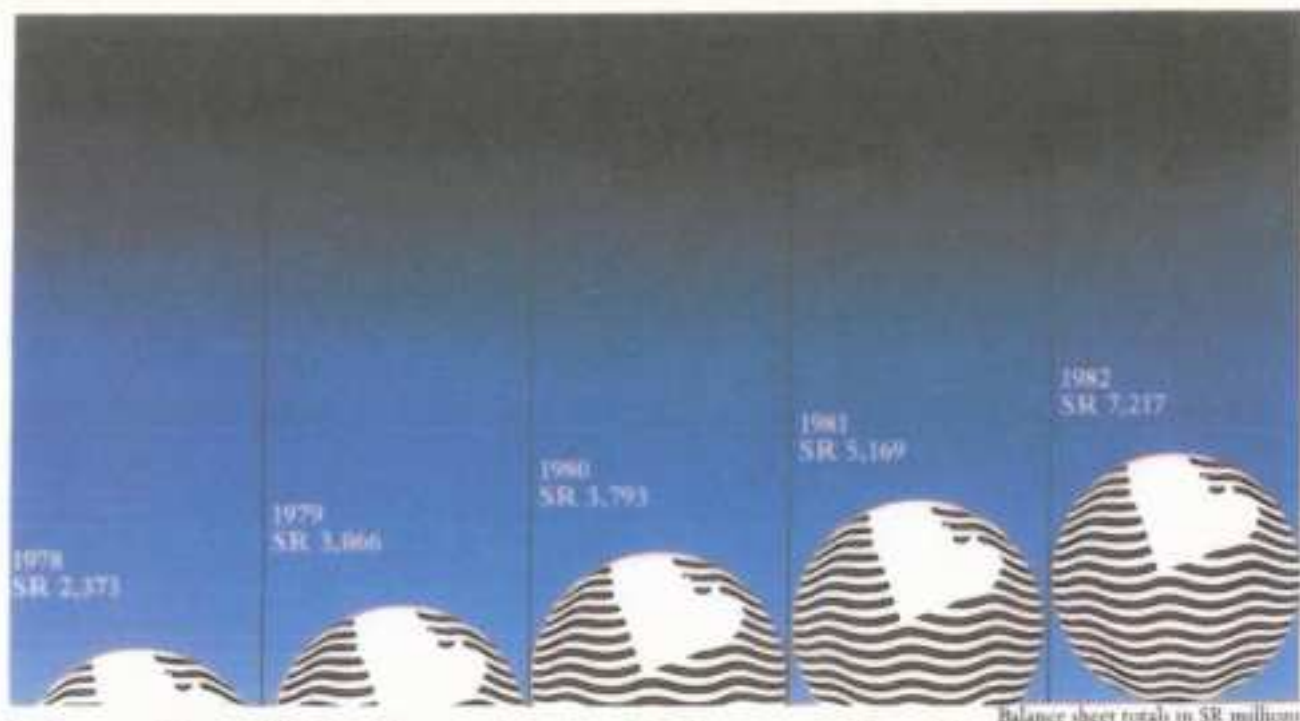
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Editorial

While both aesthetic and historical aspects of Islamic coins have come in for considerable attention, Islamic paper money, which dates back some eight centuries (only the Chinese, in fact, being recorded as having made earlier issues), has remained a neglected topic until the present day. *Arts & The Islamic World* is happy to include in this issue an article on the subject by William Barrett, who feels that the relatively modest interest in this area may be due to the long hiatus between the first issue in 693H (1294AD) of the Il-Khan Emperor Kai Khatu in Persia, and subsequent issues dating only over the past two hundred years, and mainly from the present century. Of course in his survey he uses the broadest possible definition of "Islamic influence" in discussing individual notes or types of issues, and introduces some of the aspects of the paper money "issued with any Islamic influence or reference over the past centuries".

◆ ◆ ◆

With the fourth issue now in the hands of our readers, *Arts & The Islamic World* completes its first year of publication. As stated in the very first issue, the journal was initiated in pursuance of the recommendations made by the International Seminar on "The Arts in Islamic Lands" which was organized by the Islamic Arts Foundation, and it has been closely guided by the framework developed at the seminar. These recommendations emphasised the role of art "as an essential expression of the Islamic civilization", and envisioned "Islamic art as an integral part of world cultural heritage." Above all, it was reaffirmed that the arts of Islamic Lands "are not only an expression 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 these lands."

To what extent this has happened, and is happening today in various countries of the Islamic world? To look at some of the answers to these questions, *Arts & The Islamic World* will be publishing a series of special surveys devoted to the art and cultural scene in individual countries of the Islamic world. The aim is to produce these special surveys in collaboration with art scholars and institutions in the respective country itself as well as those outside it. For this purpose a panel of Guest Editors is being invited to put together these country surveys, presenting and reviewing the state of the arts in each country and looking in depth at its cultural past and the movement towards the future.

In each case analytical and interpretive writings from art critics and historians will be supplemented by creative artists themselves, in the fields of plastic as well as performing and allied arts and crafts. They will be provided a forum to speak for themselves and their vocation, their dreams and their heartbreaks, their contributions to and demands from the society in which they live and which they visualise for the future.

These special surveys dealing with individual countries will start appearing in *Arts & The Islamic World* beginning with its next issue for Spring 1984. Subsequently, it may also be possible to offer these country surveys separately as bound reprints at a modest price so as to reach a wider audience within the Islamic world and in other Eastern and Western countries. ■

RARE BUKHARA MANUSCRIPT

"Raudat-ul-Muhibbin"

M.S. Randhawa

Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad the capital of Andhra Pradesh State of India is well known for its art collections. It has 43,000 art objects and 55,000 books and manuscripts. They were dumped in a residential building till 1968, when the Government of India provided a modern building at a cost of over five million rupees. The collector of these art objects was Yousuf Ali Khan, better known as Salar Jung III (b.1889 d.1940). He belonged to an aristocratic family of Hyderabad. Five members of Salar Jung family served the Nizam of Hyderabad State as Prime Ministers. Salar Jung I was Prime Minister from 1853 to 1887. The last one was Yousuf Ali Khan, a lover of art. He is remembered as a connoisseur of art rather than as an administrator. He remained a bachelor, had a passion for art and devoted his wealth and leisure to collecting art objects. During his travels in Europe, he collected bronze and marble statues, cut glass and Sevres, Dresden and Wedgwood China. He had particular fascination for Louis XIV gilt-painted furniture of which he purchased large quantities. Among the Western painters, he collected the paintings by Landseer, Watts, Leighton, Cooper, Foster, Constable and Canaletto.

At the time when he was

purchasing paintings and statues, Asians were suffering from a sense of inferiority and had little appreciation of their own art. Though Southern India is known for its stone sculptures and metal images, Salar Jung did not pay any attention to them. Nevertheless, he had the good sense to purchase illustrated Qurans, and classical works of Persian poets. A thirteenth century Quran, written by Yakut-al-Mustasimi, the court calligrapher of the last Abbasid Caliph, is a masterpiece of Naskh style of writing. It came from the royal library of the Mughal Emperors, and bears the seals of Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. The Mughal Emperor put their seals and signatures on illustrated books which they fancied as important and valuable. Another illustrated manuscript contains poetry of Mohammed Quli Qutb Shah, the fifth King of Golconda. Its calligrapher was Zainuddin Ali and it had paintings in early Decani style.

The pride of place among illustrated manuscripts goes to a *mathnawi*, "Raudat-ul-Muhibbin" (Garden of the Lover), which was once in the library of Emperor Shah Jahan and bears his seal. It is a collection of three mystical poems, and was illustrated for Khagan Abdul Aziz

Bahadur Khan of Bukhara in 1540 under the guidance of the librarian Sultan Mirak.

The name of the artist which is written on one of the illustrations, is Sheikh Yusuf Muzahib. The manuscript itself was written in *Nastaliq* script by Mir Ali. The paintings in this manuscript, 20 in number, are by three artists, Sheikh Yusuf Muzahib, Sheikh Bin Mulla Yusuf Haravi, and Surah Mahmud Muzahib. The work contains three *mathnawis*. They are *Si nama*, *Firaynama*, and *Dahnama*. *Raudat-ul-Muhibbin*, a poem after which the manuscript is named, is a part of *Dahnama*.

How did painting develop at Bukhara in Central Asia? We have to go back to the history of Iran in the early sixteenth century. In 1502 the Turkman dynasty which was ruling Iran was overthrown by Ismail I, who founded the Safavid dynasty. The Safavids were Persians and under their benevolent rule a period of renaissance began in Iran. Tabriz, the Capital of Tahmasp I achieved fame as a centre of art from 1524 to 1576. Tahmasp I was not only a patron of painters, but himself practised painting as a hobby. He was the one who gave shelter to Humayun when he was driven out of India by Sher Shah



1. A garden party. An illustration to the Mathnawi, Raudat-ul-Muhibbin 1549. Bukhara. Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, India

2. Musicians entertaining Sultan Abdul Aziz Bahadur Khan. An illustration to the Mathnawi Raudat-ul-Muhibbin, 1549. Bukhara Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, India

3. A ladies party. An illustration to the Mathnawi, Raudat-ul-Muhibbin 1549. Bukhara. Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, India



4. Abdul Aziz Bahadur Khan inspecting his horses. An illustration to the Mathnawi Raudat-ul-Muhibbin, 1549. Bukhara. Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, India

5. A poetic symposium. An illustration to the Mathnawi Raudat-ul-Muhibbin, 1549. Bukhara Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, India

6. A youth in a garden admiring the crescent moon. An illustration to the Mathnawi Raudat-ul-Muhibbin 1549. Bukhara. Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, India

7. A youth reading a book of poems in a garden. An illustration to the Mathnawi Raudat-ul-Muhibbin 1549. Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, India



7. A harem scene. An illustration to the *Makhsuz Raudat-ul-Muhibbin*, 1549. Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, India



8. Foreground. An illustration to the *Makhsuz Raudat-ul-Muhibbin*, 1549. Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, India

Suri. His chief artists were Aga Mirak and Sultan Muhammad, who illustrated the famous *Khamseh* of Nizami, now in the British Museum, London.

In 1528, Ubaid Khan, Uzbek ruler of Bukhara, sacked Herat, a centre of Persian painting. It was this Uzbek who encouraged Persian artists, including some pupils of legendary Kamal-ud-Din Bihzad to migrate to Bukhara and hence developed the Bukhara School of Painting. Its best period was under Abdul Aziz Bahadur Khan (1540-1550).

The arts of gardening and painting in Bukhara were imports from Iran. At the close of the fourteenth century, Iran formed a part of the empire of Timur (1335-1405). Though notorious for his cruelty, Timur was a lover of architecture and gardens. The tradition of *Chahar Bagh* reached Samarqand, the capital of Timur from Iran. He planted ten gardens in the suburbs of Samarqand which were irrigated from the Zarafshan river. Some of these gardens were given pompous names, e.g. Bagh-i-Naqsh-i-Jahan, Bagh-e-Jahan-nauma, Bagh-i-Bahisht, etc. A garden which specialised in chenars (cypress) was called Bagh-e-Chenar. Others were named after their geographical location or architectural features. We get an account of these gardens from Clavijo, ambassador of the King of Spain, who visited Samarqand in 1404, a year before the death of Timur. These gardens were surrounded by high walls, with towers at each corner and the enclosed area was divided into quarters. There was a main water axis through which a canal flowed. The gates were decorated with gold and blue tiles. In some of these gardens partridges and deer were kept. The layout of these gardens was mainly after the Persian four plot model. They inspired Babur, the founder of Mughal gardens in India, and thus had far-reaching results in the history of gardens and gardening.

In Bukhara paintings we see gardens and beauty of spring in Central Asia. The pink blossoms of almonds and apricots and the silvery sprays of plums produce a scene and joyous splendour. This is what we notice in a painting. Abdul Aziz Bahadur Khan dressed in a blue tunic is sitting on a carpet attended by a handsome youth, the cup-bearer (*saki*) (Plate 1). Georgian boys were often employed as pages by the

rulers of Iran and Bukhara. In the foreground are musicians. Artists sometimes introduced the portraits of their patrons in their illustrations of the classics. Sultan Hussain Mirza (1473-1506) had his own features portrayed in the illustrations of manuscripts. In the *Sikandarnama* of the British Museum, Bihzad painted Alexander visiting a hermit dwelling in a cave. In this painting the painter's patron, Sultan Hussain Mirza, is painted as Alexander. Similarly Bahram Gaur galloping across a field hunting a wild ass in the *Khamseh* of Nizami is really Tahmasp.

In Persian mysticism music and dance were necessary aids in achieving ecstasy. Fervour was aroused by the clapping of hands, and swaying of the body. Lines which celebrated the bliss of being with the beloved, and the joy of drinking wine were repeated by all the participants in such symposia known as *Qawalis*. It is not so much the meaning of poems, but the rhythm of music which enchants the audience in such symposia. In Plate II, a garden provides the background for such a party. Two musicians seated on a carpet are performing. The patron, Abdul Aziz Bahadur Khan, dressed in a blue *chogha* is standing near a cypress. In the garden is a tall chenar, the ornament of the gardens of Central Asia. At the sides are funereal cypresses, whose gloom is relieved by flowering peaches and plums. It is an excellent painting of the chenar, the oriental plane tree (*Platanus orientalis*) whose fame has been celebrated in the history of gardens of Iran, Central Asia, Afghanistan and Kashmir.

Cypresses, peaches and plums were the favourite trees in the gardens of royal palaces of Bukhara. We see them in Plate III which illustrates a harem scene. The Sultana is seated on a carpet attended by a crowd of maid-servants serving food and drinks. On the tallest building is inscribed the name of the patron Khaqan-e-Azam, Abdul Aziz Bahadur Khan, and the year 956 Hijri (1549) when this miniature was painted. Calligraphists were employed both in Iran and Bukhara for writing inscriptions on mosques and palaces. Some of the artists were experts in the arts of gilding and calligraphy. Plate III provides us an idea of the harem gardens of Bukhara in the middle of the sixteenth century, whose architec-

ture and layout was inspired by the gardens of Iran.

Turkistan was a horse-breeding country. Ibn Battuta, the Moorish traveller, who passed through Turkistan on his way to India in the middle of the fourteenth century, observed, "The horses in this country are very numerous. The livelihood of the people depends on them and they are as numerous as sheep in our country." Abdul Aziz Bahadur Khan was not only fond of gardens, music and poetry; he was equally attached to horses. We see him seated at the entrance of his palace inspecting horses which are being led by grooms (Plate IV). The name of the painter is given below the painting as Shaikh Yusuf Nazirivi.

A group of mystics is seated on a carpet in front of a mosque decorated with colourful tiles. Two mystics are seated to the right. In front of them are lighted candles. Evidently it illustrates a poetic symposium (Plate V).

Poets loved gardens, solitude and moonlit nights. A young poet dressed in a scarlet robe is standing in a garden of plums and peaches watching the crescent moon, lost in ecstasy (Plate VI). In another painting a young man is reading a book attended by a boy holding a cup of wine in a garden (Plate VII). The use of gold paint in the background brightens up the scene.

We see another harem scene in a delightful painting. The Sultan's wives are standing in the centre dressed in colourful clothes. Their maid servants are standing in pairs in the background. It is a perfect composition with balance and harmony (Plate VIII).

These Bukhara paintings reflect the socio-cultural milieu of Central Asia in the sixteenth century. The upper classes were cultured and had love of gardens, music, poetry and painting. These paintings are not the creation of a single painter, but of a group of painters, who worked together in the library of the patron Khaqan Abdul Aziz Bahadur Khan. They are characterised by brilliant colour schemes and the use of gold in the background brings the figures into bold relief. The treatment of clouds in some of the paintings indicates the influence of Chinese painting. Branches and foliage of the chenar project outside the frame of the painting (Plate IX). Bukhara was the meeting place of two styles of painting, viz. the Persian and the Chinese and also of two cultures. ■

THE PLAY OF LIGHT

Keith Critchlow

"God is the light of the Heavens and the earth."
The Sura of Light XXIV.35. Holy Qur'an

It is not only natural, but a spiritually inspired response to beauty, that so much of the greatest Islamic Art is through light. The play of light through the unsurpassed coloured glazes of the myriads of beautiful ceramic tiles throughout Islam, or the transmission and transmutation of light as it refracts down through the multifaceted *muqarnas* or stalactites marking the passage from square to octagon in the squinch of a dome, both demonstrate a mastery of the qualities of light and its components — colour.

It is possible that the stained glass window was also invented in Islam. It certainly developed in parallel with the other visual arts and becomes yet another demonstration of the Islamic mastery of the modulation of light through colour.

There is quite evidently a new resurgence of interest in, and even a passionate patronage of, the traditional Islamic arts today. This seems to be stimulated from both positive and negative sources. The negative is a saturation of trivialized Islamic art themes or even anti-Islamic decorative and representational art supplied by an all-too-ignorant West. However, the positive impulse is the recognition of the depth, value and magnificent beauty that radiate into the present in such majestic forms as the Taj Mahal, the Alhambra, the Skeikh Lutfallah Mosque and the Mosque of Selim II in Edirne by Sinan. It was inevitable that the Muslim spirit would not be satisfied with the compromised art that either came straight out of books or was simply empty of any Islamic values.

It is worthwhile to investigate the literal roots of the inspiration of the great artists and craftsmen of Islam. This is and always has been the Holy Qur'an.

The Arabic word for creation, *Islahaq*, is synonymous with 'assigning to each thing its proper measure.' This

word gives us an insight into the Arabic sense of proportion, rhythm and order that underlies both the love of beautiful prose and poetry and also the geometric harmony of the visual arts. Those of us who have been brought up in the tradition of visual images or icons have tended to find Arabic or Islamic Art, which is anti-iconic (or non-representational), as decorative. This has, in turn, diverted our attention from the deeper and philosophic meaning of the Islamic patterns and radiant symmetries of the crystalline geometry.

Since the discovery of the atomic structure of all of our material world, we tend to talk of our times as the "atomic age". Sadly, the image this brings to mind is the explosive and destructive aspect of atomic weapons, whereas the real beauty of the discovery of the underlying atomic reality is the almost unbelievable order and beauty that holds our universe together. Surely, if we rupture this magnificent cosmological order at microscopic level we release the forces of disorder. Yet, what we now believe to be the underlying reality, is the purity of form and relationship that Great Islamic artists of the past have always affirmed. That "God is forever geometrizing" is how Kepler summed it up. For the Arab artist, it is a fact of inner experience that cosmetics, the beautifying colours that we use to adorn ourselves, have their origins in 'cosmology'. *Kosavon*, the ancient Greek word for both 'our world' and 'adornment' is the common root. 'Proper measure', then, is both an understanding of the mind of the Creator and a security for the Islamic artist to co-operate with and in the created order. This means that the two major forms of adornment that we find in Islamic Art, the geometric and the biomorphic (or spiralling life-like arabesques), are symbolic of two fundamental forces in the Islamic world picture: the Majesty or Grandeur of the Creator (*Jalal*) and the Beauty of the Creator (*Jamal*).

When considering the approach of the traditional

Islamic artist, it is important to observe the sense of 'coming into being' as an aspect of Divine Unity as this is the all-important concept of reality. The Creator (*al-Khaliq*) is the first name that appears in the sequence of creation. *Khalafa* is, then, more the assignment of the Possible; the next term, *al-Bari*, means Producer, which is similar in meaning to the 'Demiurge' of Plato. The third term in this sequence of names and unfolding of the creative process is *al-Musawwir* or He-Who-Gives-

If the biomorphic plant-like rhythmic sprallings of the Islamic Arabesque represent a visual abstraction for the muscularity and sinuous energy inevitable in all living forms, the geometric symmetries and radiance are more indicative of the underlying rigour of order at a precognitive level. Even though the natural complementarity of two sets of two arises, these are the polarization of the four conditions of our



Form (see Surah 23 of the Holy Qur'an). These three 'Names' are said by some commentators to relate to three determining attributes in human life; Judgement (*al-hukm*), followed by Will (*al-iradah*) and Action (*al-fi'l*). It follows from this symbolic parallel that the artist craftsman also has a disciplinary procedure that needs to be observed and cultivated. The inspired saying of the Prophet Muhammad, "God is beautiful and loves beauty," sets the standard of all Islamic arts.

experienced world: the solidity of earth, the liquidity of water, the gaseousness of air and the radiance of 'fire' or light. These four settle out into two sets of two inasmuch as light or 'fire' radiates in straight lines, as does the most crystalline solid state settle into geometric form; whilst the liquid and gaseous states of water and air behave in vortical patterns. A drop of milk falling into a still glass of water develops a similar form to a cloud rising up in still air, yet one is an inverted

reflection of the other. Even so, the geometric forms, abstract as they are, still allude to a night sky, a "frozen sun", and the indefinite beauty of the hexagonal snowflakes. The reaction between pure sunlight and the 'purity' of a cut diamond beautifully reflect the two poles of this complementarity.

In the aspects of number, measure, order, symmetry and cosmology, the essential ingredients of second Islamic art, the first four of these terms are a prerequisite to the last. It is through these universal qualities that participation in the beauty and order of the natural world is made; more, for the Islamic artist, it is through these that allusion is made to the underlying Intelligence and Meaning of the Created Order which is the purpose of sacred art.

There is a genealogy in Islamic Art that is all but inconceivable in the Christian tradition. This genealogy is expressed in those guilds which up to the 1880s were reported to be directly related through a blood line to Hazrat Ali, the adopted son of the Prophet. There is no reason to believe that this guild system should, relatively suddenly, become extinct. It is also reasonable to believe that such working craft guilds have become contracted for two reasons. The first and most obvious is the avalanche of Western artifacts, Western values and Western mechanistic philosophy: in short, the irresistible 'economics' of cheap mass-produced goods with their 'sub-human' quality of identity. The issue of the meaning of 'work' in human life is too vast for the space of this article, but it is significant that the so-called post-industrial period is markedly lacking in a solution to the unemployment problem of those nations under 'industrial' economics, secularization of industry and industrialization. We mean 'industry' as a machine-centred operation as opposed to a human-centred industry, where all tools serve a human vision and purpose and enrich the participants life. The Guilds of Islam are intrinsically religious organizations whose purpose is to protect the integrity of the work as a service to the community and the relation of right livelihood to the ultimate goal of life, which is to realize the essential Unity of Existence. These Guilds are characterized by a hierarchy: first, the Sheikh al-Mashaikh, followed by the Naqib, the Sheikh of the Guild, the Shawish and the apprentice, according to the rare report of E. Qudsi compiled at the end of the last century.

This gives us an insight into the care, protection and the quality of works which are the backbone of a village, town, city or national economy, as Qudsi observes. A parallel can also be read between the degrees of the guild offices and the degrees of 'Creator of Possibilities', 'Creator of the Will', and 'Creator of Forms.' What is certain is that justice was administered in all problems through the interpretation of the Holy Qura'n by the Sheikh al-Mashaikh, or, in his absence, the senior officer of the Guild, usually the Naqib.

It is inevitable that in speaking of the craft guilds one is probably also speaking of Sufism; this is made clear in Qudsi's brief assessment. When it comes to those Sufi guilds who are engaged in the visual arts, and in particular the ceramic guilds, then the concept and 'experience' of Paradise becomes both a standard and an invocation in the creation of beauty.

"God is beautiful and loves beauty" has also been taken as a commentary on the paradisiac state, i.e., the perfection of the created order as the 'Body of Divinity.' This is in the metaphoric sense that the appreciated (*Az-Zakiri* or Outward) is a refraction or prolongation of the

hidden or Inward (*Al-Batin*) and, according to F. Schuon, similar to the phenomenon of a rainbow which is the refraction or prolongation of the purity (and invisibility) of uncoloured light. This metaphor can give us an insight into the 'outward', and, in some people's eyes, sensuous, beauty of the tiled interiors of the mosques of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and North Africa. They can be taken as celebrations of the beauty of Creation, but even more significantly, they are indications of the uniting function of the paradisiac realm between our human separateness and the Beloved or the Principle of Unity itself.

Frithjof Schuon, the well known authority on Islamic philosophy, goes as far as to say that "... man's mission is precisely to join the vision of 'the Outward' to that of the 'Inward'". In other words, simultaneously to be witness to God as Principle and Manifestation.

It is a mark of the new understanding being revealed to Western eyes by the current generation of Islamic scholars that access is given to the profundity of the underlying principles of Islamic Art. This relates to the 'hidden' order that links the planetary and cosmic rhythms to the biological, rhythmic unfoldings and foldings through number, symmetry, proportion, ratio and measure. All these symbolic links are 'abstractions' in one sense and indications of the natural and intellectual order in the other. For example, if the atomic world cannot cohere without the principle of threeness in the proton, neutron and electron, how much less the molecular, mineral, organic and human worlds? Number has always been taken as one of the most profound conditions of existence for the Islamic philosophers.

Each planet has its rhythms or periodicity of recurrence, that is, a cycle which is marked by returning to the same position in the skies, as defined by the fixed stars. Seen from the normal and common sense view from the earth, each planet makes a series of retrograde loops or turnings, before returning to the same position in the sky. These loops, or 'swimming motions' are precisely measured and each has a number value, a symmetry and a time measure. Through these natural recurrences we can arrive at the principles through which the mind can know and record this overall or *gestalt* pattern. A study of the cosmology of rhythm in space and time of our heavenly environment can serve to teach us more about our 'sub-lunar' world or world of nature, on the one hand, as well as, on the other, point the 'other' way toward the pure intellectual principles that underly space, time, form, number and substance.

Islamic art, with its predominant emphasis on rhythm, recurrence and pattern, is clear in its content and form; it indicates the state of Paradise on the one hand, and the pure principles that underly both our world and the paradisiac world in the principles of number, geometry, harmony and cosmology, on the other. In this way, it is both an exposition of Beauty and a teaching of the underlying meaning of Beauty.

I have myself, in addition to teaching at the RCA, and running a summer school in the USA, recently formed, an architectural practice specialising in Sacred architecture (Keith Critchlow and Associates) and Surat, an Islamic Art and Design Service. A recent exhibition of Surat's work was well received in the USA, in Taos, NM and at the Aspen Institute in Colorado.

Surat has collaborated with Shades of Light, a team of master craftsmen in stained glass with considerable

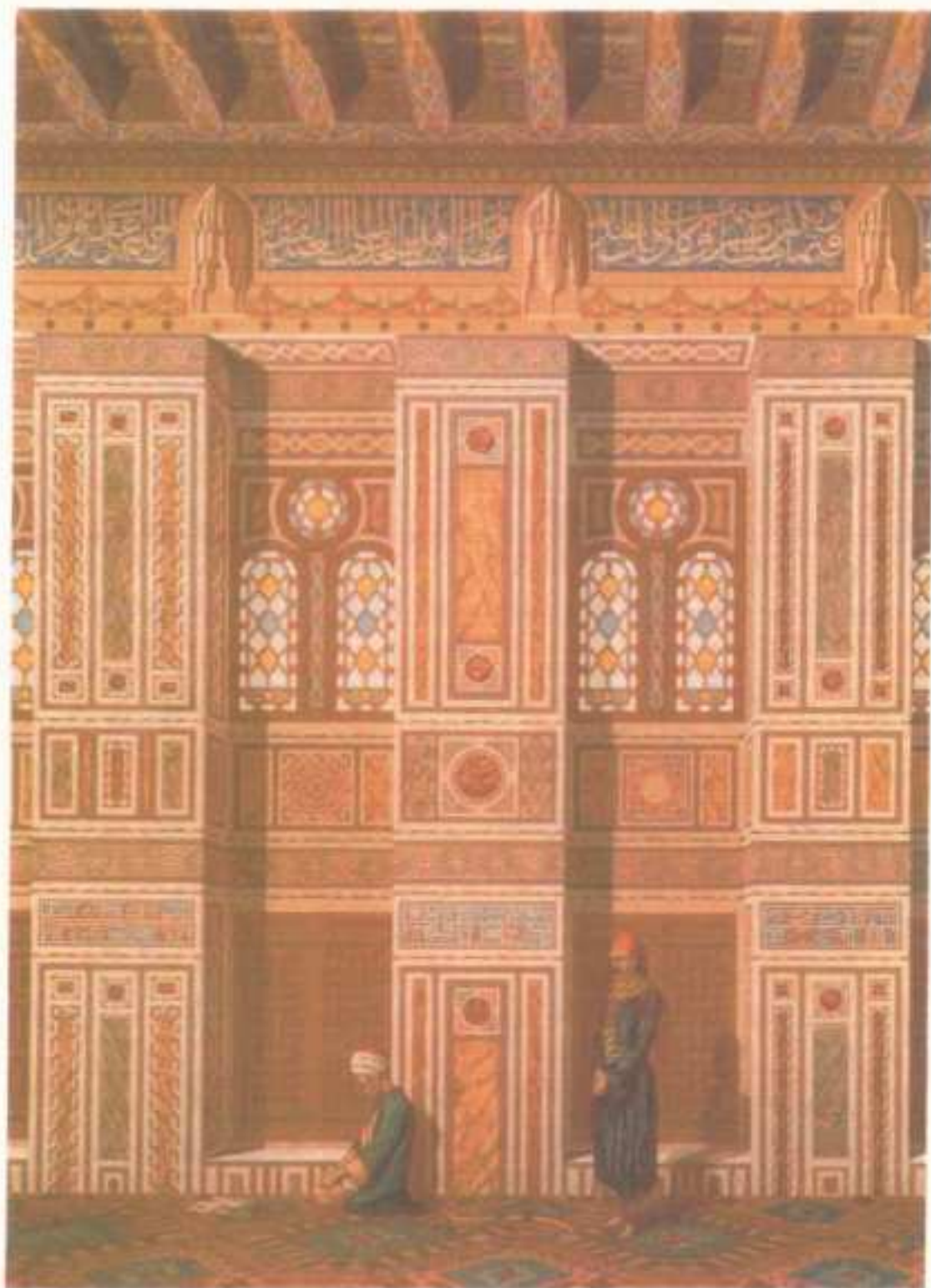
experience in the Middle East, in the development of a whole new range of glass windows and glass domes. In addition, stained glass and ceramics combined with new materials has been used in prototype form in the development of cladding panels for buildings and the construction of such architectural features as fountains. The results of this work will be shown at the Saudi Build Exhibition in Riyadh in October.

Surat and Shades of Light are concerned to support, sustain, and give energy to the serious and deepening desire to return to the traditional values and forms of Islamic Art. The collaboration is endeavouring to

reconstruct, within both the facilities and constraints of modern times, the atmosphere and integrity of the traditional guilds. The combining of the qualities of ceramic, wood, modern materials and glass-work will be undertaken in the spirit of achieving more and more subtle and beautiful standards. It is believed that this is the only motivation that can achieve qualities that can in any way measure up to the Islamic masterworks of the past, which "glow in the present".

1. Elias Qudsi's sketch of the Guilds of Damascus in the 19th C. trans. by professor Yusif Ibish.





Prisse d'Avennes: **L'Art Arabe**

Briony Llewellyn

Prisse d'Avennes' L'Art Arabe published in its entirety in 1877, was one of the most sumptuous pictorial surveys of Islamic art to appear during the nineteenth century. Its

three atlas-sized volumes contain plates both coloured and uncoloured depicting nearly every aspect of Arab architecture and decoration, drawn mainly from Egyptian exam-

ples. Over a century later, they are still highly regarded for their accurate and detailed representation of many splendid Islamic buildings and artefacts which have since decayed

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or disappeared.

The creator of this remarkable publication was the equally remarkable Achille-Constant-Théodore-Émile Prisse d'Avennes (1807-1879). His biographer described him as 'voyageur français, archéologue, égyptologue et publiciste' but he was also an engineer, geographer, linguist and artist. He acquired a reputation as an Egyptologist working on inscriptions and reliefs at Thebes and only later turned to the serious study of Egypt's Arab monuments. Irascible and outspoken he lived a restless existence preferring to rely, for the most part, on his own resources. He had many brushes with authority but these seldom deterred him from whatever course of action he had chosen. Well known to other Europeans living in Egypt during the 1830s and 1840s, he received little recognition in France and despite the eulogistic biography published by his son in the 1890s, he has remained a shadowy figure in the history both of Egyptology and of European response to Islamic art.

L'Art Arabe, completed only two years before Prisse's death, was the culmination of almost a lifetime devoted to the East. He travelled through nearly every Islamic country between India and Algeria and spent many years in Egypt working on a variety of projects. Following his romantic inclinations he left France as a young man to fight in the Greek War of Independence. By 1830 his earlier training as an engineer had resulted in his being employed, like several other Europeans, by Mohammed Ali, Pasha of Egypt, to assist in the modernisation of the country. In 1836 he resigned his teaching post at the new military school and spent the next seven years travelling and conducting his own archaeological research. Calling himself Edris-Effendi he became thoroughly immersed in the Arab way of life, adopting the dress and customs and, according to his biographer, he was converted to Islam. Established at Luxor for some years, he devoted his considerable skills as an artist to the copying of the hieroglyphic inscriptions and painted reliefs in the ancient tombs and temples, and also succeeded in removing the important Table of Kings in the Temple of Amon at Karnak from under the noses of both local officials and rival Egyptologists.

Prisse returned to France in 1844 to begin his series of monumental

publications, lavishly illustrated with tinted or chromo lithographs. The most notable were *Les Monuments Égyptiens* (1847) and *L'Histoire de l'Art Égyptien d'après les monuments, depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à la domination romaine* (2 volumes, 1858-77), dealing with the art of ancient Egypt. *L'Album Oriental* (1847-51) describing and illustrating life and customs in contemporary Egypt, and finally *L'Art Arabe d'après les monuments du Caire depuis le VII^e siècle jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^e siècle*. This was published in parts by Ve, A. Morel et Cie from 1869 until 1877 when the whole work appeared in four bound volumes: three folio volumes of 200 plates, 137 of which were chromolithographs and most of the rest tinted lithographs, all printed by Lemercurier et Cie; and one quarto volume of text with additional monochrome illustrations.

While working on these publications Prisse had returned to Egypt and visited other Arab countries to gather material. *L'Art Arabe* reflects not only his skill as a draughtsman but also his extensive knowledge and understanding of Islamic art and culture. His way of life in Egypt and elsewhere had enabled him to observe for himself domestic and religious buildings normally inaccessible to Europeans. Most of the tinted lithographs in *L'Art Arabe* are street views or details of stonework on the outside of mosques or tombs — many of them by Girault de Prangey and already published many years earlier in his own *Monuments arabes d'Égypte, de Syrie et d'Asie mineure* (1846). The chromolithographs however are mainly by Prisse and show details of interiors such as mosaic pavements, stalactite vaulting, painted ceilings, wooden lattice-work, coloured glass windows, tiled walls and alcoves and kufic inscriptions. Further coloured plates depict the elaborate decoration on a variety of artefacts — arms and armour, damascened ewers and basins, ivory boxes, carpets and hangings, and, most magnificent of all, illuminated Korans — several of which were of the type that Prisse would have seen in everyday use.

Prisse's aim, declared in the Introduction to the Text of *L'Art Arabe* who to rescue these treasures of Islamic art from oblivion, and in throwing light on a little studied epoch in the history of art, to provide fresh inspiration for the architects and designers of his own time. In a review of the first two

parts of the publication (*The Academy*, 1, 1870), R.S. Poole expressed a hope for the same outcome. *L'Art Arabe* may indeed have fuelled the concern in Britain and France during the late 1870s and 1880s at the rapid decay and loss of many of Cairo's finest Islamic buildings. On the other hand, the fashion for Arab design, which had been at its height in mid century, aroused and disseminated through the publications of Pascal Coste, Owen Jones and others, was now being superseded by other styles. The influence of Prisse's publication is difficult to assess precisely not only because other reproductions of Islamic design were already available, but also because by the last decades of the nineteenth century many actual objects of the type he illustrated could be studied at first hand in collections in London and Paris. It does seem that many details of William Burges' Arab Hall at Cardiff Castle (1880-1) were taken from *L'Art Arabe*, but this is one of only a few isolated examples of its direct influence and not an indication of a more widespread revival, as Prisse had hoped. Then as now, the plates of *L'Art Arabe* were valued on their own merits, for their variety and strength of colour, for the intricacy and invention of the patterns and for their considerable decorative appeal. ■

Literature:

Émile Prisse d'Avennes fils. *Notice biographique sur Émile Prisse d'Avennes, voyageur français, archéologue, égyptologue et publiciste* (1896)

Warren Dawson and Eric Uphill. *Who was Who in Egyptology* (revised ed. 1972)

Michael Darby. *The Islamic Perspective. An Aspect of British Architecture and Design in the 19th century* (1983)

I am indebted to Rodney Searight for allowing me access to his notes on Prisse d'Avennes.

A one-volume edition of *L'Art Arabe* by Prisse D'Avennes has been published (1983) in French as well as in English by Le Sycomore (102 Boulevard Beaumarchais, Paris 75011) and Al Saqi Books (26 Westbourne Grove, London W2) for £85 (Leatherbound £110).

All the plates are from:
A.C.T.E. Prisse d'Avennes. *L'Art Arabe*
d'après les monuments du Caire depuis
le VII^e siècle jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^e
siècle (1877).

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ISLAMIC WORLD PAPER MONEY

Aesthetic and Historical Influences
William L.S. Barrett

To define Islamic influence in a specialized area would be complex and potentially contentious for any author. Moving a step further, for anyone but an experienced art historian to state that a given detail is specifically 'Islamic' in origin would be to risk being misleading, or, at worst, incorrect. Thus the author has used the broadest possible definition of 'Islamic influence' in discussing individual notes or types of issues. His intent is to present, in very brief form, a general survey of all the paper money issued with any Islamic influence or reference over the past seven centuries. His task is aided somewhat by the unfortunate fact that paper money is still relatively poorly researched: in the context of paper money and Islam, no study has ever been prepared, thus there is considerable latitude in the area of coverage, and less need to go into specific detail on my given note. Due to the large number of countries or states that have issued Islamic paper money, little attention can be devoted to any particular issue, no matter how important or beautiful it may be. However, for readers who are interested in further study, the author is currently preparing a monograph that will explore the subject in considerably greater detail.

The world's first paper money was issued by the Chinese more than two thousands years ago. As a point of reference, the first coins date from approximately B.C. 600, being struck in present day Turkey. Unfortunately none of the older Chinese notes are presently known to exist, the earliest example surviving would date from the past eight hundred years. After the Chinese, the next people to issue paper money were the Persians, specifically the Il-Khan Emperor Kai-Khatu in the year 693H (1294). One of his advisors had heard of the Chinese notes, and as the empire had fallen on hard times, Kai-Khatu became convinced that the issue of paper money might help to fill his empty treasury. What he did not realize was that traditionally the citizens of every nation prefer gold or silver to paper, and when his paper was issued, coins were driven from circulation. Within just a few days, the economy of Persia had apparently ground to a halt, and Kai-Khatu quickly had to withdraw the note issue. The unfortunate advisor, Izz ed-din Muzafer, was seized by a mob, torn apart, and his limbs thrown to the dogs in the bazaar. It is not surprising, perhaps, that no Persian is recorded since as

having suggested a new note issue, and it was fully 600 years before paper money was reintroduced into circulation in Persia.

Unfortunately, no example of this early issue is known to have survived, though contemporary writers described it as having inscriptions in Mongolian, Arabic, and Persian. The Persian passages apparently gave the denomination, date, and a warning against counterfeiting to the effect that both the counterfeiter and his family would be executed, and their property confiscated. This type of notice became fairly standard on many issues, both Islamic and others, at a later date.

In more recent times, the Swedes are credited (or discredited) with the re-introduction of paper money in the early 1600's (after 1071H), followed within thirty years by the Americans, English, Scottish, and Danes. The first modern Islamic paper money was issued by the Dutch colonial United East India Company, in 1782 (1196H), from their capital of Batavia (Jakarta). As can be seen in Figure 1, the format is quite simple, consisting predominately of inscriptions in Djawi and Dutch.

At the same time, the British were issuing notes in India; the first known bank of issue being the Bank of Hindostan, after 1770 (1184H). However, none of the earliest notes of this bank are known to the author, nor are other notes on Indian banks prior to 1800 (1215H). Figure 2, however, illustrates a charming note issued by the Asiatic Bank in 1820 (1235H), of the style of note issued soon after the bank's foundation in 1804 (1219H). The design is enlivened by a quaint vignette, and bears inscriptions in Persian, as well as other languages.

After these early notes, paper money appeared in various Islamic countries, former colonies, or states, at different dates. In some cases the decision to issue was that of the colonial power, usually England or France. In others, such as Persia, a concession was given to a foreigner to create a bank of issue. On the Gulf, local needs were apparently satisfied by the circulation of other countries, such as coins and notes from Egypt, the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, Iran, and India. Thus we don't see national issues from, for example, Bahrain until 1384H (1964). In all, one could count perhaps sixty different national entities that issued Islamic paper money at one time or another. Within these individual states, those that began issuing some time ago often have many changes of style or influence, particularly countries such as Indonesia, with two centuries of issues, or Turkey and Algeria, each dating over a century and a half. Through the years many political and cultural changes have made their impact in note design; for example, in colonial Algeria, the first notes were engraved soon after the foundation of the Banque de l'Algérie in 1851 (1267H). For the first seventy-five years, all the notes are virtually completely French in composition, the only local influence being the addition of a small Arabic inscription. An example of one of the these notes is illustrated in figure 3. In the 1920's (after 1339H) designs were adopted that reflect new styles of printing in France and at the same time bear local subject material. For example, the 50 francs first issued in 1924 (1343H) depicts a mosque at the right, with the city of Algiers in the background. The 500 francs of 1944 (1363H) bears two naked French boys on the left, but a bedouin with a camel at the right! With the coming of independence, completely Algerian motifs came into use; the 500 dinars of 1970 (1390H), for example, has a charmingly cluttered collage of themes from ancient to

the history of the Sudan (Figure 15). With the recapture by an Anglo-Egyptian force in 1896-1898 (1314-1316H), the notes circulating in Egypt were made legal tender in the Sudan. It was not until 1956 (1375H), thus, that the Sudan Currency Board was established and first issued notes. An illustration of the current issue of the Sudan appears as Figure 9.

The paper money issues of Tunisia have much in common with those of Algeria. In fact, the earlier notes, first issued some eighty years ago, were simply notes of the Banque de l'Algérie overprinted for Tunisia. After the war, the name was changed to the Banque de l'Algérie/Tunisie, and finally after 1950 (1369H) they bore the inscription of the Banque de l'Algérie et de la Tunisie. It is not until the establishment of the Banque Centrale de Tunisie, after independence, that truly distinctive designs were produced. Notes were also issued by the Régence de Tunis, from 1918 (1336H) to 1921 (1339H), though these were small size, low denomination notes issued basically as a substitute for coinage.

In Morocco, the first notes were issued after 1907 (1325H), by the Banque d'Etat du Maroc, and these notes bear truly distinctive designs. Much use is made of geometric patterns and architectural designs, while the later notes depict local themes and landmarks. One of the most interesting issues made in Morocco was made by the State bank of the Rif during the Berber uprising led by Abdul Krim from 1921 (1339H) to 1926 (1344H). These notes undoubtedly were intended not only to serve as a circulating medium, but also to help press the Rif claim to independent status. Now little more remains of the state than Rifian notes such as that illustrated in Figure 10.

Notes were not issued in Libya until late in 1951 (1370H), after its independence from the post-war occupation of the British and French. These and the later designs are very striking, and have much in common with the other post-war notes, particularly of the Middle East. Some eight different issues were made over the next three decades, the name of the issuing body changed quite frequently, beginning with the United Kingdom of Libya, and being changed to the Kingdom of Libya, National Bank of Libya, Bank of Libya, and finally the Central Bank of Libya. The British also issued their own notes for occupied Libyan territory; these Military Authority in Tripolitania notes are denominated in Lire, reflecting the currency of the former Italian colonists, and are particularly uninspiring. The French, not to be outdone, issued their own notes for the occupation of the Fezzan; these are simply French notes of various denominations with "RF/FEZZAN" in a rectangle handstamped in black. As these notes are rare, and quite desirable, unfortunately they have been created for collectors, it being a relatively simple matter to manufacture a rubber stamp. Collectors would be advised to utilize extreme caution in purchasing one of these supposed Fezzan overprints.

Moving to West Africa, we find Islamic influence in the colonial notes of British West Africa. The first issue in 1916 (1334H) of West African Currency Board notes bore no inscriptions in Arabic, though the backs of the notes were blank. Shortly thereafter, it was decided that due to the large Muslim population of the various component states, some concession was to be made, and as a result the second issue had a simple Arabic inscription printed on the back. In 1953 (1372H) when the notes were finally redesigned, Arabic was

incorporated onto the front.

On the French West African notes, issued by the Banque de l'Afrique Occidentale, from the beginning lengthily Arabic inscriptions were used on the back, together with interesting stylized geometric designs. However, when these notes were replaced by a new issue in the 1930's (after 1349H), the Arabic was dropped, and it reappears only briefly, on the wartime fractional notes issued in 1944 (1361H). Interestingly, with the emergence of the modern independent states that previously comprised the British and French portions of West Africa, only the former British colonies of the Cameroons, Ghana, and Nigeria retained Arabic on their notes. Virtually all the French colonies adopted inscriptions solely in French. The only exception to this was the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, which had been added to French West Africa in 1920 (1338H), though it later withdrew from the French community in 1960 (1386H). The Mauritanian notes bear striking designs illustrating local peoples and culture; the 1974 (1394H) issue emphasizes geometric patterns in which the Islamic inscriptions perform a highly decorative function.

In eastern Africa we find Islamic influence primarily in the coastal countries from Djibouti to Zanzibar. In Djibouti, the French Banque de l'Indochine issued notes with the same basic designs not only here but also in their Pacific territories of Tahiti, New Caledonia and New Hebrides. As the notes had to be suitable for circulation in all these areas, the designs tended to be somewhat of a compromise. For example, the 1000 Francs first issued in 1937 (1355H) bears local scenes, with the tower of a minaret behind camels and a market, while on the back is what can only be described as a Polynesian harbour. Needless to say, the Pacific theme was as inappropriate to Djibouti as the camel and market scene were to Tahiti. Overprinted on the Djibouti issues were inscriptions in Arabic and Amharic, in deference to the two main cultural influences in the territory. It was not until its last issue in 1940 (1355H) that the bank produced notes designed specifically for Djibouti. Six years later the Trésor Public took over the responsibility of issue, and again quite distinctive designs were produced.

Around the Horn, in Italian Somaliland, later the Somali Republic, the attractive 1950 (1369H) issue bore inscriptions in Arabic along with interesting geometric patterns and vignettes of local fauna, if lions and leopards can be so described. Post-independence issues of 1962 (1382H) through 1971 (1391H) bore very minor Arabic inscriptions, which disappeared entirely in 1975 (1395H).

Farther down the coast, in the zone of British influence, the East African Currency Board issued notes in Mombasa from September of 1905 (1323H). As with the Italian issues, the main concession to the local Muslim population was the inscription of the denomination in Arabic, and really little else. These British issues continued until 1964 (1384H), when with independence only the Kenyans chose to continue this nominal Islamic influence, though even this small reference disappeared with the issue of 1969 (1389H). In 1908 (1326H) the Sultan of Zanzibar prepared one of the most attractive issues of Islamic paper money, in denominations of 5, 10, and 20 Rupees, later extended to include the 50, 100 and 500 Rupees. The strong Arab influence can be seen in the portrayal of the Dhows and Tughras, as well as the columns and stylized facade. Also shown is the harvesting of cloves, a primary ingredient

modern Algeria, among others an old sailing ship and a view of the modern city. These recent issues quite forcefully bring another influence to the forefront, the use of propaganda. This was not altogether new; but the direction of the propaganda was totally different from that of the earlier issues: the 1851 (1267H) to circa 1925 (1344H) issues bore completely French motifs, presumably to demonstrate the "Frenchness" of Algeria. Those of the next three or four decades had motifs perhaps half French and half Algerian, undoubtedly in deference to rising Algerian nationalism, though still clinging to French ideals. Finally, the notes of independent Algeria reflect the assertion by Algeria of its own national values, with effectively no reflection of French influence. When one considers the tremendous determination and sacrifice of the Algerian people in shedding their colonial master, one can easily understand their move to purely Algerian and Islamic values.

By contrast, in Egypt a strong British influence shows in the notes, even in the period before British political influence became paramount. In 1856 (1272H) the newly founded, British funded Bank of Egypt prepared a note issue consisting of the 500 and 1000 Piastres denominations. Figure 4 illustrates an example of the proposed 1000 Piastres; this charming design, printed in England, reflects the contemporary British idealization of Egypt as a living repository for ancient history. The establishment of the bank itself reflects a second, but equally important, historical theme: that Europeans thought Egypt, and many other Islamic countries as well, was an excellent location to turn a profit. Without this interest, these banks would not have been founded, and we would have no notes.

It was not until 1899 (1317H) that notes were actually placed into circulation, this time by the National Bank of Egypt, founded as a concession to British interests in 1898 (1316H). The first series is unfortunately extremely rare, only the 50 Piastres and 1 Pound being found in issued form, the higher values of 5 Pounds through 100 Pounds apparently exist only as specimens. This issue is one of the most attractive ever prepared for any Islamic nation; it was printed by Bradbury Wilkinson, with local motifs such as the Sphinx, camels, the pyramids, sailboats on the Nile, and ancient ruins. These early notes were followed by another lovely series after 1913 (1331H), which remained in circulation over three decades, the designs being revised from time to time, until the Second World War. An example of one such note, the 100 Pounds of 1921 (1339H), is illustrated as Figure 5. With the end of the war and the resultant rise in nationalism, new issues were created bearing the portrait of King Farouk, though with his demise in 1952 (1372H) we see a new influence, the replacement of Farouk's portrait with that of Tutankhamen. Later, with the establishment of the republic, nationalism and politics combine to create a new form.

These recent issues give the feeling of a vital and dynamic Egypt, in contrast to the earlier notes which convey more the sense of history and tradition so close to the hearts of the British and Europeans. The later Egyptian notes are some of the most striking and powerful designs used in the entire Islamic world; these issues of the last ten years utilize the bank note primarily as an art form; the technical data such as the name of the bank, denomination, and issue details are relegated to an entirely secondary position. And even with these inscriptions, the calligraphy and concept is



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most artistic, rather than the normal functional presentation. These modern Egyptian notes are a tribute to their designers and printers.

In the Sudan, the first paper money was issued by the British General "Chinese" Gordon, while he was besieged by the Mahdi at Khartoum in 1884 (1310H). While quite modest in appearance, as could be imagined under the rather trying circumstance of their issue, these unusual notes provide an interesting reminder of

Figure 8. Iran, Imperial Bank of Persia 1000 Tomans, as printed for circulation from 1307H (1890) to 1342H (1924). In the author's opinion, the most beautiful of all the Islamic paper money, with complex and superbly engraved designs by Bradbury Wilkinson & Company of London. The back is equally striking; the Imperial bank first issue notes can be truly considered Persian miniatures. The example illustrated is a color trial, the actual issued note being printed primarily in red and green.

Figure 11. India, Princely State of Hyderabad, 1000 Rupees 1341H (1923). The Nizam of Hyderabad first issued notes in 1337H (1919), and they continued in circulation until 1372H (1953). While most attractive and imposing, the strongest Islamic influence comes from the Persian inscriptions; the borders being standard geometric lathe work. As the Indian Government notes have only a token inscription in Urdu, one can see the strong Muslim tradition in the State of Hyderabad.

of the historical trade with the Omanis. The issue unfortunately was shortlived, being replaced after 1335 (1354H) with the notes of the East African Currency Board, and all the Zanzibari notes are particularly difficult to locate. These notes of the Zanzibar Government, together with those of the Arabian National Bank of Hedjaz and the Imperial Bank of Persia, are considered by the author to be the most of desirable of all the Islamic issues.

Turning to a rather loosely defined 'Middle East', we find the largest number of Islamic issuers. These would cover Cyprus and Turkey to the west and north, the Saudi peninsula to the south, and Iran in the east. From these countries we have two issues spanning a century or more, Turkey and Iran; then a second group whose notes appear relatively soon after, and often directly as a result of, the First World War. Those would include the issues of the French mandates in Syria and Lebanon from 1919 (1337H), the British issues for Cyprus commencing in 1914 (1332H) and Palestine in 1927 (1346H), as well as the issuance of Arabic overprinted British Treasury notes for the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign, and finally the independent issues of the Hejaz and Iraq. After the end of the Second World War, with the resulting weakening of European influence, and the assertion of national sovereignty, we see first issues from Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar (as well as Qatar and Dubai), Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the two Yemen Republics.

In the Ottoman Empire, the first paper money was issued by the Porte as early as 1257H (1841); these notes are quite simple in format, consisting of long Turkish inscriptions within an ornamental border. Later issues of the government notes become somewhat more elaborate, though retaining the basic format. However, the first issue of the newly established Imperial Ottoman Bank is brilliantly conceived, an example being shown in Figure 6. This note was created by Bradbury Wilkinson & Company of London, using their new methods for security printing. At the time of issue, in 1279H (1863), it was revolutionary in concept and design, quite different from any note ever printed, and represents the joining of Islamic art with western security printing techniques.

Financial pressures prior to the First World War brought about the next Turkish Government issue, and while these were only printed from 1331H (1913) to 1334H (1915), numerous changes were made. These highly decorative and most attractive notes were printed in Germany by the firm of Giesecke & Devrient; over the three years more than fifty different types, and considerably more varieties, were issued to circulation. The face value of the notes ranged as high as 1000 Pounds, an enormous sum at the time, and there was even a 50,000 Pound note, intended for interbank use only!

With the establishment of the republic, a lovely new issue was prepared by Waterlow & Sons in England. These notes are vastly different from their predecessors, as can be seen by the illustration in Figure 7. Unfortunately, later Turkish issues, following the modern trend, became smaller in size, allowing less room for the artist, and over the years come into conformity with the more modern, standardized form of note.

In Persia and Iran we also find superb designs and representations of Islamic art. The Imperial Bank of Persia had been formed in 1889 (1360 H) by Baron Paul Julius De Reuter, better known for the founding of the

Reuters News Agency. In fact, the banking concession was given to him by Nasr-ed-Din as a consolation for the loss of an earlier concession that covered the right not only to establish a national bank but to build railways, and work mines, as well; however as a result of objections by the ever jealous Russians, this concession had been cancelled!

The new bank commissioned Bradbury Wilkinson to prepare a stunning new series of notes, which first appeared in circulation in 1307H (1890), and it would seem that no expense was spared in preparing the plates. As can be seen in Figure 8, these wonderful notes completely subjugate the functional inscriptions to the concept of paper money as an art form. Each note in the series from the 1 Toman to the 1000 Toman was slightly larger than the next, so that the 1000 Toman was 22 x 16 cm (approximately 9 by 6 inches), which would have been impressive enough in itself, had not the equivalent value of the note (and the notes were always exchangeable for gold or silver) been some 400 British gold sovereigns, close to 100 ounces of gold.

This issue was unusual in that it contained values of

Figure 5. Egypt, National Bank 100 Pounds, 1st March 1921 (1339 H). The Egyptian issues, commencing in 1829 (1317 H), are most attractive, and depict scenes from both ancient and modern Egypt. The note illustrated here bears a vignette of the Mosque of Mohammed Ali in the Citadel of Cairo on the left. On the back we find a Nile scene with Dhow and ruins in the background. This note is a test printing; the actual colors used on the issued notes were green and purple.

Figure 7. Turkey. While the paper money issued until the end of the First World War was extremely elaborate in composition, incorporating large areas of intricate geometric patterns, the first republican issue, after 1341H (1922), shows major changes. As can be seen in the 500 Livres illustrated above, the note bears a portrait of Ataturk on the right. The back is also extremely attractive, showing a town view in the centre and geometric patterns around. Later Turkish notes become smaller in size, and more uniform in style with the other modern notes of the region.

Figure 10. Saudi Arabia, the Arabian National Bank of Hedjaz 10 Pounds, 23 Shawal 1343H (1924). While paper money of Egypt, the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, Persia, and India, all circulated in Arabia, this was the first paper money specifically intended only for circulation there. It is also one of the most beautiful and distinctive Islamic issues. The front, as shown above, bears a view between two columns, surrounded by intricate patterns, and the back is almost completely pattern work, surmounted in the centre by the coat of arms. These highly distinctive, French printed notes, unfortunately circulated for only a very brief period, if at all. Note the blank circle at left; when held to the light, the portrait in the watermark would become visible.

Figure 6. Turkey, Imperial Ottoman Bank 5 Medjidies d'Or 1279H (1863). This is the first issue of the newly founded bank, and it is remarkable for its intricate decorative work and fine inscriptions. While its predecessor, the Ottoman bank, issued notes after 1856 (1272H), they were much less elaborate in format, as was the other circulating paper money of the time, issued by the Turkish Government.

1, 2 and 3 Tomans, together with both the 20 and 25 Tomans, though one would question whether so many denominations were really necessary. These notes were also novel in that each note was stamped with the name of the branch at which it had been issued, and

technically was not payable at any other branch. This precaution was necessitated by the difficulty and danger of the terrain between the various branches, the logic being that a mule train laden with notes payable only at Isfahan, and thus relatively easily



identifiable, would appear much less tempting to robbers than a shipment payable at any branch in Persia. It is interesting to note that while at first the Persians accepted paper only with considerable reluctance, much preferring payment in gold and silver,

when it became clear how much easier it was to transport a note of 100 Tomans than a similar quantity of gold, silver or copper, the notes at times apparently circulated at a premium over their nominal value in coin!



The second and final issue by the Imperial Bank was made in 1924 (1342H), this time the denominations of 3, 25, 500 and 1000 Tomans were not printed. While this series is most attractive, it does not compare with the elaborate work of the first issue.

With the coup by Reza Shah, the Bank Melli Iran was founded, and in SH1311 (1351H, 1932) it took over the sole right of note issue, circulating notes up to the 500 Rials denomination. A second issue was made soon after, with the date SH1313 (1353H, 1934), these were again printed in the United States by the American Banknote Company. Both issues feature portraits of the Shah and scenes from the countryside or Persian history. The large 1000 Rials (equivalent to 100 Tomans) first issued in SH1313 is particularly appealing with its vignette of a warrior slaying a mythological creature. The later Iranian issues tend also to be very well designed and engraved;



considerable use of geometric form is made, together with portraits of the Shahs and various vignettes. Most notable of these issues is the 10,000 Rials of SH1317 (1357H, 1938), which unfortunately was never issued and is now quite rare.

The post war issues more closely resemble the modern format, with a portrait of the Shah to the right and full scale scene on the back, but the revolution brought new ideas to the fore. While political influence had already made an impact on some of the last notes to be issued by the Shah, (for example the 100 Rials of SH1350 (1391H, 1971) had allegorical figures of medicine, agriculture and education, while the 50 Rials had a vignette of the Shah and a citizen), this use of politics and nationalism was considerably refined by the new regime. Their first step was to obliterate with an ornamental figure the portrait of the Shah on existing issues, while awaiting the delivery of new

Figure 20. Palestine, 1 Pound 20th April 1939 (1358H). First issued in 1927 (1346H), the notes of the Palestine Currency Board circulated until the partition. Important local religious sites, such as the Crusaders Tower at Ramleh, Tomb of Rachel near Hebron, and in the case of one Pound illustrated above, the Omar Mosque (Dome on the Rock), were used on the face, while the back of each denomination bore a striking view of King David's Tower and Citadel in Jerusalem.

Figure 3. Algeria, 100 Francs, not dated, but printed soon after the foundation of the Bank in 1851 (1267H). This is the earliest bank note of North Africa; and while it does bear Arabic inscriptions, the other design components are predominately French.

notes from England, which arrived in 1401H (1981). The new issue bears such scenes as farmers and tractors, a view of Tehran university, or Mullahs leading marchers bearing a poster of the Ayatollah. Curiously, one non-Iranian, but most Islamic, theme was used on the current 1000 Rials. This attractive note bears a representation of the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem on the back — it is quite unusual, except perhaps in the earlier colonial states, to see a scene taken from outside the national borders.

Before continuing, two curious Persian issues should be described. The first of these is the German military series of World War I, made for use by the German troops in the north. These notes consist of regular German government notes overprinted in Persian; for example, the 20 Mark note dated 19th February 1914 (1332H) was overprinted for 5 Tomans. It is not imagined that these notes had a wide circulation, nor could the Persian authorities have been particularly pleased to see their issue. The second special issue appeared during SH1324 (1365H, 1946) in the short-lived Azerbaijan Republic. These locally printed notes are quite simple in format, bearing geometric designs and inscriptions in Persian.

The first of the issues relating to World War I and its aftermath appeared in Cyprus. Here, in 1914 (1332H), the British government rushed paper money into circulation to counteract the removal of gold and silver. These and later issues bore primary inscriptions in English, together with secondary inscriptions in old Turkish and Greek, in deference to the ethnic Turk and Greek populations. Later, with the first notes of Queen Elizabeth, dated 1952 (1371H), the old Turkish is changed to modern Turkish, so even this small Islamic influence is lost.

One of the more curious issues of Islamic paper money occurred during the First World War, when the British government overprinted current British Treasury notes in Arabic. The red ten Shilling note signed by Bradbury was overprinted for 60 Piastres, and the black Bradbury Pound for 120 Piastres. There is some confusion over exactly where these notes were intended to circulate; traditionally it was believed that Gallipoli and (to be) occupied Turkey were the intended locales, but apparently none ever saw circulation there. Other sources suggest liberated Palestine and Iraq; what is clear is that the notes were actually issued, and many were retained as souvenirs by returning British servicemen. An example of the 60 Piastres is illustrated as figure 17.

In Syria and Lebanon, and it is not surprising to find a strong Islamic influence right up to the present day. With the French mandate from the League of Nations, the Banque de Syrie was founded and two lovely series of notes were prepared in 1919 (1337H) and 1920 (1338H). While the inscriptions are in both French and Arabic, the vignettes depict only Syrian and Lebanese scenes. In addition, there is lavish use of geometric patterns, both in the frames and in the background; Bradbury Wilkinson truly produced a master work in these notes. Soon afterwards the name was changed to the Banque de Syrie et du Grand-Liban, and a joint issue, printed in France, was made in 1925 (1343H). Notes actually issued in Lebanon bore an overprint of "Grand-Liban" to distinguish them from those issued in Syria. This French issue is also lovely, again with local vignettes and numerous geometric patterns, but reflecting the French style of printing. Part of the 1935 (1354H) and all of the 1939 (1358H) contract was given

to the British, and the notes are particularly attractive and well designed. After the termination of the war, the printing contract went back to France for both the Syrian and Lebanese issues; while they are both quite different, each is very striking, with the Syrian issue being virtually entirely geometric work.

After 1950 (1369H), we see the tendency toward smaller, modern format notes from both countries, and, particularly in the Syrian issues, propaganda in the form of modern facilities and methods is depicted. Interestingly, the Central Bank of Syria, for its second issue in 1958 (1377H), had its notes printed by both the Pakistan Security Printing Corporation in Karachi, and by the fine old Dutch firm of Johann Enschedé en Zonen of Haarlem. Enschedé also known in the Islamic world for its fine work in printing the Indonesian (Netherlands East Indies) notes for some 150 years.

An illustration of the diverse factors affecting some of the Islamic note issues can be seen in Figure 20, a 1 Pound note of the Palestine Currency Board. After the liberation of Palestine in 1917 (1335H) and the establishment of the British mandate in 1923 (1341H), the Palestine Currency Board was formed; notes were first issued during 1927 (1345H). The notes were to stay in circulation until partition. Denominations ranged from 500 Mils (half a Pound) to 100 Pounds, and the designs are uniformly attractive. Each depicts a local landmark, and while the predominant language is English, smaller but equal space is given to both Arabic and Hebrew. These inscriptions bring to mind the unfulfillable promises made both to Arab and Jew; the post-partition issues bear only Zionist themes, with token inscriptions in Arabic.

One of the most interesting issues was created by the Arabian National Bank of Hedjaz in 1343H (1924). The 10 Pound denomination is illustrated as Figure 10; this extremely well designed note forms part of a very rare series; unfortunately few examples appear to have been saved. While the note was printed in France, and bears some similarities to other French notes, the design is unquestionably Islamic, and the inscriptions are kept to a minimum, so they would not compete for visual attention with the motifs. At present even the actual denominations of the series are not definitely known. The author possesses an example of each of the £5, £10 and £50; one piece of the £100 denomination is recorded in the United States, and a description is given by Albert Pick in the *Standard Catalog of World Paper Money* of a half Pound denomination, portraying the Kaaba. In the collection of King Farouk, sold in 1954 (1373H), a set was offered consisting of the £1, £5, £10 and £50. While the £1 has not been traced, it is believed that the other three denominations are the same pieces now held by the author.

These lovely notes bear motifs not yet fully identified; it is also not known whether they were actually placed in circulation, and if so for how long they were issued: at best it could not have been for more than a few months. With the changing political situation they were soon obsolete, and only the notes remain to illustrate this aspect of the transitional period of the Hejaz and the Holy Cities between the defeat of the Ottomans and its incorporation by Ibn Sa'ud into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The last of the between-the-war issues comes from Iraq, liberated from the Ottoman Empire in 1917 (1335H), and a mandate of Great Britain until 1932 (1351H). The first note issue of the government of Iraq appeared late in 1931 (1350H), and was printed in

England. The notes are unspectacular, bearing a portrait of Faisal I in a wreath at the right, and otherwise with only Arabic inscriptions and geometric patterns. Later notes follow the same pattern, though in time vignettes were added to the back. The most interesting aspect of the Iraq notes is the long series of no less than six different portraits of King Faisal II, showing him first as a child, and then gradually older over the various issues of the next twenty years!

With the establishment of the Republic, new issues were made, the first substituting the arms of the Republic for the portrait of the King, the later issues becoming more historical and political in nature, bearing such vignettes as an oil refinery or a minaret.

To comment generally on all countries, it could be said that in earlier years much of the paper money issued with Islamic influence was prepared by the colonial powers for their possessions. Thus the notes



themselves tend to be quite similar to those printed for circulation in Europe, modified perhaps with vignettes or motifs of local landmarks, and partial inscriptions in local languages. Later, with independence and the opening of central banks or monetary authorities (both in former colonies and also in countries never under colonial dominance), local influence is gradually superseded by the specialized styles and printing techniques of the major security printers, thus once again providing a few relatively homogeneous styles to Islamic paper money issues. Security printing today is a fine art, and very serious business, dominated in large part by the great British firms of Thomas de la Rue and Bradbury Wilkinson, the American Banknote Company in the United States, and the Banque de France. While almost any design could be engraved on a bank note, with the tremendous investment in technology necessary to keep ahead of counterfeiters, many processes are standardized, and thus each firm's finished product will have much in common with its other issues, or even with that of its competitors. A note from Indonesia may well have strong similarities to one from Oman. The typical modern British or American printed note, both from Islamic countries and others, bears a portrait of the ruler, or a symbol such as a coat of arms or national emblem, to the left or right, an inscription in the centre and above, and perhaps a blank or lightly printed space, so that the watermark may be visible when the note is held to the light. All this contained within a border composed of geometric or decorative work. On the Islamic notes, the inscriptions on the front would tend to be in Arabic, or a derivative. The back will feature a large

representation of a national monument or scene, usually together with basic inscriptions in English. In countries where notes were used more extensively for political purposes, the themes might be of a more educational or stylized form. The actual engraving would be done in England or the United States, based on photographs or graphic works provided by the issuer. The reflection of national culture or mood has relatively little room for expression on paper money; with the standardized forms of printing it could only be

hoped that a note would accurately depict the closer decorative forms; it would be unlikely to convey the subtle sense of identity that could be obtained from painting or illuminated manuscript. So it could be said that the essence of Islamic influence on paper money is found in the subject matter of the vignettes or pictorial material depicted; in the geometric or decorative pattern, and in the style of the calligraphy and the inscriptions themselves. Figure 9 depicts the recent issues of Sudan, which is quite representative of the modern states.

There were very few indigenous issues of notes in any Islamic country, and even those that were produced tended to rely strongly on inscriptions in Arabic, Persian or their derivatives, and otherwise follow an essentially Western format.

Of the modern issues, the pilgrim receipts of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency are perhaps the most

- 10 Figure 18. Sarawak, \$25, 1920 (1348H). While paper money had been issued in Sarawak since 1858 (1274H), the notes issued in 1920 are the most beautiful. As can be seen above, the new issue by Rajah C. Vyner Brooke featured his portrait and tropical themes, surrounded by ornate border patterns reflecting the mixture of Islamic and indigenous influences. Inscriptions also appear in the bottom margin, in Jawi and Chinese, reflecting the main languages of the local inhabitants. There is quite a sharp contrast between the Islamic notes of Brunei and the more incidental influence in the notes of the state that surrounds it.

- 11 Figure 2. India, Asiatic bank 100 Gold Star Pagodas, equivalent to 350 Silver Arcot Rupees. Dated 1st February 1820 (1235H), of the type issued since 1804 (1219H). Again, while the note is considerably more elaborate than that in Figure 1, it is really only the inscription in Persian that contributes the Islamic influence. While the Bank of Hindostan issued notes as early as 1770 (1184H), the author has not been able to examine any earlier Indian note.



unusual. Originally issued in 1372H (1953) as a convenience to pilgrims on their way to Mecca from other countries, the receipts within a few years became so popular among Saudis that in 1379H (1960) S.A.M.A. was authorized to issue regular paper money! In effect, the pilgrim receipts were a form of travellers' cheque which could be purchased abroad with the local currency, and then exchanged in Saudi Arabia for silver Riyals. The only similar unofficial but generally accepted paper money issue in an Islamic country had taken place in 1888 (1305H), in Persia, where the New Oriental Bank Corporation issued "deposit receipts" for circulation in 1888 (1305H). However, with the foundation a year later of the Imperial Bank of Persia, the premises and business of the New Oriental was absorbed by the new bank, which then immediately issued its own paper money.

One of the most striking features on any of these middle eastern modern issues is the stone sculpture portrayed on the notes of the Yemen Arab Republic. While other countries may have portrayed a sculpture in some form or another, to emphasize these ancient sculptures so heavily on both the issue of the Arab Republic of Yemen, and later the Central Bank of Yemen, is most imaginative. The issues of the South Arabian Currency Authority (later to become the Yemen Democratic Republic) are particularly attractive, and are also unusual, in that they utilize the same basic motif of a Dhow and coastal scene on the front, and a palm tree on the back, but on each denomination the secondary motifs and borders are quite different.

Moving toward the East, we find the issues of Afghanistan. While Habibullah SH 1281-1336 (1321-1338H, 1901-1910 AD) may have issued a paper currency, the first known issues were made by his successor Amanullah, in S.H. 1298 (133H, 1910 AD). These early notes were all locally printed, and are among the most simple of all the Islamic issues. In S.H. 1307 (1347H, 1925 AD) the rebel Baccha-I-Saqai issued notes, in a similar style. It was not until S.H. 1315 (1355H, 1930 AD) that a more modern series was ordered in Switzerland from the Zurich printer Orell

Fussli. This attractive Ministry of Finance issue was superseded three years later by the first issue of the newly founded Bank of Afghanistan. The Bank issued notes up to 1000 Afghanis, each with a portrait of Muhammad Zahir on the front, and various vignettes on the back. The large size high denomination notes of this SH1318 (1358H, 1930 AD) series are very imposing, while later issues become uniformly small in size, and adopt the general modern format. With the establishment of the Democratic Republic in SH1357 (1398H, 1977 AD), the portrait of the ruler was removed, and new designs were issued bearing the name of Da Afghanistan Bank.

With the unsettled times of the Russian Revolution, a number of the ethnic regions that comprised the Russian Empire seized the opportunity to declare autonomy or independence, and several of these new states issued paper money, before being absorbed into the newly founded USSR. In fact, even some of the national Soviet issues bore Arabic inscriptions, for example, the 1919-1920 (1338H) currency notes apparently called "Babylonians" because so many languages appeared! As can be imagined, there is room for little Islamic influence apart from the Arabic. On a local basis, Islamic issues were made in the North Caucasian Emirate, (bearing not only Arabic inscriptions but also such motifs as the stars and crescent, and scales of justice), the Federation of Socialist Soviet Republics of Transcaucasia, the Azerbaijan Independent Republic, Azerbaijan Soviet Republic, the Emirate of Bukhara (which issued an extensive series of notes from 1337H (1918) to 1342H (1923), various official issues of the Turkestan District, and undoubtedly others. These issues tended to have only partial inscriptions in Arabic, with a greater or lesser Islamic influence of design, particularly through the use of geometric patterns. The exceptions to this are the complicated series for the Emirate of Bukhara, the Bukhara Soviet People's Republic, and the Khwarezm Peoples' Soviet Republic. These notes are crudely printed, but very colorful and most charming in appearance; all sorts of colors and papers were used,





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and some were even printed on silk. One of these notes is illustrated as figure 13.

To the south we find the various issues of the Indian subcontinent. As previously discussed, some of the earliest Islamic paper money was issued here, by the various British banks. However, considering the major influence of Islam on the Moghul and related coinages, on the paper money there is very little. Virtually all the notes of the British banks, issued until 1862 (1270H), were printed by the English firm of Perkins, Bacon. They are thus fairly homogeneous in style, and have only some use of Urdu or Persian to show any reference to Islam — certainly the designs themselves are either purely British or Indian in inspiration. When the government of India began issuing its own notes in 1861 (1278H), a very small inscription in Urdu was included, and this held true right up until partition in 1947 (1360H). After independence, the notes of the Reserve Bank of India carried on this tradition. However, two unusual issues of interest to us were made in this later period. The first is a special series of Reserve bank notes intended for circulation in Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and the Trucial States. These were printed from the same plates as the regular Indian notes, but in different colors, and always with the serial prefix Z, to prevent them from being circulated in India. A second issue was intended for use by the Haj pilgrims. Once again these notes are from regular plates, but in still different colors, and bear the letters HA with the serial number. The intent of these notes of course is quite similar to that of the original pilgrim receipts issued by the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority.

In the Indian Princely States, unlike the prolific coin issues, very few notes were printed. Most important of these are the attractive notes of Hyderabad, first issued in 1919 (1337H). On these notes, which were in circulation until independence, a much stronger influence can be seen, the inscriptions being primarily in Urdu, and with much use of geometric form. The main focus of the design is the large inscription; as can be seen in Figure 11, the borders and the art work basically form a frame and background for the calligraphy.

In addition to British and the Princely States issues, paper money was also issued by the French and Portuguese for their territories. The earlier issues of the Banque de l'Indochine carry inscriptions in Urdu, though the designs are French in inspiration. Later, the

Urdu was dropped. On the Portuguese issues of the Banco Nacional Ultramarino, however, the Urdu inscription continued right up until annexation by independent India in 1962 (1362H). As with the French issues, the notes really have no other Islamic influence.

It is not surprising, however, to find a very strong influence on the notes of Pakistan, and indeed some of the earlier notes bore no vignettes, only geometric patterns and Pakistani inscriptions. Pakistan only issued its first regular notes in 1360H (1949), thus the issues tend to follow the modern pattern, often with portrait of Innah, and a landmark or landscape on the back. As in India, special notes were issued for the Haj pilgrims, these being regular Pakistani notes overprinted "For Haj Pilgrims From Pakistan For Use In Saudi Arabia Only".

With the separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan regular Pakistani notes were overprinted with the word 'Bangladesh' in English or Bengali. However when regular notes appeared there in 1972 (1392H) no reference was made to the remaining Moslem population.

The final state issuing notes in the area is the former Sultanate of the Maldive Islands. Here we see the impact of the Arab traders; the inscriptions on the notes being entirely in Arabic, and each note bears a vignette of a Dhow. While coins have been struck (solely bearing Arabic inscriptions) in the Maldives for several centuries, the first paper money was not circulated until 1367H (1947), thus relatively few notes have been issued.

The last area of relevance to us is the Orient. To the north, we find various issues along the southern flank of China. Next, along the isthmus of Kra and Mala Peninsula, come Burma, Thailand, and present-day Malaysia. Finally, marking Islam's most easterly penetration, the former colonies of North Borneo, Brunei, Sarawak, and, more important, Indonesia.

The earlier Chinese issues of interest to us come from Sinkiang, also known as Chinese Turkestan. Here we find such issuers as the Sinkiang Finance Department, the Official Currency Bureau, the Tihwa Official Currency Bureau, and the Russo-Asiatic Bank. All of these issues tend to be very attractive, though predominantly Chinese in design, and bear Turki inscriptions. The most unusual are the Tihwa notes, apparently printed on cloth and then lacquered; as they were issued from 1928 (1346H) it is possible they were



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inspired by the earlier silk notes nearby Soviet Central Asia. The Russo-Asiatic Bank issued a distinct series of notes in Kashgar, Kul'dsha, and Chuguchak, bearing inscriptions in Russian, Chinese, and Turki. All these Sinkiang notes were issued during the turbulent years of the late empire and early republic, circa 1901-1932 (1310H-1351H); with the centralization of the issue of currency after this date these interesting local issues disappear. An illustration of a Sinkiang note appears as figure 12. Most interestingly, the current Peoples Bank of China notes, in circulation throughout China, all bear inscriptions in Chinese as well as this Arabic derivative, and two other languages.

In colonial Burma, attached to India for administrative purposes, we see notes very similar to the regular Indian issues, modified only slightly to reflect the cultures of the local populations. Thus we have on the earliest notes, after 1885 (1302H), inscription in Urdu and four other languages, rather than the Indian total of nine languages. Then, around 1910 (1328H), the Rangoon office was made one of several Indian offices, so apart from the name of the city, the notes are identical with the other current Indian notes. After the separation from India in 1937 (1356H), overprinted Indian notes were used, and then in 1948 (1367H) with independence, the Bank of Burma issued notes solely with Burmese inscriptions and designs.

In Siam, the important first issue of the modernist King Mongkut in 1853 (1269H) bore inscription in no less than eleven languages, including a derivative of Arabic, and Braille — the first time that Braille had ever been used. And all this in a note that was barely one and a half inches across and three inches tall! These notes did not enjoy wide circulation, nor did the 1876 (1293H) issue, which consisted of only one denomination, and bore no Arabic. The three British and French banks that issued notes from 1889 (1307H) to 1902 (1320H) also neglected Arabic, but the lovely series of treasury notes printed in Germany by Giesecke & Devrient once again included it, as well as Chinese and several other languages. While the designs are most ornate and elaborate, it could not be said that a true Islamic influence could be detected. Unfortunately these lovely notes were never placed into circulation. The design that was adopted in 1902 (1320H), again carried a derivative of Arabic, together with Thai, English and Chinese, but the issues after 1924 (1342H) omit all



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languages except Thai.

To the south, in the old British Straits Settlements of Singapore, Penang, and Malacca, notes had been placed in circulation as early as 1844 (1260H). These were

12 **Figure 19.** Brunei, \$5, 1967 (1367H). While from the back of this note one might think that it had been issued in the Middle East, with its attractive vignette of the Sultan Sir Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque, it actually originates in one of the farthest reaches of Islamic civilization. The Sultanate of Brunei, like its neighbors Malaysia and Indonesia, is an Islamic state, though neither demonstrates this so forcefully on their own notes.

13 **Figure 16.** Morocco, State Bank of the Rif, 1 Riffan, 10th October 1923 (1342H). During the Berber rising against the French, under the leadership of Abd-el-Krim from 1921 to 1926 (1340-1345H), notes were issued in denominations of 1 and 5 Riffans. At the time, the rising was headline news around the world, and caught the hearts of citizens of many countries. The notes, while simply printed, bear attractive vignettes in the form of the star and crescent, and a mounted Berber horseman.

14 **Figure 17.** British Military issue for the Mediterranean, undated but 1915-16 (1333-34H). The basic note is the British Treasury 10 Shillings of January 1915 (1333H), overprinted in Arabic for 60 Piastres. While the exact intent of the issue of these notes is not clear, it is believed that they were intended for use in occupied Turkey (after Gallipoli), Palestine, and Iraq. Similar issues were made by the Germans in Northern Persia. While historically interesting, it would be difficult to imagine a note with less real Islamic influence.

15 **Figure 12.** China, Russo-Asiatic Bank 100 Gold Fer issued at Chuguchak, Chinese Turkistan (Sinkiang) in 1918 (1337H). As is typical of the notes issued in Turkistan, the motifs are primarily Chinese, but with inscriptions in the Arabic derivative of Turki, as well as Chinese and Mongolian. The front of this note features flame-breathing dragons within geometric pattern (not of Islamic origin), while the back bears a solitary dragon and inscriptions, as is shown above. Turkistan is the main point of contact between the Islamic and Chinese worlds.

issued by the various British and Indian commercial banks, and they bear little more than a partial inscription in Jawi along with very functional British machine engraving, and inscriptions in other languages. These notes circulated until 1901 (1319H) having been superseded by the issues of the new Straits Settlements Currency Commission of 1898 (1316H). On the new notes, we find more prominent Jawi inscriptions, with vignettes of tigers or local scenes. This pattern is continued with the new 1940 (1359H) notes of Malaya and again with those of Malaya & British Borneo, formed in 1952 (1371H). While its successor, modern day Malaysia, is an Islamic nation, the inscriptions are only written in the western



characters of romanized Malay, not in the traditional Arabic derivative of Jawi.

In British North Borneo, now Sabah, situated at the northern extremity of the island of Borneo, we again find partial Jawi inscriptions. The notes of the British North Borneo Company were in circulation by 1885 (1302H), and continued until the Japanese occupation in 1942 (1361H). The notes of Borneo's immediate neighbor, Brunei, bear a much stronger influence. On the backs of all these notes we find an inscription in Jawi, together with a full size depiction of the striking Sultan Sir Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque. An illustration of this note can be seen as figure 19. The notes of the third British state in Borneo, Sarawak, also bear inscriptions in Jawi. Sarawak was the home of the famous "White Rajas", the Brooke family who had been awarded Sarawak by the Sultan of Brunei in 1841 (1257H). Paper money was issued at various times, at first crude locally printed issues in 1858 (1274H), and then English printed notes in 1880 (1297H). These earlier issues are notable to us only for their inscriptions, though the superb 1929 (1347H) printing by Bradbury, Wilkinson in London uses geometric and

stylized patterns of partial Islamic influence. An illustration of one of these notes can be seen as figure 18.

As has already been briefly covered in the opening paragraph, the paper money of the Netherlands East Indies dates back some two centuries. In figure 1 we see one of these early Dutch colonial notes, with a lengthy inscription in the Arabic derivative of Djawi. The notes were issued up to 1800 (1215H), when the company was terminated. Over the next fifteen years we find a great and fascinating variety of note issues, some of enormous physical size, most intended for circulation within a limited area. These were the provisional issues of Banda, Ternate, Proboling, Amboina, and other regions. However, with the coming of peace in Europe after 1814 (1229H), regular issues were made by the government and later the Javasche (Java) Bank, the newly founded bank. These early notes tended to be similar to their predecessors, mostly bearing only inscriptions in Dutch, Javanese and Djawi, though after 1864 (1281H) the notes became more ornamental in appearance. At that date, the Djawi inscriptions were relegated to the back, many lines of fine print in four languages covering the legal aspects of the issue! The 1901 (1352H) issue provided lovely new designs, which remained in circulation until the Japanese occupation. With independence in 1949 (1368H), many new issues were made in Indonesia, particularly due to the mass inflation of the 1960's and 1970's (after 1380H), though the notes tend gradually over the years to take a regular modern format, and the Djawi inscriptions are no longer present.

While the issues of most countries may be relatively straightforward to discuss, some of the notes, particularly those from outlying areas, are considerably more difficult. And in particular with the standardization of format over the past twenty years, it is often beyond the author's limited cultural capabilities to distinguish Islamic influence from indigenous. After fourteen centuries of adoption, adaptation, and creation, it is difficult to say where Islamic influence ends and local influence begins. To attempt to define the characteristics of any specific note as being one or the other is often beyond feasibility; certainly it is beyond the scope of this limited article.

It has been the author's intent to create an awareness of the extent of Islam's influence on paper money; this survey is only an introduction, rather than a catalogue or comprehensive history, much relevant information and many interesting illustrations have been omitted. The author wished to point out the diversity of some of the earlier forms, as well as the homogeneity of the most recent. He intended to show the use of Arabic and its derivatives as a cultural thread of continuity through all the issuing Islamic nations from Mauritania to Indonesia. The contrast and beauty of design is also important, for example the stunner 1890 (1307H) issue of the Imperial Bank of Persia compared with the rather pedestrian early note of Afghanistan, or the relatively functional first issue of Iraq. The author also wished to demonstrate the use of the bank note as a mode for dissimulation of Islamic culture, history, languages, art, propaganda, nationalism; in short, as a microcosm of the various Islamic influences felt in these countries up to the present day. It is hoped that the reader will thus become more aware of the bank note as a cultural form, at the same time of its functional role within Islam.

16 **Figure 15.** Sudan, 2000 Piastres 1884 (1301H), issued by the British General "Chinese" Gordon. During the siege of Khartoum by the Mahdi, Gordon was forced to print these emergency notes to provide a circulating medium for his beleaguered garrison. After the fall of Khartoum, a commission of indemnity was set up in Egypt, and backs of the notes occasionally appear stamped by the commission or the Egyptian notaries who represented noteholders. The handwritten signature of General Gordon can be seen at the bottom right.



AFRICAN ISLAM

Rene A. Bravmann

There has been, in the West, a resurgence of interest in things Islamic that is quite remarkable. This interest is due, in large part, to the fact that Islam has begun to impress itself upon our political consciousness and is representative of a series of economic forces that affect us all. Emanating from this set of concerns has been an attempt to elucidate the creativity of Islamic civilization and to render its achievements visible to the public. Through a number of major, and some more modest, exhibitions museums are anxious to exhibit their Islamic holdings: one grand exhibition, *The Heritage of Islam*, has been touring the United States for the past two years and has been attracting unusually large audi-

ences.

It is within this climate that *African Islam* was conceived. The administration and staff of the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, felt that the moment was particularly ripe for an exhibition devoted exclusively to the arts of African Islam. The focus of this effort was to be upon Saharan and tropical Africa instead of upon the urban and Muslim North African areas invariably honoured in general exhibitions of Islamic art. For me the exhibition represented a fresh opportunity to look broadly at a long ignored portion of Islamic civilization, as a religious culture that has profoundly influenced much of Africa, and to explore certain dimensions of

this faith and its creativity.

The monuments and artistry of this enormous region (equivalent in size to the Near and Middle East and India), have never really concerned the art historians of Islam for they have been too far removed from the centres of the Muslim world and shaped, as it were, at the extreme edge of this civilization. Regarded as provincial and peripheral, as apprehending a very different reality, these arts remain an eternal other — they exist but go unnoticed and unattended. *African Islam* was, therefore, designed to demonstrate that the arts of this vast area of Africa belong fully within the Islamic orbit. They are testament to the remarkable diversity of mind and sensibility found

within Islamic civilization, and they are, for me, among its most vital and unique expressions.

African Islam is essentially a set of personal reflections about this religious culture and Africa that

exhibition and catalogue I have suggested certain themes that strike me as particularly important if one is attempting to begin to comprehend the breadth and nature of this religion and its artistry.



1



2



3



4

Islam in Africa is nearly as old as the faith itself for within a generation of the death of Muhammad (d.632 AD) Arab soldiers were already in Alexandria and by the end of the century had effectively

moved across the rest of North Africa to the very northern border of present day Mauretania. Military campaigns and conversion went hand in hand and ancient Berber populations in Morocco, Algeria



quest but Arab commercial enterprise that led to the introduction of the religion. Trade was crucial and these regions became nominal parts of the Umayyad Caliphate, with its capital at Baghdad, in the late seventh century. Yemenite and Arab traders established a number of trading communities along the Eritrean and Somali shores and inaugurated a tradition of intensive commerce between the Arabian peninsula and the Horn and eastern Africa that continues to this day.

From these auspicious beginnings along the edge of the continent, Islam moved slowly and inexorably into Africa. Conversion of the Sanhaja Berbers propelled Islam fully into the western Sahara among the Sarakholle (Mande speakers also known as Soninke) in Mauretania. By the end of the tenth century Sarakholle converts had already pushed into the Senegal River valley and as far as the Niger River where



and Tunisia were gradually converted to the faith.

In the ninth century the recently Islamized Berbers carried the religion into the Sahara, to places like Sijilmasa in southern Morocco and Murzuk in the Fezzan, where

Islam was to eventually gain these important Saharan trading towns. Parts of the eastern Sudan, the Horn, and the east coast of Africa were also affected during this early phase of Islamic expansion although in these instances it was not con-



their religious zeal touched the important regions of Takrur and Massina. A less dramatic but even surer advance of the faith occurred along the trans-Saharan trade routes dominated by the Islamized Berbers and Tuaregs and between the tenth and seventeenth centuries every major Sudannic state from Senegal to the upper Nile (Ghana, Mali, Songhai, the early Hausa states, Kanem-Bornu, Wadai, and Darfur) whose ascendancy was to a great extent based upon control of these commercial arteries, was affected by the presence of Islam.

Local political and economic institutions took on a Muslim cast and much of life itself, including the arts and architecture, assumed some of the trappings of Islam. The religion also had a decisive influence upon the intellectual life of many of these kingdoms and cities like Timbuktu, Gao, and Kano became centres of considerable Islamic learning. Muslim leaders such as Mansa Musa of Mali, Askia Muhammad of Songhai, and Idris Alooma of Bornu (whose deeds are kept alive even today by praise singers and authors), were known through northern Africa and in the Near East.

These Sudannic states were an important part of the vast economic empire created by Islam and their influence was also felt further south, in the forest region of West Africa. Dyula and Hausa Muslim traders from some of these states carried not only the products of the Sudan and of the trans-Saharan trade but also brought Islam into what are today the countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria and Cameroon.

The progress of Islam on the eastern side of the continent also





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continued although it was far less dramatic and always much more confined in terms of its geographical impact. In the eastern Sudan Arab settlement was restricted to the Red Sea shore from Suakin to the Danakil coast and it was not until the sixteenth century, with the gradual decline of Christian Nubia and Ethiopia, that Arab and Iraqi teachers and mystics were able to outflank these kingdoms and carry Islam into the upper Nile valley. These efforts proved especially effective in the Kingdom of Sennar and later in Darfur. Despite several attempts to gain a foothold in the Ethiopian highlands, Muslim efforts were finally repulsed in the sixteenth century and thereafter Islam remained a purely coastal phenomenon. Nowhere was the coastal nature of Islamic influence more obvious than around the Horn of Africa and along the East African coast from modern-day Kenya to the northern border of Mozambique. Along this entire coastal strip Arab and Persian traders and clerics created a remarkable series of Islamic trading towns and city-states — Berbera, Mogadishu, Merca, Brava, Malindi, Mombasa, Zanzibar — where Somali/Arab and, further south, Swahili cultures flourished and were nourished by contacts with Arabia, the Persian Gulf, and western India.

After nearly a thousand years Islam had come to influence much of Africa north of the Equatorial forest and east of the great Rift Valley. While increasingly affected by the political and religious prestige and economic power of the faith, however, African Muslims did not assume the role of passive recipients of Islam but shaped the religion whenever necessary to fit local circumstances: a synthesis developed between the universalistic orientation of Islam and traditional beliefs and perceptions that proved vital and enduring.

It was against this historical backdrop, and the mounting threat of European colonialism, that the history of African Islam entered a new phase. The nineteenth century is filled with the names of Muslim leaders, religious reformers, and militant nationalists who sought to purify and reinvigorate Islam and stem the tides of European encroachment. Along the former surely the most famous was the Fulani social reformer and mystic Usuman dan Fodio, whose jihad or holy war against the Hausa States

was to permanently change the political face and tenor of Islamic life in northern Nigeria. Of the militant resisters the careers of Al Hajj Umar, the Mahdi Muhammed Ahmad, and Muhammad Abdallah Hasan are remarkable for their unbending resistance to European force and their efforts to establish new political entities based upon Islamic principles.

The turbulence of the nineteenth century did little to slow the growth of Islam and it may be argued that from this experience the faith became stronger and a more potent political force. Even during the colonial period when certain European powers, particularly the French and Portuguese, regarded Islam as a potential threat, the religion continued to expand its influence. This was certainly the

case in British and German territories where Muslims and the culture were often admired as where they were allowed to direct their affairs in relative freedom. In many areas Islamic religious order played a crucial role in fostering the sentiments of nationalism, as was the case with the revival of the Mahdiyya in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, or in further promoting Islam by encouraging its teachers and mystics to carry its message into new regions such as Uganda and the interior of East Africa.

The influence of Islam continues unabated today, answering the needs of its adherents throughout much of the continent. That it has forged a special relationship with its believers, that Islam and Africa have made something of each other that is quite extraordinary, lies at the heart of African Islam.



1. Two engraved Kanuri calabash with depictions of Karawa beads.
2. A Baga puppet stage with three carved images of al-Buraq.
3. Print of winged steed al-Buraq. Within the border surrounding the print is the first verse of Sura 17 of the Koran known as the Night Journey.
4. Al-Hafiz Abdullahi Muhammad painting the Muslim Cloth, using the words and illuminations from *Dulal al-Kurayn*.
5. An Arabic manuscript from Naga country, consisting of part 1 (a treatise on prosody, The *Ushuq* concerning grammar, syntax and calligraphy, by al-Sayuti (d. 1505).
- 6 to 7. These amulets are powerful deterrents against the ravages of witchcraft. They incorporate words from the Koran.

The African Islamic exhibition opened at the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. on 30 November 1983 (until 22 April 1984). Introduction and illustrations reproduced here by courtesy of Ethnographica and Smithsonian.

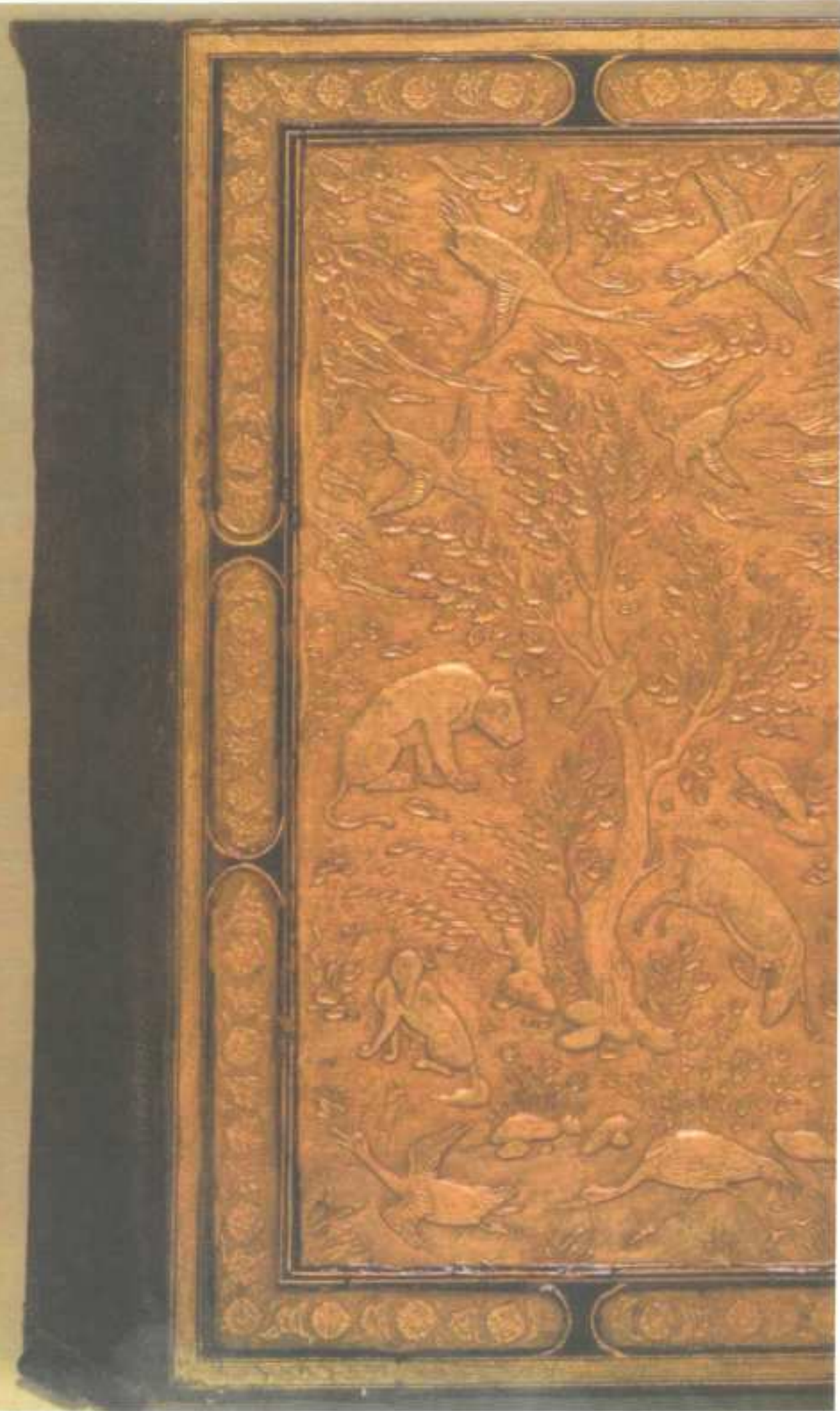


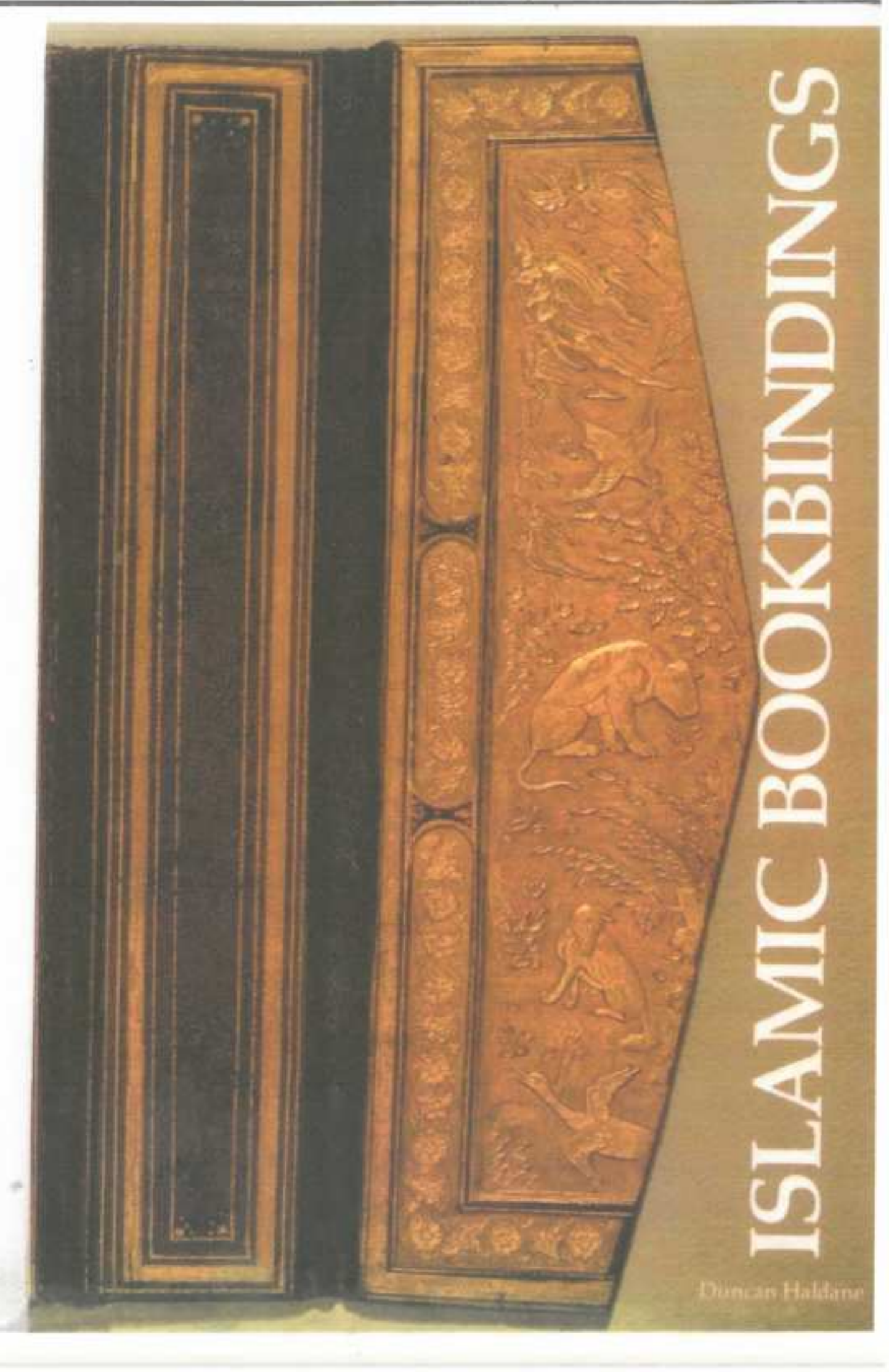
Page 3b

1. A lavishly embroidered full-length man's gown (riga) from Hausa city of Kano, Nigeria.
2. Wooden box (Sundong libbi) overlaid with patterns of sheet brass, copper and more rarely silver, Maori, Mauritania.

This page

1. The kiti cha enzi, Swahili improvisation upon a 19th century Anglo-Indian chair, Kenya.
2. Cotton and wool gown known as a Rabih gown, Kanuri, Nigeria.
3. Leather appliqué fan, Benin, Nigeria.
4. Amber beads necklace strung in a metal amulet known as herizi, Somalia.
5. Rosettes, diamonds and chevron patterns created with seeds and beads upon this basket of dyed and natural grass fibres, Somalia.



The image shows the front cover of an antique Islamic book binding. The cover is made of dark brown leather with intricate blind-tooled patterns. A large, rectangular central medallion is decorated with a detailed scene of a lion and a gazelle in a landscape. The medallion is framed by a wide border of repeating floral or arabesque motifs. The spine of the book, visible on the left, features several horizontal bands of blind tooling. The overall design is characteristic of traditional Islamic bookbinding art.

ISLAMIC BOOKBINDINGS

Duncan Haldane

When one considers the important role which the book plays in Islam, and in particular the pivotal role of one book alone, namely the Qur'an, it is strange that the covers which bound the pages of these works should have been overlooked for so long. Indeed, apart from some scholarly studies produced some sixty or so years ago by Friedrich Sarre and Emil Gratzl among other academics, there has been little general interest shown by Islamic art historians for this neglected but very rewarding field of research. When I joined the Museum as Deputy Keeper of the National Art Library in February 1980, I was overjoyed to be able to study and recatalogue the Library's magnificent collection of about two hundred Islamic book covers. This had lain dormant for a long period and apart from a few of the objects which were shown at 'The Arts of Islam' exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in 1976, very few of the bookbindings had been made known to the public. My interest in the collection and the pressing need for its thorough study led me to consider how best to publicize it. An exhibition was the obvious answer and it is gratifying to know that on December 14th the first major showing ever of these works will open at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the presence of the new Chairman of the Trustees, Lord Carrington and the Director, Sir Roy Strong.

It was not only an exhibition, however, that was needed. I hoped very much to be able to produce a book or catalogue which would do justice to the bindings and it was at this stage that my informal conversations with Alistair Duncan, Director of the World of Islam Festival Trust, began to open up exciting vistas. Alistair Duncan was very taken by the freshness and vitality of the subject as well as its wide appeal to the Islamic world and after much hard thought on both sides, the World of Islam Festival Trust and the Victoria and Albert Museum agreed to cooperate on a major publishing venture which has resulted in a beautiful two hundred page hard bound book with over two hundred colour and one hundred or so black and white illustrations. The book which has been designed by Colin Larkin and edited by Leonard Harrow is a fitting tribute to its Islamic precursors and records fully all the items in the collection along with translations of inscriptions,



The cover of a bookbinding, South Arabia, fifteenth century.

detailed analysis of dating and techniques as well as a substantial introductory text tracing the history of Islamic bookbinding, from its beginnings up to the end of the nineteenth century.

The collection of bindings was assembled largely in the final quarter of the last century when some very discerning purchases were made. However the collection is very much a living entity and has been added to over the years. Two years ago I was very excited when Sr. Chiesa, the noted Milanese book dealer, offered to the Museum Library a group of thirty one bindings which had formerly been in the possession of the late Dr. Moritz (who at one stage had been in charge of the Khedivial Library in Cairo). Parts of Moritz's collection had already been divided between the

Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, the Oriental Institute Chicago and the Islamic Museum in Berlin and now this remaining group was to find its home in London. The recently highly active Islamic art market in London, however, has led to the acquisition of some book covers which were previously owned by among others the late H. Kevorkian and F.R. Martin, itself quite a notable pedigree and pointer to taste.

The collection is particularly strong in Arab and Persian covers and Ottoman Turkish covers are also well represented. The group of Islamic Indian covers is small but noteworthy and the exhibition also displays some examples of marbled papers, a craft developed particularly by the Turks, as well as some calligraphy and miniature paintings.



*The cover of a bookbinding, Egypt or Syria,
fourteenth or fifteenth century.*

most of which come from the Museum's own collection. All these help towards a greater understanding of the complexity and integration of the Islamic book arts which it is now hoped will find a response among a wider public.

The actual craft of binding books is as old as writing itself. Even the clay tablets of the Assyrians needed some form of protective covering but book covers as we know them today date only from the early Christian period. The bound book, however, is known in early Islamic history and it is traditionally said that during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, Qur'an pages were kept between two wooden boards. Tanning works and binderies are known to have existed in Yemen, North Africa, Islamic Spain and to the east in Bukhara. We also

know that there were very large libraries, such as the one at Cordova which is reputed to have contained two hundred and fifty thousand books alone. In addition to the great royal libraries such as those of the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun or the Fatimid ruler al-Hakim, many private individuals assembled large collections of books and the emphasis in texts on the numerical size of these libraries indicates that books were seen as an outward indication of culture and social standing.

Arab bookcovers can be divided into three different categories, those from Egypt and Syria (which effectively can be treated as one entity), those from North Africa or the Maghrib, and those from Yemen and South Arabia. However, due to the international styles which prevailed in Islamic art over such a

long period and over such a wide geographical area, it is sometimes possible only to give a tentative attribution. Generally speaking, Arab bookbindings are simpler and have less elaborate designs than those which were made in Persia or Turkey. Apart from gold, there is little colour and this simplicity is one of their real charms.

The earliest Persian bookbindings are similar in style and technique to their Arab precursors but in the fifteenth century when the artistic centre of influence moved from Cairo and Damascus to Persia, a number of fundamental changes took place. In particular, techniques were refined and craftsmen in Herat developed the method of leather filigree or cut-work which was often used on the doublures, or inside covers. In addition, the range of colours was widened considerably and material backing of cloth or silk was sometimes used in conjunction with overlaid leather filigree. A later stage saw the introduction of block-stamping. This entailed the use of stamps which were engraved with overall designs (often very elaborate) which were then pressed or hammered onto the leather. Sometimes these stamps formed half of the pattern, the same stamp being used to complete the design. Initially these were of a high quality but gradually the technique deteriorated and the lines where the two stamps were joined become visible.

One of the most outstanding developments by Persian craftsmen was the introduction of lacquer painted papier-mâché book covers and at times these are of greater significance as paintings rather than as bindings. Lacquer painting became particularly popular in the nineteenth century under the Qajar dynasty.

Turkish bindings follow Persian styles of decoration and as a rule show little stylistic innovation. However they do display a mastery of technique despite a rather prosaic form of decoration. Turkish bookcovers also use a number of motifs such as the stylised Chinese cloud form known as "tchi" or the rushes known as "saz" which mark them out as peculiarly Turkish. There is also a historical reason why Turkish bookbindings show less range and variety than their Persian counterparts or precursors. In 1453 the Ottoman dynasty became firmly established in Istanbul which remained the chief artistic as well as political and administrative centre

for over four hundred and fifty years. By contrast, Persian history over the same length of time witnessed a succession of dynasties based in different centres with a consequent differing approach to the arts. In any consideration of later Turkish bindings, along with other cultural areas, it is important to remember that the Ottoman Empire underwent enormous change in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with an ever increasing influence from Western Europe, particularly France. A kind of Turkish cococco style was developed which is most immediately noticeable in the pavilions and palaces but also in book ornamentation. The format of the bookcover also changed to that known in Europe with the loss of the *liana* or flap which had for so long been one of the distinguishing factors of Islamic bindings.

Indian book covers initially followed Persian styles of decoration but gradually European influence made itself felt, particularly in the introduction of portraiture. The overall standard of workmanship also declined and some of the nineteenth century works produced in Kashmir, for example, are a witness to the decline of a highly skilled and very decorative art form.



The cover and flap of a Persian bookbinding, possibly Tabriz, seventeenth century.

1. *The cover of a Mughal or Deccani Qur'an, early seventeenth century. The inscription on the fore-edge flap is from Surah 50.*

2. *A Persian lacquer painted bookcover, sixteenth or seventeenth century.*

The exhibition in London, which is on the ground floor in Room 45 of Victoria and Albert Museum, continues until 4 March 1984. A catalogue entitled Islamic Bookbindings in the Victoria and Albert Museum is available, price £30.



THE HOUSE OF SPINK

Andrew Moore

Since the beginning of civilisation, art has appealed to man's acquisitive instinct. The ancient Egyptians filled the tombs of their dead Pharaohs with beautiful objects to be used in the next world; the Roman Emperors acquired contemporary and ancient *objets d'art* to adorn their palaces; and the ruling families of Renaissance Europe strove to form majestic collections of antiquities, paintings, sculptures and objects in precious metals.

As early as the Medieval period, Islamic works of art were cherished by Europeans. The finest ceremonial robe that the Norman kings of Sicily had fashioned for them by Islamic craftsmen was given to the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II on the occasion of his Coronation in 1220. This magnificent garment was later placed in the Imperial Treasury. The exceptionally fine enamelled tall glass beaker that today may be viewed in London's Victoria and Albert Museum has probably been in Britain since the fifteenth century. Made in Syria in the mid-thirteenth century, the piece is housed in a French leather case of almost equal antiquity. When and why it crossed the English Channel is not known. After 1500, while in the possession of a family at Edenhall in England's northern county of Cumberland, the piece was held to be a talisman by the local inhabitants. The beaker became known as *The Luck of Edenhall*.

Throughout time, the number of individuals forming collections of art and antiques has increased. While the number of outlets has grown proportionately, the basic methods of selling have not dramatically changed. Ancient Rome had its dealers, and auctions of works of art were also held. Indeed, Suetonius describes how Caligula forced his courtiers and others to bid for pictures of which he had grown weary. One unfortunate gentleman, who had fallen asleep, found, upon waking, that every time he nodded his head, the Emperor had treated the nod as an agreement to raise the bid!

The world's two leading auction houses today are Sotheby's, which was founded in 1733, and Christie's which has been in business since 1766. Both organisations are international, but both were founded in London. Specialist and general art and antique dealers are to be found throughout the world. However, none has a more colourful and longer history than London's Spink of St. James's.

Spink & Son is acknowledged to be the oldest and largest antique dealer in the world. It was established in 1666, sixty-eight years before London's longest surviving auction house, and today a descendant of the Founder is on the Board, while two others are involved with the company. There are few, if any, businesses in the world that can claim direct family involvement for so long.

The Spink story begins in 1657, when John Spink, the son of a Yeoman farmer from Kirkthorpe, near Wakefield, in England's northern county of Yorkshire, travelled to London to become apprenticed to a goldsmith. When his apprenticeship finished, the young entrepreneur opened a business "at The Sign of the Grasshopper" in Lombard Street, a thoroughfare in the heart of the City of London, now famous for its banks.

Initially, the company traded in jewels and gold and silver plate. Because of the beautiful silver inlay on the pistols and guns of the Stuart period, the firm first turned its attention to antique firearms. The present specialist departments at King Street are: Islamic Art, Oriental Art, Indian and South East Asian Art, English Paintings and Watercolours, Silver and Jewellery, Medals, Paperweights and 19th Century Glass, Coins, Books, Bank Notes and Bullion (Modern Gold Coins) and Orders and Decorations. It is this wide range of material under one roof that gives Spink the accolade of 'the world's largest antique dealer'.

It has been its willingness and ability to diversify that has resulted in the company outliving its rivals. Just as fashions in clothes change, so do both collecting tastes and interior decor. It must always be remembered that whereas some individuals buy *objets d'art* for a collection, others acquire pieces to adorn their homes. Spink has never been slow to enter new fields. For example, following the highly successful *World of Islam Festival*, held in London in 1976, Spink opened an Islamic Gallery at its St. James's premises.

However, the company has not just followed the whims of fashion. In a period when the art market is booming, one finds the rate at which new galleries open is dramatically increasing and too frequently the new dealer lacks a solid knowledge in his subject and will sacrifice quality for turnover. When the flurry of the boom trade is over, he finds that only choice items sell. He quickly discovers that no sales means no profit and a

quick descent down the path into oblivion.

Spink, however, has always maintained standards. It will only enter a new field if it has the expertise and it will never sacrifice quality. Therefore, when trade is not so buoyant, and buyers more discerning than in a boom, it is the quality of stock that the public demands.

To whatever field Spink has turned its attention, the company has always gained a first-rate reputation. The esteem has even spilled over into the world of fiction. For example, in Ian Fleming's *Live and Let Die*, "M" certainly held Spink in high regard: "As it is, and both Spink's and the British Museum agree, this is almost certainly part of Bloody Morgan's treasure". Naturally, Spink was both amused and highly honoured that it should be placed first among all the authorities on Bloody Morgan and ancient coins.

However, the world of commerce is that of reality. Today, Spink is the largest and most international of

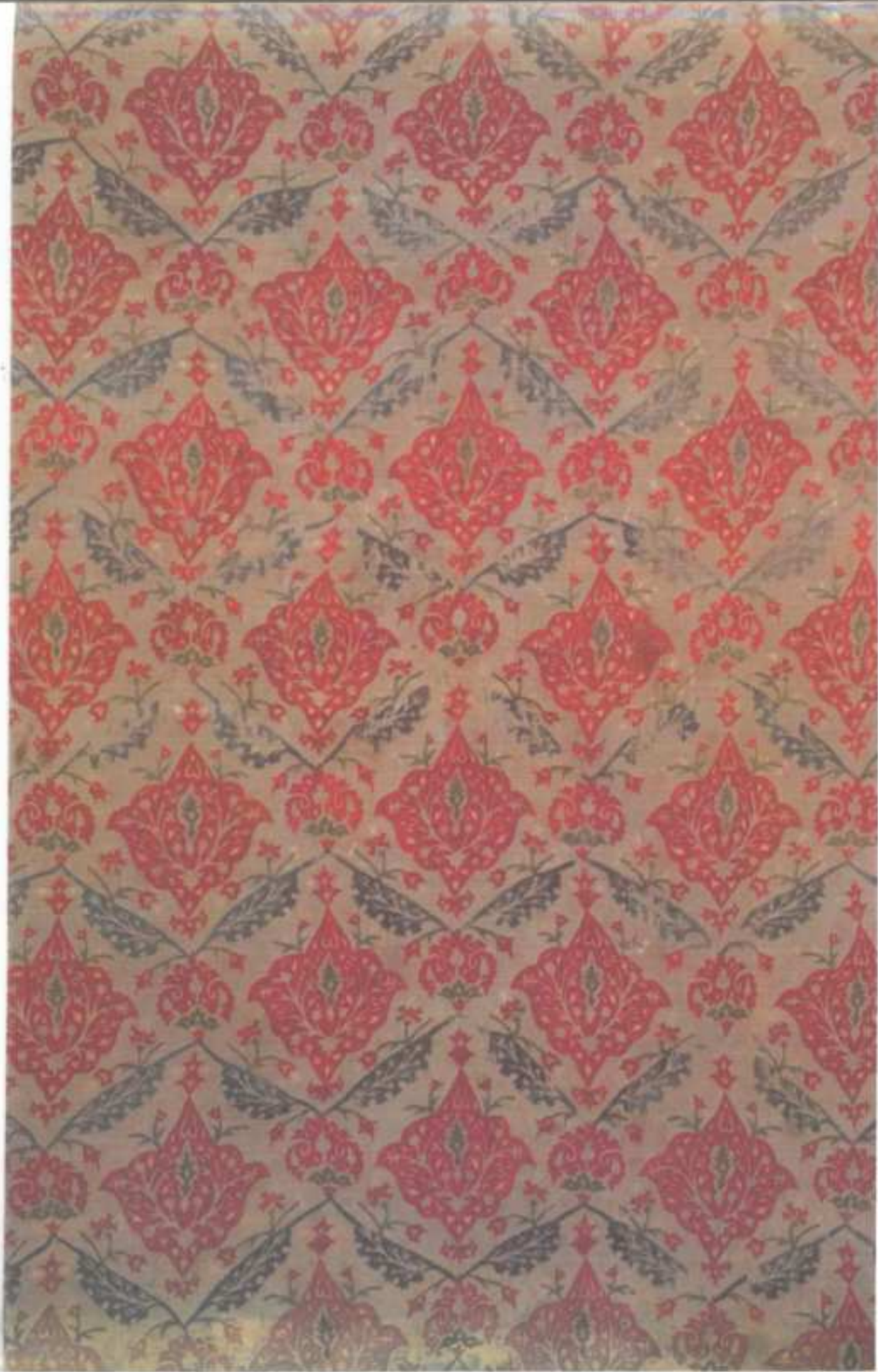


companies dealing in coins. Coin-dealing subsidiaries have been established in Zurich, Sydney, Melbourne and New York and regular coin auctions are held. The full range of numismatic material from the earliest times to the modern day, from all countries, are handled.

The coin department was established in London in the 1830s and has dealt in Islamic coins since the mid-nineteenth century. The company was therefore well-placed in the 1970s when the interest in the series, which had previously been restricted to a small band of scholars, began to gain momentum. The importance that is now given to Islamic numismatics is well illustrated by the Amir of Qatar, Shaikh Khalifah Bin-Hamad al-Thani's plan to open an institution for the study of Islamic coins in Doha. In Kuwait, part of the magnificent Islamic coin collection of Shaikh Nasr al-Sabah may be viewed at the recently opened museum.

1. A silver dish with the inscription in fine gold granulation. Alexandria, 1074 - 1110 AD. Diameter: 25.5 cms.
2. A silk banner. Ottoman, early 19th century. 115x84 inches.
3. A page from a manuscript from the *Zafarnama*, Iran, 1436. Opposite page: A fine panel embroidered with silk thread on a loosely spun linen ground. Ottoman, 17th century. 23½ x 29 ¾ inches.





There are now many collectors of the series in Europe, North America and, of course, the Middle East. Muslim private collectors believe that Islamic coins provide a vital link with their past as well as an outlet through which they can express their hunting instinct for beautiful and desirable objects. Frequently, the best artists were employed to design the coins and to prepare the dies from which they were struck.

Consequently, the coins can be viewed as true miniature works of art which contribute to the history of Arabic calligraphy and provide evidence of the artistic and cultural achievements of every region of the Islamic world. In addition, Islamic coins can act as an invaluable historical record. Rulers inscribed their own names and those of their fathers, chose legends corresponding to their religious beliefs, struck coins in their major towns and carefully dated each piece.

It will therefore be appreciated that the series has a great deal to offer the collector. Some individuals only collect the coins of one particular dynasty, such as the Umayyads, Abbasids, Fatimids, Ayyubids or Ottomans, while others collect by date — i.e., obtaining a specimen for each year of the *hijra* era from 72H to modern times. Others may collect only gold coins, while some may restrict their collecting activities to silver or copper specimens. Another theme for a collection is to concentrate on one or more of the great cities of Islam.

Spink's Islamic Coin Department maintains a comprehensive stock, but their experts note that the supply of collector's items is not expanding at the same speed as the number of collectors. Although marked increases in values have already been seen in the last few years, rare Islamic coins have still not reached the price levels of those of ancient Greece and Rome, or even those of Europe and America.

However, to turn to other aspects of Spink's business. As one may expect, many outstanding objects have passed through Spink's hands during the past 318 years. Unfortunately, the company's records were destroyed during the bombing of London in World War II. Thankfully, only the paperwork was lost and not the items themselves. The documents, however, would have been invaluable to the social historian, for they reveal an interesting insight into the movement of works of art between the stately homes of England.

Examples of some of the outstanding works Spink has handled include the following:

The manuscript of Al-Jazari's *Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices* (see below), which is now in the Kuwait National Museum, passed through the Islamic Department. The Imperial Throne of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung (1711-1799), in carved lacquer, was handled by the Oriental Department — it now has pride of place in the Chinese Room of London's Victoria and Albert Museum. The Juxon Medal, which was presented to Bishop Juxon by King Charles I on the scaffold, just before the latter's execution, passed through the Coin Department. It too has now joined the UK's greatest national collection — the one housed in the British Museum.

While on the subject of medals, it must not be thought that the company sells only antiques. It is also a manufacturing medallist and, indeed, holds Royal Appointments to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh and his Royal Highness The Prince of Wales. For over a century, Spink's Medal Department has built up an expertise which today is second to none. Its London factory

manufactures orders and medals for a considerable number of countries.

In 1982, Spink produced The Order of Al-Said (The Family Order of Oman) which was presented by His Majesty the Sultan of Oman to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II during his state visit to Great Britain. The Order was originally awarded in very limited numbers at the turn of this century, but then lapsed. Sultan Qaboos bin Said revived the Order especially for his visit to Great Britain. Made in eighteen carat red and white gold, it is set with diamonds and rubies and incorporates fine enamels; and was manufactured in the record time of four weeks.

While the company's Islamic Department has been established for less than a decade, it too has handled many outstanding works of art. Perhaps two of the most important pieces were the previously mentioned manuscript of al-Jazari's *Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices* and the manuscript of a collection of fables by Muhammed bin Zafar al-Siqilli.

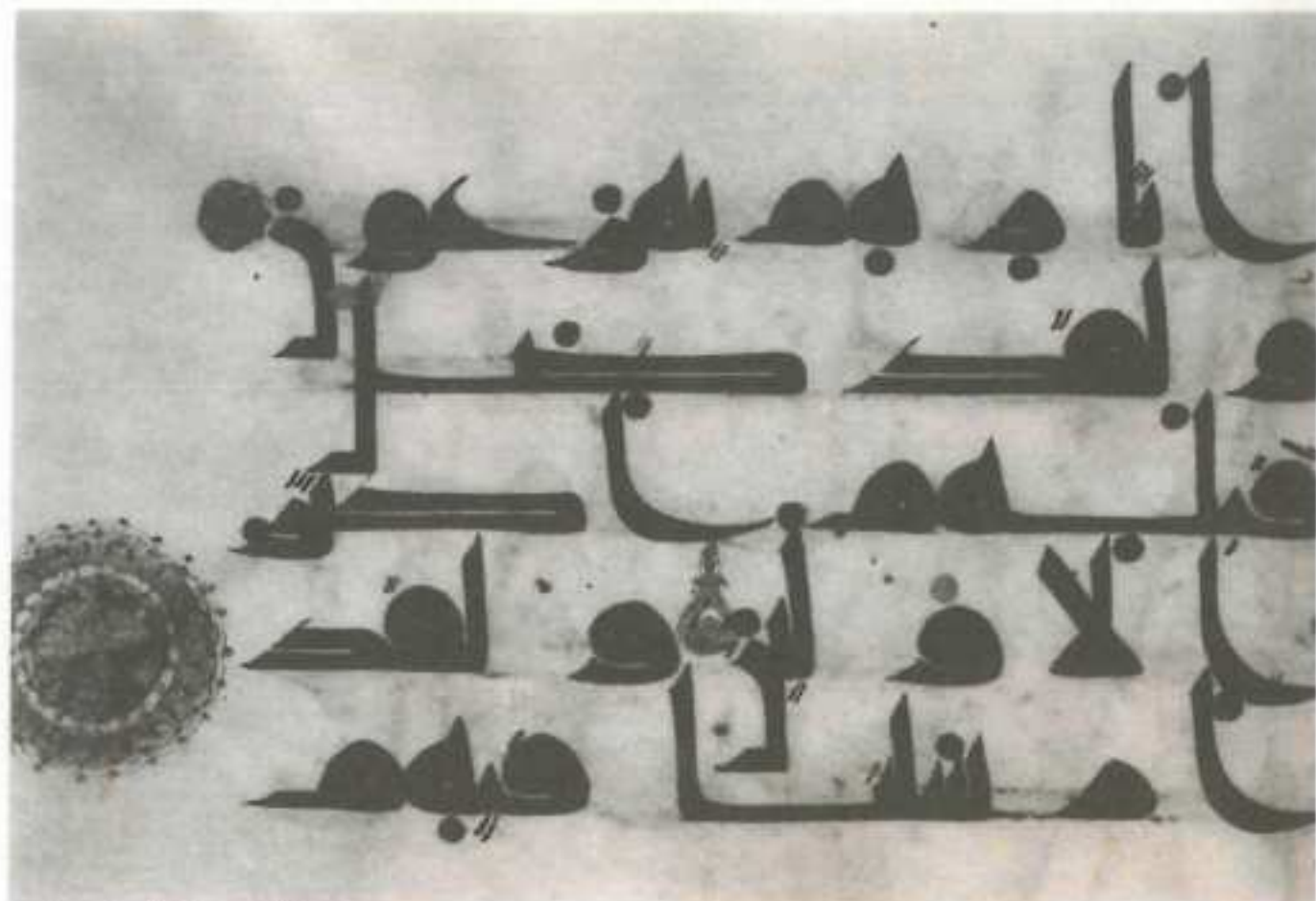
Al-Jazari was in the employ of Nasir al-Din, the Artuqid, Prince of Diyar Bakr. It is considered that the text of *Ingenious Mechanical Devices* was completed by 1204 or 1206 A.D. The subject of the illustrations and the content are principally concerned with the construction of mechanical devices and geometrical instruments intended for the personal pleasures of Mamluk princes. Although there was a strong and earlier tradition in which one can trace the development of Islamic technology (frequently derived from Hellenistic sources) by such authors as al-Khazini, Banu Musa ibn Shaker, Fakhr al-Din Ridwan and early translations from the Greek into Arabic, al-Jazari's work represents the culmination of Islamic technological development at this period.

The text of the manuscript is divided into sections each of which is sub-divided into chapters. The first section, on "Clocks", includes such chapters as "The water-clock of the peacocks" and "The monkey candle-clock"; the second section on "Vessels and figure: suitable for drinking sessions", includes a chapter on "A goblet which arbitrates at drinking parties"; the third section, on "Pitchers and Basins", has a chapter on "A pitcher which dispenses water for the king to perform his ritual ablutions"; the fourth section, is on "Fountains and perpetual fountains"; the fifth section is on "Machines for raising water"; and the Sixth section "Miscellaneous", includes a chapter on "A lock for locking a chest by means of 12 letters of the alphabet."

The manuscript handled by Spink is dated 713H (1313 AD) and comprises 150 leaves. It is the work of the scribe Farkh ibn 'Abd al-Latif. One whole page is illuminated in colours and gold and there are nine diagrams and ninety-eight miniatures. The importance of the manuscript needs no stressing. Neither does the rarity of the twelfth century illustrated manuscript collection of fables and moral tales by Muhammad bin Zafar al-Siqilli. Dated 554 H (1159 AD), the 110 leaves contain twenty-six miniatures in the Mamluk style. The subjects of the miniatures include two foxes in rocky landscape, the meeting of two elephants in landscape and a man with a horse encountering a wild boar.

Mention must also be made of the Mazanderan silver dish of Shahriyar ibn Qarin published by Spink. D. J.W. Allan of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, wrote of the piece in Spink's *Oriental*:

It is of sheet silver, has a broad flat rim (5.2 cms wide



A page from the Qur'an in Kufic script on vellum. Arabia, 9th-10th century.

and the rim edge is turned upwards and over to give the effect of piping. The only decoration is an inscription in bold Kufic script which fills the flat rim. The inscription is engraved, and the engraved lines have been set with gold granules (some 15 cms), held with silver solder. The solder has often run up and around the granules giving them a more silvery than gold appearance. However, study with a microscope shows that they are indeed gold, and that they were set in position one by one at the time of the application of the solder. Although early Islamic silver was frequently gilded and/or inlaid with black niello, inlaying with gold granules is an otherwise unknown technique from the Islamic world, nor indeed have I been able to locate comparable examples from the classical or Sasanian world. That such an inlay technique has disadvantages is clear: rough treatment of the surface of the dish will tend to loosen and displace individual granules, since they stand proud of the dish's surface by at least half of their diameter. One can only conclude that this dish was not meant for everyday use by its owner, but was intended as a piece of prestige plate to be admired by guests rather than filled with food. The inlayer was presumably a jeweller, granulation being an extremely common decorative technique on items of personal jewellery.

The inscription read as follows: *al-dawla wa'l-salama wa'l-'izz al-da'im li'l-ispahbad al-kabir Husam al-Dawla Shahriyar (ibn Q) arin alala allah baqatuh*, "wealth, peace, and perpetual glory to the great Ispahbad Husam al-Dawla Shahriyar ibn Qarin, may God give him long life". Shahriyar ibn Qarin was the first of the *muluk al-jibal*, "the kings of the mountains", the Bawandid rulers of

Mazanderan, and his reign stretched from 466-503 H./1074-1110 A.D."

Michael Spink, who is Head of the Islamic Department, is assisted by Francesca Calloway. All aspects of Islamic art, from textiles to weapons, from pottery to metalwork, are handled. The common theme is quality. Whether it is a string of amber prayer beads costing £100, or a metal bowl and cover with silver inlay and chased decoration from Khurasan priced at £3,000, the pieces will be of good quality.

My visit to Spink coincided with the Department's exhibition of Islamic Textile Design. The 1000 sq. ft. Islamic Gallery was indeed most colourful. Particularly impressive was a fine Persian red velvet Safavid coat made during the period of Shah Abbas II (1642-1660 A.D.). The front, back and sleeves are decorated with four cartouches enclosing a stamped brocade with flowering plants. The front is tied by horizontal silver straps fastened by silver cones. The brilliant colour of this garment contrasts with the subtle hues of the fine satin hanging embroidered with silk and metallic threads. This piece, which was made in England during the first half of the eighteenth century, depicts an exotic, sinuous tree. The design was influenced by contemporary Indian chintz palampores.

While the Islamic Gallery was displaying textiles, the Picture Gallery was holding its annual exhibition of Twentieth Century British Paintings and Watercolours. Although not in the main exhibition, my attention was drawn to an Edward Lear drawing of Cairo. This emphasised the kaleidoscope of precious objects with which Spink deal. Under one roof, the *objets d'art* of diverse cultures illustrates not only the number

of different branches of art, but also the fact that a specialist in one particular category may well be drawn to another field because of some common aspect.

In addition to holding exhibitions in London, Spink also stages such events in other parts of the world. Sometimes, as with the exhibition of oriental art held in Tokyo a few years back, all items on display are for sale. On other occasions, as with the 1982 exhibition, "Coinage, Culture and Artistic Heritage of the World of Islam", staged at the Doha-Sheraton Hotel in the State of Qatar, the event is organised to mark a special occasion. This latter exhibition, which Spink was asked to organise by the State of Qatar, commemorated the tenth anniversary of the accession of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar.

Over 250 coins, manuscripts, objects of art and printed books were displayed. One case contained a selection of orders, decorations and medals designed and manufactured for the World of Islam by Spink, thus emphasising that the company, in addition to



dealing in Islamic objects from the past, also contributes pieces that are, and always will be, cherished by those for whom they are made.

When John Spink slowly moved his way from rural northern England to London over three centuries ago, it is doubtful whether he realised that he was to establish a business that would become the world's oldest and largest dealing in objects from a past age. To quote an old English proverb "From little acorns, mighty oak trees grow."



1. A page from the Quran on paper in maghribi script, Andalusia, 13th century.

2. The opening pages to a Quran section, Iran, 16th century.



TRADITIONAL MUSLIM VOCAL ♦ ART ♦

Ibrahim Boolaky

Sheer joy in the beauty of words and their collocation used to be one of the dominant characteristics of the early Muslims when Arabic was the common language of all Muslims during the first 500 years of Islam. The equi-pace and sonority of their cultural linguistic expression, the rich vocalism of their religious verses and the musicality of their poetry all amounted to an advanced form of vocal art, which established itself in the seventh century with the early development of Arabic as a literary language. The historian Ibn al-Nadim (died 987 AD) puts the development of classical Arabic first in Makkah and Madinah during the emergence of Islam and then in Iraq. By the time of Prophet Muhammad (570-632), the dialects of the people of *Quraysh* and that of *Sa'd Ibn Hawazin* had blended together to make classical Arabic the most uniform and perfected language of Arabia.

The development of Arabic created a favorable cultural atmosphere in the Middle East and Muslim Spain (al-Andalus), and it became a nucleus round which most spiritual and artistic life radiated. Early in Islamic history the Arab Muslims developed a passion for rhetoric and artistic sounds and were infatuated by the beauty of their mother-tongue.¹ The great Andalusian poet al-Zubayr (d.989) in his *Tabaqat al-nahawiyyin wa-l-lughawiyyin* calls Arabic an ornament of the tongue.² This was reflected in the fact that Arabic became the vehicle of a considerable body of expression in vocal art-forms in the *Mashraq*, the *Maghreb* and other parts of the Muslim world.

Indeed when Prophet Muhammad began to recite the words of the Revelation, the professional poets of Arabia themselves realised that none of their poems could possibly match the verses of the *Qur'an*. Thus, besides the Revelation, it was basically the transmission of the *Qur'an* by Prophet Muhammad which prepared the ground for the successful establishment of traditional Muslim vocal art-forms in the world.

The Revelation started in 610 AD and lasted about twenty-three years. During this period, the verses of the *Qur'an* were preserved mainly by means of memory and vocal art. Before the *Qur'an* was compiled in about 635 AD, its continuity and accuracy were maintained mainly by the *Qurrā* (reciter).

The *Qurrā* has a perfected memory of at least part but

usually the whole of the *Qur'an*, and his main function in Muslim society is to recite the required verses at festivals and public meetings. A *Qurrā* is often a *hafiz* whose special skills lie in his ability to memorize and to recite the whole of the *Qur'an*. Following the decree of Caliph Walid I (705-15) that Arabic should be the language of all Muslims — irrespective of race or country — many non-Arabs have excelled in becoming great reciters of the *Qur'an*.

The *Qurrā* is usually a man but there have also been cases in the past whereby girls recited the *Qur'an* with great skill and devotion. It is said that As-Sitt Zubayda, the wife of Harun al-Rashid (786-809), used to encourage 100 girls to recite the *Qur'an* — in turn but continuously — at her Baghdad castle. Each girl would recite the next part of one-tenth of the *Qur'an* when joining the group.

Traditionally, the intonation and recitation of the *Qur'an* constitute an important part of Muslim education. Seven specific ways of reading the *Qur'an* became established centuries ago and for those who want to master these methods, a long and arduous training is required. According to Ibn Khaldun (d.1403), the reading of the *Qur'an* is a special craft and is a science in itself.³

The science of reading the *Qur'an* is called *al-qira'at* and includes the art of intoning, better known as *al-tajwid*. The great value of the art of intoning is that it not only makes it possible to read aloud or to recite the *Qur'anic* verses with a particular pronunciation, but it also cultivates the necessary skills to read or recite poetry to a large audience.

Next to the religious verses, the use of poetry to express some aspect of human life represents the second most important traditional vocal art-form in Islam. A classical Arabic definition of such poetry is that it is a meaningful utterance which is metrical, rhythmic, and more than one line in extent.

During the golden age of Islam, vocal use of poetry was made in Arabia and elsewhere for the praise of distinguished men, panegyrics on the heroes of the day, and condemnation of the weak and cowardly — all by means of verses which flew from lip to all the corners of the Muslim world.⁴ This was the time when Arabic was the *lingua-franca* of Muslims the world over. Verses — countless in number — were admired not merely for

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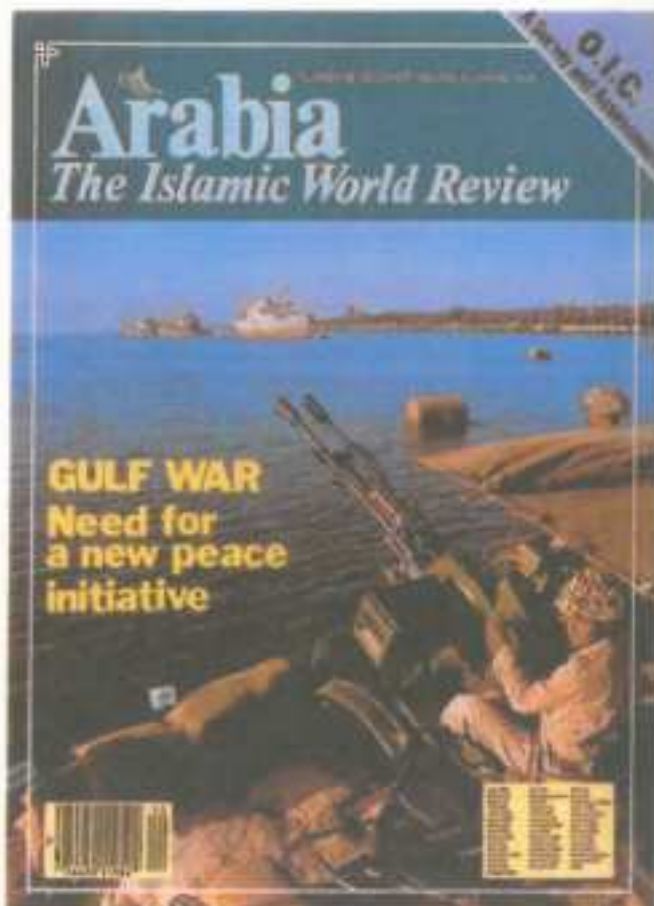
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their poetical content but also for their exquisite diction.⁵ The overall quality of the vocal expression of the time depended as much on the choice of words as on the skillful use of the human voice.

The rise and fall of the voice in refined Arabic gives the speaker such a rhythmic control of the words that many poets and other artists have produced some recitals of very great beauty in terms of language. These included songs suitable for almost every type of social function and occasion. Over the centuries, a rich literature grew up on vocal art as more and more songs were collected and classified according to their melodies and keys.

Qasida and Maqam

The development of vocal art followed Ibn-Khaldun's theory that "no art begins until there were artists". As art forms an integral part of Islam, artists began to appear in Muslim society as soon as a cultural atmosphere was created in the Hejaz and elsewhere. The *qasida* is a case in point.

The main characteristics of the *qasida* are its force of expression and compactness of language, its vivid description of the loved-one, and its wide appreciation in the Muslim world. The art of the *qasida* started when some poets and writers began to excel themselves as artists. The most famous *qasida* ever written is arguably the *Burda* or "Mantle Poem" of Shaikh Muhammad al-Busiri (d.1294) which has proved to be popular in the celebration of the Prophet's birthday.⁶

The *qasida* has also provided an impetus to other types of artistic achievement through some literary works. For instance, the *mu'allafat* is an advanced type of poem in which the poet can deal with a variety of subjects such as philosophy and ethics.

A large body of literature now exists on the different aspects of vocal art. This includes the prescription of musical notes for a wide range of songs. The most famous work on the art of singing is the "Great Book of Songs" of Isfahani (d.967) which runs in twenty-one volumes. The rich legacy of traditional Muslim vocal art-form is reflected in the works of many great authors and poets. The list includes al-Akhtal (died circa 710), al-Farazdaq (d.c.732), Ibn al-Muqaffa (d.757), Yunus al-Katib (d.765), al-Khalil (d.791), Abu Nawas (d.c.815), Atahiya (d.826), Abu Tammam (d.845), al-Ma'sali (d.850), Ziryab (d.857), al-Kindi (d.882), Ibn Abd Rabihi (d.940), al-Farabi (d.956), al-Mutannabi (d.965), Ibn Firnas (d.967), al-Khwarizmi (d.976), al-Zubaydi (d.989), Al-Burjani (d.998), Ikhwan as-Safa (10th century), Ibn Shuhayd (d.1034), Ibn Sina (d.1037), al-Tha'alibi (d.1038), Ibn Zaydun (d.1071), al-Hariri (d.1122), Ibn Abdun (d.1126), Ibn Bajja (d.1138), Ibn Quzman (d.1160), Alam al-Din Qaisar (d.1251) and Abul Faraaj al-Afghani (d.1286). In one way or another, they all have had an influence on such modern artists as the late Umm-Khalthum, Abdul Wahab and others.

Under the Abbasids (750-1258), a special type of vocal art developed in the form of the *maqam*. The peculiarity of the *maqam* is that its music is not written down in any form or notation but its art has been preserved up to now in Iraq mainly by tradition. The *Chaghi Baghladi* illustrates the popularity of the *maqam*: It originated in the twelfth century and was popularized by Mula Hasan. There followed many famous singers such as Shaltag, Abu Hamid and Hamid al-Nagar who used to sing the *maqam* in the cafés of old Baghdad.

The rich variety of the *maqam* was a great stimulus to the development of such Arab musical instruments as

the *juz*, the *santour*, the *daf* and the *dambuk* but, in the course of time, the *maqam* developed itself into a form of music of its own with many tunes. There are nowadays over ninety tunes which constitute the *maqam* melodies. They are divided into two main groups: (a) the *bayat*, *nava* and *ras* group in which classical Arabic poetry is recited; and (2) the *z'mayr* group in which colloquial Arabic is used.

The first group of the *maqam* melodies exerted a great influence in both the Eastern and Western lands of Islam, thus establishing yet another strong sense of unity in Muslim culture. From Baghdad, the *maqam* and its musical art-forms evolved to become the basis of various expressions of vocal art in Muslim Spain.

Tenor Ziryab of Baghdad — who is reputed to have known some 10,000 Arabic songs — was invited to Cordova by Caliph al-Hakeem I (792-822) so as to enliven the royal court; he later became the favourite singer of the succeeding Abd al-Rahman II (822-852).⁷ This Caliph also succeeded in having another famous artist from Baghdad: the beautiful singing-girl Kamar.⁸ Kalam, the daughter of a Visigoth lord who had become a Muslim, went to Madinah to learn the art of singing and music and on her return to Cordova became a director of the orchestra of Abd al-Rahman II.⁹

In the ninth and tenth centuries, Cordova was the leading centre of traditional Muslim vocal art in the world. Songs and music, which filled the rose-gardens of this city and other parts of Andalusia, spread to the adjacent lands of Castillo, Catalonia and Provence, thus laying the foundation for the rise of early Western culture.¹⁰

Impact on the West

Spanish and Provençal poetry is considered to be the birth-song of European literatures, awakening poetic echoes throughout Europe, from the Minnesingers of Germany to pre-Dantesque Italy, calling the "vulgar tongues" of the new Europe to literary life.¹¹ Many Westerners found the Arabic romances and poetry of Muslim Spain much more entertaining than the writings of the Fathers of the Church.¹² Bishop Alvaro lamented that his co-religionists were much more interested in Arabic poetry and Belles Lettres than in their own literature.¹³

During the Church's *Semana Santa* ("Holy Week") — the most famous of all Seville's religious ceremonies — the *maçarena*, as the most beautiful *Mulanna* (maiden dressed in white to symbolise the Virgin Mary) was called, would sing the *santas*. But these *santas* were almost identical to the hymns of praise of the Muslim women of al-Andalus. Though in a modified form, these hymns are still being sung in Spain to-day.

Another type of traditional Muslim vocal art which has had an impact on the West is the *muwashshak*.¹⁴ From it is derived the *Kharjas* songs of pre-modern Christian girls and women in Spain and elsewhere. The *kharjas* are identical in function with the *muwashshak* in evoking the sentiment of love. In their love-songs, Muslim women expressed love as a holy passion which is morally pure, spiritually uplifting, and psychologically well-balanced.

The Muslim approach to the sentiment of love inspired Alfonso X of Christian Spain (1252-1254) so much that he wrote about 417 songs of praise on the Virgin Mary.¹⁵ Commenting on these songs — which are modelled on Andalusian lyric poetry — Juan Valera told the Spanish Academy in Madrid on the 12th February 1872 that the Muslims have had an immense influence on the development of the European mind in

the domain of culture.¹⁶ The Troubadour movement in France gives further support to Juan Valera's theory on the development of Western culture.

The Troubadour movement was started by Guilhem de Poitou in 1071 and lasted about 1258 at the death of Guilhem de Montanhagol. During this period many traits of Arabic poetry were assimilated in France, such as the *muwashshah* and *zajal* stanzas, and even the style of the Muslim artists. Such artists followed certain rules of distinct recitation in order to make the tone of voice more sonorous and more harmonious with the language used. In fact, the court-singers of Provence tended to identify themselves with the Muslim artists of Andalusia and their Arabic-inspired vocal expressions. From there, many Troubadours went to Italy, Germany and other places.

In Italy such singers as Malespina, Zorzi, Sordello and Lafranc Cigala were the carriers of traditional Muslim vocal art-forms by means of the language as well as the prosody and style of the Provençal Troubadours.¹⁷ Arabic poems, even in their modified forms, became so popular that many Westerners started to complain, for these reminded them of some Muslim religious art-forms.¹⁸ What they did not realise was that many Christian hymns of praise were already under the strong influence of traditional Muslim vocal art-forms. This is shown by the verse known as the *villancico*.

The similarity of the Romance *villancico* with the Arabic *zajal* (melody) amounts to virtual identity.¹⁹ Furthermore, the *villancico* hymns became popular Christmas carols in Spain.²⁰ From there, the early Christmas carols spread to Provence, Italy and other parts of Europe. They eventually became thoroughly assimilated in the national cultures of Western Europe.

Traditional Muslim vocal art-forms are also reflected in Spain through the *noctelas*, *romanceros*, *canso*, *seguidillas* and *cante jondo*. Some of these are based on Hispano-Arab poetry and are often accompanied by musical notes. The world famous Spanish *flamenco* is basically a combination of folk songs with popular musical notes.²¹ It may be said that without some traditional Muslim vocal art-forms, there would not have been much of the Troubadours; without the Troubadours not much of Italian poetry; nor Germany's Minne-singers; and also not much of Spanish poetry.

Thus there are many aspects of European growth prior to the modern age where the influence of Islamic culture is visible.²² In the case of Spain, Alfonso X (d.1284) is known to have ordered Don Abraham of Toledo to translate the 44 verses of Sura 70 from the Qur'an (on the Angels). This Sura also acted as a source of inspiration which helped Alfonso the Wise to write numerous verses on the Virgin Mary.

To those countries in the world which developed their culture under its influence, traditional Muslim vocal art has been a light which has brought many important intellectual and artistic achievements to civilisation. Through the medium of some religious verses or artistic poetry, traditional Muslim vocal art has been for centuries an ornament of the tongue and a jewel for the ear.

The importance of traditional Muslim vocal art-forms is that they could help the modern world to get a better understanding of Islamic culture. They could also help to improve the quality of the contemporary Islamisation movement in some parts of the Muslim world. Some of the vocal art-forms have so well harmonized cultural themes with religious expressions

in the past that their revival could help the Muslims to revitalize their culture today.

Traditional Muslim vocal art can also help to promote classical Arabic. Its basic components of diction, style, rhythm, sonority and grace can be used to facilitate the new arabisation process in the Arab world. Furthermore, many non-Arab Muslims would be encouraged to take a more active interest in learning Arabic. The language of the Qur'an still represents the purest form of Arabic and its interrelationships with *al-qira'at* can no doubt help many people to achieve the necessary skills to read or recite poetry in the best possible way. There is a tradition (Hadith) of the Prophet which says: "Teach poetry to your children, for it improves the mind, enriches wisdom and promotes virtues".

Poetry, which is an essential element of traditional Muslim vocal art, is still able to help a great number of people in getting a higher form of cultural consciousness and even a new sense of direction. Many artists nowadays, especially those in the Muslim world, find themselves working in a socio-cultural vacuum. Such artists often find that an ideal without the real lacks spiritual substance and the real without the ideal lacks pure beauty. Both need to unite in order to produce real joy and a sense of satisfaction in art and in life itself. This, in essence, is the great value of traditional Muslim vocal art-forms. ■

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P R O F I L E

Abdel Wahed El Wakil

Interpreter of a Living Tradition
Saleem Shahed





Abdul Wahed El-Wakil, the 40 years old Egyptian architect who in 1980 won an Aga Khan Award for the summer house he designed at the seaside resort of Agamy near Alexandria is, like the buildings he designs, rooted in and proud of his past, aware of and receptive to the present day progress and needs, and a visionary who believes in a future where tradition and modernity do not clash but merge to create a more beautiful, a more harmonious environment for man to live in.

Seeing him at work in his studios in Ashford, England, surrounded by hundreds of drawings and pictures of the palaces, mosques, industrial and commercial complexes and ordinary houses he has designed and built in many countries; delving into his files and cabinets stacked with thousands of photographs and colour transparencies and pulling out one to prove the point he is making; getting up suddenly to draw upon the blackboard he keeps handy near his desk to illustrate what he is saying; constantly interrupted by and attending to telephone calls from his offices, colleagues and friends in Egypt, the Middle East and America and all the time talking like a man with a mission, it is hard to believe that he went into architecture just by accident. "I believe some things are destined", he explains. "When I finished school, I got a very high grade which allowed me to choose the faculty I wanted. I decided to go into engineering. I wanted to design cars. I was always designing cars when I was a young boy... But the mechanical department was housed in a huge auditorium and there were thousands of students. It was too crowded. I didn't like it and stopped attending my classes. When my father found out, he went to see the Dean and discussed the matter with him. The Dean called me and said 'why aren't you attending your classes?' I told him I can't; it is too noisy and there are too many students. He said 'So you want to go into an aristocratic department?



What are you good at?' I said I am good at sculpture, art, maths and science. He advised me to go into architecture where there were only twenty students. That's how I went into architecture. Although later on I discovered from family records that since I was thirteen or so, whenever I went to visit friends and relatives or to a hotel, I was always drawing plans of the house or room I was staying in. I would write a letter to my mother and say I am living in this house. There is my room. There is a chair in that corner and that's my bed. I was already drawing plans without realising it. I think what helped is that I had this initial capacity to have an awareness of volume and space which are the basic ingredients of architecture. So when finally I went into architecture I was at home and had no problem in keeping the leading position every year at the University."

Abdul Wahed El-Wakil, who has emerged as one of the most original voices in contemporary Islamic architecture, was born in Cairo in 1943 in a well-to-do family. "We lived in a big family house in the Kubba Kadis area in Cairo. I remember we were on the ground floor and my uncle was on the top floor. There were staircases coming down to the garden, and from the garden to the street. There was a huge palm tree in the garden and I was always thinking that this is like Jack in the Beanstalk — that there was something, somebody there. This was very important, the relationship of space. In the house itself, we had an area which was the service area, the servant's quarters, the guest quarters. We had the attic where old things were kept. In short there was a separate space set aside for everything. Later, when we moved to an apartment building, I felt very frustrated as if in a prison. To escape from it I used to imagine that from our balcony there was a

ladder leading up to the roof and on the roof there was a children's paradise where there was nothing else but toys. A big room with toys, trains, everything, and nobody could come up there because I was the only one to climb up and go in. I had this awareness of different levels of space and different levels of intimacy. I always wanted a private attic or a tree-house where parents could not reach me. I used to imagine a further extension where I could go up into the heavens to meet the clouds as in fairy tales. People living in modern apartments do not have this awareness of space and volume or the relationship between space and man. If you take a child today who is living in one of the high rise buildings, twenty floors up, standing somewhere in a balcony — and then goes through the elevator and comes out on the far side of the street, he has no idea where he is in relation to his own area. How can you create an identity if you can't say I belong to some thing, I belong somewhere. This sense of belonging in the physical realm is very important. My son today lives with me in a small village in a small road, a cul-de-sac. There in the house he has his own small room which he can fully comprehend and relate to. There is a hierarchy, a gradual understanding of which helps him in establishing his identity. This may be what I am trying to create in my architecture."

By the time El-Wakil went to University, the world in which he had grown up and the architecture which he, as a young child, had learnt to love and admire so much, was being destroyed and replaced by extra-terrestrial structures of concrete and glass inspired by Utopian dreams of western architects like Corbusier, (according to El-Wakil 'the Hitler of architecture') and his followers who believed in their own theories of an 'international style' and 'cities of the future'. At the same time, the architects in the Arab world, as in so many other Third World countries, were losing their creative freedom and authority. They were finding themselves more and more at the mercy of a new breed of townplanners, sociologists and faceless bureaucrats or the politicians worried more about their own prestige and reputation as leaders of a progressive, meaning westernised, nation rather than the real needs and individual tastes of the people. The 'modern movement' had made

Pages 56-57

Background, Rendering of Suleiman Mosque, Jeddah.

1. Dome Pententive

2. Dome construction

3. Courtyard

4. Window Screens

5. Cornice Frieze

1 and 2. Wooden sky Lanterns in one of architect's design.

inroads into the classrooms too, but fortunately for El-Wakil, the syllabus still included study of classic and renaissance architecture. The house in which he had lived in his childhood was not a traditional Arab house. It was built in the renaissance style and featured Corinthian columns. There were some other houses at the time which were supposed to be 'arabesque'. They did not appeal to El-Wakil, because they were part of a superficial revival. They would take an Italian palace as a model and instead of putting the renaissance details, ornaments and columns, they would fill it in with Islamic columns, Islamic stalactites and Islamic ornaments. El-Wakil decided to concentrate on the renaissance. "The modern was too confusing for me. There was no philosophy in the modern. Nobody could tell me why should we have a roof that breaks in the middle? Why should we have a wall that inclines like the walls in Brasilia? Why should we have a building which is curvilinear all around? Why should we have a building which is on one column only? Why should we have an overhang which is spreading as far as technology can make it go? Why should one choose to live under the feeling that it is going to drop on your head? I didn't understand this. With the renaissance there was the column and everything was related to the diameter of the column. There was a regulating aspect. There was a base and there were visible canons. In modern architecture you do not see any canons. The 'modern movement' was a breaking up of form really. It had no form of its own but only a breaking up of form of different schools, different ideas. At least in Egypt there wasn't. Moreover, the whole 'modern movement' in Western Europe was the outcome of needs that did not apply to our society. It was like their needs which created Marxism, their needs that created socialism or democracy. We didn't have these needs in our countries. All that we needed was a revaluation of Islamic principles."

After finishing his early education at the English School in Cairo, Abdul Wahed El-Wakil obtained his degree in architecture from Ain Shams University and between 1965 and 1970, he lectured at the department where he had studied. But he feels his true education came from his own in-depth research into Islamic forms and structures and



particularly the five years he spent with the internationally known Egyptian advocate of indigenous architecture, Hassan Fathy. At that time nobody appeared to be interested in local traditional architecture. When El-Wakil sent his students to do drawings of old buildings in Cairo, it was considered to be an aberration by the rest of the teaching staff. When for his master's degree he wanted to do a thesis on Hassan Fathy's work, they were all against it because they believed Fathy was a retrograde who was taking Egypt backwards. Nobody was willing to be his thesis supervisor. He gave up and decided to do a thesis on structures. "From 1965 to 1967, I did almost nothing else but structure studies which helped me later on in my career with vault and dome construction. After the 1967 war there was little work but much discussion, particularly about the need for a national form of architecture. We asked ourselves how, as architects, we could contribute to re-building our nation, particularly in the field of housing. A friend of mine told me I should go and see Hassan Fathy who had been struggling with the question for over 30 years and nothing had come of it. I went to him and told him I want to study traditional architecture. He was happy to know and I stayed with him for the next five years from 1968 to 1973. Living and working with Hassan Fathy, the writing of a thesis became unimportant because I was actually living my thesis."

After a time, it became frustrating for El-Wakil to be living in an imaginary world of drawings. Profession means practice. He had already done three apartment buildings before going to Fathy, conventional constructions of four stories with two flats per floor. Then he stopped because he felt he should not do them any more. This was not because of his previous

knowledge of Fathy and his work but because he found the building laws were too restrictive and limited his design. He also found that generally the client's criteria for judging design was based on financial speculation alone. "The resulting buildings are a disaster as environments for living," he thought. "There is no longer any fundamental meaning in this kind of architecture."

Since 1971, Abdul Wahed El-Wakil has been in private practice. His works, private residences as well as public buildings, are to be found throughout the Middle East. In 1979, he became consultant to UNESCO for the construction of a bedouin village on the historic site of Petra in Jordan.

El-Wakil's deeply internationalised knowledge of Islamic architecture has enabled him to utilize its concept with unerring sureness and virtuosity, producing an architecture which is familiar yet startlingly fresh. Moreover, his use of indigenous elements, materials and building techniques comes at a time of increasing questioning concerning the relevance of the 'international style' in architecture to the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world. Traditionally, architecture was shaped by the people and influenced by local environment. It expressed national character and identity, and provided the sense of continuity that enables man to build a stable future. El-Wakil's buildings respond to this essential need. At the same time, they are noteworthy for their efficiency, both climatically and in terms of design fitness to function.

The Halawa House in Agamy, for which he won the Aga Khan Award for "Contemporary Use of Traditional Language" is surrounded on all sides on the beach by buildings modelled on north European precedents with exposed, outward looking terraces and balconies. El-Wakil's house looks inward to a courtyard round which the internal spaces spiral. In the centre of the court is a fountain. It's octagonal shape by tradition is a reflection of the dome of the sky. Other traditional forms include the loggia, the wind-catcher, the alcoves, the masonry benches, the belvedere and oblique entrances.

Construction is traditional too. Walls are of local limestone rubble; burnt red bricks with mud mortar form the unshuttered arches, vaults and domes. The building is finished

inside and out with Alexandrine plastering of sand, lime and stucco. The layout and choice of materials make for an excellent climatic performance and roof structures give good insulation.

The Al Sulaiman Palace located in the Al-Hamra district on the seashore of Jeddah and owned by one of the most influential families in Saudi Arabia, is based on the idea to re-inforce the local building tradition by creating designs that reintegrate existing traditional trades and crafts in Saudi Arabia. Its

grandeur has been created not by using costly materials but by using ordinary materials and attaining richness through design and execution by craftsmen. El-Wakil blames the propagators of the philosophy of material functionalism and their utilitarian approach for the dull environment existing around us in the cities and towns today. "It is true that buildings must fulfil their immediate functions but it is imperative to recall the higher function of architecture, which is to give concrete objective expression



1. Island at Hydra.
2. House at Hydra (Rendering).
3. House at Hydra (Rendering).
4. Waterside Mosque, Jeddah. Elevation. Rendering.
5. Model.



to man's inner metaphysical aspirations. As Ruskin has said 'Architecture is the myth of a culture, carved in stone, its monumental buildings have provided this highest form of art.' The Sulaiman Palace was built with the intention of expressing such an ideal. 'The palace will have served its purpose well,' believes El-Wakil, 'if it can inspire and influence the more utilitarian building-types. I wished to make explicit a philosophy of design for the traditional Arab house. An architecture that serves society is dynamic and is prone to change. The challenge of architecture is to maintain continuity within the change that occurs by referring to the constants and re-interpreting them within the new context. The interaction between what is constant and what is change, brought out by newly arising situation, results in new formal entities'.

The Sulaiman Palace has been criticised by some for using traditional construction methods and materials revived by Hassan Fathy for low cost housing, not in order to build an expensive palace. El-Wakil's answer is 'It creates a standard of quality. It is an ideal image of a dwelling type. In the past, there were two versions of the ideal abode, the spiritual in the form of a mosque or a mausoleum; and the secular, in the form of the rich man's palace. Even today the modern technology too is producing Rolls Royces or Space Shuttles. They are all needed in order to produce ultimately more widely accessible ordinary objects of quality. They set the standards of what is possible. Many of the problems today with mass-housing have to do with a lack of understanding of the house as a social-status symbol. People don't want dwellings that remind them of what is old or provincial, what is referred to as 'local' or 'vulgar', belonging to common people. In this sense the Sulaiman Palace has helped. People from the lower or middle classes who did not want Arab houses, want them now. And don't forget, an architect who can design palaces can design ordinary dwellings too.'

In the Sulaiman Palace, with its Arab features of asymmetry, its separation into public and private spaces and interior courtyards and balconies, El-Wakil has made imaginative and extensive use of the traditional Mashrabiyyas, wooden lanterns, raised domes, doors

panelled with geometric patterns, ceramics and marble floors as found both in traditional Islamic houses and mosques. He says, 'In prior periods, the mosque and the house were related just as were the early Churches and the houses of the time. Today there is a discrepancy. The mosque is no longer apparently related to the modern house which is done more like garages or hangers in concrete. I want to bring the relationship back into being. Many people today are against the use of Mashrabiyyas because it represents to them a sort of prison for women, to conceal them. They do not realise that it is in fact one of the best ways of diffusing intense light into space. Today, instead of using Mashrabiyyas people hang curtains in front of open windows, hoping to achieve the same effect.'

There were no cranes used in the building of the Sulaiman Palace, only wheel-barrows and manpower. Bricks were even manufactured on site when local kilns could not supply in sufficient quantity. The carpenter was the son of a famous Egyptian carpenter whose traditional knowledge is dying out. The Sulaiman Palace provided the opportunity to preserve and develop his inherited skills. Without a market demand, such skills will inevitably be lost for ever.

El-Wakil says 'Architecture is not theorising and sociological analysis as taught in schools today; it is a knowledge of techniques and materials as well. My master mason, Aladdin, cannot read a drawing of a building in sections. You show him a plan and show him the location of a dome or vault and he understands the whole as a three-dimensional volume. Working with him taught me a very important thing that studies in schools and colleges alone cannot: that architecture is a collective art, not an individual art — and it has its own vocabulary that communicates the image in a meaningful way. With Aladdin I started to learn this language. When talking about making a claustra, he asked me 'you want seven-eights?' Well, I soon understood. Seven in Arabic is a V and eight is an inverted V; and this corresponded to the way he composed bricks to make a claustra. Every word in the vocabulary is related to a form in his mind. The poverty of modern architecture is due to the fact that architects believe they can do all the detailing without a sound knowledge of techniques and materials'.

The Sulaiman Palace was El-Wakil's conscious effort to introduce to Jeddah his concept of Islamic architecture. All the traditional elements come together in a unified whole. His daring use of traditional elements has set the pace and style for others.

El-Wakil has carefully considered the need for and the ways of restoring interest in Islamic architecture. 'What are the factors that can encourage traditional architecture?' he argues. 'And why should it be encouraged? The concern for the maintenance of traditional architecture is critical. It is the tangible expression of Islamic thought and way of life. One politician who realized this was Winston Churchill. When, after the war, there were plans to change the architectural style of House of Commons, he said, 'No, it must be like the previous House of Commons because although we form our buildings, later, they shape us'. There is a relationship of the built environment with the inward character of the people who live in it. The built environment reflects the inner thoughts and aspirations of the people.'

More impressive, from an architectural point of view, is the Datsun Commercial headquarters and its mechanical workshop in Jeddah. It raised problems altogether different from domestic spaces such as the Sulaiman Palace. Surrounded by ultra modern, steel and concrete shopping centres and residential towers, this quiet, white, fortress-like complex clearly demonstrates how the basic concepts of Islamic architecture can be made to work in the most utilitarian settings.

Later on both the owner and Manager of Datsun Centre in Jeddah, commissioned him to design their private homes. In contrast to the lavish exterior and complex interiors of the Sulaiman Palace, these two palatial houses are striking in their simplicity. They are closer to the traditional Islamic house which was built, not to impress, but to satisfy the needs of the inmates.

El-Wakil's Hamdy House in Cairo and other houses he has designed in Greece represent an altogether different exercise from the Sulaiman Palace. They demonstrate that qualitative architectural statements can also be made with limited if not meagre means. They are intended to be minimum

economic dwellings and completely self-contained units. Because of the compact nature of the volume, considerable use was made of geometric and arithmetic proportions in order to give intelligible scale and proportions to the composition of space, their heights, the location of fountains and so on. Walking through any of the buildings designed by El-Wakil, one can see that besides their conceptual aspects, he has gone into the minutest detail of the air currents, the climatic changes, the path of the sun, the quality of woods, marble, plaster and metal fixtures used in construction or the finishing work.

El-Wakil's most lasting contribution to Islamic architecture might become the mosques designed by



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1. Window, Hamdy House, Giza, Egypt.
2. Rooftop, Sulaiman Palace, Jeddah.
3. Marble Floor, Sulaiman Palace.
4. Hamdy House, Giza, Rendering.
5. Hamdy House, Giza.
6. Courtyard, Hamdy House, Night view.
7. Pool, Sulaiman Palace.

Opposite page

1. Garden, Private Residence, Riyadh.
2. Model of
3. Interior of Qasr
4. Stained glass Alshrahayah.
5. Model, Aerial view.

him like the great mosque near the Sulaiman Palace in Jeddah with its enormous 12-meter dome, the one on an island off the Corniche, another one on a lagoon or the King Saud Mosque which is being restored under his supervision. According to El-Wakil "When you are building a mosque, you are building to the glory of God. You cannot improve upon His creation. The very essence of a mosque is the unifying factor, the physical outcome of the unity of the concepts

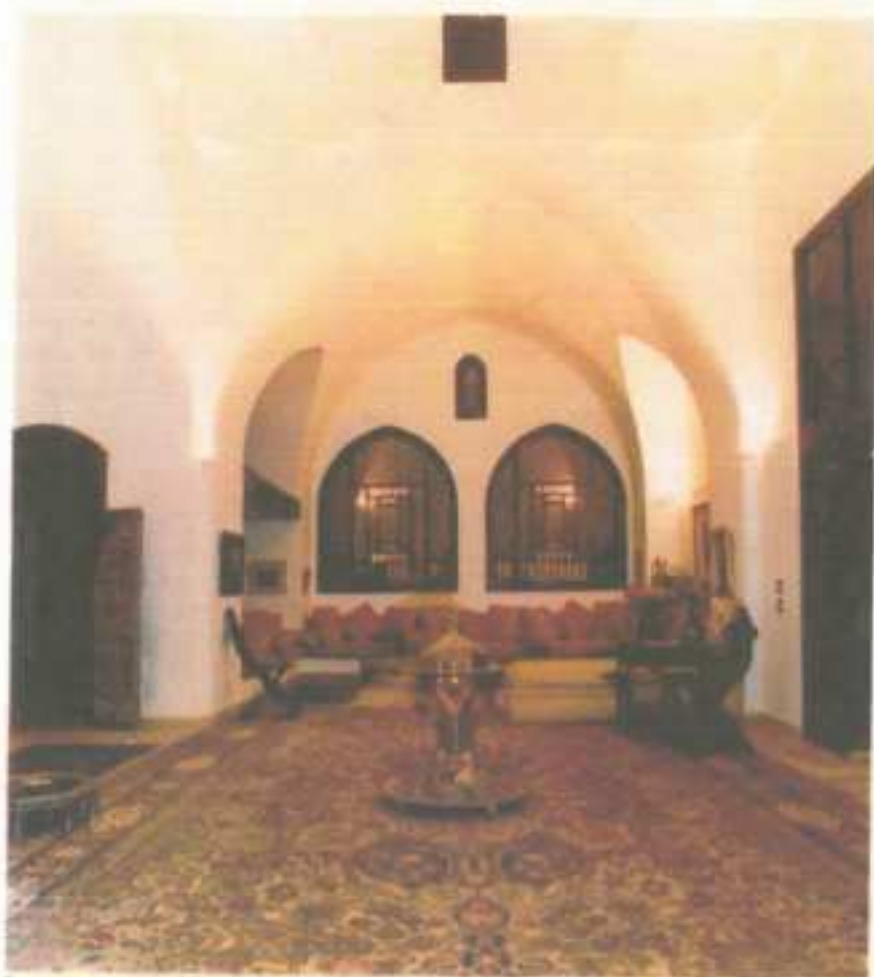
of the collective mind. A mosque is the unifying element which brings society together as a whole like an orchestra where hundreds and thousands of street-fiddlers come into it and create a symphony. This is the function of the mosque. Not a physical function but a spiritual function. It is the ideal of the unseen, the unknown. To conceptualise this ideal we build a mosque. I do not worry what materials I use in the building. Whether I use concrete and aluminium or not, it is

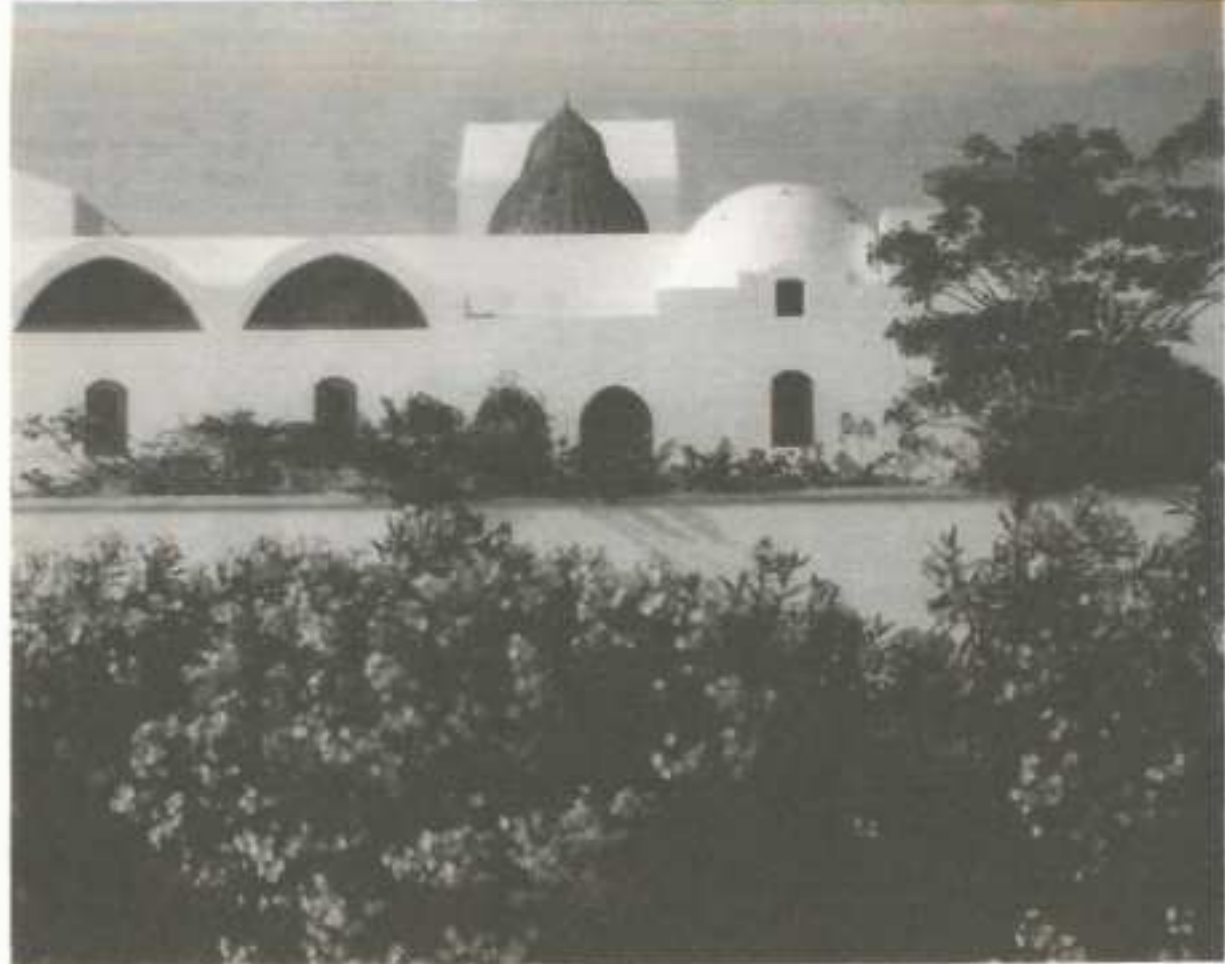


unimportant. They may give it some structural strength or quality, but they do nothing to strengthen the spiritual concept of unity which is the message of God and the essence of Islam. It is the easiest thing to design a mosque functionwise. All you need is a flat area for people to pray and you need a small ablution area with a toilet. Those who talk about functionalism and contemporary mosque are only trying to integrate the mosque in our secular society of today because it is the easier way out than changing our material society to conform with the message of God and Islam. The result is that the mosque becomes a



metropolis or a citadel. It is no more part of the society as in the past. Modern materials and methods may be more convenient because of price or speed, I prefer to use natural materials. The questions I ask myself when I build a mosque is have I been able, through my act, to spread His message? And I hope I have not spoiled His earth. I have





Elevation, South Saliman Palace.

not spoiled His environment."

Some critics have pointed out that revival of tradition results in imitation of the past. El-Wakil's answer is "The people who speak of imitating the past are the people who are imitating the West. The people who are innovative and have made contributions to art and architecture, they have never abolished the past. They look to the past with reverence. Revival is not imitation because imitation is when you are clinging to your past. You show your poverty if you go after something only because it is new or different or imported. Only those people talk about imitating the past who know nothing about the past. I do not imitate it. When I build a dome which is 12-meter in span without any shuttering, I take that risk because I know more about structures than any other contemporary architect who depends on a structural engineer. My mason who built it is more competent than many structural engineers. I am not imitating. I am recreating the past. And the only way you can avoid imitating or repeating the past is by keeping it alive. Once you forget it, you repeat it. Once you forget the evolution of religion and God, you become a secular society, you

become the 'jahilliya' again. You can only avoid the past by preserving it and that is why one of man's missions on earth is to remember. An act of remembrance is not an imitation - or else you might say why I am repeating my prayers every day? Why I am repeating my fasts every year in the Holy month of Ramadan?"

How does one define Islamic architecture? What is it that distinguishes Islamic architecture from other forms of architecture? El-Wakil believes you can do it not by form but by spirit. "You are dealing with a creature with a thousand faces. Is it in this picture of Pakistan, India, Iran, Morocco or China? The pictures represent so many changes in space and time. The picture, the form, the face is not the unifying element in Islam or Islamic architecture. Not as you look at a picture of a church and say this is renaissance or this is Gothic. Islamic architecture can leap from a Nubian house to the huge vertical buildings of Yemen, to the spread of a desert hut, to the Lebanese mountain villages with pitched roofs. There are the Turkish mosques with their dominating domes and the beautiful bedouin mosques with their courtyards and

their low *isdonnades*. There is so much variety in space and time from a bedouin culture to a very urbanistic culture. How can you combine and define all this under one name? In one way only - and that is by not looking at the form, but looking at the spirit. Once you look into the spirit, the form is irrelevant. The form comes naturally, exactly like a seed which has been planted. The tree will take its shape in accordance with the climate, the winds, but with the same basic concept of design which is within the seed. So it is the kernel, the seed, the spirit which creates Islamic architecture and is important. It is that unifying spirit which is important. Traditional forms are the alphabet, not the poetry. I use them but they are nothing in themselves. It is in the juxtaposition of these forms, how I use them, where I place them, that makes it Islamic architecture.

El-Wakil's ambition is to design an Islamic village "because a village is really collective art. In it everything is in the proper context. If you could show people what an Islamic community could really look like visually, I am sure that they would be attracted to traditional Islamic architecture."

Second Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts

Founded by one of Alexander the Great's generals or a Ptolemy of Egypt, Jerash has outlived various conquerors who took part in developing it, including the Romans as an outpost of their civilization. It was one of the Decapolis, a chain of stopover free cities along the caravan routes that stretched from the Nile to the Euphrates and from the Arabian desert to the Mediterranean shores. Enjoying the security and protection of the Pax Romana they grew in richness and architectural splendour.

Jerash reached its height of splendour during the first two centuries

A.D. with its magnificent temples, flowing fountains, luxurious baths, artistic theatres, prosperous shops and colonnaded streets. In the 3rd century it became a colony of Rome, and was further lavishly beautified, but times had changed, and soon Jerash began to decline. In the 4th century it came under the influence of Christianity and the temples became churches. In 634 it was captured by the Arabs, and is now part of the Kingdom of Jordan.

In 1981, it was chosen as the site of the first Festival of Jerash organised by the Yarmok University. It was a small event that lasted for only four days. But it was a great success not only because many famous foreign groups performed there but also because of the enthusiastic participation of a very large number of local artists, dancers and musicians who brought back to life all the richness and splendour of this historic Jorda-

nian city.

Last year the Festival was cancelled in the wake of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, but this year, it was revived on a much bigger and more ambitious scale. A national committee was formed under the Chairmanship of H.M. Queen Noor to supervise the work of the Executive Committee, and a number of sub-committees were formed which took over the actual implementation and execution of the task. Members of the Committees were voluntary workers ranging from the Governor of Jerash to the first year students of the University of Yarmok.

An infrastructure was built that would also serve future festivals. Lighting and acoustics were installed in the temples, vaults, baths, colonades, amphitheatres, forums and the cathedral of the ancient city. New parking areas were designed, water pipes and communication systems installed, public services and a wide



Jordanian Folkdancing group

range of restaurants completed. The Festival continued for nine days and included a variety of activities designed to appeal to all tastes and all ages.

Arab groups from six different Arab countries offered a variety of Arab folk dancing and music. Feirouz the leading Arab singer from Lebanon, headed the list. The Reda Folklore Dance Group from Egypt, its brilliant choreographer and director Mahmoud Reda, and its star Farida Fahmi, made the greatest impact, besides popular groups from Yemen, Kuwait, Algeria and Tunisia.

Other foreign groups included those from the third world countries such as Bangladesh and India, presenting dances and songs from different regions of the sub-continent. There was also the Chinese Hanjo Acrobatic group, whose performances were greatly appreciated. There were three American groups: Hall-Rogers Modern Dancers, Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver Country, and Bluegrass Music and the Empire State Institute of Performing Arts. Other participants were Salzburger Stierwascher Austrian Folklore, Canada Nissarda French Folklore of Nice, Italian Folklore from Sardinia and the Scottish Highlanders complete with bagpipes and Scottish dancing.

All these groups, despite the understandable differences in their standards and presentation, gave the festival a colourful air, and the Jordanian public a glimpse of the local costumes and music of various Eastern and Western countries, which many were seeing for the first time.

Local Jordanian groups presented quite a number of items ranging from traditional folklore dancing, both Arabic and Circassian, presented by five groups from different regions to the Armed Forces Band with their famous bagpipe music and the Radio Jordan Orchestra and Children's Choir, ending with two local rock groups playing heavy metal music by the young and for the young.

A pleasant surprise was the great success the poetry reading programme was able to register. The poems read and recited were of high standard and the public's reaction was full of enthusiasm and positive responsive vibrations. Leading poets from Yemen, Iraq, Egypt and Jordan recited their poems and filled the balmy Jerash evenings with the beauty of the Arabic language.

The productions of three local theatre groups highlighted the emergence of a new theatre movement in Jordan. Children's Theatre, which is very popular in Jordan, presented four plays that were enjoyed by adults as well as children. However, the plastic arts programme did not live up to the expectations. The exhibition by prominent Jordanian artists in the Zeus Vault was not very significant, specially when compared to the exhibition held at the first Festival. Another exhibition in the Cathedral area was more like a side-walk exhibition on a Sunday afternoon than an art exhibition, while the children's art exhibit outshone both by its spontaneity and unpretentiousness.

Jordanian crafts exhibited in the central colonnades revived the history of the place and fanned interest in

local handicraft. There were also two local fashion shows. The first comprised authentic traditional Jordanian and Palestinian costumes from various regions, produced by the authority on local costumes, Mrs Widad Kassar, who owns the biggest collection of such costumes in the region. The second exhibition, called "Jordan Through History", was a sort of review of the development of costumes from the stone age until the twentieth century, presented through inadequate reproductions and sometimes inaccurate modern interpretations of what might have been worn in Jordan at one stage or another during its long history.

The book exhibition had on display more than 100,000 books from most publishers and countries covering a large variety of subjects. Sadly enough, that section of the Festival was never crowded.

Historical feature films, by Egyptian, Lebanese and Syrian directors were shown, as well as documentaries, cartoons, video tapes, and slide shows. They all provided pleasant restful intervals for visitors weary of walking around the extensive grounds of the Festival.

As it progressed from the first day with the opening ceremony by His Majesty King Hussain and Queen Noor, all the shows improved, along with the organization, communications and services, thus enabling everybody to enjoy a Festival that looks destined to become a major annual cultural event in the world of art.

Wijdan Ali

General view of the crowd.



Islamic Art and Design 1500 - 1700

This exhibition at the British Museum (18 November 1983 - 19 March 1984) displays Ottoman, Persian Safavid, and Indian Mughal art, laid out within an exhibition space approached on either side by eviscerated rooms full of scaffolding and tools. Perhaps the contrast is salutary; there are some marvellous pieces, particularly the ceramic dishes (nos. 130 and 135), with stylised flowers on cobalt blue and pink grounds, and a flask (no. 143) decorated with animal and harpy figures.

One of the finest tughras from the British Museum collection is on show, (no. 31, dated 1550), as is a decree of the Sublime Porte, appointing in 1677 one Samai Bari as British Consul in Cyprus (no. 23). Two sections of the exhibition describe 'Europeans and the East', meaning Persia and India, which correspond with Chapter 6 of the catalogue 'The Muslim Empires and Europe', which is what this show is really about. Exhibits 85-101 consist of some curious miniatures by Mughal and Turkish artists, of scenes from the Bible, or people in European costumes and surroundings. No. 94, with the title of 'Bathing Scene' is a strange mixture of the religious, the erotic, and the romantic. Five fascinating woodcuts by 14th century Venetian artists are little known: no. 83, engraved in 1559 by Melchior Lorichs, shows Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in court costume, with the Suleimaniye Mosque in Istanbul in the background, and a war elephant in the middle distance.

The admirably produced catalogue - available at £5.50 at the Museum until the exhibition ends, when it will cost £7.95 - contains some minor inaccuracies: in no. 38, the antelope is an oryx, as anyone with experience of the Islamic world would know, and the illustration shows only the bottom part of the drawing, of two mythical animals locked in combat. Exhibit no. 62 does not show the youth playing the *tambur* to a dappled (grey?) horse, as illustrated in the catalogue.

At the far end of the largest room is a magnificent crimson silk banner



1. Lioness attacking an antelope - paper cut with ink details, Ottoman Turkey 16th century. No. 8 in catalogue

with green and gold Quranic inscriptions, and, woven into the centre, a representation of the Dhu al Fajar, the two-pronged sword of Ali. This is a Turkish war standard, ascribed to the 17th century Austrian-Turkish wars. It is not in the catalogue, and no hint is given of how it reached the British Museum's Department of Oriental Antiquities. All objects displayed come from various collections in Britain and Eire.

The banner brings some feel of the fire of action to a somewhat static show, which concentrates too much upon museum objects in glass cases, splendid as these are. The Indian exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1982 showed how much can be done to bring art alive; in comparison this one is unimaginative. It is evident that little thought and less money have been devoted to its design.

Rosalind Mazzawi



2. Cast brass flask with Arabic inscriptions in cartouches. Isfahan, Persia, early 17th century. No. 189 in catalogue.

3. Alexander the Great, in European clothes, is greeted by natives bearing offerings of fish. Note semi-circular red in background, square hat of soldier on the left, and plume and banner of the horse. Mughal c. 1600, from the Iskander-nama. No. 24 in catalogue.

4. Lined dish, with white flowers on cobalt blue ground. Isfahan, early 17th century, for Mughal market. No. 172 in catalogue.



Islamic Structures at Vijayanagara

The exhibition 'The Royal Centre Vijayanagara' shown at the RIBA London (May 12 - June 7) gave a fascinating glimpse of a medieval city in the South Asian subcontinent, which is currently being surveyed for the first time by an international group of students under the direction of architectural historian Dr George Michell and archaeologist Dr John Fritz.

The two centuries of Vijayanagara's history present a picture of almost

cotton trade they controlled.

The apogee of the city's wealth and power occurred in the early sixteenth century and was witnessed by Portuguese traders based in Goa who described in glowing terms the great wealth of the city. Although Vijayanagara was the capital of an empire which acted as a bulwark of Hinduism in the south against the march of Islam from the north, its adoption of Islamic traditions and building techniques is clearly recognisable, a paradox which forms one of the most fascinating aspects of the exhibition. The influence of typically Islamic architectural forms such as the pointed arch, dome and vault are mainly found in the private quarters of the king but are also evident in the open pavilions characteristic of Islamic courtly life and the fortified

geometric rather than figural, as one would have expected from Hindu craftsmen, which also suggests the work of Muslim artisans or possibly of artisans trained in Muslim building techniques. Much of the secular architecture embodies Islamic architectural forms which only appeared in India with the Muslim conquests of the early thirteenth century and would have been more at home in the neighbouring Muslim kingdom.

The city of Vijayanagara occupies a huge site on the banks of the Tungabhadra river and is divided into three distinct parts — the Sacred Centre to the north, the residential quarters sprawling out to the south, and the Royal Centre which contains the buildings connected with the private and public life of the king, and is



continuous warfare with the Muslim states to the north, as well as incessant internal rebellions and general political upheavals. That the Vijayanagara kings were able to sustain the cost not only of prolonged warfare, but of an ambitious building programme far exceeding the efforts of rival kings anywhere else in India at that time, testifies to their enormous resources. Indeed, the wealth of half the southern peninsula poured into their treasury, including the profits from the lucrative spice and

enclosures.

Throughout this period Arab horses were imported by Persian and Arab traders and Deva Raya I imported two thousand Muslim horsemen also to train his Hindu cavalry. It is likely that at the same time Muslim craftsmen were also brought in. Many of the secular buildings which are Islamic in conception could only have been built by masons skilled in the techniques of dome and arch construction. The decorative patterns on stucco are often

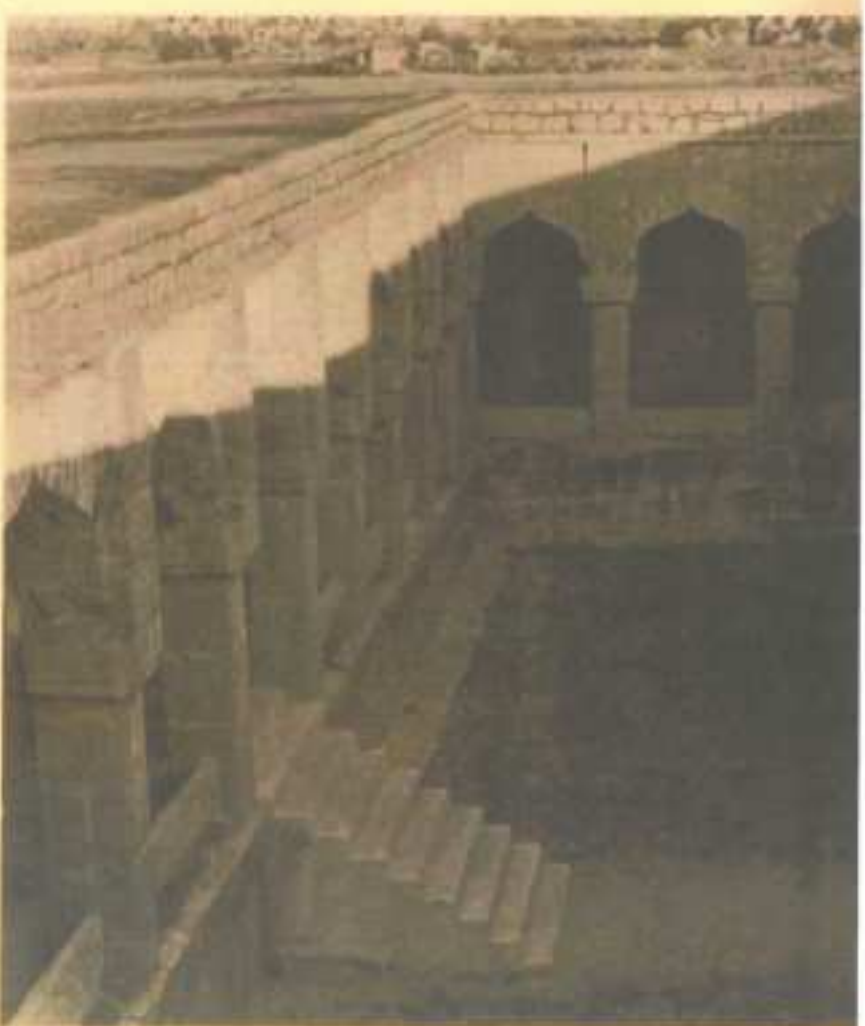
the focus of the exhibition. These are the buildings that display a pronounced Islamic influence.

Perhaps the most remarkable building shown in the exhibition is the complex of Elephant Stables whose uniqueness is illustrated in a beautiful architectural drawing. The typical form of the Islamic tomb — a domed cube — is used in an entirely new context. Eleven chambers, each roofed with a dome or vault on squinches, form a row of stables. There are six distinct types



of dome arranged symmetrically around a central bay which must originally have possessed a pyramidal roof. A royal elephant inhabited each domed chamber. Looking at the photographs of the square watchtower in the 'Zenana Enclosure', the imagination turns to the Torre de las Damas in the Alhambra and while gazing at the courtyard of the 'guard's quarters', images of the Seljuk caravanserais in Turkey come to mind. The unity of form in Islamic architecture, from the Maghreb in the West to Muslim India in the East, is remarkable enough, but to find these Islamic forms in the capital of a great Hindu kingdom is astonishing and begs the question of why these architectural forms should have had such widespread appeal.

Lisa Norell



1. Central Bay of Elephant Stables. The structure would probably have carried a pyramidal stepped roof contrasting with the Islamic domes beneath.

2. Lotus Motif.

3. Elevation. Architectural drawing of Lotus Motif.

4. Guards quarters from the Elephant Stables.

Vienna Exhibitions to mark Tercentenary of the 1683 Siege

In the 'Year of the Turks' 1983 the Viennese have attempted the Herculean task, comparable to their efforts three hundred years ago, of setting up exhibitions throughout Vienna to celebrate their second momentous victory over the Ottomans in 1683. The siege has been described by one catalogue as a 'crucial turn of events in the history of Austria, and the main exhibition at the Kunsterhaus (5 May - 30 October) successfully recreates the decisive struggle in a vivid display of audio-visuals, life-size battle scenarios and small vignettes showing, in miniature, the main stages of the siege.

The massive siege started in April 1683 and many paintings and engravings show the twenty-five thousand tents which sheltered 250,000 besieging soldiers and the bewildering grid of trenches and tunnels which must have been burrowed over 50 kilometres. There is even an engraving of Turks and Austrians both in their own tunnels which have met shooting at each other underground from their own tunnels which had broken into each other by mistake. After intense suffering in Vienna which included famine, plague and heavy losses the city was relieved on 12 September by 65,000 Poles, Austrians and Germans with over 150 cannon.

Previous commemorative exhibitions have tended to be biased towards the victors and the ideals of their day but, the organizers of the present exhibition boast fair play to both sides (although the exhibition will, no doubt, prove to be just as much a product of its age). In dispensing the traditional idea of the barbaric Turks, much of the exhibition has been given over to Turkish culture, notably embroidery and ceramics and the inevitable cross-cultural exchanges that take place when armed conflicts occur. This interesting aspect of the exhibition traces Turkish influence on Viennese culture down to the most parochial objects such as children's games and food, (though and the pretzel were apparently Turkish imports).

The main part of the exhibition is, however, the siege itself and the characters who took part in it. An exhibition of seventeenth century portraits included that of Jan Sobieski, the plump Polish hero king who aided the Viennese, who is shown mounted in full Roman regalia crushing a turban underfoot and with a trumpeting angel only slightly ahead, which contrasts elegantly with the anguished

and sensitive portrait of Kara Mustafa, commander-in-chief of the Turkish army who paid for his failure with his life and was later cruelly satirized by gleeful Viennese artists.

The imaginative battle scenarios clearly show the function of military equipment such as the appliqued cotton Turkish tents, glass hand-grenades, embroidered saddle covers and Turkish and European weapons, as well as the most spectacular Polish cavalry leather flourishes similar to Red Indian headresses. Other memorable objects were the exquisite embroidered leather saddle cover of Kara Mustafa and Father Francesco Morosini's prayer book within which was neatly lodged a pistol, indicating a time, I suppose, when even religion was subjugated to the immediate demands of war.

Despite the attempt to portray the Ottomans in a better light, contemporary opinion had, of course, to be included mainly in the form of printed pamphlets which were widely circulated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and which contributed so much to the contemporary view of the merciless Turks.

It was encouraging to notice the variety of lenders to the exhibition which even included Poland. And it must be hoped that we will soon see, as it is rumoured, loans from Turkey which would represent a welcome change of policy.

The main catalogue of the exhibition (published only in German) is solid and well documented both in the field of martial arts and historical events, with a large number of illustrations, although inevitably most of them are black and white.

An unusual feature of the catalogue was the inclusion of advertisements at the back, with an intriguing advert featuring a three hundred year old Turkish coffee house in Vienna.

Of the subsidiary publications, a novel idea was the special children's catalogue which set out the events of the siege in a comic strip format as well as quizzes and games. Another popular information magazine about all the events even included a giant siege crossword puzzle! All these no doubt represent an attempt 'to bring history alive'. Even the entrance to the exhibition is in the same colourful vein with a giant mock Turkish tent covering the entire facade and larger-than-life Turkish painted fibreglass figures on the balcony overlooking fashionable Karlsplatz.

Perhaps the real achievement of these exhibitions is the delicate diplomatic feat of turning an anniversary of old enmity into an opportunity for increasing friendship between the two countries.

Robert Chenciner and Eliza Mellor ■



Who are the Arabs? Schools' Art Competition

"What springs to your mind when the Arab World is mentioned? What is the reality behind the TV image?" These questions were put to schools in the Greater London area by the League of Arab States and the World of Islam Festival Trust in a jointly sponsored competition.

Pupils were asked to interpret through their art: "The Arab World: Families at Home"; "The Arab Village and City"; "Prayer and Worship in Arab Daily Life"; "Who are the Arabs?"; "The Arab World: Image and Reality"; and "The Arab World: Progress and Change".

The competition was designed to encourage a greater understanding of the Arab peoples, religions and cultures and it was open to schools in the Greater London area.

Divided into two age groups (A) 11-13 years old and (B) 13-15 years old, the winners were:

Group A: 1st £250, Malory School, Bromley, Kent; Katherine Mill and Diana Chervette.

2nd £100, Woodford County High School for Girls, Essex; Nina Davis and Jashur Bhamrah.

Group B: 1st £250, St Veronica's RC School, SE17; Christina Li Koon Shing and Loretta Niddik.

2nd £100, Malory School, Bromley, Kent; Allison Lees and Diana Law.

£100 prize for school with the most competitors was won by Woodford County High School for Girls.

£50 special prize for ceramic/glass entry, presented by the Islamic Cultural Centre, was won by Kingsdale School, Dulwich SE231 - Trevor Ridley.

The prizes were distributed, 14 September, by Lady Caradon after the panel of judges had made their selection. The judging panel consisted of: Dr Ali Abdulhah Mughram, Director of the Islamic Cultural Centre; Mr Orlan Arab, The Arab League Office; Mr Dale Dawson, Scorpion Publishing and Communications; Mrs Mariana Duncan, Middle East Photographic Archive; Mr Gai Eaton, Author on Muslim Affairs; Mr Frederick Palmer, Art Inspectorate, ILEA; Dr Esmat El Said, Arab Women's Council and Dr Charis Waddy, Author on Muslim Affairs.

Introducing Lady Caradon to the assembled company, and speaking of the motivation and purpose of the competition, Mr Alistair Duncan, Director of the World of Islam Festival Trust, drew attention to "the continuing

ing need for all of us to understand the inter-relationship between our own Western culture and that of the Muslim peoples of the World, not least on account of our own community in the UK".

He also drew attention to "the need for spiritual values and ethics to guide us all in facing the problems of the age on both personal and international levels", and reminded the audience that their own standards could well be checked against those of other people whose guiding principles were different in varying degrees but of no less validity.

Following are extracts from the transcript of his remarks:

"We, who have initiated this competition and all of you who have responded and taken part in it have, by their thoughts and actions, demonstrated their recognition of the fact that people and countries can no longer live their lives in isolation from each other. But in a world in which political activities all too often cause ignorance to be maintained, truth distorted and prejudices enhanced for selfish purpose, the grave responsibilities of true educationalists become of even greater importance and transnational significance.

"At a time when our own schools are suffering from rising costs and a national economy which cannot always afford the funding sought for curricula and programmes, it seemed to us that this art competition for London schools could make some small but well-intentioned practical gesture on both the counts to which I have referred. I was particularly glad and grateful that the Arab League Office should understand our motives and to generously offer the prize money. Their participation is especially encouraging to the Trust, whose work it is to promote international understanding and appreciation of their great and expensive Islamic cultural tradition which has its heartlands in Arabia.

"There is also another matter to which I would like to refer. It is a fact that at a so-called 'popular' level, western media tends to disparage and misrepresent the real values of our own great culture. Worst of all has been the myth that 'scientific materialism' was to be the universal panacea for all the ills and woes that beset mankind today. We know that this is patently untrue, and if, therefore, we are to contribute any lasting benefits to other people, we must reexamine and revive our own beliefs and guiding ethics.

"One way in which we can help ourselves to achieve this is by comparing our standards with those of other cultures and civilisations. It does not take us long to realise that we can learn

much from the understanding of other equally valued disciplines and responsible approaches to the problems which confront all of mankind, but which may vary considerably in their practical solutions. Thus the rationale behind the choice of subjects was to introduce the participating schools to a different culture in a different part of the world to that with which they are most familiar. We hope that they have found the project stimulating and interesting."

"This afternoon we have the pleasure of welcoming Lady Caradon as our guest of honour. She is herself the embodiment of a true internationalist, and in a crowded public life at the side of her distinguished husband, has spent many years in the quest for international tolerance and justice, and in the guidance of new nations towards their independence. We welcome her most cordially, and on behalf of us all, I invite her to address us and present the prizes."

Islamic Art in the Kuwait National Museum

Edited by Dr Marilyn Jenkins, the catalogue monograph introduces the newly assembled Sheikh Nasser Al Sabah Collection of Islamic Art. About 1,000 choice items from Sheikh Nasser and his wife Sheikhha Hussa's vast collection, covering almost every period of Islamic civilization, are currently on loan to Kuwait's Dar Al Athar Al Islamiya (Museum of Islamic Art) in the newly inaugurated premises constructed for them. The Museum was officially opened on February 25, 1983, Kuwait's National Day, in the presence of an international group of over 200 scholars, collectors, museum curators and connoisseurs of Islamic art. (See "Arts and the Islamic World", vol. 1, no. 2 (Spring 1983) pp 7-15.)

In his foreword, Sheikh Nasser explains that his interest in Islamic art and culture started when he was a student in Jerusalem. This passion grew as he visited many of the cities that were once capitals of the Islamic world. Sheikh Nasser explains further that his collection was commenced in 1975 and now includes specimens in every medium used by Islamic craftsmen. It is quite amazing that in only eight years one of the finest and most comprehensive collections of Islamic art in the world has been formed and presented to a worldwide audience.

By making this private collection readily available to his countrymen and the general public, Sheikh Nasser is perpetuating the tradition established long ago by his family the ruling Al Sabah dynasty of Kuwait which is to create an awareness of the educational and cultural needs of the country and participate in the improvement of its citizens' standards of living.

Dr Jenkins states in an editorial note that this catalogue serves the dual purpose of introducing the collection and commemorating the opening of Dar Al Athar Al Islamiya. She then presents, as an introduction to the book, a brief but competent summary of the development of Islamic art. It is conveniently divided into four periods: Early Islamic (7-10c. AD), Early Medieval

Islamic (11-13c.), Late Medieval Islamic (mid-13-15c.), and Late Islamic (16-18c.). She describes the successive stages Islamic art passed through the early beginnings with the adoption of foreign elements into a newly emerging Islamic vocabulary of art, later adaptations of these elements to suit Islamic needs and the eventual creation of new truly Islamic forms. The main characteristics of Islamic art according to Dr Jenkins are geometric patterns, vegetal designs, figural forms and calligraphy. She illustrates all of these with examples from the collection. The catalogue itself reproduces 139 masterpieces from the collection in colour and duplicates the label found near each exhibited item identifying the object, its origin, date and any inscriptions found on it.

Calligraphy has long been acknowledged as an essential element of Islamic art but the importance of context i.e. what is written and its relation to the object or monument has only just been properly evaluated. The extraordinary value of inscriptions in the visual presentation of Islam and its early development was discussed by Erica Dodd in 1969 and pursued by such distinguished art historians as the late Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar, Franz Rosenthal and Anthony Welch among others. In accordance with this new and very important trend the authors of *Islamic Art in the Kuwait Museum* have paid attention to most of the inscriptions on the items depicted, although the information given in the catalogue varies from nil (p.82) to mentioning the type but not translating them (p.43) to partial decipherment (p.29) to complete translation in English and Arabic (p.42 and several others). The inscription on p.26 is given as "baraka li sa(hibihi) - blessing to its ow(ner)" although the inscription as reproduced in the photograph reads "tawakal talfa - trust (in God is) sufficient".

As the catalogue was produced in an exceptionally short period of time documentation could not be done for the objects illustrated. However, a bibliography should have been included and its omission lessens the book's value even as an introductory catalogue.

The high quality of the illustrations facilitates detailed analysis of the pieces presented, although a few items such as the edges of the

emeralds on pp.124-125 are not distinct. The catalogue is aesthetically pleasing with the plates harmoniously presented in similar pairs. A drawback of this is the difficulty of comparison as items of different sizes appear equally large. The lack of complete measurements increases this problem.

This catalogue is to be followed by specialized publications on the various items in the museum, a project currently in progress that will give Sheikh Nasser's highly important collection of Islamic art the proper documentation it deserves.

Tareef El Moss



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The Preservation of the National Heritage

A note on historic art and architecture in the Arabian peninsula

No region of the world has contributed more to the riches of art and culture passed on by earlier generations to their successors than the heartlands of the Islamic world.

The awareness of both governments and people of the profound and irreplaceable importance of such inherited riches has increased sharply over the past generation; and at the same time the realisation has correspondingly grown that the stewardship of the material evidences of previous cultures is a formidable responsibility. It is, however, one that is being assumed by governments in the region with considerable assurance and deep commitment.

This, indeed, is as it should be. Although the concept is one which is sometimes difficult to accept in the case of countries which have found themselves heirs to traditions and cultures other than those with which they themselves identify, the fact remains that the cultural heritage of the world is common to all humanity and, as such, must be protected and conserved most carefully by those who have the custodianship of it. Colonial regimes are often justifiably condemned for their lack of understanding and concern for the heritage of countries temporarily under their dominion — despite the fact that occasionally and not always in a blame-worthy manner, they preserved material which might, otherwise, have been lost.

The situation in the Middle East is complicated by the fact that so much of what survives from antiquity is the acknowledged intellectual, cultural and aesthetic heritage of many peoples, widely diffused in time, geography and ideology. On the other hand these treasures comprise the incomparable inheritance of Islam, a special place in the consciousness of Muslims, an importance which non-Muslims can perhaps never wholly

apprehend.

Another factor must be borne in mind in considering the role to be played by governments in the Middle East in preserving the region's past, particularly its rich architectural inheritance: the fact that most of what survives is the consequence of chance; indeed, frequently the very neglect which characterised so much of the region when it was dominated by foreign powers, paradoxically resulted in the preservation of many fine buildings, often under the accretions of centuries.

It is notable that only during the past decade, when nationals of many of the countries concerned have come to assume responsibility for their own heritage, has that heritage come fully to be understood and protected.

The wholly integrated nature of Muslim society (where, in contrast to the Christian world, for example, no meaningful distinction can really be made between an object, a building and the society from which it comes nor the beliefs and ideologies which underlie it) demands a special approach to the sequence of art history in such a society and to the preservation of its physical remains. The identification and conservation of buildings, for example, assumes a new purpose when they are considered to be part of the continuum which links Islam in its earliest manifestations with the societies of today. Arabia has many buildings dating from the early Islamic centuries which are of great significance: the Jawartha Mosque in Eastern Saudi Arabia, the Masjid 'Umar bin Al-Khattab at al-Jawf and, in Bahrain, the Suq al-Khamis Mosque, all testify to the simplicity and elegance of early Muslim architecture, even in places relatively distant from centres of political power. They emphasise dramatically the worth of preserving them sympathetically in the present generation.

The remains of Islamic Cairo, an example of the more general inheritance of the centuries of Islamic greatness, are today much threatened. Its marvellous buildings, representing the heart of one of the most influential of all human settlements, must not be allowed to fall into ruin. They serve as an example of the importance of the world involving itself in the rescue of buildings which, although they are a part of the inalienable heritage of one

country, still belong to the world at large. In consequence it is surely the world which must come to their aid and contribute to their preservation.

There is, of course, a danger implicit in the indiscriminate exploitation of the past for the satisfaction of the political exigencies of the present.

The Israeli authorities are thus frequently credited, with considerable approbation, with an enlightened attitude towards archaeology, often compared favourably with the practices of other states in the Middle East. Yet a dispassionate view of much of the officially encouraged archaeology in Israel will show that in reality it is concerned with invoking a warrant of historicity for the presence of Zionist settlers in Palestine. It is difficult to believe that the same attention is given to evidence of settlements which would not support this contention. The fate of some of the great Phoenician sites in Lebanon, for example, during the ruthless onrush of the recent Israeli invasion of that unhappy country will demonstrate the selective nature of the Israeli concern for the testimony of the past. Thus Tyre, a city of immense importance in the history, not of the adherents of one religious faith, but of all mankind, is in deadly peril, if it is not already totally lost.

The part to be played by museums — and more precisely by their staffs — in the preservation of the national heritage is, of course, crucial. Not only can museums preserve artefacts and buildings but, just as important, they can explain them and set them into context. They can discharge a profoundly important function in relating the artefact (or building), surviving from a past age, to the present. Thus the Qatar National Museum at Doha, in addition to its rich assembly of objects dating from the Stone Age to the present century, has preserved a group of traditional Eastern Arabian domestic dwellings which, like their contemporaries up and down the Gulf, would sadly otherwise have been swept away in the avalanche of progress and development which has, necessarily and inevitably, surged over the Gulf States since the coming of oil. The buildings of the old Amiri Palace, preserved by the wisdom of the Amir himself, Shaikh Khalifa bin Hamad al-Thani, show what life was once like in the Gulf States in a way that nothing else can so effectively

accomplish.

A remarkable project instituted by the Department of Antiquities and Museums in Saudi Arabia, is still more ambitious and, arguably, even more important. This consists of the establishment of a chain of museums and conservation centres situated in major archaeological sites throughout the Kingdom. One incidental but important consequence of the project will be to demonstrate how the history of Arabia, from the earliest times onwards, coheres, with each part reacting and interacting on the others.

Societies which have not had the benefits of museums in their midst until now may count themselves fortunate. In the West, or wherever museums have long been part of the cultural landscape, the museums themselves have often tended to become fossilized. Consequently those who should use them often approach them with reservation, not to say apprehension. In Arabia such considerations do not apply although they most certainly do in the few Middle Eastern countries which have a longstanding museum tradition.

Considerations which apply to the preservation of a national heritage in architecture and ethnographic materials apply equally to objects of art, whether these were fashioned as such or whether their aesthetic qualities were recognised by a generation or a society disparate from that of their originators. In this context, one consideration stands paramount in the minds of many observers: the need for a major collection of Islamic art to be assembled in the peninsula and preserved for future ages. The problems inherent in this concept are, of course, well-known and manifold. Their existence does not, however, reduce the importance of eventually implementing such a scheme. It is to be hoped that in the course of the movement which recognises the importance of learning the lessons of the past and which already has a number of distinguished achievements to its credit in the Arabian peninsula, the creation of a collection of art objects which demonstrate, in one telling respect, the effect and influence of Islam on the human spirit, will be preserved in that region of the world from which that inspiration first came.

Michael Rice



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Islam, the Semites and the Graven Image

One of my first experiences in this field occurred when, as a young boy, I was asked to buy a box of matches for an old uncle. As soon as I delivered the matches to him, he became manifestly angry and perturbed by the little picture of a swan on the box. "Woe to us from the wrath of God! How am I to find a soul for this bird on the Day of Judgement", he said as he took a pencil and scribbled something all over the picture.

I was puzzled by his action as I noted that the house was decorated with many portraits of national leaders and popular singers. I was soon to discover that my bewilderment had, in fact, summed up the much larger bewilderment of the the Muslim world vis-a-vis the graven image.

Was the Holy Qur'an or the Muslim faith in general really against representational art? Strangely enough, I found this kind of impression given more credence in the west than in the world of the Muslims. There is nothing in the Qur'an against the art of making graven images or acquiring them. There are a few references in the chapters of Ibrahim, al-An'am, al-Shu'ara' and al-Anbiya' about idols and idol worship. Here we find the Qur'an emphatic about its prohibition and the old Monotheistic revolt against idolry is recalled: "Lo, Abraham said to his father Azar, 'Takest thou idols for god? For I see thee and thy people in manifest error.'" Chapter XXI (Al-Anbiya') relates how Abraham waited for the idol worshippers to depart and then attacked the idols and broke them to pieces. "Fie upon you and upon the things you worship besides God! Have you no sense?" he told the people as they returned and witnessed his deed.

However, in later days theologians cited examples and sayings from Prophet Muhammad proscribing in no ambiguous terms the presence of graven images. "No angels will enter a house wherein there is a dog or an image", and "Those who make images will be tormented on the Day of Judgement and will be told: 'Give life

to that which you had created!'" Another saying attributed to the Prophet damns all pictorial artists: "Image makers will receive on the Day of Judgement the most severe punishment".

Nothing can be clearer than this condemnation, but this clear cut position calls for some thought. If Islam wanted to be so much weighted against pictorial art and the presence of pictures and statues, why didn't the Qur'an pronounce a definite prohibition on this vital matter? Can we really accept these sayings attributed to the Prophet without questioning their authenticity, and examining them in the light of other contradictory reports? It is said, for example, that when the Prophet married Aisha, she was brought to him with a number of dolls, which she described as "Solomon's horses". Prophet Muhammad made no attempt to keep them out of his house or object to them. In the more mature years of Aisha, he made a specific objection to a curtain with images which was hung in the living room. "Remove it from my sight. Its pictures are still appearing before me during prayer", he said to her. Aisha then took it down and made two cushions out of the material. Perhaps this story gives us the real standpoint of the Prophet. As long as the image did not interfere with worship, as in the case of cushions, there was no objection to it, but once it did, as in the case of curtain, then the image must go.

In a more dramatic story, we are told that when the believers conquered Mecca and took over the holy place of the Ka'ba, Prophet Muhammad ordered the removal and destruction of all idols and pictures except those indicated by him. According to the reports of al-Azraqi and Ibn Hajar, the Prophet then indicated with his hand the pictures of Christ and the Virgin Mary, which remained in the Ka'ba intact for more than half a century after his death and were only destroyed in the process of war and the revolt of Abdulla Ibn al-Zubair.

Many people in the West tried to portray Prophet Muhammad as an illiterate camel driver with little appreciation of refinements. This is obviously due to the general confusion in which all Arabs are looked upon as camel-driving bedouins. Prophet Muhammad did not come from the

'badia' but from the urban trading centre of Mecca and spent a great deal of time in Syria as a trader. There, he met many Christians including Buhaira the Monk, with whom he had long discourses on Christianity. During such long visits, he must have seen the pictorial elements of the churches and monasteries of Syria. With the obvious affection he showed later on for Christ and Christianity, it is difficult to imagine him so hostile to art as to expect the worst torment to all painters, of all people. Far from being an uncouth nomad, Prophet Muhammad was a sophisticated person with a very sensitive soul as evidenced in his reflections and sayings. Indeed, his action and his words about the decorated curtain underlined his great sensitivity. It was the spirit of an artist in him which could not help responding continuously to the impact of the images on the curtain to the point of undermining his concentration in his prayers. It was then that he felt compelled to ask his wife to remove it from his sight.

The anti-graven image position seems to have developed at a later stage under the impact of Jewish converts. With the ascendancy of Islam, many Jewish scholars like Abdulla Ibn Salam and Ka'b al-Ahbar, joined the new faith and brought with them their own traditions and beliefs, some of which the Muslims accepted as part of the great monotheistic faith of Abraham and Moses. Unlike the Qur'an, the Old Testament makes a very clear stand against the graven image. In the two books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, great detailed emphasis is laid on the subject.

"Lest ye corrupt yourselves and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth."

Of course, the Arab Muslims did not take everything presented to them, but they elected to accept this kind of prohibition simply because it suited them. Now the crucial question arises: Why did the Semites - Arabs and Hebrews - chose to turn their backs on representational art?

The Semites were a nomadic people with vast expanses of desolate land to

travel all the time. They hated all crafts because they demanded a settled life and long apprenticeship. In their long journeys they had to travel as light as possible and the only portable artistic commodity suited for their way of life was the art of the word. In the small cavity of the human skull, the nomad could and did carry with him hundreds of beautiful verses and literary snippets. Other than that, there was no room for statues and paintings. The nomads had no mansions, castles or cathedrals and their goat-hair tents did not afford much chance for murals, wall paintings or bas reliefs.

In their long and bitter conflict with the townspeople of Palestine, the Hebrews identified their enemies with their grand temple and monumental statues, thereby fortifying their own old nomadic objection to the graven image. Worship of idols became identical with submission to the enemy, a point which the Old Testament often made. Subsequent Jewish traumatic experiences in Palestine produced a depressive picture laden with guilt and melancholia and with a marked aversion to the flesh and the sight of the human figure, the basis of pictorial art, as Henry Moore said. The art of the ancient world was, to a large extent, based on celebration of the physical. Now for the first time, the human body became a source of shame, sin and guilt. Throughout the Old Testament the exposure of nudity is equated with rebellion against God and with the sinfulness of Israel. Against the sculptural tradition of the Near East, the banishment of the body proved to be devastating to representational arts.

The new situation suited the Semitic Arabs who showed no interest in such arts. With their inclination towards the abstract, they were happy to develop the arts of the word on the one hand, and the arts of the decorative on the other. The two branches converged very effectively into that typical Arab art form, calligraphy, to convey the magic of the poetic word through the magic of the decorative pattern. They passed on to Muslims throughout the world this new addition to man's artistic wealth.

At the same time, the Arabs understood quite well that Islam was no bar to indulgence in the art of the figurative. Thus when they built palaces, they showed no hesitation in adorning them with figures of living things as they did at the desert palace of Qusair Amra in Jordan. The Iraqi artist, al-Wasiti had no qualms either in illustrating the *Maqamat al-Hariri* with human figures, often with an amazing measure of realism.

With none of the Semitic aversion to representational art, other Muslims in the Indian sub-continent, China and Iran felt as free as ever to indulge in the

portrayal of human and living beings and produced a wealth of miniatures, book illustrations and portraits. They fell short, however, of producing three-dimensional portraits and figures, obviously for fear of idolatry. Another element in this discussion is the fact that figurative Islamic art flourished in general in the lands of Shi'i Muslims so much so that many Western historians attributed the phenomenon to Christian influences on Shi'ism. If so, Egypt, which is nearer to Christian Europe and has a large Coptic community, should have been more amenable to such influence. In point of fact, we have here another manifestation of the old Semitic tradition and predilection for the abstract. The world of the Semites remained basically Sunni allowing no intermediaries between man and God, a position which has been strengthened during the nineteenth century by the rise of Wahhabism in Arabia. In such a world, the figurative artist could find no saints, imams or divine martyrs to inspire him

and to portray, for the benefit of the believers, in pictorial terms.

The Muslims of the Arab world were, of course, aware of what their brethren in the East were doing, but they preferred to follow the golden advice "Let a thousand flowers bloom", and carry on their own aesthetic school of the abstract, geometrical, decorative and calligraphic, as the best means of communicating with the divine and expressing the cosmic unity, eternity and ubiquity of God.

The trend continued even in modern times as abstract art and non-representational subject matter have become the hallmark of modern Arab art, which has shown in recent years great interest in the work of the calligrapher. No portraits of any particular merit have been produced and the artists have rarely made any attempt to express their ideas or moods in terms of figures, not even when dealing with sculpture.

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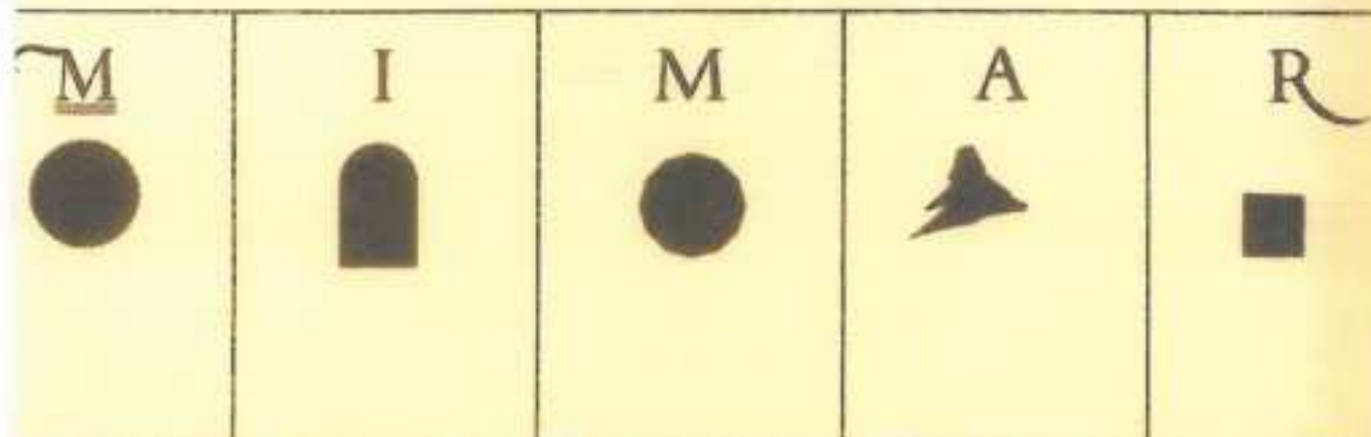
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