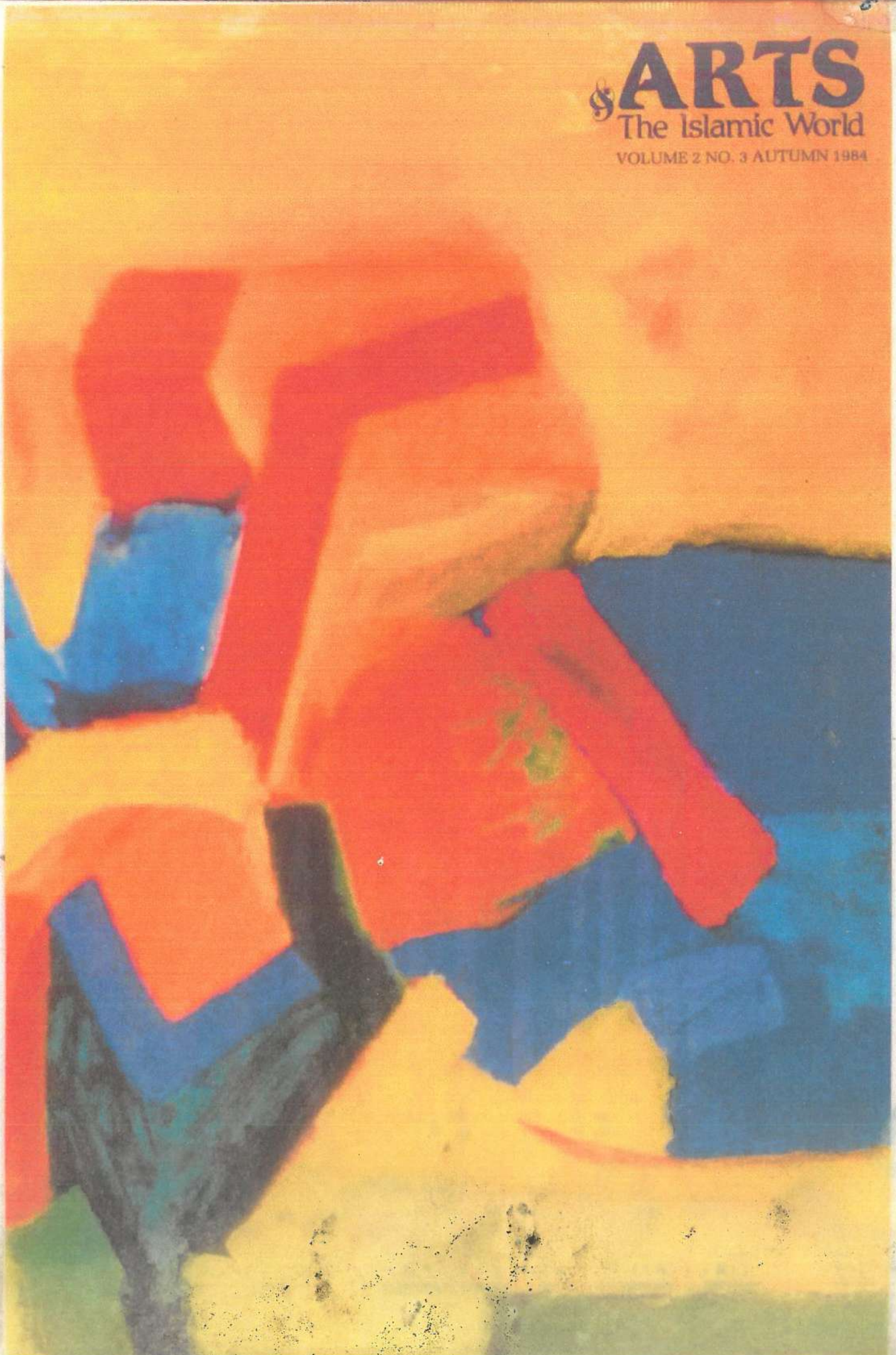
ARTS
The Islamic World
VOLUME 2 NO. 3 AUTUMN 1984



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AN IMPORTANT EXHIBITION OF 19th CENTURY ORIENTALIST PAINTINGS



Gustavo Simoni 'Outside the Palace', signed 1903, oil on canvas, size 46¾" x 31½"

MONDAY, 19th NOVEMBER - THURSDAY, 29th NOVEMBER

THE INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL
RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA

Mathaf Gallery

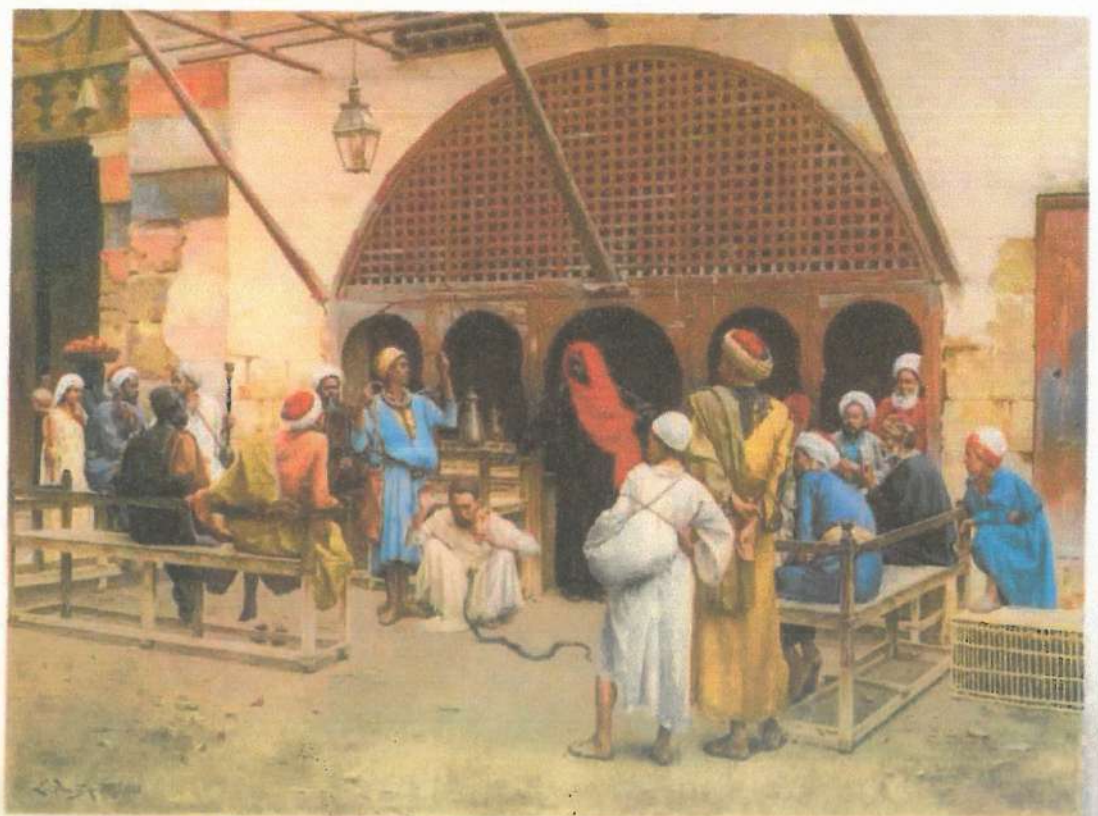
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Over the past nine years, the Mathaf Gallery have remained the leaders in 19th century Orientalist paintings of Arabia, concentrating on what is splendid and to be admired in the World of Islam.

Earlier this year, their Spring Exhibition presented works by Ludwig Deutsch, Jean Leon Gerome and many other famous artists, including the Italian watercolourists such as Giulio Rosati and Frederico Bartolini. All of these paintings, which were of a very high standard, were for sale and most of them were subsequently sold.

At the same time the Mathaf Gallery co-operated with the leading French expert in 19th Century Orientalism, Lynee Thornton, in producing an excellent reference book entitled *The Orientalists, Painter-Travellers, 1828 -1908*. This book should be of particular use to new collectors in the Arab world and is currently available in French and English editions.

The demand for 19th Century paintings of Arabia of good quality continues, but of course the buyers are becoming more discerning and require only the best of quality works. As leaders in this field, the Mathaf are recognized world-wide experts on the



Ludwig Deutch, "The Snake Charmers", signed, dated, Paris 1888, oil on panel, size: 27½" x 36¼"

Mathaf Gallery

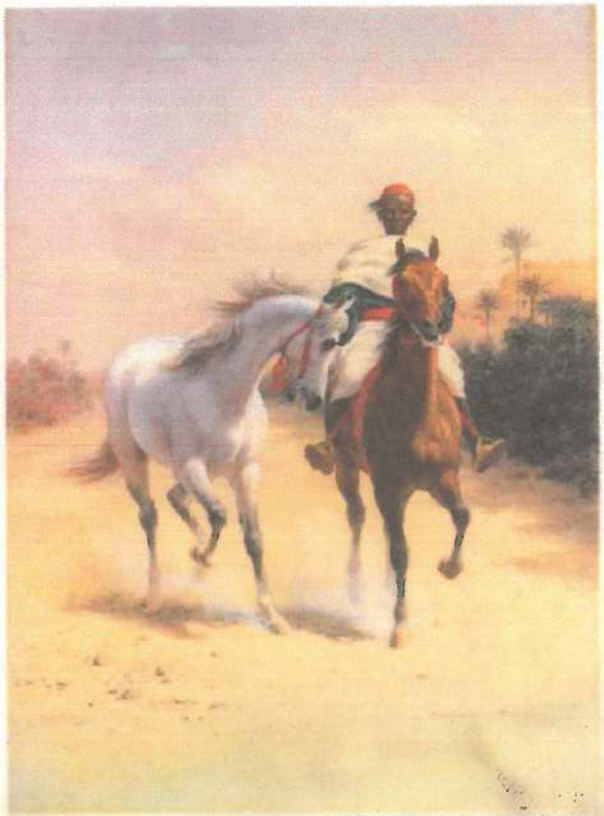
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authenticity of paintings, the style of the artists, correct signatures and details. In a recent video in Arabic produced by Brian MacDermot, the owner of the Mathaf, it is explained that buyers should be careful to be sure that what they buy is authenticated by a recognized expert and a guarantee of authenticity given. Art Galleries in the United Kingdom, particularly those who are members of the London and Provincial Antique Dealers' Association Ltd. and the Society of London Art Dealers, normally not only guarantee the works that they sell themselves but hold themselves financially liable for these sales, offering immediate refunds should a recognized expert be able to prove that they made a mistake. It is perhaps for this reason that so many buyers of art come to London in the first instance to make their purchases.

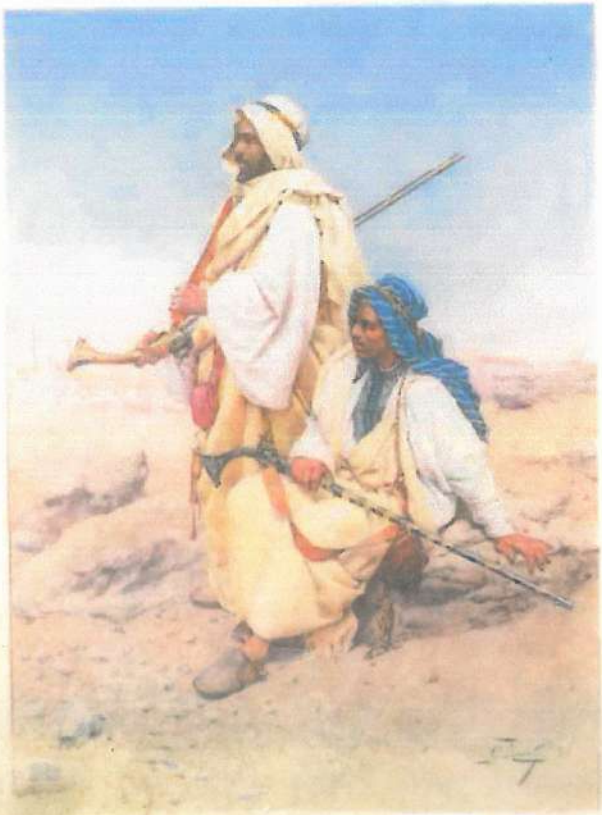
Following on the Spring exhibition the Mathaf-Gallery produced an excellent and informative exhibition of watercolours by the Middle East writer and traveller, Walter Tyndale. The exhibition was highly praised by the critics.

The Mathaf Gallery also promote a number of Contemporary British artists who work on contract for them and one of these is John Haywood. An exhibition of his paintings of falcons in the desert was held in the Gallery from August 14th - 31st, and proved extremely popular with both visiting Arabs in London and those interested in the ancient art of falconry. The paintings sold extremely swiftly. To back up this exhibition the Mathaf Gallery also had on display an exhibition entitled Animal Fair, being 19th Century original drawings by German artists for National History Books. This again proved an extremely popular exhibition, with many of the drawings being sold to other dealers in view of their extremely good value.

And now as the Summer season has come to an end the Mathaf are organizing their largest ever foreign exhibition in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia this Autumn at the Intercontinental Hotel. The paintings selected for this exhibition have been chosen with great care and include the best available pieces by famous artists of the 19th Century which are available on the open market. To accompany the exhibition a splendid catalogue has been produced in Arabic.



Harrington Bird. 'Exercising the Horses' signed, dated 1906, water colour, size: 21¼" x 15"



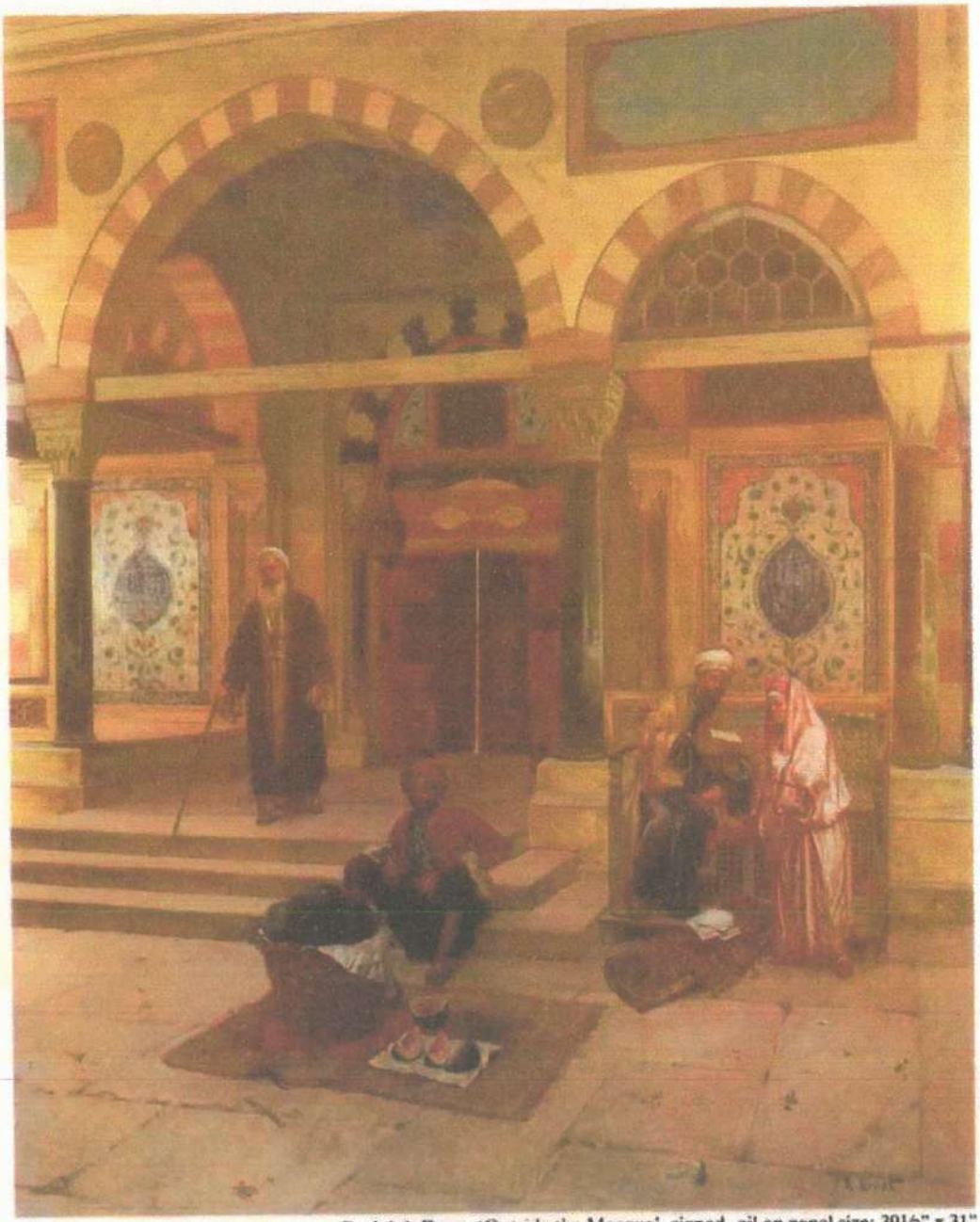
Giulio Rosati. 'Arabs approaching a City' signed, dated '96, water colour, size: 30" x 21¼"

Mathaf Gallery

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THE WORLD'S CENTRE FOR ART IN ARABIA



Rudolph Ernst, 'Outside the Mosque', signed, oil on panel size: 39½" x 31"

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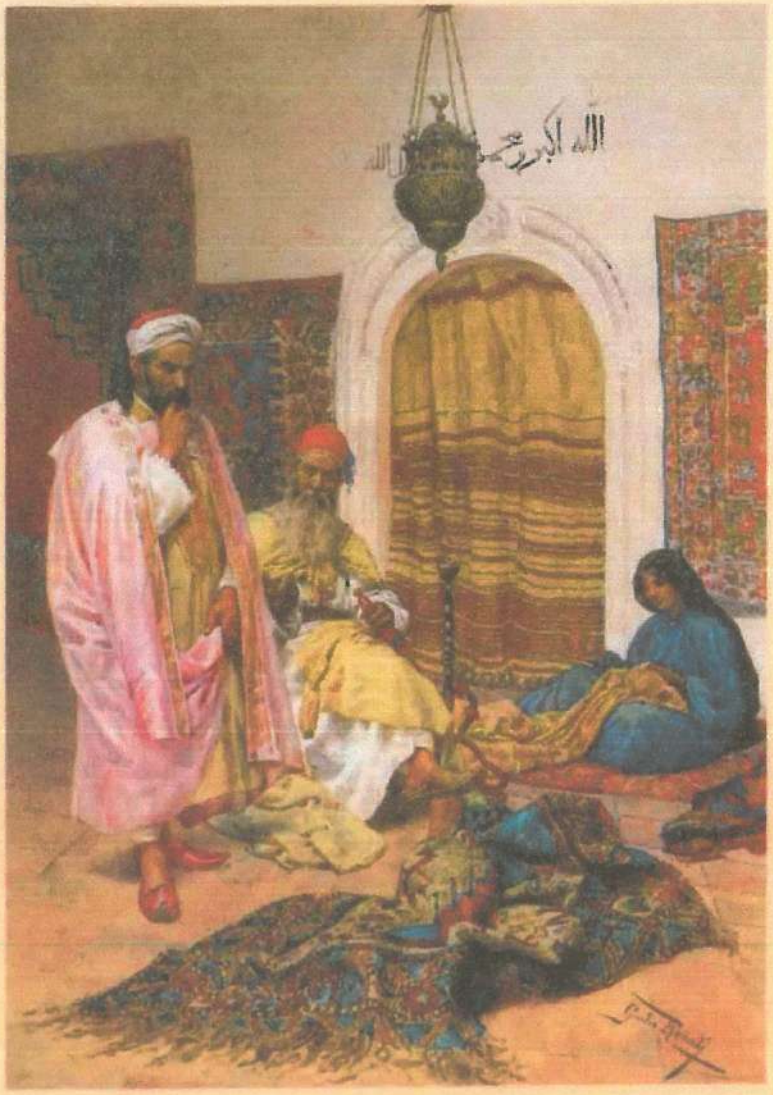
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Sharifa Fatima Syed Zubair
"Nature's Light" Acrylic on canvas, 1980.

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Giulio Rosati, The Carpet Seller, signed watercolour 53 x 37cm

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BOOKS, MAPS & PRINTS

PAINTINGS & WORKS OF ART

OF THE MIDDLE EAST

[illegible] MONDAY – SATURDAY

Editorial

Plans have been announced by the Islamic Arts Foundation for the 2nd International Seminar, to be held in the Spring of 1985. The scope and format will continue to be broadbased enough to include any aspect of "The Arts in Islamic Lands", as in the case of the 1st International Seminar in 1982 which attracted more than 50 artists and art experts as well as teachers, administrators, dealers and collectors of Islamic arts from Eastern and Western countries. However, within this wide spectrum, a specific theme on which the 1985 Seminar will concentrate relates to "Islamic Art Resources in World Museums and Major Private Collections." The aim is to review the present stage of cataloguing of Islamic art objects in various countries, and to explore the possibility of initiating a centrally available archives, easy of access to scholars and research workers in this field.

Invitees to the 2nd International Seminar include, among others, curators of Islamic art collections in leading museums in the Eastern and Western world, as well as principal art dealers, private collectors and those who have been working or have a special interest in this area. Those experts and specialists who may be unable to attend personally are being invited to send in their views and suggestions so that these can be suitably incorporated in the Seminar's recommendations on the subject.

Just as one of the results of the 1982 Seminar was the production of the quarterly journal *Arts & The Islamic World*, now in its second year of publication, it is envisaged that in the light of the recommendations of the 2nd International Seminar, it may be possible to develop a multi-volume catalogue of Islamic art objects in major public and private collections throughout the world. The actual preparation and compilation of material for various volumes, suitably cross-indexed and computer-processed to facilitate easy referencing and retrieval, could then be taken up by a network of curators and experts associated with the respective collections and backed by a central support nucleus to be created by the Islamic Arts Foundation in London.

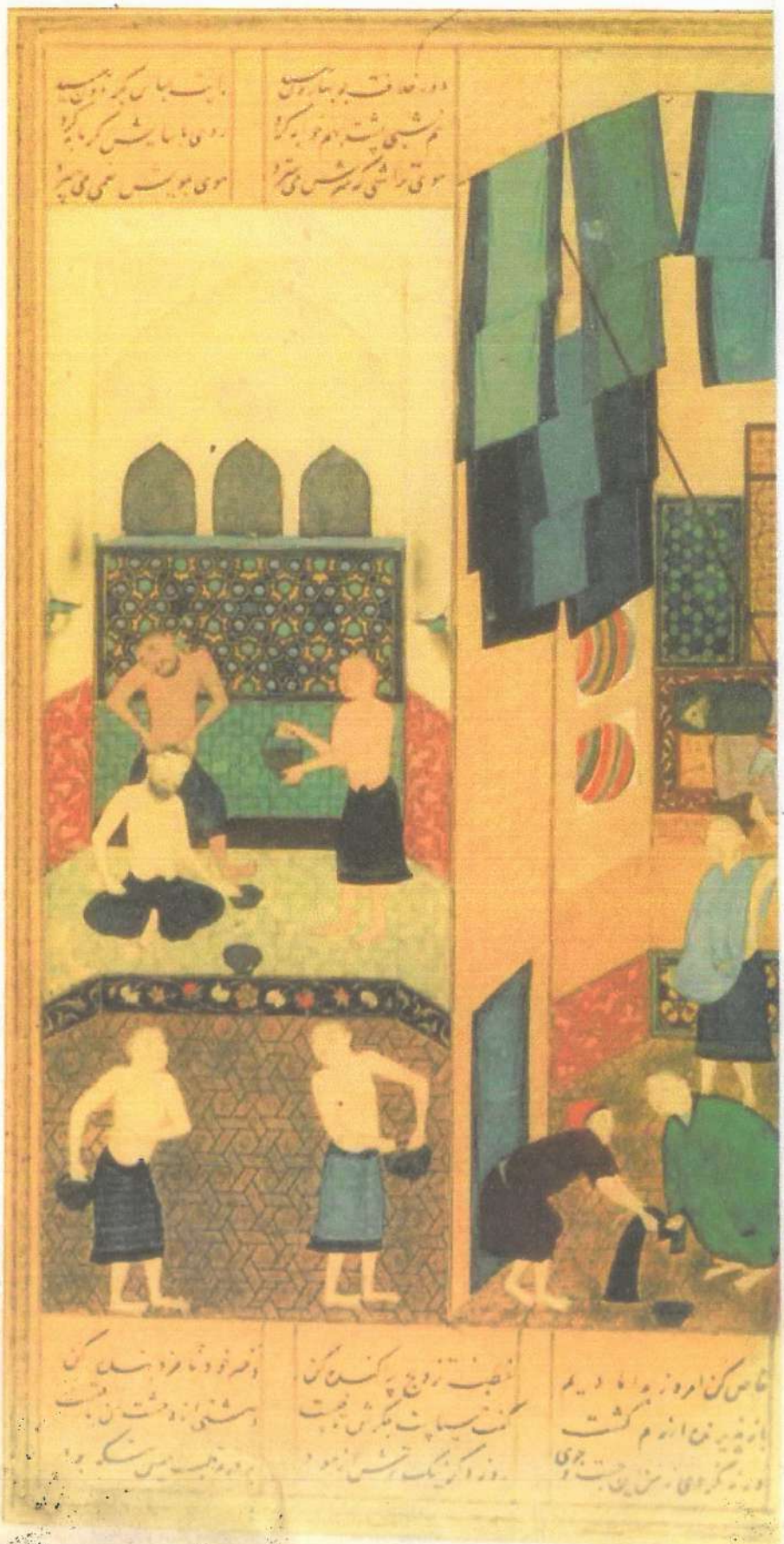
◆ ◆ ◆

The newly established Bahrain Art Society brought to London this summer an impressive display of the work of Bahraini artists. The venue was Leighton House, whose spectacular Arab Hall provided an appropriate backdrop for this first major presentation of contemporary paintings from one of the smaller but remarkably fast developing countries of the Middle East. The project owes itself to Bahrain's art-loving Minister of Information H.E. Mr. Tareq Abdul Rahman Almoayed, thanks to whose efforts the Bahrain Art Society already has a purpose-built premises of its own inaugurated last December by the Prime Minister, H.E. Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa. *Arts & The Islamic World* is happy to include in this issue an introduction to the work of the Bahrain Art Society by its President, Shaikh Rashid Al Khalifa, who is himself a practising painter, along with reproductions of some of the paintings exhibited in London.

BIHZAD

and Herat Renaissance

A marvel of his Age



Mulk Raj Anand

There is a certain mystery about the refulgence of the human spirit in the fifteenth century anno domini.

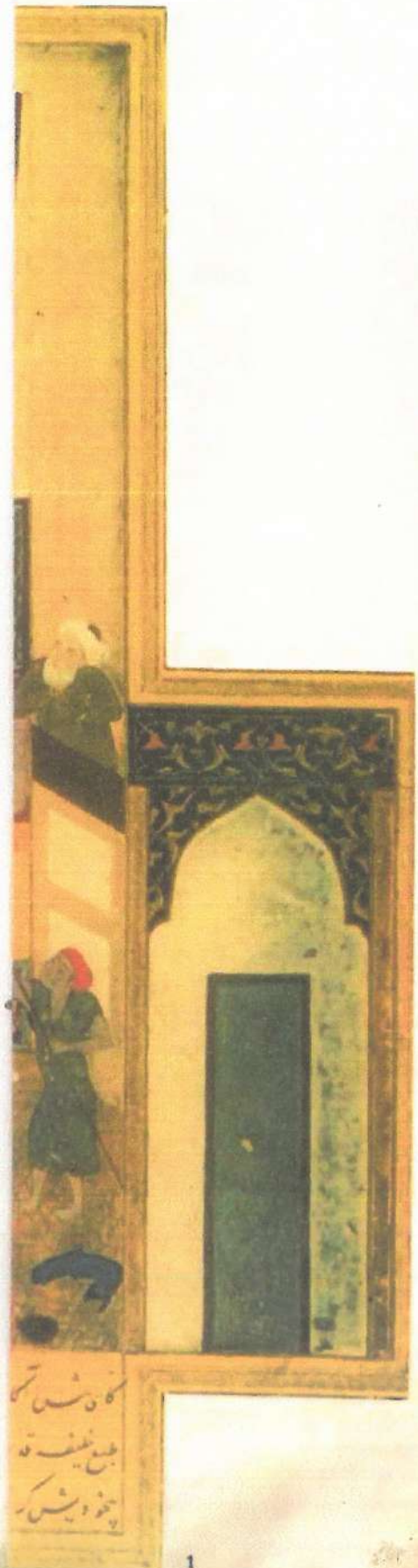
Not only were there witnessed sudden outgoings from torpor and hunger, towards the conquest of the world through barbaric violent aggrandisements, but there were breakthroughs into various illuminations in Central East Asia, India and China.

However, though the western renaissance has been analysed, the various Asian renaissance have seldom been noticed. This may be because the oriental minds turned inwards, while the occidentals used their brain power to look outwards and annex the world.

The strange glories of the awakenings, in the hundred years of the Timurids in Herat, after the successors of Timur the lame settled down, cannot be denied. For, if we speak with bated breath of the world of imagination, lit up by Leonardo and Michaelangelo and Raphael, we may contemplate the nuances of awareness of Ali Sher Nawai, Jami and Bihzad with open minds.

All the three visionaries found themselves in the being-in-situation, which Islam had bequeathed to the desert people through the parables of the Qur'an. And they looked for the hidden meaning behind man and woman and flower and bird and fish and dragon and flowing water. But while most people around them were deaf and dumb, their hearts mirrored the glimpses of reality in certain symbols, which could arrest the timeless fire.

The sense of different layers of reality, the growth of awareness



1

from matter, from the less transitory to the ultimate, had already been bequeathed by Sufi poets like Rumi, Attar and Nizami, in subtle allusions.

The prophets of the Herat renaissance inherited the symbols, but freed themselves from the prisons of traditional imagery, with wonder about the whole universe in their eyes.

And, of the three ecstatic souls, who contemplated the phenomena of the cosmos to reach Reality, and to evolve into its various layers, to touch it, Bihzad has created, through his austerities, devotions and contemplations, certain paintings which attain the grace and tenderness of the highest pictorial art.

Unlike the painters of the western renaissance, who portrayed things as external to themselves, Bihzad allied himself with nature, the rhythms of every day life of pleasure and pain, the love of tragic beings, and with love itself to illumine the most imperceptible nuances of feelings.

'Whosoever honours God's creation takes a high rank' - Jalal ud-din Rumi had sung.

The contemporary of Bihzad and his friend, the poet Jami had put this ethos of the awakening, almost as a manifesto for the creative imagination in this poem:

'Though in this world a hundred tasks thou tryest,
'tis love alone which from thyself will save thee
even from earthly love thy face avert not,
since the Real it may serve to raise thee!!
Even A,B, C are rightly apprehended
How canst thou con the pages of the Qur'an
A sage 'so heard' unto whom a scholar
came craving counsel on the course before him
said 'if thy steps be strangers to lovers pathways,
depart, learn love, and then return before me'.
For should thou fear to drink wine from form flagon,
thou canst not drain the draughts of the Ideal.
But yet beware! Be not by Form belayed.
Strive rather with all speed to the bridge to traverse,
if to the bourn thou wouldst bear thy baggage,
upon the bridge do not let thy footsteps linger...'

From the poet Jami
Translated by E G Brown

The rank of Bihzad in the history of mankind is assured through his recreations of his heart's desires and through his integral vision in some of the most perfect pictures painted by man.

II

Our contemporary emphasis on the ego, specially in the West, makes the historian of art deplore the absence of much personal information or gossip about Bihzad, who was acclaimed as a great master in his own lifetime. Art critics have been at pains to separate the miniatures on which his signature appears from those on which Bihzad's signatures may have been faked, and from those unsigned miniatures, which are obviously in his style but remained unsigned and may be by him or by his colleagues in the workshop. These meritorious efforts to build up a consecutive history has led to greater emphasis on the style of the miniatures than on the content of the miniatures, which compelled the style. Quite a few estimates remain appreciations of Bihzad as the painter of 'charming' miniatures without probing any further into the kind of egocentricity he seems to have nurtured through his inheritance of the mystique of the Sufi poets from Jalal-ud-din-Rumi downwards.

The literary atmosphere in which he flowered has been neglected. And he has seldom been studied as part of the guild of craftsmen of Herat under Sultan Hussain Bayqara, but has been interpreted like artists of the Italian renaissance. In fact, he is known to the world more as the 'Raphael of the East' than as the great visionary painter of the Asian renaissance of the 15th century.

The fact that Sir Thomas Arnold brought to light, in his pioneer book, *Painting in Islam*, has not often been remembered: that, in the East, generally, painters were part of guilds who worked under the patronage of the court, the mosque, or the holy grave of a saint, and remained more or less anonymous. As the painting of miniatures in illustrated books in Arabia arose under the Caliphs of Islam, and the artists took a good deal of inspiration from the Byzantine Empire, as well as from the Jacobite and Nestorian Christians who were spread all over Arabia, the

guild tradition was accepted.

The taboo against painting of human figures laid down by Prophet Muhammad (because he did not want the artist to emulate the functions of God as creator by becoming creators of figures), was perhaps ignored by the successors of the Prophet, by employing the Christian workmen for painting palaces, illustrating books or making carpets or ceramics. And when more Muslim craftsmen began to be patronised, it is likely that they maintained the guild system because they did not want to be singled out as breakers of taboos. By the 9th-10th centuries, however, through the coming from Central Asia of waves of intruders, the guilds changed their character. The individual artists began to be known through direct patronage by the Sultan. Later, we even get an account of the history of Persian painters by Dost Muhammad.

III

As far as Bihzad is concerned we have some information about him as an individual, from the pen of Khwandamir, a historian of the royal court of Herat, who was the friend of Ali Sher Nawai, Prime Minister of Sultan Hussain Bayqara at the end of the 15th century, and knew Bihzad intimately.

It is not necessary, therefore, to reconstruct a biography of Bihzad by considering him as, we might do, an artist of the Italian renaissance of the period, but rather as a legendary painter of the highest calibre, who came to be admired as Ustad of the Guild, or school, of Painters, in Herat.

The absence of much personal detail, except that Bihzad was a member of the coterie of poets like Ali Sher Nawai, Jami and the historian, Khwandamir, also enables us to interpret his genius not as an isolated phenomenon, but as part of the wave that was urged by the search for illumination in the 15th century Timurid Empire. It is true this might make our study not part of the 'art history' preferred by the West. But it may make for 'unrecorded history', through the study of the beliefs shared by the intelligentsia of that time, in the ecstasies preferred by the Sufi bards as communications of interior feelings, the will to know, and the art which revealed the various selves.

This reversal of the modern habit of mind which gives higher importance to outside facts, may lead to what Henri Bergson called 'Metanoia', the turning inwards. But this would probably ally us to the integral temperament of Bihzad, who seems, in his paintings, to display the sense of wonder about creation, through which he wished to ally himself, pantheistically, with every part of nature and human experience.

IV

The facts about Bihzad which have been gathered by Prof Ettinghausen and Mr Pinder Wilson, can be summed up in a few paragraphs.

Bihzad was born sometime between 1450 and 1460 A.D. He became an orphan as a child and seems to have been looked after in Herat by the painter Mirak Naqqash, the librarian of Sultan Hussain Bayqara.

As the artist-craftsmen of that time worked in ateliers attached to the Jami-Masjid in Herat (where they can be still seen carrying on their old tradition), the boy painter, Bihzad, obviously grew up in those workshops.

The high connections of Mirak Naqqash, the teacher of Bihzad, as the royal librarian, led to the recognition of his talents by the poet-Prime Minister, Ali Sher Nawai, who began to patronise him and admitted him to the recitals held in his palace, specially to hear the latest creations of the Ali Sher's friend, the poet Jami.

It is quite likely that he was presented to Sultan Hussain Bayqara and the staff of the royal library under Khwandamir by Ali Sher Nawai.

The Turkish art historian, Ali, suggests that Bihzad's teacher was Pir Syed Ahmed of Tabriz. The Mughal Emperor Jehangir wrote later that his style resembles that of Khalil Mirza.

Bihzad seems to have survived the invasion of the Uzbek Shaybani Khan and continued to live in Herat until 1510 A.D. when Shah Ismail Safavid of Tabriz attacked and defeated the Uzbek usurper. The painter stayed on in Herat under Shaybani Khan and, in fact, did a portrait of him.

Shaybani Khan was presumptuous enough, according to the Emperor Babur, to call Bihzad to court and offer to correct his miniatures.

There is a decree of Shah Ismail in Khwandamir's compilation, Naam ye-Naami, about the appointment of Bihzad by Shah Ismail as Director of the Imperial Library, and there is the story by Ali, the art historian, that this king evinced great anxiety about the safety of Bihzad during the war against Sultan Salim I of Turkey, in 1514 A.D. From these sources it is clear that Bihzad moved to Tabriz after the expulsion of Shaybani Khan from Herat.

As Royal Librarian of Shah Ismail, Bihzad was put in charge of all the other librarians, calligraphers, painters, guilders, marginal draftsmen, gold mixers, gold beaters and lapis lazuli washers.

Obviously, then, Bihzad continued to work under Shah Ismail's successor, Shah Tahmasp. This fact is confirmed by Kazi Ahmad, who says that Bihzad contributed miniatures to the copy of the Khamsa of Nizami, prepared by the calligrapher, Shah Muhammad in the library.

Prof. Ettinghausen has mentioned *Lataif Nama* of Fakhir Sultan Muhammad, c.927/1520 A.D. (British Museum, Add. 7669 Folio 98), for some facts which show old Bihzad's manner of working in the Safavid court. He seems to have taken a young Turk of Khorasan as apprentice. This young man, Darus, was an oil mixer and a favourite assistant. He entrusted him with his own works. Other pupils of Bihzad have been mentioned by Hayder Mirza, as being the portrait painters, Qasim Ali, Maksud and Mulla Yusuf. The Turkish art historian, Ali, mentions Shaykh Zada of Khorasan and Aga Mirak as Bihzad's colleagues, Kazi Ahmad mentions Dusti-e-Diwana and the father of the painter, Muzaffar Ali; he also suggests that Bihzad was a contemporary of Yari Mudhalihals of Herat, with whom he worked on the *Bostain-e-Saadi* in 893 Hijri (now in Cairo National Library). Another writer, Iskander Munksi, says that Muzaffar Ali was one of Bihzad's pupils. In a chronogram Dost Muhammad has mentioned the date of Bihzad's death as 942/1536/1537 A.D. and it is noted that he was buried in Tabriz by the side of the poet Shaykh Kamal Khudjand.

According to another tradition, the date of his death is placed 1583-1584 A.D. And yet another tradition suggests that he died in Herat and was buried near Kuh-e-Mukhtan.

Mons. Sakisian in his book, *Les Miniatures Persans*, Paris, (Brussels 1929) reproduces a portrait of an

ageing man from the Yildiz Library in Instanbul, which is inscribed 'Portrait of Ustad Bihzad'. This shows a vital face unaffected by the decay of old age. The inner flame seems to have burnt brightly in Bihzad till the end.

V

The Timurid Bibliophile, Khwandamir, wrote an introduction to one of Bihzad's album of paintings. The tone of the panegyric is metaphorical and has a charm of its own, in spite of its lack of precise historical logic. I quote some words from it:

'The Eternal painter (God)
when he made the sun
Adorned an album with a sky for leaves.
Therein he painted without brush or paint
The shining face of each beauty as from (the stars)...
From the beginning of the world, the most distinguished sons of Adam...
Have carried the palm of superiority over their like:
Among the perfect painters an accomplished artist... is the producer of wonderful forms and of marvellous art - the marvel of the age
Whose faith is unsullied
who walks in the ways of love and affection.
Master Kamal-ud-din Bihzad.
His brush like Mani's won the eternal fame'

The reference to Mani is significant. The legend goes as follows:

In the time of Jesus, Son of Mariam, Mani claimed to be a prophet and used paintings to reinforce his teachings. When men asked him to show a miracle, he took a piece of silk and retired to a cave, the entrance of which was closed up for a year or so. At the end of that time, he emerged with a silk covered with wonderful figures: men, beasts trees and birds. And the silk was the famous 'Arzhung of Mani', to which Saadi refers in his *Gulestan*. It was, legend says, owing to Mani that painting was introduced into Iran and subsequently into Cathay.

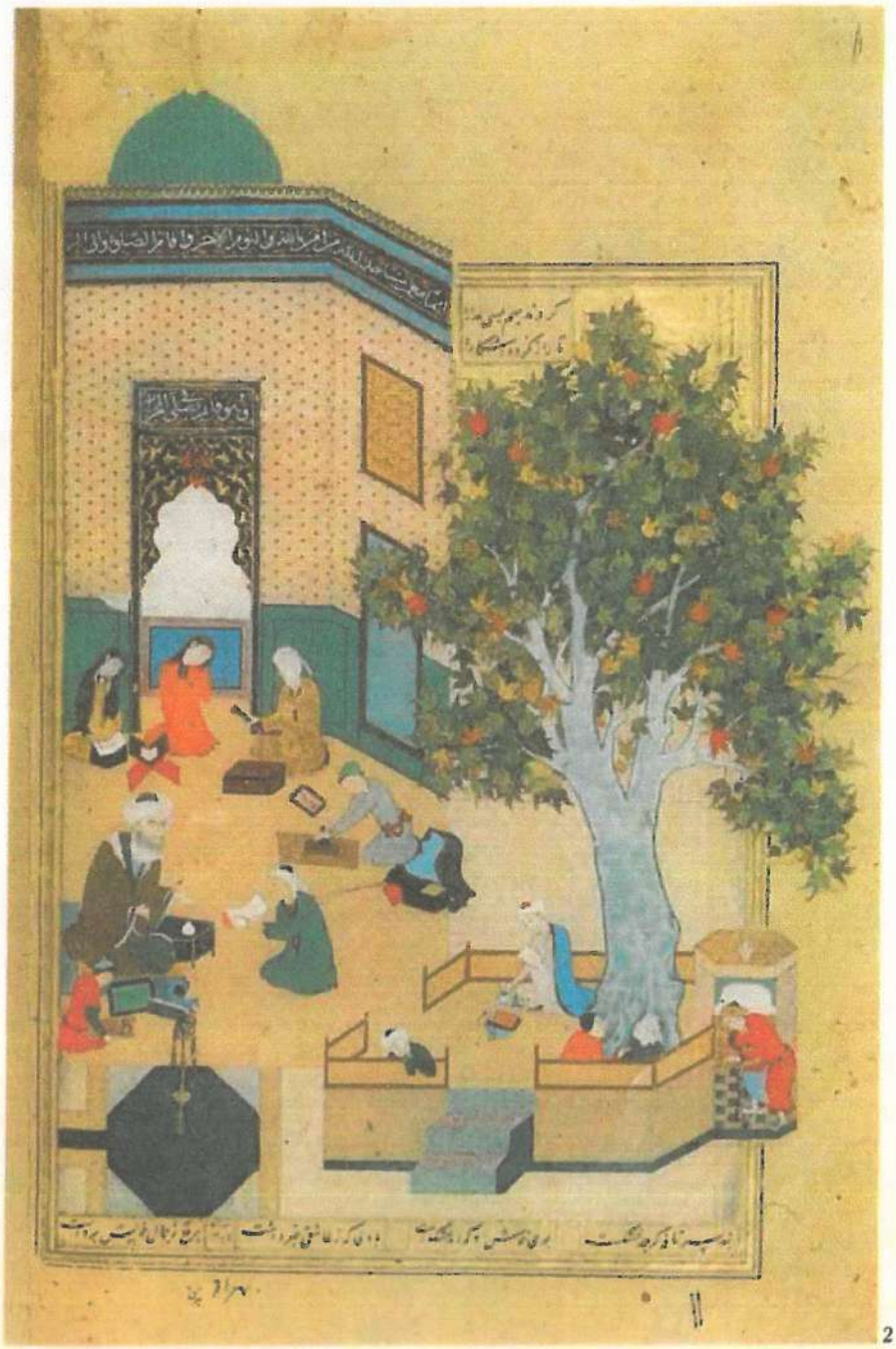
Although persecuted for centuries by Zoroastrains, Christians and Muhammadans, the faith of Mani seems to have spread over many parts of Central Asia, Khorasan and Arabia, One of the heresies of Mani, which was despised, was that God could be realised by practising the art of painting.

The comparison of Bihzad with Mani, is therefore, illuminating. It suggests that, face to face with the human predicament, current in Islamic society, about resignation to the will of God until the Judgement Day, when the Prophet would intercede on ther behalf, Bihzad had adopted the evolutionary outlook of the ascent of man to higher consciousness by gaining illuminations on earth.

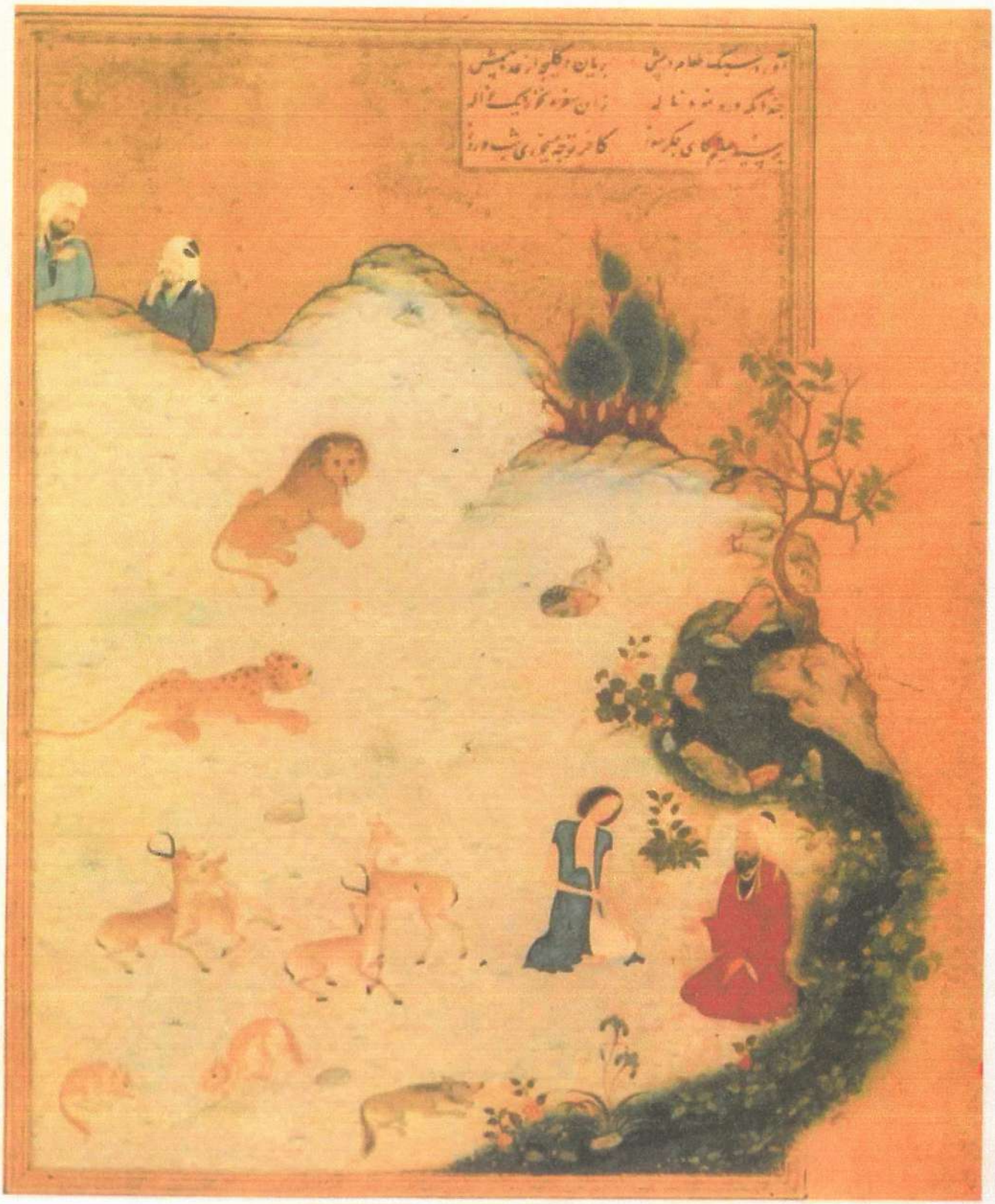
Integrated into the tradition of Sufism, as it had developed, specially in Jalal-ud-din Rumi's *Mathnavi*, in Nazami's *Khamsa*, Attar's *Assembly of Birds*, through Saadi's *Gulestan* and *Bostan*, Hafaz's *Diwan*, Amir Khusrau's *Quintet*, and up to his contemporary Jami, Bihzad had accepted the implications, for his paintings, of the pervasive presence of the soul in every blade of grass.

Difficult as it may be for Western scholarship to accept this, it is nevertheless true that certain hypotheses about the 'being-in-situation' in this world, were inherited by Bihzad as part of ordinary conversation in the Islamic world. 'The philosophical truth that 'man is in the world but not in the world', came through every gesture of the five prayers a day.

The rationalisations about the drama of spiritual life, and the obstructions which the world



2



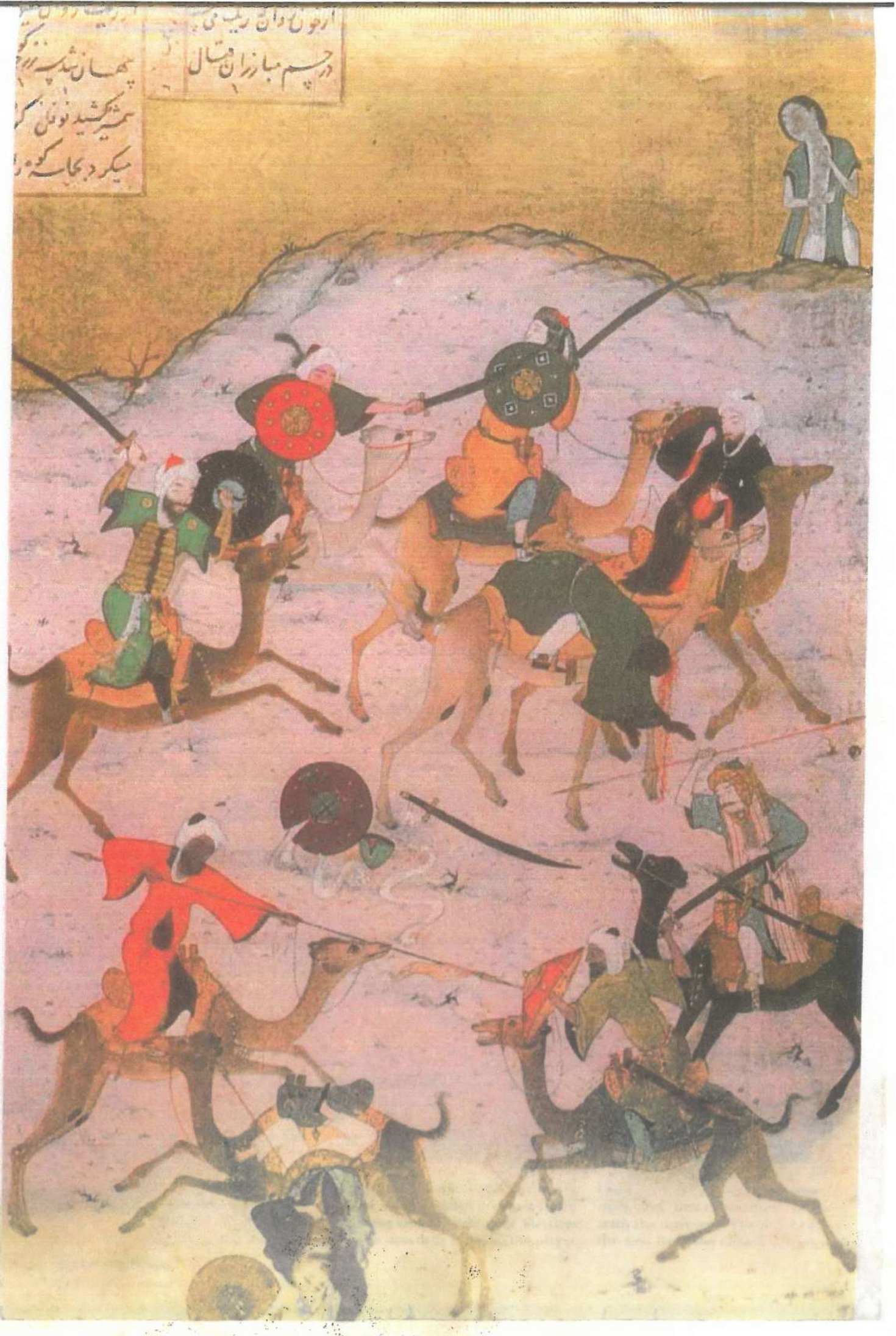
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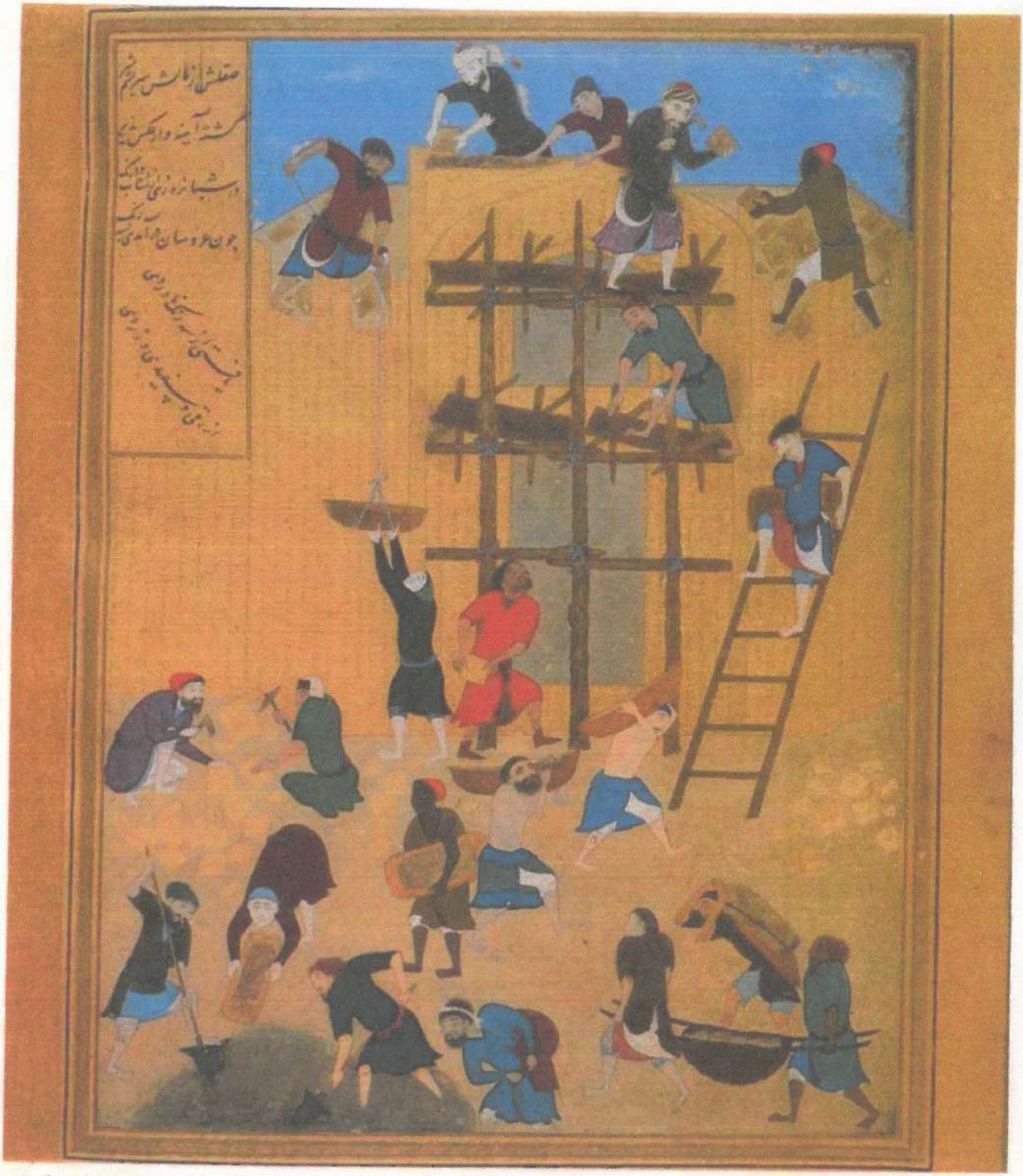
imposes on those who wish to realise Allah, were being constantly debated.

The early medieval Sufi poets had given expression to certain hunches which had become basic truths by the 15th century.

The Sufi theory of the soul pertains to the idea that the world has existed in immanent forms. The world soul descends to the material world to fulfil itself. The divine takes pleasure in assuming flesh. The gross in nature can be purified by love. And in the true quest, man can perfect himself by alliance with creation, which is the manifold emanation of the creator himself. As soon as the spark is ignited in the soul of man at birth, it is lost in the grossness of the body. But the urge to move upwards through the physical life remains constant. Thus what seems inanimate is really on fire. In plant and flower and shrub, in the animal, in the babe that seeks the breast, the spark glows without these creatures knowing why.

The poet, or the creative artist, can probe the depths and sense 'isness' and thus can achieve oneness with the universe. The artist can lift the veil from the closed bodies and





5

minds, through his anguished awareness, by first transforming his own soul, awakening it through willed action, to reveal himself and the world in his words or pictures. This awakening is like giving memory to a forgetful man and dreams to those who are fast asleep. And the troublous dream may be realised in vision. And from vision may emanate dim awareness.

There are echoes in the poets from Sanai to Rumi and Jami of the emanation theory of Plotinus. The Greek philosopher had described the triple nature of the soul, when indicating its grades -- vegetable, animal and human.

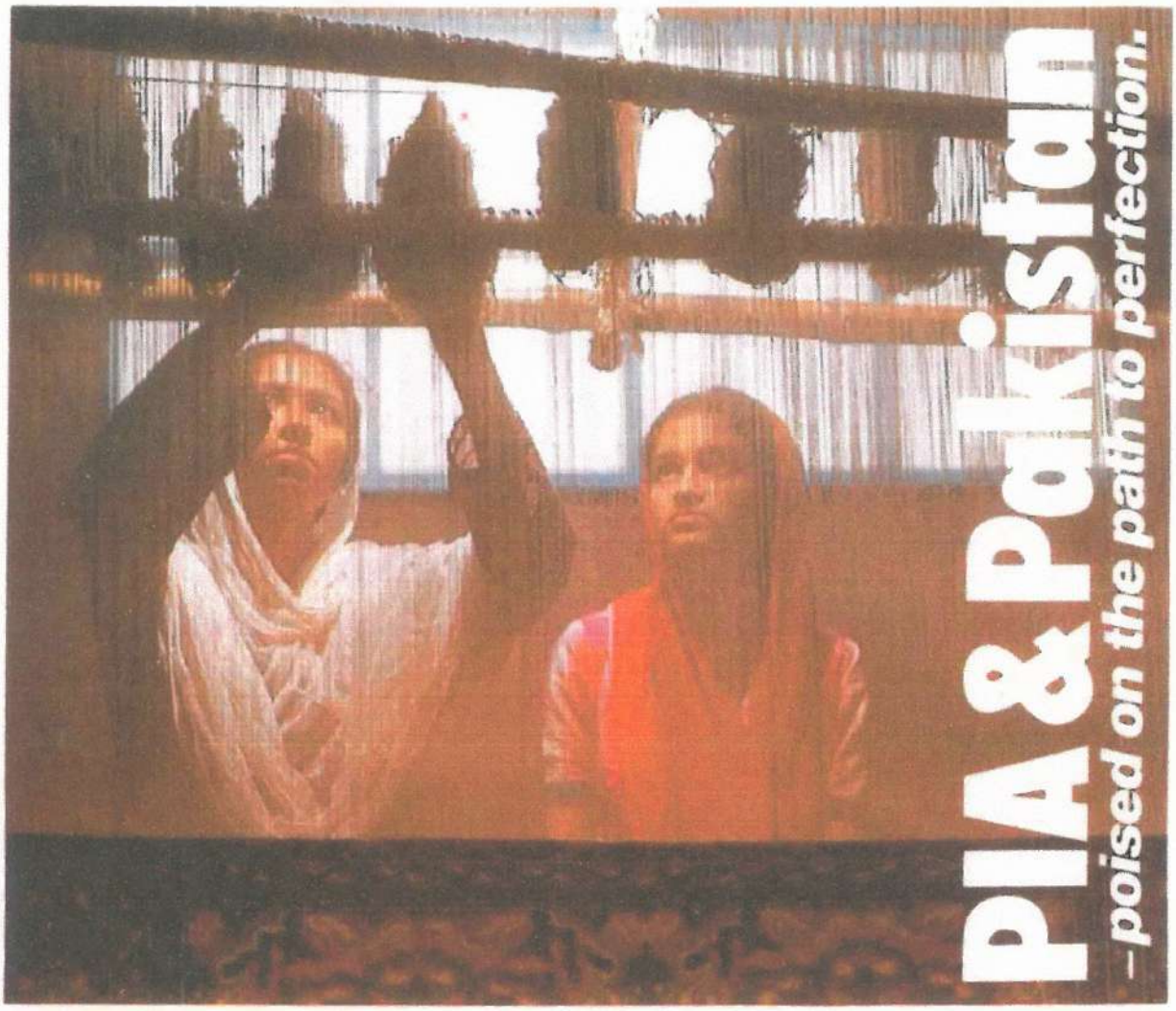
And the Sufi poets had deepened this as does the Hindu Yoga through stages of enlightenment, by plumbing the depths.

In the market places of Asia, the poems of the longing for beauty had been heard during the centuries. The 'flower in a crevice', the 'wine in the tavern', the 'drunken poet', the 'ringlets of the beloved' and the 'glow on her cheeks' had become images of the beloved. Curiosity and desire had become the way. The hidden treasure was all around, desiring to be known. The sense of wonder was in every poet's eye.

The poet Jami sang to Ali Sher Nawai, in sensuous imagery about the discovery of this treasure :

He held up the mirror to his own face
He displayed his loveliness to himself

Continued on 31



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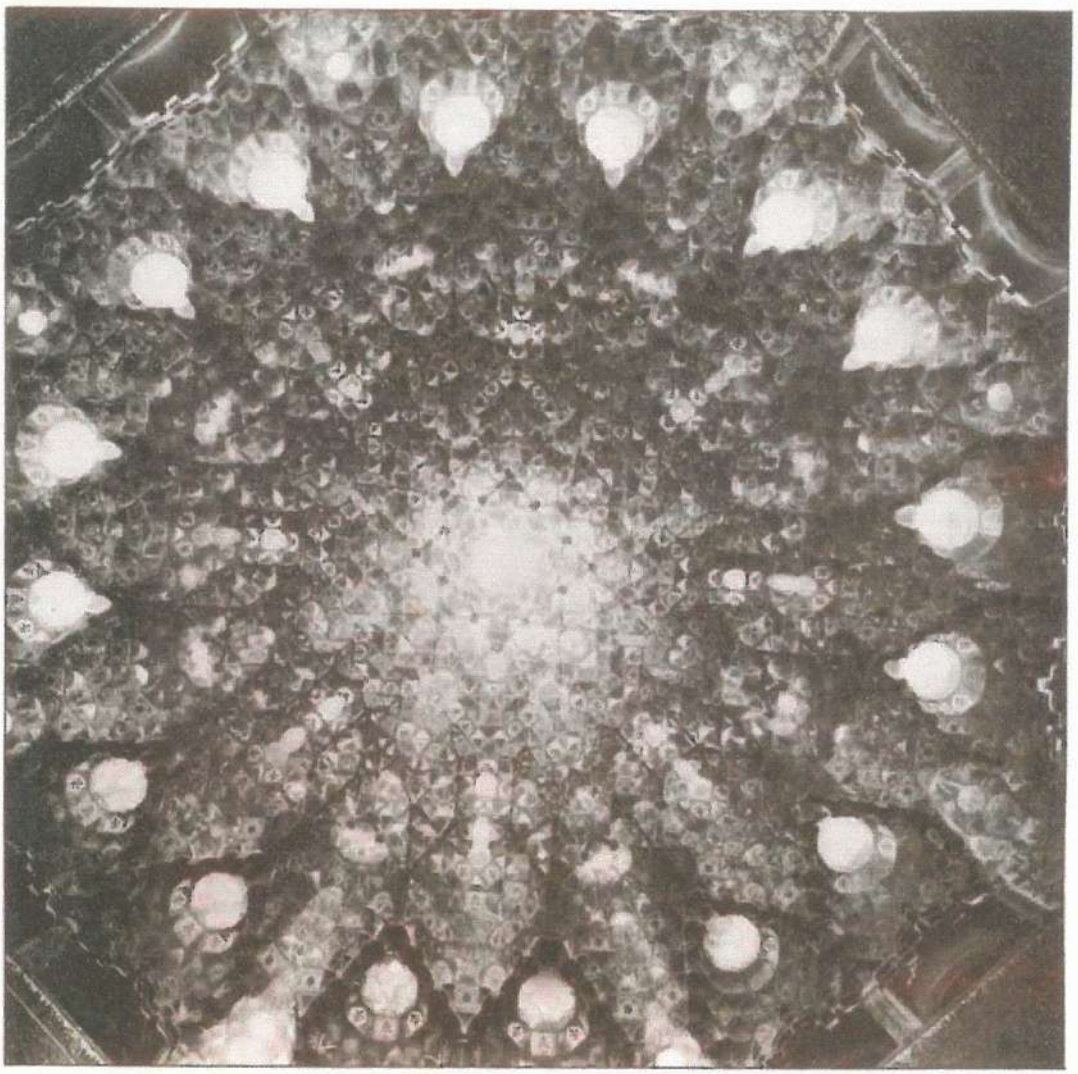
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Dome at the Court of Lions, Alhambra-Granada

A Niche for Lights

Symbol and Function in Islamic Sacred Architecture

Rolph Blakstad

When two lutes which have been equally tuned are set in the same room and the strings of one lute are plucked, the strings of the other will sound exactly the same chords by themselves. There is a sympathetic consonance between the two instruments. The forms are the same, the tuning is the same. There is a harmonic response, a communication and concordance between the two lutes. One lute is struck by the hand of the artist, the other lute responds. It is by this same principle that sacred architecture touches the human soul. The great works of sacred architecture were created by enlightened masters whose hearts were tuned to respond to what can be described as celestial harmony. They then fashioned the lutes, the architectural vessels according to harmonic principles of their understanding. We, entering into these vessels, with a suitable condition in mind, purged of confusion, calm, surrendering, can be tuned to a harmonious relationship with that celestial music which is resonating in the very fibre of their structure. We become consonant with the presence of transcendant harmonies passed on to us through the arts of enlightened masters. The function of sacred architecture is a transcendant function because it is related to the influence and development of the human soul towards an integration of a higher nature. The dome of the Court of the Lions in the Alhambra is such an instrument.

The art of sacred architecture has been in a state of eclipse for a long time. A climax was reached in Islamic

countries some centuries ago: in Moghul India, at the time of Shah Jahan, in Persia, at the time of Shah Abbas, in Turkey, at the time of Sinan. Then there was a fading out of the art. In Europe there has been an even longer period of eclipse. After the creation of the great cathedrals in the Middle Ages, church architecture took on a secular quality, something was lost. During the Renaissance in the European cultures, an emphasis was put on the intellectual study of the physical world. As a result of this activity great progress was made in the physical sciences. This led to a mastery and domination of many of the physical aspects of the world.

A rise in cultural and political power with this bias occured in the West. This coincided with a decline of cultural and political power in many other parts of the world. An expansion of European influence into those areas resulted in the world cultural phase known as the period of Colonialism. A further evolution of this phase has polarised the world into political and cultural areas known as "The West", "The Communist Bloc", and "The Third World". That is simplification, of course. What has been apparent, as a result of this polarisation, is the emergence of a World Culture. Although there is political, military and economic confrontation of varying degrees between these three groups and miriad subgroups, there is a remarkable agreement across the world in the cultural area we can call "life-style". The traditional life-styles of the entire globe are being massively influenced by the life-styles which were evolved in the West during the present century. The principal factor in the evolution of this life-style has been the utilization of energy systems which have enabled a vast increase in the proportion of the world's population to change their activity from food production solely, to the production of other goods. Coupled with this has been the virtual elimination of time and space as impediments to human travel and communication. The means of a continuing global life-style is already with us. The phenomenon is likely to increase and become total.

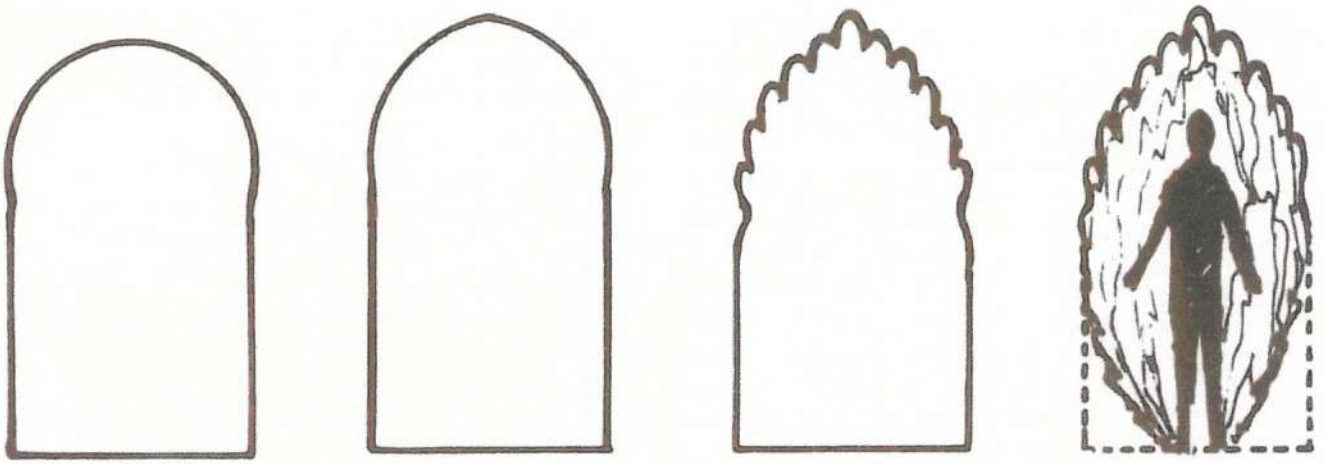
With the rapid disappearance of traditional life-styles, many of us feel that an unfair bargain has been made, that much of great value to human life is being lost in exchange for something of surface glitter but of lesser value. But the change is inexorable. We are really helpless to do anything about it other than adapt to the event and attempt to make improvements within the new context.

We find ourselves in a vast flood-tide of cultural flotsam and jetsam. Everything is in a state of turmoil and flux. There is a feeling of confusion and despair in the cities of the world. There is something lacking in the new man-made environments. The new environments may seem to be superior in many ways to the old ones, but something is lacking. In my opinion, that which is lacking is what was never put into it as a result of a certain turning away which occurred in Europe five or six centuries ago. At the end of the Medieval Period, at the beginning of the Renaissance, a certain emphasis was made in the concentration of one function of the mind. The analytical intellectual function was emphasized at the expense of the integrative intuitive function. I say emphasis, because to operate at all they must operate together to a degree. It is a question of balance or imbalance. Most cultures carry some sort of imbalance inherent in the cultural norms which are inherent in that culture. This tends to create a general bias in the individuals who are members of that culture. Thus certain organs do not develop in these individuals but remain undeveloped and tend to atrophy. Thus whole populations are blind in aspects of sensibility which are part of the human potential. This is the result of conditioning of the particular cultural bias. This is a basic factor of the "personalities" within the culture, and the "personality" of the culture as a whole. The situation does not end there. The bias is carried over as an effect upon the environment through the direct action of the group. Hence, if the group is insensitive to the overall harmony inherent in a particular place, an imbalance is created which has a profound effect on plant and animal life, and even on the climate. This imbalance in the exterior world can be traced back to an imbalance in the minds of the individuals who together constitute the cultural group living in that place. A cycle of action and reaction is set up which not only reinforces the conditions, but sets up further worsening of natural conditions. These can remain chronic for long periods.

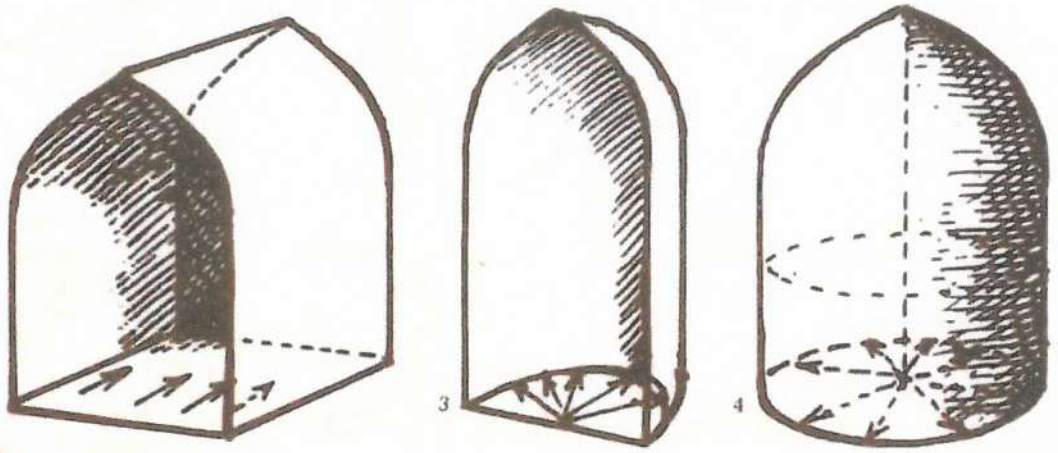
The intuitive function of the mind senses the harmony or disharmony in the whole entity of the environment. Unless the intellect is harnessed in tandem to this function and is dedicated to act in concert with the perceived harmony an imbalance is created. The lower functions of greed and ignorance compound the problem.

A villager, whose intellect has not been overdeveloped to the detriment of his intuition, generally builds his hut and plants his trees in accordance with his feeling of harmony with the prevailing conditions of his environment. He also utilizes the experience of his forebears in a similar situation. The tradition was created and maintained by action based on a balance between intuition and intellect in harmony with the environment. That is why a sensitive person feels that a certain mud village can be harmonious and "right" and a certain chromium amd glass town can be unharmonious and "wrong". This wrongness is not to be traced to the use of particular materials, but to the factors involving the total situation, the correct sensing of interrelated factors. This "sensing" is not an intellectual activity. Unfortunately our present cultural system: laws, building codes, the training of architects, the training of constructors, are all the product of centuries of imbalanced mentation, an over emphasis of the intellectual function. We of this culture, are more or less unbalanced, our interrelation with our own man-made environments are unbalanced. The influence of this on plant and animal worlds is incalculable. A redress of balances, if it is possible to make, cannot be made by fiat, by law, but only by the revitalizing of the organ of intuition itself. The possibility for this may occur through an awareness that the intellect has not achieved what was hoped for from it. Men's souls may turn and search for other means with which to achieve satisfaction.

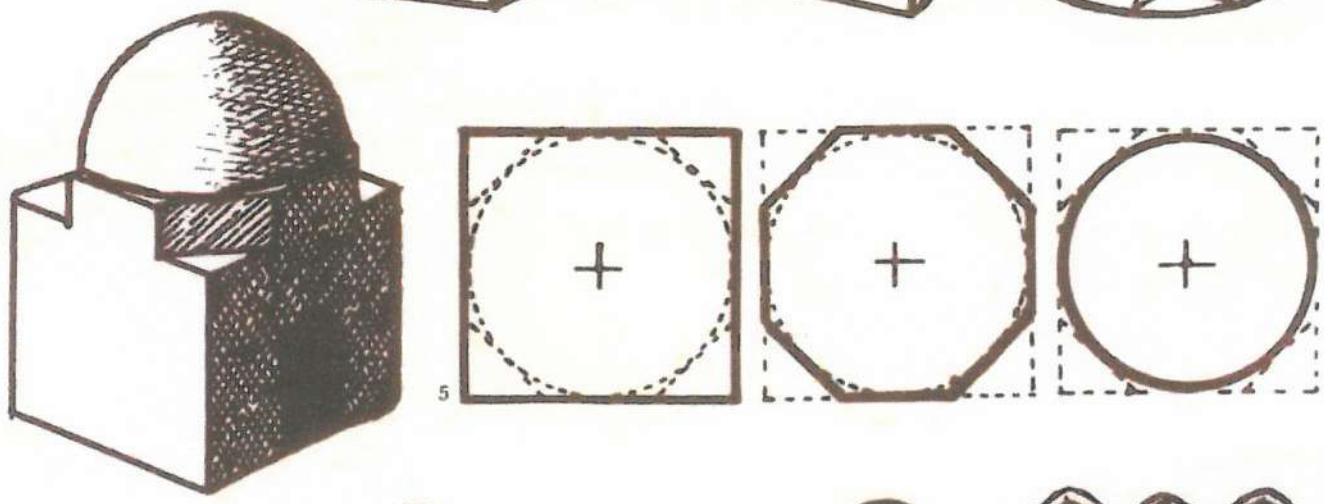
How was it ordered in past times, before the development of the modern world? In the prior civilizations which influenced the area now known as the Islamic world and Europe, builders were organised as craft-guilds. Youths were trained as apprentices by craftsmen who were trained by masters. It seems that since the appearance of the earliest civilizations, knowledge existed of a system whereby gifted individuals could be trained so that their faculties developed in a healthy and balanced way. The work of such balanced



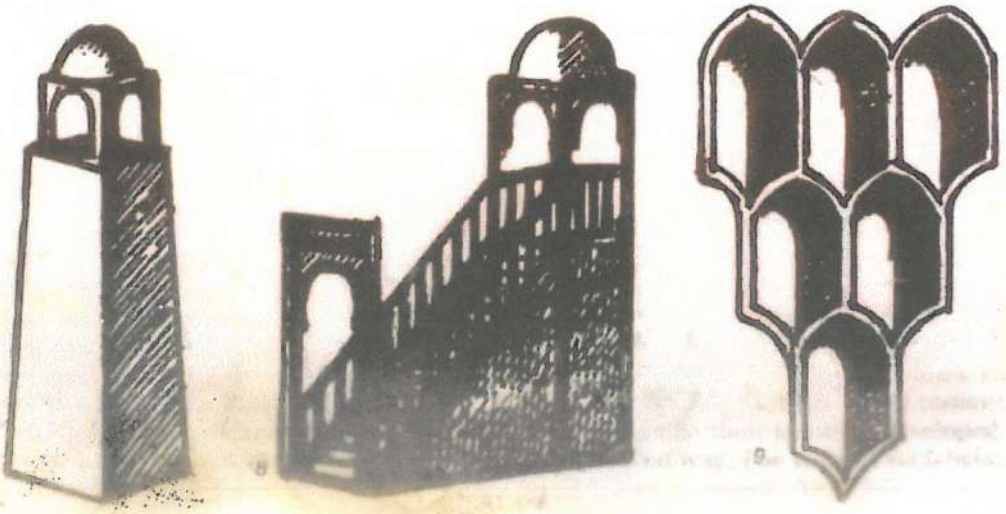
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people had a beneficial effect on the communities to which they belonged. The histories of these guilds would, no doubt, reveal periods of flourishing and decline. The evidence of their activity are the monuments of sacred architecture which are still to be found in the world.

The guilds were maintained as secret societies. An important characteristic of the authentic group was that art, science and religion function as a unified interdependent system. Some of the training methods of the guilds were open to misinterpretation by some members of the community to be contrary to accepted religious practice. For the benefit of everyone concerned, the knowledge that was held by the guilds was kept secret. That is why it is lost to us. There has been a great deal of speculation over a period of many years as to the functional systems pertaining to various monuments of sacred architecture. To my knowledge, no comprehensive solution has been proposed. We are very much in the same situation as the well-known blind men who were confronted with an elephant. There is a great deal of information to be considered and tested. New instruments are being developed for the study of phenomena that are, or have been, considered occult. It is expected that the results of the studies made with these tools will prove that the phenomena are part of man's evolving perceptions of the universe.

I think it is necessary to study sacred architecture in a very broad context. It may lead to a better understanding of man's needs and his place in the Universe. This understanding can then be applied to working with the environment as a whole, to the "non-sacred" part, which of course is a relative term because the environment is all sacred.

Now, if we are talking about non-sacred architecture, it is surely the secular architecture of our present world culture. It was created by an imbalanced system of mentation, and must be out of harmony with our real needs.The needs our minds were created for. What are our needs? We must have a definition for them if we are to find any sort of key to understanding sacred architecture. The best definition I know of it is this, written by Shah Waliullah of Delhi:

"Our own view on this is that the desired objectives with regard to the human species is no more nor less than the purification of the manifest faculties by means of states and stages. The human race has come into being in such a manner that its happiness lies in turning it's attention towards the supreme manifestation and the exalted assembly; while it's wretchedness lies in deviating from these."

Sacred architecture is not in itself the means to such development in man. It is merely one of the instruments created by masters as an aid:

"That they may be present at what helps them and remember God's appellation...and perform the circuit around the ancient house." (Quran:xxll 26-9).

When Pharoah held a contest between his magicians and the Prophet Moses, these priests threw down their staffs, which upon striking the ground turned into snakes. The Prophet Moses then threw down his staff; this also turned into a snake, but his then devoured all the other snakes. The meaning of this parable is that the religion of Moses was more all-embracing, and could contain in entirety the content of the prior ones. The religion of the Prophet Mohammed, the last of the Prophets of a world religion, accepts the messages of Moses, Jesus and the other [illegible] Islam contains and transcends the earlier messages, yet accepts them as valid. It will be seen that the rites of Islam accepted traditional sacred forms from earlier religions. These forms are integrated into the structure of Islamic sacred architecture. However, these are to be considered as allegories of the created world of forms, not as the focus for Uncreated One, who transcends all forms.

There are three forms which constitute the basic key to symbol and function in Islamic sacred architecture. The first two, "the Arch" and "the Mandala", combined create the third,"the Dome", or more completely, "the Qubba". The Arch is composed of two vertical lines or columns which curving towards each other converge and join at an apex (Fig. 1). If the Arch is extended horizontally in a straight line, this creates the form called "the Eyvan" (Fig. 2). If the Arch is rotated concentrically 180 degrees (half circle) this creates the form called "the Mihrab" (Fig. 3). If the Arch is rotated concentrically 360 degrees (full circle) this creates the form called "the Dome" (Fig. 4). The Dome, whose profile depends on the particular curve constituting the Arch, when set upon a volume derived in plan from a Mandala (Fig. 5), creates the form called "the Qubba" (Fig. 6). Mandala here means a symmetrical centric form: a circle, a square, or a regular planar polygon. Another manner of expressing this is to say that the primary form in Islamic sacred architecture is the Qubba; that a whole series of important derivative forms can be abstracted from it. These forms do not make up the entire repertoire of Islamic sacred architecture, but are certainly the foundation of that repertoire. A Minaret is a Qubba exalted and set upon a tower (Fig. 7). A Minbar is a Qubba also exalted and set at the top of a flight of stairs at the foot of which is an arched doorway (Fig. 8). The Muqarnas are the interlocking of multiple Mihrabs (Fig.9). There are endless variations and combinations of these derivative forms. The Qubba, or forms related to it, is to be found in many cultures dating from the most ancient times.

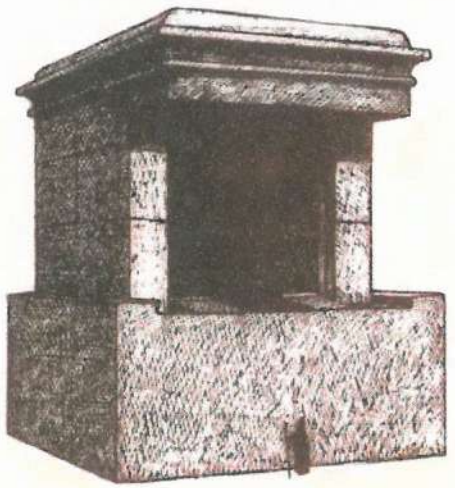


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An evolved form is found in the temples of the ancient Egyptians. It is the "naos", or Holy of Holies where-in was manifested the spirit of the deity. This form is made up of a hollow cube surmounted by a pyramid. One side of the cube is open forming a doorway. This is a sort of square Arch formed from two

upright colums surmounted by a lintel. This form is the prehistoric precursor of the arch, and has the same meaning: the synthesis of opposites joining to become a unity.

The Hermetic tradition, which is the essence of ancient Egyptian civilization, holds that certain geometric shapes embody the qualities of the basic elements which make up the universe. The square and cube represent the element Earth, the triangle and tetrahedron and pyramid represent the element Fire. The combination here is fire above earth, which can be interpreted as the fire of the spirit rising out of the earthly body or, as well, descending into the earthly body. It is a symbol for the soul of Man. The cube is an empty house into which was placed an image of a god of particular qualities which were desired to be manifested within the house. The cube is simply a vessel to contain those manifested qualities. The Qubbas of Morocco retain this form, cube with a pyramidal roof.



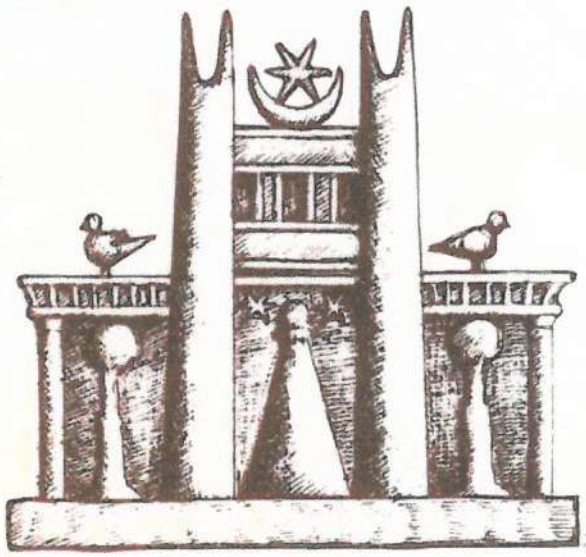
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The "Maabed" of Amrit in northern Syria is a Ka'ba-like structure set in an open court. It was built as a shrine of pilgrimage by the Phoenicians, a Semitic race said to have immigrated to the Lebanon from the South of Arabia around 2000 B.C.; about the time of the Prophet Abraham, or just prior to that time. The deity enshrined at Amrit was the ancient Semitic goddess Astarte, she became the Aphrodite of the Greeks and the Venus of the Romans. Her special day of the week was Friday, in the Romance languages of Europe. Friday still carries her name (Venerdi, etc.). Her special color was green.

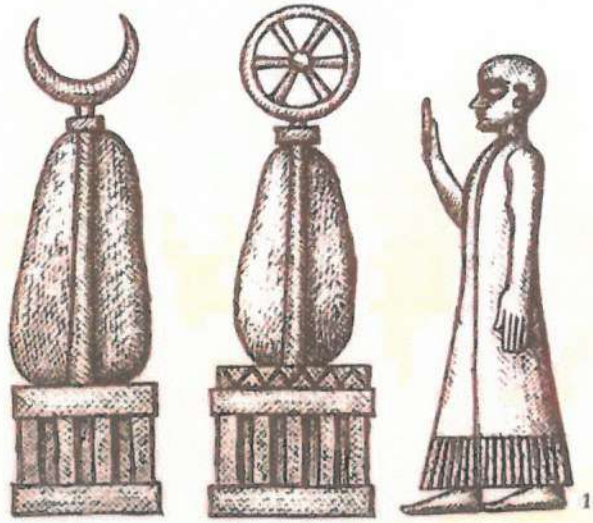


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The Phoenician image of the goddess was simply a conical or domeshaped stone called a "bayt-el". The Phoenicians founded a shrine to Astarte-Aphrodite at Paphos in Cyprus which became the greatest centre of pilgrimage in the Classical world of Greece and Rome. In 1888 the bayt-el of the goddess was unearthed during archeological excavations at the site of the temple. It is now to be seen in the Archeological Museum at Nicosia. It is a black conical stone 1.20 meters high. Although it is not shaped, it is polished smooth by the touch of hands of millions of devotees of ancient times. A number of representations of the shrine exist on Roman coins. They show the bayt-el enshrined in a cubical structure surrounded by a fence. There are two towers on each side of the open doorway of the chamber. There is a star and crescent, symbol of the goddess, present at the shrine. Set over the chamber are two doves, also symbols of the goddess. It will be noticed that the arrangement of the towers on either



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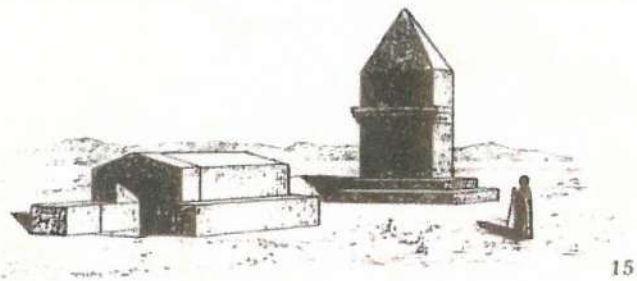
side of the chamber is evocative of the Minarets flanking the Eyvan entrace to the Qubbas or sanctuaries of the great mosques of Iran.

A Chaldean seal stone in black jasper in the British Museum shows a priest in attendance to two bayt-els. One is dedicated to the sun, the other to the moon. He is holding up his hand for the absorption of the baraka which emanates from the stones.

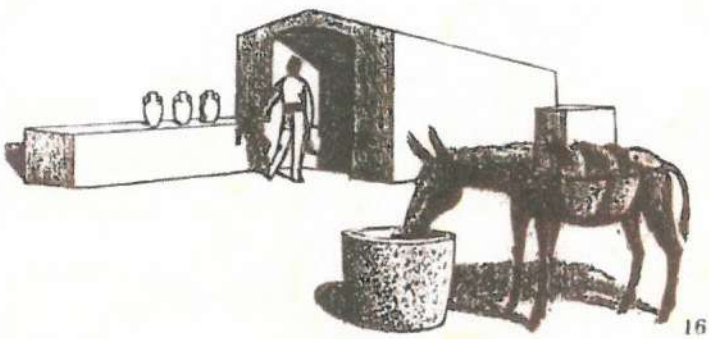
Another type of monument evolved in ancient times

is the qubba related to tombs. This can be studied at Amrit as well; it is a Phoenician tomb. A structure, which consists of a doorway with descending stairs into an underground burial chamber, stands in front of an obelisk shaped qubba, which is set precisely over the underground chamber. The doorway to the underworld is a replica of the structure built by the Canaanites as entrances to their underground springs. These type of spring chambers were constructed by the Phoenicians at their various colonies around the Mediterranean. A spring chamber is till in use on the Spanish island of Ibiza. The tomb entrance retains the bench for lining up the water jugs, as well as the bench for people waiting their turn for water and for chatting with their neighbours at this communal place.

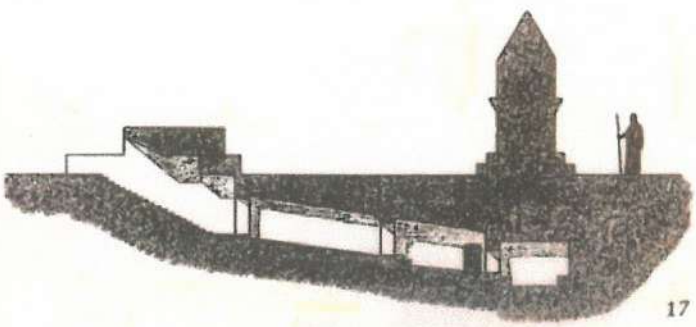
The underground spring symbolized the womb of the Earth Mother from which all earthly beings are born, and to which they return in death. The pyramid is the male solar principle, fire from Heaven. The two principles, male and female, sunlight and water, are required to make the seed germinate. Here the life elements have returned to their sources, the body to the womb of Earth; the soul to the regions of light.



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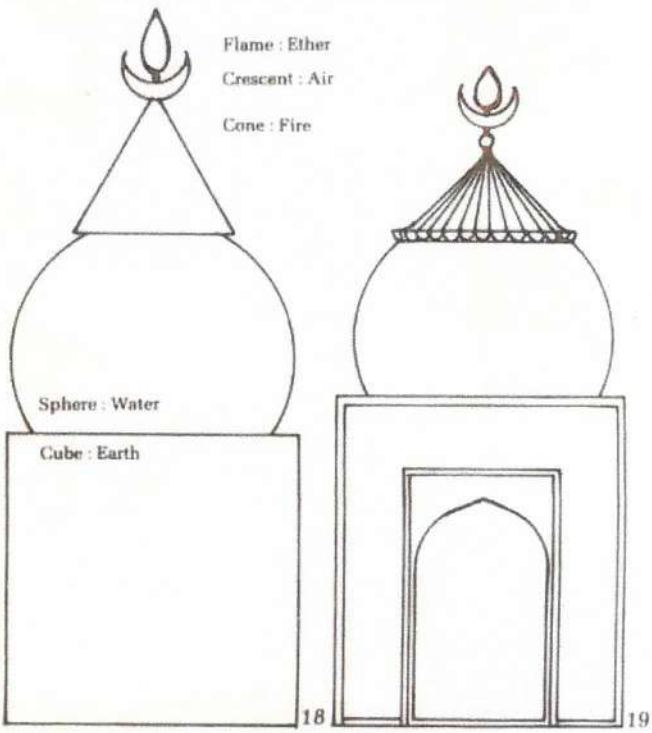


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The obelisk form, or arch shape of tombstones, is common in many parts of the world. The principle of water and fire joined was shown with hermetic cyphers as a male-fire, upward-pointing triangle combined with a female-water, downward pointing triangle. This makes a six-pointed star whose centre is manifest with "new life". These symbols are still in use, in Arab lands, as the "Abjad" system. What I wish to point out here is that these principles were thought to operate as technical, functional principles, as well as symbols of poetic simile.

With the development of Buddhism, in Central Asia, a more complex structure, the "stupa", came into being. The same hermetic symbolism is given to the forms which constitute the stupa. The book "Psycho-cosmic Symbolism of the Buddhist Stupa" by Lama Anagarika Govinda, is a compendium of information about these structures. The five hermetic elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether are represented as embodied in a superimposed series of geometric solids: cube, sphere, cone, cup and "flaming drop".

Lama Govinda says that the stupa evolved from the prehistoric burial mounds of heroes and chieftains, but that with Buddhism came to be the burial places for "Awakened Ones", containing their remains, or other relics which had been attached to them during their lifetimes. He mentions that some of the old stupas were completely covered with niches for oil lamps so that the whole structure would appear to be a radiating dome of light. These domes were surrounded by a fence with four gateways. The stupas remain objects of pilgrimage. Worship consists of the pilgrim making ritual circumambulations within the space between the fence and the stupa. Lama Govinda states that the stupa represents the "psycho-cosmic image of Man". The relics of a saint are thought to emanate a mysterious force or blessedness (baraka), which can act as a bridge to states of being which transcend death in this world; can continue to exist after the death of the body of the saint.



18 19

The similarity between stupas and the marabouts of North Africa and the tombs of Moslem saints in Central Asia can here be noted; the marabout is a qubba.

In Europe also there are many remains of prehistoric tumuli. There was a tendency to develop the interior space in the megalithic "beehive" or Tholos tombs of prehistoric Greece. An out-standing example is the "Treasury of Atreus", at Mycenae. It is an underground dome with a parabolic arch section related geometrically to the domes of Safavid, Iran. It is made up of

thirty-three courses of carefully shaped ashlar blocks whose curves follow exactly the parabolic profile. It should be noted that the "Masonic" number thirty-three could substantiate the claim that the craft of Freemasonry does, indeed, go back to remote origins.

The centric domed building (qubba) developed within Roman culture in such buildings as the Pantheon, and, in the Christian period, in the church of Santa Sofia in Constantinople and the church of The Holy Sepulchre, in Jerusalem. Creswell, in "Early Muslim Architecture", indicates that the "Dome of the Rock" derives its form from the Church of The Holy Sepulchre. The tomb of Jesus is a variation of the stupa with the difference that it is a building rather than a mound. The circumambulation takes place in an interior aisle which surrounds a hollow dome, the qubba. The differnce between the Moslem qubba at Jerusalem and the Christian one is simply that the bodily remains of a prophet are not enshrined in the Dome of the Rock. It is, rather, the association with the place with the Prophets Abraham, Mohammed and other prophets which makes the place of special significance. The Rock itself emanates their special *baraka*, and in this sense it is a relic. So this, too, is an "internalizd stupa". The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, The Dome of the Rock and the Taj Mahal are all "marabouts".

It will be noted that each of these have the same basic architectural concept as the Phoenician tomb at Amrit: (except in the primitive form the qubba is a solid) a qubba placed over an underground cave or chamber. The cave usually contains the bodily remains of saints, heroes or kings, but it can contain something touched by, or associated with, those persons in their life times, even the rock itself.

Emel Esin, in the book "Mecca the Blessed. Medina the Radiant", gives a history of the Kaaba of Makkah based on legends that it was first built by Adam, in the form of a "reflection" of the Holy Throne of God. "Granted free will to choose between faith and doubt, Man was to abandon faith and therefore to experience the great grief caused by his separation from the Divine Beloved. God would then return to Man in the throne that Man must build within his own purified heart." Adam fell from Heaven to Earth onto Mount Budh, either in India or Ceylon, after much wandering came to the Hijaz where in a natural basin surrounded by mountains: "on a small elevation in the midst of the sandy basin there stood a Baldaquin supported on four emerald columns and roofed with a giant ruby. Under the Baldaquin, shining so brightly that it illumined the whole valley, lay a pearly white stone, the symbol of Man's Soul." The vision was of: "An arch in which is a lamp, the lamp in a glass and the glass like a Blessed tree, an olive neither of the East nor of the West, the oil where-of giveth light, though fire touch it not; light upon light." (Quran: XXIV, 35). (Esin mentions in a footnote that the light Sura is interpreted by mystics to be the symbol of God in the human soul.) "And then, with stones brought from nearby Mount Hira, he tried to bind it forever to the Earth by walling it with strong masonery."..."Death came to Adam in Makkah, at the end of a long life.

His pi... Seth buried hi... in a cave beneath Abu Qubais, ...ountain of the Makkan area. The lumino... ...m-throne was taken from the Baldaquin an... ...ced in Adam's grave."..."Seth lived on in the Hejaz after his father's death and honoured God's throne on Earth. One day the jewelled vault suddenly ascended to Heaven, and Seth realized that the sins committed by his brethren who lived out-side the sacred valley had caused Man's vision of God to vanish." (The qubba has ascended and the bayt-el has been buried.)

The descendants of Adam continued to live on Earth, gradually forgetting the purpose of the walled enclosure in the valley. Eventually the great flood covered all the Earth, the walled enclosure was burried in mud, and when the waters receded, it was no longer to be seen. The legend continues telling the story of Abraham and Hagar with their child Ismael coming to the valley in the Hejaz, and what befalls them. Eventually Abraham and his grown son undertake to build a temple to God. As they dug into the sand they discovered the remains of Adam's temple. Abraham and Ismael renewed the foundations. When the walls were built to the height of a man "they needed a stone of exceptional appearance at the eastern corner to indicate where circumambulatory rites should begin. Ismael went to the neighbouring hills to look for such a stone, and while he was gone the gem-throne was miraculuously carried from Mount Qubais where it had lain buried since Adam's death. The soft light from the heavenly jewel again illuminated the whole Makkan area." This legend is not clear as to how the white stone turned black. The walls were completed; no roof was made, because of its cubic shape; it was called "Ka'ba", the cube. God said to Abraham:

"Associate naught with Me, and purify My house for those who make circuits and stand to pray and bow and prostrate themselves. And proclaim to mankind the pilgrimage. They will come towards thee on foot and stand to pray on every lean camel, and through deep pass, that they may be present at what helps them and remember God's appellations ...and perform the circuit around the ancient house. (Quran: XXLI 26-9) This legend is clearly allegorical rather than historical, but, of course, sacred architecture is itself allegorical. The legend states that the stone represents the soul of mankind (Adam), that man must build a throne for God in his own purified heart. This stone is set into the wall of a structure which is an empty cube. The cube represents the earth, or man's earthly consciousness. This must be purged of all association with worldly things in order that God may once more be enthroned there-in. With the passage of time, the descendants of Abraham, like the descendants of Adam, forgot the meaning of the empty cube, the purified soul, and began surrounding it with idols of pagan gods which eventually numbered three hundred and sixty. The interior was decorated with paintings and filled with votive treasures.

In the time of the Prophet Mohammed, some five years before the beginning of his prophetic mission, the Ka'ba had become very dilapidated. It was demolished and reconstructed by the Quraish, who were the hereditary nobility responsible for the maintenance of the temple and supervision of the pilgrimage and rites. The Ka'ba at that time was rebuilt with alternating courses of timber and stone. Creswell suggests that this system of construction derives from the building methods used in religious architecture in Abyssinia. There were sixteen courses of stone alternating with fifteen of timber. Idries Shah, in the chapter "The Builders", in his book "The Sufis", refers to this: "This temple was built with thirty-one courses of stone and wood. The Sufis add: 'With earth and sky, thirty-three'." The chapter "The Builders" relates the Freema-

sons to the Sufi society called 'The Builders' (Al-Banna) which was founded by Dhu'l-Nun the Egyptian. Dhu' l-nun is said to have reformulated ancient Egyptian hermetic wisdom and presented it in a form appropriate to a new phase of culture. This was some two centuries after the rebuilding of the Ka'ba referred to here. However, it does show that the Quraish were following age-old formulas.

The Quraish were maintaining the temple precincts for polytheistic worship. It was to become the mission of the Prophet to purge the Ka'ba of its accumulated images of gods, and return it purified to the state intended by its builder, the Prophet Abraham, as the Temple of the God of Unity. This was not to be accomplished without a long struggle with the Quraish and the conservative Makkans who held tenaciously to what had become the traditional rites of their worship.

Before the completion of that mission, the first two mosques were built. These were occasioned as a result of the Hegira, the leaving of Makkah and the establishment of the first Muslim community at Medina. The mosques were of the most simple nature, simply walled enclosures to set the ground apart as a place of prayer. Such a form is called a musalla, but the later forms of mosques derive from these humble structures. The first mosque was built at Qoba on the southern edge of the oasis of Yathrib, (Medina). It was a stone enclosure in the form of a square, measuring 66 x 66 cubits. A shade made of palm branches was erected across one end. A stone was set as the qibla facing towards Jerusalem, towards which the community still directed their prayer. The second mosque was built at Medina. Like the enclosure at Qoba, the mosque was a square court, this time measuring 100 x 100 cubits. Here it is to be noted the number pattern 33, 66, 99 plus, like the beads in a rosary (Subhah, Tasbih) for telling the 99 names of God.(The 100th being unknown.) A covered area at one end was made supported upon eight palm trunks as pillars, with a roof of palm branches. The qibla was also set to face Jerusalem, but at a later time the Prophet changed the direction of prayer to the direction of Makkah. The *qibla* was accordingly set towards the South and the southern entrance bricked up.

The square enclosure with the congregation equally distributed over the four directions, yet all facing Makkah, symbolizes the world with each person equal to his neighbour ranged over its surface. Each one, facing Makkah, surrendering himself to God.

The numbers, 33, 66, 100, are to be equated with the recital of the attributes of God. The attributes are the whole field of Creation. So a square field with all the attributes of creation, in which is set a single marker for the focus of prayer, is the simplest form of mosque; it is a representation that the whole of creation has a single point of emanation and return.

After the success of the Prophet Mohammed's mission to cleanse and restore the sacred Ka'ba, a continuous expansion of his armies spread beyond the deserts of Arabia to confront the empires of the Byzantines and the Persians and those even further afield. The architectural forms of the Arabs were of the most rudimentary, as we have seen. In Syria, churches were taken over as mosques or else divided and shared between the Christian and Muslim congregations. In Persia, palaces or audience halls were adapted as mosques, effected by the removal of images, and the setting up of a marker to indicate the direction of Makkah.

The first Mihrab as a niche was made for the mosque of Medina during its reconstruction by order of Al-Walid. The second, during the rebuilding of the Mosque of Amr; the third was the Mihrab of the companions of the Prophet in the Great Mosque of Damascus. The form then became established generally. There may have been some resistance against the use of the niche as it was so much a part of of the formal repertoire of other religions. It is found in the churches as the apse in which the altar is placed; as the niche of the Torah in synagogues; as the niche for setting images in Greek, Roman and Phoenician temples, as well as in those of the Mesopotamians, the Buddhists and the Hindus. It is a symbol of the aura which radiates from saints or from holy objects. The niche is the vessel which contains the aura, as it were. This is the subject of the Light Sura in the Quran, and is the justification of the mihrab as niche.

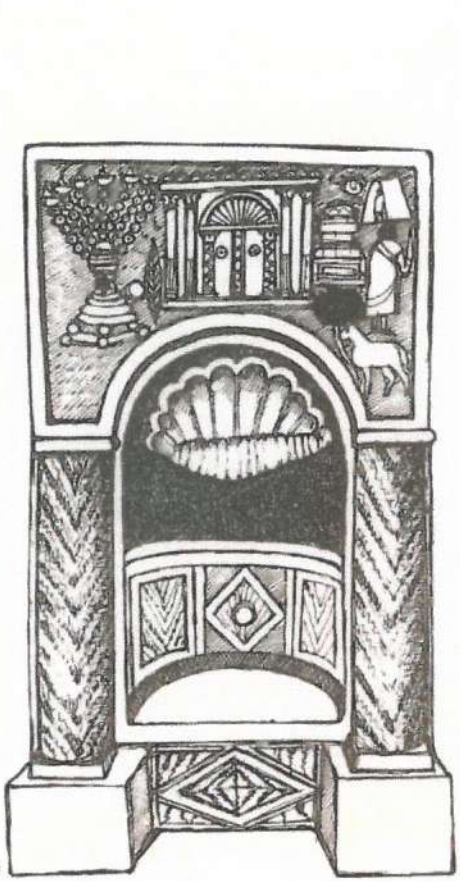
The difference between the sacred niche as used in Islam and other religions bears a parallel with the purging of the Ka'ba of idols, ("Associate none with Me"). The mihrab is a focus towards God. The mihrab has been purged of idols.

There is a geometrical concept which is presupposed in the Moslem rites. The basic devotional act in Islam is the act of prayer which is directed towards the Ka'ba at Makkah. The mosque is the architectural setting provided for the ritual prayer of the individual and for the community. The Ka'ba is the central point of a mandala whose field is the whole world. Scattered over this field are the multitudes of mosques which are oriented to face the centre. Within each mosque, on the Qibla wall, is an arch-shaped niche, the mihrab. This niche is, as it were, a gateway, leading to one of the multitudinous paths radiating from the centre of the world mandala.

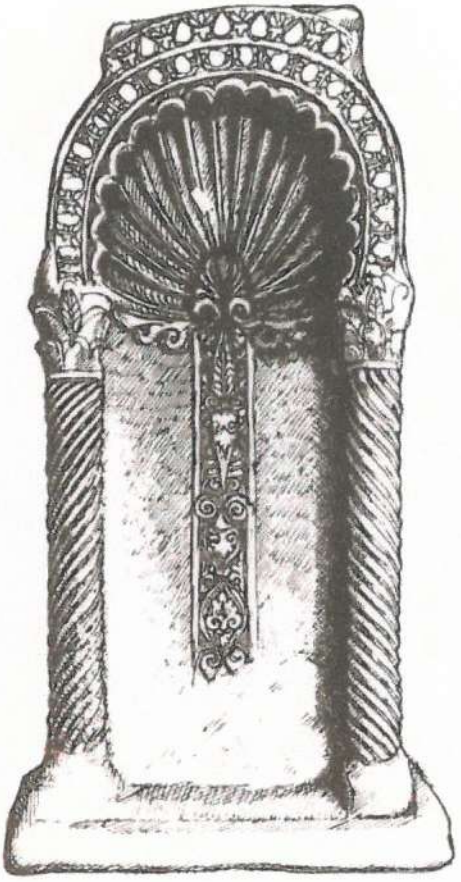
The symbolism of this configuration, the world mandala whose centre is the Ka'ba, is that the prayer of all Muslims is unified, centralized at a single point. The soul of each individual becomes directed and symbolically absorbed with the souls which make up the whole community, the Ummatu Muhammad. The Ka'ba, then, is the focus of the soul of the entire Ummah in surrender to God. According to Rumi, "Animality has division in spirit, the human spirit has one soul". (Ruhu'l Azam) The soul of the individual worshipper, purged of his animal nature becomes expanded and absorbed into a truly human soul, filled with the light of God. This state transcends the state of time and space. The mihrab and Ka'ba are symbolic vessels. The real qibla is the human heart directed in surrender to God, the mosque is the human soul. This is, of course, the meaning of the tradition "Wherever a Muslim prays is a mosque".

When the Prophet purged the Kaaba, he destroyed the images of the material world as a primary focus for the mind; what was left was an empty vessel into which can descend the light of God. "It is the vacant, voided, purged 'house' into which the Baraka descends." The empty cube draped in black is a symbol of the vacant, voided, purged house. It indicates the state of consciousness in which "Neither commerce nor trafficking diverts from the remembrance of God."

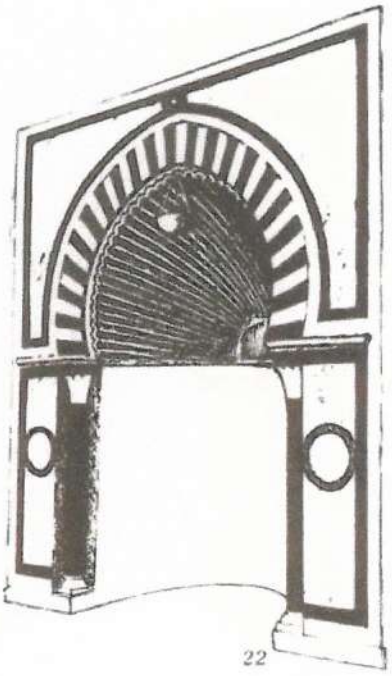
The Ka'ba in its simple, primitive form cannot, perhaps, be called a qubba; it lacks the physical dome or pyramid representing fire. This may be because it is the focus of the actual fire that the dome symbolises. Perhaps there is a cone of energy actually centered on its axis, the focus of prayer of the Faithful in their millions. In any case, it is the centre of a mandala whose field is the whole world, its dome must be the arching



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heavens themselves.

The Ka'ba functions as the locus of the Ummatu Muhammad in the state "Ar Ruhu'l Azam". The qubba and its corollary, the mihrab, represent the soul of man illuminated by the light of God. This is a state in which the individual animal soul of Man disappears and becomes united with the world soul. It can be seen that the symbol of qubba and Ka'ba do, indeed, coincide. The individual qubba represents that state, also, as goal and potential. This is the meaning of: "Man is both complete and incomplete". He is created with the potential for completeness.

Illustrated here are three mihrabs which are very similar. The first one is from the temple of Dura Europos, and dates from 250 A.D. It is now in the Archeological Museum in Damascus. This mihrab is some 450 years older than the first mihrab installed in mosque, which was done during the rebuilding of the mosque of Medina by order of Al-Walid in 707.

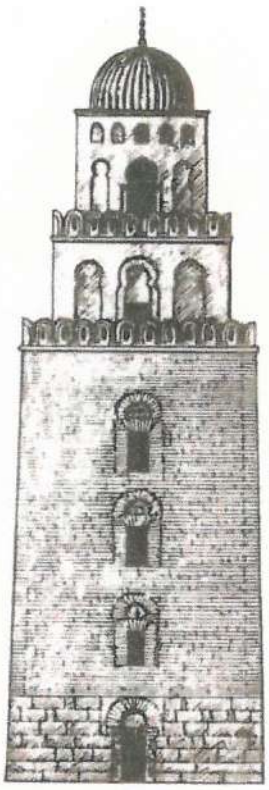
The mihrab carved in white marble is from the 9th century.The main elements of the former are preserved. The conch and the two pillars. A 13th century mihrab, in the Mosque of El Hawa in Tunis again preserves the same elements.

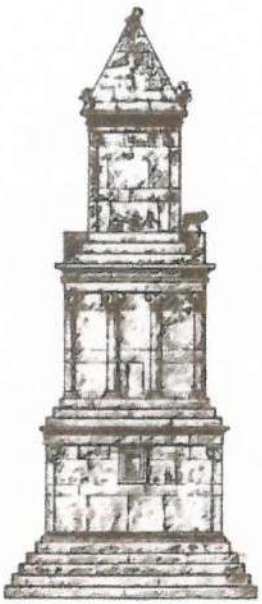
The minaret is a beacon, a light guiding to the place of prayer. Qairawan still retains the aspect of the early Islamic cities. The minaret of the Great Mosque can be seen from afar, dominating the skyline of the city set against the desert sands. Its very form calls out: "Come to prayer, come to success!" Most minarets are terminated in a qubba; the illuminated aura. The meaning of the w[illegible]" is "luminary". The minaret of Qair[illegible]ed of three cubic forms set one over the [illegible]. The topmost forms a domed qubba.

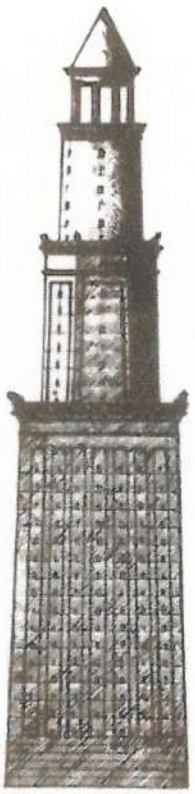
The design closely follows that of the 2nd century B.C. Punic Mausoleum in nearby Dougga which in itself is closely related to the Phoenician obelisk-qubba at Amrit. Alexandria was the centre for a synthesis of cultural ideas. There was a harvesting of Egyptian,Greek and Semitic knowledge as well as that of Central Asia due to interchange following the conquests of Alexander the Great. Egypt under the Ptolemys provided an atmosphere for the blending of the knowledge of different cultures very similar to the process of the later Islamic synthesis.

The Pharos, or lighthouse of Alexandria was a luminary, a tower with a fire burning at its summit to light the way of ships to a safe haven in the darkness. The Pharos was built for Ptolemy II (285 - 246 B.C.). It had a base 100 feet square and rose to a height of 440 feet. It existed well into the Islamic period: it was finally demolished in the 13th century. Its name in Arabic is "Manara". It consisted of 3 prisms superposed one above the other, the bottom, a square, the middle, an octagon, the top a cylinder crowned with a cone. This as well as the Semitic mausoleum was the probable prototype of many minarets particularly those of Egypt and the Yemen. The beautiful minarets of the Ashrafiyya Mosque in Taizz follow this sequence of superposed prisms. The sequence of transition from square to circle is to be found as one of the basic characteristics of the Qubba. It symbolizes the transition from the earthly state to the heavenly state (square - earth, circle - heaven). It connotes that this is an evolutionary process. The Muqarnas forms of the dome can be said to represent the seventy thousand veils of light and darkness described by Al Ghazali in his exposition "A Niche for Lights". There is a mounting sequence of interdependent "mihrabs" which as they approach the single point of the apex become more imbued with a greater intensity of light.

In existing illustrations of the Prophet at prayer


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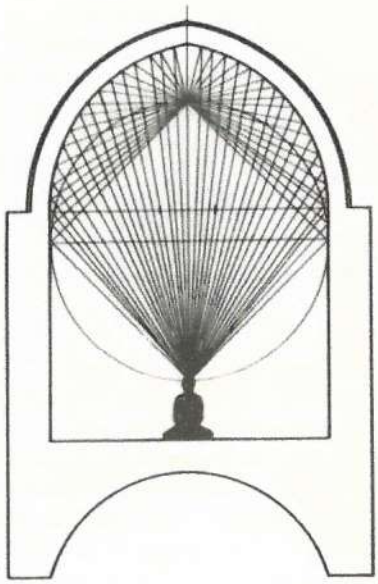

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before the Ka'ba, his saintly aura is shown as a golden flame. For thousands of years, clairvoyants have seen and described the aura. It is one of the key themes of religious paintings and at the very core of sacred architecture. In 1949 S.D. Kirlian discovered the possibility of photographing the energy fields of biological objects in high frequency currents. This system called "Kirlian Photography" is now being researched in many parts of the world.Dr. Thelma Moss of the U.C.L.A. Neuropsychiatric Institute is developing instrumentation which bypasses the need for high frequency currents and can monitor the electrical fields of auras directly. The electrical fields of plants, animals and humans are, as photographs show them to be, in a state of continual flux depending on the vitality or lack of it in organic tissues. In the case of persons the fields differ depending on the emotional moods of the subjects. In a confrontation between friends, the individual emanations reach out to each other and fuse. In hostile confrontation, the emanations draw back and "bristle". It should be possible to study the effect of sacred architecture on the human energy field, just as bio-feedback experiments enable studies to be made of the effects of meditation techniques. The auras of ordinary people are in a state of change in response to events in their ambient environments outside of their bodies and in response to thought patterns, emotions and organic processes occuring within their bodies. The aura is not the soul, but it monitors the response pattern of the soul as an energy field with differing characteristics. The body is accumulated action or habit of soul. The changes of mood of a person are effected as changes in shape and colour of the aura. Changes of mood can be seen in the pattern of tensing or relaxing of the muscles of the face. But the effects in the aura are more fluid, more dramatic. Human or animal behaviour, and thought patterns reveal an immediate response in the aura which may not be perceptable as a response in the physical body. The aura reveals the quality of thought and action as emanating from the soul of the actor. If there should be an auric memory which preserves the overall development of an individual auric body, the effect of its character, this becomes very close to being the book of the recording angels for that soul. In other words, the quality of actions promote growth or inhibitions which enable the aura to function at a certain level in its environment. This would cause the soul to either develop or regress in consciousness.

Sacred architecture is dedicated to provide instruments for aiding people to develop a more comprehensive consciousness. With the advent of scientific instruments for the study of the human energy field, it should be possible to study the aura of a person at prayer in varying surroundings including settings which are, by general consent, holy places.

There is a long history of studies dealing with "psychovital" energies. It is crucial that an effort be made to gather, correlate, and clarify the data into a general working theory. Electricians work with electricity without knowing what it "is". We are running about "living" without knowing what life "is". The energy phenomena can be defined as "nutrients of the psyche", clearly a correct quantitative and qualitative balance of these forces is essential to the healthy development of a living organism. It would seem probable that the endocrine gland system is sensitive to irradiation of these energy forms, and that a hormonal response would in turn affect the biosystem of the individual creature.

The following studies of energy-reflective structures suggest that energy radiation, light sound or "other" was used in the past to artificially influence the vital systems of persons situated within those structures. No attempt is made to isolate what those energy forms might be excepting in the way of general surmise. A great deal more will have to be known about the "nutrients of the psyche" before the technology of sacred architecture can be clearly understood in a current con-



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text. The "electricians" of the past, however, apparently knew their trade.

The Bayt Al-Mal (Fig. 27) in the courtyard of the Great Mosque of Damascus is surely one of the earliest domed structures of Islam. These studies were made before it had been covered with restored mosaic decoration. It consists of an octagonal domed chamber set upon eight re-used Roman columns with Corinthian capitals. The structure of the chamber is made up of alternating courses of brick and stone. The inner dimensions of the chamber(Fig. 28) , including the dome, have a proportion of $1:\sqrt{2}$. The section of the dome is elliptical, giving focus centres $\frac{\sqrt{2}-1}{2}$ from apex and floor, and 1" apart. The lower focus point will coincide with a point centrally located in the cranium of a person seated on the floor directly under the centre of the dome. This focus point is reflectively co-incident with the higher focus point which in itself bears a formal similarity to the point within the cranium. But the shell of the dome becomes a macro-cranium, as it were. Any energy manifestation, (light, sound, other), are in direct communication with minimal energy loss. One can speculate as to the purpose of this chamber. There is no tradition that it was other than a secure place for storing treasure. According to Creswell, there is evidence that there was once a fountain basin directly under the chamber. This has recently been covered with modern paving.

There is another domed chamber, with an elliptical section of an octagonal plan. It is in the Alhambra at the far end of the Court of Myrtles, opposite the Hall of the Ambassadors (Fig. 30). Here the section is 1/2 of a horizontal ellipse whose proportion is $1:\sqrt{3}$. The centre line containing the focus points is raised to height equal to that in the Bayt Al-Mal. This point, as before mentioned, is co-incident with a point centred in the cranium, or in the forehead of a person seated in certain positions on the floor. The actual dimension is 83 cm, or the megalithic yard. (A dimension used in setting out the Megalithic monuments of Western Europe, and for the setting out of the Great Pyramid at Gizeh). In the case of the Alhambra dome, this dimension is arbitrary as the line could have been set higher or lower. But in the case of the Bayt Al-Mal, the measure is intrinsic to the dimensioning of the whole chamber.

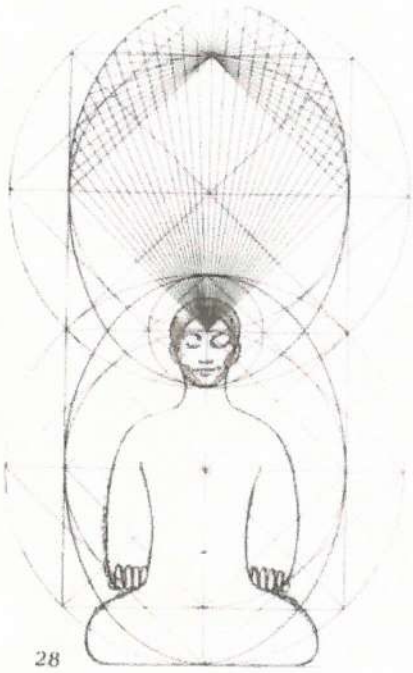
In the Alhambra chamber, the focus points of the ellipse describe a linear octagon in which persons sitting opposite each other are functionally, though not spacially, coincident. This relationship is repeated four times within the octagonal configuration.

A circular dome using a $1:\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}$ elliptical section, has been built to my design. The focus point forms a continuous circle at a height coincident with the crania of a group seated in a circle at the correct location on the floor. The effect is to greatly intensify any sensory communications between the people so arranged. They tend to become attuned to one another in "unison". Figure 29 shows a geometric scheme for a qubba using the focussing principle of the Bayt Al-Mal dome. Here, instead of a room, it is reduced to the size of a small pavilion or throne.

These examples are based on the ellipse where there exist two focus centres which radiate and concentrate energy phenomena at these two points. In three dimensional design, in the vertical elliptical dome, the focus points are concentrated as points in space. In the case of a horizontal elliptical dome, the focus exists as a line in space, either circular, in the case of a circular plan to the dome, or a polygonal line of focus in the case of a polygonal plan to the dome (the Alhambra dome).

There is another type of dome using the principle of the parabola. Here the curve of the dome reflects energy transmissions in parallel lines. These are radiated from a focus point, or conversely concentrated to a focus point. The dome principle is usually resolved in section as two half parabolas confronting each other. Another type, a vertical parabolic reflector facing downwards over a cubical chamber to form a qubba. The Druze Shrine "Abel's Tomb", over-looking the Barada Valley in Syria is of the latter type (Fig. 34).

The former type is of great antiquity. A cross-section of the Treasury of Atreus indicates that this chamber, like the Alhambra chamber, is built of blocks of limestone. The curved profile is as well carefully carved. There is a strong echo in both of the chambers. The whole space reverberates according to its specific shape and energy stimulation. In both chambers the focus line is situated so that a line of people, presumably reciting dikr, create an augmented energy relationship, one with another. The Bayt Al-Mal type is constructed for the use of one person; the repetition of dikr, would, however, be concentrated and returned to the reciter. In all of these the focus point, or line, is coincident with the physical body of the person or persons situated within the chambers. The later development of the "confronting section" parabolic domes suggest that another range of energy phenomena are involved.(c.f.the sanctuary of the Shah Mosque in Isfahan). Here the "focus" circle is far removed from physical centres in the body. Sound or other physical emanations reaching the dome would tend to congregate as a concentrated circular focus in space. The emanations on the lower levels would tend to be dissipated in the normal way of a rectilinear space. The cream is being skimmed off the top, as it were. That which rises is favoured over what remains below. I possess a gas-lamp which consists of a mantle set in a dome-shaped glass



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chamber. When the mantle is lit there is projected into the space of the upper dome, a perfect "ghost" image of the mantle. It occurs to me that an effect on the human aura could parallel the mantle in a suitable domed chamber. Many people feel something rising out of the body when in a cathedral or domed mosque, a shivering or exalted feeling. It may be that the aura separates from the locus of the physical body in such a time. A theme for further research.

We have been dealing here with the interior function of the dome for reflecting and focussing of energy phenomena. There is another possibility for research. There is speculation that forms such as pyramids, hemispheres and cones actually concentrate and radiate energy.

The particular energy form associated with sacred architecture is, however, "baraka". There has been general human acceptance of this energy manifestation since prehistoric times. Its existence is accepted, at very least, by the builders of holy shrines, and by those who visit them. A very comprehensive study of beliefs related to baraka is given in "Ritual and Belief in Morocco" by Edward Westermark. Generally speaking, the baraka associated with religious shrines is that manifested by the bodily remains of saints or holy persons and with relics belonging to them, such as clothing or other objects. The baraka remains "impregnated" in the material as if it were a substance. It is not necessary to actually touch the relic, as the baraka radiates into the vicinity for some distance. A pilgrim visiting a shrine is able to absorb the emanations from the relic by remaining nearby. The postures of the two pilgrims in the cave within the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (Fig. 33) are typical for the "absorption" of baraka. Many have noticed that there is a feeling of discharge of energy when the forehead touches the floor, and a feeling of receptiveness in the whole field of the body when the hands are held upwards. The architectural setting for relics is a type of qubba often called a marabout. This, at any rate, is the Magrebi term.

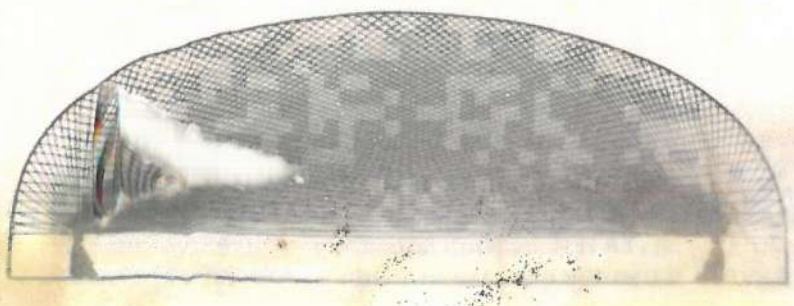
Figure 34 shows the tomb of Abel, already mentioned, with an inverted parabolic dome, ommiting, here, the direct radiation form the tomb of the saint. And, touching only on the function of the dome, the implication is that the radiation reaching the dome is refracted evenly throughout the whole volume of space. Notice that the profile of the cenotaph (darbuz) is the most ancient profile of a qubba. Like the Kaaba, the cenotaph is covered with a cloth drapery. These were often fenced with a screen made of massive silver. Silver is an excellent conductor of baraka. The "Black Stone" of the Ka'ba is set within a silver "domed" bezel, so that the pilgrim's head enters into a silver chamber whilst kissing the stone.

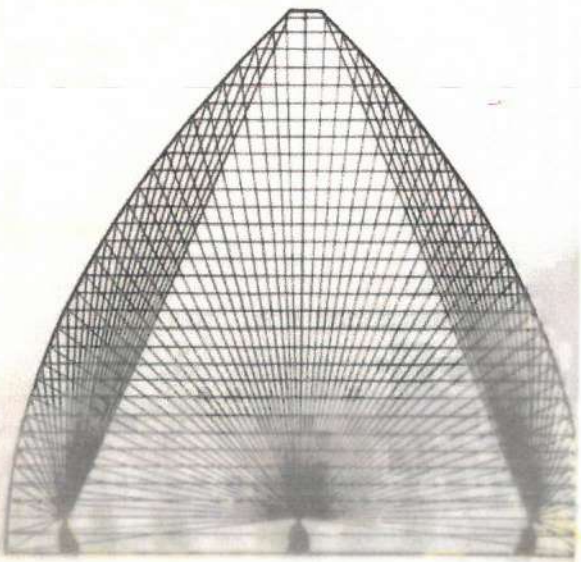
The domes used as examples here, follow very closely exact elliptical or parabolic profiles. The Treasury of Atreus and the elliptical dome of the Ahlambra are beautifully carved in massive blocks of lime-stone. It has been suggested that the blocks were set by master masons trained to a sensitive response to the echo.

It should be clear, however, that different dome types were used for differing functions. Actual dimensions were dependent on precise ratios of the human frame. The diagrams of the Bayt Al-Mal and the minimum qubba should make the principle evident.

"In the presence of the Archangel Gabriel, Abraham and Ismael made the sevenfold circuit of the Ka'ba. They ran seven times between the hills of Safa and Marwah in commemoration of Hagar's anguish. Then they walked to the plain of Arafat, and turned back again towards the Ka'ba, recalling the ordeal of sacrifice. As the mysterious rites were performed Gabriel asked Abraham: "Hast thou penetrated the significance?' The last phrase shows that the rites are an allegory.Symbol in religion is function in that it can operate functionally in the subconscious mind to create a transformation within the mind.

Allegory is a model of necessary experiences which can effect that transformation. The purpose of the sym-





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bol is functional in that sense. Thus the qubba, in its form, is a functional symbol, in taking thought of that form, there is an effect on the mind of the thinker. That is one aspect of the symbol and function of sacred architecture: as allegory. Another function is in the sense of the building as an actual instrument for the ordering, concentration and transmission and perhaps transmutation of energy. In both cases the purpose is the transmutation of the human mind.

The purpose of religion is to modify human behaviour, towards a certain refinement and to expand the individual consciousness. In the Islamic religion all individual conscious entities are seen as sub-functions of a single total entity. The purpose of the modification of behaviour and expansion of consciousness towards a total harmony is a state of surrender to the total entity.

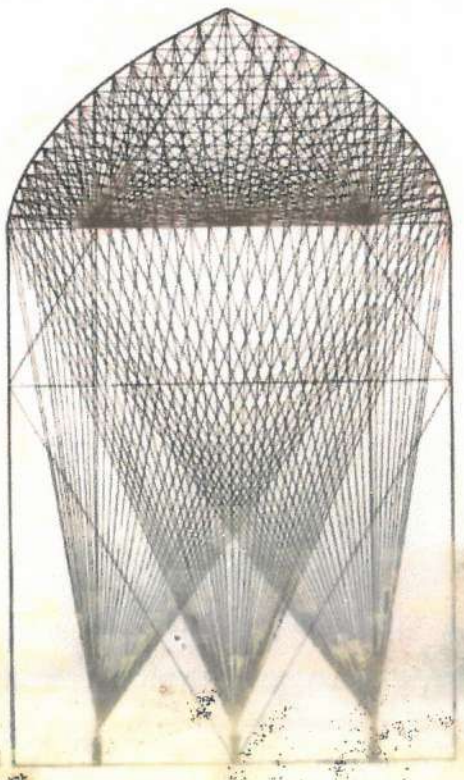
Certain actions, prayer, fasting and the giving of alms, are designed to manifest certain effects in the body, mind and behaviour of the individual person practicing those actions. The actions are, thus, seen to have technical functions.

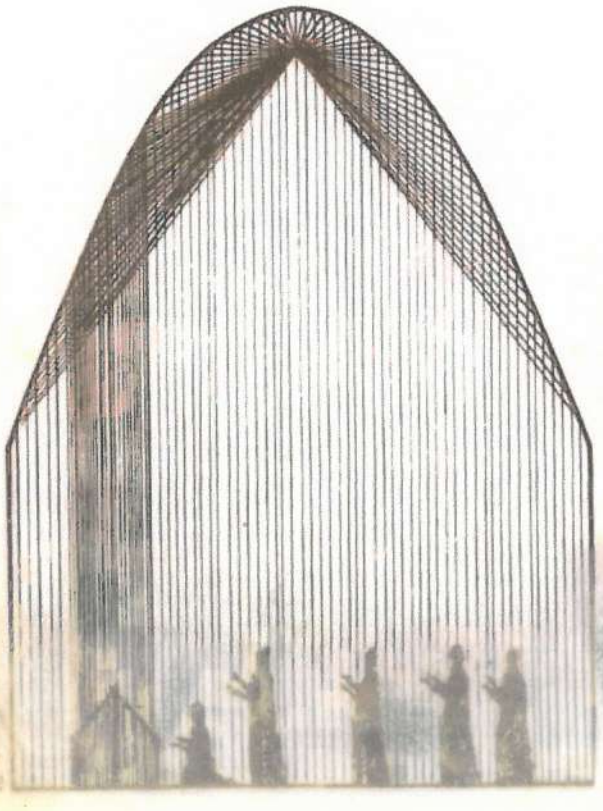
Another order of technical function in the service of a religion, is that provided by sacred architecture. The purpose of this is to create an environment with particular qualities which, in themselves, can promote growth and development of the individual consciousness.

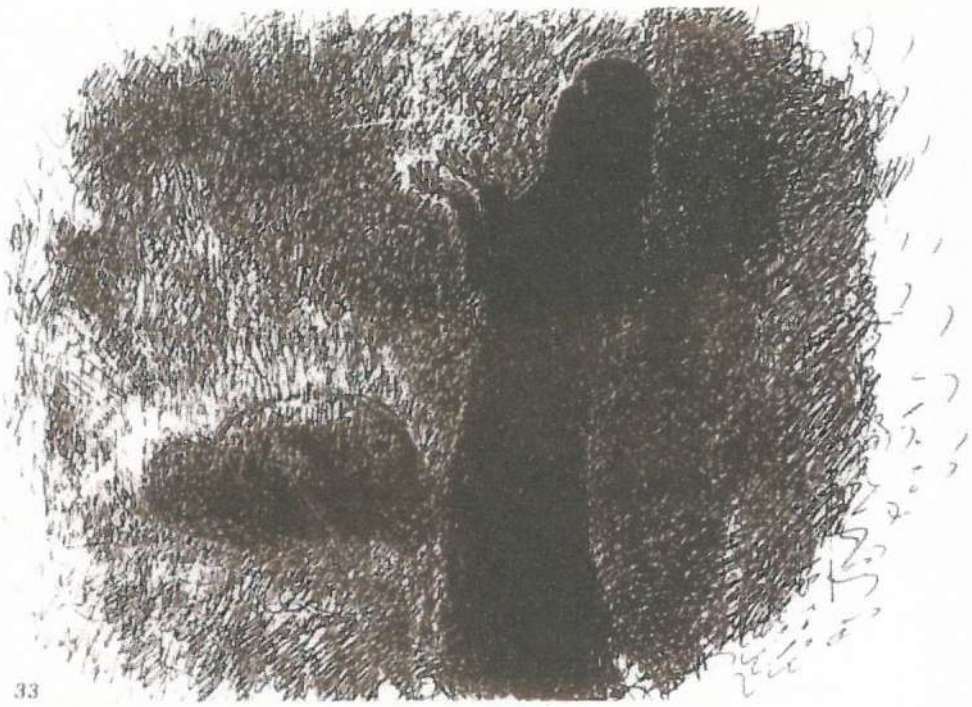
One technique is to create a microclimate of perfection to which the individual consciousness can identify with through harmonic association. The qubba of the Court of the Lions provides such a setting. The individual is able to "tune" himself to a certain conscious experience not to be found in the everyday setting of the flute played during the construction. The finishing of the surfaces, once the blocks were in place, could also be "tuned", in this way. Guitar makers shave and sand the insides of an instrument, while adjusting the tone, by sounding chords and feeling the clarity of the vibrations. The lute was invented in Arab Granada. It was made of cypress wood in the shape of half an egg, sliced vertically. This shape is made up of a major and minor ellipse combined. As such, it can represent a relationship of macrocosm to microcosm, as a harmonic unity. The Muqarnas Dome, of the Court of the Lions at the Alhambra, is made up of thousands of prisms of cypress wood; these are set tightly together and can be tapped into place from above, and can be "tuned" in a manner similar to the tuning of a grand piano. That dome is probably the masterpiece of Islamic dome building.

That is the gathering, concentrating and focusing of unspecified energy phenomena in specific ways for specific purposes. The various dome types given as examples in this essay show some of the configurations used in the past. These domes utilize the focusing properties of elliptical and parabolic profiles as energy reflectors. It is possible that this function was combined with other factors. Walls of alternating stone, wood (Kaaba), or brick and stone (Bayt Al-Mal) could act as energy condensors. This again, with the force field of an underground stream combined with a metal-clad dome which would set up a charged ionic atmosphere within the chamber. The actions of the group within, would compound the effect on the consciousness of the group, with or without the presence of the world. By experiencing this, the individual can use this to transcend the mental pollution that obscures the everyday experience, thus purifying, in effect, the world effect an essential transformation of that mind; a bind-itself in the conscious mind of that individual. The shape of the arch can act as a "tuner" to stabilize the shape of the individual aura, if a certain attitude of mind is directed towards it.

There is a further function of sacred architecture. baraka of a saint - a special microclimate. The rites of the pilgrimage are performed by each pilgrim, in which it is possible to experience some special sequence of impacts on the mind which may act as a catalyst to







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ing to the way, a preparation for a longer journey, a further pilgrimage beyond this world.

The present trends of research in the study of the human mind are opening an approach to what was once the prerogative of religion. The traditional systems are becoming obsolete, as are local cultures; we may be witnessing the birth of a world culture. There is surely a place for a new synthesis in sacred architecture. It depends, of course, on real understanding of the art.

In the traditional lands of Islam, if an Islamic identity and vitality are to be renewed, these forms must continue as a living expression. The arch, mandala, qubba, constitute the permanent basis for the design of mosques and other structures for religious purposes. They are intrinsic to the rites of Islam, as meaning, symbol and function. Their structural and aesthetic functions are secondary to their religious function. Research into the nature of this function of sacred architecture would be valuable, not only for employment in the building of structures for religious purposes, but more generally as well. An understanding of principles which bear on the relation of man to the cosmos are fundamental to the welfare of man himself, to the maintenance of the man-made environment, and to the welfare of the planetary environment as a whole.

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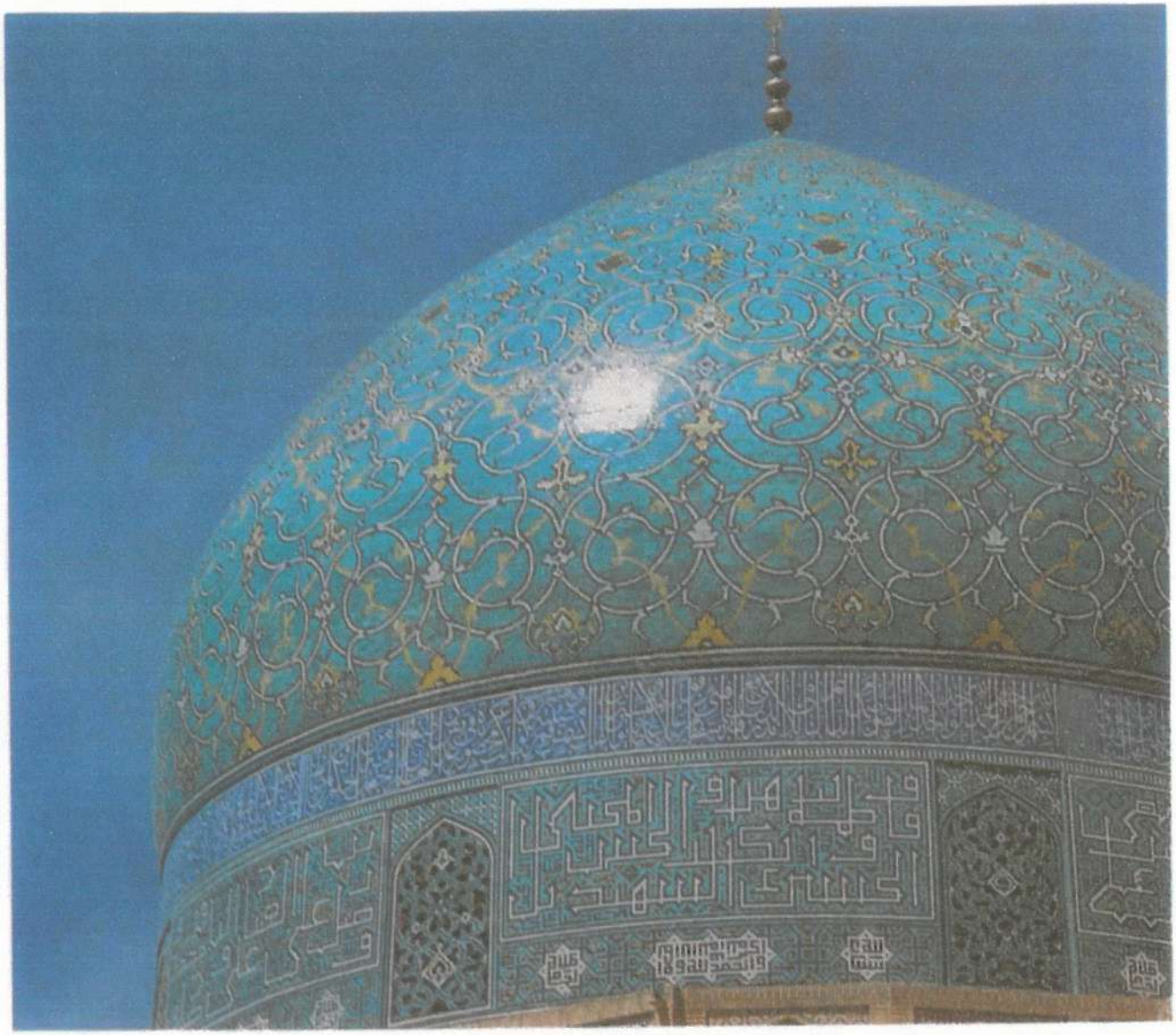
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CAPTIONS

1. Round Arch, Pointed, Flame, Human aura.
2. Eyvan
3. Mihrab
4. Dome
5. Mandalas
6. Qubba
7. Minaret
8. Minbar
9. Muqarnas
10. Naos of Temple of Edfou
11. Maabed of Amrit
12. Bayt-El of Astarte-Aphrodite from Temple of Aphrodite at Paphos Cyprus. (Archeological Museum, Nicosia, Cyprus)
13. Representation of Roman Coin of Temple of Aphrodite at paphos.
14. Chaldean Seal Impression, 2nd Empire, (British Museum, London)
15. Phoenician Tomb at Amrit, Syria.
16. Punk Sprign Chamber, Ibiza, Spain.
17. Section Tomb at Amrit.
18. Hermetic Symbols which make up a Buddhist Stupa.
19. Indo-Islamic Qubba.
20. Niche of Temple of Dura-Europos 250 AD. (National Museum of Damascus, Syria)
21. 9th Century White marble Mihrab from Mosque of Al-Khassaki, Baghdad (Iraq Museum)
22. Mihrab, Mosque of El Hawa, Tunis, 13th century A.D.
23. Minaret, Great Mosque of Qairawan.
24. Punic Mausoleum, Dougga, 2nd century B.C.
25. Alexandria, Pharos, Minaret reconstruction.
26. Bayt-al-Maal, Great Mosque Damascus.
27. Energy reflection analysis
28. Focus configuration for minimum Qubba.
29. Energy reflection analysis, Alhambra, Granada
30. Energy reflection analysis, Treasury of Atrevs parabolic Dome
31. Energy reflection analysis, Shah Mosque sanctuary, Isphahan
32. Energy reflection analysis, Baraka Valley Tomb of Abel, inverted parabolic dome.
33. Pilgrims absorbing Baraka, Cave of Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem



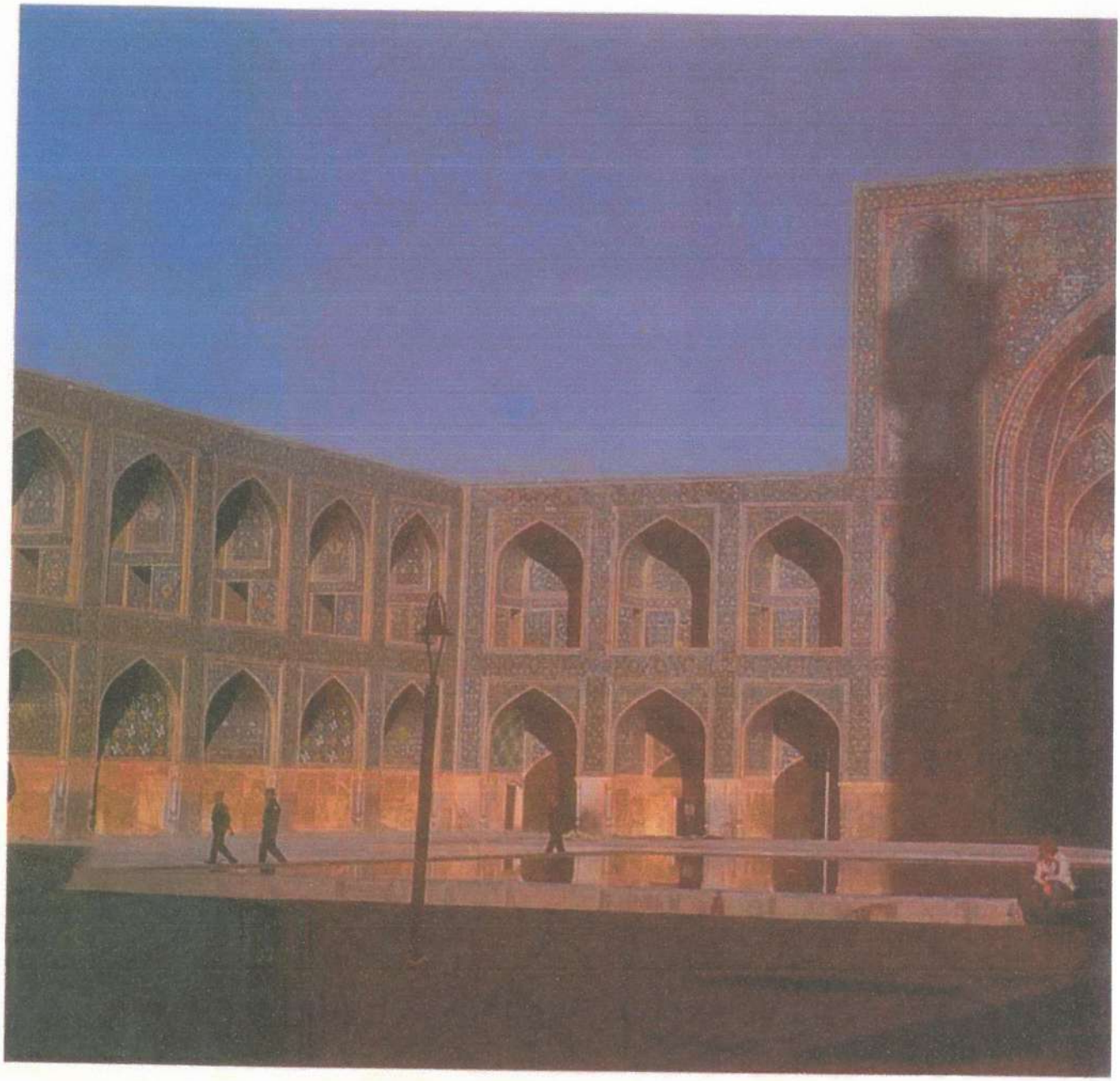
Homage to a Mosque

Ayeshah Abdel Haleem

The account that follows is authobiographical, because I feel it important to demonstrate from a particular experience that those who codify art in great lists and tables sometimes forget the purpose of its original effect upon the human spirit, a purpose fully intended from the outset by its makers. This is eminently true of the great Mosque in Isfahan, now named after Imam Khomeini (formerly the Shah Mosque), which I first visited with a companion very early one morning when the sun had barely risen on a chilly, but bright spring day near the time of Naw Rūz.

First I must remind you that in Iran, more than in any land which I have so far travelled, one feels the magnetic presence of minerals in the land before one's eyes possibly because for much of the time its rocks and pebbly terrain are unobscured by vegetation. One would hardly believe that the bright hues that go into the glazes of the coloured mosque tiles are derived from the varied metal salts in the rocks which, until transformed by the alchemy of the heat of the kiln, remain dull grey, brown or white. The clay of the tiles, of course, comes from the mud of the land and can be seen in use, unclad by weather-resistant tiles, in the bee-hive-shaped homes of the ordinary people.

Not only do the materials and colouring matter come from rocks and dirt: in the dyeing of mosque carpets,they also come from the leaves, bark and roots of small plants, shrubs and trees, which at the time I am referring to, also appeared unsuspected by the passer-by, in the unobtrusive shades of nascent vegetation which was striving upwards, hoping to live in the crystal-clear air, produced by the gradually increasing heat of the spring equinox combining with the

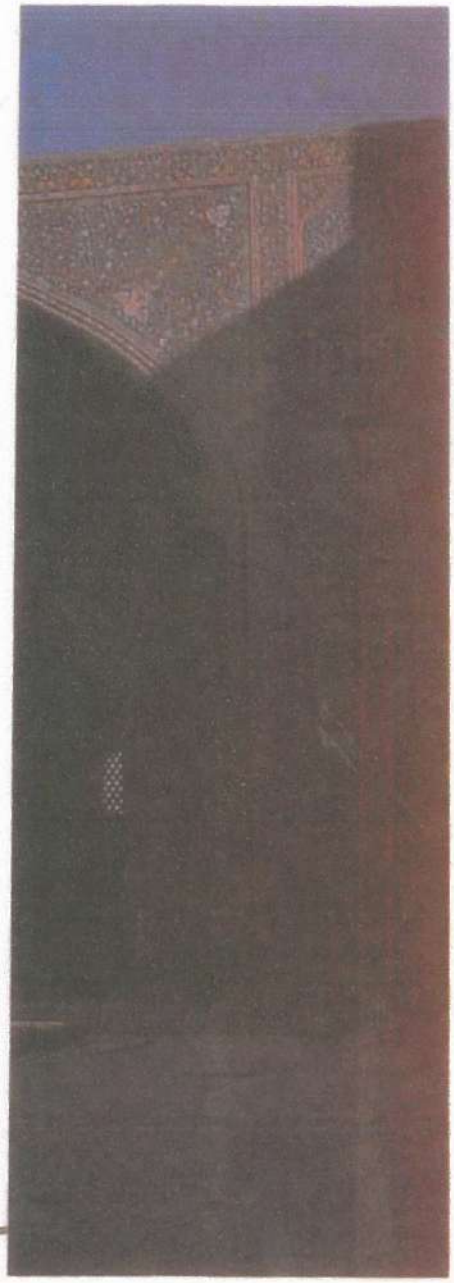


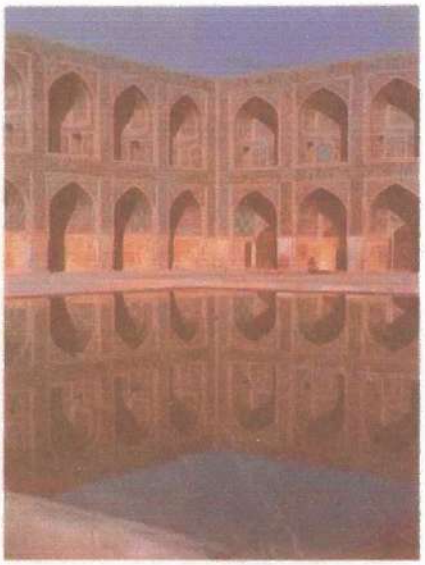
cold of the melting snow. In such pristine weather appeared the mirage of the Great Mosque itself against the mountain range behind, caught by the gold of the rising sun, as we sleepily made our way down the side street to the *maidan*. This was a vast oblong which had served as a polo ground in its day, at one short end of which the Great Mosque towered majestically. Far across the *maidan*, a modest *ivan* that, reflecting the shape of the Mosque opposite, marked the entrance into the labyrinth of the bazaar, which stretched like a complicated rabbit-warren beyond its gaping mouth.

Each of the long sides of the *maidan* also had a central feature. On one side was a former palace of Shah Abbās called the Ali Qapu, a traditional Persian beam-and-plate palace which had no less than seven floors tucked into it, all lavishly decorated, each floor having a different function, which cannot be described here. It had a high verandah whose roof was held up by painted wooden columns with *muqarnas* capitals leading the eye up to a richly painted ceiling. From this vantage point we were able to look across to the other long side of the *maidan* at the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, which, traditionally, was a mosque for ladies only . These four buildings, then, brought together religion for men and women, (the two mosques), the seat of government, (Ali Qapu), and commerce, (the bazaar), as the foci of life.

What took up the rest of the space on the sides of the *maidan*? Looking again at the structures flanking the Ali Qapu, one could make out the shapes of pointed arches placed in square facades. These ran the whole way round the *maidan*, and each arch opened into a craftman's workshop, with his dwelling on the floor above.

In working hours, the shutters in the archway were opened and provided a shop-front open to the sidewalk for the display of wares, while work was continued at the back. When we arrived in the square early that morning, everyone must already have answered the call to prayer of the dawn *ādhan* in their upstairs dwellings, but it was still two hours away from the time when the workshop doors would open, and the carpet makers, potters, and brass-beaters would appear, with the accompanying clangour of their









trade. We could see the backs of these workshops from the Ali Qapu terrace, as well as the outlines of the Great Mosque domes, which had already become clearer with the increasing daylight.

The informal view of the Mosque from the back was revealing. An unglazed dome which looked bald on the outside we were later to find was profusely decorated on the inside with glazed floral tiles, much as an agate looks like a dull stone on the outside but reveals glinting splendours when cut open. We could also see the unseen 'back' of one of the four interior *ivans*, with a little kiosk on the top -- also unglazed because it is usually out of view to the onlooker glazing upwards to the inner courtyard. Beyond that, we could see the front of the main *ivan*, intentionally slewed round, taking the whole Mosque with it, in order to make it to face Makkah, with two minarets on either side and little lookout posts on the top originally meant as a half-way-house position for the *mudadhdhin* to call from instead of climbing all those stairs to the top of the minaret, but unfortunatley replaced now by loud speakers. Behind this the principal dome was glazed turquoise with beige arabesques and an awakward Kufic inscription on the drum that served to anchor its crocus-bulb hemisphere. We were later to find out that the inner surface of the dome was even more splendidly decorated with orange and blue flowers.

We descended from the Ali Qapu palace and skirted the pools of water in the grassy centre of the *maidan* passing closer to the Lotfollah Mosque. At last we approached the doorway, the grand entrance portal, and looked upward at the facade and especially at the decorative panels on either side of the door which looked like Persian carpets in ceramic form set against the pink marble door-surround. In the centre, the generating nexus of a many-lobed medallion gave rise to hundreds of intersecting circles, criss-crossing and creating little pockets or florets of white space, then bringing a whole design into being. It could be read as a diagram of the fulfilled heart linked by thousands of threads to the filaments of existence, as much as a decorative flowering tree -- otherwise it would not have had the power to still the mind and entrance the heart. Paler worlds above and below the celestial centre indicated the domains of the intellect above and the physical nodes of the sensorial body below. The transmission of such a meaning is direct and tangible -- a sure sign of sacred art at work. It was executed in thousands of pieces of ceramic specially cut to shape and slotted together in a tight jigsaw, with the patience and refinement that only the Persians have always shown themselves to be capable of.

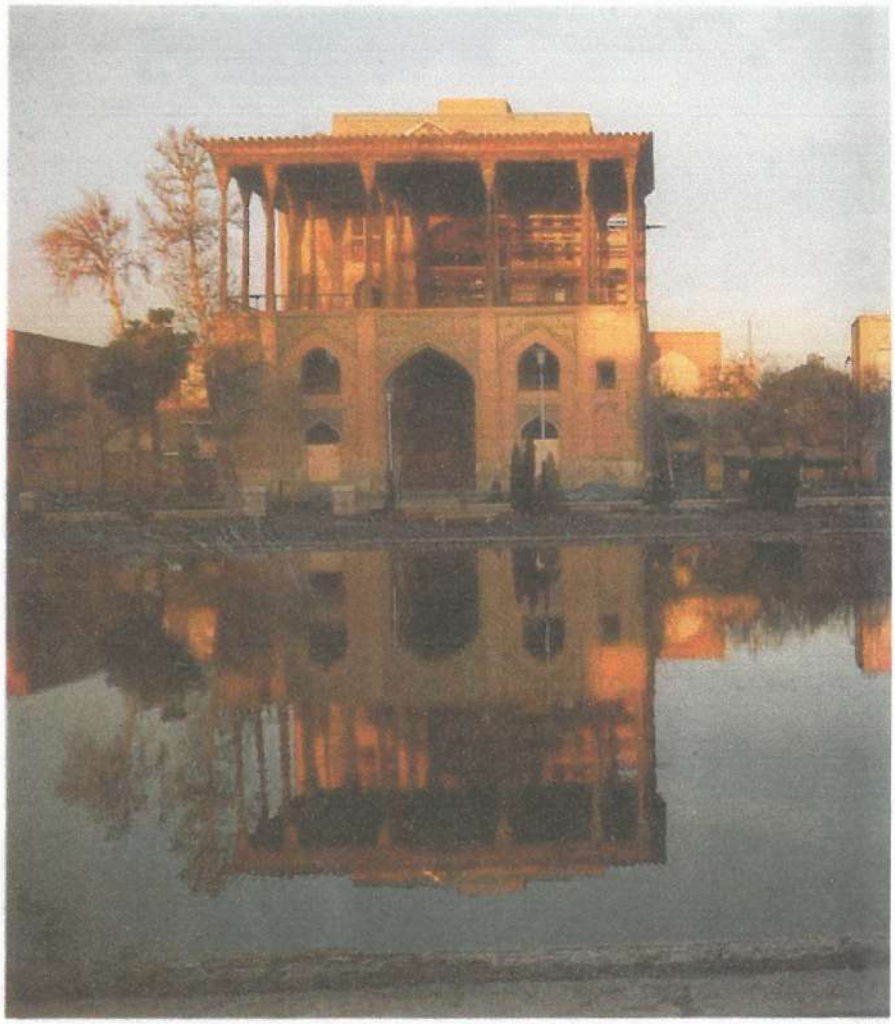
The two leaves of the door themselves were made of silver and the lobed plates, whose outlines had again been determined by hundreds of tiny little circles drawn by the long-forgotten hand of an anonymous master-geometer, were bolted onto the main wooden body of the door in layers of varying height.

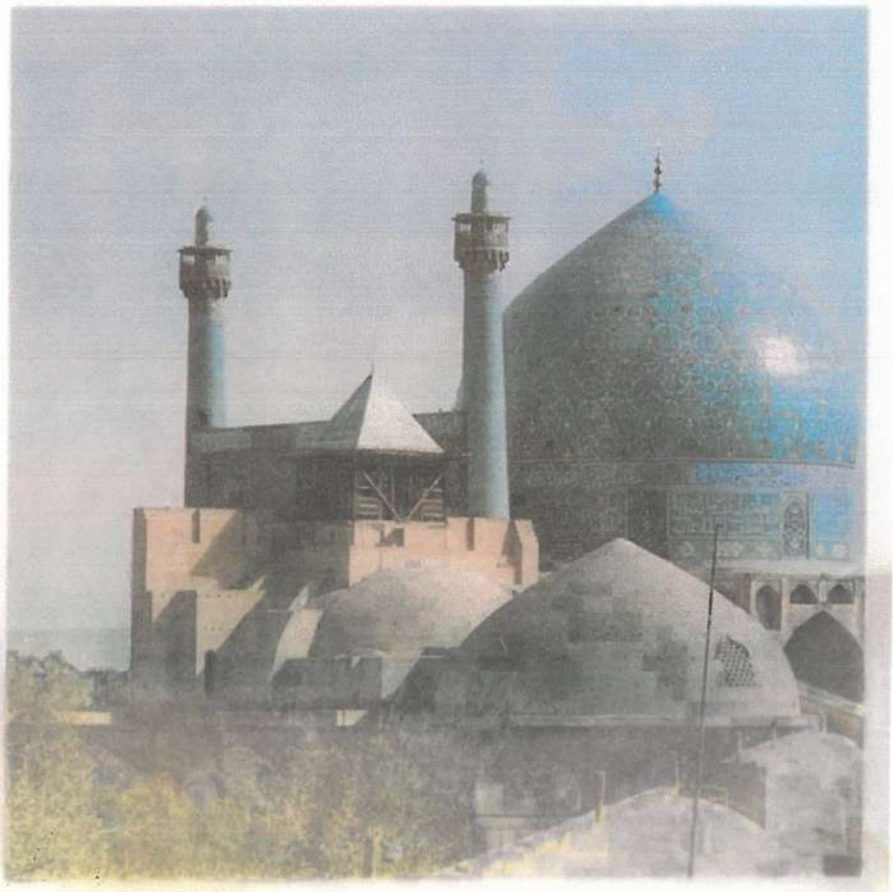
Because the Mosque behind the facade had been oriented to the *qiblah*, a change of axis had to be negotiated once the door had been closed behind us. The porch was angled to lead the worshipper sharply to the right, where the same pink marble in the high dado gave way higher up to decorative floral tiles laid on in squares.

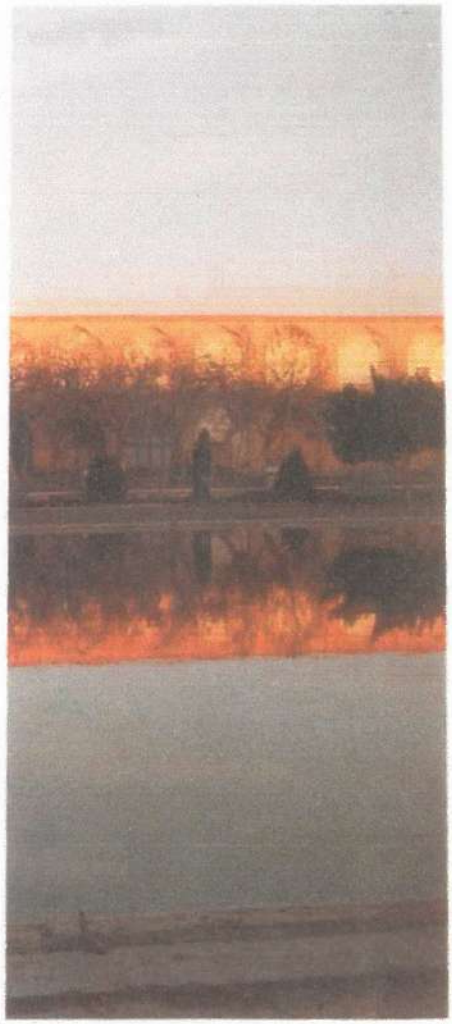
As we emerged from the reorientation passage, we had our first view of the magnificent main *ivan* leading into mysterious coolness. Then on either side, as we stepped out, we saw the rhythmic, because repetitive, inner courtyard lined with theological students's rooms on the upper level, an ablution pool in the middle and an imposing central *ivan*, or ceremonial archway, in the centre of each row of arches, rising above them.

The first overall effect wrought on the soul on entering the courtyard was of grandeur, peace and nobility, as the shadows of the minarets moved like pointing fingers over the archway. The Great Mosque is lofty in its proportions and its peace on that day was not silent, but had an almost imperceptible, high-pitched singing vibration which was due to the colours of bright yellow and dark blue running in controlled riot, according to the abundance of God's Law, over every flat mud-brick wall and underside of every arch or *ivan*. The repetition of the arches had the insistent effect of the repetition of God's Name in the *dhikr*, and their solid forms were reflected perfectly in the ablution pool, as the world of real forms, or Platonic ideas, is reflected in the world of matter. It was an indication to the metaphysically minded that it was all too easy to forget which is real and which reflection.Wherever the eye turned the vision was the same, calling to mind the Quranic verse. 'Wheresoever ye turn, there is the Face of God's (2:115).

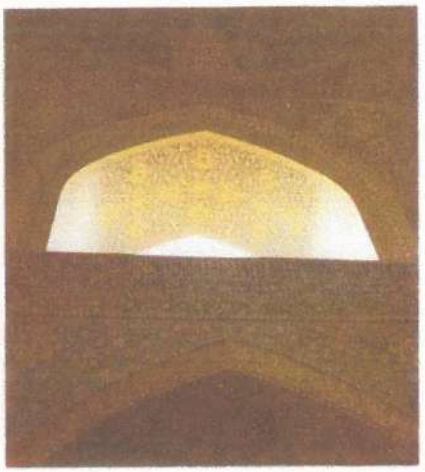
It was time to leave the main courtyard, through one of the archways which, if we inspected closely was this time coverd with square tiles which would have been drawn out and glazed as a set before being separated in the firing process, and then put together after the colours had been annealed on the clay: evidence of a technical ability that few present ceramicists could imitate, both in overall co-ordination of design and brilliance of colours achieved. The entire archway,











would have had to be planned and accurately drawn as a whole before being sliced up and baked: the accuracy of the overall ensemble would have been impossible otherwise. In the case of the undersides of the arches, the sets of wet tiles would have had to be shaped to the inner side of the arch before being fired, in order to have the right curve.

We thus passed into a more intimate, side courtyard on the flank of the main hall under the dome. It was private and secluded. Individual archways changed the colour balance to the predominance of sulphur yellow with the royal blue in a secondary role, then vice versa in the surrounding frame. More archways led off at right-angles, radiant in their undersides full of joy and brightness.

Retracing our footsteps, a fleeting vista of smaller arches down a side tunnel conveyed inexpressible charm, in the true sense of the word. For even one arch-head would exert its spell on the soul with the same two[illegible] By now I could feel that [illegible] network of nerves had begun to grow and blossom into flowers at their tips, like the creeper system formalized in the Mosque's tile system, and I was aware of a high singing sound, much as one hears electricity humming across telegraph wires. This was the potency of sacred art making itself revealed in a human's inner being, where nerve meets Spirit. Hidden depths were set afire, and the heart was full of love like an opening pomegranate flowers.

In retrospect, was this not a more important reaction to the building than looking only for its date and category, as art historians do, and fitting it into a time line of other works, finally producing a shelved cabinet of artefacts spaced out in centuries, so that Islamic architecture is finally neatly compartmented and docketed? Of course this activity has its place, but far more important is to be open to the effect of the building on those who use it, for that is what it was made for -- to touch mankind and rekindle his devine spark, which is too easily obscured by his material concerns.

Now we looked up and saw directly above us, over the *ivan* that indicated the *qiblah*, the main dome right above us now, gleaming a pale turquoise against the cobalt sky. We moved back to the main courtyard and stood below the awe-inspiring arch, studded like stars with singing flowers, a sixteenth-century echo of the ancient *ivans* of Ctesiphon, and it bade us enter in. The triangulations in its apse recalled the inner surface of the heart, and the Qur'an was chanted in a straight line above in white interlacing *naskh*, while the minarets, covered with diagonal *kufic*, stood like sentinels on either side. We walked into the darkness, the pierced windows of one slab of clay coming into view.

Our eyes, [illegible] darkness, looked up at the relieving arches which cleverly led the dome down to the cube of the chamber while also letting light come in at points high enough to illuminate the dome. Before daring to raise our eyes to the firmament, we were entranced by the prelude the undersides of these arches provided, this time coloured mauve and cream, bringing a note of imminent realization from within the Night (*Lailah*)

The final revelation was indeed all we could have hoped for: a thousand petalled vision of flowers streaming down from the centre of the hemisphere, suggesting to one's being that every cell in the skull had budded and opened simultaenously in an explosion of illumination. The dome had a more direct effect than any of the great figurative works I had seen in Europe, such as Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, which is also intended to be cosmic in its scope. Islam was well aware of the distractions of human form in art.

As we walked out into the the *maidan* again, with daylight brightening on all sides, and went down to the bazaar entrance for a final view of the Great Mosque as it dissolved into daylight, I had not yet realized that this building had contributed towards my conversion to Islam. After we had retired to our hotel, the singing was still ringing in my ears as I sat in my chair.

Art has as much power to convert and turn a soul to God and religion as has the preacher with his words. In fact, the Great Mosque has such a direct effect on the person because the shapes of its patterns describe the very same intervals of space and vibrations of colour as the real but invisible radiance of God throughout existence. Hence the soul is in a [illegible] manner galvanized into contact with divine power by its reflection in art.

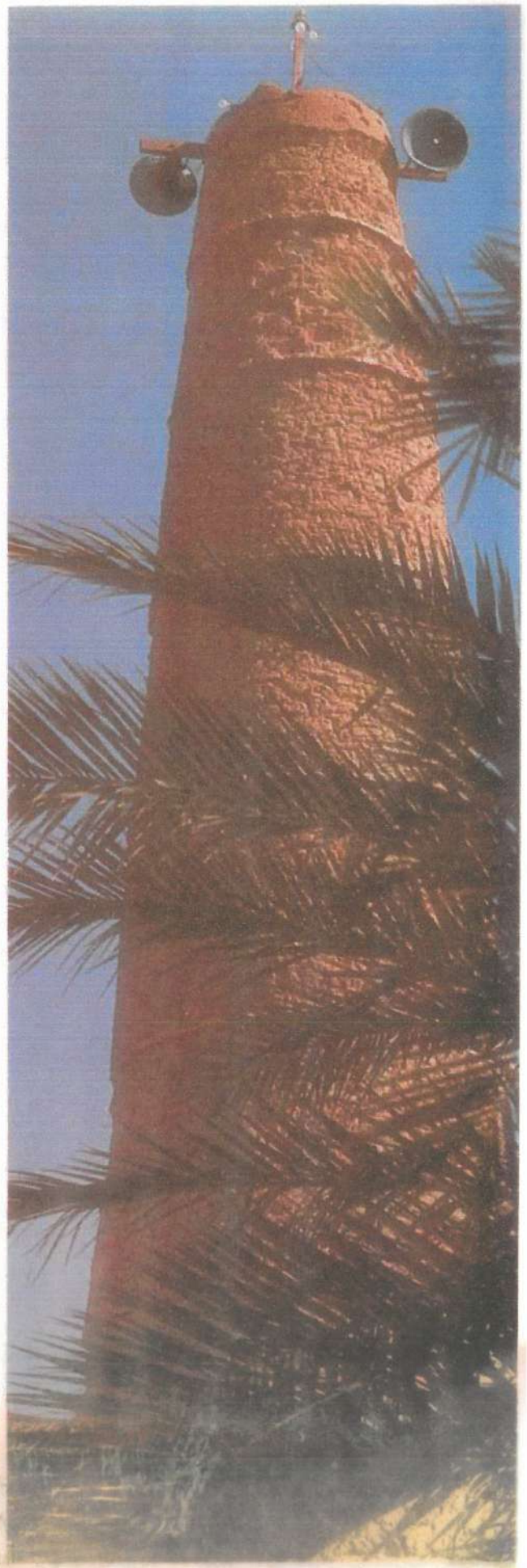
Indigenous Building Styles of Saudi Arabia

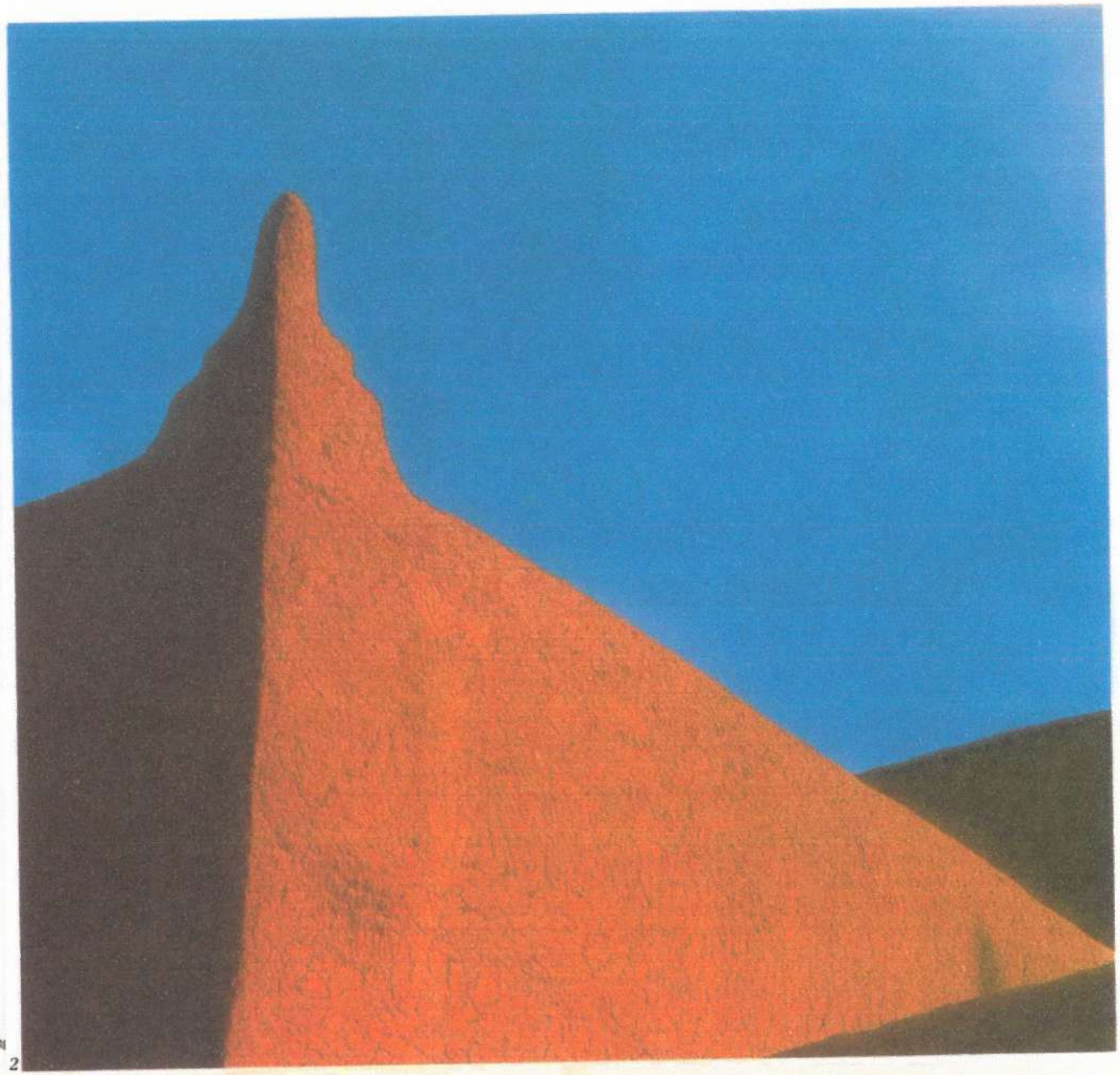
Shirley Kay

The traditional architecture of Saudi Arabia is relatively little known and few people would think of the Kingdom as a source of interesting indigenous building styles. This is a pity, for Saudi Arabia offers a rich variety of architectural types which fit harmoniously into their setting and are aesthetically very pleasing; for lack of interest, they are in danger of disappearing in these days of instant concrete homes.

The diversity from one region to another is one of the striking features of Arabian architecture. Each area has developed its own building methods and styles, quite different from those of other areas which, in the vastness of the country, are often separated from it by hundreds of kilometres of daunting mountain or desert terrain. On the other hand, the architectural styles are often related to those of countries across the borders, of the Yemen in the south, the Gulf states in the east, Iraq in the north and Egypt or Turkey in the west. And one can trace some of the features of Saudi buildings back to very ancient origins, in the early cities of Mesopotamia for example.

Although the building styles which have developed in the various regions are so very different, they all start from the same principles. The use of locally available materials determines the structure in the first place: mud buildings must have a solid structure, while a lighter, more skeletal structure is possible where stone is available; shortage of long timbers leads to a prevalence of long, narrow rooms, or wider ones whose ceilings are supported by columns. Throughout the country the inhabitants seek, in their homes, an escape from the heat, and have developed a number of ingenious devices to cool the interiors. They also always desire privacy for their own family life, yet combined with the possibility of entertaining which





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forms an important part of their tradition of hospitality. Houses tend, therefore, to have a private and a public area, kept as separate as means allow.

The Najd is the very heartland of Saudi Arabia and its domestic architecture is quintessentially Arab or Middle Eastern. The two-storey houses, each with its own courtyard, are set close together along narrow, shady streets. They are built of mud mixed with chopped straw, prepared in the form of sun-dried, slightly rounded blocks, somewhat the shape of sandbags. A binding layer of mud is applied over the blocks and pressed down with the hands, then the wall is plastered with a fine, smooth mud layer applied with a wooden scraper in sweeping arcs the radius of a man's arm. The ceilings of palm fronds and mud are supported on tamarisk beams.

Each house is set around its own courtyard, often with a living room open all along one side onto the yard. Along one or more sides of the courtyard, runs a portico which supports a columned balcony giving access to the first-floor rooms. Above, the flat roof has a low wall around it and is used as an additional living area, especially at night.

Even the simplest of these mud houses is enlivened by a variety of decorative features, contrived in the basic materials of mud or wood. The roof lines are invariably decorated, sometimes with rows of little steps, the age-old crow-step pattern known from the Nabataean tombs of Petra and Medain Salih, and from Assyrian palaces of Mesopotamia 3,000 years ago, and sometimes with a crenellation of spearheads, or simply (in northern Najd) spearhead finials.

Triangles often decorate the walls themselves, either used as openings in the upper part of the wall to allow the breeze to enter, or set in a frieze, the apex pointing downwards and protruding. This latter design also hails from ancient Mesopotamia and must have been inspired by the freshly cut stumps of palm fronds.

Within the houses, the walls are smooth plastered and decorated with incised geometric patterns, often representing a six-petalled flower, while friezes of triangles are popular here too. A splash of colour is added by the painted, incised doors closing rooms or cupboards. The warm reds, ochres and blues of the doors harmonize well with the rich golden brown of the mud walls, to produce homes with a warm, human atmosphere and a pleasing sense of scale.

The architecture of Najdi mosques would make a study in itself, but I must briefly mention the varied styles of traditional minarets. In the region near Riyadh, the minarets are square, not very high, and entered by an external staircase coming into an opening right through the tower, part way up. The silhouette of these towers, with their oblong 'keyhole' openings against the sky, is one of the most memorable sights of the Najd. Further north, in the Sudair region, the minarets are very tall, mud-built and cylindrical, tapering towards the top. Further north again, if I may include al Jouf with the Najd, is the very interesting stone-built mosque of the Caliph Omar, one of the oldest in the country. The walls of the square tower slope inwards to a rounded top and are decorated with three horizontal rows of projecting tiles (reminiscent of buildings in the south west). A passage runs under the minaret, supported on stone rafters, and above there are oblong window openings on each side.

Beyond the Najd, in the Eastern province, the houses are also stone-built, mostly of coral rag along the shores



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of the Gulf. Although they too are usually two storeys high and often set around a courtyard, the building style is quite different from that of Najd. Here a skeleton framework of strong pillars is used, with the space between the pillars filled with panels, which are offset against each other so that a current of air can enter the rooms inside but no-one outside can see it. On the upper storeys, some of the panels may also be topped with an arch. The decoration inside the house reflects that of the outside. The walls of the rooms are made more interesting by a series of square or arched niches, and geometric patterns are cut in the plasterwork or pierced right through plaster panels in the wall to increase ventilation. These eastern houses, of elegant proportions, have a clean, cool look from their smooth, white-painted walls.

Houses on the west coast of the Peninsula are also built of coral aggregate, but there the similarity ends. While homes in the eastern region are closely related in style to the houses of Bahrain and Dubai, those of the Hejaz recall the tall, ornate houses of Cairo or Turkey. They are built, it is true, on a skeleton pattern, but with the spaces between the supporting blocks occupied by vertical rows of large window shielded by heavily ornate projecting wooden screens - the *mashrubiyyas* of Cairo, known in the Hejaz as *roshan* . These screens shade the rooms inside the building from the fierce Red Sea sun, yet allow cooling breezes from the sea to enter. They also enable those inside to look out without being seen, thus preserving the privacy of the women, who usually live on the upper floors.

Hejaz houses stand four or five storeys high, and the flat roofs, high above the city streets, are used as additional living areas, especially at night in the summer. The roofs are enclosed with walls also pierced with wooden screens. In these houses, privacy is assured by placing the family living quarters on the upper floors, while the ground floor, and sometimes the first floor, is reserved for business and entertaining. In some large



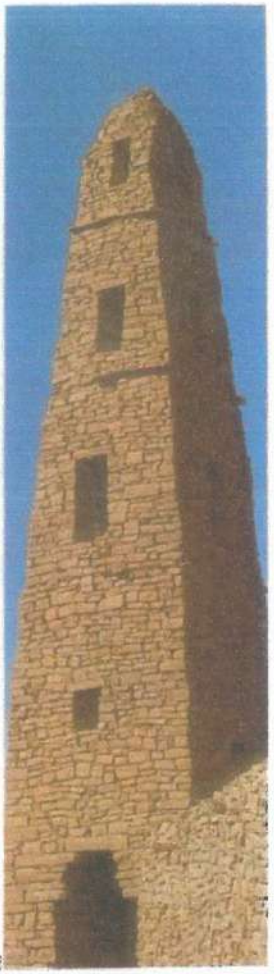
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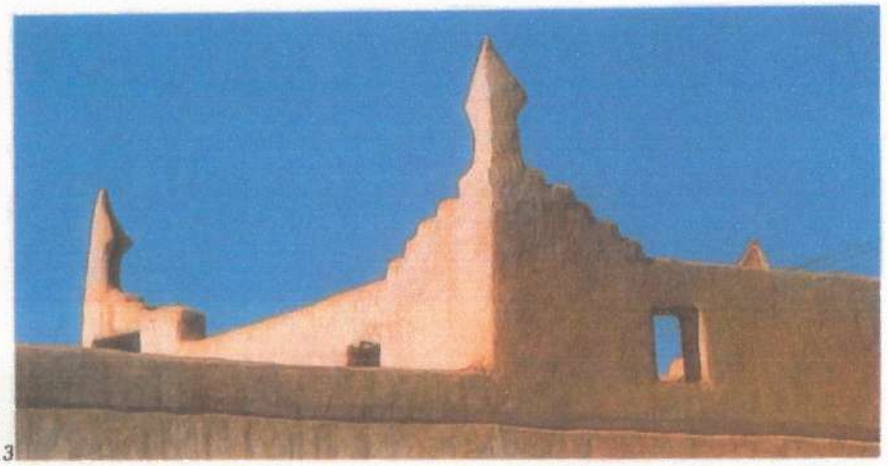
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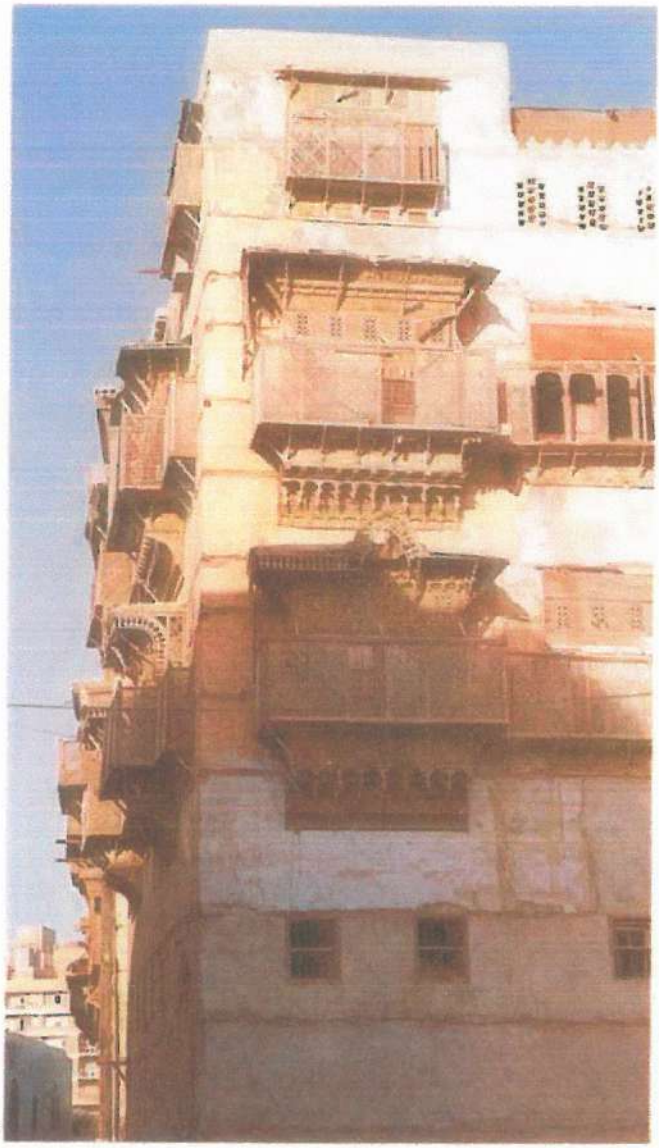


houses, the ground floor is stone flagged and in summer water is poured over the flagstones, to create a cool, cavernous environment.

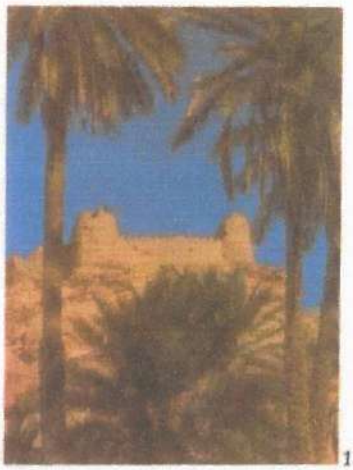
Since imported wood from East Africa was readily available through the Red Sea ports, the Hejaz houses made far greater use of wood than any others in Saudi Arabia. They are less restricted to narrow rooms than other areas, tie beams are set in the walls to strengthen the coral construction, and they have, above all, massive teak doors and a profusion of wooden panels, balconies, screens and windows. The workmanship of much of this wood, carvings on doors and fretting of screens, is of a notably high standards.

Further south, on the west coast, the tall tower-like shape of the houses continues, and is indeed emphasised, but once again all else changes. In the Asir, and in Najran on the extreme southwestern borders, the most picturesque, perhaps, of all Saudi Arabian traditional architecture has developed. The mud-built dwellings rise in elegant towers, the walls often sloping slightly inwards toward the flat roof, which provides an important living area, often half enclosed by a porticoed verandah.

In central Asir, horizontal lines of tiles, set around the mud walls of the houses give the buildings a particularly original appearance. Their purpose, however, is functional: to protect these mud constructions from the relatively heavy monsoon rains. Mud mixed with



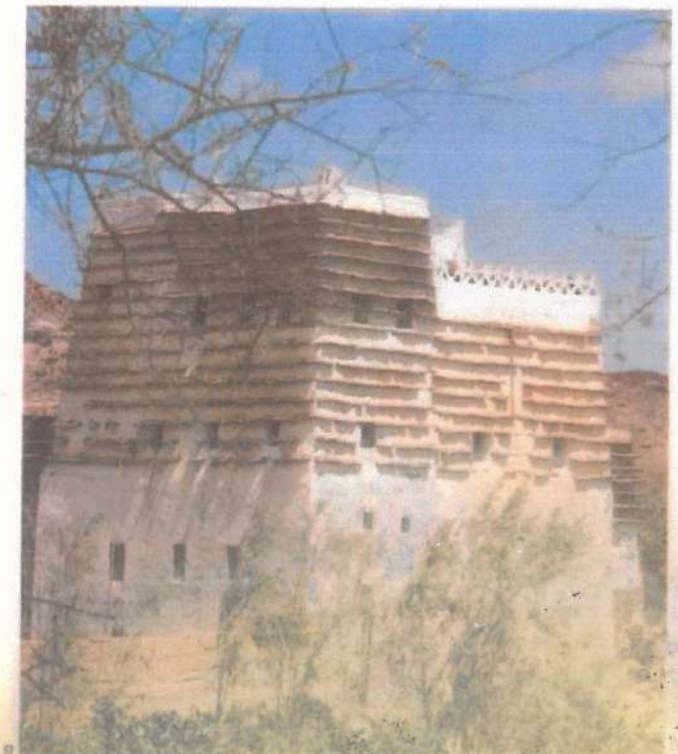
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chopped straw is the common building material of the region, but itis used in a different manner to that of the Najd. Here mud layers are piled up by hand, each layer being left to dry before the next is put in place. Perhaps the pattern of layers influences the final decoration, for, once the house has been smoothly plastered on the outisde, it is decorated with horizontal bands of lines in Najran, with horizontal tiles and sometimes stripes of various colours in the Asir.

Decorative motifs in this south-western region are varied and reflect sometimes those of the Najd (the crow-step moulding around roofs is popular) and sometimes those of the Yemen to the south (semi-circular coloured windows above the main ones, vertical mouldings below the roof line and white painted outlines to the windows). A particular feature of Najran is the upward sweep of the corners of buildings, followed faithfully by the incised lines of the plasterwork.

Many of these high tower buildings served as complete farmsteads for the animals being quartered on the ground floor, grain and fodder stored on the first floor, guest rooms being arranged on the second floor, while the family lived on the floor above that and spent much of their time on the roof. Access to the upper floors was by a steep, winding staircase in the centre of the building, somewhat hazardous from the darkness of the stairwell and the fact that the steps had a tendency (perhaps through wear) to slope outwards and down.





The solidity and height of these buildings, along with the lack of windows on the lower storeys, gave them something of a defensive appearance, which was reflected in the numerous watch towers, now abandoned, which still dot the whole countryside. The watchtowers also had walls sloping in towards the top and few or no windows; they had no stairs, access being by trapdoor through which one could just haul oneself up to the floor above.

Throughout Saudi Arabia, these often beautiful, traditional buildings are rapidly giving way to modern, concrete houses which tend to break with all past tradition. The dictates of air-conditioning require low ceilings and remove the need for good insulation. The roof terrace, so much a feature of traditional Saudi town life, is no longer so attractive when it means leaving an air-conditioned room. Some efforts have been made to preserve a few outstanding buildings, such as the fine Nassif house in Jeddah or the Murabba palace in Riyadh. But all record may easily be lost of the everyday homes of the different regions.

Fortunately, a far-sighted Saudi architect, Ziyad Zaidan, responsible for the Yanbu master plan, Ministry of Information complex in Riyadh, Saudi embassies and numerous housing projects for the Ministry of Interior, concerned to elaborate a truly Saudi contemporary architecture, has made an intensive study of Saudi traditional architecture to use as a basis. His organisation, Idea Center, has a research division which, with the collaboration of the French planner Francois Denieul, has prepared an extensive photographic record and survey plans of existing traditional buildings and ananalysis of the architectural logic of regional styles.

Their work, to be published soon in Arabic, English and French, should be of interest to anyone concerned with the preservation of the cultural identity of Saudi Arabia and the traditional architecture of the Arabian Peninsula. There is much to be learned from these traditional dwellings, both from their method of adaptation to the environment and their aesthetic attraction, and from the quality of warm, secluded family life which they sheltered.

1 Mud-built minaret in Sudair village, Hejaz
2 Roof pinnacles, Unaiza, Najd
3 Decorated plasterwork in majlis of a Buraida house, Najd
4 Carved window panel of traditional house, Jeddah, Hejaz
5 Sculpted plaster decoration, Hail, Najd
6 Carved and painted door hatch, Unaiza, Najd
7 Nassif house, Jeddah, in process of renovation, Hejaz
8 Painted doorway of old house, Hail, Najd
9 Rare painted ceiling in old house, Jeddah, Hejaz
10 Old watchtower, Asir
11 Minaret of old mosque by the sea front, Jeddah, Hejaz
12 Ancient Omar Mosque in Jouf, north-east Saudi Arabia
13 Finials combining crowstep and spearhead design, north-east Saudi Arabia
14 Balcony of Najdi house with columns and triangle friezes
15 Old house in Jeddah
16 Mud-built fortress of Sakaka, in north-east Saudi Arabia
17 Porticoes and balconies of Kishla Fort, Najd
18 Tile-hung house near Abha, Asir
19 Tower houses with painted bands, Asir
20 Fortress-style, mud-built house, Najran, south-west Saudi Arabia

Photographs by Shirley Kay, Saudi Gazette and Francois Denieul

PROFILE



Sharifah Fatimah Syed Zubir

Chu-li

.....in silence, there is no sound.
do we not hear?
if in darkness, there is no light
do we not see?
if in pain, there is no joy,
do we not feel?....

These are the questions that linger in our mind as we experience the Dark Light Series of paintings, in acrylic, by Sharifah Fatimah Syed Zaubir. And if we pause a while to consider, we realize her paintings speak loudest in silence, for within that dark stillness, varying tones of shades appear and disappear before the wake of light, and leave behind vivid timber of green-blue-black, and a spot of red-white - below in harmonics.

Sharifah paints as the poet uses words in imageries and symbolisms in abstract to break up concept, form, shape and space into its rudimentary fragments to mirror....

"...words...endless words
like the colours of the earth,
fire, the waters and the heavens
forever cycling endlessly...
red yellow green blue
language of Nature...an Eternal
song.

White as the Word pure and
unstained
colour of pure light...before
individualization
before the One become the many
white light descends from the sun
uniting mankind..."

...the artist herself writes, for it is true that her painting is to nature what sound is to the word, and nature is music which one hears with one's eyes. And if you look at her paintings long enough, you begin to hear the silent ragas of colours bright and dark.

She calls this series Nursiyah or Dark Light, which literally translates as Black Light, in reference to that incomprehensible period during which one may be questioning oneself when everything else is no longer in order. But Black or Darkness, surely, does not connote evil. No. It is only about the Fall or 'temporary respite' which is the awakening before Light...before purity...White...diaphanous...through white colour is made manifest so through black it remains



'Solitude' 1978





'Nursiyah Requiem III' 1983



hidden.
Black is bright light in a dark day
Black is the annihilation of self
it is the light of Majesty..."

says Sharifah.

Therefore, Dark Light is a return to Life...an inner life...the silent inner space, for in that darkness, surely we cannot deny life. Even in darkness, with or without light, there is always life. It is necessary, she cautions, that we become aware of our inner space, of the void which lies deep in us, for this is where our being is firmly rooted.

Sharifah explains further:

"It is this silent inner space, hidden at the centre of all men's being which is the source of all meaningful activities and actions. This is the inmost self in us, without this, the outer forms of being cannot be held, cannot exist. This is where our emotions, our mental activities, our intellect, our beliefs and concepts exist. This is the unthought thought in us, the unseen seer in us and the unheard hearer in us."

"This is where our sensitivity lies,

This is where our sensitivity lies, locked within our spirit and soul, and when we are unconsciously silent and still, it may steal itself into our consciousness and give us light upon which we are made to see. In every man's life, at one time or another, Nursiyah shall come to give man his respite, to give him that moment to awake again to another release of energy.

Is the world of colour so devoid of opposition? Sharifah asks, for surely, colour springs from that which is without colour. So we see her series of paintings in Nursiyah as an inevitable follow-up of her Light Series (1980), or her Sunshine Series, which was inspired by an expression of joy and an explicit dedication to life in vivid tones of warm colour...a series bursting with dynamic sunshine colours...

"...Red is fire active and expansive
vital spirit...like the pulsating sun
in the morning in the spring time.
Yellow is air
Is the sound of trumpet filling the
spaces with vibrating waves..."

Do not be mistaken that her Dark Series is a negation of life. It is not. It is just as dynamic in its appeal and its cry for life as her Light Series. For a dedicated artist, surely an exaltation of life is not merely explicit, but through the years, though both the artist and her art may have grown more subdued, more implicit, both have also become somewhat fuller, richer, for after every exaltation, surely there must come respite. And in this respite there is no lack of life in its inevitable silence.

"Green is water, is hope and fertility
like the trees reaching for the heavens
calligraphy of branches
glorifying the Great One
green is the carpet of the earth.
Blue is earth cold and dry
like the strings of the sitar echoing the
nightingale's call bringing the tune of
raga into the night..."

In Nursiyah, she also depends on the use of colours as constructs of feelings, revealing a continuously spontaneous cycle of shades and tones, a natural flow of touching and repelling:

"I want to reveal the spirit I have about the thing, not the material I'm going to paint. Reality does not exist in material things, rather paint the flying spirit of the bird than it's feathers. I want the colours to pulsate the spiritual dimension of life, to breath the eternal silence and dance to the music of the heaven and earth even in its depths."

Her paintings now are more earthly, about the landscapes of our doing, landscapes of our spirit and soul, showing forms settling or alighting up-and-down, side-to-side, on vertical or horizontal planes. Such silence, in tone and content, she finds more difficult to find just the right intensity of feeling for a particular imagery or symbolism of silence in Dark Light so that it doesn't leave too much gap in between spaces. Her abstract form is still about spaces; the spirit of her paintings is about the essence of spaces. But this time her inspiration comes from man himself, man and his world on this earth plane.. To capture this only in colours needs a special kind of sensitivity, a special honing of the senses.

And indeed, there seems to be a persistent consistency in her works through the years, and a strong inner haunting pull in her abstract symbolism as in 'Bandage This Earth' dedicated to the dispossessed in Palestine:

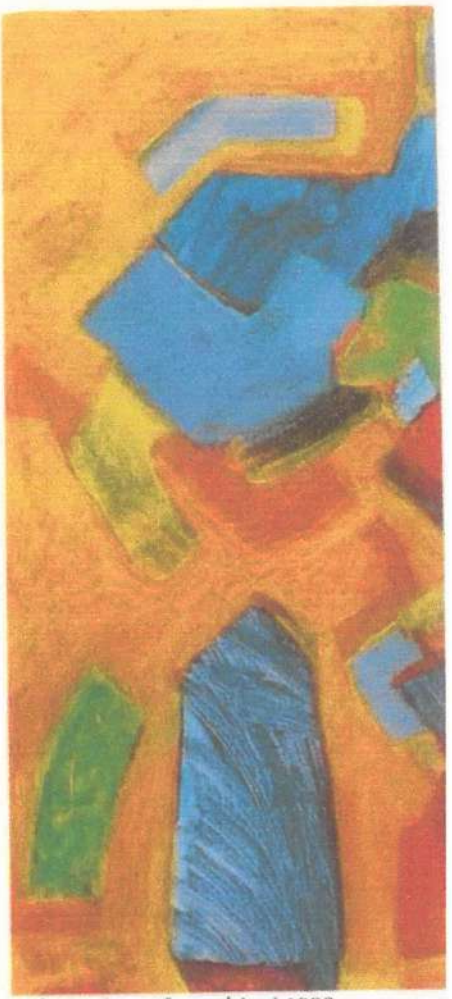
"Bandage this Earth, for she's
wounded
Chase away the clouds, for she's
shedding bloody tears
Sieve this white sand,
for it's covered with splinters..."

....And in 'Solitude':

"Beloved,
You once told me that the sons of
Abraham
Laid down their arms to
celebrate Rosh Hashana
.....sweet soulful music filled the
air
And the sons of Abraham..in sweet
forgetfulness..
Then....
Let each day be holy
Let the songs of the shofar and the
reed fill the air
Forever
For they awaken to the divine
delights our senses
And make us deaf to all else".

In Nursiyah, her paintings are her poems, much more concerned now with the earth-bound, unlike those of her 'Light Series' where her original appeal is to universal duality, showing the physical world as an interdependent and inseparable parts of the cosmic whole, and as different manifestations of the same Ultimate Reality.

When she gives voice to man in his own silent stance in Nursiyah, she also relies on symbols to enhance the appeal to the spiritual in man's struggle within himself and the outside world. In this 'Dark



'Like a piece of sunshine' 1983



'Green Light' 1983

painter from 1971-73, and held her first solo-show in Singapore in 1972. Her main interest at this early stage was mainly in form, abstract form, showing growth in Nature, an inner force exuding from a natural growth revealed through physical shapes and controlled colours.

In 1973, she applied to enter Reading University, England, for an Art History Course but after a year, she realized the course was unsuitable for her purpose. Consequently, they allowed her to change to Fine Art, doing etching and abstract acrylic mainly, finally graduating as a First Class Honours student who carried away the University Prize. At this stage, she confessed she was unconsciously being influenced by foreign works, especially those of the World of Islam Series, exhibited in England in 1976 in rich colour tones, as well as the North Indian miniature paintings of vibrant colours.

After completing her basic degree course in Fine Art at Reading, she applied for and was awarded the prestigious John. D. Rockefeller III Fund Fellowship to puruse post-graduate studies in Fine Arts at Pratt Institute, New York in 1976. The new challenges of the US and the vibrant American art scene have helped shape the young artist and her works into something distinctively passionate, firm and strong, without sacrificing the sensitivity and sensuality of her works. In fact, her US experience has made her conviction in Art even stronger, as it had stirred in her an inner spiritual awakening. She began to question herself: Who am I? Why am I born? What is my purpose? etc. She read avidly the great works of literature, philosophy, theology, music...all this exposure gelled in her art works and gave to her paintings a certain maturity and finesse that her earlier works did not possess. Her paintings before, like the places she visited, she said, were merely exhibits of a beautiful facade and an emptiness, shaped by a meticulous, methodical approach of art schools, but her US experiences seemed to have liberated her from her former skilfulness. Her paintings of the US Series and after, do show a strong intuitive and spontaneous passion of her own inner stirrings and an attempt to understnad herself.

Today, her paintings still tell us what we can see of life, what we cannot see; what we can hear and cannot hear; what we feel and do not feel. Sharifah herself associates her works with the creativity of alchemy, that ancient science of the cosmos. Traditional alchemy is actually a complete way of looking at things. It is also looked upon as a science of the soul and is related to art and metallurgy on the one hand, and spiritual psychotheraphy on the other. Its basic principle is that 'everything is in everything else'; that everything penetrates everything (tadpoldi). And therefore the substance of things can be transmuted so that their nature can be changed. Therefore, for Sharifah, colours intuitively take shape and form, and reveal their emotional colouration in proportion to the feelings they simply want to express themselves, with as little of the artist's contrivance as possible. This is like the alchemist view of nature as a sacred domain whose processes of giving birth to precious metals and minerals are accelerated by the alchemist through the power of the spirit operating within his soul and making possible the deliverence of the soul from all bondage and its transformation into gold which is the only metal that remains unaffected by the influences of the natural forces.

The main purpose of an artist, she believes, is to bring to life a fleeting stance of the surroundings, not only in a figurative style, but also depicting nature in colours and shapes. When a painter paints a flower, he captures its essence, showing its growth and its joy of creation. That is why in her 'Light Series', joy, then as it is now, is the impelling force:'...that which was there before we were there, and the artist is to show others this abstract feeling...'

'...When the world was an ooze without any shape or direction, there was this force of joy prevailing everywhere, and that was reaching out to express. Joy unmeasurable; it was the essence of creativity...the force of creativity...I hope we have not forgotten about this joy, otherwise we do not feel anything...'

And somehow, I do believe, that for Sharifah and for many of us who are each committed in his own field, that it is only in silence and in stillness, in the quiet, in a moment, that the forces shall come to lift us out of our basic skill into mandalae of energies...into music..for a particular purpose...

When we see her paintings, it is as if we can hear Sharifah saying:

I remember a time long past
in a big, enormous, empty field,
I was lying looking up at the sky
and above me the stars in
constellation
suddenly start producing sounds
and smile
at me lying helpless and touched
on the little mound
At other times I dream
I can rise in air and walk
to walk on regardless...

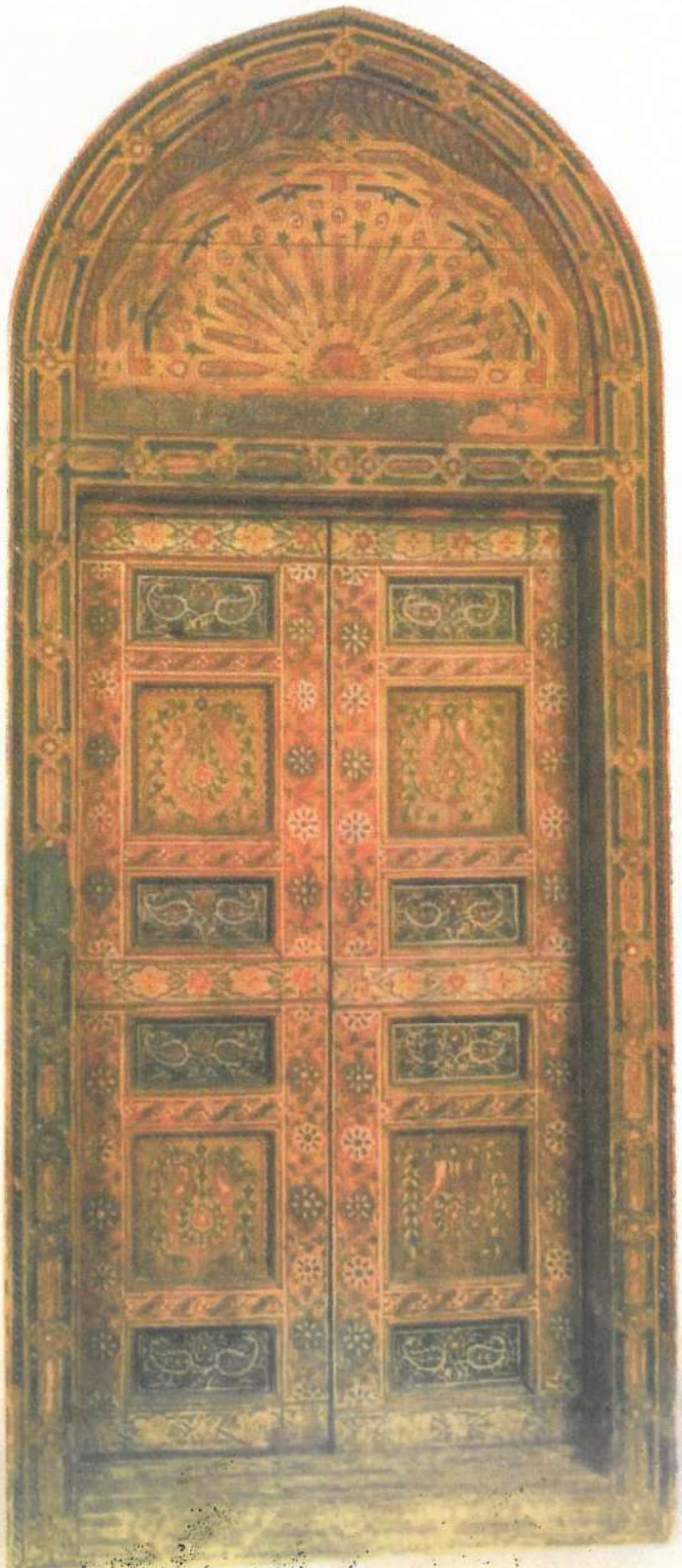
And I do believe Sharifah's works may do just that for many of us.



'Nursiyah' 1983

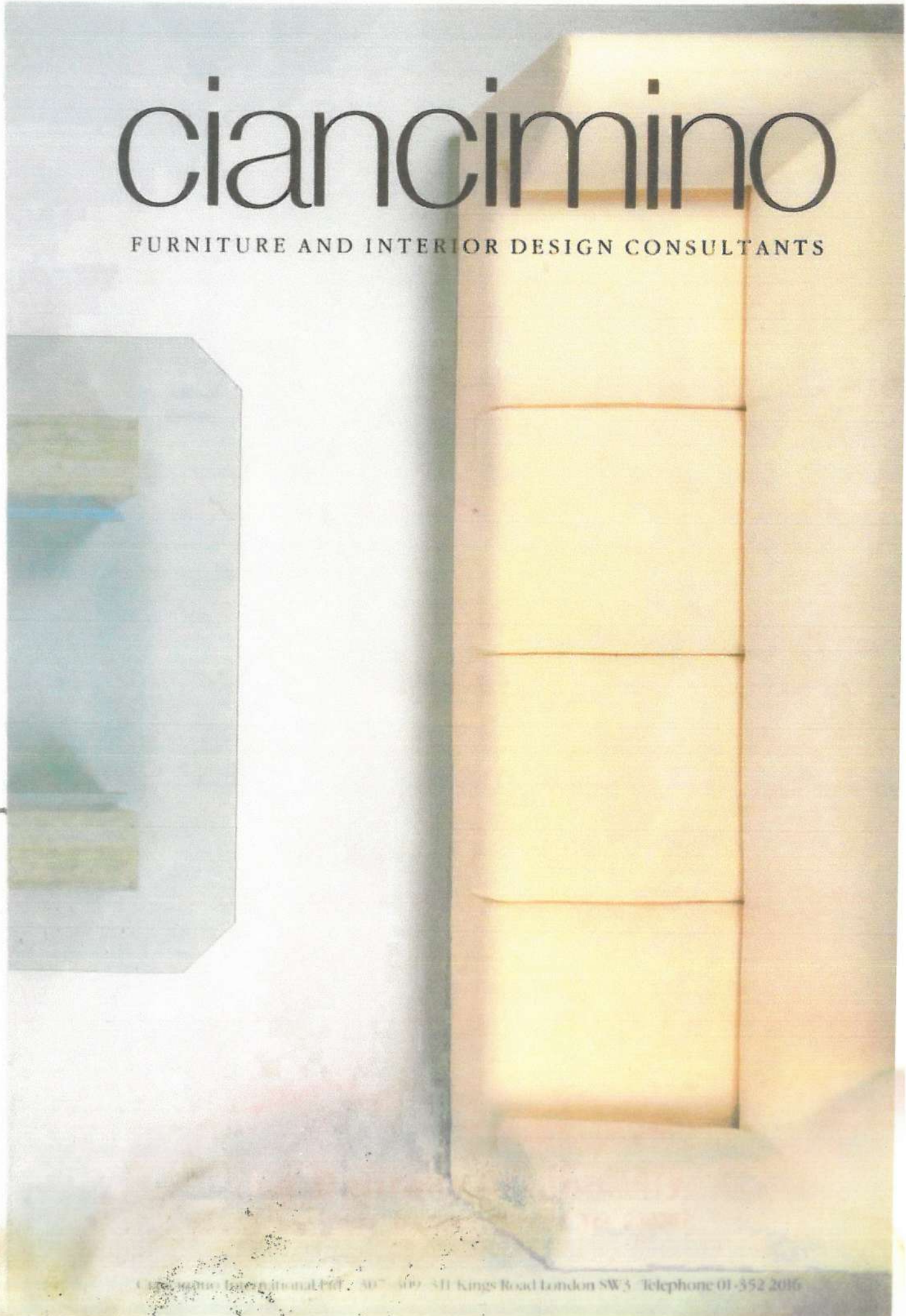
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BAHRAIN ART

Rashid Al-Khalifa

Modestly established less than a year ago with a membership of 34 practising artists -- since grown to 77 -- the Bahrain Art Society began with the aim of providing a base to promote fine arts and stimulate cultural activities generally for Bahrainis and for people of many different nationalities who have come to look upon the island as their home.

The first stirrings came in 1982 when the Bahrain Minister of Information, H.E. Mr Tariq Almoyed, took the initiative, and with his encouragement and support the idea of setting up an art and cultural complex started taking shape. In that year, Bahraini artists got together and applied to the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare to form an Art Society. At the same time efforts began to look for a suitable premises as the Society's headquarters which should answer to the diverse needs and aspirations of its members.

What we had in mind was to have a multi-purpose place where, apart from displaying the works of our own members as well as other visiting artists, it should also be possible to offer art courses and provide ancillary facilities for the study of various aspects and facets of art.

A place was soon found, situated in the green belt of Bahrain, off Budaiya Road. It is a large Spanish-style building with clusters of colourful bougainvillae greeting the visitor to the main entrance. Inside, there are several large rooms for art classes, library, cafeteria, rest rooms, and display area for exhibitions.

The place came to life with its formal opening by the Prime Minister of Bahrain, H.E. Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, on the morning of 6 December 1983 when he inaugurated a well-represented exhibition of paintings which launched the Bahrain Art Society! It was a gala occasion indeed and a cultural landmark in every sense of the term.

The Society has steadily developed a wide variety of programmes aimed at art education as well as art promotion. It has organised a number of exhibitions and offers courses not only in oil painting but also interior design, pottery, sculpture, Arabic calligraphy and photogrphy. There are special classes for children in drawing and painting. The classes are taught in Arabic and English with a choice of several studies using as many different mediums as available in Bahrain!

There are lessons specially for



1



2



ladies, who have taken an enthusiastic interest and some of their work has already been exhibited in Bahrain itself as well as in other countries. There is a staff of 10 responsible for various studies available, including one taught by Wynn Pedersen on "Drawing: a different approach" using one's intuitive mode as an exploration into drawing based on latest scientific techniques in self-expression.

Since its opening last December, the Bahrain Art Society has participated in exhibitions in Egypt, Kuwait, France, Jordan, Qatar and Oman, apart from offering one-person and group shows in Bahrain itself. Among the more popular exhibitions were the display of Oriental art and antiques, silkscreen paintings, and the work of students with a stunning display of mixed media.

Of course the Society's most ambitious project abroad was the exhibition of "Bahraini Artists in London" this summer at Leighton House comprising more than a hundred paintings by 27 artists. Some of these works are reproduced here and will serve to indicate the range of styles and mediums that mark the coming of age of the contempoary art movement in Bahrain.

Abeer Al-Khalifa

Born in 1964, Shaikha Abeer has studied art in both Bahrain and Switzerland. Since 1981 she has been studying art with Raquel Duran Clegg, a Spanish teacher-painter who has been living in Bahrain for several years.In 1982 Shaikha Abeer was awarded a prize at the Bahrain Student Oil Paintings Exhibition, and in 1983 she joined the Bahrain Art Society. Working mainly in oils, Shaikha Abeer has painted extensively, a number of her studies portraying seclusion and solitude. She is currently working towards her first one-person exhibition planned for December this year.

Abdul Elah Al-Arab

Born in 1954, Abdul Elah graduated from Cairo with a Diploma in Calligraphy in 1978 and subsequently went on to complete courses in arabesque and the art of gold leaf. A commercial artist, Abdul Elah is a

founder and Executive Committee member of the Bahrain Art Society. In 1976 he won a prize at the Ministry of Information's Annual Art Exhibition in Bahrain and also participated in the Bahrain Art Society's inaugural exhibition in December 1983. His favourite subjects are arabesques and calligraphy. He uses silkscreens and Chinese ink and his main leisure interests include photography and drawing.



4

Hamid Obeid

Born in 1945, Hamed studied art at the College of Fine Arts in Iraq, and graduated with a BA in Fine Arts in 1977. A qualified art teacher and member of the Bahrain Art Society, he has taken part in several exhibitions in Bahrain and Kuwait.

Abdul Rahim Sharief

Born in 1954. Abdul Rahim qualified from Beaux Arts in Paris with an HND before going on to study art at Parson School of Art and Design in New York. Over the years he has participated in many exhibitions in Bahrain as well as in a number of other countries.



Mohsen Al-Taitoon

Born in 1952, Mohsen is a qualified Art Teacher and has participated in a number of exhibitions in Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco and Kuwait.

Ibrahim Bu-Saad

Born in 1952, Ibrahim graduated with a BA in Fine Arts from Baghdad University in 1977 and now works with the Ministry of Education as a Calligrapher and Book Designer. A founder member of the Bahrain Art Society, he has taken part in major exhibitions in both Bahrain and Baghdad and was one of the prize winners at the prestigious Kuwait Bienalle in 1982. Using a variety of mediums including oil, ink and collage, Ibrahim mainly deals with subjects such as arabesques and the Arabic alphabet.

Ahmed Asghar

Born in 1949, Ahmed Asghar prac- 5

ticed art during his education in Manama up to 1968 but did not become active in painting until 1983. He works in watercolours and specialises in scenes of Bahrain.



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8

Abbas Al-Mahroos

Born in 1943, Abbas graduated from the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad and is currently working as an Inspector of Arts at the Ministry of Education, Bahrain. He has taken part in many exhibitions and is general supervisor of the fine arts clubs of the Ministry of Education. His works have won a number of awards both in Bahrain and internationally, including first prizes in 1971 and 1975.

Rashid Al-Khalifa

Born in 1952,Rashid Al-Khalifa is a founder and the President of the Bahrain Arts Society. After studying at Hastings College in England he graduated with an OND in Art and Design in the summer of 1975. Apart from one-man-shows in Bahrain in 1970 and in Washington in 1982 he has participated in major exhibitions in Paris, Singapore and Kuwait. This year (1984), in addition to the Cairo Biennale in Egypt, his work has been displayed at the Bahrain Week in Jordan and at the French Artists Annual Exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris. He works predominantly with oils, pastels, watercolours and acrylics. Most of his motifs are of the Bahraini landscape and clearly show the influence of the Impressionist school. Artists who have influenced his work are Monet, Renoir and Turner.

Badie Al-Shaikh

Born in 1955, Badie Al Shaikh is a founder member of the Bahrain Art Society and has participated in several major exhibitions both in Bahrain and Kuwait in 1974 and the Inaugural Bahrain Art Society Exhibition in Kuwait in October, 1983. Currently working as a Supervisor with Gulf Air, Badie lists his leisure interest as reading, photography and painting. Working mainly with oils, he completes between 20 and 30 paintings each year. His favourite subjects are landscapes, still life, calligraphy and Arabesques.

Abdulla Yousif

Born in 1949, Abdulla participated in all the annual Art Exhibitions held by the Ministry of Information between 1972 and 1982. He held his first solo exhibition in Bahrain in 1971 and took part in the Bahraini Artists Exhibition in Singapore in 1981. He has won several awards for his work, including first prize in the Bahrain Artists Exhibition of 1975 and Certificate of Recognition in the Arab Exhibition of Rabat in 1976.



10

Ahmed Al-Sunni

Born in 1933, Ahmed Al-Sunni holds a BA in Fine Arts and is a founding member of the Bahrain Art Society. He has participated in many major national and international exhibitions since 1956 including a private exhibition in the U.S. He is at present heading the Curriculum Department at the Ministry of Education in Bahrain.



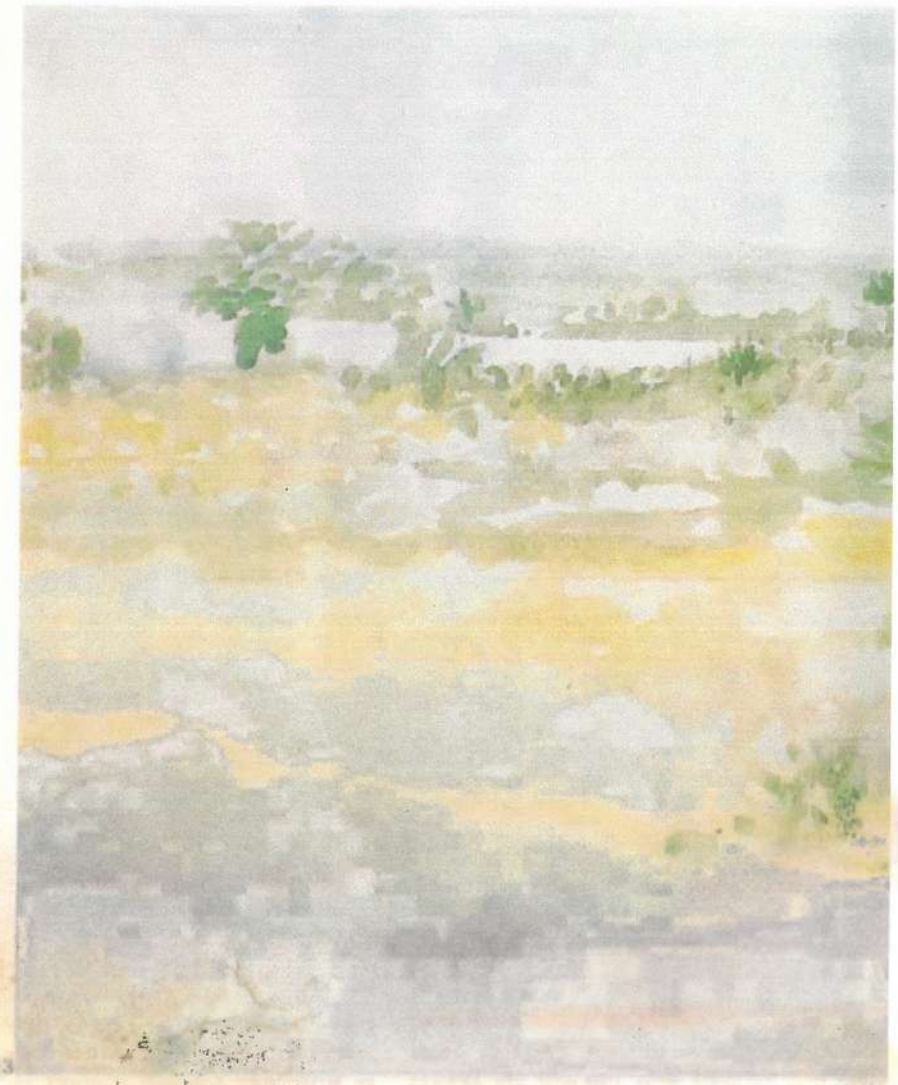
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11

Ahmed Baqer

Born in 1946 in Manama, Ahmed Baqer graduated from the School of Beaux-Art in Paris and the School of Art Education, University of Wales, U.K. He has participated in several local and international art exhibitions and was awarded the Silver Medal by the Societe des Artist Francois. He has also held one-person shows in Bahrain, France and the United Kingdom. In 1975 he was elected Secretary General for the General Arab Art Union. He is the head of the Art department at the Bahrain University College and is author of the first book on contemporary art in Bahrain.

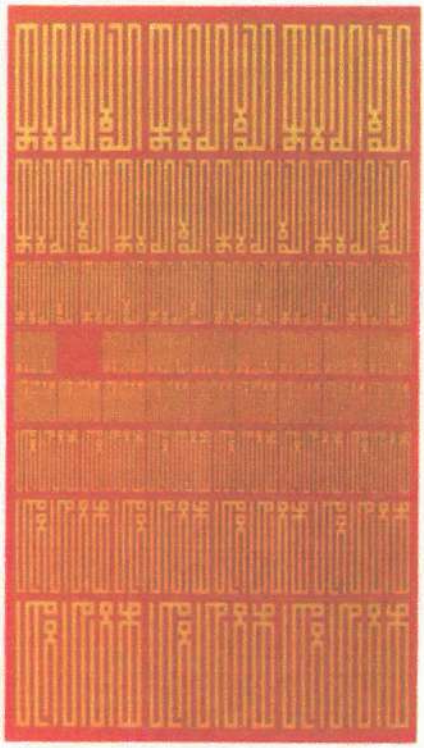


Ishaq Al-Kooheji

Born in 1953, Ishaq graduated from Cairo's College of Fine Arts with a BA in Interior Decor in 1978. In addition to his involvement with the Bahrain Art Society exhibitions of 1983, Ishaq has participated in several major exhibitions including the Kuwait Bienalle, the 1976 Cairo Unesco exhibition, and a one-man show in 1980.

Mahmoud Al-Yamani

Born in 1954, Mahmoud studied 13



2



Fine Art at the Institute of Art in Baghdad and is now a qualified art teacher and member of the Bahrain Art Society. In addition to participating in the 1977 Joint Exhibition, Mahmoud has displayed his works in Kuwait and at the Bahrain Ministry of Information's annual Art Exhibitions.

Khalil Turabi

Born in 1962, Khalil is a member of the Bahrain Art Society and works mainly in oil. He has displayed his works at major national exhibitions in Bahrain and has received several prizes.

Yousif Al-Kooheji

Born in 1953, Yousif studied at the Cairo College of Fine Art, graduating in 1979 with a BA in Interior Design. As children, Yousif and his brothers were strongly influenced by watching their grandfather work as a designer -- a factor which led several of the family members to pursue artistic careers or hobbies later in life. Yousif joined the Bahrain Art Society in 1983 and was a participant in the Society's opening exhibition in December 1983. He has also taken part in exhibitions in Cairo in 1979 and in Kuwait in 1984, receiving several awards. He works mainly with gouache, water colours and pencil.

Mukhtar Al-Sharikh

A graduate in psychology and sociology, Mukhtar has taught art and currently works as a teacher of photography in the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre in Bahrain. An active member of the Bahrain Art Society, he has participated in several exhibitions including student exhibitions in Kuwait and the American Express exhibition in support of the Bahrain Olympic Appeal for 1984.

Abdul Latif Mufeez

Born in 1950, Abdul Latif studied for a BA in Fine Arts at the Academy of Baghdad, graduating in 1973. A curriculum specialist with the Ministry of Education and a founder member of the Bahrain Art Society, he has been a regular exhibitor at Ministry of Information Exhibitions since 1973. In addition to receiving second prize at his first attempt, he has been awarded Recognition Certificates in 1975, 1976 and 1977. Working mainly in oils, water colours and gouache, Abdul Latif has given one-man shows in Bahrain and Singapore. During 1978 and 1979 he exhibited paintings with several British painters at the British Council in the United Arab Emirates.

Fareed Buqais

Born in 1955, Fareed is a graduate from the Fine Arts College of Cairo University and holds a BA in Fine Arts. A qualified art teacher, Fareed is a keen member of the Bahrain Art Society and has exhibited his works at shows in Bahrain, Cairo, Kuwait and Singapore.

Mahmoud Al-Mulla

Born in 1952, Mahmood is a professional calligrapher. As a member of the Bahrain Art Society, he has taken part in many major exhibitions in Kuwait, Cairo, Paris and Bahrain, winning a number of prizes. He lists his leisure interests as photography and theatre.

Abdul Hamid Saeed

Born in 1950, Saeed graduated from the Public Fine Arts College in India with a BA in Fine Arts in 1975.
A founder and Executive Committee member of the Bahrain Art Society, he works mainly in oils. Saeed has displayed his work at exhibitions in Bahrain, Kuwait and India. He won local prizes in 1975 and 1979.

Kamel Barakat

Born in 1947, Kamel is an art teacher and has participated in Bahraini Artists Exhibition in Kuwait and Bahrain since 1969. He held a solo exhibition in Albanoush Gallery in 1975 and took part in an exhibition of graphics in 1981.

Rashid Swar

Born in 1945, Rashid is an experienced art teacher and has been a

prominent exhibitor at the annual Ministry of Information Exhibitions since 1972. He is a founding member of the Bahrain Art Society and serves on the Executive Committee. In addition to the regular showings in Bahrain, his works have also been seen in Kuwait and Singapore. He has received several prizes through the years.

Ali Al-Mahmeed

Born in 1944, he acquired his education in Bahrain. He attended various art courses arranged by the Ministry of Education and Teachers Training Centre. He portrays typical Bahraini life in his work. Although he shows a fine appreciation for wood, he also works in brass and gypsum. His works have been exhibited in Bahraini Artists exhibitions from 1976 through to 1981. He also took part in exhibitions in Morocco, Iraq, Kuwait and Jordan. He is a founding member of the Bahrain Art Society and serves on the Executive Committee as Treasurer.

Abas Al-Mousawi

Born in 1952, Abas graduated from the College of Fine Arts in Cairo after obtaining a BA in Interior Design. A member of the Bahrain



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A PERSONAL NOTE

Raquel Duran Clegg

One of my first impressions on my arival in Bahrain 14 years ago was the scarcity of paintings in the homes of friends and acquaintances, and the fact that there were no Art Galleries.

Bahrain is a beautiful island with a remarkable variety of scenery and landscape, ranging from lush greenery to sparse desert, the Old Souk to the modern concrete high rise buildings, and last but not least, fantastic contrasts in colour which one cannot imagine but has to see to believe. The Island was waiting to be painted and to be shown to everyone through the medium of painting.

One Art Gallery was opened by Ahmed Oraifi, who is a painter in his own right, and another in the Gulf Hotel by a forward-looking and enterprising young Bahraini lady, Cheri Yateem, who also assisted me in my first two exhibitions, both of scenes of Bahrain, the first in embroidery and the second in oils.

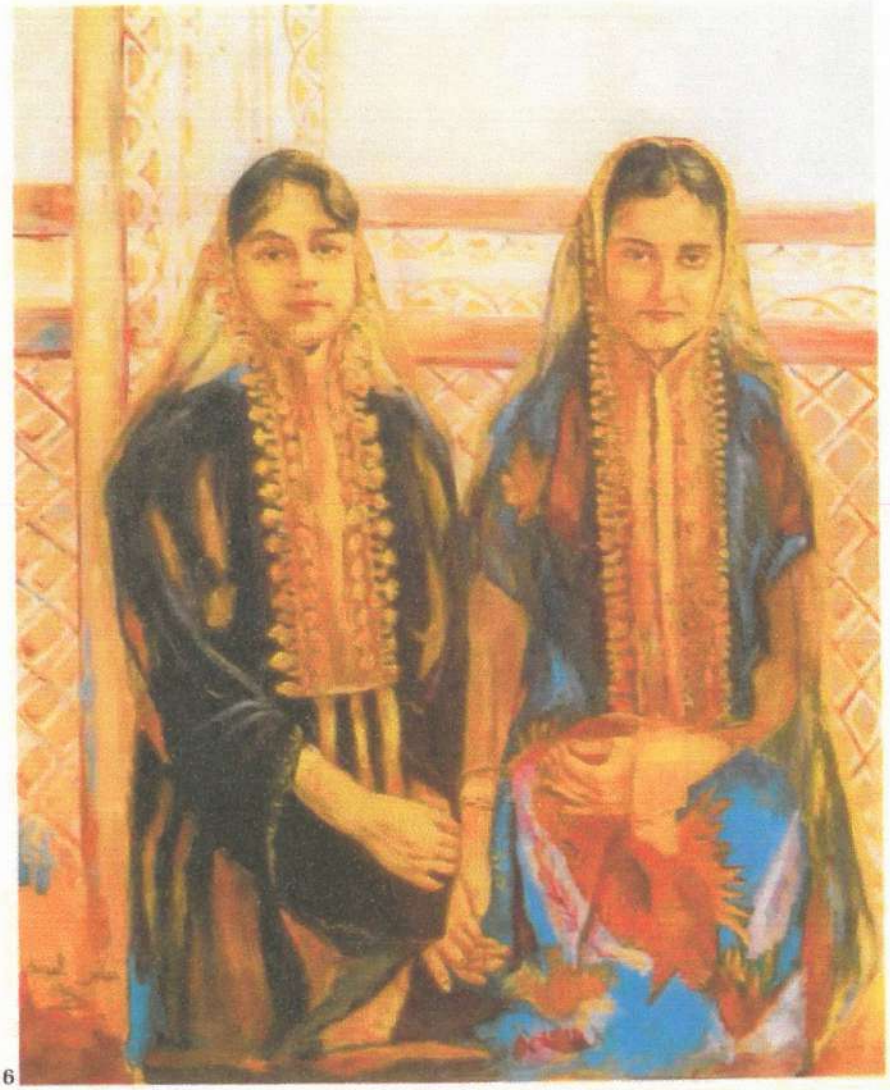
During the first few years in Bahrain until 1976, the number of recognised artists was small, although there were artists who were getting known throughout the Middle East, Europe and the U.S.A.

My own realization of the appetite for art in Bahrain was during the exhibition in 1976. The response was magnificent and the exhibition a tremendous success due to public support and interest; the question so often asked was: "When is the next one?"

In the years since then, many young and inspired Bahraini artists have gone abroad, to the United States, India, England, France and Egypt, developing their own styles as well learning from many famous artists whose work was prominent in those countries.

During 1977 the Bahrain Arts Centre was opened. The purpose of the Centre was to promote and teach Art in Bahrain as a non-profit making enterprise and a request for teachers was made by Radio Bahrain. I myself started a class with six students of diverse nationalities, including one Bahraini student who has since held her own successful exhibition at the Sheraton Hotel in Bahrain.

It was a completely new project in Bahrain and required unceasing energy to persuade people to come forward and allow their unknown artistic skills to be drawn out into the open. Soon the Art Classes, in particular oil painting, became very popular and with help and encouragement from the Minister of Information, His Excellency Mr. Tariq Almoayed, exhibitions and art classes became increasingly popular. I myself had a long waiting list of students whose enthsiasm and eagerness to join reflected the upsurge of the arts.



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Art Society and first prize winner in the prestigious Four Nations Gulf Air competition, Abas has exhibnited his work at Bahrain Art Society's Inaugural Exhibitions in Bahrain and Kuwait. Many of his paintings are now on permament display at the Bahrain Sheraton Hotel.

Abdulla Sapt

Born in 1962, Abdulla has taken part in exhibitions in Bahrain and Cairo and is a keen member of the Bahrain Art Society. Employed at the Bahrain College, he chooses pencil as his favourite medium.

1. The Bahrain Art Society Gallery
2. A view of the Studio
3. Art class in progress
4. Mohsen Al-Taitoon, Girl
5. Badie Al-Shaikh, Letter
6. Badie Al-Shaikh, Words in water
7. Ibrahim Bu-Saad, Inside and Outside Beirut
8. Abdul Rahim Sharief, Still life
9. Abdulla Sapt, Weaver
10. Abdulla Yousif, The Dhow Maker
11. Rashid Al Khalifa, Returning Herd
12. Abdul Elah Al-Arab, Soora from the Quran No. 3
13. Ahmed Asgher, Saar Village
14. Abdul Latif Mufeez, Fishermen
15. Abas Al-Mousawi, Vegetable Market
16. Abas Al-Mousawi, 2 Girls
17. Ishaq Al-Kooheji, Boats on a Beach

More and more exhibitions were staged at various centres such as hotels, and the support of the Prime Minister, His Excellency Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman bin Khalifa, promoted tremendous interest. The media, especially television under the direction of the Ministry of Information created further interest by successful coverage of art exhibitions.

In 1979 I had an exhibition of the work of my own students which proved very popular with the public and the students. With the support of Mr. Tariq Almoayed it became an annual event, encouraging an increasing number of students to paint and to participate in these exhibitions.

The Royal Family of Bahrain have given their full support to the promotion of arts, and have shown remarkable interest in art events and exhibitions.

On a personal note I might mention that my own students are so full of the feeling for art it is sometimes difficult to realize that they them-selves are people of all nationalities and from all walks of life, everyone has something to give as well as to take and their paintings prove the point. I myself have taken to teaching mainly ladies, and in particular the ladies of Bahrain, and it is incredibly heart-warming to note their feel for colour and their gift for expressing such colur on canvas: the ladies portray the beauty they feel and see so well on canvas.

Under the patronage of the Ministry of Information, Bahraini artists have been encouraged to display their works and have these exhibited in many parts of the world both collectively and in one-person exhibitions. In Bahrain itself many such local exhibitions have taken place and are always well supported by the public.

In 1983 the Bahrain Arts Society was opened with the encouragement of the Prime Minister, His Excellency Sheikh Khalifa bin Salaman Al Khalifa and the never-ceasing support of His Excellency Tariq Almoayed, the Minister of Information. The Society is housed in a beautiful building with a magnificent Art Gallery and facilities for Bahraini artists to work, to relax, compare notes and discuss and criticise art.

The Society has orgnaised several exhibitions and its President, Sheikh Rashid Al Khalifa, ensures full usage of the facilities, classes and gallery. Himself a very talented and gifted artist, Sheikh Rashid organised in June 1984 the very successful exhibition of "Bahraini Artists in London" which was opened by Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Kent, at Leighton House. The success of the exhibition was highlighted by the attendance of some 2,500 people and the possibility of the event becoming an annual exhibition although not always necessarily in London. Three artists have been approached with a view to their exhibiting individually in London, and one of them has since been invited to discuss her future artistic career at the Royal Academy in London.



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FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Baria Alamuddin

Often the talk about Arabia and the Gulf is that of the mystic, the heroic and the beautiful, for in those areas the arts of love, peace, thought, equality and justice have originated. Islam itself promoted in its teachings the art of life in its best terms and forms, and its norms ever since have made life for millions of people in that region and around the world worthy of the highest aesthetic and artistic values. It is not surprising therefore to find that the Gulf, and in particular Bahrain, has produced some of the finest artists and craftsmen. Indeed Bahrain has steadily developed a tradition for creative ingenuity and hard work, qualities that can be seen in all aspects and spheres of life, and may very well be illustrated in the field of fine arts.

The London exhibition of Bahraini artist not only introduced some interesting aspects of Bahraini life and landscape, but also served to highlight the work of the Bahrain Art Society, one of the youngest and most active additions to the developing art scene in the Middle East. The exhibition was hosted by H.E. the Ambassador of Bahrain, H.E. Shaikh Abdul Rahman Faris Al Khalifa, and it was formally inaugurated by HRH the Duchess of Kent. The works on display received words of admiration from the Duchess and she personally expressed her great pleasure and many thanks to Shaikha Abeer Al Khalifa, whose works were on display at the exhibition, and who presented one of her own paintings to the Duchess.

Shaikha Abeer, 24, is currently studying art with Raquel Duron Clegg, a qualified Spanish painter, and has been doing so since 1981. Talking with Shaikha Abeer about her art and her life only confirms her sweet nature and depth of thought. "What I want most in my life", she says, "is peace. I look for simplicity and truth in life". She is a very cheerful person by nature. She loves to listen to classical music and enjoys family gatherings and friends, but spends most of her time painting.

Her own work is a reflection of her peaceful nature. "I do not like to paint complicated things, I like to give the message of simplicity and peace in my paintings. This I see a lot of in our desert, which is to me so alive with beauty and peace. I have never seen the desert dry or dead. I feel I would always like to portray the beautiful and the simple, so that people could watch and relax and forget about the problems that surround the world. The message I want to give is that of peace and happiness", says Shaikha Abeer.

Twenty five other painters took part in the exhibition, some of whom came to London to be with their works. There was very considerable variety of themes, styles and media. Abdul Rida Al-Arab showed some beautiful Soora's from Koran on silk screen using Chinese ink and gold leaf: he completes around 20 works annually, and hopes to show these in more exhibitions around the world. Hamid Obaid and Ibrahim Bu-Saad, Kamel Barakat, Abdul Hamid Saeed, Abdul Latif Mufeez, and Ahmed Asgher showed some watercolours with different themes, ranging from natural landscapes to political and social issues. The wars of Lebanon have left a great deal of impact on the Arab world, especially on the souls of its artists. So while Saeed portrays the massacre of Sabra and Shatilla, we find Ibrahim Bu-Saad portraying the destruction of Beirut, which he portrays in a most touching and impressive way.

Some interesting oils were also on display, among others by Abdul Rahim Sharief, Abbas Al Mahroos, Abdulla Yousif, Badie Al Shaikh, Ahmed Al-Sunni, Mahmoud Al Yamani, Khalil Turobi, Fareed Bugais and Abas Al Mousani. On the other hand, Mohsen Al-Taitoon, Ahmed Bager, Isbaq Al-Kooheji, Mahmoud Al-Mulla, Kamel Barakat, Ali-Al Mahmeed, Rashid Swar, Abdulla Sapt, Yousif al-Kooheji and Mukhtar Al-Sharikh, used different methods ranging from pencil drawing, wood, fibreglass, mixed media and gouache.

It was indeed an impressive display, and an apt reminder that such exhibitions are among the finest ways to promote understanding of the different cultures in the world, as what is more close to the soul than a painting or a work of art that translates with all honesty the inner self.

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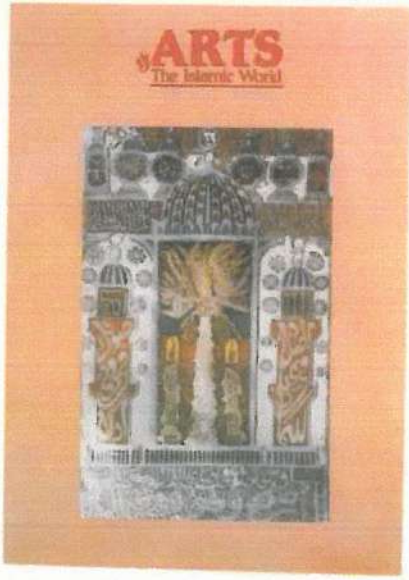
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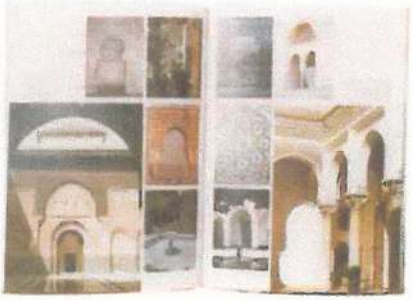


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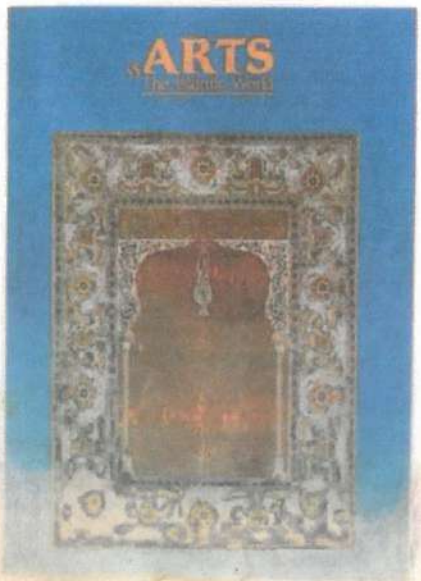


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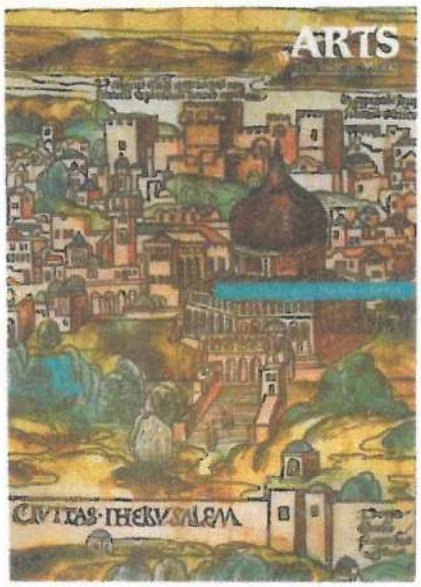
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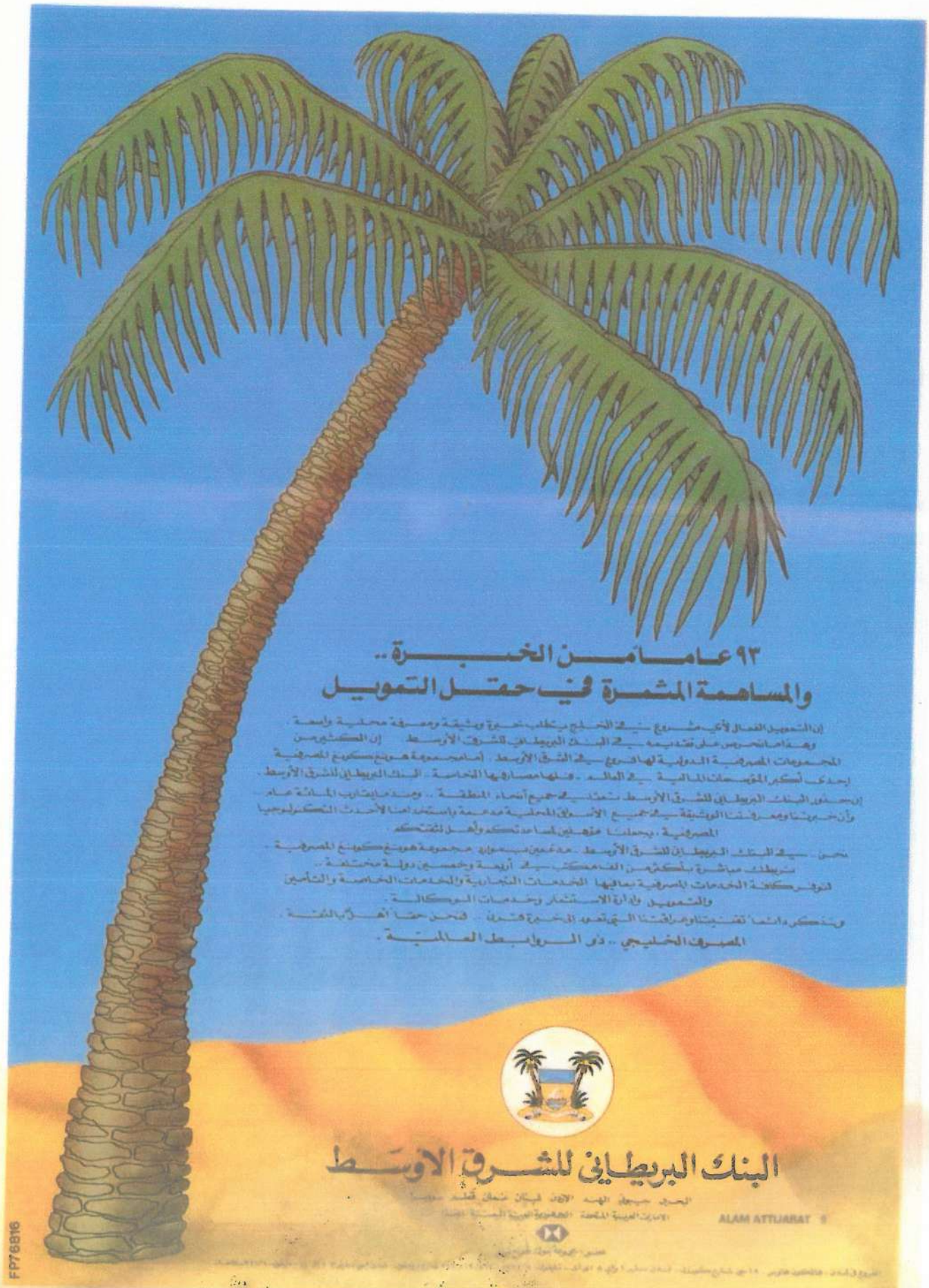


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٩٣ عاماً من الخبرة..
والمساهمة المثمرة في حقل التمويل
البنك البريطاني للشرق الاوسط
ALAM ATTIJARAT
FP76816

£10,000 Prize for Study on Arab Architecture

The Arab-British Chamber of Commerce, London, has announced a Prize of £10,000 for an indepth study on Arab Architecture. The Prize is part of a programme of discussions and dialogues on architecture in the Arab world, undertaken by the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce with scholars, policy-makers, as well as practising architects and designers.

The aim of the Prize is "to encourage study and research into issues which concern those involved in the development of the physical environment in the Arab world". Candidates for the Prize may submit studies "which are academically sound, with practical relevance to the practising architects and those involved in the development of the physical environment."

Six topics, based on themes which are relevant to the emerging built environment in the modern Arab world, have been chosen for candidates to submit proposals. These are:

- What form should Arab Architecture take?
- The relevance of Islamic concepts in architecture today in the Arab world.
- The role of tradition in contemporary mosque design.
- The role of historic studies in conservation and rehabilitation in the Arab world.
- The setting of buildings in the modern environment in the Arab world.
- Community participation and architecture in the Arab world.

Individual candidates wishing to take part may be of any nationality but studies must be submitted in English. Studies may be concerned with one or more of the topics listed above and may be of any length, illustrated with material considered relevant by the candidate.

Assessment will be according to an established two stage procedure. The first stage requires the candidate's biographical data; an outline table of contents, with estimated length of text and number of illustrations, and an outline introductory chapter of 5,000 words, with relevant diagrams and illustrations. From this first stage, a short list of 5 candidates will be chosen, each to receive a prize of £1,000.

The second stage will require the five candidates to develop their studies in full. They will be given time to prepare and submit a manuscript of the completed work, including illustrations. A final choice of the award will then be made and the winner of the prize of £5,000 will be announced. The award study itself will be published in book form by Longmans.

Tentative programme has been worked out as follows: Award statement and conditions of entry: 30 September 1984; publicity campaign and distribution of material: 31 October 1984; final submission of first stage entries: 1 March 1985; prize announcement of first stage: 15 April 1985; final submission of second stage entries: 15 April 1985; and prize announcement of second stage: 15 June 1986.

A Seminar to provide an opportunity for discussion on the aims of the Prize in general and more specifically to consider the proposed topics as appropriate for submissions by candidates was held at the new premises of the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce on 10 September 1984. Participants included among others Sherban Cantacuzino, Mohammed Makiya, Ibrahim Shukrallah, Ronald Lewcock, Roy Gazzard, Jim Antoniou, Anthony Hutt, Janice Paveley and Piers Rogers.

Colloquim on the Arab house

The School of Architecture, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, which hosted the above Colloquium (15-16 March 1984), had felt the need for such an event for some years. Since the postgraduate (M.Phil.) course in Housing for Developing Countries was established in 1982, architects and professionals in allied fields relating to housing and the built environment, from a wide range of overseas countries have been attracted to Newcastle to pursue advanced studies in housing; many have come from the Arab World, and some of these, having taken their Master's degree, have stayed on to read for their Ph.D. degree. The School has gradually built up a corpus of knowledge, of detailed studies in several specialised areas – environmental design, construction technology and housing infrastructure, urban planning, the planning and design of new settlements, the conservation of historic areas, the mobilization of economic, physical and social resources, etc. – and of bibliographical information.

This corpus of knowledge has proved an increasingly useful resource for students, and has enabled students to identify geographical areas of major housing stress, and also subject areas deficient in survey documentation and research activities. One such geographical area is the heartland of the Arab World, where rapid development and population growth, accompanied in the major oil-producing states by large-scala immigration, inevitably results in the massive expansion of existing towns and cities, and an ever increasing strain on the existing housing stock.

The traditional house forms and settlement structures of the Arab World, which have envolved naturally over thousands of years in response to local climatic and topographical conditions, and the social and religious traditions of the Arab peoples, are increasingly at risk. The pressures of modern development and the superficial attractions of the materialistic culture and life style of the West, set little store by traditional values, reduce privacy and weaken social and family cohesion.

It is generally recognised that in the traditional Arab house, whether rural or urban, a domestic environment was created that satisfied family needs for shelter, security, identity, social status and domestic comfort. Spatial and physical characteristics combine to express the qualities sought in the Arab House. The aim of the Colloquium was to review the present state of knowledge of Arab domestic architecture, to report on special studies and research in progress and generally to provide an environment congenial for the exchange of information and ideas between scholars, professionals and students.

In the event, about fifty people attended, drawn predominantly from British Universities, but including

some UK-based architects and some visiting academics from overseas.

The proceedings started with a brief address of welcome by Professor Miles Danby, of the School of Architecture, founder and Course Director of the School's courses in Housing for Developing Countries. The Thursday morning session, under the Chairmanship of Professor Peter Collison, of the Department of Social Studies, was inaugurated by Dr Mohamed Makiya, founder and former Chairman of the Department of Architecture in the College of Engineering of Baghdad University, who gave a stimulating and wide ranging review of Arab domestic architecture and urban design, past and present, copiously illustrated with slides. Dr Makiya's humane philosophy, distilled through a lifetime's experience of architectural teaching and practice, and his love of Arab and Islamic architecture and design, illuminated his critical observations.

Mr Roy Gazzard, architect and planner of the Department of Geography, University of Durham, spoke on "The Arab House: its form and spatial distribution". He set the Arab house and human settlement in its geographical context, and illustrated the great diversity of house form and settlement pattern that has evolved in the Arab World in response to particular climatic, topographical and political conditions. The first session concluded with an anthropological overview of Arab hospitality given by Dr Ahmed Al-Shahi of the Department of Social Studies, in which he examined the concepts of privacy, security, social status and family responsibility, and their relationship to the design of the Arab house.

The Thursday afternoon session, under the Chairmanship of Mr John Norton, Director of the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies of the University of Durham, was devoted to specific research projects. The first paper, presented by Dr Richard Lawless, of the above Centre, consisted of a case study of housing in Tunis, and examined the roles of planners and the local inhabitants in determining the future development of the historic medina of Tunis. Dr Ihsan Fethi, of the Department of Architecture, University of Baghdad, had submitted a paper "The Traditional House in Baghdad – some socio-climatic considerations", in which he discussed the results of micro-climatic investigations that had been carried out in a number of Baghdad houses, and related these to the traditional social structure of the Baghdad household. Unable to leave Iraq for the Colloquium, his paper was read for him by his partner in the Gaylani and Khadimiyeh housing rehabilitation projects and co-author of "Traditional Houses in Baghdad", British architect John Warren. The final paper of the afternoon was presented by Dr Magdi Nour, of the Department of Architecture, Zamalek, of the University of Helwan. On "the function and form of the courtyard house", it presented the results of similar micro-climatic investigations, this time in the traditional houses of the old city of Cairo, and established the efficacy of the courtyard as a modifier of the micro-climate, and its role as generator of the house plan.

The final session, on the Friday morning, under the Chairmanship of Professor Alex Hardy, of the School of Architecture, contained papers by Mr Tarek Shalaby, of the Institute of Planning Studies, University of Nottingham, and by Professor Miles Danby. Mr Shalaby's paper "Behavioural Patterns and the Arab House" presented the results of his studies in anthropology and behavioural psychology, and their application to the interpretation of traditional Arab house design and the establishment of guidelines for the design of new housing. Professor Danby's paper "The design of the Arab house and its relevance to contemporary housing – a case for more systematic research", was a state-of-the-art review of research into environmental aspects of the traditional Arab house, and a plea for the continued application of the proven design principles and traditional environmental control techniques in the design of new housing. In the final paper of the season, which wound up the Colloquium, Mr Abdel Wahed El-Wakil, Egyptian architect and Aga Khan Award winner, gave a scholarly and yet impassioned interpretation of the historical evolution of the Arab house, and of the conflict between the continuing Arab tradition and the dynamics of modern architecture and technology, and expressed the hope that the Arab house of the future would be a reflection of the Arab society of the future, secure, just, and in harmony with the universe.

Most of the papers presented at the Colloquium contained a great deal of food for thought, of material for discussion, and some were spiced with controversial or outrageous assertions – not everyone would agree with the description of Le Corbusier as the 'Hitler' of modern architecture, for example – and much useful discussion took place, with some vigorous questioning of received dogma from the floor. As usual on such occasions, there was insufficient time for discussion within the formal programme for each session, but scholarly discussion and social conversation continued in the various breaks for refreshment during the Colloquium, and at the Reception hosted by Professor Ben Farmer, Head of the School of Architecture, on the Thursday evening.

Ancillary to the Colloquium was an exhibition containing the following material: a small selection of early 20th century photographs of Ottoman Syria and Iraq from the Gertrude Bell Archive, kindly lent by the Department of Archaeology of the University of Newcastle; panels from a larger exhibition on "Traditional Houses of Baghdad", kindly lent by the Architectural and Planning Partnership (APP) of Horsham and Baghdad; and panels of "Traditional Building in Yemen" kindly lent by Mr Derek Matthews, architect. Related to these last was the Vision Habitat film "Traditional Building in Yemen", which was shown during the Reception.

The general concensus of opinion expressed at the end of the Colloquium was that the event had provided a valuable opportunity for scholars and research students to renew acquaintanceships, and make new contacts, to exchange ideas and information, and generally to bring themselves up-to-date in the fields of architectural and planning research and development in the Middle East and the Arab World. The proceedings of the Colloquium will be published.

A D C Hyland

Alif Gallery in Washington

Art lovers in the US capital are beginning to take notice of the exhibitions organised by the new Alif gallery which opened in the heart of Washington's historic Georgetown a few months ago.

The gallery is a welcome new aspect of the work of the burgeoning Arab American Cultural Foundation, a non-profit organisation established in 1978 with the express aim of bringing to the people of the United States a deeper knowledge and understanding of Arab, and particularly contemporary Arab, culture.

Over the past six years, the Foundation, under the chairmanship of renowned Palestinian academic Hisham Shirabi, has carried out an impressive programme of events which has included poetry readings by top Arab and Arab American poets, concerts by recognised Arab musicians, and workshops, seminars and lectures by both Arab and American experts in the field of Arab culture. Some of these events took place in important locations such as the Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts in Washington, while others were initially launched in Washington but went on to tour other cities and university towns around the country.

Now, with the opening of Alif, the Foundation has a more concrete base from which to launch its far reaching

programmes and is at last in a position to present the varied work of contemporary Arab artists to the American audience.

Among those whose works have already been exhibited at Alif are the luminous silk-screens of Palestinian writer/painter, Kamal Boullatta; the "painted manuscripts" of Lebanese painter/poet, Etel Adnan; vibrant canvases of Iraqi artist, Dia al Azzawi; and the evocative landscapes of Jordanian painter Suha Noursi.

Scheduled for the near future are the works of Jordanian sculptress, Mona Saudi. Also in the planning stages is an exhibition of the work of three Palestinian painters, Kamal Boullatta, Sari Khoury and Vladimir Tamari. Childhood friends from Jerusalem, all three artists now work in exile, Boullatta and Khoury in the US and Tamari in Japan. Their development as artists has altered radically from their experience as exiles and should provide some interesting contrasts when brought together at Alif.

Presenting the works of Arab artists at Alif is only part of the gallery's aim, however. According to Programme Director, Kamal Boullatta, the gallery should eventually be viewed as a comprehensive documentation centre for information on contemporary Arab art and as such should provide a ready reference for buyers and students of modern Arab art alike. All Arab artists, whether exhibiting at the gallery or not, are invited to submit slides, catalogues and other information about their work as part of the reference system.

Nor does the gallery restrict itself to the works of the known artist. Just as important to the artistic heritage of the Arab world is the work of the unknown bedouin or urban craftsman whose colourful artifacts are often an inspiration to the modern Arab painter. Accordingly, Alif intends to hold exhibitions of traditional Arab crafts. One, featuring Palestinian festive garments, is already planned, while discussions are underway to show a collection of Kuwaiti bedouin designs, in cooperation with the Kuwaiti organisation *Sadu*.

Such exhibitions are likely to be accompanied by a lecture by an Arab or American academic working in the field of the arts, anthropology or ethnography. Previous lectures, on related cultural topics, have been well attended in the past.

The Foundation has also enjoyed considerable success with its musical workshops which have followed in the wake of performances by leading oriental musicians from both Egypt and Lebanon. Similarly, seminars related to poetry readings by important Arab poets such as Mahmoud Darwich and Adonis, have proven quite popular. Both Darwich and Adonis went on to tour other US cities.

series of readings organised by the Foundation. Other readings by recognised Arab American poets such as Naomi Shihab Nye and Samuel Hazo were organised in Washington and Virginia.

One of the most interesting readings of all, was that of works written by a group of American poets in protests against the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. This took place at the height of the invasion and amidst great publicity in New York City and a comemmorative publication, "And Not Surrender: American Poets on Lebanon", was produced. This is the first of a series of publications connected with Foundation-sponsored events. Others will include books on art and photography, as well as music, dance and poetry.

This involvement by a group of American poets in the Foundation's programme is well within the philosophy of the Foundation: to highlight not only the work of Arabs and Arab Americans but also those American artists and Academics with an active interest in the culture of the Middle East. The scheduled dance performance by Mary Averett Seelye, who spent many years in Lebanon and was greatly influenced by her time there, is a case in point. "Our aim is to encourage interaction between the two cultures", says Boullatta, "to provide a meeting ground for the two".

So far it is native Americans rather than immigrant Arabs who have shown most interest in the Foundation's programme, says Boullatta. Though more Arabs are becoming involved. Attendance at events has been steadily increasing as time goes on, helped, of course by the fact that most events are free to the public. "We want to establish ourselves firmly on the map", says Boullatta, "and this is one way to do it".

The fact that the Foundation relies entirely on private and corporate donations means that there are times when the financial situation is somewhat precarious. But thanks to the work of enthusiastic volunteers, things always seem to pull through and, Boullatta insists "in no way has our performance ever been affected by the cash flow, it has always been of the highest standard". Which is exactly how Alif and the Foundation intend to keep things, with a little help from their friends.

Maureen Ali

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New York Exhibition of Mehdi Qotbi's "Picture Writing"

Mehdi Qotbi (whose exhibition opens at the Leila Taghinia-Milani Gallery 6-27 October) is a young Moroccan artist who lives and works in Paris and has travelled widely in America. Determined to be true to the whole of his experience, he has synthesized elements of his native traditional Islamic culture with attitudes and imagery drawn from the most advanced Western modern art. Using Arabic script as the basis for his "all over" style, Qotbi fills the entire field of his canvas or paper with the elegant curving and twisting arabesques of the most elegant and refined Islamic calligraphy. The beauty of Kufic writing has inspired many modern artists, including Pollock, Krasner and Tobey, as well as Matisse, for whom the word "arabesque" had a special meaning. These artists appropriated the delicate filigree of Moorish art toward the creation of an ornamental style that had a hypnotic quality that carried their work beyond the merely decorative into the realm of a meditative exercise. It is this quality of inducing a state of hypnotic meditation that Islamic art -- from the great mosques of Istanbul to the repetitive ceramic and plaster decorations of Moorish minarets to Hispanic-Mauresque pottery and textiles -- that defines the essence of Arabic spirituality.

By covering his surfaces with dancing calligraphy, Qotbi produces images that shimmer and change, that focus and unfocus before our eyes. Thus although his scale is small, there is great vitality in his work. Qotbi introduces a modernist note in his work by drawing on the examples of Paul Klee and Mark Tobey. His graphism is less pictographic than Klee's and less uniform than Tobey's, but it is equally musical and rhythmic in its changing pulsations. Having seen colour-field painting; Qotbi is more intent on integrating his figures into the "carpet" or coloured ground of his work than earlier artists influenced by calligraphy.

The originality of Qotbi's style lies in his ability to suggest forms, whose contours appear to undulate before us, without depicting shapes in a conventional manner. By varying intensity, hue, saturation of colour, and the pressure and direction of his pen, which twirls across the surface like an entranced dervish, Qotbi is able to create a structure so fragile it appears constantly on the point of dissolution. Looking at his work, one thinks of analogies as distant from one another in space and time as the elegance and refinement of Persian miniatures and the hypnotic sound environment of the "trance music" of LaMonte Young and Philip Glass. Seeing his Moroccan past through Western eyes, Qotbi has created a distinctive personal art that refreshes our vision.

Barbara Rose

LEILA TAGHINIA-MILANI GALLERY

Hossain Zenderoudi
Mehdi Qotbi
Nickzad Nodjoumi
Monir Farmanfarmaian
Y.Z. Kami
Massoud Arabshahi
Assurbanipal Babilla
Nasser Ahari
Mahmoud Farshchian
Nasser Ouissi
Ardeshir Arjang
Mahjoub Benbella
Mohamed Saber Fiuzi
Malekeh Nayiny
Etel Adnan
Khaled Bensalimane
Adam Henein
M'Hamed Goider Trikki
Moustafa Boujemoui
Yahya Fiuzi
Nahid Haghighat
Fareydoun Hoveyda
Rachid Koraichi
Abdallah Hariri
Hossein Mirpudi

CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC ART AND CALLIGRAPHY

OCTOBER 1984 MEHDI QOTBI
NOVEMBER 1984 Y.Z. KAMI
DECEMBER 1984 HOSSEIN ZENDEROUDI

LEILA TAGHINIA-MILANI

ARTS Publications

Building in the Islamic World Today

Although most of the publicity surrounding the Aga Khan Award for Islamic Architecture goes, naturally enough, to the tri-annual award ceremony itself, there are many attendant activities related to the scheme which are of seminal importance to its overall success.

Foremost amongst these are the different architectural seminars which have taken place in various Islamic countries in recent years, each one focussing on a new aspect of the multi-faceted problem of modern Islamic architecture.

Emanating from these seminars has been a series of publications comprising the papers presented and the related discussions. These publications are aimed primarily at a specialised audience and are designed to stimulate dialogue among architects, students of architecture or other professionals working in related fields. Now, for the first time comes a book about the Award, *Architecture and Community, Building in the Islamic World Today*, available for general distribution (Published by Aperture, New York, 255pp $20.00). It summarises, in part, some of the main issues raised at the various seminars, as well as giving a detailed account of the reasons behind the choice of 15 prizewinners, announced at the first Award ceremony in 1980.

In his preface to the book, the Aga Khan highlights a number of the problems confronting the Master Jury when called upon to choose the Award winners – the same problems faced by all those trying to define the status of modern Islamic architecture today. Among the questions raised are the most basic, what exactly do we define as modern Islamic architecture and what kind of architecture should we be rewarding, that of the traditional builder who still plays such an important role in most parts of the Islamic world, or that of the fully qualified architect building today's modern monuments? The architecture of the people or the architecture of the state?

These points are amplified by the book's editor, Professor Renata Holod, when she outlines the many pressures being brought to bear on the nations of the Islamic world as they try to make their adjustments to the demands of Twentieth Century development in terms of building programmes, as well as everything else.

Most countries, she points out, have experienced massive urban migration, giving rise to housing problems on an unprecedented scale. Many of the poorer nations rarely have the means to tackle these problems let alone turn their attention to "great architecture". At the same time, almost all the Islamic countries have suffered to a greater or lesser degree from colonial domination, with its attendant cultural and educational dependency, something which has greatly discouraged the development of an enduring vernacular style of building in recent years. And everywhere, there is the new form of cultural domination in the shape of imported technical designs and approaches, which again has undermined the continuation of a characteristic style of architecture.

All of these factors she points out have combined to interrupt the natural rhythm of development in most of the Islamic countries not only in the field of architecture but also in the evolution of society as a whole. It is in this context that the organisers of the Aga Khan Award found themselves working. The solution they decided was to seek out and reward examples and approaches which best served the needs of the people for whom they were created. In other words, the question raised by the Award Scheme would not be related simply to aesthetics or architectural excellence, but to the general development and well being of the Islamic community.

The detailed background notes on the 15, 1980 Award winners are amply illustrated by high quality colour and black and white pictures as well as drawings and sketches. They present a fascinating cross section of possibilities for models for the future and as such provide a valuable framework for others to work from. The range covers everything from a Malaysian slum improvement scheme to an urban preservation programme, from a traditional mudbrick house to an ultra modern conference hotel centre, from a complicated restoration scheme and an exemplary conservation project, from a well planned rural medical facility and a highly technical and rather revolutionary public water supply system. All are vastly different in approach and intent and all are part of the complex mosaic of problems and solutions being sought in the variegated map that comprises the Islamic world.

Frequent criticism has been raised about the Jury's choice of so many winners, yet looking back on the awards as they are so clearly presented in the book, it is easy to see how this situation arose (and again in 1983 when there were 11 winners). In retrospect, it seems almost imperative that so many prizes should have been presented in order to establish working guidelines for future juries. The Award is breaking such new ground and the criteria for giving the awards are obviously so complex that the highlighting of so many approaches must be beneficial in the long term. The impact that the award has had over the last few years basically bears witness to this.

The 10 papers selected from the various seminars for inclusion in the book have been carefully chosen to raise some of the main practical and theoretical issues underlying the award scheme. On the theoretical level, for example, Professor Olaf Grabar investigates the presence and meaning of symbols in traditional Islamic architecture and how these have changed in the present context. While on a more practical note, Mahbub al Huq focuses on the responsibilities of today's decision-makers in choosing architectural forms. Dogan Kuban outlines the beneficial aspects of a responsible conservation scheme, which he sees as valuable in terms of safeguarding the environment as a whole; while Indian architect, Charles Correa discusses the dilemma facing architects in the Third World when faced with the enormous housing problems that exist in almost all countries. Mona Serageldin and Francois Vigier put forward some pretty down to earth ideas for tackling slum housing; while Yasmeen and Suhail Lari carry out a critical appraisal of the contemporary approaches to the provision of leisure facilities, especially when viewed in the context of the Islamic lifestyle.

Along with the notes on the Awards, these papers provide a concise summary of the Award's aims and ideals and of its progress during the first three year cycle. A similar book, taking

in the next three years up to the 1983 Awards, is due for release later this year. Together they should form a useful document with which to orient the interested lay reader towards this challenging new subject.

M.A.

Islamic Art published by I.A.F.N.Y.

Of the Royal treasures, preserved in the Topkapi Palace, amongst the most beguiling are surely the Topkapi drawings. As recently as June 1980, a meeting was held by the Percival David Foundation (PDF) to study these works and, as William Watson points out, in the preface, the unusually large number of papers read at the Colloquie, and the special need of generous illustrations, posed problems which were resolved when Professor Ernst Grube offered to make the report the initial volume of a periodic publication Islamic Art which would appear under his direction. This book thus represents simultaneously the first issue of Islamic Art and the tenth of P.D.F.'s reports. A generous contribution from the Mehdi Mahboubian Foundation in New York made it posible for a greatly expanded illustrative section.

The works under discussion fall into three broad groups. Group One - works given to Mohammad Siyah Qalam, Group Two - paintings done in the Chinese style and often on ecru silk, perhaps direct copies or provincial works, and the last group; Group Three -hybrid works, aware of the great art of China, but distilled within the ways of the eastern Islamic painters. Some are done on silk, and others in a scroll format.

The scholarly contributions make up two-thirds of the book followed by the photographs of the drawings, with a large amount of related material from the sources used to illustrate the points raised.

The drawings depict a world long lost, great bufallo struggling with tigers, beautiful maidens and handsome youths - strange demons and shamans, wonderful flowers and birds take their place next to scenes of battle, or an exquisitely attired horseman on an animal reduced to an arabesque (fig. 44c); camels entwined one with the other (fig. 20) and galloping with ill humour at the bidding of the master (fig. 19), all this and so much more will add a new dimension to our understanding of those times.

Group Three, the hybrid works, are strange, childlike works, so crisp and innocent is the resultant vision. Fig. 175, as an example, an elderly traveller riding a donkey, followed on foot by a young squire, set in a landscape of rich vegetation, so full of Chinese ideas and Islamic intentions, belonging to a world of its own, disturbing in that it belongs almost nowhere, therefore forcing us away towards the images which give it birth.

Fig. 174, the same in subject, is an easier work, belonging a little more to China than to Islam and a duality of observations is not required.

The works in Group Two, the Chinese works, are of great interest, not only for their inherent charm but perhaps more so on account of the debate as to their origin. Some are perhaps Chinese provincial, while others are possibly indigenous copies. It is indeed curious how a great tradition, from whichever source, is rarely forgotten and how there are reflections here of an artistic vocabulary, developed centuries earlier in Tang China. Fig. 104 has just this quality, echoing however badly, things which had gone long before. Strange that a great number of Chinese paintings have not been discovered in the Middle East where logic dictates that they must be.

"Oh dust, thou live by some forgotten well, waiting thy day of ransom to return and smile".

I have left to the last the most important group of works. Group One - those attributed to Muhammad Siyah Qalam, drawings of outstanding graphic realisation. His is a curious technique, one both elastic and unbending, allowing no disturbance of style, yet capable of expresssing the deepest aspirations of his age. A cruel clarity of vision, a cruel graphic line, catching within an unbreaking web the drifting dreams of his times.

And this extraordinary ability gives to his works a heightened physical awareness as in Fig. 281 a nomad family, a father feeding his donkey watched by his wife and children, the intensity with which he holds the animal, and the concentrated ferocity with which he forces the animnal into its feeding bag, causing it in the process not a little agitation, whilst his wife watches with a disturbing anguish.

This is indeed a work of profound psychological significance. It is also, to those with the wit to notice it, a work of despair hinting at the tragedy of hunger to come.

The dancing Shamans, Fig. 304, become one with the subject of their mystical experience, to find a parallel realisation, one must almost go beyond the ecstasies of El Greco, to the photographs of Nijinsky "dancing" *Le spectre de la Rose*.

Perhaps the greatness of the man may be found in a subtler way, by comparison of the copyists' works. Fig. 283, a seated man half turns away with a reluctant reality, yet even this is preferred to Fig. 284, for here nothing will ever happen, these arms will never move - we are confronted no longer by content but by mere design.

Besides these groups, there are other things of interest in his book. Margaret Medeley writes on the influence of Chinese pottery, and there is indeed a drawing of a boy with his back to us, holding a Chinese Blue and White bowl (Fig. 386), an uneven disjointed, unhappy work, yet we are grateful that it is here for it tells us a little more than we knew before.

There has been, in recent years, a growing interest in the Heretical eastern and more specially the Nestorian Christians "The Christians of Antioch". These, the Nomads amongst the Christians, who, like lost wanderers in time, appear and reappear at uneven intervals, now a fragment from Karakhoja, a gravestone with some lonely inscription, a written reference and again, a sacred object which does not fit too easily into another tradition.

All this is of interest for one of the drawings, Fig. 409, depicts an Eastern Christian and possibly a Nestorian Church. Barbara Brend writes very well about it. There is an interesting comment by P. Andrews who mentions that the bells, which appear in the drawing, seem out of place in an Armenian or Nestorian Monastery, where a board would have been beaten as a summons to worship. This work is full of such illuminating moments.

Michael Gulbenkian



Sotheby's Autumn Sales of Islamic Works of Art

Islamic sales at Sotheby's this autumn (October 15-17) will be offering an impressive range of manuscripts and miniatures as well as rugs, carpets, textiles, glass, arms and armour, pottery, tiles, jewellery, carved wood panels and screens.

The selection of Oriental miniatures includes a 17th century Mughal painting by the artist Farrokh Beg dated 1615 and executed when the artist was 70 years of age. There is a selection of vellum Quran leaves written in Kufic, in gold, and an illuminated Ottoman Quran, 16th century, from the Estate of the late King Umberto II of Italy. There is also an interesting Timurid prayer book written in gold throughout and dated 1445.

Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Indian manuscripts in the sale include *Zij-i-Ilkhani,* a treatise on astronomy by



One of a pair of Ottoman brass candlesticks, 16th century

Safavid mosaic panel decorated with the zodiac sign of Sagittarius, 17th century

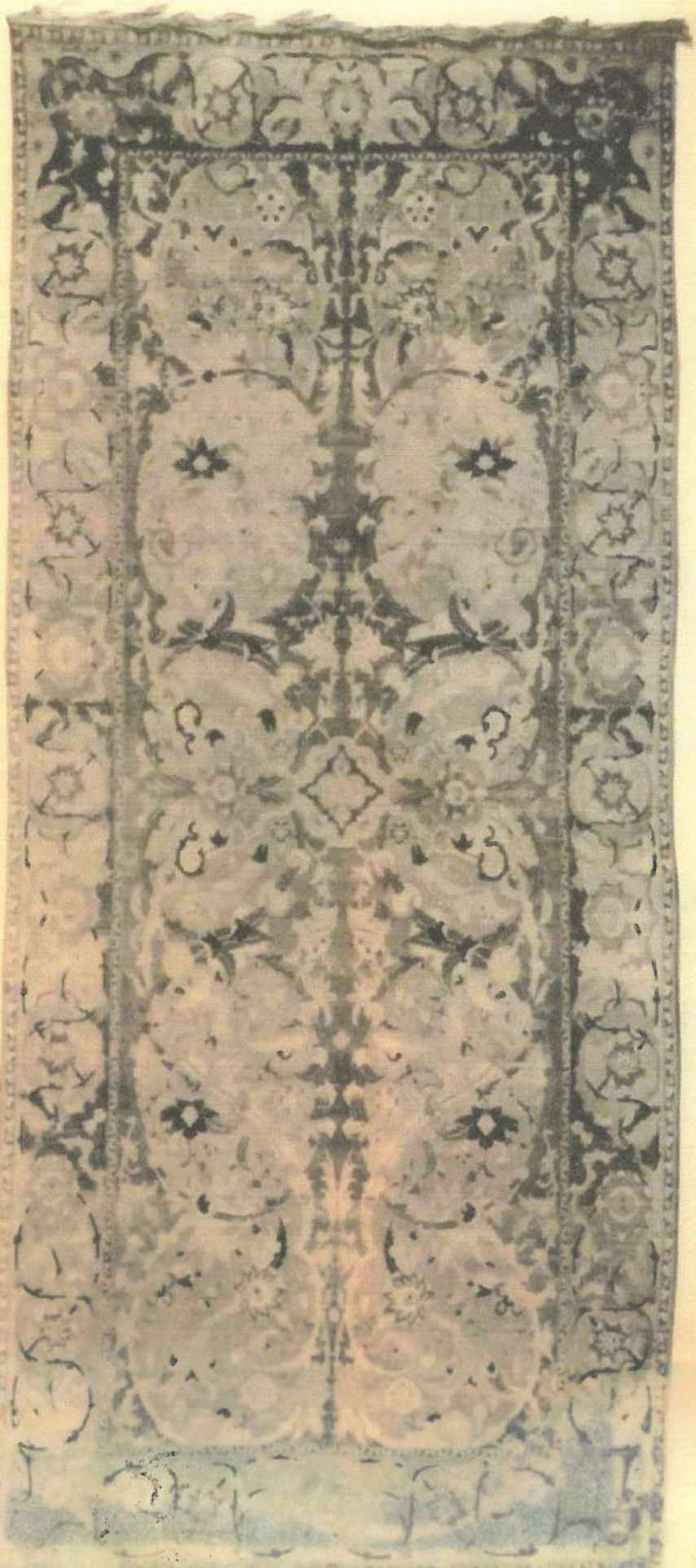


Safavid mosaic tile panel decorated with a wise man, 17th century





Mamluk under glaze painted jar, 14th century



A fine polonaise carpet from the estate of the late King Umberto II of Italy, 17th century

Nasiruddin Tusi dated 1288. This manuscript from Maragah is of considerable importance to the history of Islamic astronomy and medieval science. It still retains its original binding which makes it one of the earliest surviving Persian bindings. It was previously sold in the celebrated Phillipps Collection at Sotheby's six years ago.

The section devoted to works of art includes an interesting 14th century Maluk underglaze painted jar, two Safavid (17th century) mosaic tile panels and a selection of Nishapur slip-painted pottery. The metalwork section offers a pair of Ottoman brass candlesticks from the first half of the 16th century inscribed with the name of the Mamluk Sultan Kalaun who lived at the end of the 13th beginning of the 14th century. Also of interest is a small Maluk silver-inlaid bronze cup from the early 14th century corresponding with the cups found on Mamluk blazons.

THE ART OF AFGHANISTAN

'EXTILES, JEWELLERY AND WOODCARVING FROM CENTRAL ASIA.



OCTOBER 17th to NOVEMBER 17th 1984

THE RUG SHOP 1 ELYSTAN STREET LONDON SW3 01-584-8724
JOSS GRAHAM ORIENTAL TEXTILES 10 ECCLESTON STREET LONDON SW1 01-730-4370

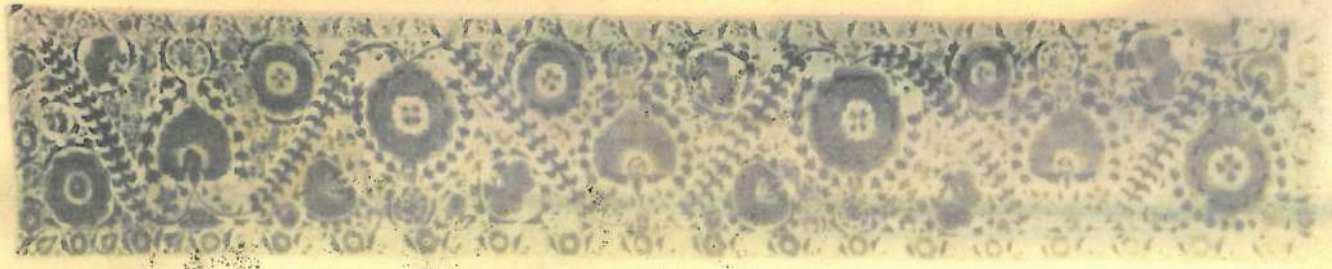


This exhibition brings together the various artforms for which the craftsmen and women of Afghanistan are best known: rugs, kilims, felt, embroidery, jewellery and woodcarving.

The Rug Shop will be holding a small exhibition of Central Asian material dating from the early 19th to early 20th centuries, where as more recent works of art including costume and woodcarving will be shown at **Joss Graham's gallery**

Of particular interest will be:

- a collection of fine Turkoman, Kazak and Uzbek silver and semi-precious stone jewellery.
- carved wood chests and low chairs chiefly from the remote mountainous region of Nuristan where a distinctive centuries old animist culture developed & thrived.
- embroidered Uzbek and other tribal trappings used to decorate their tents, their animals and themselves.
- a wide range of sturdy kilims from Maimana and Labijar in North West Afghanistan; fine loom embroidered Baluch kilims and traditional Turkoman knotted carpets.



"Heritage is a Trust by the Present for the Future Generations"

"The time has come for us to assert our identity by using valuable remains of our past as tools for producing a future which will be distinctly our own", argues Mrs. Yasmeen Lari who recently organised the first and largest gathering of architects and town planners from all over the Islamic World held at Lahore in Pakistan earlier this year.

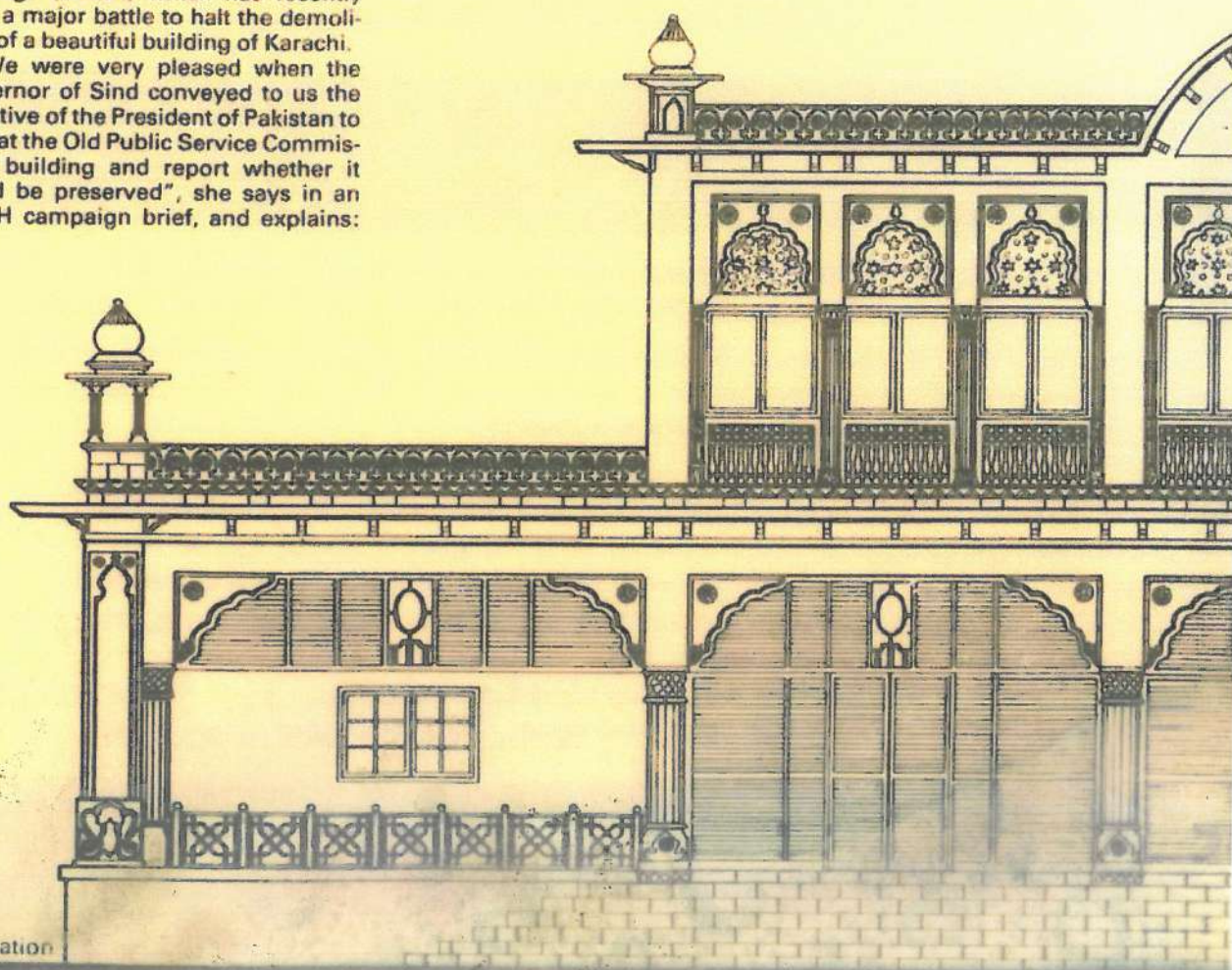
Herself an innovative architect and Chairperson of the 250-strong Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners, she is the moving spirit behind the Society for Preservation of Muslim Heritage (SPMH) which has recentiy won a major battle to halt the demolition of a beautiful building of Karachi.

"We were very pleased when the Governor of Sind conveyed to us the directive of the President of Pakistan to look at the Old Public Service Commission building and report whether it could be preserved", she says in an SPMH campaign brief, and explains:

"The Old Public Service Commission building is of unique value. It is an outstanding example of Neo-Mughal architecture in a period when most buildings in Karachi were built in neo-gothic or neo-classical styles which was the characteristic of the colonial period of our history".

The architectural vocabulary of this building, according to her, evolved during over a thousand years of Muslim political and cultural association with this region, and the building itself is in sound structural condition. How ever, immediate steps are required t avert any deterioration in its presen condition. The walls being of stone ar generally in good condition, thoug some damaged part of stone on exte nal walls needs to be replaced or re-se with lime mortar. Serious problem o dampness in the walls needs to be con trolled effectively by creating a dam proof barrier at floor level. Because o water seepage from an existing wate tank close to the building, there ha been some settlement of floors o west side and also because of a cella below that particular floor. The floor ing in this area has to be removed and relaid. Some of the ornamentation tha has been damaged will also require repairs.

"The historical buildings and the his



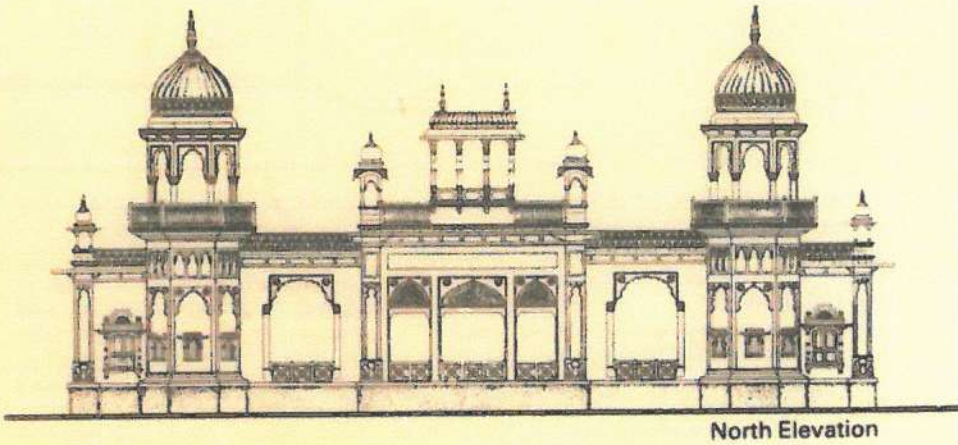
South Elevation

toric centres are decaying or being destroyed wihtout a trace. Before our very eyes we see our past disappearing. There is an urgent need to save them, but first of all we must record them. They are invaluable in search for our roots and for inculcating a sense of pride in our history and traditions. Heritage is a trust held by the present for the future generations. We shall be responsible if nothing is done to prevent this cultural suicide", she warns.

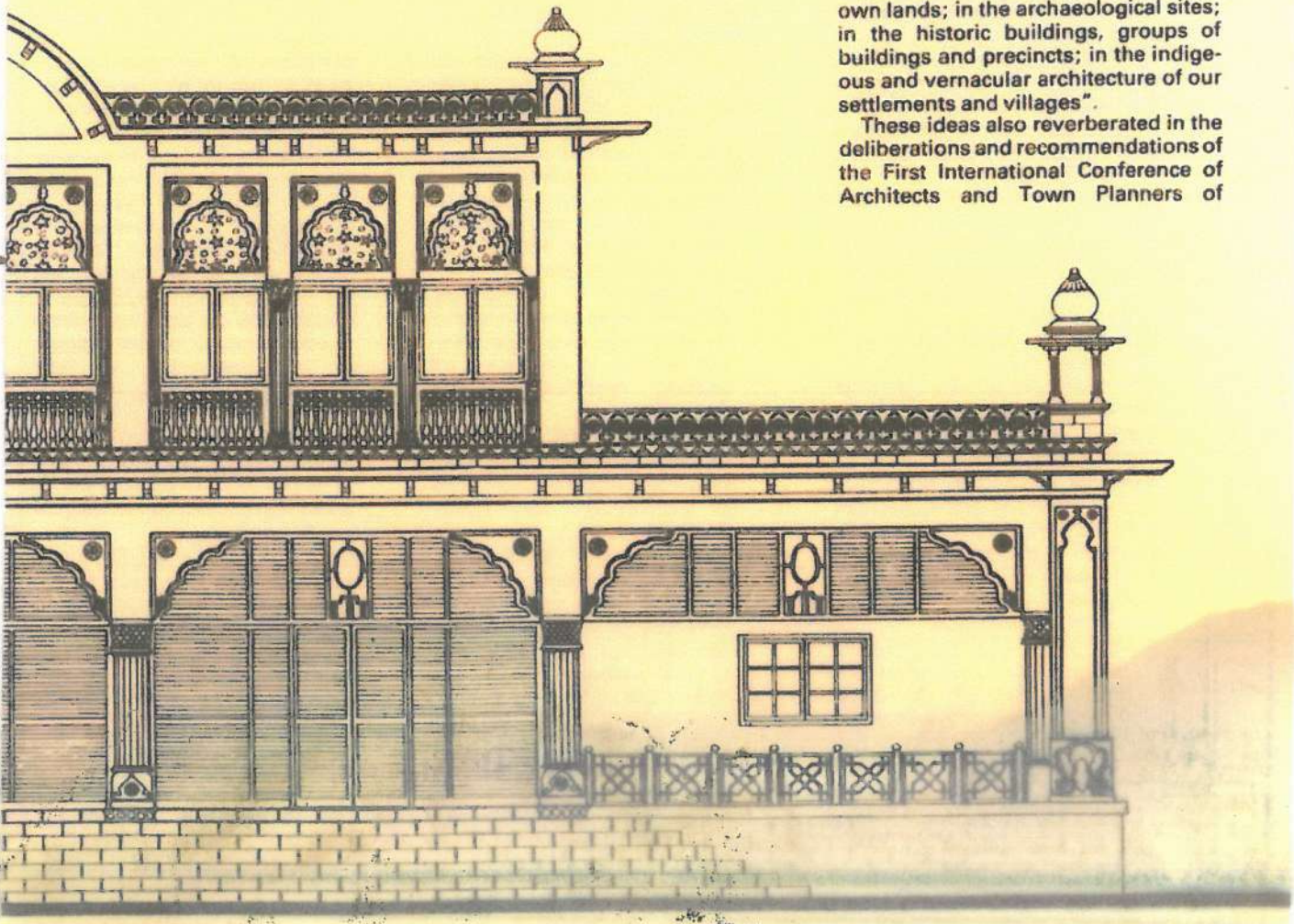
SPMH made its mark when it took as its first assignment an old town Thatta, which was once political and cultural capital of what is now the Sind province of Pakistan. "In 1607 the British East India Company described Thatta to be 'as great and big as London", Mrs. Lari recalls. "Today it has a larger population of dead than living with one of the largest necropolis of the world spread over six square miles."

The photographs, drawings and documentation of Thatta were one of the entires at the prestigious Venice Biennale, and later travelled for a year in various towns of Italy. International attention is now focused on its preservation. "To humanise our environment, restructure our cities, and create a fabric of human living, we have to find the roots not in the alien concepts imported from outside but within our own lands; in the archaeological sites; in the historic buildings, groups of buildings and precincts; in the indigeous and vernacular architecture of our settlements and villages".

These ideas also reverberated in the deliberations and recommendations of the First International Conference of Architects and Town Planners of

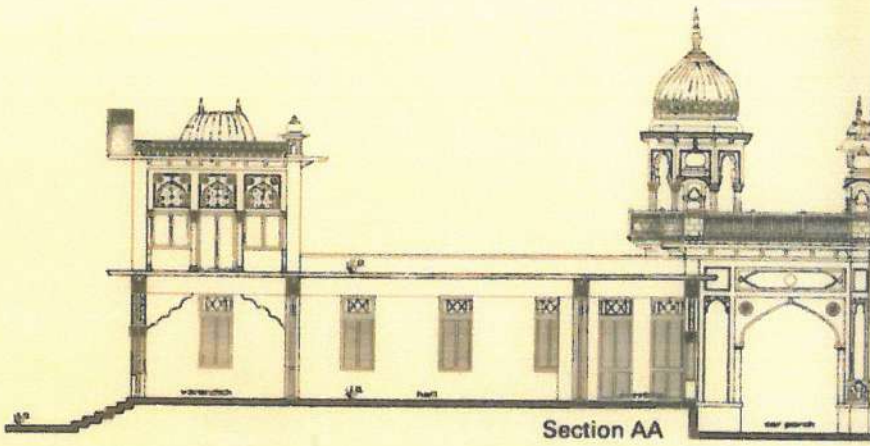


North Elevation



Islamic Countries (May 6-8, 1984), participants to which came from 19 countries, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Yemen Arab Republic, Yemen Democratic Republic, and the host country, Pakistan. The following is the text of the resolutions adopted by the Conference:

I.R. Siddiqi



Section AA

The Conference of Architects and Town Planners of Islamic Countries held in Lahore, Islamic Republic of Pakistan on 4-6 of Shahban 1404, Hijra (6-8 May, 1984):

(1) **Deeply conscious** that the Islamic Countries are heirs to a great civilization which has played an important role in the enrichment of the socio-cultural life of the world.

(2) **Aware** that the Muslim World achieved the highest excellence in the field of Architecture and Town Planning which inspired generations throughout the World.

(3) **Deeply concerned** at the state of neglect which has befallen the traditions of Islamic Architecture, in the recent past.

(4) **Determined** to rectify the situation and to revive the magnificent traditions and philosophy which governed Architecture and Town Planning of the Islamic Civilization.

(5) **Aware** of the need for peoples of Islamic Countries to be conscious of the impact of Architecture and town Planning on overall development, both material and spiritual.

(6) **Believing** that Islamic Solidarity constitutes the corner-stone for any joint action by Muslim World and is an essential element of coordination, cooperation and integration.

(7) **Recalling** Resolution No:6/13-C of the Thirteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Niamey, Niger which endorsed the statutes of the International Commission for the Preservation of Islamic heritage.

(8) **Taking** note that the Islamic Countries have established the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) and have given it the mandate to initiate cooperation between member states in the development of applied science, the use of advanced technology within the Islamic values and ideals, and to support the preservation, protection and promotion of the Islamic Culture and civilization and its identity.

(9) **Recognising** the urgent need for cooperation and collaboration among Islamic countries and people for the protection, preservation and promotion of Islamic Architecture and Town Planning).

(10) **Recognising** also that coordinated action in this important field requires the establishment of an Islamic Organisation to be entrusted with this urgent task.

(11) **Drawing guidance** and encouragement from the profound inaugural address delivered by His Excellency General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

I. **RECOMMENDS**

i) That an organisation to be called the "Council of Architects and Planners of Islamic Countries" should be established under the auspices of OIC with the following objectives:

a) Research and documentation, protection and preservation of Islamic Architecture and built environment.

b) Stimulate awareness, through wide dissemination of information amongst Muslim peoples of the history of Islamic Architecture and Town Planning.

c) Cooperation and collaboration among Muslim Countries and organisations in the field of Architecture and Town Planning.

d) Promotion of Architecture and Town Planning steeped in the Islamic traditions in harmony with contemporary environment and conscious of future needs.

e) Making serious efforts to provide socially, culturally and economically suitable built environment for the Muslim masses.

f) Preparing and maintaining lists and acting as a data centre for information of Architects and Town Planners in the Islamic world.

g) Coordination at the international level of the objectives listed above and other objectives and functions that may be decided upon by the Council.

ii) That all member states of the OIC may sponsor the affiliation of Council of Architects and Planners of Islamic Countries with OIC through ISESCO or similar appropriate organisation.

iii) That full material and moral support be provided to the Council of Architects and Planners of Islamic Countries so that it can implement its plans and objects in accordance with the objectives listed above.

II. **MANDATES** the Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners to bring this resolution to the attention of the OIC and ISESCO with the request to place these recommendations on the agenda of the next meeting of the Islamic Commission for Economic, Social and Cultural Affairs as well as the Second General Assembly of ISESCO.

III. **DECIDES** to set up a committee to follow up the implementation of this resolution with their respective governments. Mrs. Yasmeen Lari would coordinate the activities of the members of the Committee, the membership of which will be determined in consultation with the participating delegates.

IV. **CALLS** upon the Muslim world to take a definitive stand for the preservation of Islamic character of the Holy city of Jerusalem and to undertake the necessary measures to prevent the Zionist agressors from destroying the Holy city of Jerusalem.

V. **EXPRESSES** deep gratitude to the Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners for the excellent arrangement made for the holding of the Conference and for the generous hospitality offered to the delegates to the Conference.



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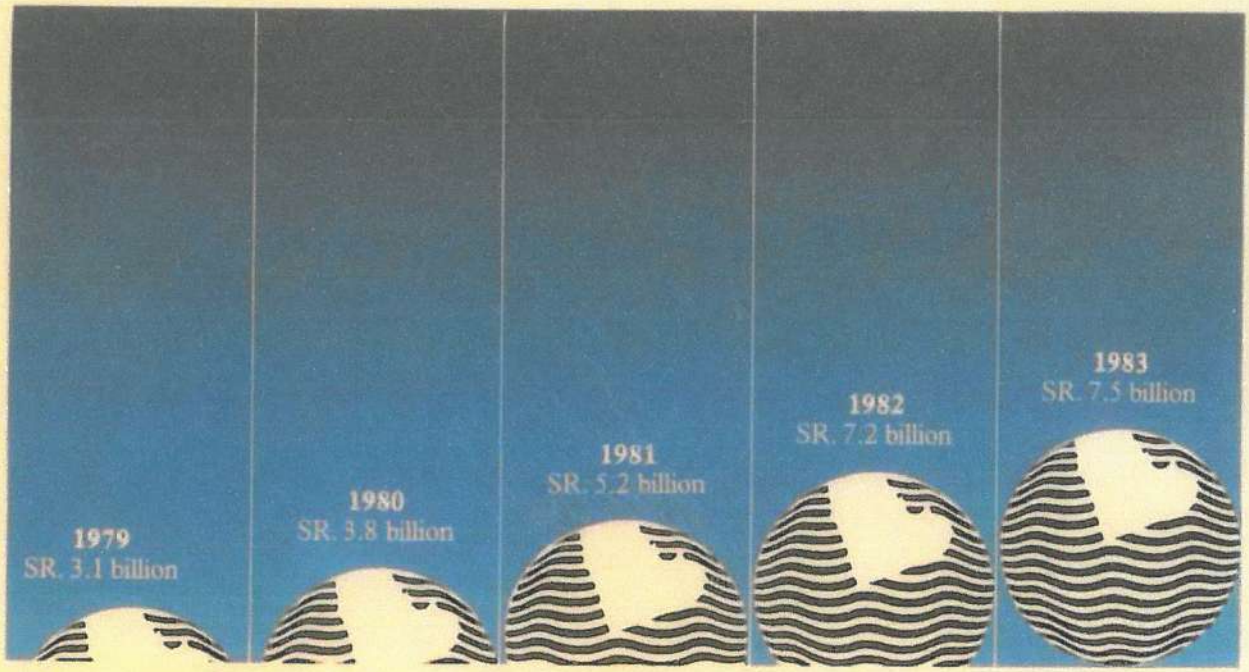
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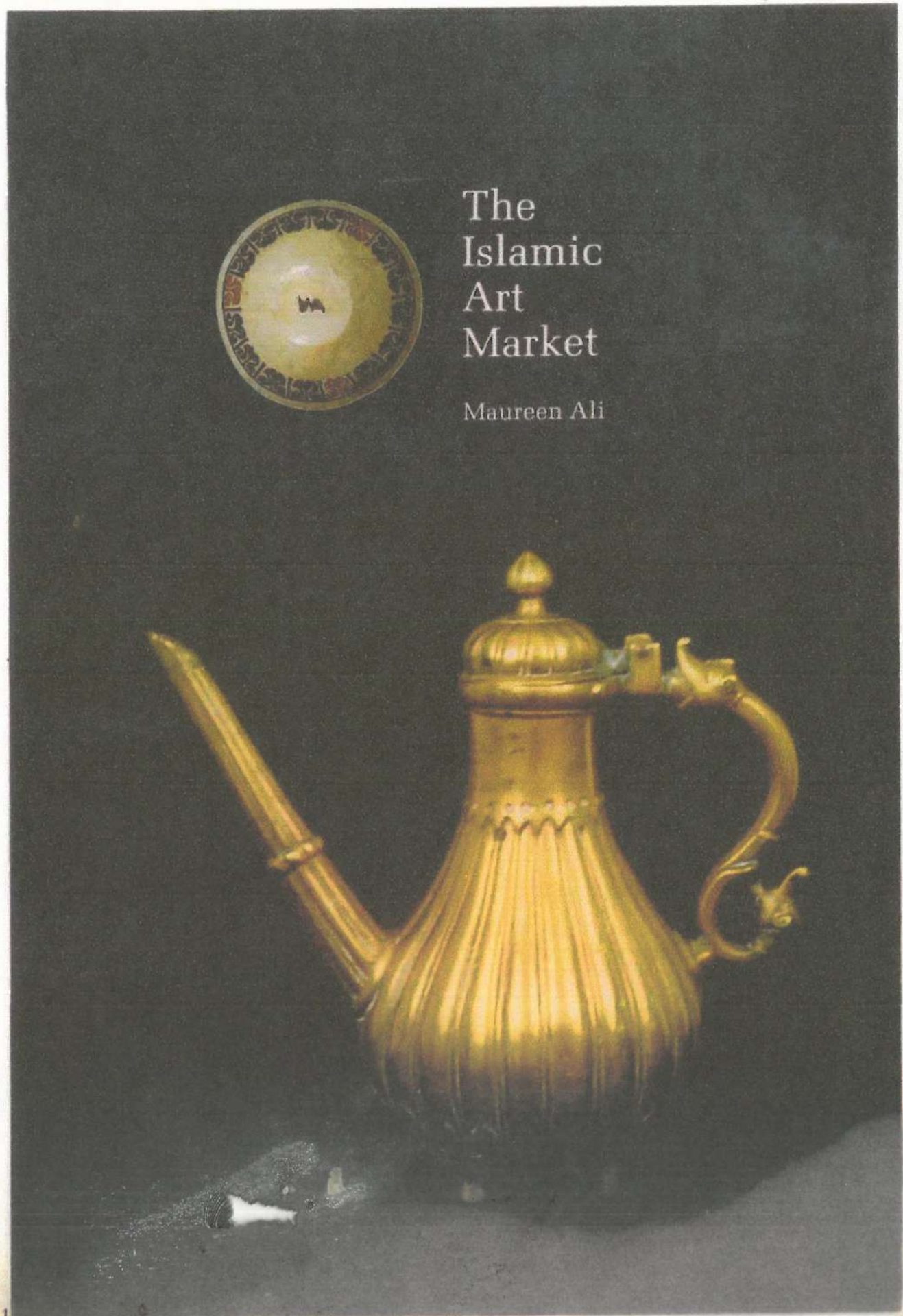
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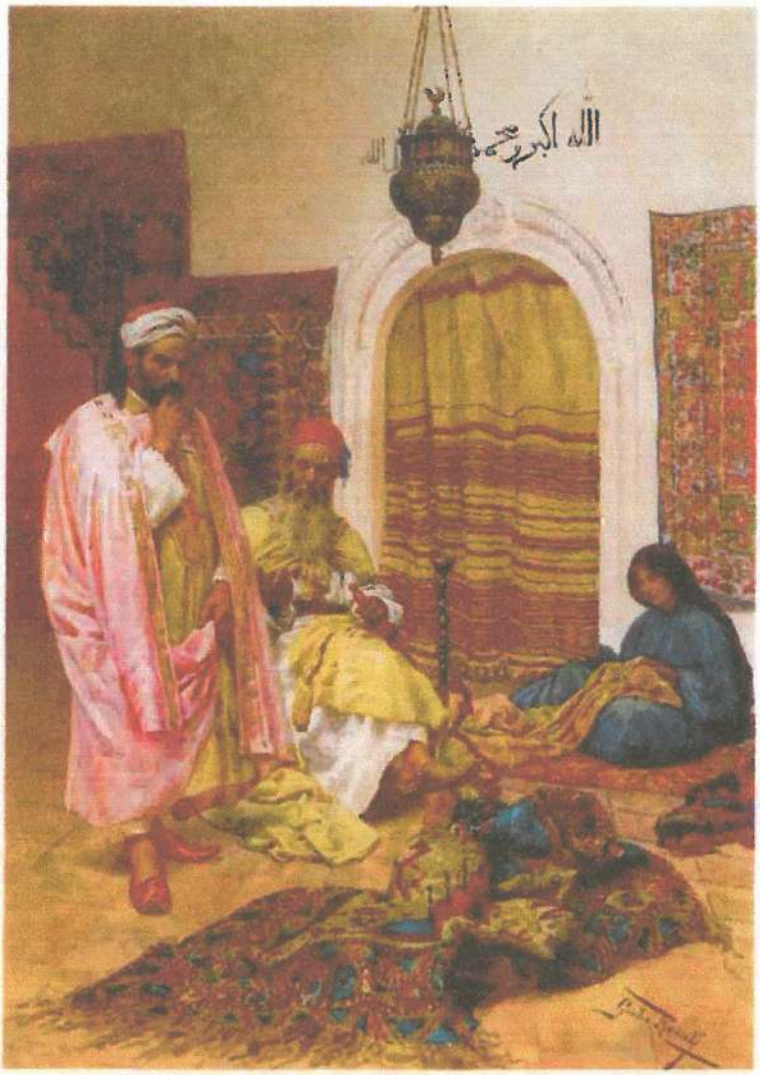
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The
Islamic
Art
Market
Maureen Ali

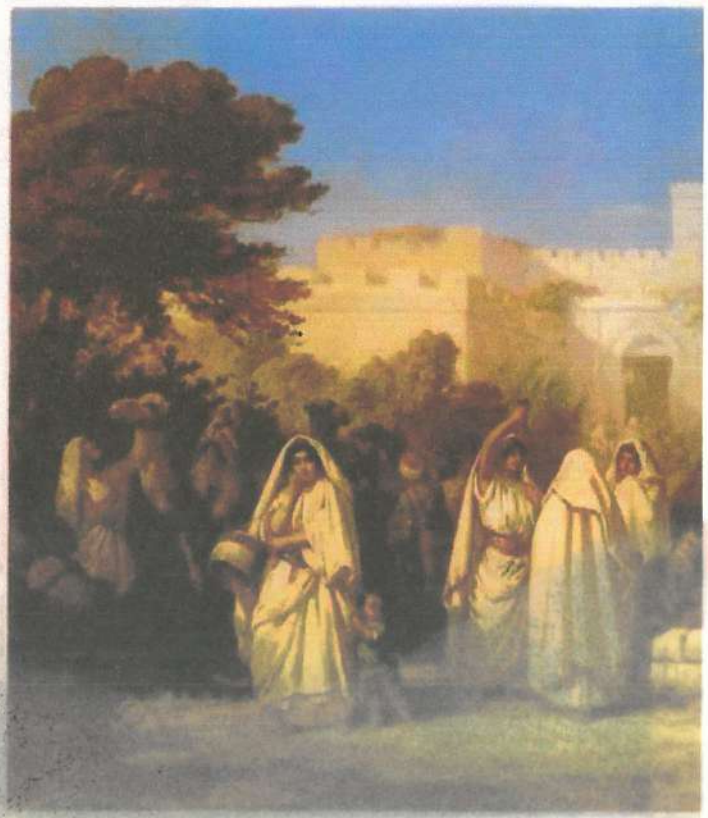


Entering the world of the Islamic art market in London is quite an experience - not perhaps, what one would initially expect. For despite the aura of calm and civility that pervades the surface of this world, there is an undercurrent of hostility and rivalry as vigorous as that in any other area of commercial enterprise. Things sometimes border on the cut-throat.

It is a quiet, genteel, world, nonetheless. Many of the chic galleries have a still, hushed, almost reverential quality about them, like so many sacred tombs about to disclose their most precious treasures. Sparsely furnished but sumptuously furbished with fabric wallpapers or deep pile carpets, each displays its fine (but probably not its finest) pieces in a sort of iso-

1. *Brass jug with handle, 17th century, The Momtaz Gallery.*
2. *Ceramic Bowl with 'S' shaped motifs, 10th century, The Momtaz Gallery.*
3. *Guillio Rosati, The Carpet Seller, signed, water colour, 53x37cm. The Connoiseur Gallery.*
4. *Jean Discart, A street musician, signed and dated 1883, 16x12½ins. The Mathaf Gallery.*
5. *A. Delacroix, A well in Tangiers, signed, oil on canvas, 80x129cms. The Sammer Gallery.*





lated splendour. Carefully spaced objects are placed under strategically positioned spotlights designed to highlight their unique features.

There is no noise, no clutter, and almost no people. Even the gallery owners remain scarce, lurking behind smoked glass windows or in the inner depths, until summoned to the fore by well-groomed young ladies highly skilled in the art of "vetting" the intruder. The atmosphere is restrained, polite, bordering on suspicious and is in many ways indicative of the way those in the market operate. The competition is keen, nobody is going to take any chances and everyone is on his guard against the next man.

This is hardly surprising since the last few years have been rather lean for the market, people are on the defensive. Nevertheless, almost everybody will admit, if pressed, that 1984 was highly encouraging.

For Brian MacDermot of the Mathaf Gallery, 1984 was something of a milestone in the history of the gallery, with the organisation of a major exhibition of classical and contemporary Orientalist paintings in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia — the first of its kind to be held in the Kingdom. This took place in November in one of the private villas attached to the Intercontinental Hotel and it turned out to be an unqualified success.



"We took quite a gamble in arranging the exhibition there," says MacDermot, "but we received nothing but praise for it. It was very expensive to mount and there were immense difficulties, but it was well worth it in the end. All sorts of people came to see it, groups of high school children, nurses, even taxi drivers who had heard about us. The interest stirred was gratifying. We received a great deal of publicity and in turn, we learned a lot.

"Value-wise, we sold roughly half the works — the most expensive ones were the first to go," MacDermot continues. "Many buyers preferred to wait and see what was available in London, however; they still consider London as the centre for the art market and people in the Arab world still prefer to come here to buy."

Established some 10 years ago as the first gallery in London specialising purely in Orientalist art, Mathaf has established a formidable reputation for itself. But this did not come easy and over the years Mathaf has done much to heighten the public's knowledge and awareness about its art, not only through exhibitions and catalogues but also with the publication of a handsome book: *The Orientalists, Painter-Travellers, 1828-1908*, produced in co-operation with Lynee Thornton, a leading French expert on the subject.

At the same time, Mathaf prides itself on the amount of research that it puts into its paintings and exhibitions. "We try to be as correct as possible," explains MacDermot. "There are fakes circulating everywhere and we advise people to be very careful and only go to fully qualified, certified galleries where the dealers not only guarantee the works they sell but also hold themselves financially liable for their sales, offering immediate refunds should it be proven that they have made a mistake."

Though 1984 was a successful year for Mathaf, MacDermot describes the current market as "cautious". "There is less money around than in 1983, he explains, "and sometimes people have been paying too much at the auction rooms. More dealers are rushing in and buying works which may be difficult to move at the lower end of the market. The competition is enormous and it is pushing prices. Newcomers should [illegible]

Nevertheless, [illegible] times to be [illegible] investment in MacDermot's opinion. There are still some good bargains to be had if you buy carefully, he asserts. "The very good things are excellent value, it is the middle range that might be overpriced." And he still sees room for growth. "There is a revival of interest not just in Orientalism, but in Victorian art generally with museums like the Metropolitan in New York and the Paul Getty buying again. At the same time, the Arabs are developing more of a taste for acquiring art and highest on the list, of course, is Orientalist art."

Mathaf's plans for 1985 include more exhibitions at home and abroad as well as more works of research. These include two more books, one on Italian Orientalist Watercolours and another on one of the leading painters in the field, Ludwig Deutsch. This is all part of the consciousness-raising process which MacDermot feels can only increase the market's potential.

For Lebanese dealer, Makram Irani of Connoisseur Gallery, a newcomer to the London scene, the first few months of business have been so successful that he has already expanded his premises, situated in the heart of affluent Belgravia.

"Friends told me that I was either very sure of myself or I was a fool when I decided to open up here after 16 years in Beirut," he says, "but I know what I am doing. London is the centre for Islamic art: geographically, by reputation and because of its facilities. There are lots of private collections here and they go back a long way. These are coming onto the market. There are scholars and research facilities here for verification, so everything is at your fingertips. And as for the competition, I welcome it, it is very healthy. After 20 years in this business and with a good core of international clients who have followed me over the years, I am looking forward to 1985 with optimism and confidence."

Irani's speciality is paintings, prints and works on paper: maps, manuscripts and calligraphy. Although he brought a large stock with him from his Beirut gallery (now occupied by refugees) he has also been actively involved in buying new stock in London. "I cannot claim to have the largest collection of paintings," he explains, "because my stock is continuously changing, but I do keep up a good range at modest prices. As always, original [illegible] and [illegible] one main point of [illegible]

collection.

"Prices are going up all the time", says Irani. "Some items are realising their value, others have gone way over the top. Some dealers are telling their clients that it is difficult to obtain paintings and so they jack up the prices. This is bad. The market should develop along a steady curve. Playing with it does not make sense. We should not forget what happened with the Iranian market, this should not occur with the growing Middle East market."

The growing Middle East market is something all the dealers have their eyes on, perhaps a little too optimistically at this stage. The new Kuwaiti Islamic Museum certainly provided a fillip for the market and brought a few new Arab buyers in its wake but whether this indicates a new trend is hard to say at this point.

Among those taking an optimistic view are Khoder Abu Ismail and Sam Benady, who along with Donald Vaughan recently opened the Sammer Gallery for Orientalist art in London and Madrid.

Catering largely to Arab clients, Sammer offers a considerable range of paintings and prints. These include the best of the classical Orientalists and works from a new school of contemporary Spanish orientalist painters, which are proving popular.

"The Arabs are starting to take a real interest in Orientalist art," says Abu Ismail, "and the market can only get better. People are beginning to appreciate their own culture, there is a new consciousness of their heritage. All you need is one or two more collectors like Sheikh Al Sabah and his wife to get things going. There is also talk of more museums opening up."

With close to 20 years experience of working in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, Abu Ismail has established some high level contacts which have proven invaluable in launching the new venture. Tracking down clients has not been a problem and in the first five months alone (from August 1983), Sammer London was able to show a profit — much to the delight of all concerned.

"We do not know where we stand for 1984 yet, but we have to admit the summer was slower than expected," says Abu Ismail. Nevertheless we are still very pleased with the way things are going."

Professionals to a man, the Sam[illegible]

mer partners take every precaution to guarantee the quality and authenticity of their works, employing a scientific researcher, when necessary, to guarantee the true origins of the paintings they handle. A full refund would then be forthcoming should a customer find that a mistake had been made.

At the same time, Sammer subscribes to the idea that not nearly enough is known about this fascinating aspect of art history and slide lectures for school children are organised by the partners. One such was recently delivered in the auspicious setting of Eton college.

Art and design consultants by profession, the Sammer group began the gallery partly as a hobby — but with the firm conviction that there was also a good future involved. The first year of trading has done nothing to shake that conviction and they are looking to 1985 with sufficient confidence to organise a major exhibition in Abu Dhabi and possibly Bahrain.

According to Nasser Khalili of Khalili Gallery, it is only a matter of time before the Arab buyer becomes a real force in the market. "The wealth is there," he says, "the awareness is growing and the desire to search out one's heritage is increasing. These are the ingredients for a boom. If this trend does develop, we will see prices going five, even 10 times higher. This is good to a certain extent because we will finally know exactly where we stand. There is no reason, for example, why a 16th Century Bible should sell at £2 million while a 14th Century, handwritten Quran only sells for £50-£100,000.

"On the other hand, once these objects start to go back to the Middle East, there will be little chance of recovering them again. It will become more and more difficult to find quality objects. The ordinary will eventually achieve star quality as the better pieces are snapped up. There again, even the ordinary has character and a value which until now has been underrated.

"I believe that the market is poised for flight and that what we have seen so far is just the 'tail of the snake'."

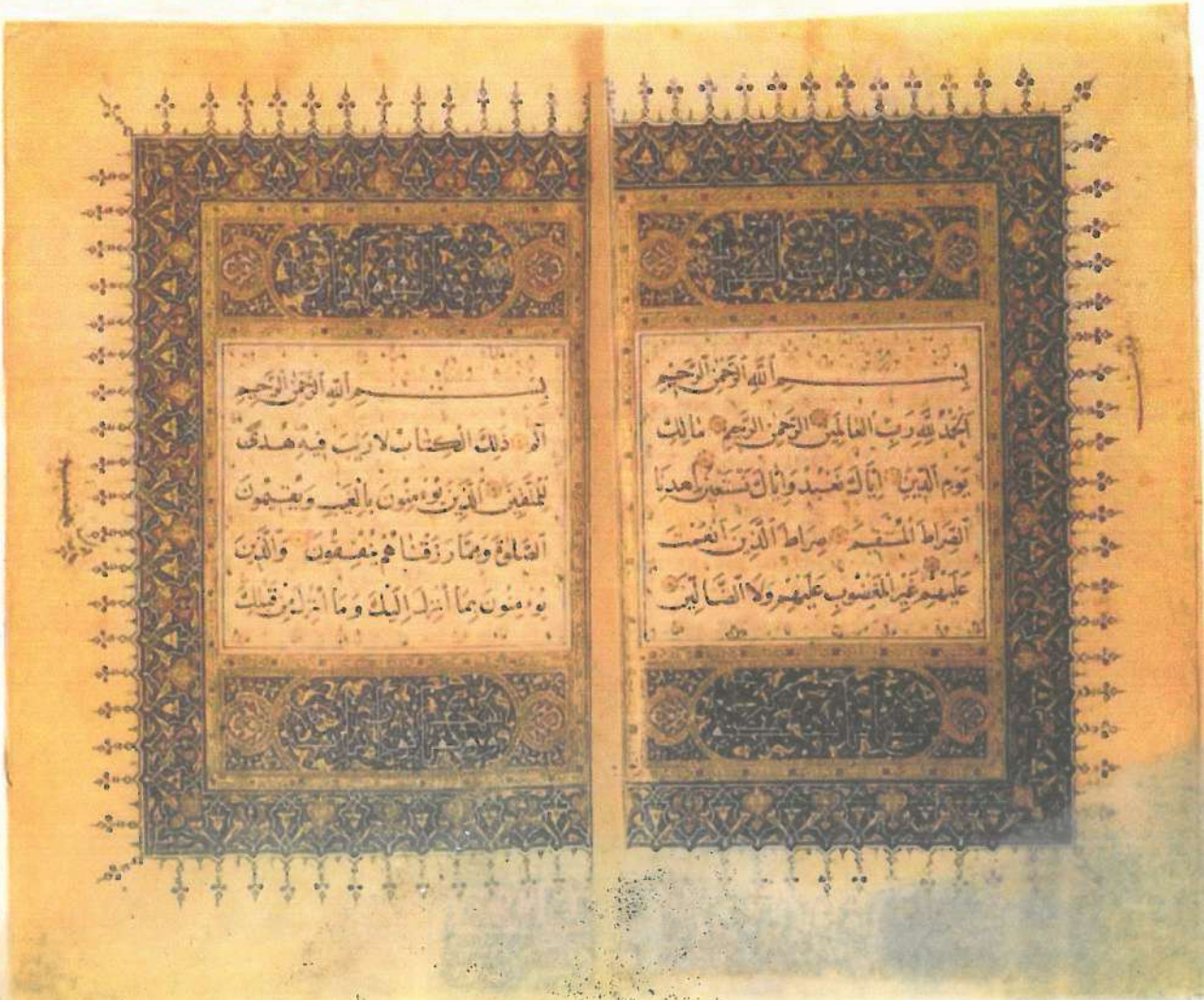
Most dealers would agree with Khalili that Islamic art is greatly underpriced but not all are as convinced of an imminent price increase.

"Yes, there was a great burst in the market until the Kuwait Museum was opened," says Oliver Hoare of Ahuan Gallery, "but the spin-off





6. *Mihrab of Glazed Ceramic Mosaic, Isfahan, Timurid period, second half of 15th century, 171x16cms, Ahuan Islamic Art.*
7. *Exceptional wall tile found at Tepe Yahya, Kashan 13th century AD, size 46x42cms. The tile decorated in relief with foliate sprays under the striking blue Thulth inscription from the Qur'an, an arabesque border above and a further Qur'anic inscription below. Hadji Baba Ancient Art.*
8. *An early Ottoman Qur'an with a very fine double page of illumination preceded by the illuminated khamsa. Third quarter of 15th century, 24 5x16.5cms, Khalili Gallery.*



which was anticipated in the Middle East did not happen. There is a new interest from the Arab world, with private collections being formed - even one or two such buyers can have an impact - but things are still sporadic."

Hoare himself has 'no complaints' about 1984. He has a constant stream of clients from Europe and, increasingly from the United States and he anticipates a steady upward trend in the coming years.

"Islamic art is very underrated artistically and otherwise," he explains, "in fact it has never really taken off, so it is still very cheap when compared to European or Chinese art. For those who have followed it over the years, you will find steady growth. It is till a good market to buy into but it will begin to change.

"This general preoccupation with the Arabs will have an effect. The market will change. It is not going to be seeing very well educated buyers at that time but rather people who are anxious to buy. And London is the centre, things arrive here from the United States and Europe and although they are sometimes difficult to find, you can get what you want eventually."

For Oliver Hoare, 1985 presents a particular challenge. He has been charged with the task of putting together a major Islamic exhibition to commemorate the opening of the Islamic Art Gallery at the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies in Saudi Arabia. The exhibition, under the theme, The Unity of Islamic Art, will consist of some 250 pieces taken from important private collections in the West. It will take place at the Centre in Riyadh during February and March before being moved to Jeddah for a further two months. This is the first exhibition of its kind in the Kingdom and should have an enormous impact on potential collectors there.

Hoare's views are largely supported by Irene Momtaz of Momtaz Gallery who defines 1984 as having been, "good, steady, stable, constant". Her business, she says, has enjoyed a "certain pattern in an irregular trend".

"People are buying with more assurance", she continues. "They are more aware and they know what they are buying. Before, I had to train or educate my clients, now we can enjoy a dialogue. There are buyers coming in from the Middle East but the Europeans and Americans are taking a much greater interest in Islamic art. People realise that the market has not yet reached its peak, that there is still time to buy, although the prices are shooting up fast."

In a highly competitive field, Momtaz feels that trust and respect between dealer and client are essential ingredients for success. "Collectors do their homework these days," she says, "and they know when dealers are trying to put something over on them. We all have to make a living, but some of the profit margins are going to spoil the market for the future. I have seen things 200 per cent over-valued in the last few years. While I might pay a lot for certain pieces which I know are special, I feel strongly about the commercialism. This pushiness and greed could do a lot of harm".

Bringing her own successful year to a close, in December, Momtaz staged a small, private exhibition of works in her collection.

Another dealer who is concerned about the effect of today's opportunism on tomorrow's market is Mukhtarzade Mansour of Mansour Gallery. "There is a lot of rubbish on the market at high prices and we will not touch it," he asserts. "We only handle the best quality pieces for our clients.

"The market is undervalued for the best pieces and overvalued for the rest," he continues. "Now the auctioneers are trying to act as dealers, they are overrating pieces, putting undated items up for sale and overinflating their importance, making money out of everything possible. Islamic art should have a good future but if things continue like this, it will spoil the market. In 1975-76 Iranian pieces came into fashion and prices went skyhigh before they dropped. The same thing could happen again. Many Arab clients do not know what they are buying and those advising them are not always qualified to do so."

"I cannot agree that the auctioneers are mishandling their sales," says Philippa Martin from Hadji Baba gallery. "Auctions are auctions and it is up to the dealers to handle them properly. The auction houses are always trying to rise to the occasion in terms of giving information, getting pieces and setting prices.

"Good pieces are difficult to find," she continues, "but this is a constantly changing market and there are some very collectible items. The number of quality items are few and there are a lot of collectors, so the real value of the pieces is beginning to be understood. The less valuable may be somewhat overpriced but things are becoming rarer and the bottom of the market is reflecting this. Nevertheless there are still plenty of lovely things around."

"There is a revival of interest in the Islamic from the Middle East in the last two or three years and this is gratifying, it gives fresh input", Martin concludes. "The trend is picking up and the value of the market is beginning to be understood. This is pleasing because these buyers of all people should understand and appreciate this art".

For Hadji Baba, 1984 has been a steady year, encouraging enough for a gallery to go ahead with major rebuilding work which will extend the premises by a further 50 per cent. The new wing will open in





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9. *An old Tabriz carpet, beige background. Size 400x305cms (12.2sq. mtrs.) with animal and floral design. Circa: 1930. Aaron Gallery.*
10. *Embroidered cushion, Belgravia Gallery Ltd.*
11. *Embroidered cushion, Belgravia Gallery Ltd.*

January.

"I think there is as much good stuff around as ever," says Michael Spink of Spink and Son. "I just think people forget how much rubbish they used to see a few years ago. And prices are rising fast but people are still cautious about selling. They are waiting or perhaps vaccillating, trying to see how the market is going.

"For us, it has been a steady, healthy year, the result of endeavour. We see no reason for things to change in 1985. We have plenty of good things in stock."

As far as Spink is concerned, there is little evidence of false price inflation. "That would be very short sighted," he says, "You cannot usefully manipulate the market. Nevertheless, things are a bit confused. The auction houses have disrupted the natural hierarchy. Instead of selling to the dealers, they are now selling directly to collectors, which is unsettling the market a little."

Anthony Thompson of the Islamic Department at Christie's Fine Art Auctioneers does not see it that way. "The trade sees our sales as a threat," he explains, "but basi-



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12.A Fars Silver Inlaid Brass Bowl (Tas), 14th century, 6⅞ins; 17.5cms. diam. Sotheby's.

13.Large, princely Mamluk Qur'an dated 729 HQ/1329AD, dedicated in Waqf for the Mosque of Qusun, who was perhaps the greatest Amir of that period. 375 ff. muhaqqaq script of very good quality, 7 illuminations. Kamiliya Books.

14.The Exhibition Gallery, Dale Egee Art Consultancy.



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cally we are doing the dealers a favour. It is all laid on for them. We are in a position to bring in pieces from all over the world, which they are not, and to promote them and spread information about them. All they have to do is come along from 10 minutes away and pick and choose.

It also makes sense for us to bring private people into the sale room to get them interested in buying. This can only help the trade in the end. Our sales have increased public awareness and confidence in Islamic Art which the trade has not done. The dealers have simply been trying to guard their patch. In fact they are trying to keep the amateurs out at any price but in the long run this can only harm the market. The more people interested, the more chance for trade. Some private buyers will not go anywhere near the dealers at present."

Speaking at the end of a very successful Winter Islamic sale, Thompson has every reason to feel confident. "There is renewed optimism," he explains. "People are bidding with increased strength. Some items went for two to four times the estimated price.

"This is the first upturn since the fall of the Shah and the beginning of recession, both of which affected the market. Since then it has had a chance to rationalise. It has spread its roots into Europe and America and gradually gathered strength. Now things are also heading towards the Middle East, with the Gulf buyer emerging and there is no reason why one should expect this to decline, although we all recognise that a market is dependent on the political and socio-economic balance of any region. Prices are going up as a result, and sometimes spectacularly, but overall we find a cautious increase here.

"There does seem to be quite a bit of rubbish around, those selling are either new to the game or they bought four or five years ago and are forced to sell at around the same price as they paid. People buying know what they want, however, and they are going for the specific, which is largely good quality objects in good condition. We do not believe in over-promoting unimportant objects - which sometimes happens elsewhere -- it does not pay in the end."

Like everyone else in the market, the people at Christie's believe that the Islamic art market is grossly undervalued. "It is still an incredibly limited field of knowledge for over 800 years of art", says Thompson. "There needs to be much more information, scholarship and exposure before people can begin to understand its value. This is part of what we are trying to do."

Things are seen from a similar viewpoint at Sotheby's, Christie's traditional rival in the auctioneering field. Here, the much criticised new sales catalogues are now arranged to show off each and every object to full advantage (whether it deserves it or not, the critics say).

"It has taken me two years to convince our directors to put all the Islamic works of art in the same sale," says Jack Franses, head of Sotheby's Islamic section. "That means all works of art, ceramics, carpets, metal work and so on. This allows for cross-fertilization across the board. It encourages spontaneous buying - albeit to advantage or regret. Before, when all antiquities from the different areas were sold together, everything was so higgeldy-piggeldy that things got missed. Now, those small objects which would normally skip through unnoticed can be easily snapped up. The collectors are thanking us for this."

Obviously Franses can feel confident: Sotheby's October Islamic sale was the most successful on record, grossing £1.6 million. But there is



plenty of room for improvement, he asserts. "Until now there have been few real collectors of Islamic art. It is so underrated and there is so much good stuff lying around which will only come 'out of the woodwork' once people know what they are sitting on. You see, unless something becomes expensive, it is not considered as a real investment and nobody takes much notice of it. Islamic art is terribly low in comparison to other art. Thus a 1500-1510 Iznik plate may fetch £7,000 but its European or Chinese counterpart, even if chipped, would bring in £160,000.

"The market will go up but it will take time. The position will eventually be forced if the Arab buyer begins to emerge. But as things stand at present there is very little literature or research available on Islamic art and many pieces are largely unidentified. We believe in giving our pieces the widest possible publicity to make people more aware of what they might be holding on to. The more exposure the market gets, the more people become aware of it and the more things start to move. Our plans for 1985 are to work harder to get more exposure for the pieces we handle."

The rising cost of the Islamic Art is something which has had an effect on Art Consultant, Dale Egee who specialises in finding works of art for the Arab client. "People I deal with like Orientalist art," she says, "but the prices have gone up through the roof - doubling every year for the past few years. A lot of people can no longer afford to pay these prices. I am finding that early etchings and lithographs from around the 1800s, often with ethnographic interest, are proving quite popular instead. I also handle a number of contemporary Arab graphicists, depending on the type of client I am dealing with.

"Islamic antiquities are also terribly popular, but again, it gets more and more difficult to get things that make sense, price-wise. The auctions have been 'discovered' and the prices are going up all the time. Some are totally inflated. There again, you can still find attractive pieces but some of these may have been heavily restored and I often advise my clients to steer clear of these. You can still buy good pages of calligraphy which are definitely worth looking at.

"On the other hand, we find that anything by David Roberts is selling well. It is considered safe and well known. Of course, a good, hand coloured original set is priceless, but recent reprints sell at a decent price and are popular.

"Depending on my client, I will still buy a top of the range piece, either a painting by Gerome or a quality piece of Islamic art. They are still worth their price. It is the lower range pieces which have shot up in price and which I would keep away from."

As expensive as things seem in London, they are not as bad as at source, indicates Jacques Mantoura, who opened Al-Mashreq Gallery just one year ago. "The prices I paid for my best pieces when I was collecting in the Middle East are higher than my selling prices now," Mantoura says, and he has been forced to remove some of them from the gallery as a result.

Though the gallery was founded on Mantoura's private collection it has quickly evolved to include a much wider and quite different range of goods. High on the list is the hard-to-come-by 19th century decorative furniture: Egyptian and Damascene mirrors, in-laid chests and carved tables which often must be heavily restored in Mantoura's workshop. Also popular is the wide range of water colours and prints he carries on the Middle East which include both work by leading 19th century Orientalists and up-to-the minute portraits by qualified British artists catering largely to Gulf customers.

"The first year has been successful beyond all expectations," declares Mantoura. "It has been invaluable for me in trying to define my market. This falls into three distinct categories: Arabs living in London, visiting Gulf Arabs, and the US buyers who represent as much as 30 per cent of my clients. These are the most selective group, they have an excellent knowledge of the market and they meet you as one professional to another.

"Already I have had people come back to me time and again and I am delighted, because frankly, I did not know what to expect. Now we will just wait and see what happens next, everything is a pleasant surprise".

Like for Mantoura, 1984 has been pleasantly surprising for Leila Awad who opened the Belgravia Gallery just under two years ago.

An interior decorator by profession, Awad decided that she would prefer to supply the trade with the objects she loves and opened her gallery partly with this market in mind.

The pieces include many attractive examples of traditional Chinese and Japanese art and more especially, a considerable range of Islamic works, including jewellery, tapestries, ceramic tiles and, most popular of all, Turkish kilim cushions of all shapes and sizes. "These, along with our footstools, are our real bread and butter," says Awad. "We have a very high turnover."

The kilims are bought in London and converted into cushions in a workshop on the premises. Each is given a unique touch by the addition of braid, beads or other trinkets.

Because of its location in the centre of Belgravia, the gallery caters to a cosmopolitan clientele. However the majority of customers are Arab who hear of Awad through her own network of friends. "Our sales are very good," she says. "We have high overheads but we are doing well".

Another venture which has just got off to an encouraging start is Kamiliya Books which opened for business in the latter part of 1984. Among its earliest successes has been the sale, on behalf of a client, of a priceless Mameluk Quran, in prime condition and lovingly rebound as close to the original as

possible. The sale of this important princely Quran, attributed to the great Emir Qusun at the Mosque of Qusun in Cairo and authenticated as one of the best of its type by the Chester Beatty Library and other scholars, has set Kamiliya firmly on the road to future successes. Understandably, director Farid Kioumgi is quite optimistic.

As well as unearthing more such important works, Kamiliya will be specialising in a range of antiquarian books, most especially Islamic reference books and First Editions about the Middle East in English or French, which are increasingly hard to come by. Kamiliya hopes to provide a unique service for the growing number of collectors anxious to put together a complete reference library on various parts of the Arab world.

"Reference books are underestimated as a source of knowledge on the area," explains Kioumgi, "but people are beginning to understand their value. There is a growing number of Arab buyers and institutes looking for all sorts of things in this category."

Unlike dealers in other areas of Islamic art, Kioumgi expects to find more material at source than in the UK. "It is quite a closed circuit over here," he explains, "and the prices are very high. The books sold at auction are overpriced and often very incomplete. I do not really understand how they manage to get the prices they get for some of these works. The auction is not a good barometer for prices either because the dealers automaticaly increase their prices in tandem with the sale room".

In addition to rare books, Kamiliya is doing a lot of research into old photography and postcards from the Middle East, which have wideranging interest from the social and ethnographical point of view. It is another unique field of study which has been little explored commercially. As a spin off from this and other research into art and architecture from the area, Kamiliya might also branch out into limited edition, re-editions of important art reference books. This will depend on future developments but as things stand now, Kamiliya is looking ahead with some confidence.

So is the Aaron gallery - according to director Manouchehr Aaron: "The market is improving," he says. "1984 was good but 1985 should be much better. There is renewed interest and more knowledge about the field. My criticism is that those interested in Islamic art should be looking at the whole field and not just at 'Arab' goods. Islam was a widespread culture, surfacing in different places at different times, each period being outstanding in its own right. This is what collectors should keep in mind."

A carpet dealer as well as an antiques dealer, Aaron has gone through some lean times in recent years. All the carpet trade has suffered from recession and the fall of the Iranian market, but at last things seem to be picking up, says Aaron.

In the light of two highly successful carpet sales at Christie's earlier this year, Anthony Thompson tends to agree. "There is new interest developing in everything from the very rare to the purely decorative," he says. "People are beginning to look at carpets in a new light, whether as an investment or because of the increasing price of ordinary machine-made carpets or even because they want to brighten up their modern, high-tech, monochromatic rooms. More and more interior decorators, for example, are buying carpets to add a touch of character to their clients' properties. The carpet trade has been in recession but it is finally beginning to move again. Nevertheless, there is still a lot of ignorance about rugs and carpets and much more information needs to be given to the public before they will go ahead and buy with confidence".

And as Aaron points out, it is an area where one ought to have the confidence to go ahead and buy. "When you compare the cost of a fine, old carpet, representing two to three years of hard work, with the cost of, say, a European painting, you must admit the price of the carpet is still very reasonable. In fact it is downright cheap by comparison".

If there is one thing that all the dealers seem to be able to agree upon, it is that the price of Islamic art, no matter how much it seems to have shot up in recent years, is still grossly underrated. By all steps of logic and according to all the experts, the market can only begin to pick up soon and with it, the value of the pieces. But whether 1985 will prove a watershed year, it is far too early to tell and even those 'in the know' are cautious about predictions.

One event which is bound to give the market a boost in 1985 is the up-and-coming exhibition "Treasures of Islam" to be held in the Rath Museum in Geneva from 25 June to 27 October.

This is the first exhibition of its kind to be held in Switzerland and it will feature some of the most outstanding pieces from leading private and public Islamic collections, including those of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, Baron von Thyssen Bornemisza, and Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah.

Exhibits will include a number of outstanding books such as the remarkable historical manuscript, the *Jam'al al-tawarikh* of Rashid al-Din, which achieved a world record price in Sotheby's in 1980. Similarly, there will be a chance to see the Shah Tahmasp's Shahnameh (The Book of Kings) or Houghton Shahnameh, as it is known. Another outstanding piece is the complete Quran of 202 folios, dated 959/1552 and again attributed to Shah Tahmasp.

All the pieces chosen for exhibit have been selected to highlight every aspect of Islamic art in all its many facets: ceramics, metal work, carpets, textiles, jewellery, architecture, and even numismatics. The pieces chosen in the different categories rank among some of the best examples in the world.

All the most important periods will be covered from the birth of Islam in the 7th Century up to and including the 19th Century. For each period, great care has been taken to select not only the finest but also the most representative pieces. Thus, in the carpet section, the Cairene Mamluk carpet dating from the early 16th Century is an excellent example of the kaleidoscopic geometric design of that period. Among the rare objects coming from the Al Sabah collection is an architectural piece, a blind niche from Greater Syria in the first half of the 8th Century while the Persian lacquer casket thought to have been commissioned by Mirza Muham Khan Qajar, is one of the most spectacular in existence.

Islamic art dealers in London are quick to acknowledge how much the 1976 World of Islam Festival helped put Islamic art on the investors' map in the United Kingdom and beyond, giving rise to a much healthier market. It is highly likely that the Geneva exhibition will create a similar effect and in doing so provide greater impetus to the market as a whole. □

PROFILE



Zubeida Agha

Agha Abdul Hamid

Mystics and philosophers tell us that art is a powerful instrument for the knowledge of the noumenal world—the world hidden from us by the curtain of maya or illusion and ignorance. This knowledge is emotional and intuitive. As Ouspensky has pointed out "art serves beauty, i.e. a particular kind of emotional knowledge.... The search for beauty is the aim of art, just as the search for god and truth is the aim of religion." It is for this reason that Rumi has said that poetry is a part of prophethood.

The poet, the painter and the musician are concerned with the essence of things, not with their appearance, and with the basic human emotions and ideas.

Zubeida Agha has said from the beginning that she wants to paint



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the essence of things and ideas rather than the reproduction of their apparent form. This led her to a very difficult path on which she had to meet opposition and even ridicule. She also had to work hard and be endlessly patient. In the end she succeeded to such an extent that painting in Pakistan has been virtually transformed. What aroused the hostility in artists of the forties has now become a part of their own

creed.

Her revolt against the existing tradition was due to its mechanicalness and lack of vitality. The tradition of painting in this sub-continent which produced the masterpieces of Ajanta and Ellora lost its real content and elan over the years and broke down with the disintegration of Hindu society and civilization during the time of troubles between the ninth and thirteenth centuries. After consolidation of the Moghal rule a new tradition was gradually built up under the influence of Persian painting, which itself had been influenced by Chinese painting. That it was not only an expression of the Muslim sensibility was proven by the fact that some of the most notable and famous painters were Hindu and also by the subjects chosen which were entirely indigenous. This tradition was carried on, somewhat diluted, by the Rajput and Kangra schools of painting in the North until almost the beginning of the twentieth century.

In reality the tradition had been awakened by the decline of the Moghal rule and broke down completely with the coming of the British when the Moghal Empire came to an end.

An attempt was made to revive painting in the nineteenth century. Like all revivals, however, it was not a success. The new school of painting was a very anaemic and sickly grandchild of the Moghal School of painting. It was sentimental, romantic and escapist. It lacked all vitality.

Under the impact of the British rule the social order in the subcontinent was changing gradually. The upheaval brought about by the first World War and the consequent shake-up of the social order compelled people to question accepted values and inherited traditions. The painters, like poets and writers, were deeply influenced by the social change. The result in the case of painting was a revolt against the existing concept of painting and an almost complete break with tradition.

There were at least two notable exceptions. Abdur Rehman Chughtai in the Punjab and Jemini Roy in Bengal. They were both gifted artists, but their work was a kind of *tour de force*. They left behind no living tradition.

The leader of the revolt against tradition in India was Amrita Sher-Gil who had studied painting in

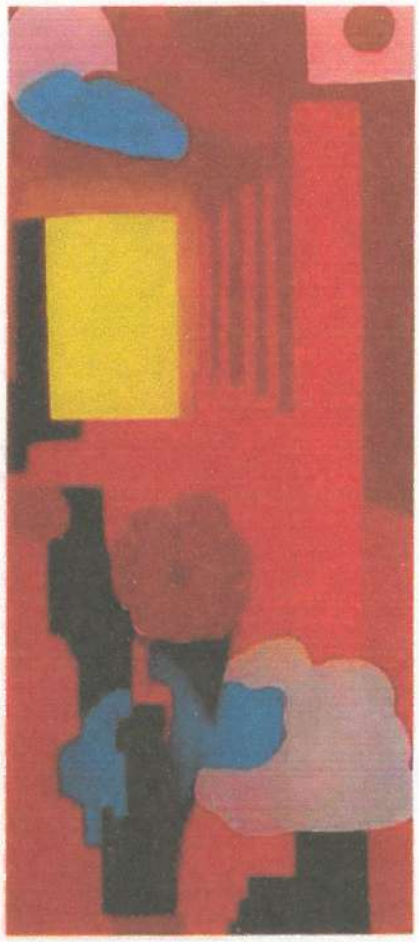
Paris and produced work of great merit and originality.

In Pakistan the leader of this revolt was Zubeida Agha though she consciously never planned to lead a revolt. In her case it was not a protest merely for the sake of being different, but an effort to find a language of her own to express herself in a way not possible with the style then prevalent. The living vibrant paintings she produced were significant enough to encourage other painters to follow in the same course. She, more than any other painter of Pakistan, realised at the outset of her career that painting was not merely a question of creating romantic and pleasing forms, but altogether a very serious business—as serious as life itself.

Unlike painters who work on the human destiny—of birth and death, of happiness and sorrow, of the overwhelming tragedy of human life and endeavour, of human efforts to organize a better life and above all of the insoluble mystery of life itself. The artist has to face these questions again and again: What *do* men live by? What *should* men live by? Zubeida believes that an artist has to be a human being of great awareness and sympathy and a responsible member of society.

Born in 1922 in Faisalabad, Pakistan, she was educated in Lahore where she graduated from Kinnaird College of the Punjab University. Her subjects were philosophy and political science. During the course of her studies it never occurred to her that she should take up painting. In fact she did not like the drawing





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inspiratio[illegible] the moment alone. Zubeida[illegible]lieves in a very deliber[illegible] and emotional d[illegible] only t[illegible] ously [illegible] serio[illegible] life. [illegible]rt's, but art f[illegible] inspiration [illegible] under the discipline of an [illegible] which is concerned with the fundamental problems of

1. *Year 2000.*
2. *Landscape.*
3. *Sky.*
4. *Lotus.*
Burst of flower in front of a window.

classes she had to attend in school. But after her graduation in 1944 she had time on her hands and wanted to take up something interesting. She joined the studio of B.C. Sanyal and worked there for nearly two years. Within a few weeks of her working in the studio she knew her vocation was to be a painter and nothing else.

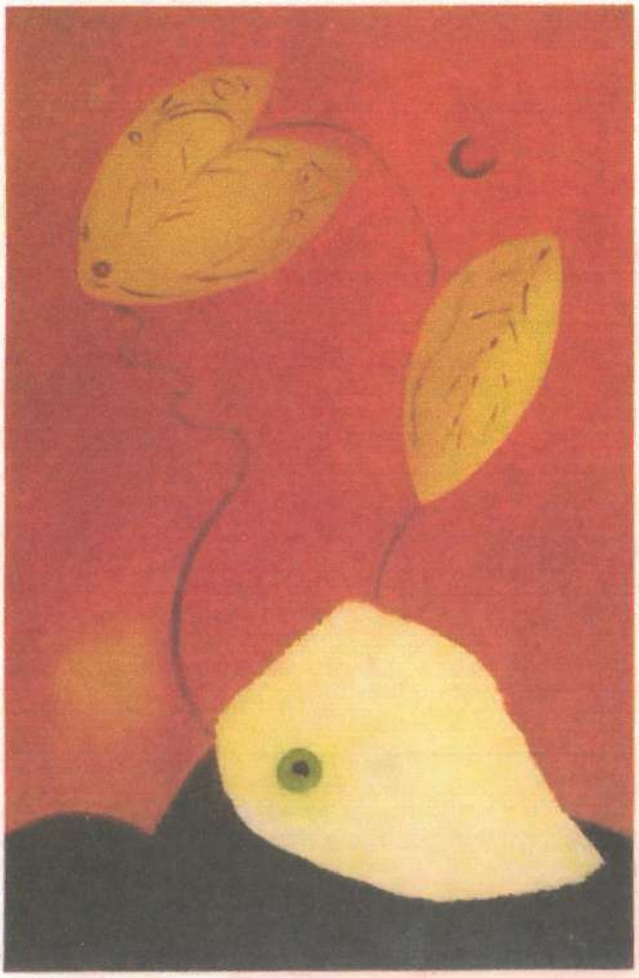
In 1946 she started lessons from Mario Perlingieri, an Italian prisoner of war and a one-time pupil of Picasso. It was Perlingieri who introduced her to European painting and the tremendous experimentation that had taken place there from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards.

Zubeida Agha's preoccupation with ideas is obvious in her paintings. Even her titles such as 'Future', 'Youth', and 'Symphony of Life' are significant. For example, 'The Cotton Pickers', one of the earliest of her paintings, sets out boldly to portray her aims and method. The colours are vivid and bright, yet harmonised successfully. The rigid intellectual discipline has resulted in a simplification of drawing and a rejection of unnecessary detail. There is deliberate and controlled attempt to simplify the structure of the painting and thus achieve a beautifully rhythmic quality.

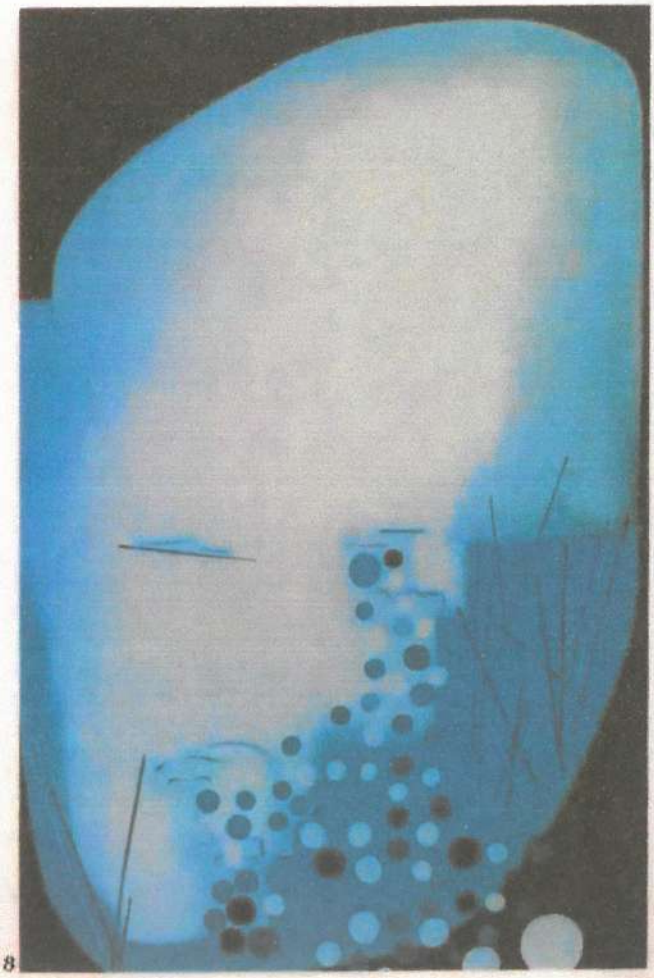
In the earlier days of her career, Zubeida Agha did a great deal of reading in philosophy and mysticism. She sought for a better understanding of the meaning and purpose of life. Over the years she realized that she could better achieve this by painting.

In 1950 she joined St. Martin's School and in 1951 had her first solo exhibition at Trafford Gallery, London. It was a very successful show. The '*Scotsman*' reviewing her work described her as a "painter who catches some of the mystery of the East while appreciating the lighter side of Western life."

Melville Hardiment, in the '*Painter and Artist*' noted the third dimensional effect in some of her paintings and said: "If Zubeida Agha can maintain this with her natural simplicity of vision, whilst arriving at the technical means most suitable to her temperament and racial tradition, the time will arrive when these three elements will be in co-partnership. On that day I think Pakistan will be able to say 'here in Zubeida Agha we have the creative artist around whom we can rebuild the culture of our country'."



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6. Shrines.
7. Lotus.
8. Ice-berg.
9. The crown, detail.
10. Self portrait.

Her first solo exhibition took place in 1949 under the auspices of the Karachi Fine Art Society. This nearly resulted in a minor riot. She was praised by some and harshly criticised by others. The controversy in the press went on for weeks. She was totally indifferent to criticism and remained as serene as ever.

In Paris one of her teachers appreciated the Oriental quality of her work and told her to take care that Western influence did not submerge it. She returned to Pakistan in 1953 and resumed her work in Karachi and had several solo exhibitions of her paintings. In 1961 she



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was appointed Director of Contemporary Art Galleries Rawalpindi and worked there for sixteen years. During this period her main achievement was the introduction of the work of young Pakistani painters as well as exhibitions of work of the well-known painters of the country. In 1965 she was awarded President's Medal for Pride of Performance.

In her earlier paintings, there is a greater preoccupation with structural design, rhythm and abstract ideas. Colour, as such, plays a secondary role. Deep browns, sombre reds and blues p[illegible] However, even in thi[illegible] few paintings lik[illegible] Horses' and 'The[illegible] splashes of beautiful yellows, reds and light blues. It is in her later work that colour begins to play a more dominating role.

Although Zubeida Agha is generally called an abstractionist she has painted comparatively few purely abstract paintings. If we take the majority of her earlier and middle period paintings into consideration the dynamic quality apparent has more elements of Futurism than anything else. A painting which is merely a representation of objects and space (be it a portrait, a still life or a landscape) can be aesthetically satisfying and lyrical in quality. However, it cannot have dynamic qualities unless it embodies a deeply felt intellectual idea or a properly crystalized emotional experience. Zubeida Agha's paintings embody both these and therefore have a dynamic quality. In her later paintings along with a greater flexibilty and subtlety of expression the colours are purer and used more boldly. Today Zubeida Agha is the best colourist in Pakistan.

There has been a maturity of technique in the later paintings. The line is more flowing and she creates a rhythmic, almost a symphonic, effect by bringing in a number of shapes and colours together. What to the untrained eye might appear as a haphazard arrangement of forms, reveals itself on closer scrutiny to be a carefully controlled and balanced pattern. To illustrate what has been said above it would be useful to consider a few paintings in some detail.

'Urban Landscape' and 'Landscape with Horses' are two paintings which really deal with allied subjects. In the second painting we see a horse galloping headlong in a completely deserted street and another one hesitating to start. The sky is red as if with the glare of a huge fire and in a doorway is seen a completely immobile and self-absorbed figure, oblivious to the thunder of galloping horses in the street. The colours are black, yellow and red and are placed in large patches very confidently. The lines are stark rather than flowing. The vision is grim and mysterious, and above all, suggestive of terror and impending gloom. The contrast between movement and utter stillness is startling.

'Urban Landscape' is a variation of the same theme, simplified in the extreme. The powerfully lit opening [illegible] the centre of the painting may lead to populous street full of happy people or may lead to absolutely nothing. Not often has a feeling for the terror of the unknown been conveyed so powerfully.

'Self Portrait' belongs to the middle period and is one of the best paintings of the artist. We see the face drawn with just the right amount of distortion to emphasize the dominant features, but without any sentimentality. With a few simple brush strokes the artist has created an expression of wonder, modesty and deep desire for knowledge and understanding. A few more strokes evolve an amorphous atmosphere of colour and movement in the background. The most enchanting feature of the portrait is the painting of the eyes which seem to be at the same time looking outwards and yet turned inwards in contemplation.

To the latest period belong paintings like 'The Red Vase!', 'New York', 'Burst of Flowers in Front of a Window', 'Black Horses', 'The Sky', 'Landscape', and 'The Black Vase with a Blue Background'. In all of them colour plays a dominant role. 'The Red Vase' has a very powerful yet a very simple design which is extremely arresting. 'New York' looks three-dimensional—a quality which has been noticed in some of her other paintings and is apparent to some extent in 'Landscape'. Sheer joy in colour and form is noticeable in 'Burst of Flowers', 'Black Horses' and 'Yellow Flowers'. The other set of paintings like 'The Black Vase with Blue Background', 'Landscape' and 'Sky' all have an element of mystery. The longer you look at these paintings the more mysterious they appear to become. To what part of the universe do the sky and landscape belong? What really are the objects shown? What does the gloom surrounding the vase hide?

In spite of the diversity of subjects of the paintings the main impression one gets is one of serenity. At the same time a large number of her paintings do show a mysteriousness which creates wonder.

The quest for understanding the nature of reality and the problems of life which started in 1944 gradually and imperceptably changed over the years, into a joyful acceptance of life itself—its infinite variety, its beauty, its multitudinous colours and forms, the change of seasons, the drama of the rising and the setting sun and the enchanting softness of moonlight. All these and many more things like them are the *ayat* (signs) of Allah and their joyous acceptance, and living in harmony with His creation, is perhaps the very meaning and purpose of life. □

The Arts in Islamic Lands: Seminar in April

The 2nd in the series of International Seminars on "The Arts in Islamic Lands", being organised by the Islamic Arts Foundation, will be inaugurated by H.E. Dr. Mohammad Abdu Yamani, former Information Minister of Saudi Arabia, at Farnham Castle in U.K. on 19 April 1985. Five sessions are planned, spread over three days (19-21 April), which will be presided over by H.E. Dr. Ezzeddin Ibrahim Cultural Adviser to H.H. the President of United Arab Emirates.

One of the sessions of the Seminar will be devoted specifically to a review of the Islamic art resources in world museums and major private collections with particular reference to the present state of cataloguing of Islamic art objects. A number of museum directors and curators of Islamic art in the Arab and Islamic world as well in other Eastern and Western countries are being specially invited to participate.

Other sessions of the Seminar will deal with various aspects of the arts in Islamic lands and a detailed agenda is being worked out in consultation with art scholars and experts as well as practising artists and heads of art organisations and institutions.

It will be recalled that the 1st International Seminar on the subject was held three years ago (1982) and had made wide-ranging recommendations, one of which was to publish a quarterly journal *Arts & The Islamic World*. The journal started publication in January 1983 and has steadily built a broad-based readership in many countries of the world, pursuing and highlighting in its contents the major recommendations of the 1982 Seminar, which are reproduced below, along with the list of papers presented at the above Seminar.

Seminar Recommendations

Art as an Essential Expression of Islamic Civilization

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

Islamic Art as an Integral Part of World Cultural Heritage

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

Preparation of a Repertory of Islamic Arts

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

Setting up Museums of Islamic Art and Heritage

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

Proposal for an Islamic Cultural Heritage Year

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

Festivals of Living Arts and Crafts of the Islamic World

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

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

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

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

Return or Restitution of Islamic Cultural Property
The Seminar noted that important and valuable elements of Islamic heritage are presently held in non-Muslim countries, mostly as a result of colonialism and illicit traffic in cultural property which continues even to this day. It reminded the concerned national authorities as well as the international and regional organisations, of the need to make efforts for the repatriation or exchange of elements of the dispersed heritage of the Islamic world. The Seminar urged the Islamic member-states of UNESCO to encourage the Inte-governmental Committee for the Return or Restitution of Cultural Property to the Countries of Origin, and to draw the Committee's attention, whenever necessary, to difficult cases concerning the return or verification of cultural property. It requested the Islamic States who will participate in the World Conference on Cultural Policies, to be organised by UNESCO in Mexico City, 26th July — 5th August 1985, to draw the attention of the World Conference to the important problem of the return or restitution of Islamic Cultural Property to the countries of origin. In this context the Seminar focussed attention of the Islamic countries on the urgent necessity of improving or creating not only museums, archives and other cultural centres as infrastructure, but also the training of staff required for the safeguarding, restoring, presentation and display of important collections.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

List of Seminar Papers

Nature and Philosophy of Islamic Art

ISLAM: DOCTRINE, HISTORY AND THE ARTS
Aisha Gouverneur
Islamic Text Society, Cambridge

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

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

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

WHAT IS ISLAMIC ART
Robin Ade
Rhijnvis Feithstr, Amsterdam

SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY OF ARAB ART
Dr. Afif Bahnassi
Art Historian, Damascus

THE CAUSE AND EFFECT OF BANNING HUMAN FORM IN ART
Nazir Ahmad
Chairman, Interlink Longraph, London

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

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

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

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

Influences and Trends

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

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

BIO-CLIMATIC PATTERNS OF ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE
Youssef Belkacem
Architect, Algeria

DESIGN AND SYMBOL IN ISLAMIC CARPETS
Dr. Hussain Haddawy

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

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

ASPECTS OF ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY
Ahmad Mustafa
Artist, London

Conservation and Restitution

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

THREAT TO ISLAMIC CITIES: THE CASE OF MADINA
Dr. Stefano Bianca
Architect, Geneva

ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE IN JERUSALEM
Dr. Yousuf S. Natsheh
Director, Department of Archaeology, Jerusalem

PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL ARTS AND CRAFTS IN MOROCCO
Dr. Jean Louis Michon
Art Historian, Morocco

TRIBUTE TO TITUS BURCKHARDT
Hasan (Gai) Eaton
Editorial Advisor, "Islamic Quarterly", London

THE MUSLIM URBAN HERITAGE: A CASE FOR CONSERVATION
Ayyub Malik
Architect, London

TENT TOWNS
Dr. M.A.K. Rasch
Architect, West Germany

THE WORK OF THE HAJJ RESEARCH CENTRE
Sami Angawi
Director, Hajj Research Centre, Jeddah

UNCOVERING ARABIA'S PAST: ARCHAEOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT OF MUSEUMS
Michael Rice
Architect, London

PLAN FOR AN ISLAMIC HERITAGE YEAR
Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu
Director General, Institute of Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul

THE RETURN AND SAFEGUARDING OF ISLAMIC TREASURES
Alistair Duncan
Director, World of Islam Festival Trust, London

THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF ISLAM
Michael Spink
Chairman, Spink & Son, London

UNESCO'S EFFORTS FOR RESTITUTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY
Y.R. Isar
Department of Cultural Heritage, UNESCO, Paris

The Contemporary Scene

ART TODAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST
Maureen Ali
Art Critic, London

PROBLEMS OF THE CREATIVE ARTIST IN PAKISTAN
Agha Abdul Hamid
Art Critic, Karachi

ISLAMIC MOTIFS IN MODERN EGYPTIAN ART
Dr. Morsi Saad Eldin
Chief Editor, "Cairo Today", Cairo

CALLIGRAPHY IN ARAB ART TODAY
Buland Al-Haidari
Editor, *Funoon Arabia*, London

ISLAMIC HERITAGE IN SOUTH ASIA
Dr. Heather Marshall
Art Critic, London

ISLAMIC ARTS IN SRI LANKA
M. Haniffa Mohamed
Minister for Muslim Affairs, Sri Lanka

ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE IN BANGLADESH
Dr. S. Mahmudul Hasan
Director, Institute of Islamic History and Art, Dhaka

ARCHAEOLOGY, ARCHITECTURE AND ART IN UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
Jana Buresova
Librarian, UAE Embassy, London

CONTEMPORARY ART IN SYRIA
Carol Hotchkiss Malt
Director Art Centre, Florida, USA

THE SITUATION OF THE ISLAMIC ARTS IN FRANCE
Dr. Rahmatoullah
Art Critic, Paris

FILMS IN THE ARAB AND ISLAMIC WORLD
Bassem Abdallah
Film Editor, London

Riyadh Plans Major Display of Islamic Art

About 150 works of Islamic art, carefully selected from private collections in different parts of the world, will be on display for the first time in Saudi Arabia at the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies in Riyadh for the inauguration of the Islamic Hall Gallery in February.

The exhibition is being organised by Ahuan Islamic Art, London-based

specialists in this field, who were invited by the Director General of the Centre. Dr. Zaid Abdul Mohsen al-Hussein, to mount this inaugural display. The theme underlying the collection is the unity of Islamic art.

The Centre itself is part of the Faisal Foundation which was set up in 1976 to commemorate the services of the late King Faisal to Islam, and the objectives of the Foundation include support for educational, scientific and cultural projects for the benefit of Muslims everywhere.

Geneva Exhibition: "Treasures of Islam"

An exhibition devoted to the art of the Muslim world entitled "Treasures of Islam" will be held at the Musée Rath, Place Neuve, Geneva, Switzerland from 25 June—27 October 1985.

This exhibition is the first of its kind to be organised in Switzerland.

An Organising Committee was formed to liaise with the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire and it played a major role in all aspects of the project — fund-raising and selection of the works of art, to appointing the scholars.

The aim of the exhibition is to promote better understanding and appreciation of Islamic culture in the West. Altogether 367 works of art and 200 coins of major importance and rarity dating from the 7th century will be on view.

The majority of these works come from private collections and are not known to have been on display before. The exhibition is divided into eight categories so that all the media are represented: The Arts of the Book; Ceramics; Arms and Armour; Textiles and Carpets; Decorative Arts; Architecture; Metalwork; and Coins. The Organising Committee appointed the Geneva architect Michel Buri to design the exhibition and to create an appropriate atmosphere and architectural setting. The works of art will be displayed by category so that the development and influences of Islamic art are clearly presented. The exhibition will be complemented by audio-visual displays.

Cairo Newsletter

The spacious new Nile Hall Gallery at the eastern entrance of the Gezira Exhibition Grounds started off the 1984/85 season with three interesting shows. The site outside, an unattractive mess, is being prepared for the new Centre for the Performing Arts and the new Museum of Egyptian Civilization, which have yet to begun. The Nile Hall itself, however, with its wide white marble steps, airy interior carpeted in a neutral greenish tone, and excellent exhibition facilities, is already a splendid addition to Cairo's cultural scene, though it does not seem to have attracted much attention so far.

The First Arab Biennale, which ran over the summer and ended in the first week of October 1984, brought paintings and sculpture from 11 Arab countries. Some of the work from Morocco, Sudan, Somalia and the Gulf States was relatively unsophisticated and showed a joyous sense of colour, whereas more sombre and symbolic work, depicting pain, suffering, subjection, and imprisonment, emanated from those Arab countries beset by tension and conflict. The theme of the oppressed woman appeared in a variety of manifestations, and a number of the painters themselves were women. The Egyptian painters were remarkable for their daring assurance.

In November an exhibition garnered from the storehouse of the Gezira Gallery brought to light some fine miscellaneous domestic objects: carpets, textiles, ceramics, metalwork, glass and woodwork. Mostly Ottoman, but ranging in date from the Mameluke period to the 19th century, they must have been hidden away for decades and had the look of having been the personal belongings of somebody's great aunt, as perhaps some of them once were. Silks, velvets, Iznik ware, and Bohemian glass were displayed in the company of Kashan or Anatolian carpets, just as they would have been in the houses which these treasures undoubtedly furnished originally. It would be interesting to know what their fate will be. Some of them would be very suitable for permanent display in one of the smaller museums, such as the Bayt Suhaymi, the Musaffir-khana, or the new Mohamed Ali Museum at the Citadel. Each item was listed and briefly described in an illustrated catalogue produced by the Ministry of Culture. For some reason inventory or acquisition numbers were cited, rather than exhibition numbers, rendering this catalogue almost useless as a guidebook, but valuable perhaps for future reference despite some anachronisms in the descriptions.

The most recent exhibition, running throughout December and into the new year has been a big collection of tapestries from the Harraniya School of Ramses Wissa Wassef, which made a gorgeous display of vivid colour and abundant imagination. They blend sophistication with naiveté, and in no other contemporary art form is the rich luxuriance of vegetation, the life of the river and the villages depicted with such masterful grace. Lady Weir, the outgoing British Ambassador's wife, who wrote about these tapestries in *Arts and the Islamic World* in the special Egypt Supplement in Summer 1984, is campaigning energetically to bring this show to the Barbican in London in September. She has already raised a considerable amount of money, but still needs more backing.

Other Ministry of Culture galleries such as the Akhnaton, the Al Salaam and the Egyptian Cultural Centre have held regular exhibitions of the current work of leading artists. Fouad Selim's clear block-like forms, surmounted by flickering calligraphy, and Abdel Hafiz Farghali's latest manifestations of the adventures of his fascinating doll were the highlights of the Akhnaton Gallery. The Salaam has had the jewellery of Ihsan Nada and sculpture by the prize-winning Mahmoud Shokry. The Goethe, French and Italian institutes have also shown a rich variety of Egyptian painters. Currently the Italians have a well-selected eight-man show of Egyptian portrait painters, including mavericks Hassan Soliman and Nagy Bassilious.

Meanwhile, private galleries, such as the Arabesque, the newly reopened Mashrabia on Sharia Champollion, and a charming new gallery in Maadi called The Patio, have been giving the public a good sampling of other contemporary artists. Works of Hussein Bikar, Mustafa Abd el Moati, El Geballi, Fathi Ahmed, Sabri Mansour and many others have been shown. They are not remarkable or new or striking departures, except perhaps in the fresh and original paintings of Nazli Madkour, shown at the Patio.

Laila Foda, Ursula Schernig and Lamia Medhat, the ladies involved in running and publicizing exhibitions at these private sector galleries, have done an excellent job, working tirelessly on behalf of the artists. By contrast the public sector galleries tend to be poorly advertised; and though valiant efforts have been made to produce catalogues for every show, they usually leave something to be desired.

Elizabeth Rodenbeck

Folklore Seminar in Doha

A conference on traditional music and dance of the Gulf region, organised by the Arab Gulf Folklore Centre (AGFC), was held in Doha in December 1984. The Centre is a collective venture by six members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (CCASG) established

in 1982 with Doha as the headquarters. Besides Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and the Sultanate of Oman, the AGFC also has the non-CCASG state Iraq as a member.

The conference discussed and reviewed the definition and concept of traditional music and dance in the region, musical forms and functions, traditional dance and games, performance and interpretation of dances. The agenda also included field work activity in music and dance, setting up procedures for an ethnological map for traditional dance and music in the region, documentation and classification for adoption by the centre, advanced equipment on dance and music as found elsewhere in the world, and scientific and technical training for improving standards.

The conference was attended by more than 45 specialists on the subject from the Arab Gulf region as well as other parts of the world. Participants and other specialist observers for the seminar were welcomed by AGSFC co-director Ali Abdulla Khalifa.

In his opening address Qatar Ministry of Information's Under Secretary, Mohamed Abdul Rehman al-Kholeify, appealed to the people of the Arab Gulf region to help preserve the rich cultural heritage of the area. He said the need for protection of the region's traditional music and folklore heritage had become urgent. "Music and folklore are distributed between the desert, the sea and the villages in the region. Because of this the chances of their disappearing are strong. Hence the need to preserve our rich tradition in music and folklore," he said.

He recalled that this concern brought the Arab Gulf States together to establish the AGFC as a specialised organisation charged with the task of putting through a proper plan and preparation. "The centre is much concerned during the planning period to have the views of specialists from the world over so that we get the benefit of their knowledge and experience," he said.

Dr. Tariq Hassoon Farid, chief of the centre's music unit, said the seminar would help review matters of priority for the AGSFC and define a plan of action. The AGFC had moved cautiously in the two years since its establishment step by step so as to avoid waste and error, and the centre already had drawn up an action plan on traditional music. The stimuli had resulted in the formation of a consultative committee for the region as a whole, and recommendations were made by a previous meeting of the centre held in June 1984. He said the work of the centre needed to be put on a serious scientific basis, especially in the field of collection, classification and documentation of the rich cultural heritage of the region.

The concept of folk music in the Gulf and Arabian peninsula, aesthetics of traditional music of the region, Qatar's traditional arts, folk musical instruments, field musical research in the region, scientific training, and audio-visual documentation were among the 15 different papers on the subject presented and discussed at the seminar.



Venezuela Exhibition of Ameena's "Animal images in calligraphy"

Ameena Begum Ahuja, whose paintings of animal images that emerge from the harmonious blending of lines of poetry into figures made up entirely of letters from various alphabets have been seen in exhibitions as far apart as Moscow, London, New York, Tokyo, Delhi, Aligarh and Wellington, had a major display this winter (December 1984) at the Fundacion Mendoza in Venezuela.

Commenting on the exhibition in the Venezuelan *Daily Journal*, Isabel Cristina Calcano noted that "She was born in India of an English mother and a Muslim father. Her life, even as a child, was spent mostly in Europe, where she received most of her education. One would never guess this, however, from studying her art, truly Oriental in inspiration as well as form".

The reviewer emphasized that music and poetry have been Ameena's real source of inspiration since she started painting, adding that "Generally, she draws from the works of the greatest poets of the East, including those from India. Rumi and Hafiz, 15th and 16th century poets of the Sufi philosophy, are two of her favourites, as well as Ghalib, a 19th century Indian poet, Mir, an 18th century poet and Pushkin, a Russian poet. The way she works from these poets is by combining their ideas and traditions and painting what she sees in that combination.

The artist herself explained her work and background in a recent interview, excerpts from which are reproduced below:

My father was Indian, my mother English. I was born in India and my childhood was spent in a traditional Delhi home. Delhi is fiercely proud of the centuries old heritage represented by language, literature, architecture, the musical wealth; Delhi prides itself in being the spiritual seat of 22 Sufi saints of India.

All this awareness created a lifestyle, a thought process which gives to Delhi a very special place. This was my background in childhood till I moved to England to complete my schooling and university education. I was born with two languages, Urdu and English. I acquired Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Latin, Russian, French and Romanian as I went along. I recently got my Doctorate in Philology from Moscow University.

My art training was mostly in England, first at the Camberwell School of Art and at the Slade. My desire to specialise in the Persian miniature and the Russian icon led me to a study of the relevant languages and their literature, especially poetry. I had been trained to appreciate the divine poetry of the Qur'an, commiting it to memory in childhood. Years made me aware of the rhyme, metre and prosody inherent in the divine verse.

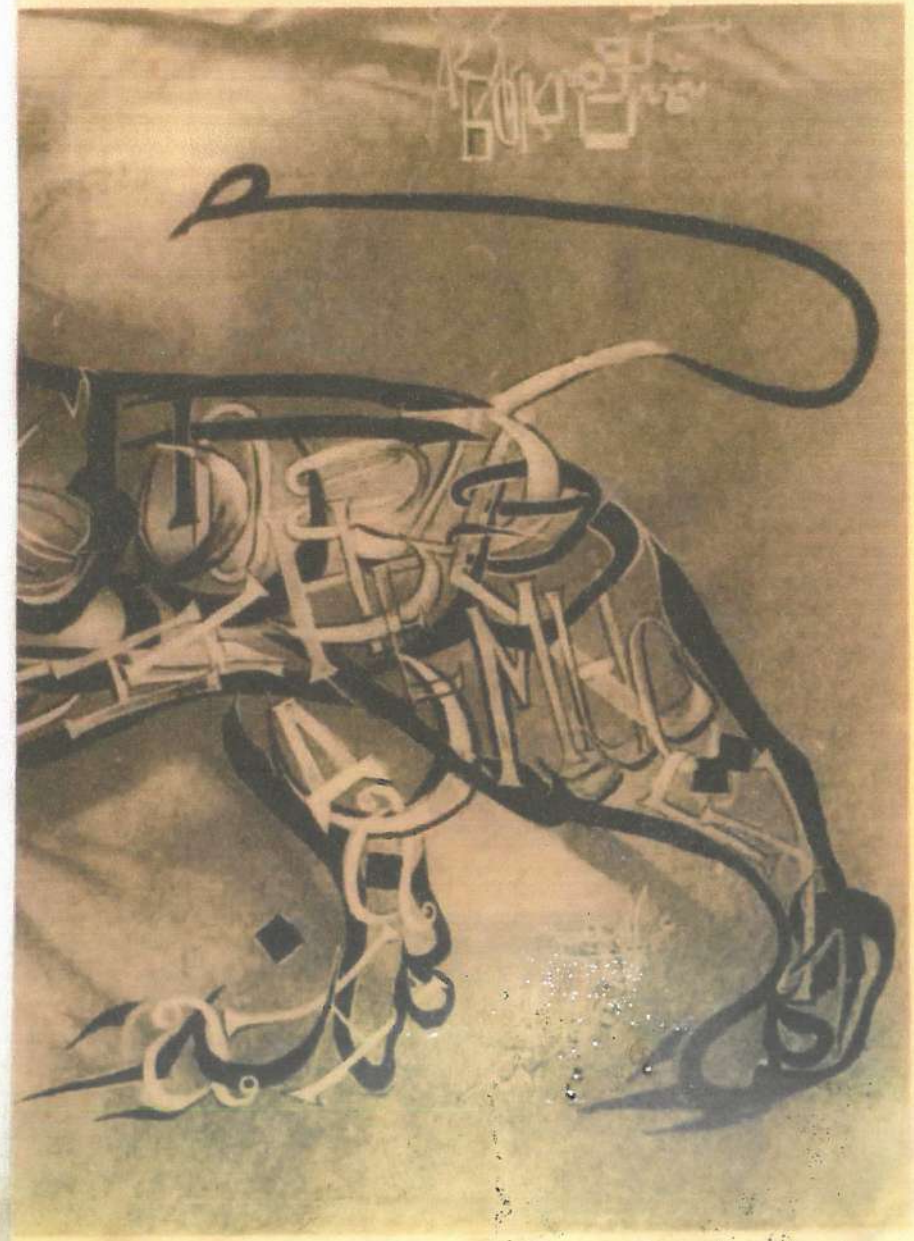
This has helped me in an appreciation and love of poetry generally whether in my native Urdu or English, Russian,





Photograph by Alexander Kuleshov

French or Persian.
In order to switch off from the strains and stresses of present day existence, try to learn verse by heart in the various languages I know.
This has led me in recent years to turn more and more to poetry as a driving force in my art work.
There was a rewarding conscious encounter in my earlier work with our Indian musical heritage which had resulted in my *rag-mala* (garland of melodies) series along with Esenin's Shiraz Cycle series when I had attempted to work on the ancient Sanskrit adage "Sound must be seen, colour must be heard", an observation we come across in the poetry of Rimbaud. In my present work I am still guided by my obsession with sound and colour as it is made vocal and visible by poetry. I am also consciously discovering for myself the similarity of human thought process in poetry in languages as diverse as Arabic and Russian, or Urdu and French.



The Proud Lion, based on Hafez
Courtesy of H. Medwed (Boston)
Oil in Bronze, gold, silver and Sumye ink
Size 103x74cms
Photograph by Filipe Ojeda

In paintings which emerge out of this realisation I have combined along with Arabic calligraphy another relevant script.
The architectural heritage of Delhi offers some of the very best that Islamic calligraphy represents. The Qur'anic inscriptions on the Qutub Minar (Medieval India) is a marvel for the eye and baffles the mind, an unforgettable aesthetic experience and I was taught to appreciate calligraphy by my parents. My father, the late Nur-ud-din Ahmad, taught me the Kufic, the Nast'aliq, the Shikaste, the Khat-e-zulf-e Urus, the Khat-e-Rehani scripts in the traditional manner, i.e. using the *qalam* and black ink on the wooden *takhti* with its ground prepared with Multani clay. To my English mother, the symbols of calligraphy were more than mere letters of the alphabet. She never failed to point out the similarity of the calligraphic symbols with the contours in the sculputure of Henry Moore or Koninkoff or the twisted agonised lines in the paintings of Graham Sutherland or Miro. To me the symbols of calligraphy represented the essence of what notes of music convey to a composer or musician. Just as a melody emerges within the space created by one single musical note in combination with another, so it is with letters of calligraphy. A figure or a form gradually take shape within the framework of letters of the alphabet which a given verse releases. I lean on poetry to achieve this and what emerges in my work is more often than not, a bird or animal form and occasionally the human form. Animal and bird images seem tro me to represent human wisdom or folly much as in the fables of Aesop, Khalila-wa-Dimnah, Kriloff or La Fontaine.
The poetry of Abu Nuwas, Mutanabbi, Rudaki, Rumi, Hafez and Sa'adi, Ghalib, Zauq, Iqbal, Pushkin, Akhmatova, Rimbaud and many many others is a vast and infinite storehouse to draw from. I also find it a challenge not to imitate the great master calligraphers of the past whether in the Arab world, in Iran or the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. What these masters created was unique whether on the facades of monuments or in illuminated manuscripts or metal surfaces or in ceramics. Their perfection cannot be surpassed or repeated. It, however, inspires and encourages in the pursuit of new avenues.

Shattered Dreams of a Third World Artist

Paris has always been the focal point and dream of almost every aspiring Third World artist. We were weaned on believing New York to be the ultimate goal for any established artist, London a must for at least one exhibition in a lifetime but Paris remained the Mecca of Art.

Recently, I went to Paris hoping to enrich my craving artistic soul on the varied rich exhibitions that were in the city of light. Among the first posters to attract my attention was the one on FIAC; FIAC stands for Foire Internationale D'Art Contemporain. It is an annual exhibition held at the Grand Palais by most of the leading art galleries in the west. The galleries rent space where they show the works of artists patronized by them and works of established masters patronizing them. I have long known about this exhibition which portrays almost every movement of contemporary art in the Western Hemisphere. The moment I deposed my suitcase at the hotel I rushed over to pay homage to the supposed moguls of art today, being certain that I would walk out of the Grand Palais with so many new and crowding inspirations that I wouldn't have the time to put them all on canvas. Very exciting hours were indeed awaiting a Third World artist.

The moment I entered the portals of this museum that has in the past enriched Paris and the world with many great exhibitions and with its permanent collection of modern masters, a knot started forming in my throat, and as I started wandering around the different stalls rented each year by commercial galleries from all over France and other countries such as England, Belgium, Japan, Italy, Holland, Denmark, the United States and many more, the knot grew bigger as the dream started to fade. At first the works of great modern masters such as Picasso, Miro, Poliakof, Gris, Leger, Soullage, Debre, and others were exhibited by well established galleries which are the Wall Street of art. Then the lesser galleries suddenly came into sight. They are the shepherds that lead the flock. In their stalls one comes abreast with the latest movements, schools and fantasies of Western artists. Alas this time the schools turned into graveyards, the movements into nightmares and the fantasies shattered to reveal the sad reality of the state of mental decadence, inspirational deprivation and moral despair some young Western artists have reached. Painting and sculpture simply left the realm of beauty to enter the world of crude pornography.

In his book, The Nude, Sir Kenneth Clark differentiates between the naked and the nude in a most sensible way. He defines the naked human body as devoid of feelings representing the animal and carnal state of man while the nude represents the perfection of God's creation in his own image creating feelings of ecstasy, humility, pathos and eroticism. In his words, "We do not wish to imitate, we wish to be perfect".

To understand this point made by Sir Kenneth Clark one has only to compare the statue of a naked, fat, balding old man, an enormous belly hanging in front of him, while he performs the act of relieving himself standing on scrawny bent legs with Michelangelo's statue of David. Works in paintings, graphics, sculpture and photography portrayed various acts and daily functions of human beings meant to be kept private in order to spare us all the purfunctoriness of everyday life. One stall after the other hit me with similar examples of the man relieving himself. They continued, sometimes, with even more sordid and depraved works, such as a set of living room chairs burnt down with their skeletons standing and given the title "The Day After".

A conversation between a gallery owner and myself accidentally started when he enquired about my country of origin while I was buying a catalogue from his stand to take back home in order to shatter my fellow artists' dreams. When he knew I was from Jordan he was genuinely surprised and immediately asked whether there were artists in Jordan!!! Indeed a very educated question to which I answered that he had one of them standing in front of him, so he became more interested and enquired whether I painted people in Jordan. So I informed him that I actually painted desert scenes. With a knowing nod he in turn informed me that in Jordan that would be the most natural subject to paint. At this point I couldn't help myself but tell him that in Jordan we were lucky enough not to have reached the state of cultural and moral decadence I see epitomized all around me in the works promoted by his esteemed establishment and would he kindly tell me what he thought of it all. To which he answered, I quote "Oh! I love it, I love those works, they portray the utter decadence of our civilization and I believe once an artist admits to this decadence and immorality and submits to it then he becomes a reborn romantic". On this note I couldn't help but part company with the porno-reborn-romantic Western art dealer of the eighties.

If today's Western artists are depicting their reality with all its insecurity, violence, the threat of the bomb, loose moral behaviour, poverty of the soul and body, they certainly are not coming up with anything new, for all those sad realities did exist in different forms since time immemorial, and have been portrayed by artists all along, for each age had its share of realists and impressionists! Yet they differed from this age's realists by being blessed with their talent that did not lack inspiration and they did not waste their time in reeducating the public in everyday's body functions in answer to the call of nature or in enlarging certain parts of the human anatomy to cover fairly big canvases that are unfit for even peep-shows in Soho or Place Pigale let alone a drawing room or a dining room wall.

After more than one hour wandering around, my naive oriental soul could not take any more scenes of this Sodom and Gomorrah cum city dump.

I left FIAC with a very deep feeling of sadness mixed with joy. I couldn't help but feel sorry for the artists of the west who have become so disillusioned by their culture as to lose their sensitivity and sense of beauty and respect for humanity, and in their confusion, derive their inspiration from pornography, sadism, violence and the toilet. Yet a sense of joy engulfed me knowing that our unknown, struggling third world artists might be labelled as obscure but they still have faith in God's creation, in a universal humanity and beauty from which they derive their inspiration, portraying their sufferings and that of our peoples, without losing their hope, dignity and dream of the future and without debasing their minds and bodies for only through our faith in humanity can we look forward to a better and brighter future be it in the arts or any other field. Just one word to my underpaid fellow artists in our overpopulated, underdeveloped lands: Turn back to your own roots and culture and stop craning your necks towards Paris, London and New York and look towards Cairo, Dacca, Tunis, Bombay, Karachi and Amman; it is not only they don't want you in the west but believe me you wouldn't want to be where they are anyway.

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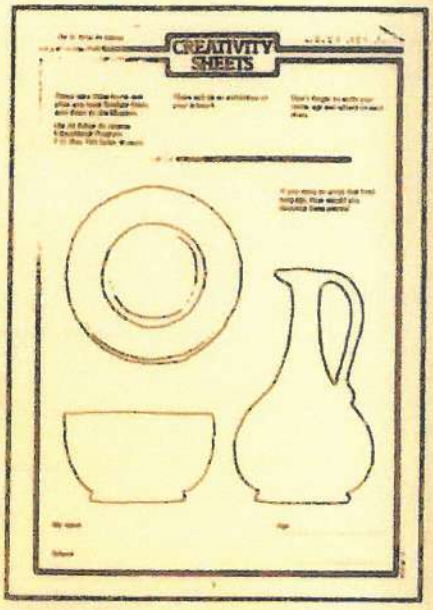
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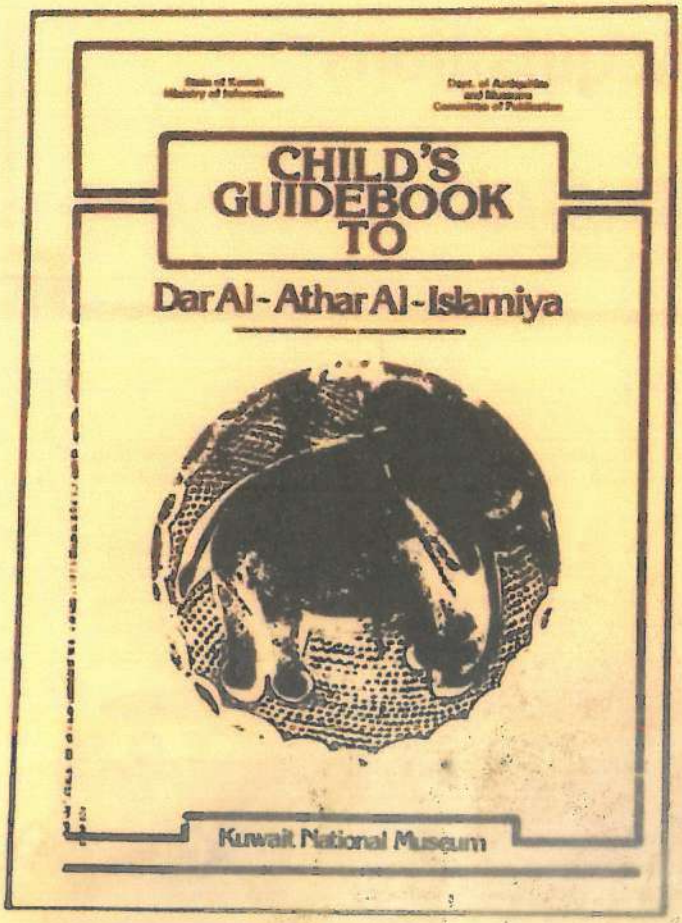
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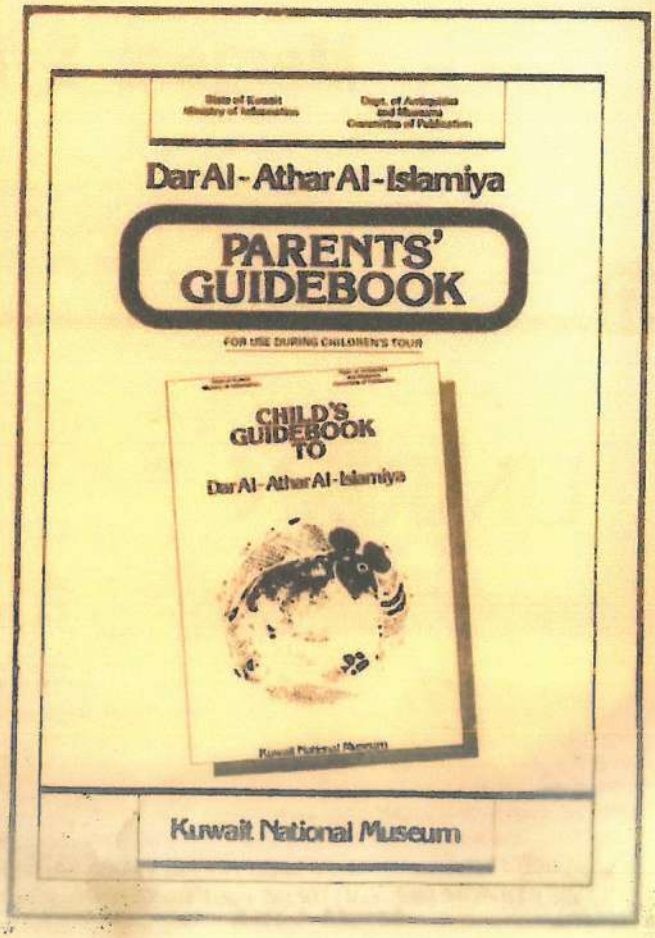


The Al-Sabah Collection of Islamic Art in the Kuwait National Museum, known as "Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiya", which had from its very inception in 1983 laid special emphasis on art education, has already within a short space of time put out a beautifully conceived *Child's Guidebook*, accompanied by a thoughtful *Parent's Guidebook*, for use during children's tours of the Islamic art galleries of Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiya. The Guidebooks are available in English as well as Arabic, and provide, in a simple but evocative language, extremely useful information, aesthetic as well as historical, about principal objects in each gallery.

The *Parent's Guidebook* begins by explaining that the museum is laid out in chronological and historical order. There are 10 galleries on three levels, and all exhibits can be viewed easily in sequence. There is a historical resume covering each gallery, and there are helpful hints on how to draw the child's attention to some of the interesting aspects and details of individual exhibits, at the same time putting these in an appropriate cultural and historical perspective in a manner that the child can understand, respond, and get involved.

Here, (in a box), are notes in the *Parent's Guidebook* on Gallery 3:





1 **Calligraphy**
Take the child around and talk to him about the materials which have been used to make some of the objects on display:
Ceramic, Stone and Metal.

Quran
Take the child towards the case containing the Quran. This is a very beautiful specimen of Eastern Kufic style. Note the variety of styles on one page.

2 **Turquoise Case**
Go towards the case which has a predominance of "Turquoise" colour. It was a favourite colour in Persia at the time.

Remind your child of the "palmette" pattern.
Point out the incense burner and ewer shaped like birds. Tell child that the bird design was used on many objects in the Islamic World.

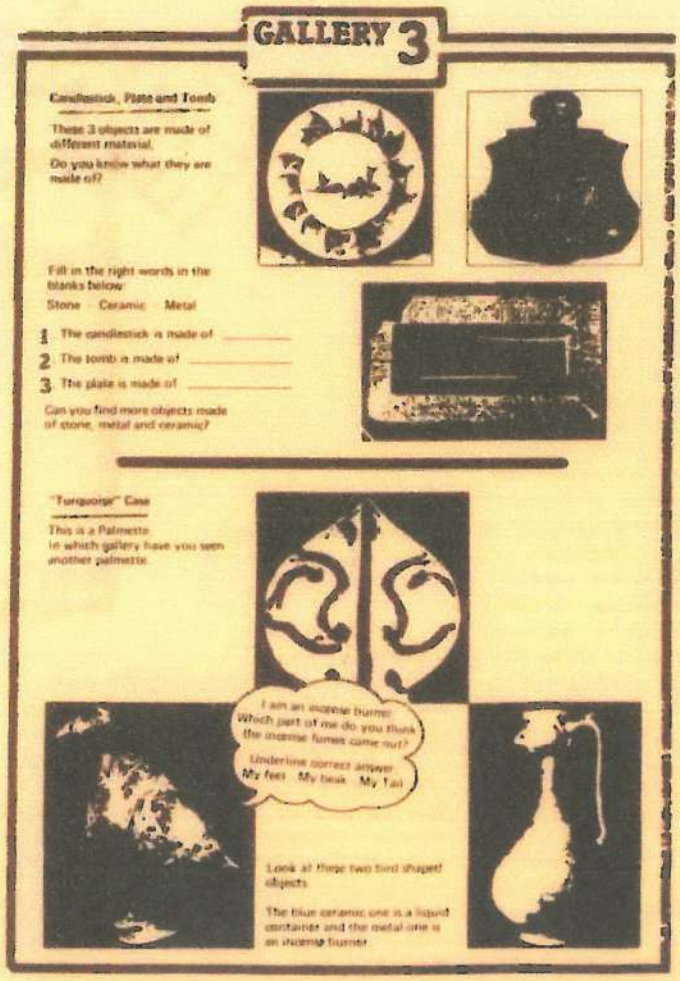
3 **Tiles**
Point out the tiles. Both shapes complement each other and can cover a surface indefinitely. Tell him that in ancient times tiles were used to decorate walls of mosques and houses. As an example, show him the tiles that have been put on the corner of the wall, near the "Turquoise" case.

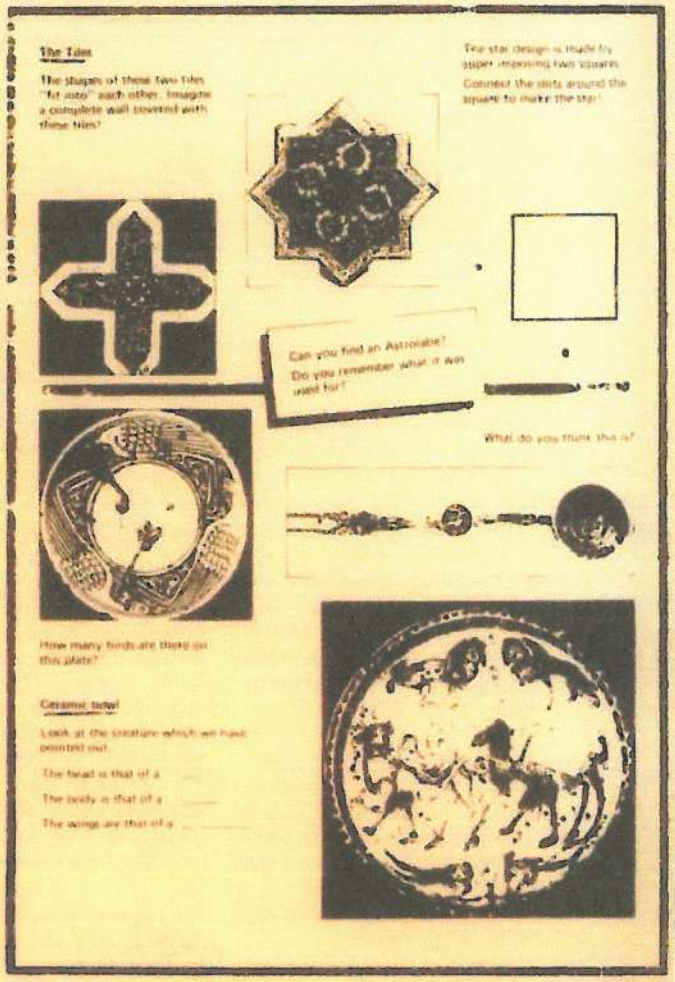
4 **Astrolabe**
Direct the child towards the astrolabe. If he can't remember its use, refresh his memory. Point out book with diagram of an astrolabe.

5 **Ceramic**
The bowl with birds is a good example of how design has become stylized to fit a shape.

6 **Folding Spoon & Fork**
This item should amuse the child, as he can identify it with objects of everyday use.

7 **Ceramic**
As the child is looking at the bowl tell him that this style of creature appears often on objects of the region.





The relevant exercises relating to this Gallery in *Child's Guidebook* are reproduced here
There are also accompanying "creativity sheets" which the child is invited to take home and play with. A typical example is a set of outline drawings of objects with a beckoning challenge: "If you were an artist that lived long ago, how would you decorate these pieces?"

There is of course the clincher: "After you have finished them, send them to the Museum. There will be an exhibition of your artwork. Don't forget to write your name, age and school on each sheet".
The team of experts and institutions who have collaborated to create the *Guidebooks* (production: Ministry of Information Kuwait; supervision: Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiya; preparation: Salam El Kaoukji; copy writing: Yasser Al Maleh and Moin Khoury; text revision: Dixie Carey and Flora Yassin; design: Concept Creative Consultants) deserve to be congratulated for this excellent art educational aid.

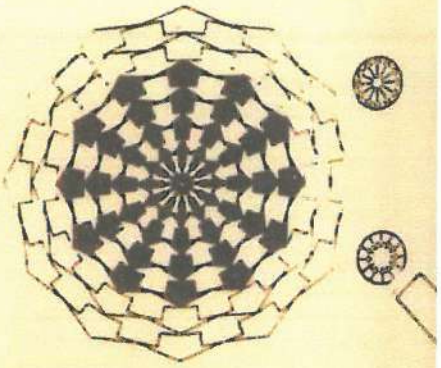
Azra J. Ahmed

The Touch of Midas:

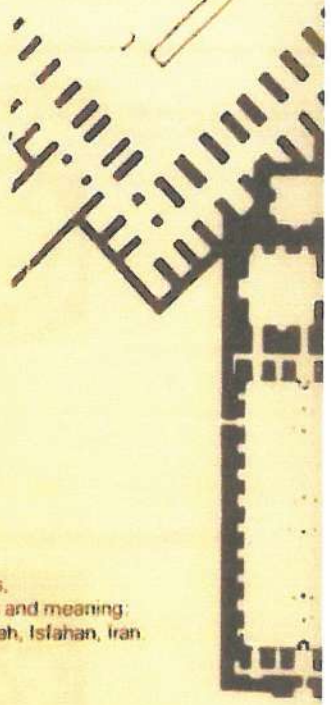
Science, Values and Environment in Islam and the West

Ziauddin Sardar (Ed.)

Manchester University Press, 1984, £20, 253 pp.



Imploding hierarchy from society to self; environment as shaper of self; from Islam to Muslim.



Of elements, connections and meaning: Masjid-e-Shah, Isfahan, Iran.

"... And so now the apparently benign societies of the Occident depend partly on the misery of the Third World and also partly on luck. This is the luck that our technological system does not go seriously wrong, either in the short run as with nuclear reactors releasing radioactivity or in the long run through some pollution or perhaps greenhouse effect".

The Bhopal gas leak disaster had not occurred when Jerry Ravetz wrote these lines in the chapter he contributed to "The Touch of Midas". But the sense of foreboding is there all right. The spectre of a whole series of malfunctions in an unstable technological system — from Seveso to Three Mile Island — are conjured up in Ravetz's words. The moral for countries where such risk-laden technologies are not yet in operation is clear: they must question the values on which these technologies are based and evolve alternative science and technology policies before it is too late.

"The Touch of Midas" is an attempt by people involved in science in East and West to identify a system of values which, while promoting an understanding of the crisis of science in the West, could, at the same time, shape science and technology policies in the developing countries of the East — particularly those of the Muslim world. The points made in the book were expounded during and after a series of seminars held in Stockholm, Riyadh and Granada during 1981 and 1982. These were sponsored by the Stockholm-based International Federation of Institutes for Advanced Study (IFIAS) with backing from Islam and the West International in Geneva and grants from several bodies, including the Salen Foundation in Sweden and the Islamic Solidarity Fund.

Participants in the seminars came from a wide range of disciplines. Those whose contributions are contained in the book itself include engineers, architects, biologists, journalists, educationists, environmental consultants and historians. But they all share a concern for the social, moral and political aspects of science and a recognition that science can never be value-free.

At the Stockholm seminar, entitled "Knowledge and Values in Islam and the West", Ziauddin Sardar proposed a set of 10 basic values of an Islamic culture, the first of which would be "tawheed" — the unity of God asserted in the unity of mankind and the unity of man and nature. From tawheed is derived the concept of "khilafah" — the belief that man does not exist on earth to conquer nature but to preserve it, in his role not as owner but as trustee.

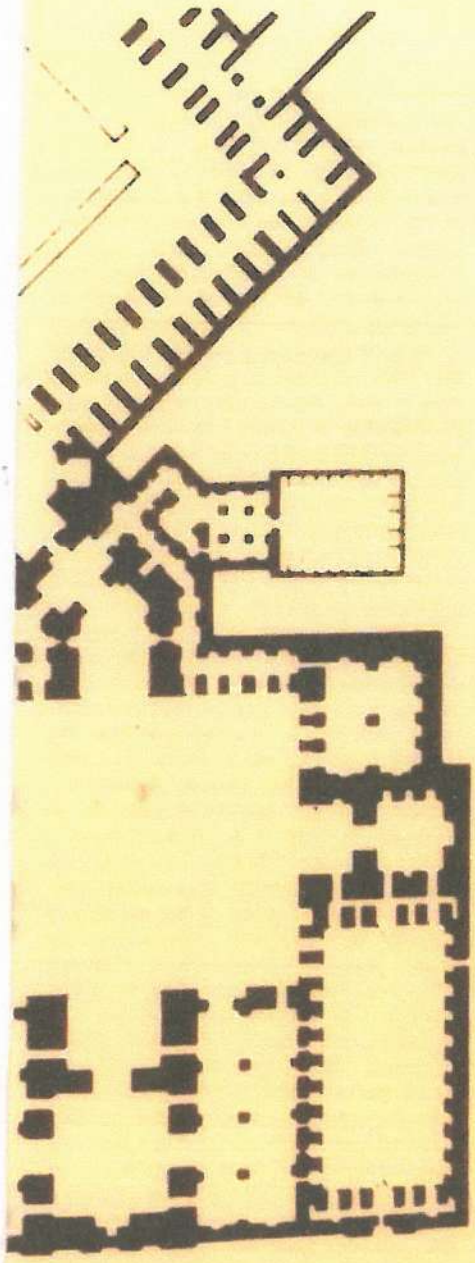
The implications of such concepts are especially clear when it comes to applying science, through technology. The fact that Islamic science has known a Golden Age greatly enriches discussion of the differences between a science which respects nature and one which is set upon dominating it.

Glyn Ford, in his chapter on the "Rebirth of Islamic Science", is opposed to the fashionable view of Islamic science as having served simply as a preserving medium for Greek science during a period when Europe temporarily "forgot its destiny". There was, he says, an Islamic science worthy of an independent existence, that dealt with the questions raised within its own framework of ideas". Ford draws heavily on the work of Sayyid Hossein Nasr, who describes a number of kinds of knowledge including the knowledge of vision and experience alongside the acquired knowledge of the intellect. Assuming that these different forms of knowledge were all of equal standing for the Muslim scientist of days gone by, and that science, as such, was considered to reveal only one aspect of a multidimensional reality, Ford suggests that these factors tempered the science itself. "Scientists gave answers which were not posed in the unilateral manner of analytical and quantitative science but were rather an art form of qualities and symbols". And the science that emerged from an Islamic cosmology emphasising harmony and equilibrium led Muslims to create technologies that utilised natural forces through maximum use of human skills and with the minimum disturbance of the natural environment.

Environment and habitat were the specific subjects of the seminar held in Granada, Spain, and they take up a third of the book. Two chapters in particular provide a stark contrast between ugly reality in British town planning and urban development and the idealised Islamic city, described by Gulzar Haidar, as an environmental Utopia".

Alison Ravetz, recounting the evolution of high-rise housing in Britain and elsewhere and the advent of the New Town Movement, brings home in no uncertain terms the waste and disruption caused by these trends, which were conceived and imposed by an elite. With multi-storey buildings the construction industry became increasingly capital rather than labour intensive. Yet, because of shortcomings in the technology, building collapses and the need to actually demolish relatively new buildings became increasingly common. Behind the supposedly "progressive" attitude to planning lay the "clean sweep approach" which presupposed that existing environments should be rejected wholesale and uniform new ones put in their place. In the event, the fantastic promises could not be kept. The old environment would be irrevocably damaged and the new one would be left raw and incomplete.

Set against this no-man's-land the

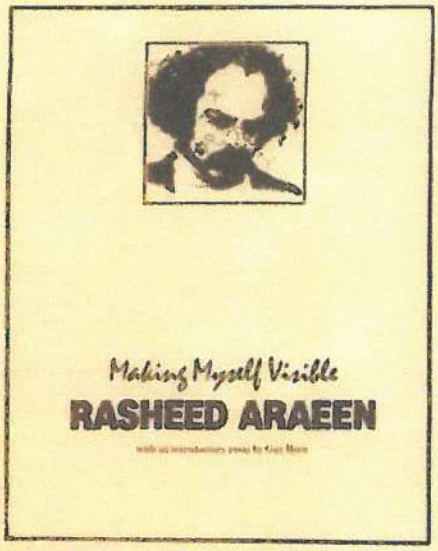


City of Islam, as set out by Gulzar Haidar, is a beautiful vision indeed. He envisages a purposeful, problem-solving environment, created by collective vision, inspired by Islamic social and economic codes, that values skills, hard work and ingenuity, exists in a symbiotic relationship with nature and sets great store by physical and mental health. The design principles for such a city are environmental sensibility, morphological integrity and symbolic clarity. Haidar illustrates these principles in words and drawings with fine examples from Sanaa to Samarkand and Timbuktu.

As Robert Walgate's epilogue states so lucidly: "All forms of knowledge must be complementary as there is only one world to describe. Religious experience is an aspect of reality. It must unite with science". The debate recorded in "The Touch of Midas" demonstrates the desire of many to see science reunited with religion in the Muslim world today.

Naomi Sakr

Rasheed Araeen — Making myself visible



In a piece he wrote several years ago and which he has included at the beginning of the recently published monograph entitled "Making Myself Visible", (Published by Kala Press, London, 1984), Rasheed Araeen has posed the vital question concerning the "identity" of a "Third World" artist living and working in the West. His own work has been reviewed in a thought-provoking introduction to the monograph by Guy Brett.

Excerpts from both these important statements are reproduced here by kind permission of the publishers.

Who am I? Where do I come from? How do I, a non-European, relate to European society I find myself living in but do not belong to? How do I react to its assumptions of white superiority? are the few questions which confront me today and which I'm trying to deal with in my work — artwork as well as writing.

Once could deal with these questions in two different ways: either by metaphysical specualtions and thus turing one's back to and ignoring the very reality of which one is part; or by looking into the specificity of this material reality and try to resolve these questions within it.

For me the question of metaphysical (or spiritual) projection does not arise. Metaphysics belongs to the realm of affluence and abundance. The nature of my existence and predicament — and that of the world I come from and belong to — is defined and determined by the forces that are patently materialistic. To ignore or gloss over this materiality of our existence — poverty and under-development — though an art activity (of metaphysical or spiritual nature) would be grossly dishonest.

It is believed that there exists human essence which is universal, and that Art should express this essence by transcending the specificity of a material predicament. It is understandable why bourgeois ideology is so concerned with "human essence". The dire poverty of the two-third of humanity is the direct consequence of Eurocentric, bourgeois world-view, its world domination and exploitation. The actual blame for the world predicament today must therefore be shifted to a natural or metaphysical plane so as to confuse those who are struggling for a better life on Earth.

The question of identity is very crucial for the Third World artist and it ought to be different from (Western) bourgeois artist who tends to seek harmony with *status quo* and in doing so limits himself to the pursuit of an individual style in the work. This question becomes critical and much more complex when the Third World artist is not living in his or her country of origin, and is thus uprooted from the soil and denied cultural and historical contexts.

My own experience of living in the West has made me realise that these questions cannot be resolved within the context of an art history that remains oriented towards the Eurocentric objectives of domination and exploitation. Nor is it possible to deal with them independently and effectively within the national boundaries of Third World countries that accept Western models for their own contemporary developments — socio-economic, political, as well as cultural.

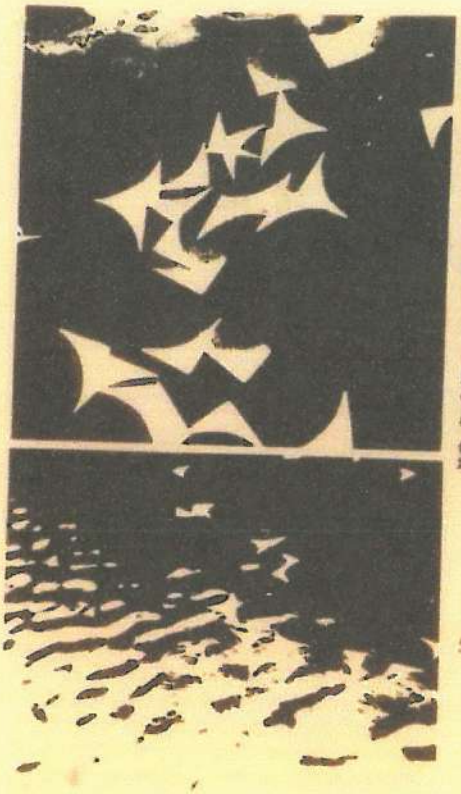
The internationalism of Modern Art is false and phoney, since it offers no place for the participation of non-European people in its development and evolution. The projected "internationalism" of Modern Art is in fact a reflection of international monopoly capital and its imperialist ethos. In the imperialist scheme of things the Third World is placed on the periphery and there the Third World artist should only play a secondary role within this context.

It is therefore imperative (for me) to challenge this context and search for a different direction, in order to formulate and develop a critical discourse which not only looks at the world from a point of view different and antithetical to bourgeois world-view but also offers a new historical context for the Third World artist to realise his or her full creative potential.

My own work is an attempt towards the realisation of this specific goal.

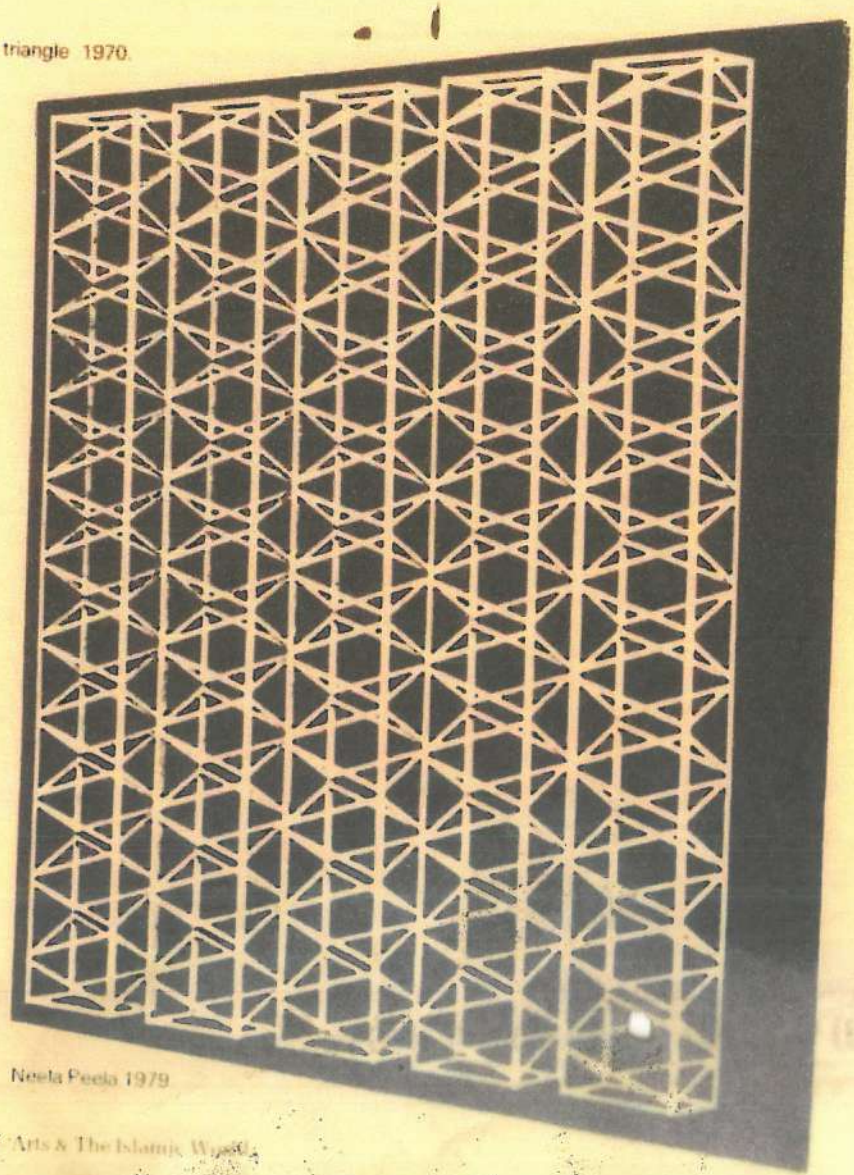
Rasheed Araeen 1979

Undoubtedly, one of the most important historical events for Europe since end of the last war has been the arrival and settlement of millions of



Self portrait 1964

triangle 1970



Neela Peela 1979

people from non-European countries, mainly from countries of the so-called Third World. The experience of these people as 'immigrants', a super-exploited class, deprived of a political and cultural voice, and the experience of the 'host' society in having its deep-seated Eurocentrism and racism revealed to it, in all their complex ramifications, are the twin realities of this great change. To say that Britain is a multi-racial society is both a cliché of the 'race relations industry' and a fact that is only slowly entering the consciousness of even the supposedly enlightened and liberal milieus. In Britain, in the visual arts, it seems to me that the most passionate and the most intelligent body of work up to now to closely concern itself with these issues, these experiences, has been produced by Rasheed Araeen.

Rasheed Araeen is not an 'immigrant' worker but a middle-class intellectual who came from Pakistan to London as an artist. But he has convincingly connected the two realities. He did so explictly in a work of 1980 commissioned for 'Forum Kunst', an exhibition organized by the museum at Rottweil in Germany. He sent over a large wooden 'diptych' in suitcase form. When opened it showed colour-xerox copies of some of his work and sprayed across them with aerosol in large letters: *Gästkunstler* ('Guest artist': in West Germany the 'migrant workers', who come mainly from Turkey, are known as *Gästkunstler* — guest workers). The form of the suitcase, combined with the hostile scrawl of the pseudo-respectful euphemism 'guest', emphasises the feeling of not belonging and links the ambiguous status of the artist with that of the worker. Characteristically, Rasheed Araeen also stands back and makes a comment on his own work within the piece itself, a position vital to his art practice. For he realized that the production of art in Britain or in the West is inseparable from the whole complex network of relationships which make up the contemporary art world. Undoubtedly, as an 'outsider' he saw this especially clearly. But he was not interested in divining the nature of these relationships in order to fit himself in with them. "Making myself visible" meant for him logically and literally a challenge to the norms and assumptions on which contemporary art practice is based. He decided to engage the system simultaneously at several levels by making art works, performing, starting a magazine, writing polemics and letters, printing postcards and broadsheets, contributing to conferences, and initiating a research project to change the content of teaching in British art schools. Materials from all these activities are collected in this book and should be seen as indivisible.

Guy Brett



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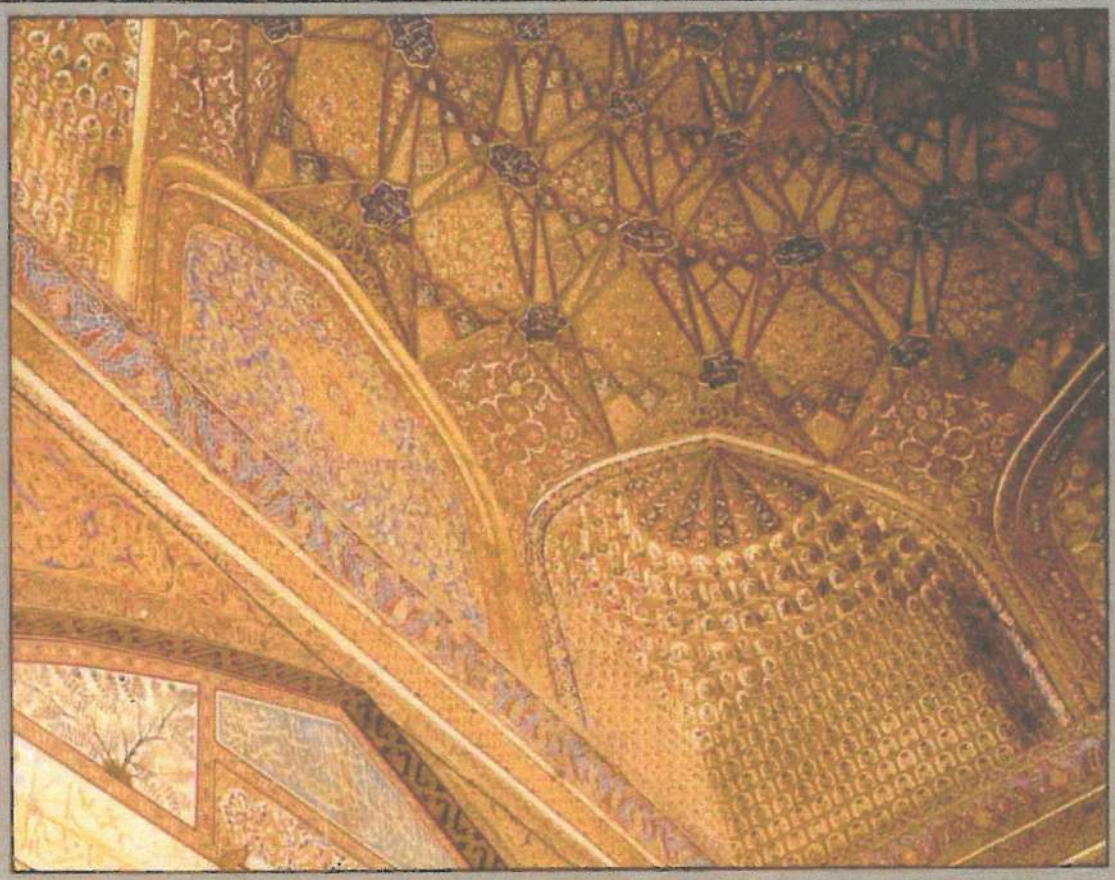
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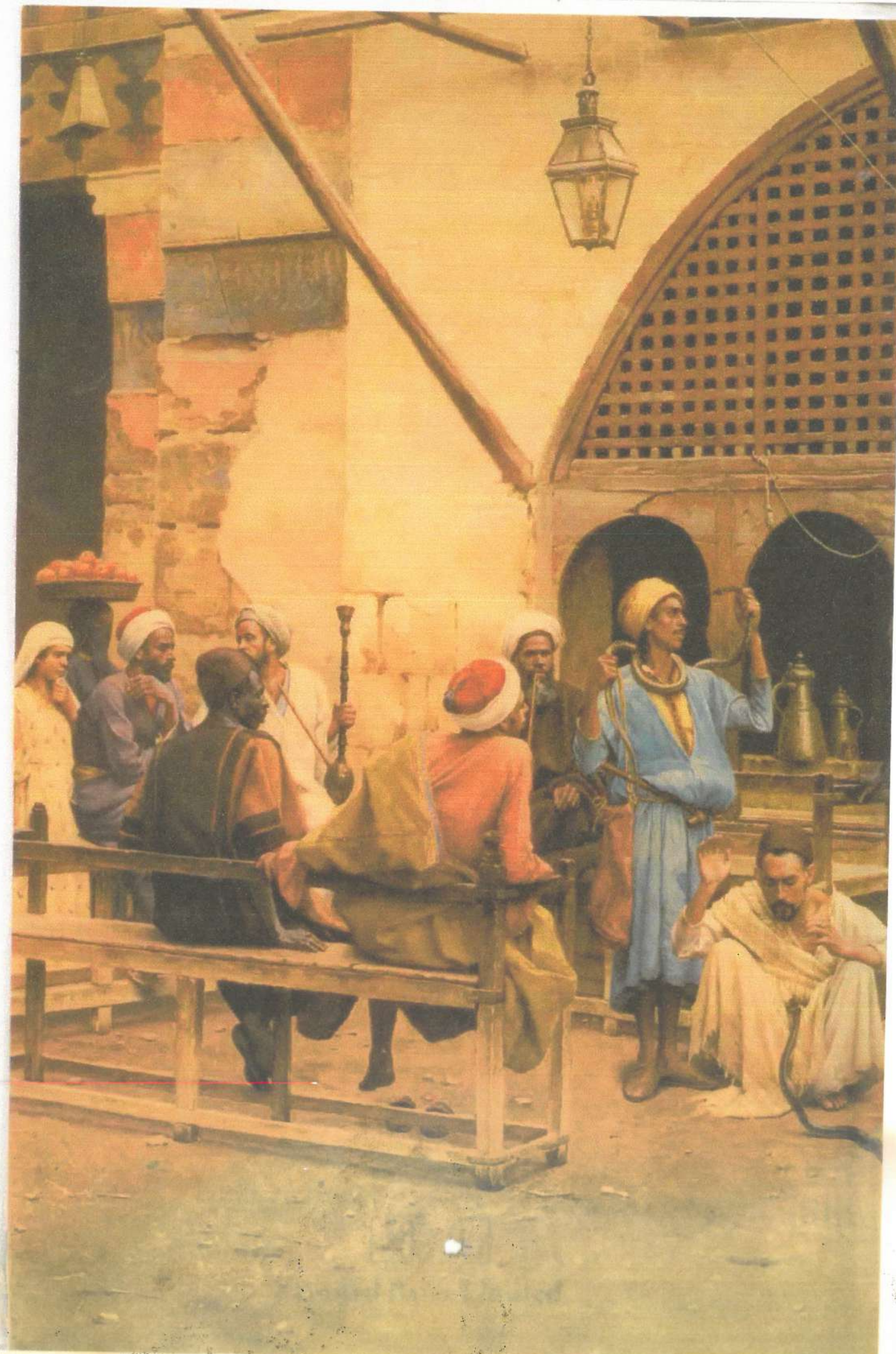
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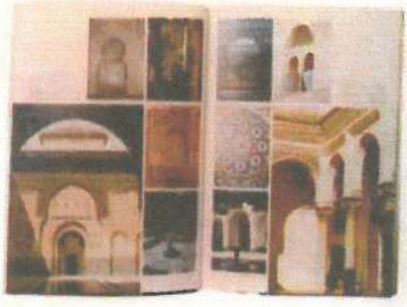
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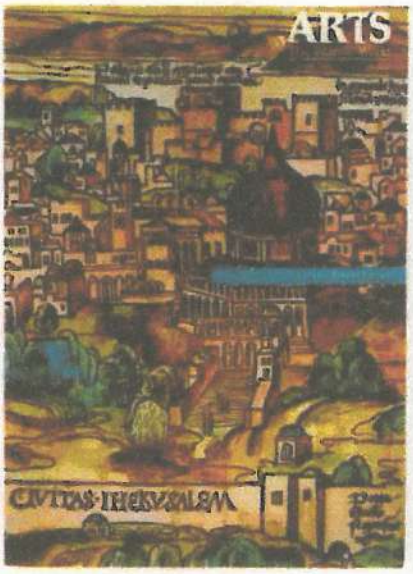


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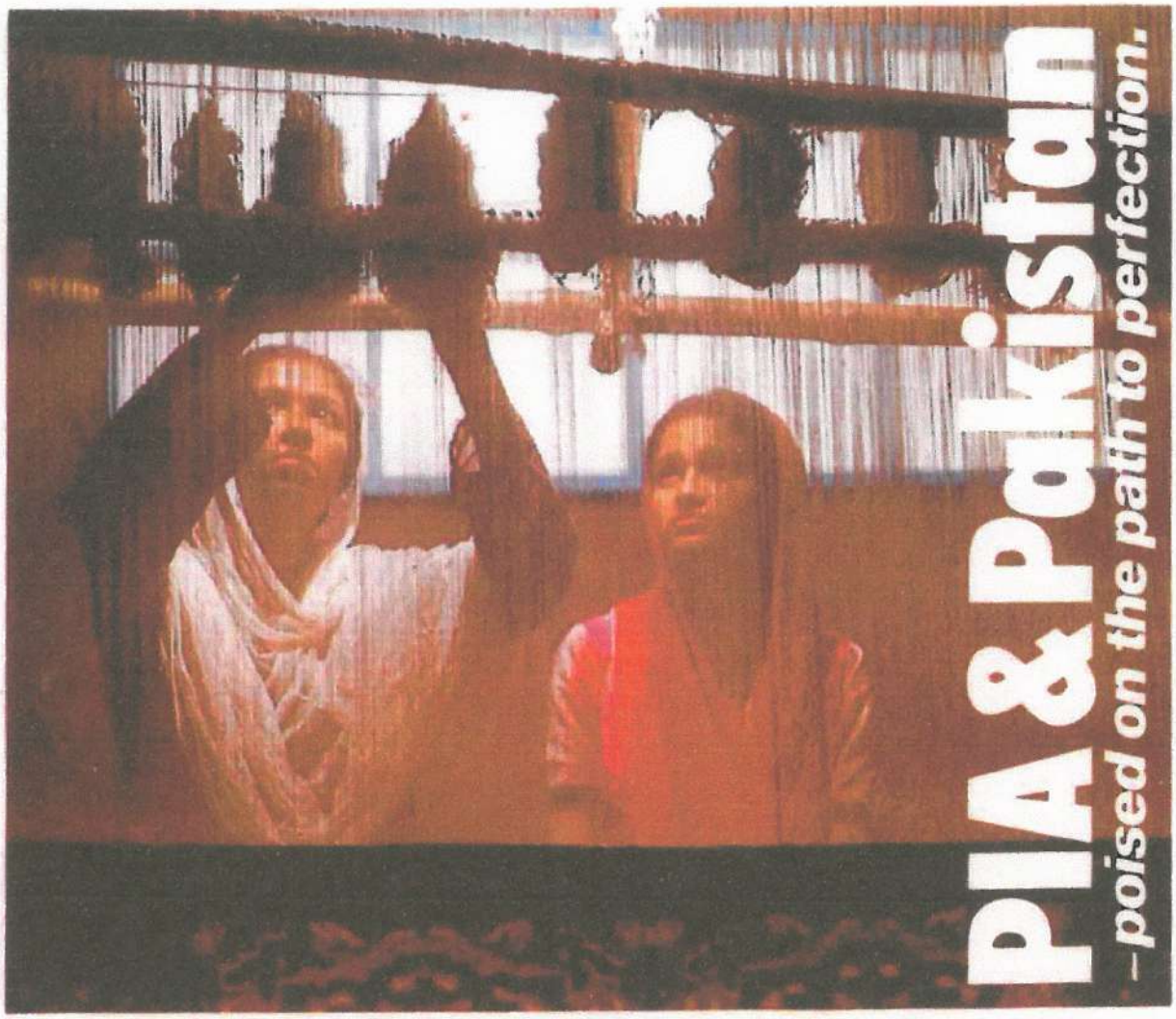
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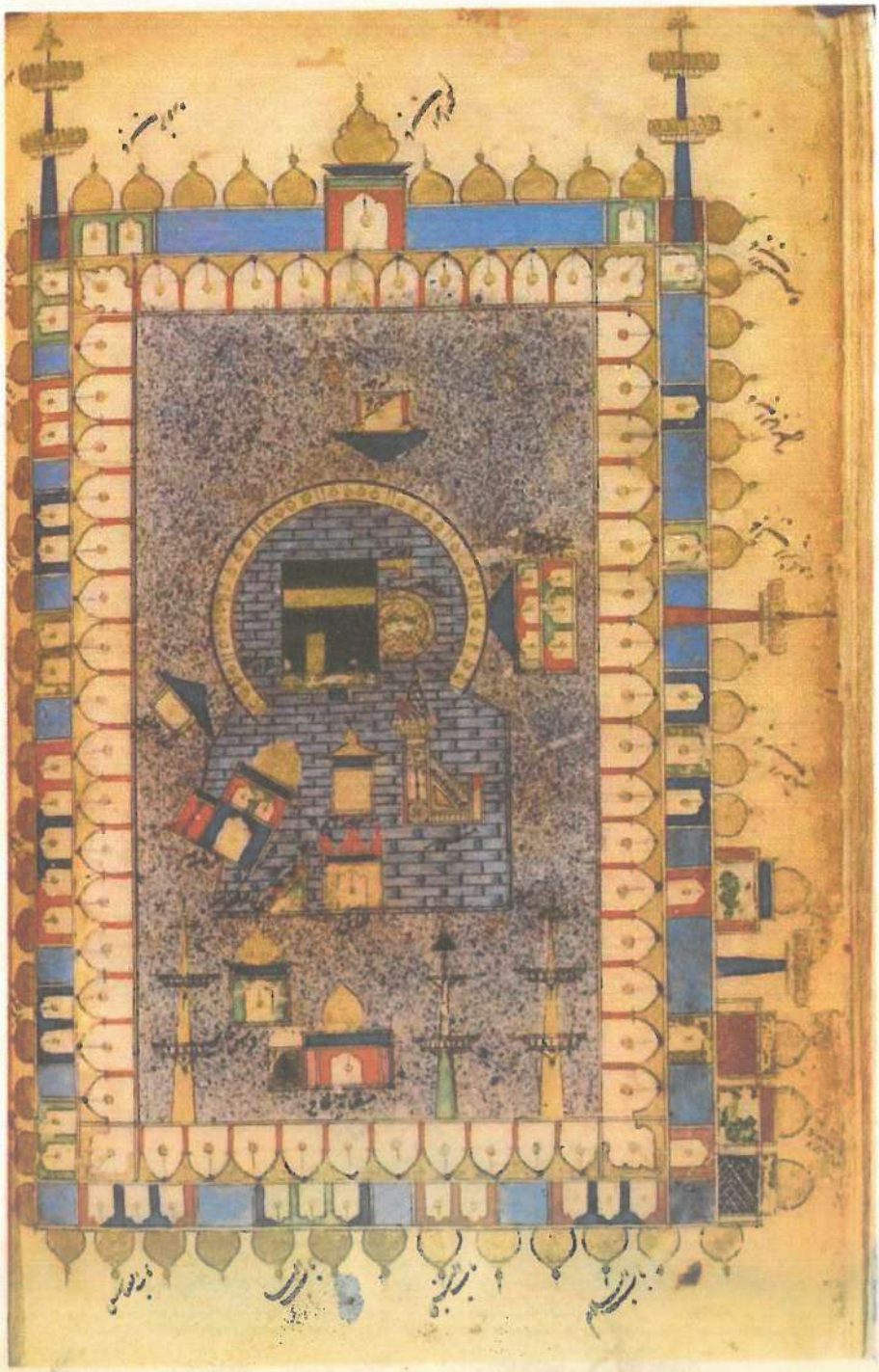
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Ludwig Deutch. "The Snake Charmers". Signed, dated Paris 1888. oil on panel, size: 27½"x36¼". Recently exhibited at Riyadh Exhibition of Orientalist Paintings. Reproduced courtesy of the Mathaf Gallery, London.

Editorial

This issue had been printed when the sad news came of the passing away in Paris of the scholar-savant Dr. Najmuddine Bammate. May his soul rest in peace: to Allah we belong and to Him we must return.

A distinguished art historian and one of the finest exponents of Islamic art, he devoted a whole lifetime building bridges of understanding and interpretation between the world of art and the Islamic world — an objective he identified for this journal itself when invited to join its Board of Contributing Editors at its very inception two years ago. He was most truly an internationalist, and passionately believed in "the recognition of every culture in its own universality." To him, as he once put it, a great culture was not necessarily a powerful one, but one "which is loved, cared for, respected by the humble, and meaningful to all the people." It was in this context that he pleaded for an effort "to consider and to study Islamic art within its own social and cultural context", as in his view Islamic art had too long been affected by what could be called 'renaissance' or 'neo-classical' prejudice. He argued that "Byzantine art, negro art are now studied according to their own intrinsic values and criteria, and not as styles which tried and failed to imitate realism, or were unable to obtain perspective, or confused surface decoration with great art, or again failed to have a sufficient number of individual artists to indulge instead in the repetition of patterns in workmanship." He felt that Islamic art should be approached "without such prejudgement and simply considered "according to its own values and criteria and to what its society wanted and its culture desired to achieve, which is expressed in texts as well as in forms". He knew that this required "rigorous and long-term field work involving collective efforts of research as well as preservation, since so many of the works to be studied are scattered, threatened with destruction or alteration, denatured or misunderstood"; and he identified this as one of the tasks of the Islamic Arts Foundation.

◆ ◆ ◆

To those of us who knew and admired his brilliant contribution to the 1st International Seminar on "The Arts in Islamic Lands" at Farnham Castle in 1982, his loss will be particularly poignant as we prepare for the forthcoming 2nd Seminar this Spring. As a scholar as well as a much travelled person, Dr. Bammate had personally visited and studied almost every major collection of Islamic art in the East and the West, and was a keen advocate of creating and developing an integrated and professionally organised documentation centre as a repertory of comprehensive data on Islamic art objects throughout the world. That is a specific theme on which the 1985 Seminar will concentrate, among other things as a fitting tribute to his own memory and vision.

THE QATAR NATIONAL MUSEUM

Dr. Darwish Mostafa Al Far



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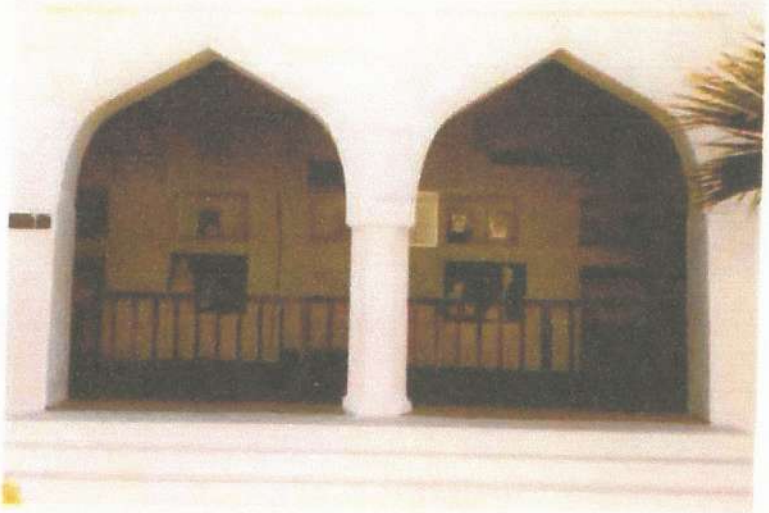
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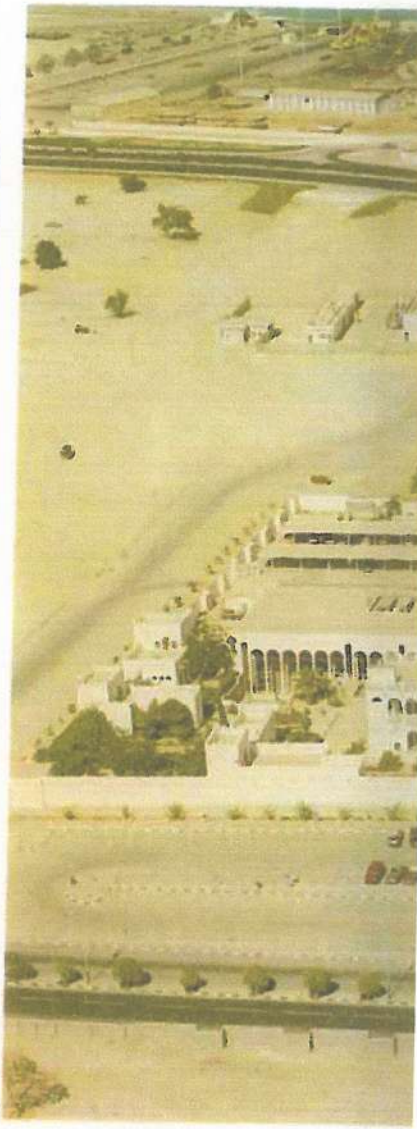
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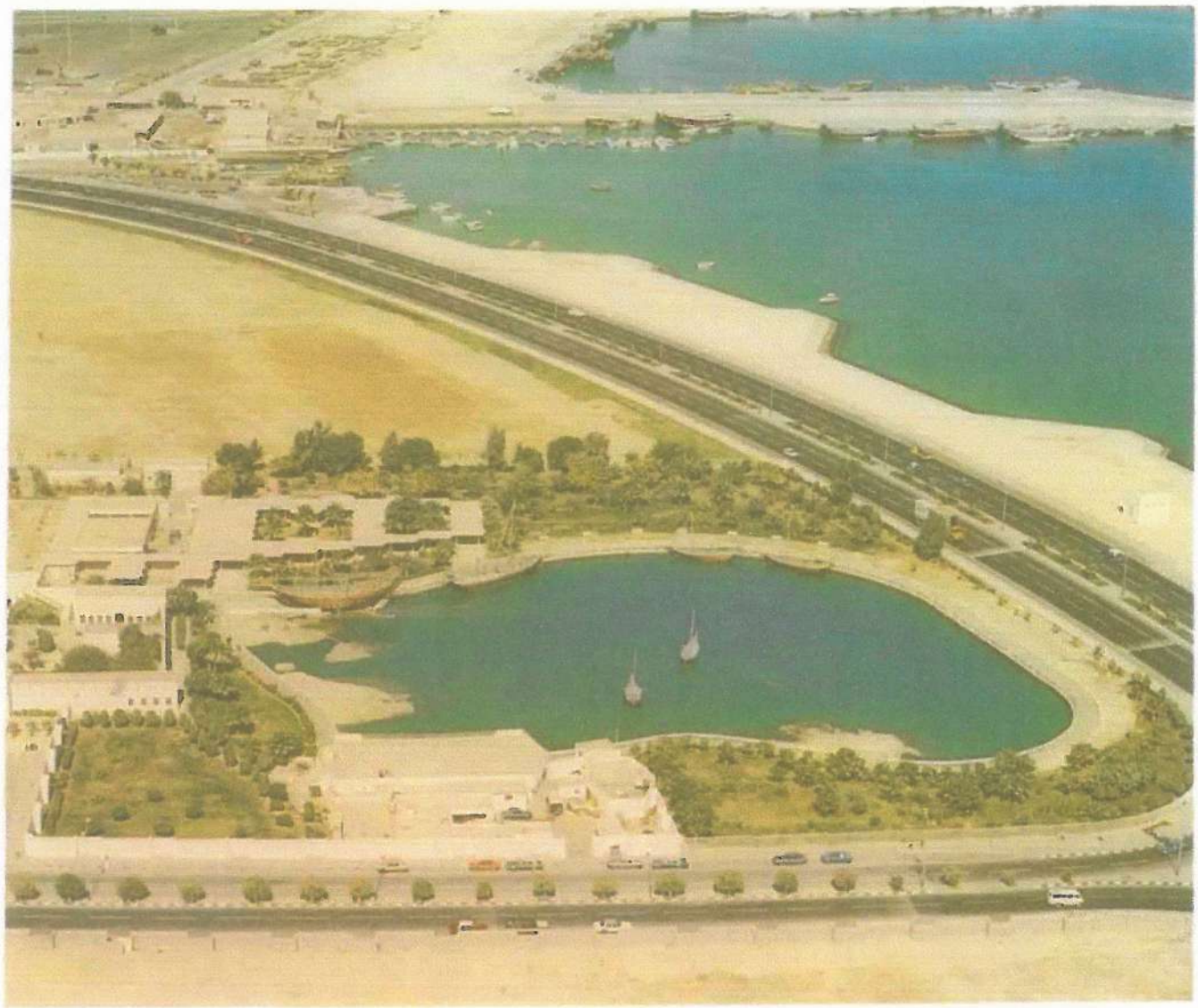
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Overlooking the beach between Ras Abboud and Doha harbour, and spread over an area of approximately 50,000 square meters, the Qatar National Museum is housed in what is itself a pre-eminently striking example of indigenous Arab architecture at the turn of the 19th century. It was formally inaugurated by H.H. Shaikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani on 23 June 1975, and it broadly covers the history and heritage of the Qatari people as well as various facets of the land and its environment. Above all it reflects the ideology and philosophy of the State of Qatar to keep abreast with the needs and demands of the moden scientific civilisation, while staying and developing within the Arab-Islamic framework, and creating institutions aimed at a broad-based dispersal of knowledge and popular participation of the masses in the spheres of science, culture and recreation.

Within the short period of less than ten years, the Museum has not



only added new depth and dimension to the capital, Doha, but has steadily acquired world-wide reputation as a cultural landmark in this region where, over the centuries, Qatar has played its role in natural and human history as a part of "the eastern Fatherland of Arabia". Indeed, as I pointed out in an earlier article contributed to the Opec volume *Not Oil Alone*, although the mainland of the State of Qatar, namely the Qatar Peninsula on modern maps, is an isolated protrusion from the Arabian Peninsula surrounded by sea and *sabkhas* (salt marsh), the country cannot be treated as an independent ecosystem. This has been substantiated by recent researches in various disciplines, including what botanists learned about the presence of indigenous floral species characteristic of Qatar, such as the famous edible seasonal herb fruit, al Yarawah (glossima edula). It is also confirmed by what archaeologists report about the presence of obscure, not yet deciphered, engravings of the Stone Age Qataris in different parts of the country, especially in the north-east near Fuwairet and Jassasyiah, where there are several patterns of lines, cups, pits and scorpion-like boots not yet known elsewhere; and by what we know today about the hand-made stone incense burners at El Khor, almost half way between the capital, Doha, and the extreme north of the peninsula on the eastern shore.

Even in the country's folklore, one can detect the odour of East African, Persian and Indian factors blended in the Qatar crucible with the authentic folklore of Arabia. In the Arabic accent of the Qataris, one can unmistakably feel the influence of minor infiltrations of non-Arabic languages. Women's dresses and decorations and local spiced dishes also betray foreign influence. G.R.H. Wright could even prove successfully that traditional Qatari architecture is a product of several patterns of building in neighbouring

1. *Two of the early Islamic Coins in the Museum.*
2. *Traditional Bedouin textile design.*
3. *A view of the two storey central structure which houses traditional Qatari furniture.*
4. *A hand-beaten kettle.*
5. *The main entrance.*
6. *Some of the Islamic art and calligraphy exhibits.*
7. *A view of the Main Hall.*
8. *Part of the Old Palace.*
9. *An aerial view of the Qatar National Museum Complex.*



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countries. And yet the Qataris have developed and maintained their own entity and national identity over the centuries, consolidating and enriching their history with famous warriors, poets and leaders of thought and learning, specially in the field of Islamic jurisprudence where many Qataris have been prominent.

The name itself is evocative of history: Pliny the Elder, in his *Natural History*, mentioned the "Nomad Catharrei".

The map of Ptolemy shows the word "Catara" at the head of a bay lying east by "half a degree" from the famous end of the incense-trail at Gerrah, which may be "El Aqir" in the numerous Arabic geography references. We find "Cidado de Catar" on the 1563 map of the Iberian, Lozaro Lewis, and "Catarah" on the 1568 map of Vernae Vaz Dourado. Again, while there is no mention of the word Qatar on the famous map reproduced after Al Idrisi of the 12th century AD, we find that in his own reputed lexicon "Nuzhat al Mostaq—fi Ikhtiraq Al Aafaq", Al Adrisi mentions Qatar, as he says: "From Golfar to El Bahrain you come to the port called El Sabkha where there is a fresh water spring, then to Shiqab and Bowar on a barely passable sea shore. These places are called the Sea of Qatar". Al Idrisi goes on to say that "On the shore of the Sea of Qatar, there are no inhabitants", but adds that in the sea itself "there are several islands which are only inhabited by birds of different kinds. The droppings of these birds accumulate to form much dung. When the wind in the sea is fair, sailors on boats reach these islands and carry that bird excrement to Basrah and elsewhere



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10. *Traditional Qatari hand loom.*
11. *Early Qatari kitchen utensils.*
12. *Bedouin hand weave.*
13. *Part of the Islamic numismatic collection.*

to sell it as a very high-price commodity, where it is used as fertilizer for gardens and vineyards".

Qatar does not appear on the 1750 map of Emon Bowen. However, Al Masoodi, the famous Arab Geographer (died 956), tells us in his *Morooj Ad Dhahab*: "on the opposite side of the Persian shores there is the land of Bahrain and the (Islands of Qatar) and the shores of (Bani Judhaimah) and the land of Oman". He mentions again: "the Abyssinian Sea, the land of Khariq and Qatar and Ceylon". Another Arabic geographer Al Hamadani of the 10th century mentions a watering place named Qatar in the "region of El Bahrain". Yaqut, the famous lexicographer and geographer of the 13th century, speaks about a kind of coarse red cloth with stripes from which are made shirts or dresses called "Qitriah", described in several Arabic poems and carried from Qatar for different markets in Arabia. He does not tell us whether these garments were manufactured in Qatar or imported from abroad, but says that Qatar is situated on the shore between Oman and El Aqir. Yaqut adds that Qatar is famous also for its stock of thoroughbred she-camels, described in poetry as Qatariyat.

In the "Book of Conquests" of El Baladharri, the word Qatar does not appear. The region between Oman and Basrah was simply called El Bahrain, or Khariq or El Khatt. Reference is made to El Khatt in naming the



"Khatti spears," which were imported from India via this part of Arabia. El Baladharri mentions that, in the seventh century, the people of the region, including Qatar, practised the pagan cult of worshipping horses and were called the Aspathis, who, except for a very few, followed Islam and sent their tribute to the Prophet — totalling some 80,000 (dinars?) — through his messenger to El Bahrain region, Al Alaa ibn Al Hadhrami, to their leader Al Mondhir ibn Sawa, a descendant of Boni Tamin, the forerunners of Al Thani. We do not know how much Qatar contributed in that tribute from its famous pearl banks.

It may be mentioned that, in the 10th century, the great Moslem scientist, Al Biruni, denied the legend of the formation of precious pearls along the banks of El Bahrain region from dew or rain drops that fall into floating oysters at a certain season of the year. The legend is intensified through a verse of poetry in which the pearls are described as twinkling like the dog-star Sirius, and are Yemenite or "Qatary". Al Biruni said that the pronunciation must be "Qataryaton" and not "Qatryaton", in relation to Qatar, a place name in the Bahrain region, and not in relation to "Qatr" or rain/dew drops.

It is not without foundation to theorize that the northern and eastern pearl banks of Qatar received great attention from pearl merchants and divers of the Abbasid times because Queen Zabaidah, wife of Caliph Harun ar-Rashid, was fond of pearls. She ordered drilling of thousands of pearls to pierce them at right angles to make it possible to weave them into a dress. Archaeologists are busy studying ruins of Abbasid settlements near the north-western province of Qatar.

Whatever the origin of the name Qatar, it should be noted that naming the whole peninsula Qatar is a relatively recent phenomenon, which made its appearance, as far as one can think, on a 19th century Ottoman Empire map.

How to compress and display the millenia of Qatari history and tradition, how to reflect and bring alive its land-sea environment, and above all how to interpret and project its pre-eminent role and contribution as an inseparable part of the Arab-Islamic world — these were the challenging tasks that daunted as well as inspired the planning and organisation of the Museum from its very beginning. And although a great deal has been achieved as the existing collections and displays testify, continuing efforts are being made to develop and enlarge it by expanding the existing sec[illegible]l as visualising and adding new ones.

The Museum complex itself has evolved steadily over the years, and owes itself to the vision and personal initiative of the Emir himself who ordered the restoration of the old palace of the late Sheikh Abdullah Bin Qassim Al-Thani, the founder of the modern State of Qatar, for housing the Museum. The palace was originally built in 1901 to serve as a residence as well as administrative headquarters, and had 11 units including Sheikh Abdullah's own house and those of Sheikh Hamad and Sheikh Ali. Other units were the central Majlis and another two, the small and the major Majlis; the northern gate and scribe's room; the Imam's room and verandah; the eastern gate; and guard's room and stores.

All these structures were carefully restored between 1971 and 1975 by the Qatar Ministry of Public Works, according to the original Arab-Islamic design which was laid by the Arab engineer Abdullah Al Mail. Simultaneously with these restorations, another building — the new palace — was constructed, and together this complex provides the main nucleus of the Qatar National Museum, which has five main sections.

The *old palace*, mentioned above, has been used for displaying a variety of ethnographic material relating to the Qatari environment. The *new palace*, which has three floors, concentrates on material concerning archaeology, bedouin ethnography and natural history as well as Islamic arts and sciences, modern history, geology and oil. There are also exhibits depicting Arab life in town and desert, including arms and armour, weaving and spinning, falconry and horse and camel life.

The *marine* section deals with display of sea-life, fishing, pearl diving and trade, cultured pearls, and Arab achievements in navigation and seafaring. There is also an aquarium with live fish and other sea creatures from the territorial waters of Qatar. In the nearby *lagoon*, which was actually a protrusion from the Gulf itself that was separated by the advent of the Corniche road, the biologists of the Museum carry out their experiments, and the Museum keeps natural size dhows or all the sailing boats which were used to navigate the Gulf and the Indian Ocean before the advent of the steam. Finally, there is the *botanical garden* covering the space between various buildings of the Museum and around the lagoon, planned to develop as a comprehensive desert plant garden based on acquisitions from different deserts of the world.

Visitors to the Museum may begin with any section, but a suggested guideline is to turn right from the main gate and have a look at the

Mutawah's veranda and residence, which has been well preserved and carefully restored like the rest of the old palace. Then turn west directly to the residence of Sheikh Abdullah Bin Qassim to enjoy the beauty of the traditional old building with its intricate carvings in wood and plaster, and see some old traditional kitchenware, furniture and costumes. Proceeding to the residence of Sheikh Hamad Bin Abdullah, you see on your left in the southwestern corner of the palace, the old stable which is now a part of the garden. Next, in Sheikh Ali's residence there is relatively modern furniture, pottery and stoneware, and you move to the new palace leaving the bedouin tent on your right.

In this new building you see first of all a film in the pit facing the entrance that tells the scientific story of how Qatar appeared on the surface of the globe. Proceeding westward you see Qatari stone age artefacts and engravings at Fuwairet and Jussasyeh as well as the Nabatean inscriptions. Turning east to the circular hall you see samples of Muslim achievements in medieval times in science and technology. In the four side rooms are displayed several items relating to the camel brandings, movement of nomad tribes, the classical subdivisions of the Arab race, the Islamic arts, the Gulf musical instruments, and some of the contents of the nomad Arab's tent. Then you enter the realm of natural history: in the eastern end of this underground hall there are glimpses of modern history of Qatar, with the oil section above the staircase, and geology.

The adjacent two-storey central building houses the jewellery section and a display of traditional perfumery and, further eastward, is a delectable range of coffee-pots through the ages. You now leave the quarters of the old palace after having a look at the major Majlis and, walking through the eastern gate, you come to the lagoon with stately dhows — among these is *Fatih Al-Khair* which belonged to Sheikh Hamad half a century ago. Next is the marine section and aquarium, concluding with a tour around the lake and an enchanting view of the seascape from the Museum's Cafeteria.

That is how the Museum stands today. But what about the future? Already there are carefully worked out plans for modification and expansion, since one knows the basic practical difference between a museum and an exhibition, and it must be understood that a museum is a living, growing, dynamic entity. Indeed when a country or nation builds a museum on its own territory, the museum comes to belong automatically to all mankind: just as the construction of a lighthouse in the ocean guides *all* steamers irrespective of whatever flag they may be flying.



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It is in this perspective that plans for the Museum's future extensions and improvements are at present being worked out for an in-depth portrayal of Qatari environment. These would include setting up an elaborate herbarium containing all floral aspects of Qatar, scientifically identifying traditional and academic characteristics; presenting a fuller picture of Qatari bird life, migratory and indigenous, reptiles, mammals and insects, displayed in dioramas of their natural habitat to serve both science and recreation; and acquiring and projecting a thoroughly researched record of Qatari strata on the surface and the sub-surface, correlating these with the surrounding geological provinces and stratigraphically classifying the geological and geomorphological features. There will also be a major section on the mineral wealth of the Arab world telling the story of oil in Qatar as well as in other countries of the world, its chemistry, economics and international distribution.

Another project relates to preparation and display of miniatures of the citadels and forts which have their remnants still on Qatari terrain, and three-dimensional projections of the famous battles of Islam including Badr, Uhad, Hittin, Nahawand, Poitier, etc. as representing authentic aspects of the history of Arabs and the Islamic world to which Qatar undoubtedly belongs.

It is also planned to set up a gallery relating to the history of Arab Islamic science and technology, with specific sections named after famous Muslim scientists. The room for astronomy would carry the name of Al Biruni; medicine (Al Razi); mathematics (Al Khwarzimi); physics (Al Hasan ibn al Haizam); chemistry (jaber bin Hayyan — Geber); herbology (Ibn al Baitar); zoology (Al Damiri); technology and engineering (Ibn Al Jazari); and a few others, hoping to spark off active interest and enthusiasm of the youth which would help them in speculating and indulging in scientific and technological progress as proud descendents of those immortal Muslim savants who paved the road of science and knowledge to Europe itself.

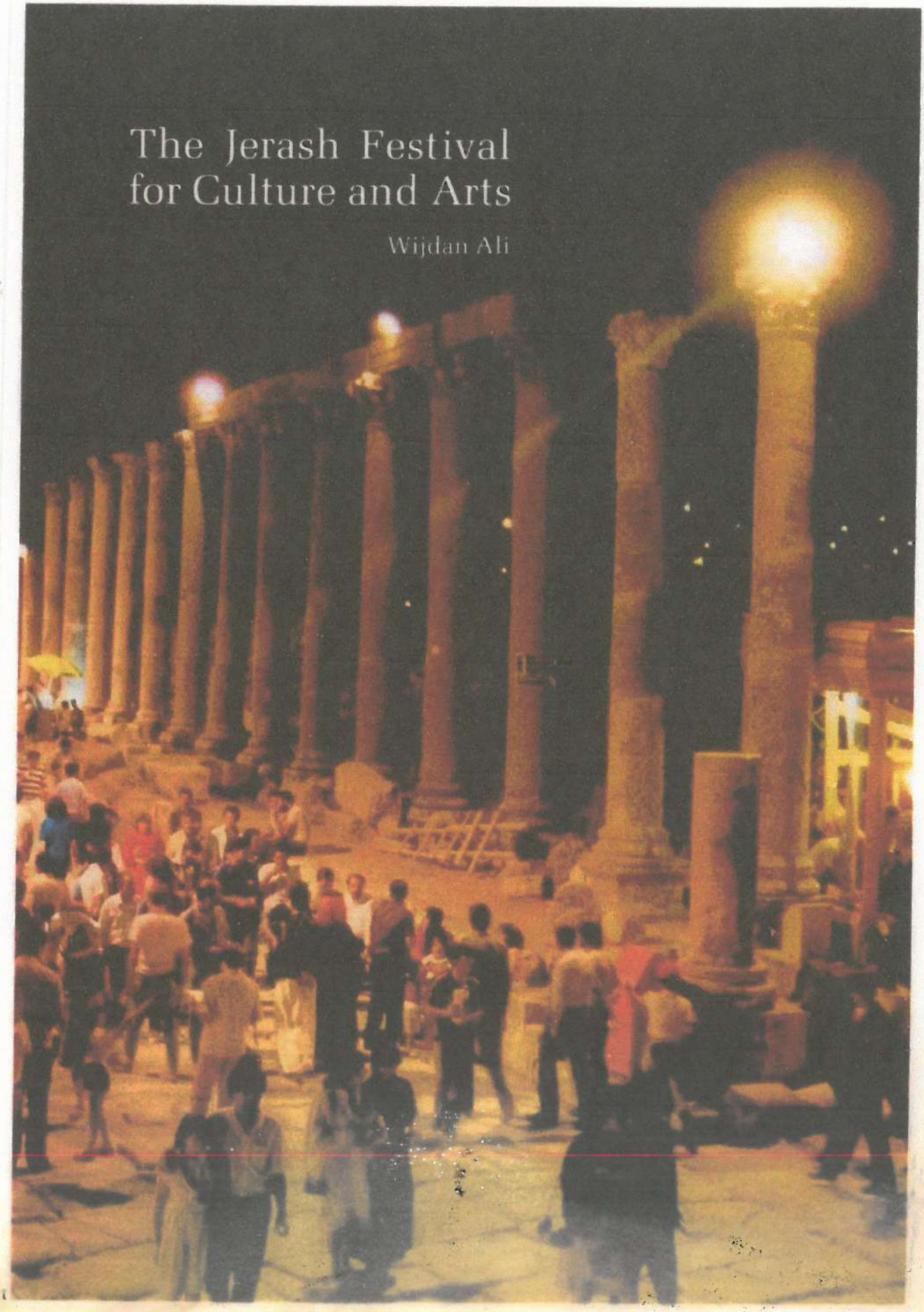
An interesting section would deal with the date palms and with scientific data relating to every aspect of this genuine Arab desert tree and its place in science and poetry, and displaying various kinds and strains of dates from all over the world. There would also be a section displaying the story of the camel dating back to the fossils appearing in the tertiary rocks of America and its relation with the llama and alpaca, etc.

Finally, an important part of this extension plan is the completion of the Doha Institute for Islamic numismatics dealing with the study of the Islamic coins in a scientific manner using modern chemical and physical equipment for a better and deeper knowledge about the mining centres and metallurgical processes and procedures during the Islamic period.

This Qatari quest for its heritage and a keen desire for a wider participation in the acquisition of knowledge is best summed up by the Arab poet who wrote long ago: "A worthy son is not he who says what his father was, but the one who says 'here I am'". □

The Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts

Wijdan Ali





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The 1984 Jerash Festival in the autumn (16-31 August) brought lots of surprises with it. It has become an event that people in Jordan look forward to: it satisfies the taste of the sophisticated few as well as of the fun-loving many, including youth and children. Through the wide spectrum of activities, especially the performing arts, all segments of society have been attracted to the Festival.

The emphasis in 1984 was mostly on folk groups. Both local and foreign folk dancing and music reigned supreme among the ruins of the ancient Roman city with its theatres, amphitheatres and forums.

Among the troupes that came from other Arab countries, there was the Iraqi National Folklore Troupe reviving their beautiful classical folk songs and accompanied by dances from different parts of Iraq. The music, choreography and costumes were all of high professional standard. The Iraqi troupe is the best ambassador of its country. It filled the nights of the Festival with authentic artistic representation of people whose cultural roots go deep in time.

The Muwwashah, an art born in Umayyad Spain, has hardly changed since Ziryab, the musician, came from the court of Haroun Al

1. *General view of the public.*
2. *The Iraqi Folklore Troupe.*
3. *Local Folklore Troupe, Maan Youth.*
4. *The Al Jeel Troupe.*





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Rashid in Baghdad to the court of Abdul Rahman II in Cordoba, where he established the first music conservatory of Andalusian music. Fusion of Arabic and Romance literature gave birth to the Muwwashah. Two groups, the National Institute of Arabic Music Band led by Muhammad Altamismani from Morocco, and the Arabic Music Orchestra led by Abdul Haleem Nuweira from Egypt, brought Andalusian nights to life in a most beautiful way.

Among the international troupes, the National Ballet of Colombia scored very high. It was the first time a South American group had



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5. The Columbian Ballet.
6. The Ballet du Nord, from France.

performed in Jordan, and it was a gain to the Festival. The great effort on the part of Her Majesty Queen Noor in bringing the Colombian ballet as well as the Sierra Leone National Dance Troupe to Jordan should be applauded. Both troupes acquainted the Jordanian public with cultures they had not been exposed to before.

From the United States, two original and very interesting troupes surprised the public by their excellent performances. One was the Young Strings in Action, a children's orchestra that gave pleasure by their spontaneity and high professionalism to both children and adults. The second was "Smircus" — Fairmont Theatre of the Deaf. This highly professional group of ten performers amazed the public and reminded them of a segment in our society we rarely think of entertaining in a third world country.

Other troupes were "Le Ballet du Nord" from France which added a classical touch as well as a touch of jazz to the performances, the Bitburg Folklore Dance Group from West Germany, the Friendship Folklore Troupe from the Soviet Union, with their colourful costumes and catching, cheerful music, the Harmanli Folklore Troupe from Bulgaria, the Gymnik Folklore Troupe from Czechoslovakia, the Up With People International Folklore Troupe from the United States, who presented dances and songs from all over the world, including Jordan, and the Chicago Footwarmers Jazz Group, also from the United States.

From Jordan, there were 26 folk groups from all over the country, each representing a different region. The best among them was the Alia Folklore Troupe, belonging to Alia, the Royal Jordanian Airline. Their professionalism earned them great admiration. Other good troupes were the Maan Youth Troupe from the North of Jordan, Aljeel Circassian Folk Dancers whose performances have always been of a high standard, and a new troupe "the Children of Beit Fajjar". They added a fresh touch to the performances. The rest of the troupes were given the chance to perform to a vast public, some for the first time, and to be reviewed by the local press which, to an artist, means a great deal.

There were five local plays, including a musical and a comedy. Given a longer time to rehearse and more funds they might have come up with stronger and better performances. There is always a first time, and the local producers should really start now for next year's performances.

The four children's plays, like last year, were of a higher standard than the grown-ups' plays. Could it be that children are harsher critics than adults, so their producers make more effort towards excellence!

A programme of poetry recital brought together poets from Egypt, Sudan, Iraq, Lebanon, Tunis, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Again, like last year, their performance reached a degree of excellence and the public's reaction was most enthusiastic.

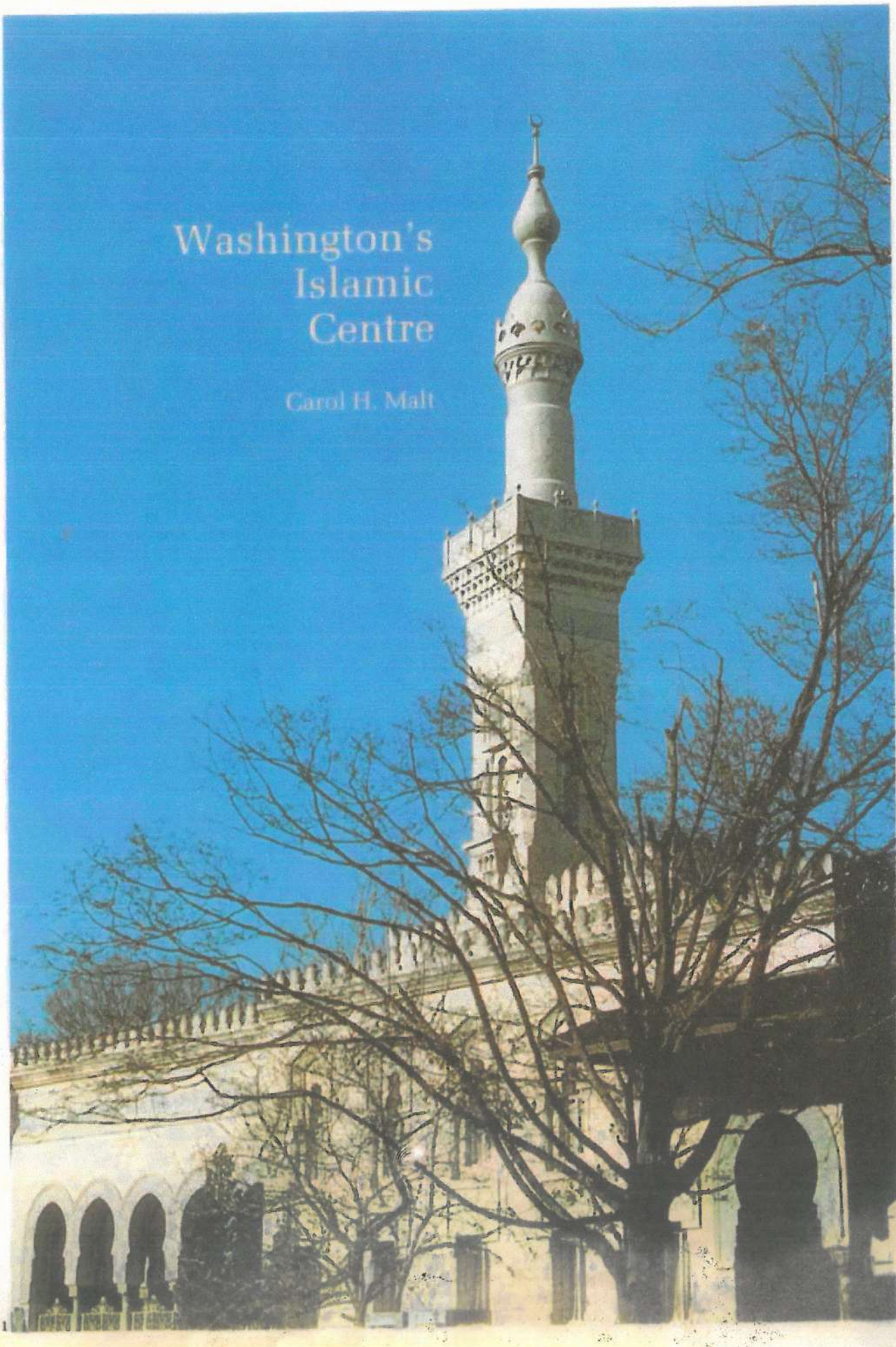
The high quality of the performing arts overshadowed the Fine Arts Exhibition, the Arab Book Fair, the Children's Books Exhibition and the Craft Exhibition. This is the second year that the exhibitions disappointed the public. Next year the public should be given a much better quality of exhibits in order to make up for the two previous years.

Micky Mouse, a Disney character, flew all the way from Florida to wander among the crowds and shake hands with wide-eyed children. The Radio Jordan Orchestra and the Jordanian Armed Forces Band as well as the Yarmouk University Music Bands freely entertained the public and received lots of applause.

The Jerash Festival in its four years has become a traditional event that people in the country and some from outside go to in order to entertain themselves and widen their horizons. It is an event that is strengthening bonds of international understanding through the highest and most effective media, the arts. □

Washington's Islamic Centre

Carol H. Malt



"The Islamic Center on Massachusetts Avenue may not stand serious esthetic comparison with the great monuments of Moslem architecture ranging from Spain to India, but the modest, elegant little building with its trim minaret that towers over Rock Creek Park has added an appreciable grace note to the city's architecture for 26 years," wrote Benjamin Forgey in a recent article in the *Washington Post* entitled "Islamic Grace", reintroducing the American public to the Islamic Centre in Washington D.C. Among the few Islamic Centres and mosques in America, it is certainly the most elegant. Located in the Embassy Row section of the city, it is a religious and cultural facility whose objectives are "to erect a house for the service of Allah; to serve as a centre for religious guidance for Muslims; to be a leading centre of Islam in the Western world."

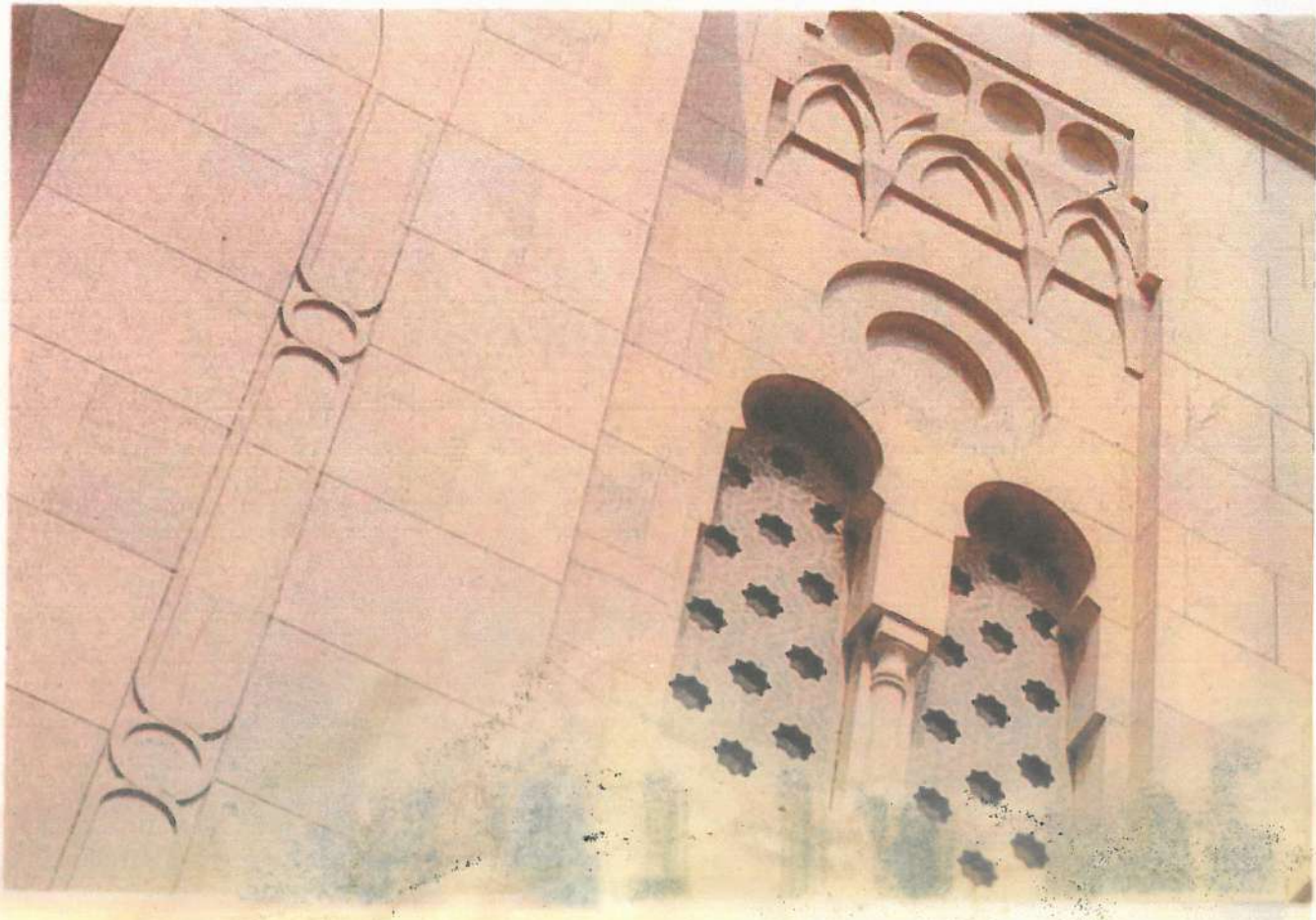
Architecturally, the Center is a complex of related facilities. Unified by the columned facade it is an impressive building, yet human in scale. From the entrance walkway by the street, the cut limestone building is long with a recessed entrance containing five slightly pointed arches which spring from slender columns. The decorative capitals relate to Ionic design, much like those in the mosque of Hamouda Pacha (1655) although the columns are not fluted. Decorative panels above the arches contain calligraphy set in light blue stone chips. A single arch at both ends of the building balances the facade while a short tiled roof juts decoratively over them suggesting Andulusian influence. The rectangular minaret is well proportioned for the building, its design suggestive of the al-Azhar mosque in Cairo.

Other Egyptian influences, such as the similarity of the crenellations to the mosque madressa of Sultan Hasan (completed 1362) are not surprising for the Centre was designed by Cairo architects in the Ministry of Wakfs, then built by a local firm, Irving S. Porter and Sons. With the exception of the interior tiles, chandeliers and *minbar*, it was built with American materials and reflects the combined artistic influences of Egyptian, Turkish, Andulusian and American design.

Entering the courtyard through the arches in the facade, the quiet peace of the setting and the inspirational beauty of the architecture become apparent. Gardens and ornate iron work can be glimpsed

1. *The Islamic Center, Washington D.C.*
2. *Detail of the Mosque facade.*
3. *The courtyard with fountain.*
4. *Damaged ceiling.*
5. *Ceiling under repair.*
6. *Minaret, detail.*

Photographs 1,4,5 by Georgetown Design Group.
5,6,7 by Malt.



through archways on the sides and a central marble fountain beckons. Immediately to the right, doors lead to the offices and gift shop where books on Islam, cards, calendars, *Qur'ans* as well as perfume and sourvenirs are sold.

Immediately to the left is the library which is seemingly well provided with historical and scholarly material, but not with current journals and publications due to a lack of funding. It contains books, magazines and manuscripts, mostly in Arabic, however a great many are in English. It is professionally catalogued and contains several basic texts on Islamic art. As a reference library, it is available to scholars and students by request.

Cases along the walls house exquisitely tooled leather covered *Qur'ans* and several folk and archeological objects from the Middle East including pottery, weaving and metal work.

Above the library, on the second floor, is a series of interesting interconnected spaces which could be adapted for a visual arts gallery. A similar space across the courtyard above the gift shop contains the offices.

The entire building sparkles from obvious care and attention, but this present beauty belies the turmoil which was resolved just a year ago. Shortly after the Islamic revolution in Iran, the Center was caught in a controversy involving certain elements wanting to use it for political purposes. While closed for repairs after it was firebombed in May of 1982, dissidents staged a sit-in in the mosque, then took over the Centre completely in January of the following year and remained in control of it until eventually forced to leave under the direction of the Executive Committee. It was during that time that the Centre and mosque were physically neglected and abused. The closure of the Centre between 1981 and 1983 interrupted its activities and funding.

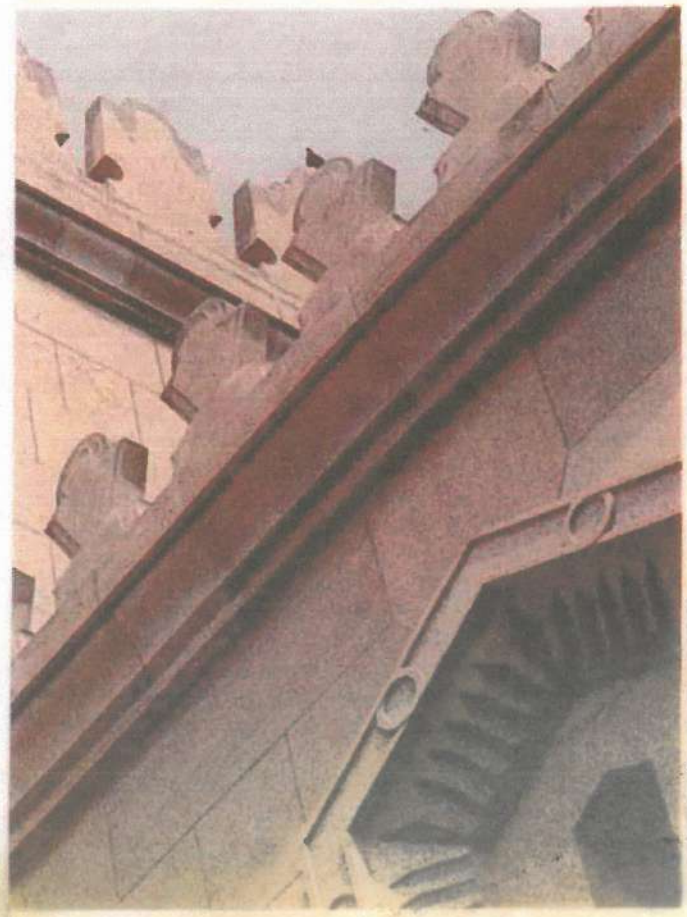
Responsible for the extensive restoration to the Centre was Dr. Mokhlas Al-Hariri, President of Georgetown Design Group in Washington. Working without the original blueprints and wishing to complete their work in record time for the upcoming Eid Al-Fitr, over forty workers laboured four whirlwind months to repair the structural problems of the Centre: the leaking roof, burst pipes and crumbling mortar. Once structurally sound, the aesthetic and design problems caused by insensitivity

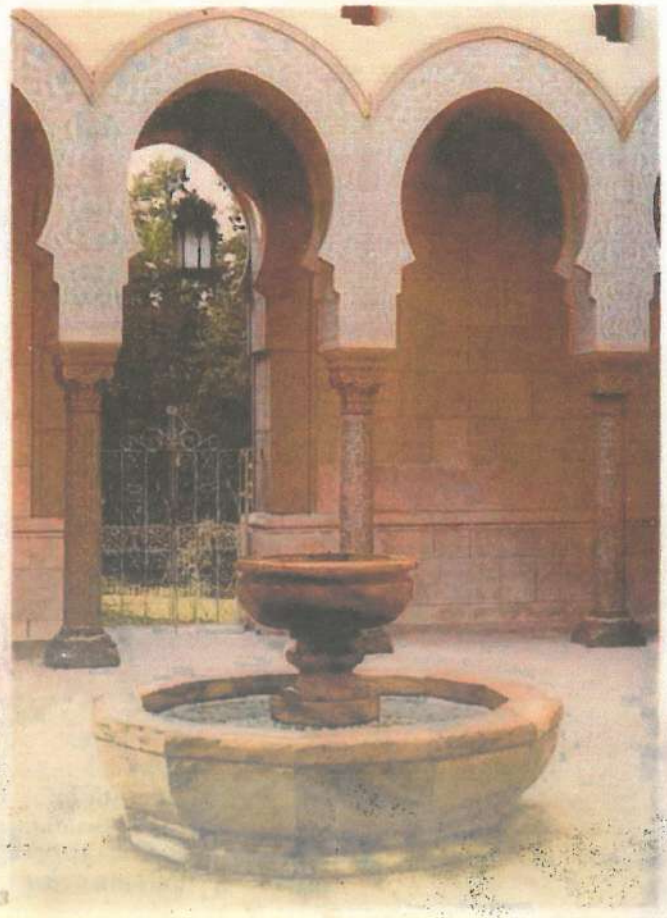


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and lack of respect to the art work inside were addressed.

Interviewed in his office, which is located not far from the Centre. Dr. Al-Hariri still marvels that the restoration was completed in so short a time. His photographs of the damage and the restoration in progress are graphic reminders of an unfortunate era.

During the restoration there were some surprises: because the elaborate painted ceiling had been blackened with soot from fires and needed cleaning, restorers uncovered a long forgotten inscription in a corner over one of the columns in the prayer hall which was written by the Egyptian craftsmen originally brought over to do the work. It reads: 'This is the ornament and the calligraphy of Abdel Hassen and his assistants, Mohammed Mehdi and Toufik Ahamed.'

Besides restoring this room and complex to its original beauty, Dr. Al-Hariri also suggested several additional security measures: an iron fence surrounding the site, and installation of fire and surveillance equipment. These additions do not detract or intrude in aesthetic enjoyment of the Centre. Under his sensitive and inspired direction, today, except for historic *minbar* which was badly burned in an arson attempt, and has not been restored, the Centre is again a place of beauty.

Because the design of the complex had to satisfy existing Washington building codes as well as the needs of Islam, the observer may not notice the subtlety of the architectural plan. For example, the impressive facade faces Massachusetts Avenue while the prayer hall, behind, is oriented toward Mecca. The walls of the courtyard space in between become delicately convex and concave to meet the prayer hall at its new axis.

Access to the prayer hall from the courtyard is through a small stepped and recessed entryway. A heavy wooden door opens to reveal the narrow, cool receiving hall separating the main prayer area. The outer walls of the hall are lined with splendid painted turquoise blue and green tiles whose vegetal and intricate floral forms are mirrored in the designs of the dark red Persian rugs which overlap each other on the floor. The central prayer area, bordered by columns with elaborately painted and shaped arches contains approximately 4,000 square feet. The controlled lighting



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is adequate to fully appreciate the splendid tilework and credit for its manufacture is given to the right of the main entrance: Made in Turkey by Sumerbank Yildiz Porcelain Factory.

Above the tiles which cover the first six feet of the outside walls, the eye rests in neutral space before the elaborate geometric painted patterns of the upper walls and dome begin. The line, colour and design of the decoration resembles that of the Umayyad mosque in Damascus and in this area boldly outlined rectangular cartouches contain verses from the *Qur'an*. The ornately painted and geometrically designed dome sits on an octagonal drum which contains small arched windows - further controlling the light. From the centre of the dome hangs a large metal chandelier designed in Egypt and containing the thick bubbled glass so reminiscent of Hebron's early wares.

The plain temporary *minbar* seems out of place in this splendid hall. The original, still in restoration, was made of over 10,000 pieces of wood joined together in geometric patterns fitted by hand without the use of nails. Its stair sides consist of five rectangular and two triangular panels connected to the seating area by four domed and crenellated pillars. There is an atmosphere of reverence, a setting of beauty, and the sense of awe that one expects and respects when in a house of peace.

The Islamic Centre in Washington was the dream of an American Muslim from Palestine, A. Joseph Howar (abu-Howa) who came to this country at the age of sixteen as a manuel laborer and died recently having built a small, real estate empire.

Although it dreamed on June 28, 1957, with President Dwight Eisenhower as the keynote speaker, the Centre began as an idea in 1944 when Muslim dignitaries attended the funeral of the Turkish Ambassador. During this gathering, it became apparent that they needed a mosque not only for such activities, but also for educating their families in Islam and for holding regular prayers.

With the support of many and the help of the Egyptian Ambassador, Mahmoud Pasha, Mr. Howar began to finance his dream. A trust was set up to finance the operation of the Cenre and many of the Embassies of Muslim countries committed themselves to provide funds on an annual basis. A Board of Governors was appointed, made up of representatives of each of the Muslim countries that had diplomatic relations in the United States. These representatives were to be Ambassadors. Today, the only non-ambassador on the Board is the son of Mr. Howar, who acts as treasurer. Currently the chairman of the Board is H.E. Omer Salih Eissa, Ambassador of the Sudan.

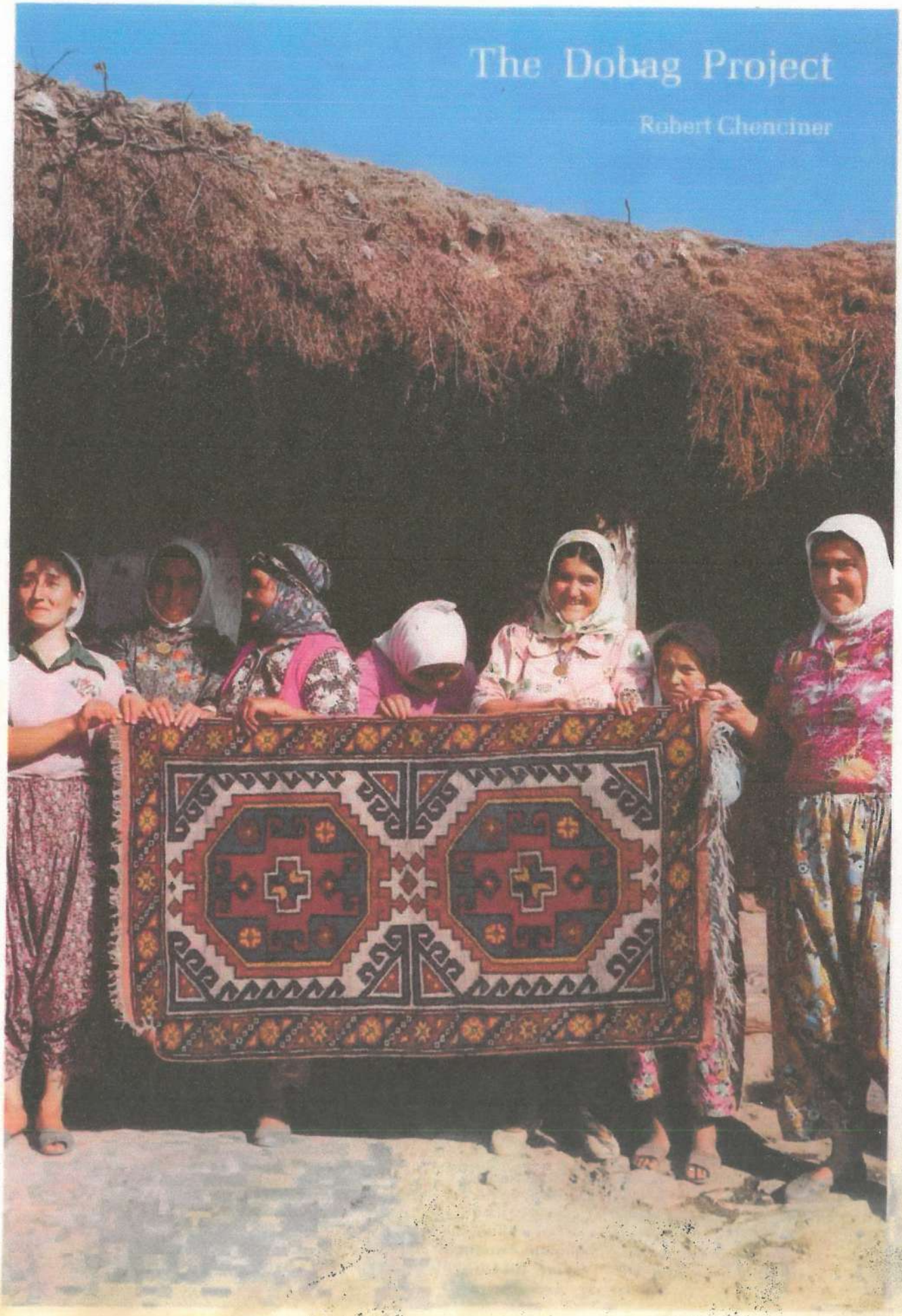
The Centre publishes and distributes literature on Islam, conducts religious and language classes, operates a research centre with a library, offers counsel and guidance to Muslims and non-Muslims and furnishes the latter who wish to embrace Islam with a place to take their *Shahadah*, to conduct marriage ceremonies, funerals and other matters of concern to Muslims. Above all, the Centre provides Islamic leadership to Muslims from all nations, it acts as a representative of Islam in various ecumenical conferences, and supports Muslim-Christian dialogue as a representative of Islam at meetings of the National Council of Churches in the United States and Canada.

The current Imam is Dr. Adil Al-Aseer and the program director, Dr. H.S. Hamod, is the first American born Muslim to have this office. Dr. Hamod is concerned about the growth of the Centre and plans to expand programming to include exhibits of Islamic art, seminars and symposia on topical issues in Islam as well as continue the impressive lecture series begun this past year.

He understands well the needs of the Centre and speaks with enthusiasm about its future: "This Centre has great potential, some of which has been realized. It's the future that we must look toward, because as the Muslim population in the West grows, our task will at the same moment become more challenging and more rewarding as our programs fulfil the aims of Islam." □

The Dobag Project

Robert Chenciner

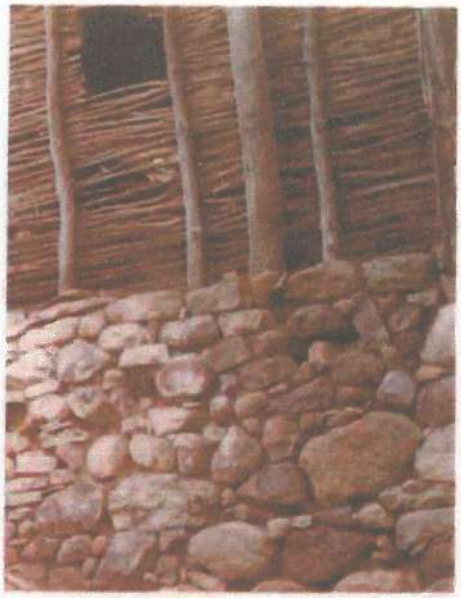




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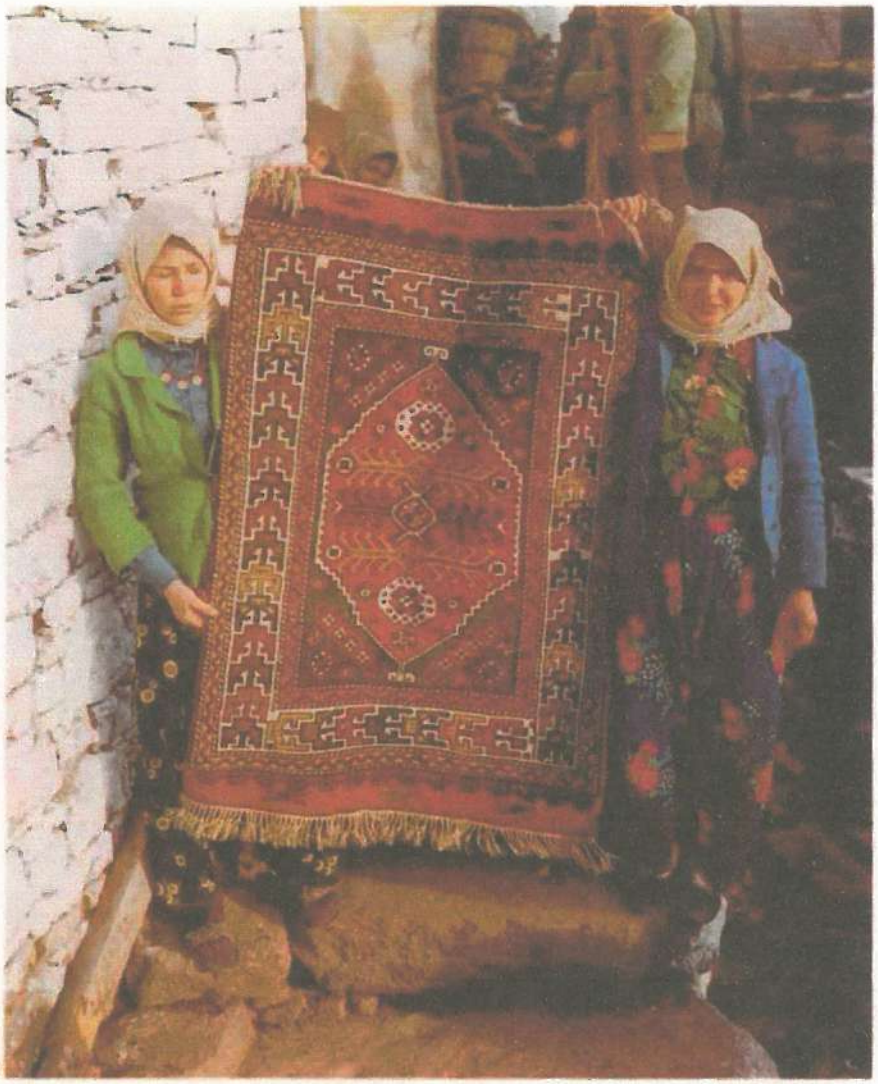


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1. *Here are all the women and girls aged from 10 to 60, who were involved in dyeing and knotting the first Dobag carpet, standing next to the outdoor covered area where their loom is set up. The women (not the men) get paid by the village co-operative when the carpet is finished.*

2. *In the Yundag district rug weavers live in stone houses with stone roofs. These people are Sunni Moslems, originally Turkomen nomads, who settled in the early nineteenth century. Locally produced wool is hanging on the terraces.*

3. *A mother and daughter knotting at the loom in the Yundag district. They copy the design of the mother's own dowry carpet made 20 years ago with synthetic dyes. Their head-dress is similar to those worn by nomad Turkomen and their hands and finger nails are dyed with henna for religious or cosmetic reasons.*

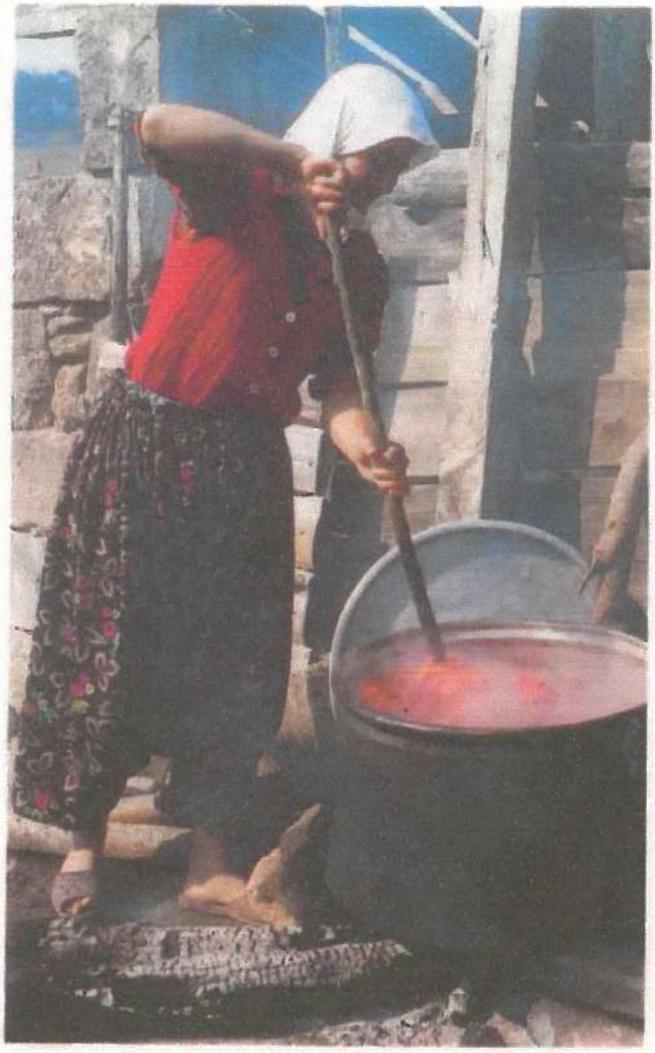
4. *Cutting the warps for the first Dobag carpet made in September 1981. This Yuruk lady from Cinavpinar village near Ayvcacik dressed in her own colourful (synthetic coloured) clothes had already started her second carpet to have it ready for sale next week. It takes a week for two weavers to make a small carpet with 50,000 knots — they are paid by the knot which maintains a standard quality.*

5. *Two unmarried sisters from Pinar village in the Yundag district, with their first Dobag carpet woven in Spring 1982. They are now weaving rugs for their dowries, choosing to use natural dyes.*

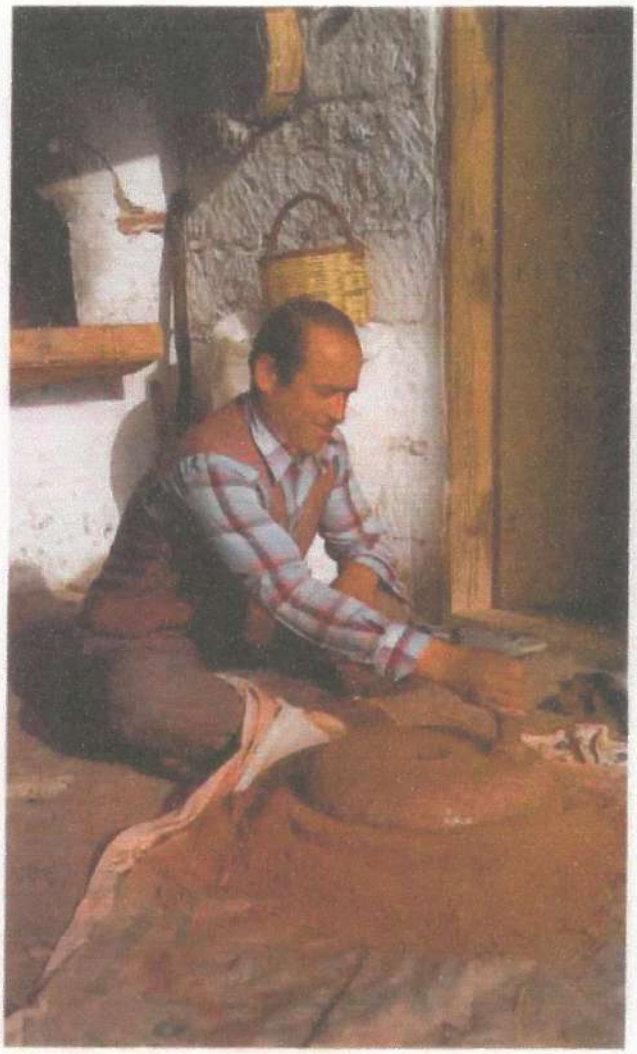
In June 1983, visitors to the London Barbican exhibition 'Carpet Magic' were agreeably surprised to see a real Turkish lady weaving a carpet. The fifty year old mother and her loom left her village for the first time and stayed in London for five weeks during which time she wove two DOGBAG carpets at the exhibition. With no housework to do, she found production was faster than at home and there were plenty of people who could speak Turkish with her and were fascinated by watching her work.

The Dobag project is a Five Year Plan for the revival of natural dyes in certain areas of Anatolia which still have an unbroken weaving tradition. Dobag is the abbreviation of Dogal boya arastirma vegelistirme project, meaning 'research and development project for natural dyes'. The project was established in May 1981 at the former State School for Applied Fine Arts, Textile Department, Istanbul. In July 1982 the school became the Faculty of Fine Arts of Marmara University, Istanbul. At present the Dobag project is headed by Prof. Dr. Fahiman Tekil, Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts. Dr. Harold Bohmer is resident expert for the German Society for Technical Co-operation.

The project is supported by several government ministries, universities and museums. To help provide comprehensive assistance and advice, Dobag co-operates closely with public organizations and co-operatives in selected pilot districts. Its activities range from organizing dyeing courses to giving information to prospective



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6. An Ayvacik lady dyeing madder red herself in her tinned copper pot. She will pass on her skill to three or four relatives. They found that the tin, in addition to the mordant, has the effect of brightening the red to orange, so aluminium pots are now usually used, which have no effect on the colours.

7. An Ayvacik man grinding dried madder roots with a moveable top stone weighing 10-15kg. It takes over an hour's hard work to grind a kilo of light red. A kilo of dye makes enough red wool for a 1½ sq. metre rug.

buyers. The results of chemical dye analyses carried out on old Turkish textiles complemented with botanic research provide the technical basis for reviving natural dyeing. It is in the reintroduction of home dyeing that Dobag sees the greatest potential to recreate the rich spectrum of colours that existed in former times. Turkish pattern tradition is traced through new and old carpets and flatweaves (up to 100 years old – synthetic dyes were introduced after 1865) found in local houses and mosques. Copying Caucasian, Persian and unauthentic patterns is strictly prohibited by Dobag. Dobag carpets and flatweaves are never artificially bleached nor made to appear old by chemical treatment. Dobag issue certificates that guarantee natural dyes and authentic patterns in a carpet or flat weave.

The manufacture of Dobag carpets was begun in the autumn of 1981 in the district of Ayvacik, in the province of Canakkale, and is now in full operation.

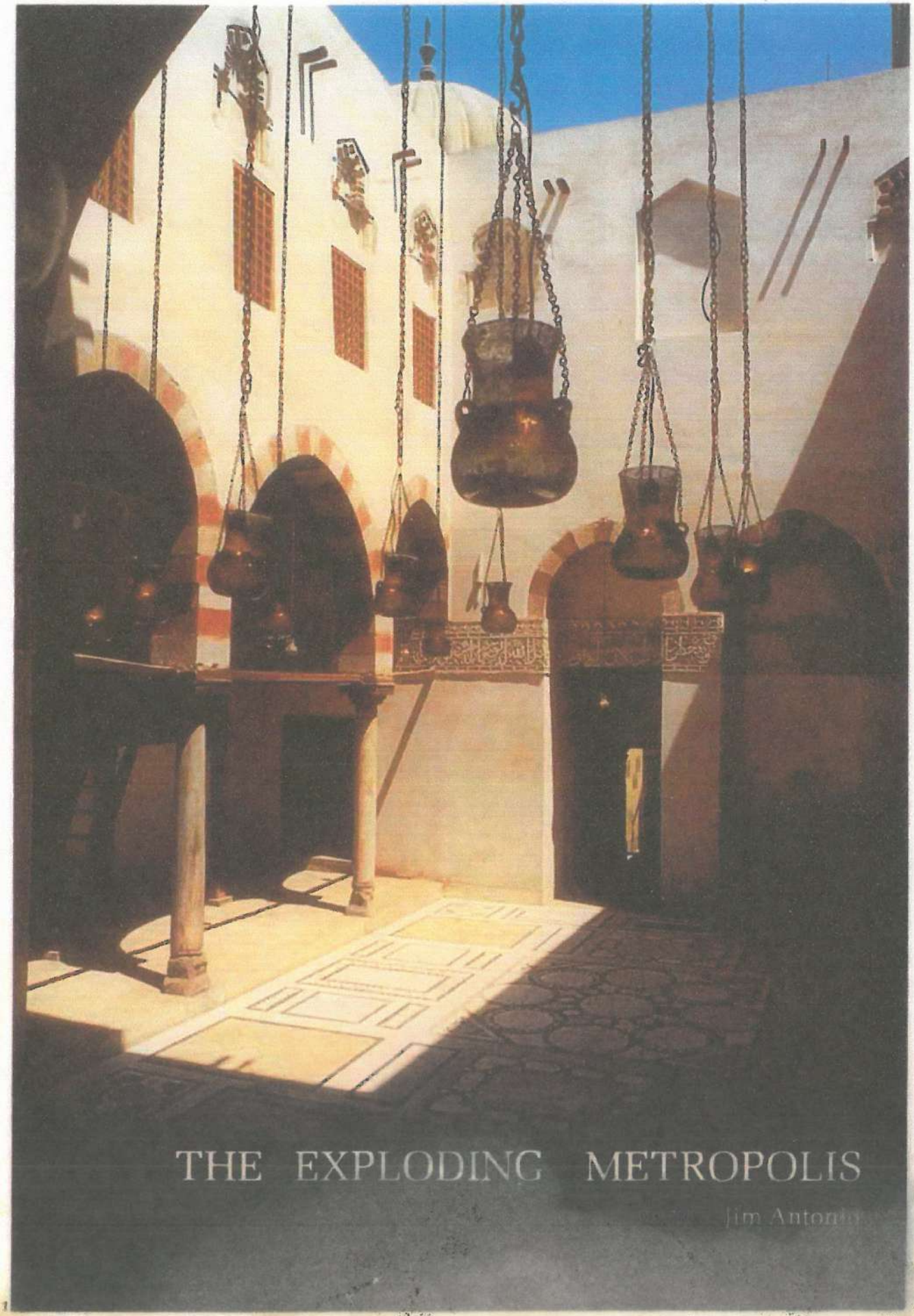
In order to organize the production, selling and distribution of Dobag products, a special state financed company was established at Canakkale in August 1982.

In the Yundag, a mountain range in the province of Manisa, production of carpets has also already begun. Preparations are underway to establish further projects at Karatepe, near Adana (flatweaves), and Dosemealti, near Antalya (carpets). Steps have also been taken to incorporate the Dobag project in the power of the state financing Organization.

The Dobag Project is both interesting and important because it works at village level, and is run by local people. There is no imposition of outside values or culture, or importation of machinery. Its success since it started two years ago has meant that in the two areas where the natural coloured rugs are made by over 350 households, they are earning more money than before and they are no longer thinking of leaving the village to move to the big cities.

The photographs with captions tell the story in more detail.

The way the project has been tactfully introduced could serve as a model for other projects in other countries connected with the revival or increase in quality of both the same and other local arts, such as glassmaking, pottery, woodwork, embroidery, stone-carving, metal-work and so on. The project should not grow too large in any one area as this might encourage exterior interference which could disturb the economic and cultural balance. □



THE EXPLODING METROPOLIS

Jim Antonio

THE AGA KHAN AWARD PROGRAMME

Within a period of eight years, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture has established itself as a major prestigious event. The Award was established in 1976 to recognise projects which demonstrate architectural excellence and suggest directions of value to the future of Islamic culture. At that time HH the Aga Khan remarked "I can think of no human art form which exercises such a permanent influence over our lives". He emphasised that "we must demand from our respective decision makers, our architects, our planners and our landscape architects an environment in which we can live, work and practise the precepts of our faith".

In this endeavour, up to US$500,000 in prizes is given every three years to completed architectural projects throughout the Islamic world. The aim of the Award is to encourage within the architectural profession and related disciplines a heightened awareness of Islamic culture while encouraging an architecture appropriate to the 20th Century.

The presentation of Awards have been spectacular events. The first Awards were presented at a ceremony in the Shalimar Gardens in



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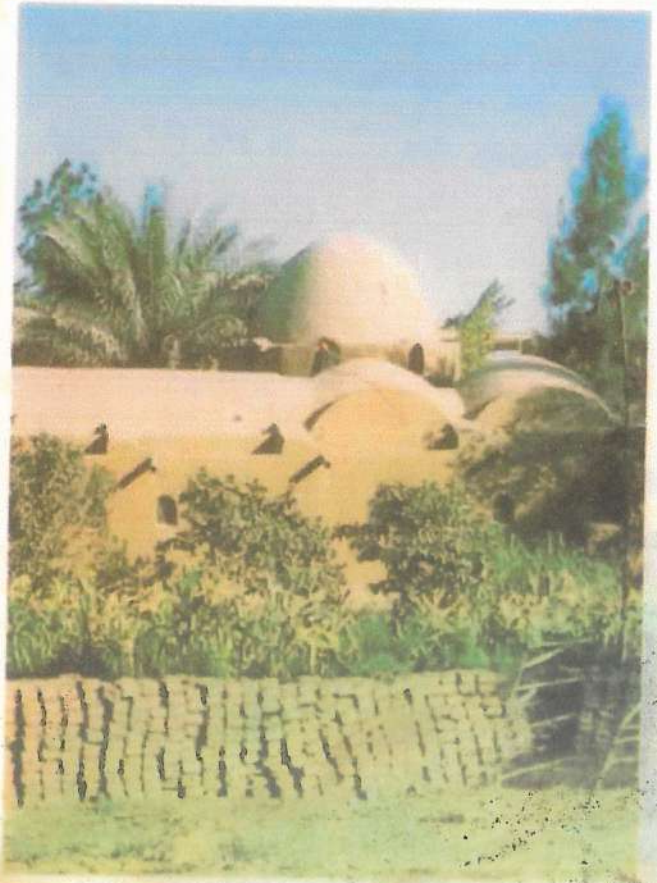
Lahore, Pakistan in 1980. The US$500,000 prize was shared between 15 projects, located in 12 Muslim countries, from Senegal to Indonesia. The type of projects honoured ranged from prestigious private homes and housing schemes for the urban poor, to hotels and museums. In these prizes, not only architects were honoured, but also clients, craftsmen and an entire village. During this period a special prize was presented to the Egyptian architect, Dr. Hassan Fathy, in acknowledgement of his life-long commitment to architecture in the Islamic world.

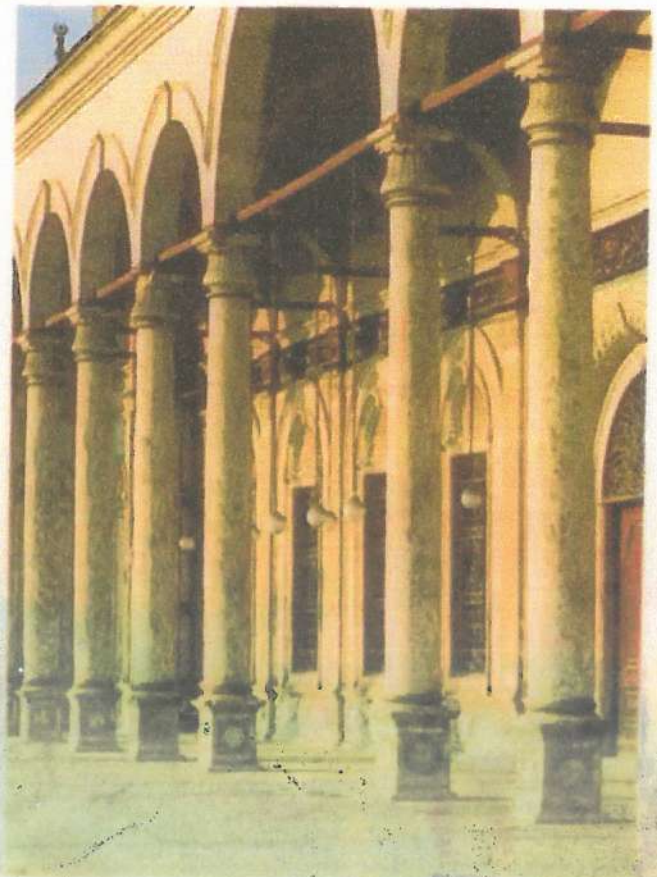
Three years later, in 1983, a second series of Awards was presented at a ceremony held at the Topkapi Palace in Instanbul. Here, eleven diverse projects in nine different countries were honoured. They ranged from a mud mosque in Mali to a technologically advanced airport terminal for the Hajj in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. A third series of Awards is already being prepared for a presentation in 1986.

The Award for Architecture is only one significant part of an extensive programme, which combines four major continuing activities. A series of international seminars have taken place to address the wide ranging architectural transformations which are currently taking place in the Islamic world. A unique feature of the Award programme is the selection process by which the winning projects are identified. A major activity, therefore, is the system of procedures which is used to identify outstanding architectural works. The collection of data to form the basis of a permanent archive on contemporary architecture forms the third activity of the Award Programme. Finally, the Award Programme is involved in the generation of specialised publications.

However, an integral part of the Award process is the series of seminars which have been created to focus upon principal areas of concern. Each seminar serves as a forum to local and international invited participants to address critical issues afffecting the built environment of Muslims. Experts from all regions of the world have included architects, government officials, scholars, planners, designers, sociologists and economists.

1. *Darb Qirmiz Quarter, Cairo.*
2. *HH the Aga Khan addressing the opening session of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture Seminar at the Arab League Building in Cairo. The Prime Minister of Egypt, Kamal Hassan Ali is seated next at right.*
3. *A view of the Seminar in progress.*



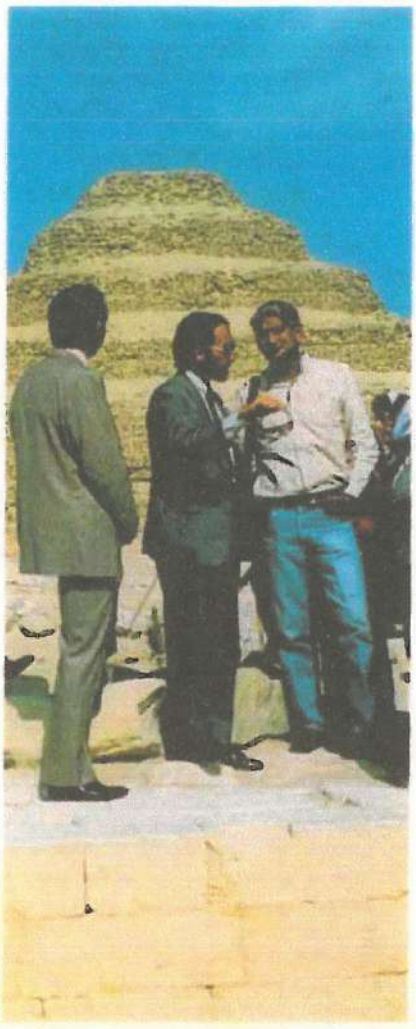


Seminar programmes include site visits relevant to the theme of discussions and provide useful guidelines for the selection of projects for Award nomination. So far, over the last six years, some nine international seminars have been held in Paris, Instanbul, Jakarta, Fez, Amman, Peking, Dakar, Sana'a and this year in Cairo.

Appropriately enough, the Cairo seminar had the theme of the "Expanding Metropolis", dealing with one of the most pressing problems facing countries in the developing world today: the extraordinary rapid growth of cities. Held between 12 and 15 November 1984, the Cairo Seminar was the first to focus on a city in the Arab world. Many distinguished speakers took part in the discussions in dealing with the urban growth of Cairo.

THE MEANING OF HISTORY

Professor Oleg Grabar spoke of the meaning of history in Cairo. One unique feature of Cairo is that no other city of the Muslim world possesses such a wealth of architectural monuments. In the world at large, only Rome can match in numbers (and perhaps in variety surpasses) the richness of Cairo. Professor Grabar also emphasised another unique feature of Cairo. He stressed that "the monuments punctuate the city, serve as inescapable focal or nodal points in one's perception and awareness of at least the urban area as it existed before the momentous physical and social changes of the 19th Century".



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The unique features of Cairo emphasise that this is not a typical "Islamic" city of Western Asia and the Mediterranean. Many cities such as Fez, Baghdad, and Isfahan contain any number of major buildings, even masterpieces of architecture. However, from 1000 to 1800, Cairo shows a continuity of major building activities.

Why did Cairo become so uniquely different? Professor Grabar believes that Cairo, alone among the major urban centres of the medieval Muslim world, was provided with a combination of incentives for investment and expression in large scale architecture. One such incentive was the continuous source of wealth as a result of trade. Another was the absence of destructive invasions from which most of western Asia suffered until 16th Century. Cairo also acted as a consistent

4. *Wissa Wassef Arts Centre, Giza.*
5. *Mohammed Ali Mosque*
6. *Participants visiting one of the monuments.*
7. *Modern Cairo skyline.*



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magnet of intellectual, social, and money-making institution, bringing together people from many parts of the Muslim world. These and many other operative factors created in Cairo, both a consistent patronage and the means to invest in building. It seems that Cairene architecture was able to exploit traditional forms of spatial composition and surface decoration. In particular, Mamluk architecture uses a well established language which implies a cultural self-assuredness on what forms are needed and why.

It is interesting to note that all buildings in Cairo of classical times (with few exceptions) were independent constructions and not major modifications of, or additions to older buildings. Moreover, relatively few monuments (except for private dwellings or secular buildings) were systematically, or wilfully destroyed in order to be replaced by new ones. This implies that the integrity of a monument was protected by much more than the legal deeds. For example, many monuments contained burial places, resulting in a form of "social protection" by the community.

Many of the buildings use a small number of architectural themes which dominate the city's landscape. Professor Grabar defines these as being minarets, domes and gates. These architectural themes constitute the real, continuous architecture of Cairo — much more than the functions they house.

Professor Grabar referred to what he calls "the rhythmic power" of the monuments, where *minarets* (more accurately called towers) serve as a "visual relay" leading from one place to the other; *domes* indicate the prestige given to a certain place and elaborate *gates* require people to stop and enter, or at least look.

In this way, Cairo contains a network of visual signs which dictates movement within the city. This character has been given to the city in the Middle Ages which has remained until today, without being extended to the new areas of the city. In the language of the 20th Century, traffic roundabouts and neon signs have replaced minarets as landmarks. Similarly, tall buildings have replaced the importance of domes and gateways have given way to window displays. Moreover, by 1970, there were some 300 new nightclubs in Cairo, compared to the building of about 400 new mosques.

During his speech Professor Mohammed Arkoun made the perceptive observation that Gamalia "is becoming more a place of signs and signals than of symbols ... only time can preserve the symbolic expression of Islamic tradition". In the opinion of Professor Arkoun, not enough attention is paid to the break between symbolic expressions and ideological expressions, now becoming increasingly powerful.

GRAND POLITICAL DESIGNS

The transitional period between the historic development of Cairo up to the 19th Century and the emergence of the metropolitan city was clearly described by Dr. Saad Eddin Ibrahim. "The history and sociology of Cairo are those of Egypt and to some extent, those of its entire Arab region", he states.

To the Egyptians and their fellow Arabs, Cairo has at once been a seat of political power, creativity, culture, religion, scholarship and entertainment. In terms of regional influence, Dr. Ibrahim compares Cairo to a combination of Paris, the Vatican, Oxford, Hollywood and Detroit.

It seems that present day Cairo evolved historically through a series of grand political designs. In the course of history, power in Cairo has shifted from Babilon, the Greco-Roman settlement, through al-Fustat, al-Askar, al-Qataai and al-Kahira and on to the Citadel. In the 19th Century, the seat of power was shifted further, from the Citadel to the Abdeen Palace. It was not until the beginning of the 19th Century that Cairo began the struggle for autonomy from the Ottoman Empire.

Mohammed Ali (1805-1849) attempted to modernize Cairo by circumventing its traditional structures. By creating modern institutions parallel to the traditional ones, he turned the country into a giant regional power in a matter of two decades. He also began the process of extending a modern Cairo — alongside the traditional Islamic city, to the northwest. The directions he initiated for the future expansion of Cairo proved lasting, laying the foundations for a new middle class of Egyptians. Mohammed Ali's modernisation attempts were reinforced by Kedive Ismael (1863-1879), during Egypt's Liberal Age (1922-1953), under Nasser (1952-1970) and under Sadat (1970-1981). All these had a lasting impact on Cairo.

Ismael's vision of modernisation was to transform Cairo into a European city. New districts were built in the European style, complete with parks, broad streets and street lighting. With the British occupation, hundreds of thousands of foreigners in search of fame and fortune flocked to the new quarters created by Ismael.

Meanwhile, the old city was ignored and neglected. Its population grew steadily within a confined area, resulting in high densities and a lowering of living conditions.

By the time of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty a new partnership had emerged between foreigners and local elites. However, the growing working class felt left out, resulting eventually in the 1952 Revolution led by Nasser.

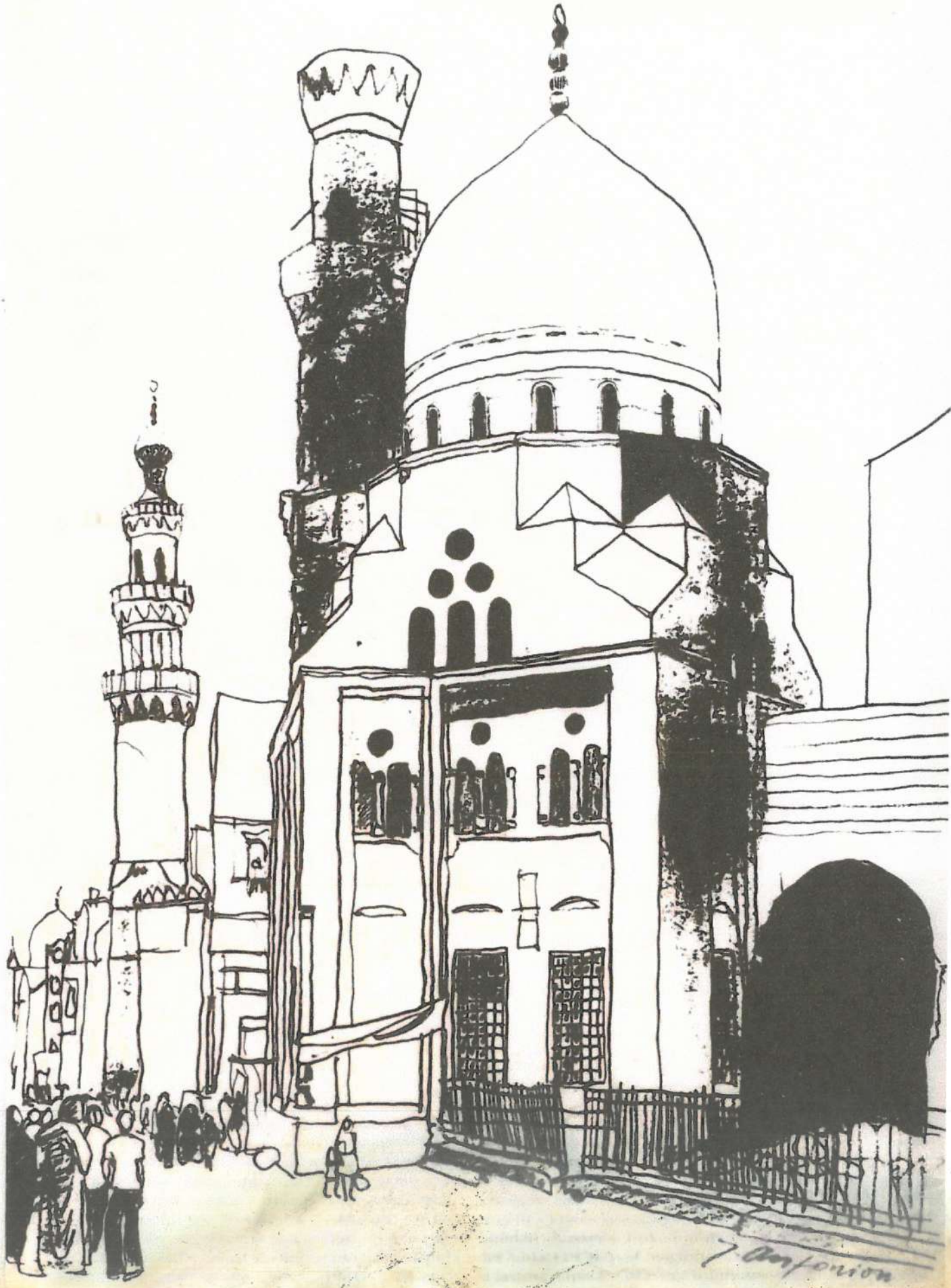
By 1958, urban rent-controls were introduced, adversely affecting owners of properties to the benefit of tenants (mainly lower middle class and workers). At the same time, massive public housing projects were carried out in the poor districts of Cairo.

During this time, Cairo grew both in population and in extent. Large industrial plants were located at Helwan and at Shubra al-Khima. New bridges were constructed across the river. In short, developments which emerged as a result of the initiatives from the Revolution were far superior than there were ever before. At the same time, Nasser's revolutinary drive turned Cairo into a political Arab capital — until the war came in 1967.

When Sadat came to power in 1970, attempts were made to develop Cairo along western lines (primarily through economic aid from abroad). Dr. Ibrahim compares Ismael's ambitions to model Cairo on Paris and Rome with Sadat's attempts to turn the capital into Los Angeles and Houston. To pursue this vision required a triple alliance of social forces: the major land owners; the nouveau rich; and the leaders of Nasser's public sector. It is against this socio-political sketch that modern Cairo's development must be seen.

THE GROWTH OF CAIRO

The image of modern Cairo was dominated at the Seminar by the simplification of a plithora of interlinked problems: the disintegration of magnificent monuments; and the drastic solutions for growth and development for the future. Par-



ticipants were mesmerized by frightening statistics, demonstrating the magnitude of the problems and by the urgency displayed in proposals for solutions.

Urban population grew from 19 per cent of Egypt's total in 1907 to 33 per cent in 1947, and on to 44 per cent in 1976. At present, it is estimated that half of the country's population lives in urban areas. The reasons for this dramatic rural to urban migration resulted from pressure on limited arable land; neglect of the countryside; lack of employment opportunities and the many other attractions of cities. The spreading cities of Egypt are consuming fertile land at a rate of 10,000 to 12,000 ha per year.

In Egypt, urbanisation is, of course, dominated by the growth of Cairo. During the last century, Cairo has grown thirty-fold. From an estimated 200,000 people in 1800 to 600,000 in 1900, Cairo continued to grow to 2.4 million in 1950; to 5.7 in 1970; to 8.8 million in 1980. In this century alone, Cairo has grown fifteen fold. Currently, the city accounts for about 25 per cent of Egypt's total population and about half of the country's urban population. Some 150,000 migrants have to be accommodated annually in the capital.

The growth of Cairo in extent is equally dramatic. Up to the 19th Century the built-up core was some 5 sq. km. By the end of the 19th Century, the area had tripled to 15 sq. km. At the end of the second decade of this century, the land-mass of Cairo had expanded around the Islamic core to an area of some 30 sq. km.

It was between 1850 and 1950 that the bulk of the present metropolis developed. The three decades that followed 1950 witnessed the growth of Cairo from 100 sq. km. to 220 sq. km. Across the River Nile, the city of Giza extended westward all the way to the pyramids (some 15 km. away), adding a further 100 sq. km. to the growth of Cairo. Collectively, the socio-physical entity known as Greater Cairo is some 350 sq. km. containing about 10 million people. By the early 1980's, Cairo accounted for 63 per cent of the urban mass and about 70 per cent of the urban population. Cairo now has one of the world's highest densities (32,000 persons per sq. km.) with about 450,000 buildings and 2.5 million residential units.

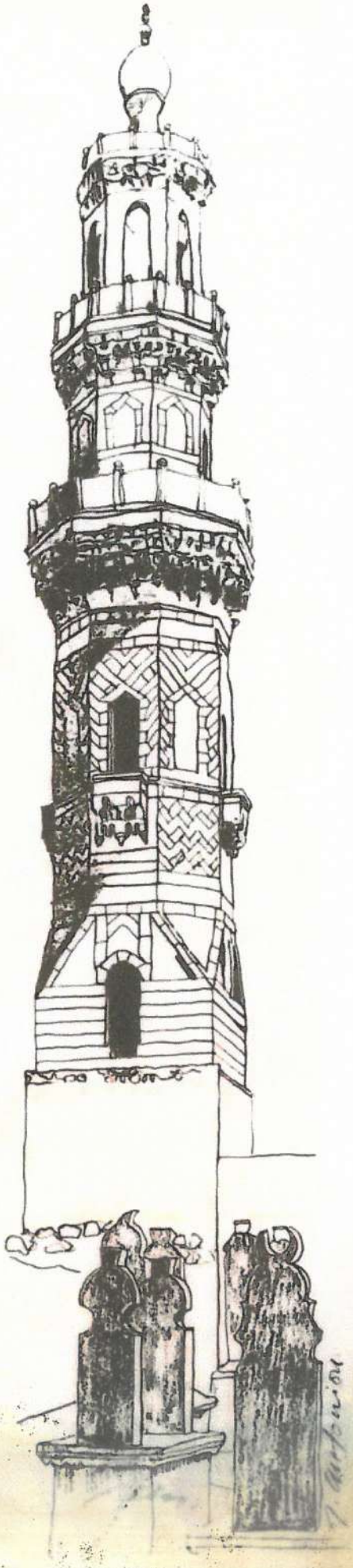
In contrast, the historic Islamic core has decreased in relative population over the last 150 years. Measured against Greater Cairo, the population of the Islamic core accounts for less than 10 per cent. Adjacent to the historic core is the City of the Dead which has been absorbing the spill over population from various parts of Cairo and recent rural migrants.

Traditional burial places in Cairo usually include a grave, one or two adjacent rooms and an open yard surrounded by a fence. This arrangement enables relatives of the deceased to visit and even spend the night on special occasions. Many of these structures are spacious and pleasant and could accommodate the living as well as the dead. Over the last 40 years, the City of the Dead began to attract people who were unable to find cheap housing in other parts of Cairo. By 1937 some 10,000 people were living there. Now the World Bank estimates that some 500,000 people live in the cemeteries. At the same time, some of the most impressive Islamic monuments in the world are located in the City of the Dead.

By Cairo's standards, this area offers better living conditions than many slums located in the capital. The residents of the cemeteries, assisted by some meagre municipal services (water, electricity, schools, public transport and even a police station) are engaged in a wide range of commercial activities. There are groceries,bakeries and also traditional industries such as glass-blowing, all located in the cemeteries.

These problems are a reflection of the acute housing conditions. Nearly all the poor of Cairo live in substandard housing. The Governor of Cairo, Major General Yussef Sabri Abu Taleb, has stated that 35 per cent of the capital's housing units are too old and dilapidated to be fit for safe or healthy human shelter.

Dr. Mona Serageldin emphasised that despite significant growth in housing construction over the last two decades, Cairo is still faced with a serious shortage. Ultimately, this has been attributed to the unprecedented growth rate of the population. However, housing policies since the 1950's have aggravated the problem. For example, government construction of subsidized housing has proved prohibitively expensive and has been unable to meet the demand. At the same time rent controls have discouraged private investment in housing. The result is



that informal housing has become widespread, accounting for an estimated 70 per cent of all new construction at present in Cairo.

With an estimated 1.6 million dwelling units in 1980, Cairo is predicted to need an additional 1.9 million by the year 2000. Currently, the annual production rate is below 80,000 dwellings. In the late 1970's, the Government therefore adopted a policy of upgrading existing areas to capitalize on the standing housing stock. However, as Dr. Mona Seragaldin pointed out, "rehabilitating older areas and conserving historic zones involve issues of much greater complexity and require very different approaches".

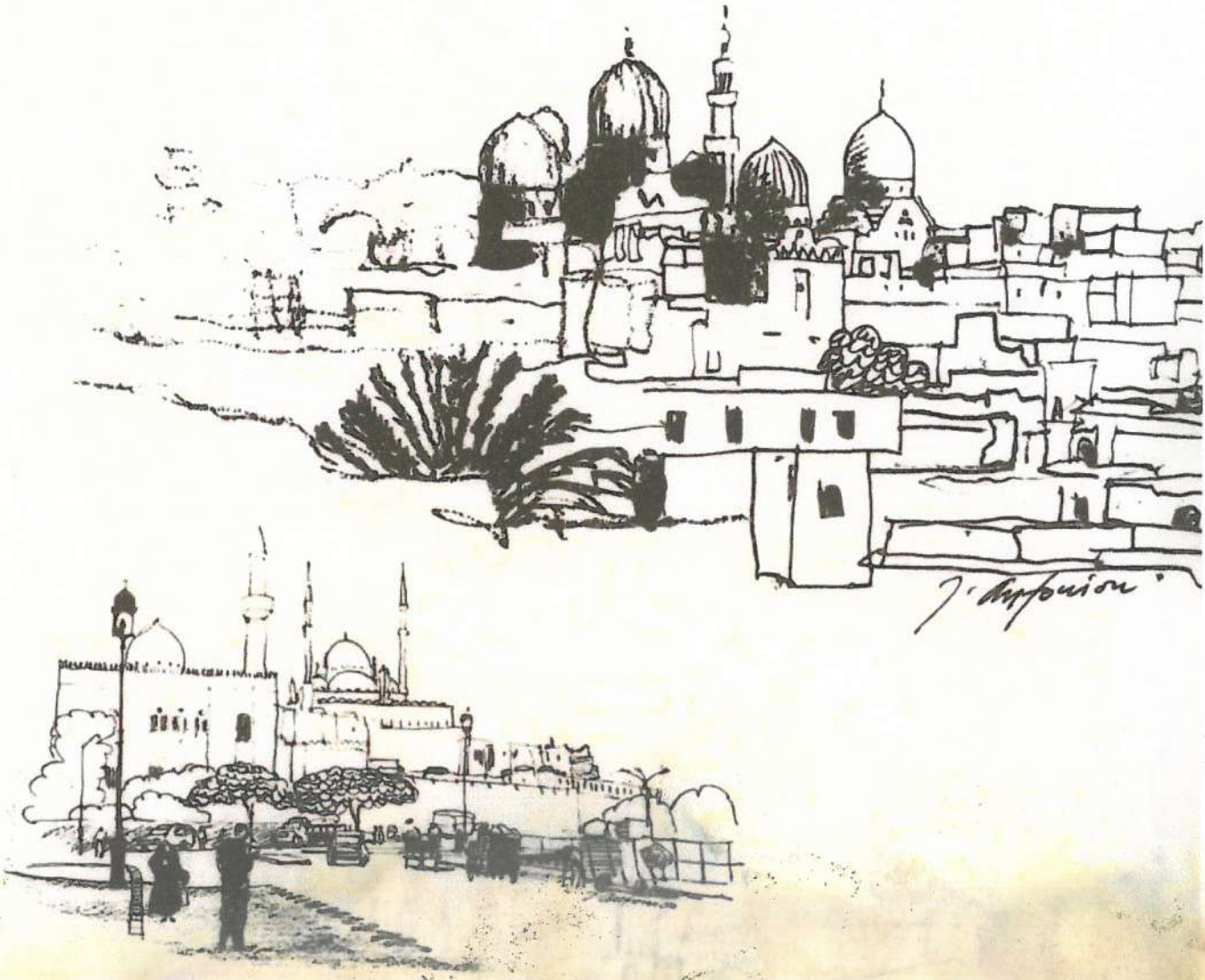
Repair of traditional construction is both difficult and expensive needing special materials and skills. Deterioration from lack of maintenance rapidly reduces multi-storey buildings to dilapidated one or two storey structures. Deterioration of street surfaces and of structures (including monuments) is aggravated by the high densities, housing laws and changing attitudes towards maintenance of public spaces and facilities which are now considered to be a responsibility of government authorities.

APPROACHES TO CONSERVATION

The "Comite de Conservation" was established in 1882 to preserve buildings of historic and archaeological value. At the time, the Comite surveyed the older quarters and registered some 1000 structures. This body of enthusiasts undertook the annual maintenance and rehabilitation of all important monuments. The legacy of the Comite was to transfer the responsibility for the maintenance of historic buildings (mostly *waqf*) from the Awqaf authorities to the Department of Antiquities.

Professor Ronald Lewcock pointed out that by 1953, the monuments generally seemed intact (although they were covered with dust and were crumbling). The largest city in the Arab world from the 10th Century and from the 13th Century to the 15th Century, the largest in the Islamic world, was still in existence and with much of its built form (and its way of life) intact.

Various pressures emerged during the 1950s which had a profound affect on the historic city. Rent control was introduced, fixing rents at levels below the level of economic maintenance of houses in the old city. New building regulations were being enforced, requiring large setbacks, in effect changing narrow streets into wide thorough-fares Large scale public housing schemes



were being built to replace traditional houses in the area. In particular, a whole quarter, close to Khan al-Khalili, was cleared to make way for the Al-Azhar Square, which involved the destruction of many hundreds of buildings. Moreover, the 19th Century water supply and sewerage system began to fail,leading to massive wastage which affected nearly all the buildings in a devastating way.

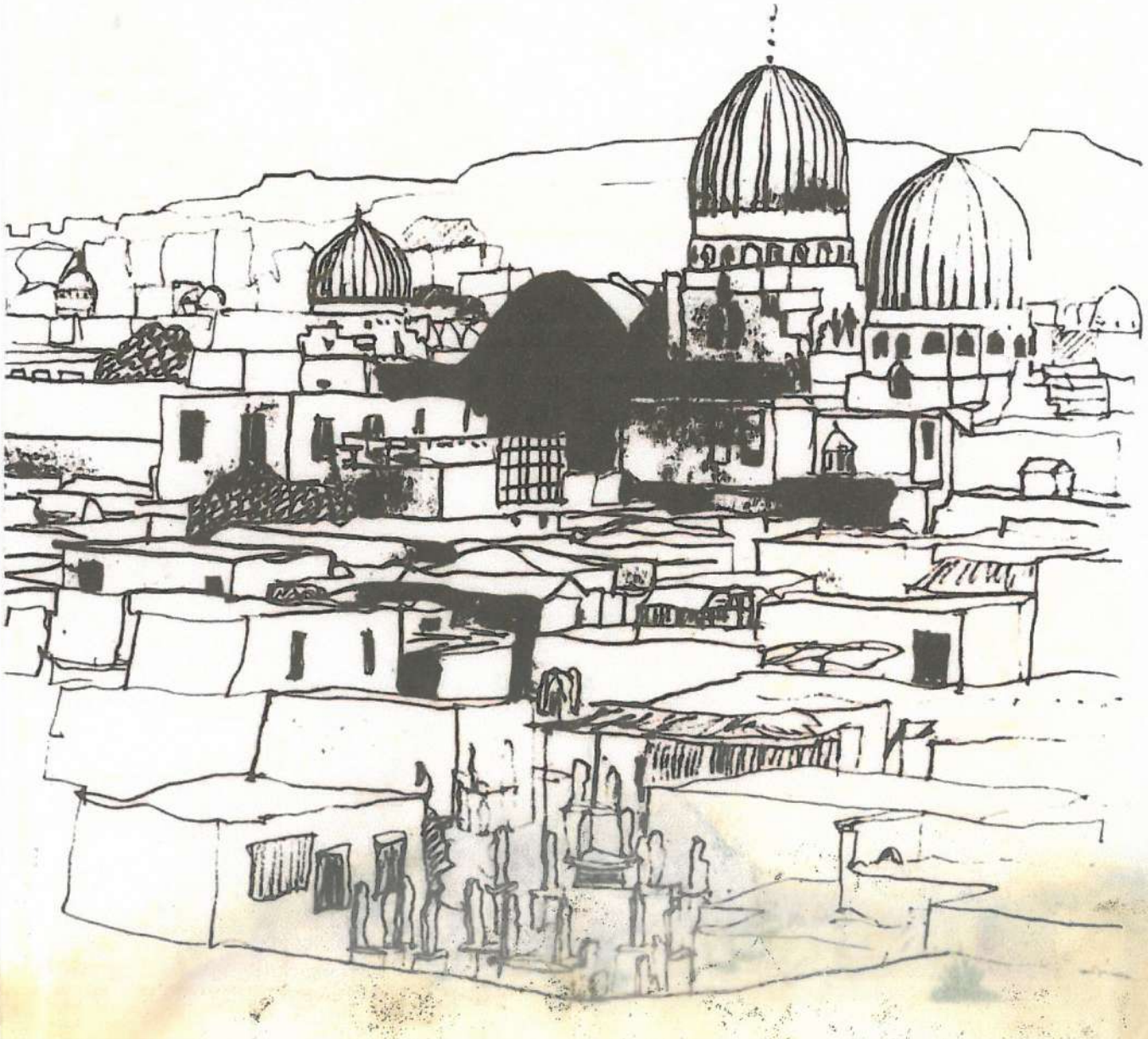
A number of foreign institutes undertook responsibility for the restoration of individual buildings during the 1970s, in collaboration with the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation. These included the Polish Centre, the Goethe Institute of Germany, the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and the Italian Institute of Culture.

The Poles began work on the Madrasa Mausoleum of Amir Qurqumas (1506-7) in the Northern Cemetery. The Danes have restored the Madrasa al-Jawhariyya (1440), next to the al-Azhar Mosque. The Italians began the theatre of the Mawlawi Dervishes (19th Century), together with the rest of the fine complex in which it was built.

The most spectacular restoration programme was undertaken by the Germans on a number of buildings in the Darb Qirmiz. Restoration here began with the Mosque — Madrasa of Mithqal (1361) and the Tomb of Shaykh Sinan (1585), to which the Germans have since added the Madrasa of Tatar al-Hegaziyya (1348), the Sabil-Qutab of Katkhuda (1744), and the Beshtak Palace (1334). This part of the historic city contains the ingredients which can form the nucleus of the first conservation area in Cairo. This ambitious restoration programme, involving seven important monuments in close proximity to each other, was appropriately chosen for an Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1983.

However, not all restoration efforts have been successful. The reconstruction of the largely ruinous Mosque of al-Hakim was carried too far by the Buhra sect from India, with the consequent destruction of the sense of antiquity and authenticity which in the past has been its main quality. Moreover, an excess of zeal at the al-Hakim Mosque led to the removal to another part of the city of one of the listed monuments next to its entrance, the Mausoleum of Qurqumaz (1511), which had added significantly to the richness of the street scene outside the Mosque.

Similar restoration work to the al-Hakim Mosque took place at the Mosque of Amr, the first and most historic mosque in Cairo. It has been altered so much by new construc-





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8. His Highness the Aga Khan and seminar participants visit the Citadel in Cairo during The Aga Khan Award for Architecture Seminar.
9. His Highness The Aga Khan and seminar participants visit Fatimid Cairo.
10. His Highness The Aga Khan greets the Prime Minister of Egypt, Kamal Hassan Ali, on his arrival at the Arab League Building for the opening of the Seminar. The Governor of Cairo, Youssef Sabri Abu Taleb looks on.

Photographs by Aziz A. Islamshah.



tion work that its present atmosphere is considered a travesty of that experienced by visitors only a few years ago.

Even so, of the more than 500 listed monuments, these efforts amounted to only a handful of restored buildings. It became apparent to a number of people including some of those in Government Authorities that the only hope for preserving the monuments in the old city lay in wide scale conservation and rehabilitation.

UNESCO was approached in 1960



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by the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation to appoint a team of 5 consultants (planners, architects, sociologist and conservationists) to study the situation. The UNESCO team presented a plan for emergency action which might ensure that the most important parts of Cairo's heritage were saved for the future.

The team of international consultants (which included myself as field director to the project) felt it was of overriding importance to preserve as much of the physical context and the monuments of medieval Cairo as possible; the traditional way of life; and ensure a simple method of implementation. Due to the limitations of time and resources the area chosen for study was the Fatimid city. The emergency action necessary led us to set a high priority on the identification of vulnerable zones. These zones were integral parts of the living urban fabric and were therefore chosen for immediate action. Six zones defined by clusters of monuments, were chosen along the main roads to the city.

Since the presentation of the UNESCO report, and its discussion in Cairo at an International Conference on the Preservation of Islamic Cairo held in December 1980 (at which a decision was taken to adopt its recommendations) the Ministry of Culture and the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation have been reorganised. HE Mohamed Abdel Hamid Radwas, now Minister of State and Culture and Dr. Ahmed Kadry, Head of the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation have taken emergency action on a number of monuments, including the Citadel and the aquaduct. However, the aim of conservation clusters of buildings to preserve their essential ambience has not been adopted.

An enormous amount of repair work has been done. However, the bulk of the activities appear to be cosmetic, repairing surfaces and often merely applying bright coats of paint. The fundamental underlying defects, such as rising groundwater, which hasten decay in the future, remain.

However, Dr. Kadry's approach has aroused [illegible] interest in the Islamic monuments, particularly among the general public. An increasing number of monuments appear clean and in some cases gardens have been created for their setting, to be enjoyed by many Egyptians. Perhaps this will pay dividends in the future.

Meanwhile, UNESCO has continued with mapping out conservation zones in all other parts of historic Cairo. In 1982, UNESCO appointed me to carry out studies and provide advice and proposals to the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation for conserving previously unstudied historic parts of the city. My brief included the cemeteries, the archaeological site of al-Fustat, Bulaq, the Citadel and Old Cairo.

My own experience in Cairo points to some of the problems in implementing the concept of "area conservation". One issue is that the scale of the problems is such that monuments are spread over a wide area and therefore the impact of measures adopted for restoring individual buildings are diffused and not immediately apparent.

The Egyptian Antiquities Organisation urgently required assistance to deal with basic technical problems and formulate a restoration





policy combined with a systematic approach to maintenance and upkeep of the listed buildings.

I believe there are enormous difficulties in adapting to the concept of *area conservation* in Cairo. The Egyptian Antiquities Organisation lacks resources and experience in urban issues such as infrastructure and socio-economics and is therefore reluctant to embark on policies which involve participation in urban planning problems outside its immediate control. Yet it is precisely in these urban planning issues that the basic conservation problems need to be considered, if restoration is to be effective.

In the majority of European countries, the concept of area conservation is now accepted and is so strong that many take the view that it is not a separate planning activity. Area conservation is, therefore, seen as part of an integrated policy concerned with the maintenance and functional use of houses and other buildings. Such policies are being developed away from the irrational notion of preserving buildings simply because they are old.

In contrast, there are many fine examples in Islamic countires, where individual buildings and their surroundings have been restored and improved (some of which have received recognition by the Aga Khan Award for Architecture). But these cannot be considered as accurate examples of area conservation as embodied in the Venice Charter and more recently in the Lahore Declaration.

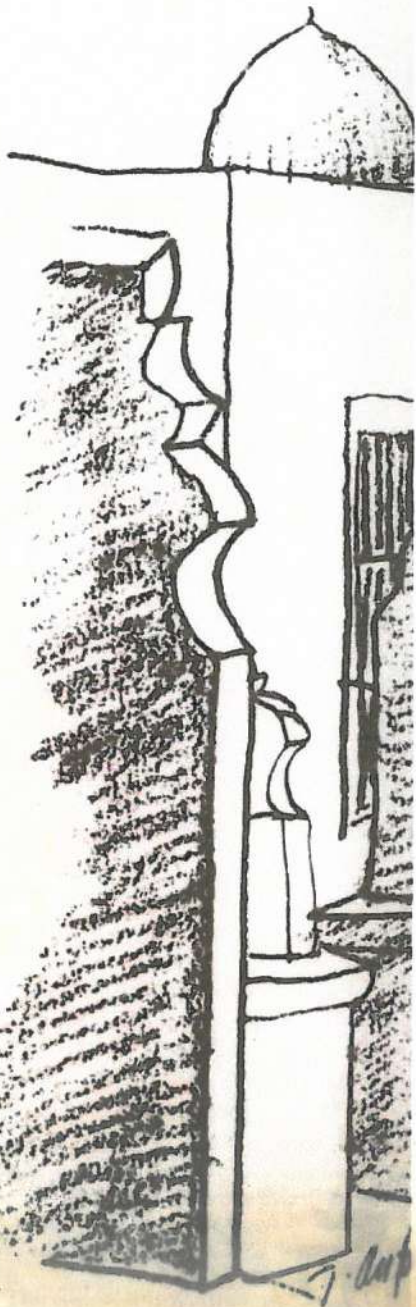
The Governor of Cairo is now taking new initiatives in the historic core. He is considering a plan prepared by the Egyptian Arab Bureau, which if approved, would launch a scheme to be financed with the aid of the World Bank for the rehabilitation of the Gamalia area, located between the northern Fatimid gates and Bab Zuwayla.

I believe that any comprehensive project put forward for this historic area must take account of a number of important issues. There is a core for modifying the existing government system to perform more effectively, leading to more community involvement, rather than establishing a totally new powerful authority. Nor should conservation be excluded from rehabilitation. Historic buildings are essential to the unique character of this area and cannot be devorced from rehabilitation proposals. If a programme for action is being put forward up to the year 2000, I suggest that it is unrealistic to keep these complementary issues separate.

Finally, I believe that two aspects require greater emphasis. First, there is a need for projects which bridge the gap between the present situation where, in particular, conditions of over-crowding are rife (with the environment becoming increasingly eroded) and the future time when major capital works will begin to yield a benefit.

Second, I think there is also a need for greater emphasis on community involvement, leading to a consultation between the inhabitants and those who plan. A major limitation of improvement plicies in historic cities is that, all too often, upgrading affects the more prosperous people. This often ensures the departure of most of the original inhabitants.

The Governor of Cairo is also undertaking a campaign of services



uniqueness of his choice of decisive moments, to create the sense of mystery in the outsider, to penetrate within the 'decorative isolation' of space of the small miniature, from the depths, as it were, so as to carry the outsider into indefinable areas beyond words. In the dialectical contrarities of the composition, we can sense the painter himself as a person seeking connection with other persons.

1. *Caliph Ma'mun in the Bath*
Khamsa of Nizami
The British Library (OR 6810)

The purification of the body before prayer was insisted upon in the Koran. The prophet seems to have considered the organism as the house of the soul. Only the rigorous cleansing of the human frame, could release those vibrations which may stir the soul above the circadian rhythms.

Bihzad dramatises the ceremony of cleansing in the Royal Hamam, or bath, by showing the Caliph Ma'mun being massaged. The other bathers are showing various actions, including the attendents who are drying the wet cloths.

The Master uplifts the mudane scene by colour contrasts: the blue striped lungis heighten the pale yellow and grey backgrounds, the two pink figures, clad in deep blue lungis, the one massaging the Caliphs head and the other holding the vessel, are contrasted against the whitish torso of the chief: other figures being similarly lit up by opposite colours: and each person is doing something. The head of the Hamam looks on. The decorative tiles in various geometrical designs brighten the interior. There is the characteristic care for detail of Bihzad. And the extra ordinary ability to create multiple planes in the space area of the bath -- the kind of constructivism which goes behind the earlier decorativeness of Shiraz under Iskander and Herat under Baysunghar. This miniature is attributed to Mirak Bihzad. It may be a collaborative work.

2. *The composition of an open air Madrassa adjoining the Masjid, is conceived by Bihzad as a simple courtyard. The Chinar tree whose star-pointed brownish leaves are heightened by the reds, dotted here and there, offsets the barreness. Here, as elsewhere, the Ustad displays his constructivism by relating the rectangle on the left hand and the square of the pavilion under the tree, and by placing the figures so that each is realistically distinct and eloquent. The characters, teachers and pupils, are not types, but individualised portraits.*

3. *Construction of the Palace of Khanwarnaq from the Khamsa of Nizami*
The British Library (OR6810)

If the Persian miniature was generally an illustration of an episode in a poem before Bihzad, this Ustad made most of his pictures into poems in colour, even when dealing with court scenes, featuring his patron Sultan HussainMirza Bayqara of Herat.

But he went beyond decoration to construct pictures, by relating the various planes, rectangles, squares, curvacious lines and points of illumination of tiles. In the construction of a wall, he creates the frame of building itself. The actual operation of brick layers and the labourers fetching and carrying is so mundane that painters never noticed it. But Bihzad saw, in simple human acts of life the symbols of man's creative inventiveness.

The group life of the builders of the wall (of the palace), is seized up to show the devotion of the workmen in the collective action of construction.

The adroitly drawn planes of the scaffolding, and the steps with workmen clad in cloths of different colour, against the beige wall, in fact the whole construct of the picture recreates the act of creation itself. The patient labour of the builders is in accord with the patient labour of the artist, who seems to have believed that creative action is the renewal of the body-soul.

4. *The Battle of the Clans*
from Khamsa of Nizami c. 1490
The British Library, London (A20 25900)

The choice of the theme from Nizami's Khamsa by Bihzad, in the illustration of the Battle of the Clans, to which he and Laila belonged, is significant, not only from the point of view of the facts behind the legend but also from the spiritual meaning which Nazami himself and his illustrator saw in the war of two tribes.

The mystic Nizami saw in the medley of human existence the confusion about the real meaning of life. He felt that the tensions could be resolved by lifting the emphasis from the jealousies and hates of the narrow parochial life to higher things. He was for the dissolution of the ego and felt that the light can only come from a true awareness of love.

Bihzad interprets the concept by lifting the historical event, the fight between the two tribes, in the eyes of the distracted Majnu as a needless fratricide, as he sees it standing on the high horizon. The lover has already plumbed the depths of his being and glimpsed that his personal love for Laila is part of love itself.

And yet he find that those who are bound up with their tribal pride, as in this case the superiority of one clan over the other, are unaware of anything but their separateness and have shut themselves in themselves in fury against the fury of others.

Bihzad interprets the torment of the battle through the highly dramatic attitudes of the warriors on camel-back in the bitter fight, by showing the death of two opposites in the battle. The fierce attack by the lancer, the equally violent gesture of the lifted sword of the defender, the wild chase by the warriors on the left of those on the right and the open-mouthed horror of the camels where the fight is most active -- the whole dramatic episode is rendered through drawings of the highest flexibility and yet in clear differentiations of the figures. And, by a skilful manipulation of the struggle, in a circular movement, in his brush work, the painter symbolises the closed-in circle of the destructive forces of this worldly existence. The figure of Majnu contemplating the war is shown in a stance which has reached beyond anguish and calm.

He almost seems to say: "I am not in this world,but in my own".

And Bihzad indicates that his madness itself is the sign of his awarenesses of absolute love.

5. *Majnun in the desert visited by Salim*
From the Khamsa of Nizami
The British Library, London (OR 0810)

In the longings of Majnun for Laila, Nazami, like the other Persian poets, saw the symbol of Love itself, the burning and melting in the desert, when the lover exiled himself, is the long-drawn pain of the body, through which emerges, in mystic apprehension, the soul itself.

This miniature attributed to Bihzad, suggests the outsider Majnun, in the desert, where the wild animals keep him company.

Occasionaly comes a visitor, in this case Salim, to share the lover's exile for a while.

Bihzad seems to have seen in the romantic legend the essence of lonliness of man, when he is in isolation from others, obsessed by love.

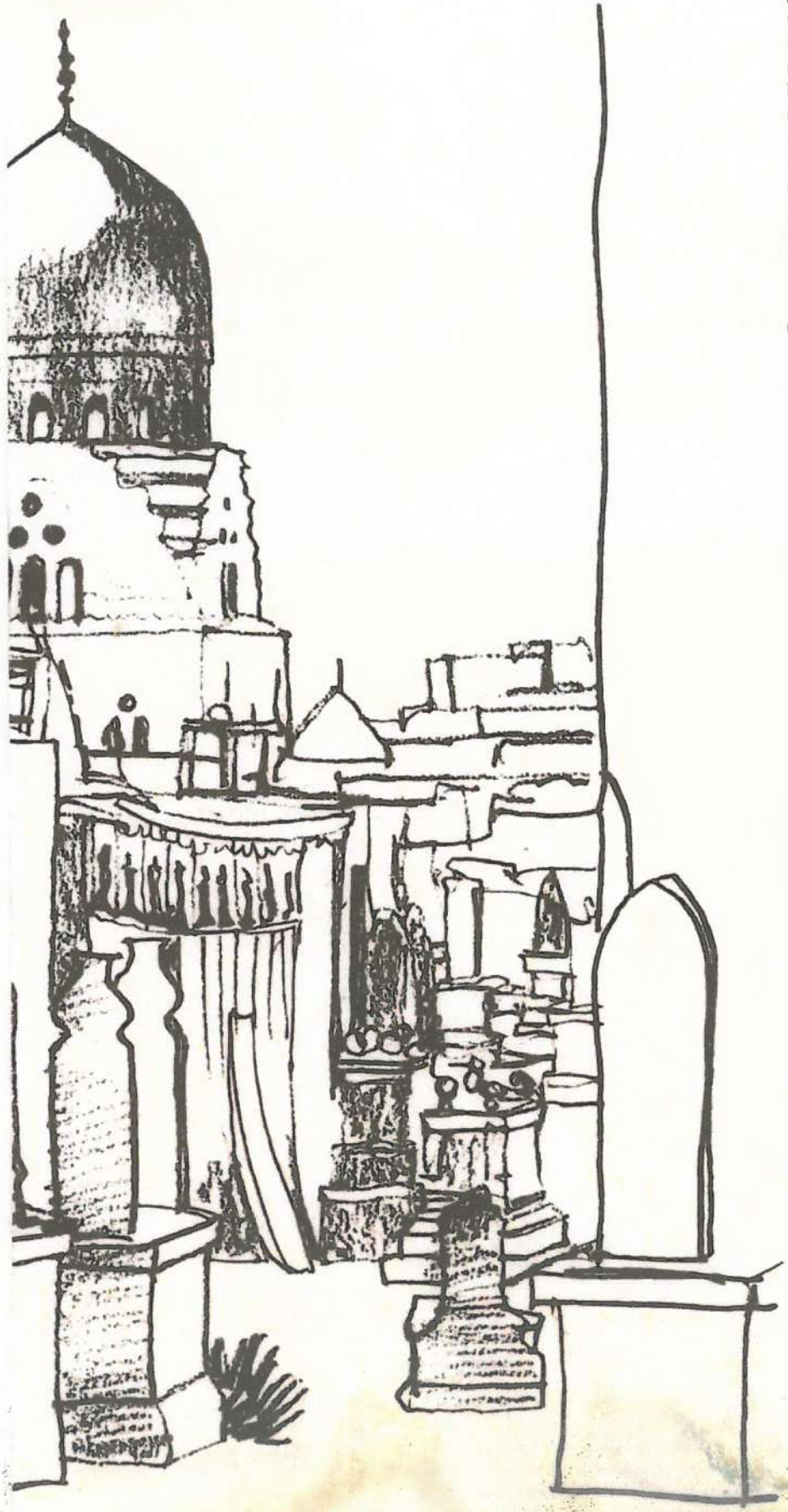
The insider from the worldly wants is supposed to apprehend the truth of devotion to the beloved by visiting the ascetic mystic Majnun. The visitor may have heard the words put into the mouth of the lover by Nizami.

'I do not breathe
If the breath does not come
From your lips
That breath with
Your fragrance
Is the source of life itself...'

In the clearing where Majnun sits in a corner, in the midst of the brownish desert, is the emaciated figure of Majnun opposite Salim. The animals who share the Lover's exile, have been won over as companions by the sheer force of his radiant love.

Bihzad treats each figure, so that if enlarged the features of the two men and animals will appear to be true to life.

The composition adroitly dramatises the constrasting space areas and the colours.



of infrastructure throughout the whole historic area. A major problem is that the historic city is specifically excluded from the direct benefits being brought to Cairo by the Greater Cairo Waste Water Project. It is even thought that the measures being adopted there may exacerbate the problem of rising ground water in the area. This is now one of the most serious developments undermining long-term conservation efforts.

CAIRO'S INFRASTRUCTURE

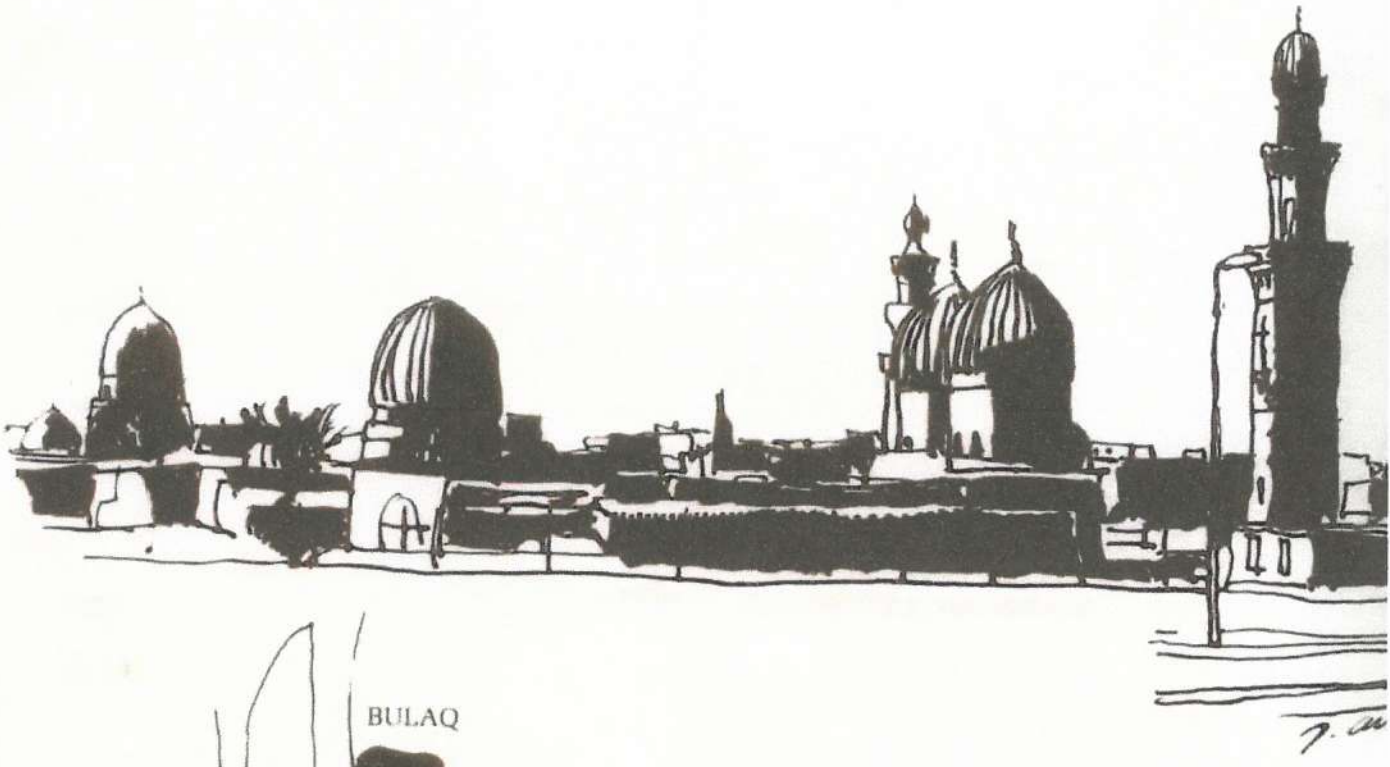
Infrastructure for Cairo as a whole is receiving increasing attention from the Government. A 20 year water supply project has been formulated to expand production capacity and extend the distribution network is currently underway at an estimated cost of US$2.9 billion. Similarly, the current plan for improving the existing system over a 10 year period represents one of the largest sewerage projects in the world and is projected to cost over US$3.4 billion, exclusive of any major extensions.

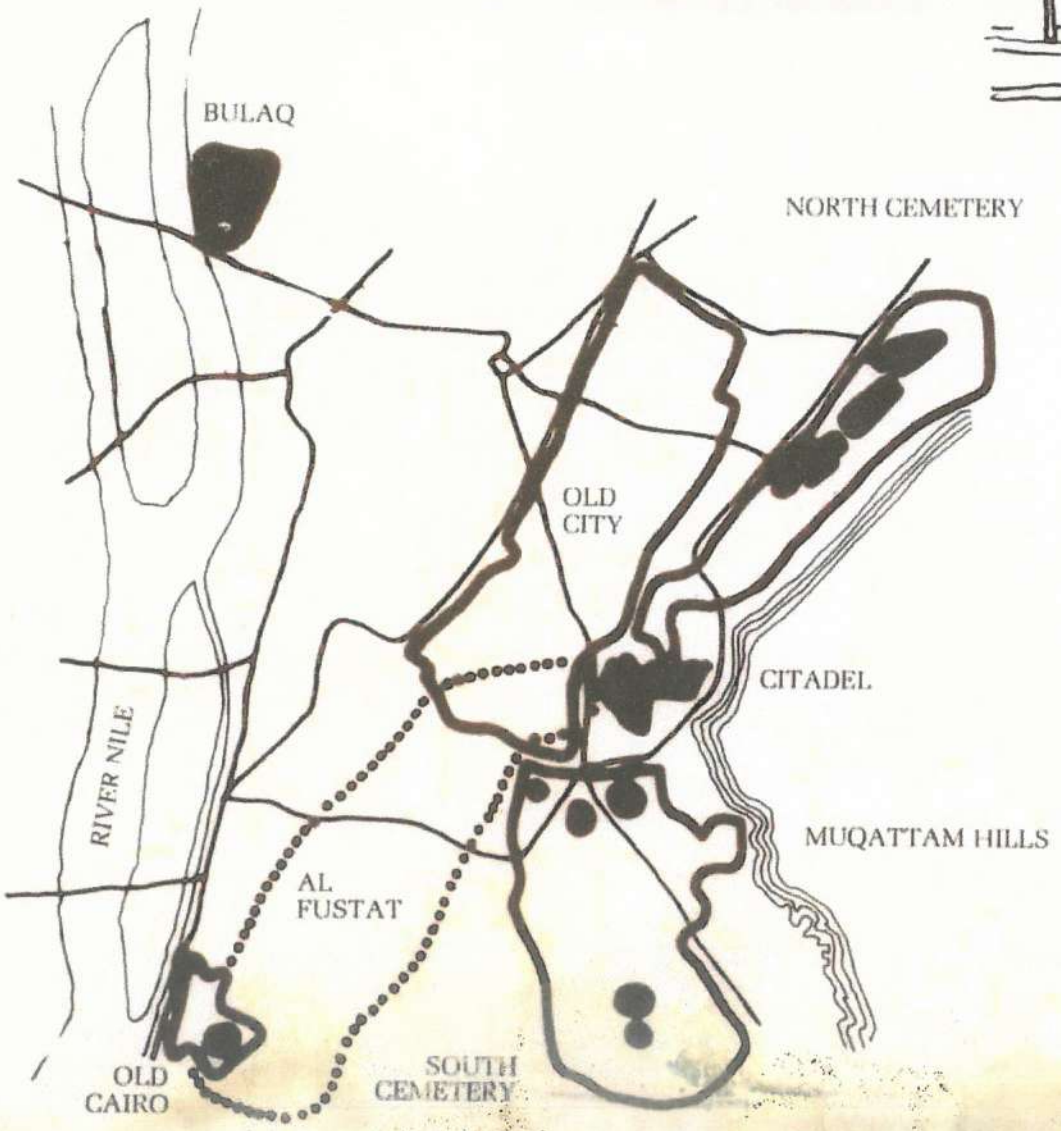
A major issue for discussion at the Seminar has been the acute problem of traffic. Cairo is growing at a rate of 1000 persons per day. This not only results in a serious housing shortage, but also a dramatic increase in cars leading to acute traffic congestion and parking problems. In the last decade, the number of cars has increased from 99,000 to 294,000. The Government is investing heavily in its road building programme and in improving public transport.

The new Metro system now under construction could carry some 60,000 passengers per hour in either direction. David Cook, transport specialist from the World Bank, pointed out that the first phase of the Metro, with a minimum of bus-operated feeder lines, could put the bulk of Cairo's 10 million inhabitants within reach of the subway.

GREATER CAIRO STRATEGY

The population of the Greater Cairo Region increases by some 350,000 each year — equivalent to one of Egypt's largest provincial cities. About 100,000 are migrants from other parts of Egypt and the rest of these inhabitants are due to natural growth. Michel Foud Gorgy analysed the implications of these issues. In dealing with the Greater Cairo Region, the issues for planners were framed in terms of two broad social goals: economic growth and




BULAQ
NORTH CEMETERY
OLD
CITY
CITADEL
RIVER NILE
MUQATTAM HILLS
AL
FUSTAT
OLD
CAIRO
SOUTH
CEMETERY



the improvement of the living environment.

Various measures are required to achieve these goals. Agriculture areas and water resources will need to be protected from building construction and industrial encroachment. The archaeological and historic heritage will also need to be protected from the pressures of redevelopment. There is also a need to improve existing facilities such as infrastructure and housing. There is also an urgent need to improve transport efficiency and encourage the deconcentration of the Greater Cairo agglomeration.

In dealing with such a wide range of urban issues, it is important to remember that the whole urban area of Greater Cairo should be considered as one heterogeneous entity, and not as individual portions. However, there are also homogeneous sectors of the city which could be relatively independent with respect to the provision of jobs, housing and services.

The planners also propose development corridors to link Greater Cairo to other economic centres of Egypt. A wide range of new communities are also allocated to the benefit of these corridors and encourage the east-west axis of the Greater Cairo Region.

With the bulk of the population concentrated in just 4 per cent of the land, Egypt has embarked on an ambitious programme of building new communities. Ten years ago this policy was hailed as an attempt to redraw the map of Egypt. From this policy, a strategy is now emerging for Cairo, aimed at spreading populations away from the congested centre into new communities.

In the Greater Cairo Region, new communities are of three types. Independent new towns are sited at a sufficient distance from Cairo so that residents will not be able to commute to the centre. There are also satellite cities which are similar to new towns, but are situated closer to Cairo in order to reduce public investment and permit them to benefit from locational advantages. Furthermore, new settlements are predominantly residential areas, taking advantage of existing employment bases and offer an alternative to living in the informal settlements.

The construction of new towns such as Tenth of Ramadan located some 50 km. from Cairo is intended to funnel people and employment opportunities to new desert regions. Satellite cities such as Sixth of October, located 20 km. from the centre are planned around Greater Cairo. These new towns offer a medium term solution to Cairo's growth problems.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE SEMINAR TO OTHER THIRD WORLD CITIES

In discussing the growth and future development of Greater Cairo, Dr. Mona Seragaldin pointed out that what was required was a bold vision by decision makers assisted by experienced public administrators with expertise in the implementation of programmes. This view was echoed by Professor Francois Vigier when he reflected on the issues which the Seminar brought to mind. His impressions of discussions at the Seminar were relevant not only to Cairo, but also to other expanding metropolises of the Third World.

Indeed, the problems faced by Cairo and other Third World cities are unprecedented in history. Demographic pressures and an endemic shortage of financial resources and administrative and professional cadres have created a situation where the dynamism of urban growth is outstripping the ability of all levels of governments to deliver the services expected of them. "In the three years or so since I was last in Cairo", Professor Vigier observed, "it has grown by one million, more than the total population

of the twin cities of Boston and Cambridge where I live".

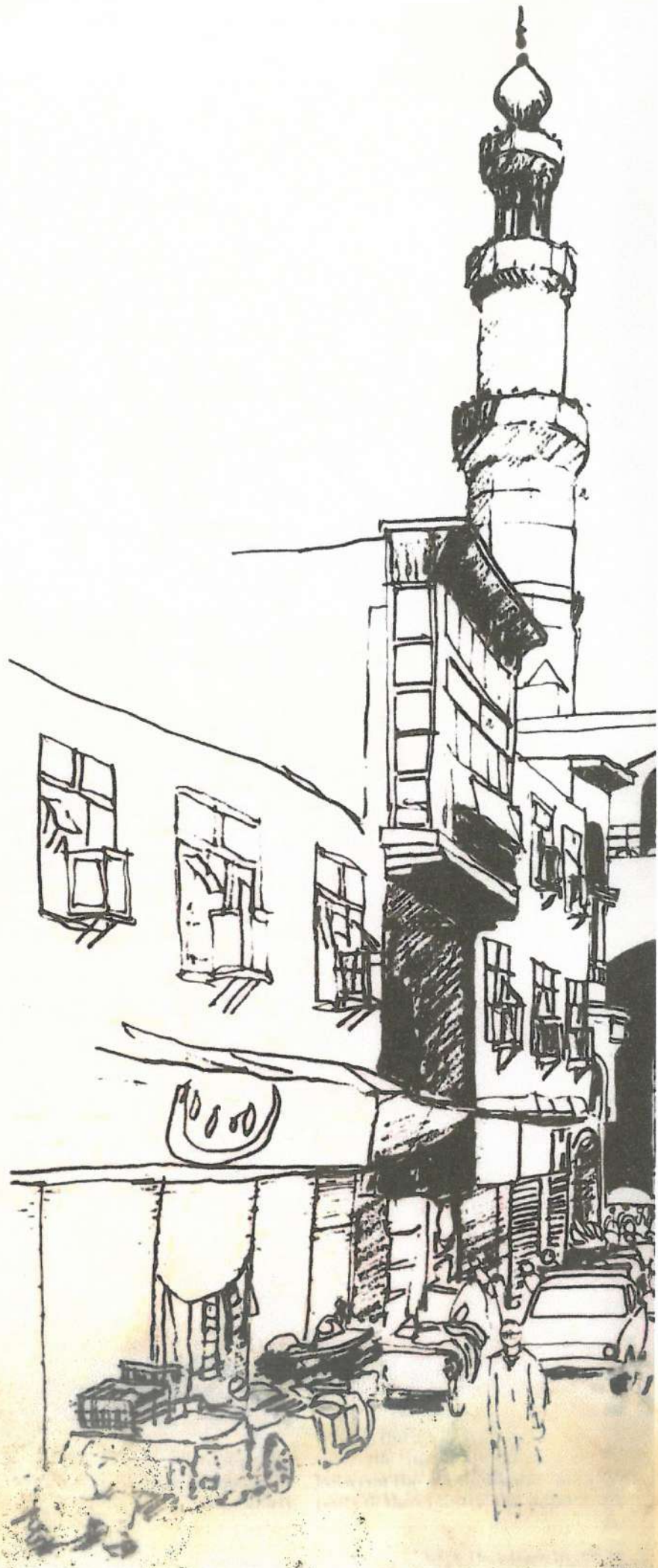
What then are the lessons to be learnt from the seemingly horrifying numbers and statistics that participants were bombarded with during the Seminar? In spite of severe overcrowding, it is worth noting that masses of people are not sleeping on the streets of Cairo, nor are the number of shanty towns relatively high. At the same time, some 80,000 dwellings are built annually in the Greater Cairo Region. And although this figure comprises of a broad qualitative range, about half are really transformations or additions to the existing stock, rather than new construction. Moverover, 80 per cent are constructed illegally.

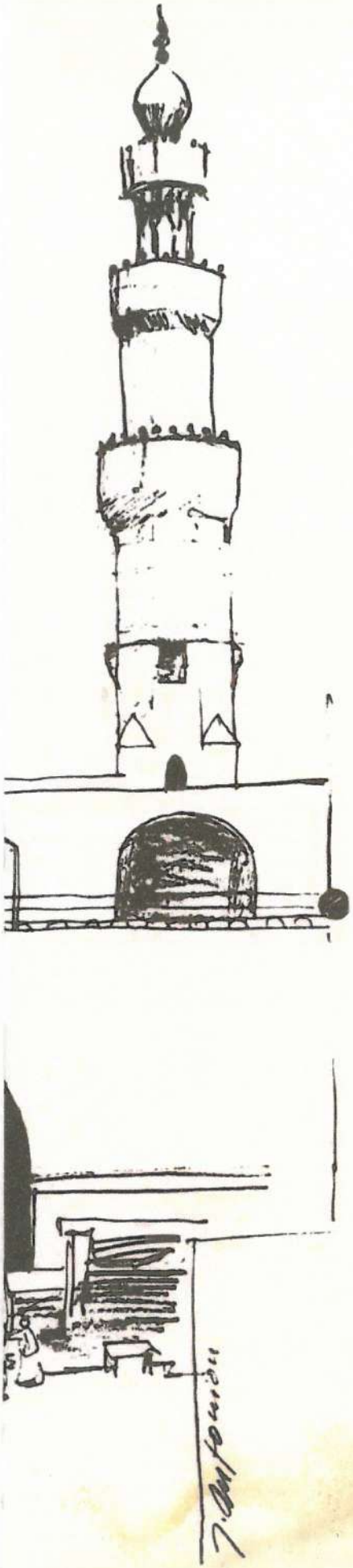
Professor Vigier found this phenomenon "an extraordinary demonstration, both of the existence of unaccounted for economic resources and of the energy and imagination demonstrated by people to *solve* their housing problems by themselves". It is deplorable, of course, that informal developments are eating up valuable agricultural land and that it is occurring in a seemingly haphazard fashion that contradicts the rational vision of the future embodied in public policy: from regional master plans to building regulations.

One of the striking characteristics of the exploding metropolis is the chaotic appearance resulting from high densities, frenzied construction (from major public works and skyscrapers to informal housing) and the fluxes of people, generated by cross-commuting patterns. To the orderly mind, of a western-trained planner, the situation is bewildering as is the vision of the future based on "millions of people and thousands of hectares".

Professor Vigier suggested that the standards and theories currently used in the west were largely irrelevant and may even be counter-productive to solving the problems of a city such as Cairo. This view was supported by the fact that standards and theories grew out of different cultural contexts and were developed as remedial measures in cities that were past their expansionary peak and not to cope with high growth rates. They are also based on an income distribution radically different from that of Cairo.

The resources demanded by such theories and standards may well be manageable in the wealthy industrialised countries, but are not pre-





sent in most of other countries. They also embody a static vision of a desirable future, to be achieved in an orderly manner, rather than recognising the dynamics of the situation.

The challenge of rapid urbanisation requires solutions that are addressed specifically to the unprecedented phenomenon. The Khedine Ismael proclamation that "Egypt is now part of Europe" is no longer valid. Egypt is part of the world community and its intellectual resources argue that specific solutions should be found, compatible with both, its cultural traditions and contemporary issues.

Public interventions are needed that utilise the energy of the people. For if people seem able to finance and build shelter for themselves (and for others as rental units) only government can provide the infrastructure and public facilities and services that are indispensable in a dense urban environment. A situation where the housing being built by people is not served because it is illegal or in the wrong place is counter-productive.

If the energy of the private sector is to be utilised efficiently, the Government must regain control of the directions of growth. Informal settlements locate according to their own rationale: availability of affordable land; proximity to a source of water, to employment centres and public transport. The vitality of such settlements contributes to an increasingly chaotic regional land use patttern. Infrastructure planning is forced to react to development trends, rather than be an effective guiding force. In this way, the contribution of the informal sector could become a valuable asset, if properly integrated within a coherent regional strategy.

Such a strategy would allow a cooperative relationship between the public and private sectors in housing, the coordination of transport, sanitation and job creation policies: and a range of intermediate technology solutions which can be easily upgraded at any one time. At the same time, a range of land transfer and registration procedure and building regulations would be required that would aid private housing production rather than relegate it to an illegal or semi-legal status.

In looking at policies for safeguarding the urban heritage, the issues involved were particularly complex. Dr. Abdelhalim I. Abdelhalim observed that the first half of the 20th Century created a number of major architecturral landmarks which were the work of Egyptian architects searching for a national expression as part of the struggle for independence. These landmarks together with those in the medieval city are being threatened by rising land values and a strategic location within the metropolitan region.

Even more complex is the conservation and revitalisation of a large area strategically located in between the central business district of Cairo and the various directions of expansion. As Dr. Doris Abu Seif pointed out, the attachment of the majority of the urban population to the medieval fabric needs to be demonstrated. They might gladly trade better housing and better community facilities for the dilapidated historical environment in which they live.

However, involving the inhabitants in the process of development will not only increase their awareness in their urbanistic heritage, but may also help in ensuring the ongoing maintenance that must accompany any rehabilitation strategy, if it is to be more than a ephemeral effort. Indeed, the most disturbing aspect of rapid urbanisation is the gap that develops between people and institutions.

In his opening address to the Seminar, HH Aga Khan noted that "... the poor can display considerable ingenuity in improving their own environment and in utilising locally available materials..." People are the Islamic world's greatest single resource. "If we are to harness their latent abilities, then we have to understand ordianry citizens' aspirations — which may be far removed from architectural or planning ideas" said HH the Aga Khan, "and we have to persuade them of the value of what we are attempting to do".

THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT

Prominent members of the Government took part in the Seminar. HE the Prime Minister took part in the opening ceremonies and HE the Governor of Cairo also participated and attended some of the Seminar sessions.

The Governor of Cairo remarked that on the manifestations of modernity, the increased human traffic between the southern and northern parts of the country the population

explosion, all are exacting their toll on development. According to census projections, by the year 2000 (only 15 years away), Greater Cairo will have a population of between 16.5 million and 20 million. This implies that an area equivalent to the present size of Cairo will be required.

The Governor of Cairo recognised that a satisfactory solution will need to identify how best to utilize existing potentials to meet needs, how to conserve Egypt's exalted traditions; and how to strike a balance between surrounding environmental conditions without damaging nature. "For God has blessed us with such aspects of nature" said the Governor, "that serve as a life vein for us and for our future generations — our great River Nile, our fertile soil, our fresh air and our green areas".

At the opening ceremony, HE the Prime Minister of Egypt emphasized the Government's intentions on establishing principles, based on directives from the President of the Republic. These principles include the protection of local popular districts and prompt enactment of measures to ensure the protection of agricultural land from encroachment by urban growth.

He also emphasized a number of achievements. For the first time since 1950, a cadastral survey is being undertaken, covering all Egyptian cities and villages. The results will be a basic input in physical planning. For the first time since 1950, encroachment on agricultural land or on the banks of the River Nile are also being stopped, according to the Prime Minister. Projects have also been prepared for the expanison of green areas and landscaped open spaces in cities. Special attention is also being given by the Government to the historic areas which encompass the Islamic heritage.

THE AGA KHAN'S OBSERVATIONS

Right from its inception, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture has avoided the view that architecture and its imprint on society is the exclusive province of the architectural profession alone. A large number of other forces have an impact on the built environment. For this reason, participants are invited to the Seminars who represent other agents of change, including those who finance development.

Participants included Charles Correa of India, winner of the Royal Institute of British Architects' 150th anniversary Gold Medal, who presented a case-study of the city of Bombay. Professor Mahdi Elmandjra of Morocco, specialist in international relations at the University of Rabat and former Assistant Director General of UNESCO highlighted the current issues facing the urban development of the city of Casablanca.

The Seminar was also attended by Mr. Rafael de la Hoz, President of the International Union of Architects and Dr. Hassan Fathy, Egyptian architect, poet and noted exponent of indigenous building. The Egyptian National Institute for Urban Planning and the Department of Architecture of Cairo University have undertaken, on behalf of the Award, photographic surveys of the most significant buildings constructed between 1920 and 1960. The results were exhibited during the Seminar. Participants also took part in site visits in and around Cairo including trips to two winners of the 1983 Aga Khan Award: the Ramses Wissa Wassef Arts Centre in Giza and the Darb Qirmiz Quarter in the historic city of Cairo. Visits were also made to houses designed by Dr. Hassan Fathy.

HH the Aga Khan, who takes an active part in the participation of the Seminars was able to articulate on the issues involved in the growth of Cairo and on their relevance to the Islamic World.

In his opening address he was able to remark that "when the World Heritage Convention listed 136 sites as being of major importance to the heritage of mankind, no less than a third were monumnets of Islamic culture". Cairo, as well as being an international, intellectual and commercial centre, is of course one of these historic sites. On a personal note HH the Aga Khan remarked that Cairo was founded by his ancestor the Fatimid Caliph, al-Mu'izz.

For Muslims, the relationship between a person's life and his or her physical surroundings is of critical importance. For Muslims, there is no fundamental division between the spiritual and the material: "the whole world is an expression of Allah's creation and the aesthetics of the environment we build are correspondingly important". The fundamental question is how best to encourage planning and architecture for the Islamic World, sympathetic to both spiritual and aesthetic heritage and to the present day aspirations of Muslims for a change and improvement.

Fifty cities are expected to have populations in excess of 15 million by the end of the century. Cairo is likely to be one of these fifty cities. It was, therefore, clear that "when we build, we must seek to do a great deal more than merely overcome immediate crises". It is all too easy, when faced by the huge financial implications of restructuring a city, to take refuge in projects that will relieve the worst pressure points and to disregard the rest. HH the Aga Khan perceived that "the urban infrastructure we are creating will have to serve not only our own generation and the next, but many more".

In his closing address, HH the Aga Khan had much to say on the administrative system of cities. The Islamic world is developing desirable directions in which to encourage the growth of its built environment. While concepts are becoming clearer, the means to achieve these concepts remain unclear. Many parts of the Islamic world have inherited an administrative structure from colonial times whose purpse was, in part, to control and sometimes to arrest initiative. These procedures are undesirable and often obsolete and can generate an environment which disables progress.

One subject which frequently arose during the Seminar was that of administration, particularly in terms of the feed back and flow of information necessary between different authorities and the many planning experts.

New administrative machinery cannot be introduced successfully overnight, although useful lessons can be learnt by introducing new methodologies to a few key areas.

However, as HH the Aga Khan noted, the most crucial question concerns the ethos from which planning develops... "Whether we are architects or planners, engineers or builders, governors or governed, we have to ask ourselves what vision the Islamic world should have of its cities, not today, not tomorrow, but in twenty-five years time". He observed that, "with a clear vision of the kind of city which will serve the future of our faith and our civilisation, a vision which will fulfil the aspirations of Muslims and improve the quality of their daily lives, we can succeed. Without it we cannot".

2nd INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

ISLAMIC ART RESOURCES IN WORLD MUSEUMS AND MAJOR PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

The Islamic Arts Foundation, which organised the 1st International Seminar on "The Arts in Islamic Lands" in March 1982, plans to hold the 2nd Seminar from 19-21 April 1985.

The scope and format of the 2nd Seminar will continue to be broadbased enough to include any aspect of "The Arts in Islamic Lands", as in the case of the 1st Seminar in 1982, which had attracted more than 50 art experts and scholars as well as teachers, administrators, dealers and collectors of Islamic arts from Eastern and Western countries.

However, within this wide spectrum, a specific theme on which the 1985 Seminar will concentrate is: "ISLAMIC ART RESOURCES IN WORLD MUSEUMS AND MAJOR PRIVATE COLLECTIONS". The aim is to review the present state of cataloguing of Islamic art collections in various countries of the world, and to explore the feasibility of developing a centrally available archives which should be easy of access to scholars and research workers in this field.

The Foundation will appreciate receiving information about any published or unpublished material relating to Islamic art collections in various countries. References to these will be suitably included in the background material being prepared for the Seminar.

The venue of the 2nd Seminar will be the same as in 1982, viz. Farnham Castle, 40 miles north of London.

For further details please write to: ISLAMIC ARTS FOUNDATION, 5A Bathurst Street, London W2 2SD. Telephone 01-402 1451; 01-724 0614; Telex: 894240 ISLAMI G; 262284 MONREF G Ref 3307 Islamic Arts.