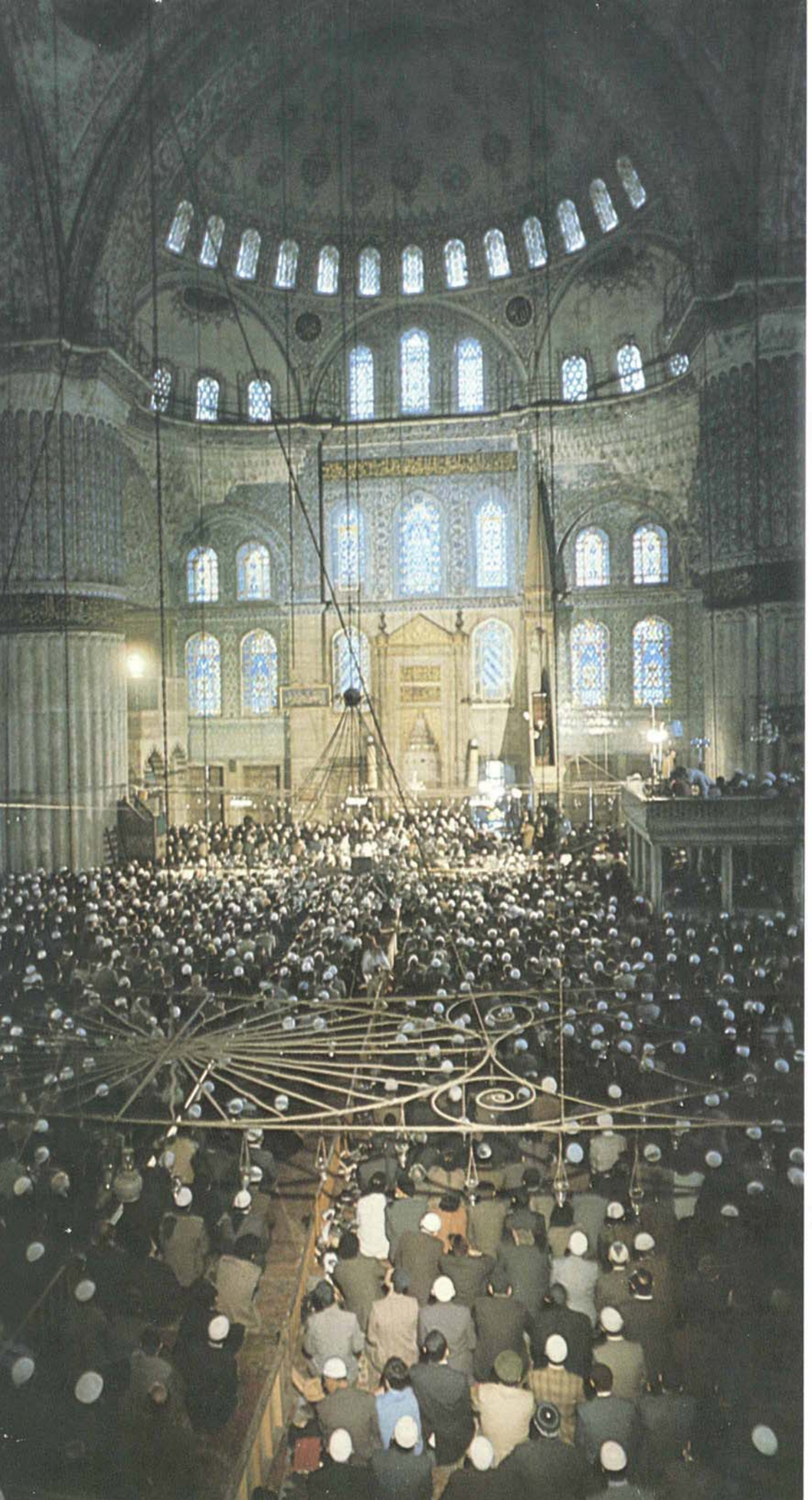

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ARAMCO WORLD magazine

JULY–AUGUST 1976

To value the past

ARAMCO WORLD magazine

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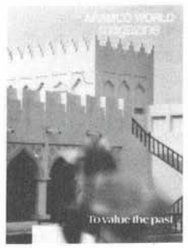

Cover: Sited on the sea, Qatar's new National Museum offers modern halls, a small aquarium, a lagoon for dhows and 10 restored buildings – such as this 19th-century residence. Photograph by William Tracy. Story and photos on page four. Rear cover: Muslim foreign ministers pray in Istanbul's Blue Mosque.

◄ At the turn of the century a dam on the Nile submerged Philae and partially covered the Temple of Isis and such carvings as the sun god, Horus. Page 16.

Air Raid! A Sequel

WRITTEN BY WILLIAM MULLIGAN

ILLUSTRATION BY DON THOMPSON

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It was an audacious plan. With a staggering load of fuel and bombs the tiny flotilla was to attempt to fly the Eastern Mediterranean, cross the mountains of Lebanon and make its way over the largely uncharted deserts of Syria and Arabia. En route they would have to avoid RAF patrols out of Iraq, bomb the refinery, cross the Arabian Peninsula and land in Eritrea, seized in Mussolini's war with Haile Selassie's Ethiopia, then usually called Abyssinia.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

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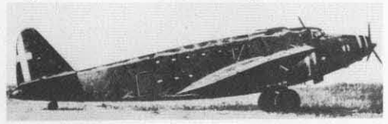

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Muti, a Fascist Militia general, with Mussolini.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

In Qatar, a new museum is helping today's generation...

To value the past

WRITTEN BY WILLIAM TRACY

PHOTOGRAPHED BY WILLIAM TRACY AND GIAN LUIGI SCARFIOTTI

Bottom right and top: Qatar Ministry of Information photographs show complex of 19th-century residences before and after reconstruction. Bottom left: Facade of the new Museum of State is in harmony with older buildings.

Things are changing fast in the Arabian Gulf. Since the advent of oil and its recent emergence as the major economic fact of life, many of the old ways have been disappearing rapidly. Too rapidly for some leaders, who fear that industrialization and social change may be achieved at the expense of the region's rich cultural heritage.

One such leader is Shaikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of Qatar, a small peninsular state which juts due north into the Gulf from the coast of the larger Arabian Peninsula. Anxious lest the younger generation forget the historic streams which shaped their country—the desert, with its migratory tribes, and the sea, with its coastal communities of fishermen, pearlers and traders—Shaikh Khalifa last year opened a national museum devoted to Qatar's nomadic and seafaring origins. Three years in the planning, and strategically placed on a seaside complex of nearly 12 acres, the museum offers gardens, restored residences, a spacious Museum of the State and a striking Museum of the Sea, which includes an aquarium and a pleasant lagoon in which five dhows float at anchor.

There are, certainly, many museums in the Middle East already. Those of Cairo,

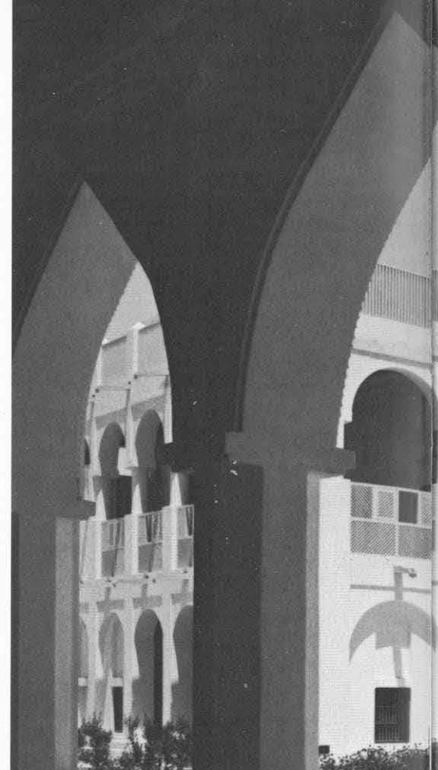
Five specially commissioned dhows afloat in lagoon.

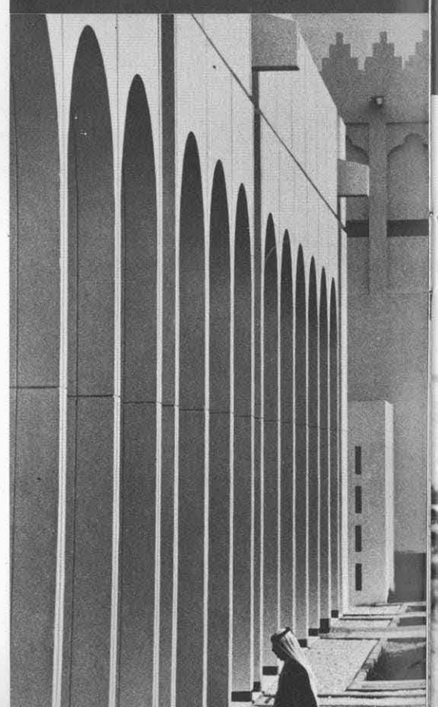
Damascus and Baghdad, to cite just three, have world-wide reputations—and justly so. But until the Qatar National Museum opened last year the Gulf region lacked a special showcase for its rich and varied past. Both Kuwait and Bahrain have small museums and Saudi Arabia's Department of Antiquities is hard at work on an ambitious $400-million plan to build 13 regional museums and a central National Museum in Riyadh. In the meantime, however, the new complex on the shore at Doha—capital of Qatar—houses the largest collection of ethnographical, ecological and historical material assembled on eastern Arabia and the Gulf. It also, according to a London *Times* critic, "promises to set a new standard for such institutions in the Middle East."

Much of the success of the Qatar National Museum derives from the initial decision to restore a walled complex of 10 crumbling but dignified seaside halls and residences from which the ruling Al-Thani family governed Doha from the mid-19th century until about the time of World War II. A key factor in the choice of the buildings as the site of the museums was Shaikh Khalifa's childhood recollections; he had lived in one as a boy and remembered with fondness their breezy terraces and cool dim interiors, thickly carpeted and lined with cushions. But there were sound architectural reasons as well: the character of the buildings was distinctive to the Arabian Gulf, yet also reflected the influence of three countries involved in Qatar's history: Ottoman Turkey, British India and Persia. And although the residences were modest structures, the vertical lines of the supporting piers, the deep-set shadowed windows and the delicate stucco ornamentation gave them an appealing grace.

The Amir gave the job of restoring the old buildings to the Ministry of Public Works and personally chose Beirut architects Irving and Jones (See *Aramco World*, July-August 1971 and January-February 1972) to design compatible new buildings. He also designated Michael Rice and Company of London, who had advised on the small Bahrain museum, to plan the interiors.

According to all concerned with the planning, restoration and construction, Shaikh Khalifa followed the project closely from conception to completion. And the result reflects the concern: the simple, airy feeling of a Greek village





Left and opposite: Broad, high-ceilinged verandas with wooden lattice work catch the sea breezes from the nearby harbor. Bottom left: In the Museum of State a 'Tower of Light' leads visitors from the historic exhibits to a second-story gallery depicting Qatar today.

with plaster surfaces gleaming like marble, delicate stucco patterns picked out in shadows and then woven repeatedly into inlaid floors, screens, signboards, brochures and even light fixtures. Outside the museum sparrows swoop in and out of the pillared verandas and perch saucily on rain spouts and lattice work, and hedge-lined gravel paths line gardens of flowering jasmine, frangipani and rose bushes in the shade of acacia and cypress trees.

Another striking feature is the one-story Museum of the Sea—a memorial to the time when Qatar controlled a third of the Gulf's once-important pearling fleet.

In the basement, the Aquatic Biological Consultancy Services of England has provided a small aquarium with a dozen large tanks devoted to the Gulf's marine life. But the eye-catcher is outdoors: a dredged lagoon in which are anchored five specially commissioned dhows, the famous sailing vessels in which Gulf sailors explored the Indian Ocean and beyond. The museum dhows may be among the last of these old wooden craft to be built without now-standard modifications for inboard engines (See *Aramco World*, March-April 1974).

In planning the Museum of the State the architects and designers hoped to capture in exhibits a span of human experience covering some 200,000 years—from the Old Stone Age through the coming of Islam and including the present Oil Age. But presenting the culture of the Bedouin posed an unusual problem. Bedouin life, adapted to the harshness of the desert and the need to travel with a minimum of goods, is essentially non-material. Museum planners, therefore, decided to make extensive use of tapes and films to tell the story of life in the desert. To capture what is probably the outstanding cultural achievement of the Bedouin—his rhythmic poetry and prose—the planners have mounted on the walls written excerpts and stanzas expressing

the themes of nomadic life and the wisdom of Islam. One, on bravery, captures both:

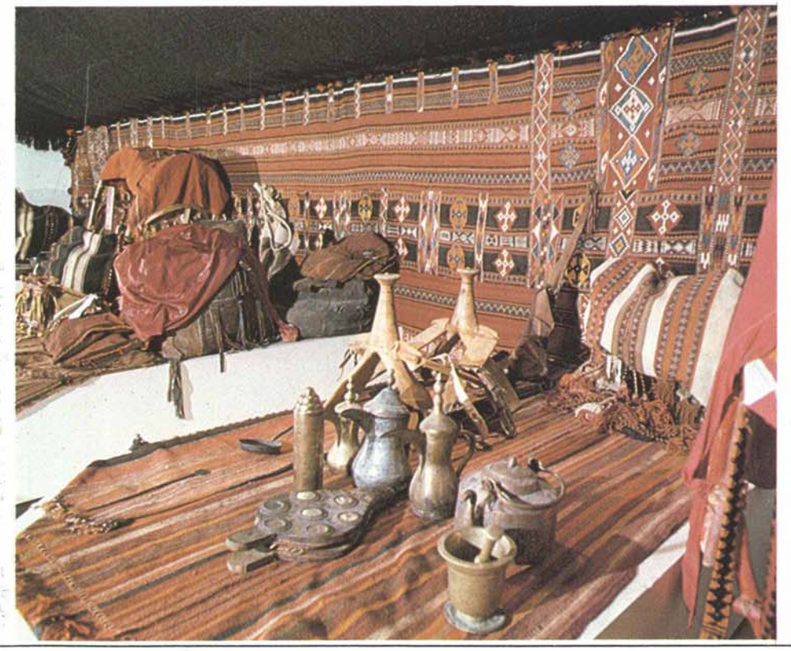
I said to my Soul
When she was seized by fear
In the face of my enemies' might:
O my soul
Shed fear
For in vain do you try to gain
One day more than your allotted time.
So hold fast in the presence of Death;
Be patient
Immortality on Earth
Is a futile quest.

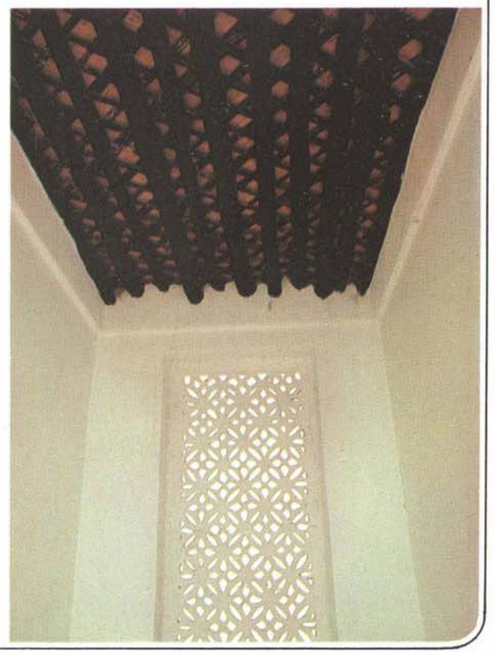
The museum is built on a human scale. Its exhibits are not severely institutional, but informally arranged to guide the visitor on a leisurely stroll that links the life and customs of the past with the discoveries of today. At the entrance, for example, an animated film, projected in the darkness of a desert well, shows the geological history of the region and concludes with views of the Arabian Gulf photographed from space. But close by an inscription on the wall pointedly tells the story of creation according to Sura 41, verse 2 of the Koran: ". . . turned He to the heaven when it was smoke, and said unto it and unto the earth: 'Come, both of you, willingly or loth.' They said: 'We come obedient.' "

Throughout the museum, displays are diverse and lively. They include a large wall map of prehistoric sites and, in a dimly lit room, a mural of rock carvings and an exhibit of stone hand axes and burial urns. There are displays on astronomy and geography, collections of swords, muskets, jewelry and design, and films covering music, weaving, storytelling and coffee making. One section displays Bedouin artifacts in wool, leather, wood, copper, brass and iron; it takes in carpets, saddlebags, pillows, hangings, bowls, chests and saddles. Three smaller rooms are devoted to the horse, the camel and the desert Arab's hunting partners, the falcon and the saluki, and a section on ecology displays charts, graphs and maps on rainfall, temperature and bird migrations plus handsome large color transparencies of wildlife, including the rare, legendary Arabian oryx. The museum's material on fauna and flora was prepared by two *Aramco World* contributors, David Harrison (January-February 1970) and James P. Mandaville (January-February 1968).

In the last section a "Tower of Light," surrounded by a graceful circular staircase, rises to the final exhibit: a second-story gallery of glass and chrome in which large photographic panels depict the coming of oil and the progress of the modern state. It is a dramatic finale to the story of Qatar which leaves visitors—the creators of Qatar's National Museum hope—with a new-found respect for the values and customs of those who came before.

William Tracy is assistant editor of Aramco World.





In the Museum of State are displays of weapons (above), silver jewelry and Bedouin implements (bottom photos left and center). Restored 19th-century rooms feature painted or timbered ceilings and ornate stucco screens.

THE APPOINTED ROUNDS

WRITTEN BY PAUL LUNDE

"Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

Those words, carved on the lintels of post offices across America, once capsuled a spirit that was the foundation of today's sophisticated network of global communications—a spirit that sent Western Union boys pedalling into the rain with telegrams, urged pioneering pilots to fly the early airmail letters through wintry skies to Chicago and spurred the Pony Express across the untamed plains with mail for Sacramento.

But those inspiring words are much older than airmail pilots, Western Union boys or Pony Express riders. They were written by Herodotus, the father of history, in 430 B.C., and described the communications network of Xerxes, ruler of Persia in the fifth century, B.C. It was a remarkably efficient network, but even then was a relatively late development in the history of communications.

The need for an efficient postal system goes back to the ancient need of a ruler for swift and accurate information, a need clearly described by Nizam al-Mulk, a prime minister under Seljuk Turkish sultans in the ninth century:

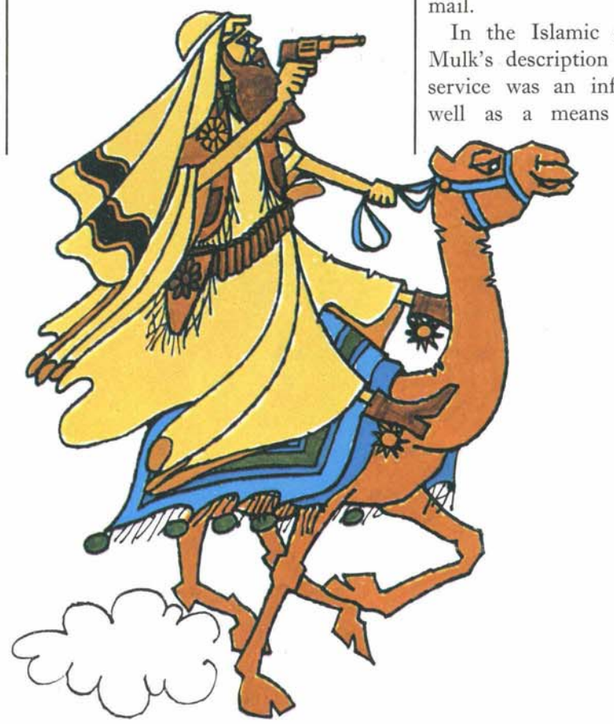
It is the king's duty to enquire into the conditions of his peasantry and army, both far and near, and to know more or less how things are. If he does not do this he is at fault and people will charge him with negligence, laziness and tyranny, saying, "Either the king knows about the oppression and extortion going on in the country, or he does not know. If he knows and does nothing to prevent it and remedy it, that is because he is an oppressor like the rest and acquiesces in their oppression; and if he does not know then he is negligent and ignorant." Neither of these imputations is desirable. Inevitably therefore he must have postmasters . . .

Long before al-Mulk set that down for the instruction of Seljuk princes, rulers in other empires had already come to similar conclusions and acted on them.

As early as 2000 B.C. the Egyptians had developed a primitive postal system, by about 1000 B.C. ancient China had worked out a system not unlike the one developed by America's Pony Express, and by the time of Islam other peoples—Greeks, Romans, Byzantines and Sasanians—had refined and polished elements of the earlier systems into relatively sophisticated operations.

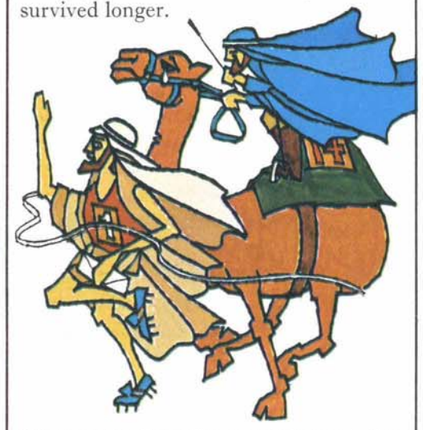
As the new Islamic state expanded, its leaders were quick to adapt and elaborate on what had been learned before. Indeed, the Arabic word for "post" (*barid*) is derived from the same Sasanian chancery term that gave the Greeks *beredos* and the Romans their *veredus*, meaning "post-horse." Both are derived from a Persian word meaning "crop-tailed mule," the mount the Sasanians used to carry the mail.

In the Islamic state, as Nizam al-Mulk's description suggests, the postal service was an information agency as well as a means of communication with the provinces. By the ninth century, as a result, the *Diwan al-Barid*—the Ministry of Posts and Communications—was probably the most important arm of government. Its postal inspectors, stationed along major roads, not only saw that the mail got through, but gathered information for the central government and sent periodic reports to it. Those reports ranged from the state of the roads to the condition of crops and included notes on political problems, social unrest and even the efficiency of the regional governor.



The *barid* was organized in exactly the same way as the Pony Express in the American West—except that it used camels and mules instead of horses. Every four to six miles throughout the empire was a post house with quarters for the couriers and stables for the camels and mules. At each post house the couriers would switch mounts and at stated intervals the riders themselves would be changed to avoid exhaustion. Even the back-up organization was similar: the central government had to keep the roads open at all times, provision the post houses and pay the wages of thousands of postal inspectors.

There were limitations: only government communications could be sent along its network. Ordinary citizens either sent messages by caravan or, in urgent cases, hired special couriers. Yet the system proved to be remarkably efficient. A letter took four days to reach Damascus from Cairo—just about what it takes today—and Cairo could communicate with Spain in a week. The system also survived longer.



Whereas the Pony Express collapsed after 16 months, the *barid* flourished for centuries and spread to India where Muslim rulers maintained its efficiency—as traveler Ibn Battuta indicated after a trip to Sind in 1333. From the frontier of Sind to Delhi in India, he wrote, is a 50-day march, "but when the intelligence officers write to the Sultan . . . the letter reaches him in five days by the postal service."

India also added an innovation. In addition to mounted couriers, they introduced foot couriers. These runners were often faster than the mounted postmen and always, as Ibn Battuta describes them, more colorful:

Every third of a mile there . . . are three pavilions. In these sit men girded up ready to move off, each of whom has a rod a yard and a half long with brass bells at the top. When a courier leaves . . . he takes the letter in the fingers of one hand and the rod with bells in the other, and runs with all his might. The men in the pavilions, on hearing the sound of the bells, prepare to meet him,

For a while there, the mail did get through

ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN SMITH

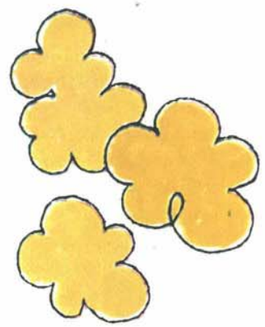
and when he reaches them one of them takes the letter in his hand and passes on, running with all his might and shaking his rod until he reaches the next station, and so the letter is passed on until it reaches its destination.

By such swift—and musical—couriers, Ibn Battuta goes on, the sultans not only accumulated intelligence and news, but also obtained fruits from far-away Khurasan, drinking water from the Ganges and, during the sweltering Indian summer, snow from the Himalayas to cool their beverages.

If efficient, however, the Islamic postal service was also vulnerable. Like their counterparts today, invaders knew that a government deprived of trustworthy information was powerless to act. By blocking roads and ambushing couriers they could disrupt communications and insure victory.

In some parts of the empire this strategy succeeded. But in others Islamic rulers came up with ingenious alternatives. One was an early warning system set up by the Mamluk sultans of Egypt when Hulagu Khan led his Mongol hordes across Persia in the middle of the 13th century. Fearful that the Mongols would cross the Euphrates and sweep across Iraq and Syria to Egypt., Mamluk engineers erected a chain of watchtowers along the postal routes between Iraq and Egypt. On top of each tower the prepared beacon fires—green wood for smoke signals in daylight, dry wood for bright fires at night—and assigned a corps of watchmen to 24-hour duty.

The system had faults and it could transmit just one basic message: the enemy has attacked. But it was astonishingly fast. News of a Mongol invasion could reach Cairo in eight hours—about the time it now takes to receive a telegram there from the same distance. More to the point, it worked. When the Mongols finally did sweep into Iraq the watchmen on the Euphrates lit their fires, the watchmen at the next tower lit theirs and, tower by tower, the alert flashed to the Mamluks. By the time the Mongols cut their way through Iraq, Syria and Palestine the Mamluks had had ample time to mobilize and were able to inflict a crushing defeat upon them—the first ever suffered by the Mongols in open combat.



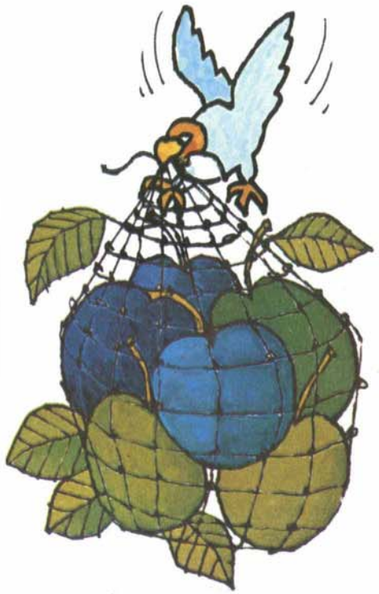
During the Crusades, when even special couriers were intercepted or blocked, Mamluk leaders turned to courier pigeons.

They set up relays of dovecotes from Egypt to Iraq that could get a message from Cairo to Baghdad in two days. The pigeons were so efficient that the Crusaders themselves adopted the idea. One Crusader prince used them to announce his capture of Beirut and others carried pigeons back to England and Europe where, in 1850, Baron von Reuter used them to carry bulletins from Germany to Belgium and help found Reuters News Agency.

Under the Mamluks, only the Sultan himself could open a letter delivered by pigeon. All the pigeons bore the Sultan's mark, either on their beaks or on their feet, and the letters they carried were immediately brought to the Sultan even if he were asleep. At one point they became so numerous that they were divided into companies, each with its commandant, and lodged in special dovecotes near the Citadel. In the year 1300 the Mamluk postal service employed

1,900 pigeons whose careful training led a German soldier of fortune named Johan Schiltberger to compose a lengthy description:

It is also to be noted, that the [Mamluk Sultan] also sends letters by pigeons, because he has many enemies, and is afraid that they might stop his messengers. They are sent mostly from Archey to Tamasgen, between which places is a great desert. It is also to be noted, how the pigeons are sent to any city to which the Sultan wishes to have them sent. Two pigeons must be put together, and sugar must be put into their food, and they are not allowed to fly; and when they know each other well, the hen-pigeon is taken to the king, and he keeps it, and marks the cock-pigeon that it may be known from which city it is; it is then put into a separate place that is prepared, and the hen-pigeon is no longer allowed inside. They no longer give him so much to eat, and no more sugar as he used to have; this is done that he may wish to return as soon as possible to the place where he was before, and where he was trained. When they wish to despatch him, the letter is tied under a wing and he flies straight for the house where he was trained. There he is caught and the letter taken from him, and they send it to whomsoever it belongs.



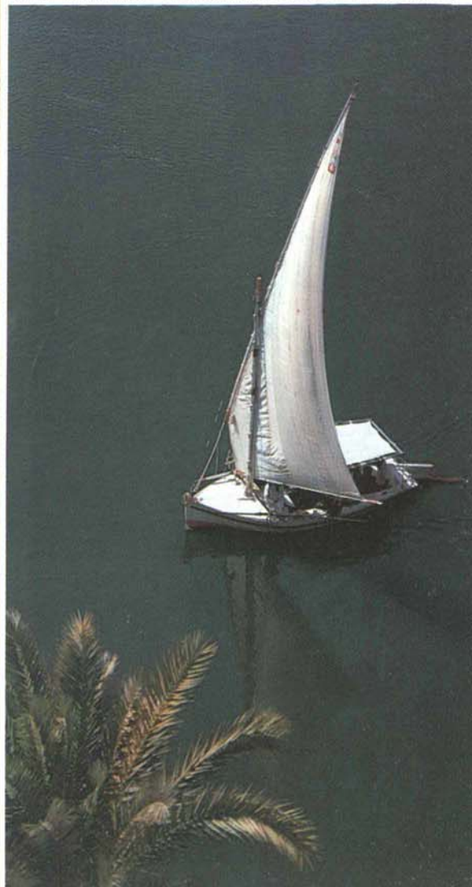
Like the runners in India, and their heirs with Parcel Post, the carrier pigeons were not used exclusively for military communications. There is a story, for example, that one day a Fatimid caliph in Cairo expressed a desire for the sweet plums of Baalbek in today's Lebanon. His vizier immediately dispatched a pigeon to Baalbek ordering plums by return post. The ingenious postmaster at Baalbek at once complied, and before the day was out a flock of pigeons delivered a bowl of plums to the caliph. Each pigeon had carried a single plum tied to its leg.

Paul Lunde, who studied Arabic and Persian at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, now lives and writes in Saudi Arabia.

A new setting for Philae–"The Pearl of Egypt"

LAST OF THE TEMPLES

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY ED MULLIS



Eight years ago they rescued Abu Simbel. One year ago they rebuilt Dendur in New York. This year they're saving Philae.

Philae was once and rightly called "The Pearl of Egypt." For even amid the historic splendor of the Nile Valley this small island and its monuments were unique. There was a temple to Isis, goddess of fertility and healing, inscriptions vaunting the might of Rome and chapels marking the fourth-century spread of Christianity—14 monuments in all, standing, as someone wrote, "among rustling palms and bright mimosa, and floating on the fast blue currents of the Nile as they swept north to the sea."

Like Abu Simbel and Dendur, and numerous other treasures of ancient Egypt, Philae came to the attention of the Western world 27 years after Napoleon invaded the Nile and dispatched his teams of geographers, engineers, scholars and draftsmen to explore, measure, describe and draw these wonders from the ancient world. The result of their work was the encyclopedic study called *Description de l'Egypte* (See *Aramco World,* March-April, 1976), a work which brought the Western world flocking to the Nile.

Many, certainly, brushed past Philae in their eagerness to see the magnificent sandstone figures of Ramses II cut into the cliffs of Abu Simbel some 130 miles upstream. But to some, even then, Philae was the jewel of Egyptian Nubia. Its island setting was unforgettable and its complex of temples, obelisks and inscriptions was incomparable. Philae bore, as one writer put it, "the traces of the different cultures which had flowed across it, as it was later to bear the marks of the tides."

The "tides" that writer noticed were really the currents of the Nile rising and falling seasonally after Great Britain, which had occupied Egypt, constructed the first Aswan Dam in 1902. Built two miles north, or downstream, from Philae, the dam slowed the flow of the mighty river and created an 11-square-mile reservoir. In winter the waters of the reservoir covered the island and the lower half of the monuments but in summer, when the dam was opened for irrigation, the monuments were left high and dry.

These seasonal tides posed no great danger at first. They did wipe out the lush gardens and, later, after the dam and the depth of the reservoir were raised, coat the monuments with silt. But as the British had strengthened the temples' foundations in 1896 before proceeding with the dam, the structures themselves remained intact.

In the 1950's, however, Egypt announced its plans to build the Aswan High Dam four and a half miles south of, or upstream from, Philae. The towering High Dam was

NIK WHEELER

a cornerstone in the plans of Gamal Abdul Nasser for the modernization of Egypt; it would provide power for new industries and water to irrigate two million barren acres. But it would also leave Philae trapped between the two dams, raise and lower the level of the old reservoir by 10 feet every day—as water was admitted or drained for power production—and by that action accelerate the erosion of the ancient stone and the destruction of the foundations. Furthermore, according to the Egyptian Ministry of Culture, it heralded the annihilation of the slender length of Nubia, south of the dam. And with Nubia irreplaceable treasures which would vanish forever under the 130-mile body of water to be called Lake Nasser.

To the foresighted Ministry of Culture such a loss was unacceptable and in 1959 the ministry appealed to the world for help. Through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization — UNESCO — they launched an appeal for financial and technical assistance to save what has been described as a common heritage of mankind.

To sweeten the appeal the ministry shrewdly offered assisting nations the right to archeological digs in Nubia and, as a bonus to the more generous nations, the outright gift of several of the smaller temples.

The response was overwhelming. Professor Adolph Klassins and a team dug for four seasons north of Abu Simbel and the Temple of Taffa now rests in the Rijksmuseum in Leiden, The Netherlands. Dr. Henry G. Fischer, curator of Egyptian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, arranged to move the exquisite Temple of Dendur and reconstruct it in a special glass-enclosed wing in Central Park (See *Aramco World*, May-June, 1969). Spain moved the Ptolemaic Temple of Daboud to Madrid, and West Germany, which moved the Temple of Kalabsha to a higher site, brought home a Ptolemaic gateway for the Berlin Museum. In all, more than 50 nations contributed to the campaign and 21 temples were saved, including famous Abu Simbel, the two cliff-side temples and four 67-foot seated figures which Ramses II built in the 13th century B.C.

Both the giant figures and the cave-like temples themselves were carefully cut into manageable segments and winched to the top of the cliff 200 feet above in a technically staggering $38-million race against time. But by the time President Nasser dedicated his $1-billion dam the entire job was done. Today Abu Simbel and the four giant figures again sit in majestic repose by the waters of the Nile.

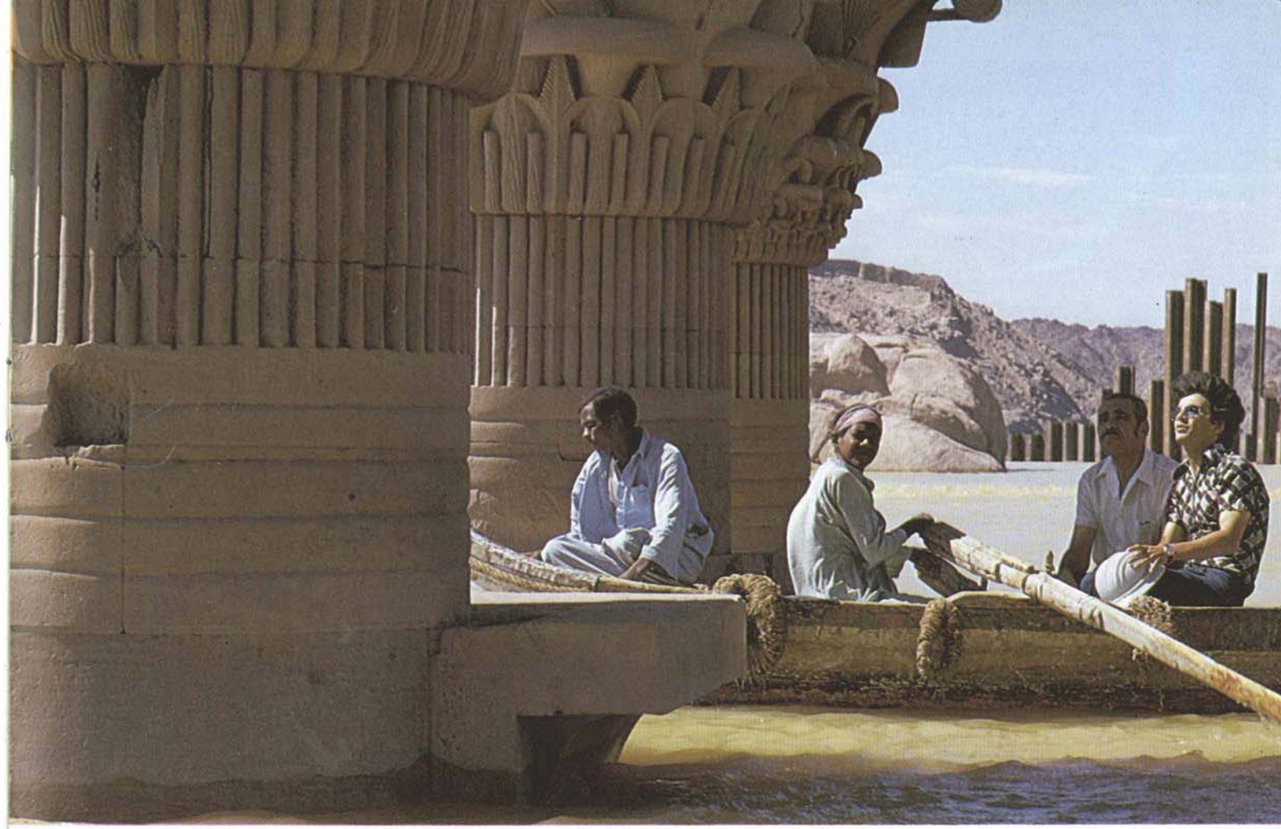
Philae—the last of the 22 temples scheduled for salvation under the UNESCO–sponsored program — presented a quite different problem. Whereas the temples upstream had to be moved before the waters reached them, Philae had to be moved from *under* the water. Many of Philae's temples, moreover, were carved with precious bas-reliefs which would add immeasurable complications to any plan involving dismantling and reconstruction.

In weighing those problems, experts considered and rejected several proposals: to raise the level of the island itself; to surround it with a permanent dike; to lower the water around the island by building three small dams and isolating it in a secondary lake. Eventually they settled on the ambitious project now being implemented at an estimated cost of $18 million. They decided to build a cofferdam—a temporary, watertight enclosure — around Philae, pump out the water, move all the monuments to a nearby island reshaped to resemble the original, and re-erect them there.

It was by no means a simple task. Moving the temples involved 40,000 separate building stones weighing between three and 27 tons each. Nevertheless, in December 1971 the project got underway. Engineers began to drive 50-foot interlocking steel-sheet piles deep into the riverbed to form twin belts of steel around the island, 40 feet apart and a half-mile in diameter. This phase —the first—required 6,000 tons of steel and took nearly two years to complete. When the piles were in place the 40-foot channel between the steel walls was filled with sand from quarries about three miles away; the sand was mixed with water and pumped as slurry through a floating pipeline to the temple site and hosed into the channel. As the slurry forced the water out—and then dried out itself—a dike of steel and sand was created, leaving the island and its monuments in a tranquil pool inside. When the cofferdam was finished they began to pump the water out; gradually the mud-coated temples emerged into the sun and an army of workmen began to cart away accumulations of silt that in some places were more than six feet deep.

Phase three brought a regiment of archeologists, architects, photographers and draftsmen onto both Philae and the island of Agilkia, the new site, 1,000 feet away. Using an advanced technique known as photogrammetry—primarily, high-precision cameras aligned in pairs to produce three-dimensional views —technicians turned out geometrically accurate line drawings for the reconstruction phase. That done, a firm of Italian specialists began the exacting task of numbering and dismantling the 40,000 stones in the monuments. Started in September 1975, the dismantling and transport of the stones is expected to be completed early next year.

In the meantime the nearby island of Agilkia was being transformed. Behind dozens of giant bulldozers an army of 4,500 men from the Aswan High Dam Company worked three shifts a day to clear 750,000 tons of granite dynamited from the sun-bleached ledges of the island and then dump it in the river. This fill —some 12 million cubic feet—is



Upper photo: As construction of the steel-pile cofferdam proceeds, Egyptian experts and a visiting journalist take a close look at the Temple of Trajan. Bottom: Pumping begins as the circular dam isolates the flooded Temple of Trajan and the Temple of Isis (foreground) from the lake proper.

UNESCO/ALEXIS N. VORONTZOFF

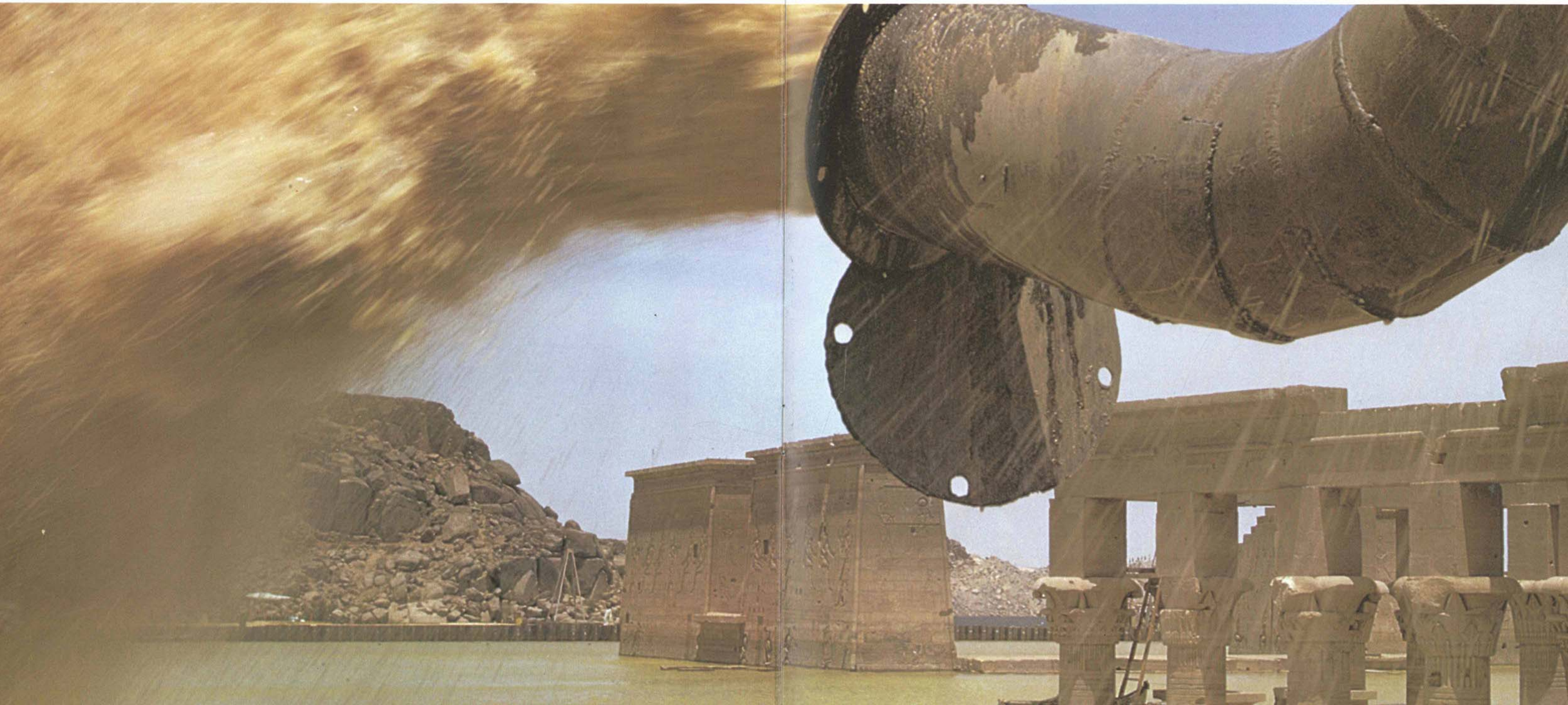
After the temples have been meticulously marked and dismantled (left), they will be reconstructed on neighboring Agilkia (above), which engineers are reshaping to resemble Philae.
Below: A slurry of sand and water is pumped into the channel between the double steel walls of the cofferdam surrounding the submerged monuments.

being dumped along the shoreline of the island according to a precise plan of landscaping that will duplicate the shape, size, height and contours of Philae. This phase was scheduled for completion this summer but re-erection of some temples had begun even before the dust—or mud—settled.

Meanwhile, UNESCO was also at work—trying to raise another $6 million to add to the $12 million already given or pledged. Altogether 24 nations have contributed substantial sums, including $2 million from the United States and $1.6 million from the Soviet Union. Another $1.6 million came from the proceeds of the Tutankhamen Exhibition in London (See *Aramco World*, September-October, 1972), and the World Food Program contributed the equivalent of nearly $5 million in food rations to the workers and their families. UNESCO itself is selling a "Philae Medal." Struck in gold, silver and bronze, the medal commemorates a campaign that will not only save "The Pearl of Egypt" but, when the mammoth job is completed two years from now, provide it with a new setting worthy of the old.

Some 40,000 stones must be moved to the new site.

Ed Mullis has covered East Africa and the Middle East as a free-lance photojournalist and television cameraman.



A Conference in Istanbul

WRITTEN BY JOHN LAWTON
PHOTOGRAPHED BY ARA GÜLER

Not since the time of Suleiman the Magnificent had Istanbul played such a central role in Islam. Not since the 19th century has Islam made a more determined effort to forge a new sense of Islamic unity.

Islamic nations, of course, already share a central religious unity and at six other Islamic conferences they have weighed divisive issues. But this May, at the Seventh Islamic Conference, foreign ministers from 42 Muslim states made a special effort to unify the often divergent views of the nations on political, economic and cultural problems and other secular matters.

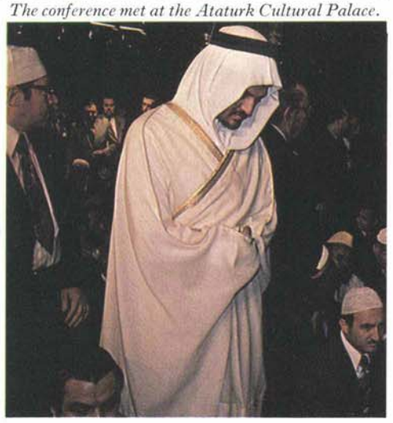
Only time can measure the ultimate results of that effort, but it was undeniably promising. Each day, for four days, they met to talk, argue and compromise on practical ways of making this aim a reality. And at the end they approved an 18-page document unifying their nations' stand on serious international issues and recommending numerous steps towards increased economic and cultural cooperation.

The conclave illustrated, as Turkish Foreign Minister Ihsan Sabri Caglayangil put it, "the spirit of solidarity prevailing among Islamic countries." It also underscored the resurgence of numerous Muslim states—stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific—after decades of Western domination.

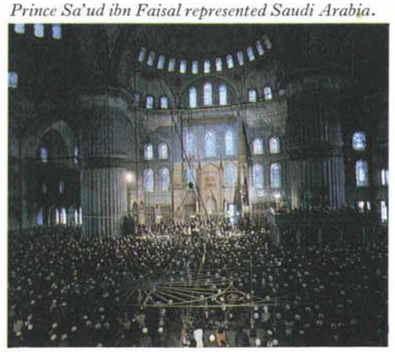
Such domination was unthinkable back in the days when the Ummayad and Abbasid caliphs were carrying the message of Islam west to the Atlantic coast, and east to India and the frontiers of China. In those days the Islamic states were militarily, culturally and scientifically supreme in the world. With the collapse of the Damascus and Baghdad dynasties, however, and the slow erosion of secular power in the Islamic empires that succeeded them over the centuries, Islamic solidarity and power eventually splintered and was destroyed.

As it was in Istanbul that the last great Islamic Empire collapsed—that of the Ottomans, after World War I—it was particularly appropriate that Istanbul also provide a site for an international conference marking a resurgence. As it was also the first time that Turkey participated as a full member of the conference, and as the conference was the largest international gathering ever held there, Istanbul responded enthusiastically. It bathed its magnificent mosques in brilliant floodlights, sent a colorful Ottoman band to greet ministers with stirring marches, reopened the Ataturk Cultural Palace, entertained ministers in Ottoman palaces, offered cruises up the Bosporus and, at the famous Topkapi Palace, served a lavish banquet of Black Sea fish, doner kebab and baklava. Appropriately too, Istanbul scheduled the Friday noon prayers beneath the six minarets of the magnificent 17th-century Blue Mosque—and drew thousands of spectators who, unable to join the ministers inside the cool, blue-tiled interior, thronged the courtyard, gardens and streets outside.

The conference met at the Ataturk Cultural Palace.



Prince Sa'ud ibn Faisal represented Saudi Arabia.



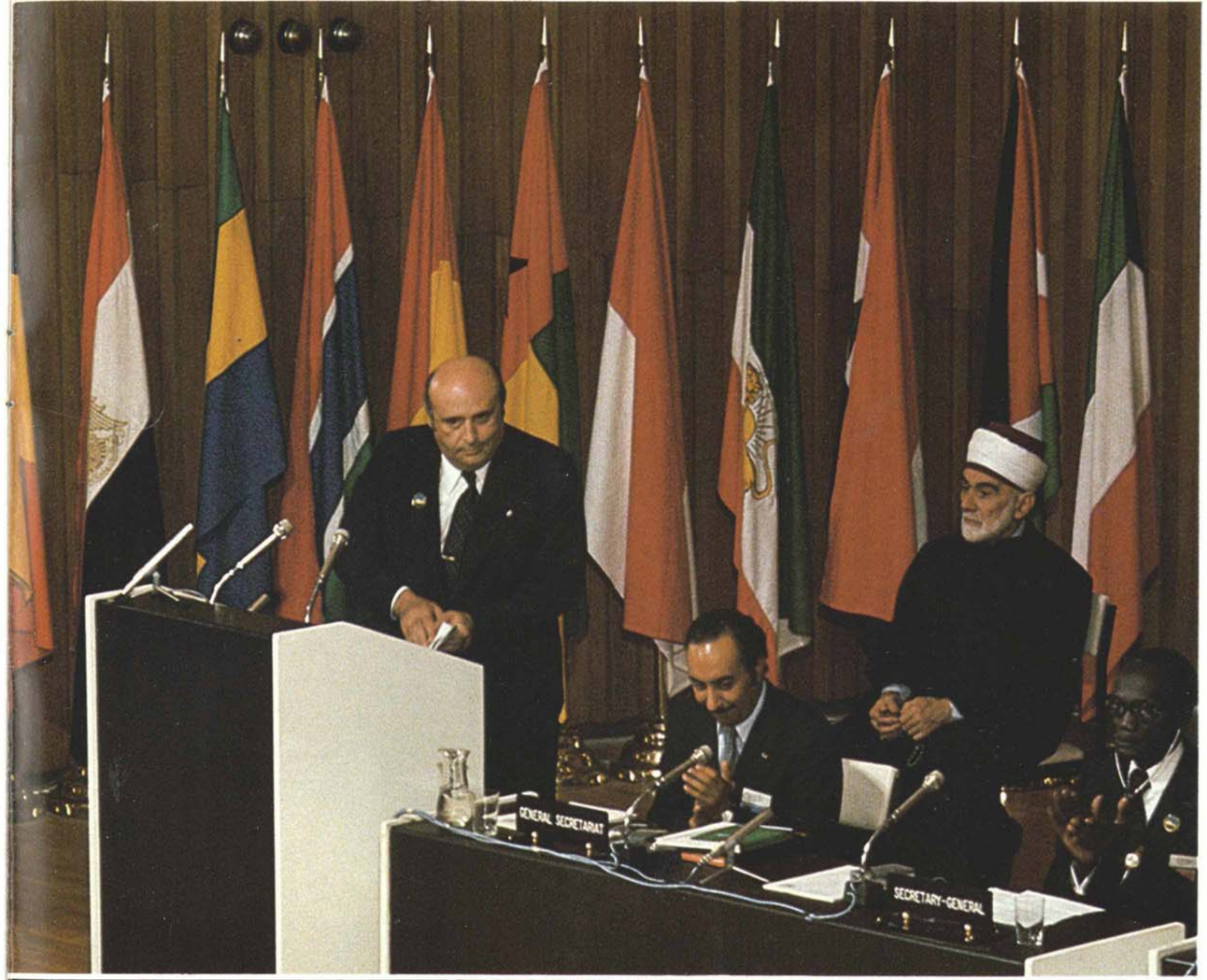
Conference delegates at prayer in the Blue Mosque.

By the end of the conference ministers and observers were generally agreed that it had been an outstanding success. For in addition to their statement of unity on thorny international issues, the delegates had also quietly decided to set up a center in Istanbul for research into Islamic history, culture and art; ordered the conference secretariat to take steps toward establishment of a statistical, economic and social research center; and asked member states to comment on recommendations that the conference set up an Islamic science foundation.

Nor was that all. The ministers also ordered a study pointing toward establishment of an international Islamic news agency, urged Muslim states to consider making Arabic a compulsory language in all schools and pledged educational assistance to the Federation of International Arab Islamic Schools to provide education to Muslim children whose parents—in the 1970's—work all over the world.

There were, certainly, problems and disagreements. But in the time available the achievements far outweighed the failures. As one Arab delegate put it, "For 42 quite different countries to work collectively in a world dominated by regional issues is far from easy. But this, I think, was a good start."

John Lawton, a veteran U.P.I. correspondent, now free-lances from Istanbul.



ISLAM IN GREECE

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY PAMELA ROBERSON

Whitewashed minarets dot the hills and valleys of Thrace

Most people know that the Parthenon in Athens was a pagan temple. Fewer know that it was also, at one time, a mosque.

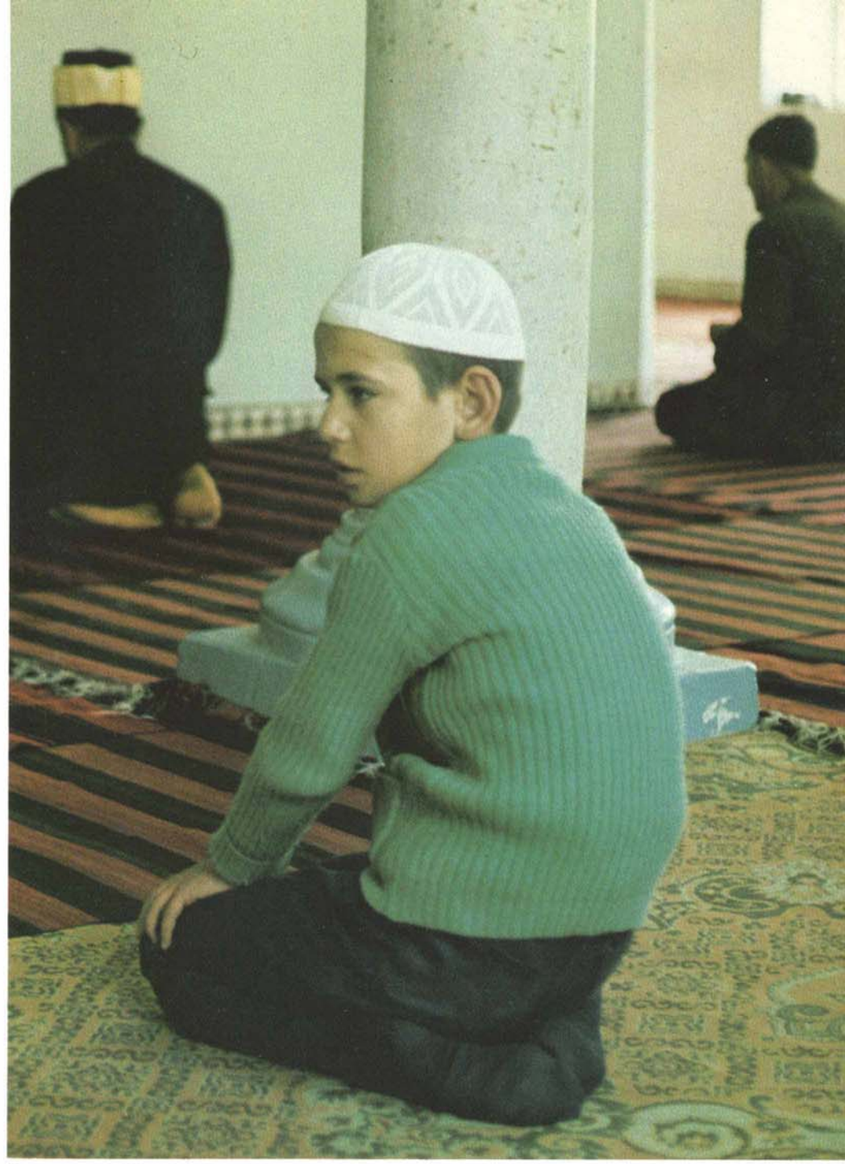
The mosque was built many centuries ago—after the Ottoman Turks carried the banner of Islam into Greece in 1354. And although some old prints show a minaret rising from one corner of the Parthenon there is only one trace of the mosque left today: a rough staircase inside the ruins.

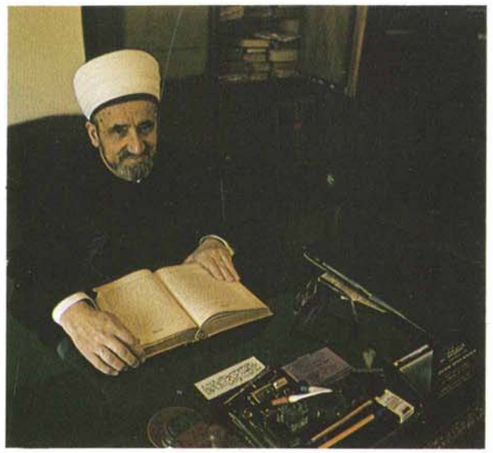
But that's the Parthenon. Elsewhere in Greece—in eastern Macedonia and particularly in Thrace—the stamp of Islam is plainly visible in the minarets and the soaring cry of the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer five times a day.

Islam came to Greece at the invitation of the Byzantine Empire. Although initially a mortal enemy of the Byzantines, the Muslims agreed to help Byzantium tame the troublesome Serbs—and stayed five and a half centuries. Even as late as 1913 Muslims formed nearly 40 percent of the population of Macedonia. Ten years later, however, when the First World War's Treaty of Lausanne rearranged frontiers and populations, nearly 350,000 Greek Muslims had to leave in exchange for nearly 600,000 Greek Orthodox Christians living elsewhere. When the exchange was completed the Muslim presence was reduced to those living in Thrace, an enclave that today numbers about 108,000 Muslims.

Thrace is a region of great natural beauty, with the sharp peaks and steep ridges of the Rodopi range interspersed with little valleys and the Drama-Serres plain. It is also a prosperous region that grows cotton, cereals and, in the foothills around Kavala, Xanthi, Drama and Komotini, tobacco — Greece's major earner of foreign exchange. There are six principal varieties of the leaf: Basma, Bachi Bagli, Kaba Koulak, Trebezonde, Samsoun and Smyrna. As the names imply, the last three were brought in by the refugees of Asia Minor in 1923.

In the villages and towns of the lowlands the Muslims all speak Turkish, and in some outlying villages not a person can be found who understands Greek. But in the towns they are usually bilingual and

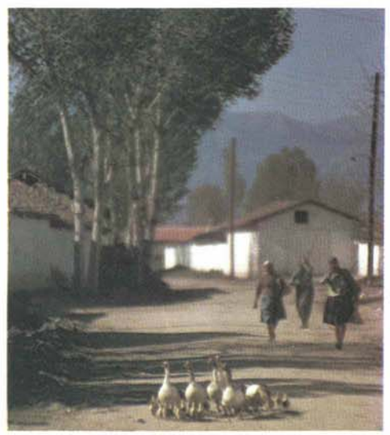




Opposite page: Inside the simple whitewashed mosque at Xanthi (exterior on preceding pages), the mihrab, *or prayer niche, is rich with color and calligraphy. Above: A boy at prayer in the Yemi Cami Mosque in Komotini. Left: The mufti (Muslim jurist) of Komotini, Hussein Mustapha, in his office.*

Faces of Thrace: Villagers outside a cafe (upper left), a minaret above red rooftops, a bride in Velkion . . .

. . . happy farm girls, school children outside a Muslim public grammar school in Alexandroupolis (far left) and farm women heading home with geese.



freely intermingle with their Greek Orthodox neighbors. Children play together, mothers compare baby formulas on the street corner and both Muslim and Christian men retire to all-male tavernas for the evening. They play backgammon, twirl worry beads and sip sweet coffee.

In the highlands and mountains lives a completely different group of Greek Muslims: the Pomaks, a Serbian-speaking people from Bulgaria. The Pomaks are Slavs who accepted Islam after exposure to the Ottomans. Their name is generally believed to derive from *pomagaci*, or "helper," for they often served as auxiliary troops for the Turks after their conversion in the 14th century.

In costume and custom the Slavic past still exists among the Pomaks. But there are strong elements of the Middle East as well: long white dresses, ankle-length black cloaks and jewelry, the bangle bracelets, the necklaces and the earrings. Pomak women are also more conservative than their Muslim counterparts in the lowlands. They modestly turn their faces aside or turn in the opposite direction to avoid being looked at. On the other hand, the Turkish-speaking Muslims greet strangers and welcome them into their homes. But whether lowland or highland, all Greek Muslims live by the law of Islam and accept the decisions of the traditional Muslim arbiter: the mufti.

In Greece the mufti is a civil servant whose basic salary is paid by the Greek government. To qualify for the position

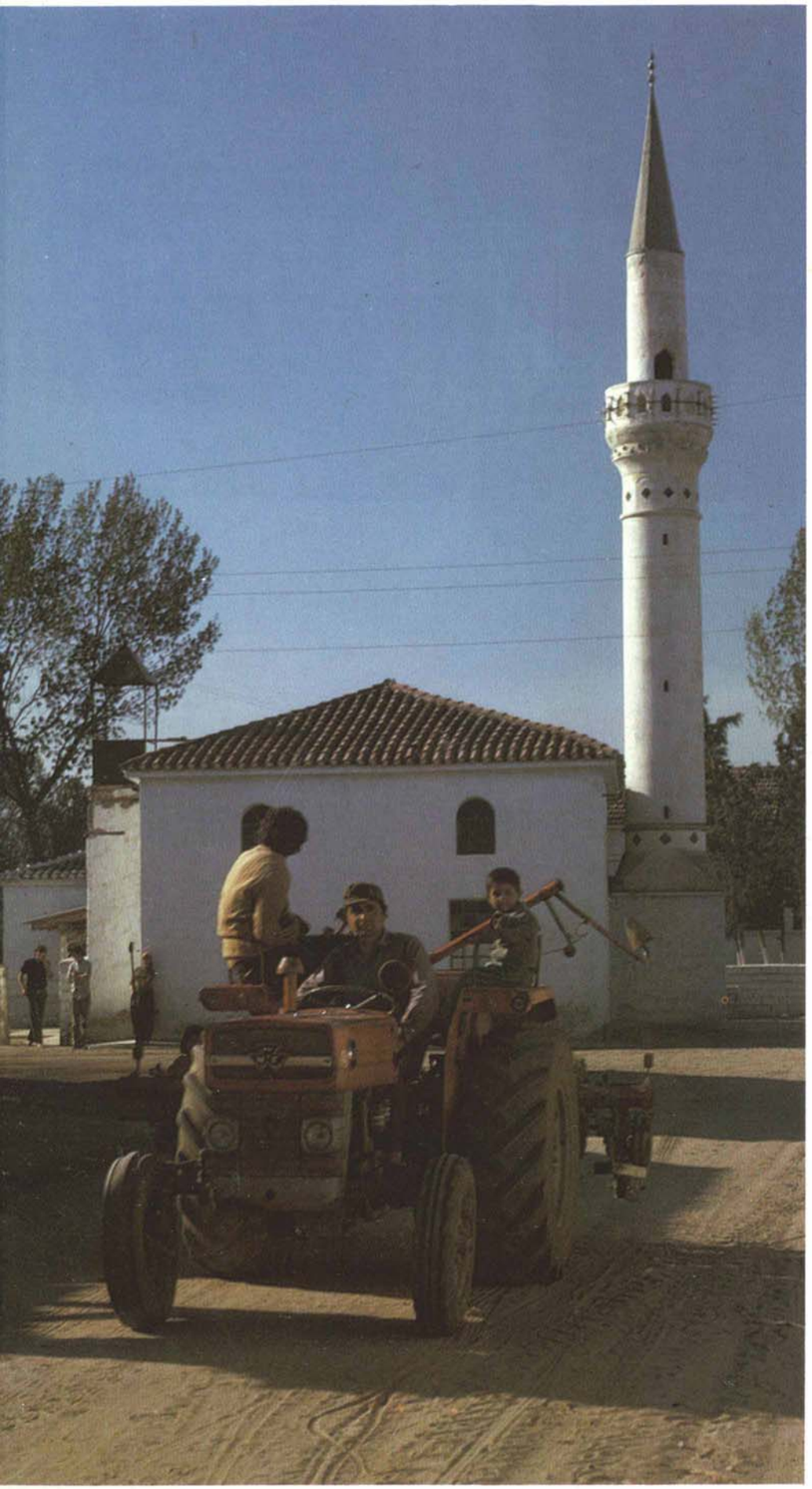
Glass water pipes (above) and brass braziers (below) add color and a Middle Eastern flavor to a shop window in the Muslim quarter of Komotini.

a man must graduate from a *madrasah*, essentially a religious school, and in three districts—Xanthi, Komotini and Didymotichion—he is elected by those registered as Muslims. As in wholly Islamic countries, the mufti's authority is supreme in religious matters, but also extends to matters of "personal status" —family problems, marriage, divorce, tutelage and coming of age.

In Komotini the mufti, Hussein Mustapha, permitted me to observe a typical case. It involved a young Pomak boy and his girl who wished to marry, but had been forbidden to do so by one of the grandfathers. The girl and the boy told their stories separately while an elderly scribe in a gold brocade fez leisurely recorded their answers in an enormous ledger; he wrote in Turkish, but in Arabic script. When the mufti learned that the girl had run away from home five days before—to plead her case —he frowned with displeasure. But then, convinced they were in love and did wish to marry, he rendered a swift decision: marry tomorrow.

I didn't attend that wedding but observed others elsewhere. They were, like wedding celebrations in the Middle East, community gatherings with hours of talk, food, laughter and endless cups of black coffee. At one of them, which took place in a village called Volkion, I noted that the bride's house was a fine example of Greek-Islamic architecture.

In Greece, Muslim villages are readily distinguishable from those of the Christians by the high walls around houses. As



in Arab villages, each house is built around a compound which usually contains a well, a garden and shelter for the farm animals. The houses are usually one-story stone structures with balconies and everything is whitewashed, giving the villages a sparkling appearance against green fields and dark mountains stretching off into the distance.

In Greece, as in the Middle East, Muslims lavish great expenditures on their carpets. Furniture is kept to a minimum—some low sofas and big overstuffed cushions—and the only other decoration in the rooms is quotations from the Koran in Arabic, which few people read but all know by heart.

Left and above: Muslim villages dot the fertile plains and flowered hillsides of Thrace. Opposite page: The graceful minaret of Komotini's mosque.

Mosques, of course, are the primary sign of the Muslim presence and in the countryside the interiors of the mosques are a stunning contrast to the plain exteriors. Open the door, and you see a rainbow of color: pink, orange, green, turquoise and yellow bands of paint wind their way up the walls, into the *mihrab*, or prayer niche, over the *minbar*, or pulpit, across the ceiling and around the columns supporting the women's gallery, while, simultaneously, rainbow shafts of light filter through the stained-glass windows and make dazzling designs on the oriental carpets. They are lovely, simple and reverent—fitting monuments to the centuries of a faith that endures and flourishes far from its homeland.

Pamela Roberson is a free-lance photographer who formerly lived in Lebanon.