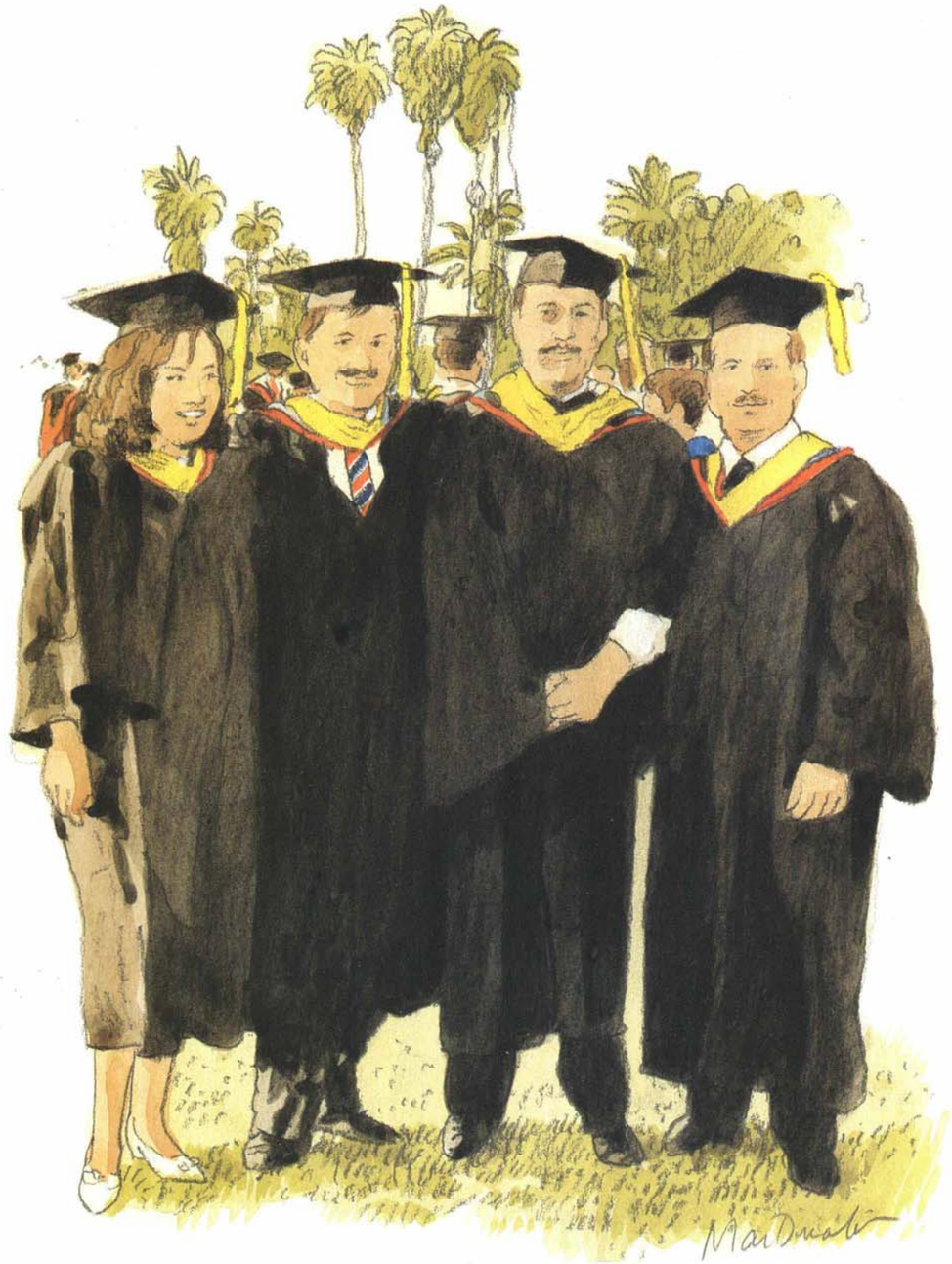

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FORTIFIED OMAN

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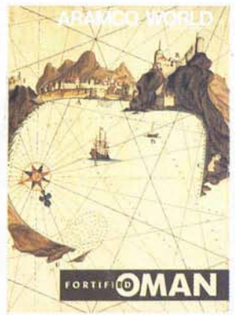

Cover: Three forts protect the bay of Muscat in this 17th-century chart and a fourth defends the next anchorage to the west. They are a few of the many watchtowers, castles, bastions, fortified houses and palaces that dot Oman's craggy landscape as well as its tumultuous history. Photograph: Leiden University Library. Back cover: New-minted graduates of the American University of Beirut symbolize AUB's – and Lebanon's – resilience and hope. Illustration: Norman MacDonald.

◀ Young girl from Bethlehem or Jerusalem in 19th-century costume.

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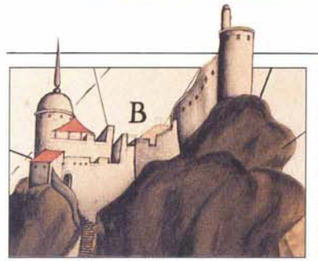
STEVENS



SIMARSKI

WERNER

VINCENT-BARWOOD

GRUTZ

Hamlin Hall
Robert College

Mary Tenney Hamlin

Houses on the Bosphorus

A WEDDING IN TOKAT

WRITTEN BY MARCIA AND MALCOLM STEVENS
ILLUSTRATED BY MICHAEL GRIMSDALE

"We stopped at a miserable place but met with great kindness."

In 1859 Cyrus Hamlin was looking for a wife. He had arrived in Istanbul 20 years earlier to establish a missionary school. Two decades in the Ottoman capital had earned him a reputation as an intellectual of the first order and a mechanical genius, one who mastered the local languages as readily as he established industries to aid the unemployed and destitute. The Crimean War had thrust him into a partnership with Florence Nightingale as he provided baking and laundry services for the thousands of British war casualties housed in the military hospitals at Haydarpaşa and Kuleli. Yet the great work of his life – the founding of Robert College – still lay in the future (See *Aramco World*, March-April 1984).

The preceding years had also brought tragedy. Henrietta, the young wife Cyrus had brought to Turkey in 1839, had died of consumption in 1850. In 1852 he had married Martha Lovell, a teacher at a girls' school in the city, but five years later she died of a stroke. Cyrus also lost two daughters to the ravages of disease, one less than a year after Martha's death.

It was not just loneliness that prompted Cyrus to seek a new wife; he needed a mother's hand to guide and nurture his younger children. By coincidence, Mary Tenney, a teacher at a missionary school in Tokat, had recently arrived in Istanbul for a period of convalescence. Mary, whom Cyrus described as having "a fine, intelligent, intellectual and amiable cast of physiognomy," had been a frequent visitor to his dying daughter's bedside. He was impressed with this capable young woman who had left behind in America a promising career as a teacher and writer to enter the missionary service.

When Cyrus proposed to her at his home on the Bosporus, Mary was taken aback. It was at that precise moment that Alfred Hamlin, Cyrus's four-year-old son, interjected himself into the scene. He ran to Mary, leaned on her lap and offered his head for a kiss. "It was at a rather delicate juncture," Mary wrote to Alfred years later, "...as though you were unconsciously asking me to grant your father's request...."

That childish innocence was enough to tip the scales. Mary accepted the proposal, but informed her suitor she still had duties to complete in Tokat. They agreed that at a later date Cyrus would travel to Tokat – 650 kilometers (400 miles) to the east in north central Anatolia – to bring her back to Istanbul. Had Mary known then what type of journey lay ahead of her, she might have had second thoughts.

In late October Cyrus set out to claim his betrothed, first by steamer up the Bosporus and along Turkey's Black Sea coast to Samsun, then overland along the 210-kilometer (130-mile) southerly track to Tokat. The land journey to Tokat, which normally took five days on horseback, could be a most pleasant experience in clement weather, notwithstanding the fact that paved roads and other amenities available to the modern traveler were rare indeed in the rural expanses.

From Samsun the road rose steeply, so that a backward glance afforded the traveler an enchanting panorama of the port surrounded by lush olive groves, with the sea stretching to the horizon. Southward, the road followed a high ridge of hills separating two river valleys, the habitat of wild boar, stag, eagle and hawk. But in places the rich forest was so thick that the sun's heat never penetrated to the clay roadbed, and an extended period of rain might leave the track so muddy that horses would sink in up to their knees. "The extremes of discomfort and enjoyment ... constitute one of the charms of oriental travel," Cyrus had once remarked.

The descent from the mountains to the low-lying farmland in the vicinity of the market town of Kavak was steep enough in places that the traveler had to lead his horse. Across the farmland the rider was shaded from the midday sun by stately poplars that lined the road, while his senses took in fields of grain separated by green hedges, orchards of apple, pear and cherry, distant snow-capped mountains, and the song of birds in the thickets. Abundant mulberry trees fed the silkworms that spun their delicate filaments for the local silk weavers. *Bekcis* – watchmen – guarding the orchards from their elevated platforms waved a friendly greeting.

Soon the orchards gave way to treacherous spring-fed marshland, the territory of a vast array of ducks and geese. Then the road climbed again to cross the 1000-meter (3600-foot) Ak Dağ before descending to the picturesque town of Amasya nestled on the banks of the Yeşil Irmak among steeply rising hills and guarded by a ruined citadel on a pinnacle overlooking the valley.

Now the road headed away from the river in a more easterly direction before once more turning south. Another day's journey and the Yeşil Irmak came into view once more, and not far beyond was the welcome sight of Tokat, resting in a fertile valley among granite mountains.

A good number of khans, or inns, lay along the route from Samsun to Tokat, some built of sturdy stone, others – in the more heavily forested regions – of logs, with mud-brick ovens built outside to guard against fire. Some had elegant colonnades or handsome carved doorways. Many were spacious and comfortable, but those that were, were popular and filled up early, especially in inclement weather. Then the road-weary traveler might have to put up with more cramped quarters in run-down khans, quarters shared perhaps with the horses and an assortment of fleas. The lucky ones might find themselves sharing the hospitality of friendly villagers along the route.

What a welcome sight the massive schoolhouse in Tokat must have been for Cyrus after the uncertainties of the road. Located on a hill overlooking the city, the terraced building, surrounded by landscaped walks, fruit trees and vegetable gardens, contained everything needed for the school – classrooms, dormitories, and living quarters for the staff and students.

Although it was his plan to return to Istanbul with Mary immediately, Cyrus was reminded by Henry van Lennep, director of the school, of the impropriety of traveling with an unmarried woman. He would have to marry in Tokat. Cyrus and Mary were married before some 200 assembled guests.

Four days later the newlyweds left for Istanbul, but they were not long on the road before the weather turned nasty. In a letter written 25 years later to one of his daughters, Cyrus gave a graphic account of a wedding journey that was anything but a typical honeymoon trip.

"We started November 9, a pleasant day and as there had been one great rain we felt sure of most delightful weather. Before noon, clouds came over from the Black Sea region and about two o'clock it began to rain. How soon the mud formed! By four o'clock it was dark, by five pitch dark. We could not reach our khan and we put up at a poor Turkish village. The poor people showed us every possible hospitality. I always remember them with gratitude. There was not a Christian in the village.

Excerpts from the Hamlin letters are reprinted courtesy of Bowdoin College Library, Abbott Memorial Collection, and the owners of the Marston Lovell Hamlin Collection and the Estes Collection.

In late October Cyrus set out to claim his betrothed...

"We boarded the steamer at Samsun in such a sea as I never dreamed of boarding a vessel in..."

"Next day it rained all day, but was not so very cold. Every step of my horse threw mud onto Moma, covered with her raincoats and capote. I venture to say I threw a ton of mud onto her before we reached Samsun. I had a tremendous horse, she a small one. The roads were in *pits* dug by the horses' feet, full of mud and water.... My horse enjoyed plunging his great foot in and splashing out a quart of mud at every step all day long for five successive days. It is more likely he threw *three* tons on her and her horse than *one*. Our second night we could not make our desired khan where we would have had nice accommodations. Darkness and mud and rain made us glad of what seemed a horrible place. A rough room, a big fireplace, green, wet wood, we benumbed and chilled through. Have you no coal? Not a particle. A man here has some coal.... It was brought – more than a bushel – and poured over the green wood. What a fire it made! It roasted us out. I got a pail of water and reduced it and pulled out half the coal. We had a splendid supper out of my two tin bottles into which I had [put] every night two chickens with rice soup, a great invention of mine. But oh the fleas! We made the best terms we could with them and slept.

"Our fourth day was bad. Our fifth day was dreadful. Along the heights, snow and rain and hail and a tempest of wind. I feared it would be fatal to poor Moma. I never suffered as much myself, limbs benumbed, circulation stopped. But lo, just as we were to leave the heights, the wind ceased, the clouds broke and there lay the port just before us, sea calm, ships at anchor; in one hour we must be there. I uttered a cry of joy. The [guide], half dead himself, looked with a scowl, 'Don't you know that's in the clouds... a mirage!' Ah yes! But then the sight refreshed our souls, renewed our courage, and we descended onto the plain.

"Again darkness and rain closed in upon us. We stopped at a miserable place but met with great kindness. The reaction of restored circulation in hands and feet made me writhe some, for we had again a great fire. Moma took it all without a word of complaint. The roof leaked badly and our umbrellas, useless during the day, were splendid for the night. We again enjoyed a capital supper. We had tea, coffee, butter, rusks, and the soup was never monotonous, although chicken would have been a little *de trop* after a while.

"The next day we reached Samsun, storm unabated, steamer at anchor a mile [out] and no communication. It would soon leave! To stay there ten days was to die. I said to Mr. Guaracino, is it not possible to reach that steamer? They have just tried it, he said, but the boat was taken by that surf wave, upset and hurled back on the sand with all the men and baggage. But we can put out ten men with a good surf boat and no baggage except for ballast, and if your wife has the nerve, they will put you safe through for a couple of liras! In that case I thought better of the money. When all was ready and we were in, 200 perhaps assembled to see the attempt. We waited for a great surf wave to break and then the boat was shoved off on the refluent water and those ten stalwart fellows bent to their oars for dear life. I watched the white line form of the next great wave. It came careening on and our gallant boat sped on its way to meet it before it should lift itself up to its greatest height. I held my breath as we met. The sharp prow of the boat cut through the foam which went hissing by as high as our gunwale; we rose beautifully over the wave and the boatmen raised a shout, Yahah! Yahah! which was answered by all the crowd on the shore. On we went, the next was not so bad, and so we reached the steamer. Then came the tug of war. The steamer, anchored with the longest chain it could pay out, was rolling, pitching, tumbling, so that even to approach it was dangerous. The problem was to keep so far off as not to be caught and rolled under, and yet so near that when the stairs were rising out of the water we could jump on. We found it vain to try to jump together. I finally sprang upon the stairs alone, two officers catching me firm. Poor Moma had not the muscular strength to do [the same]. Two boatmen caught her up and tossed her onto the stairs as they were rising from their deep plunge, and we all caught her safe. When we found ourselves in the small but neat and beautiful ladies' cabin all to ourselves, there being no other lady passengers, we gave thanks to God.

"Had the sea been quiet Moma would have rallied at once, but fifty-two hours of terrible seasickness right on top of such a journey exhausted her. It was weeks before she was fully restored. But we lived through it and here we are in comfort."

Cyrus also wrote a letter to his brother shortly after the journey was at last completed and he and Mary were safely home in Istanbul, when the memories were still fresh in his mind.

"I have married a wife, but I am too busy to find time to tell you and other family friends about it. She is a talented, educated, true, noble-hearted woman, and I would love to tell you of all my journey to Tokat, of our marriage there, which the van Lenneps as standing in place of the 'Old Folks' refused to have elsewhere, of our journey to Samsun 130 miles through a storm that swept to destruction more than 100 vessels on the Black Sea. Oh the mud! the rains! the snow! the wind! all encountered on horseback, much of it at the rate of two miles an hour, but above all, Oh the vermin! Oh those mudrooms in the khans!... I can go a few hundred fleas and bedbugs in case of necessity, but when they are thousands it is *intolerable*, and then add those abominable, filthy, disgusting, abhorred *lice*! I wish your dainty brides and bridegrooms on their bridal tour by railroad and river steamers could have accepted, or could in future occupy, one night our room at Bagin Khan or Tator Keni, or Kavak. The Lord brought us safely through. We boarded the steamer at Samsun in such a sea as I never dreamed of boarding a vessel in, and then 3 days of rolling and heaving on the stormy Euxine, with deadly seasickness, almost finished up my poor wife.

"It is almost 3 o'clock and about time I was abed. But my head is bursting with so much to do that often sleep cannot be wooed and won so easily as a wife."

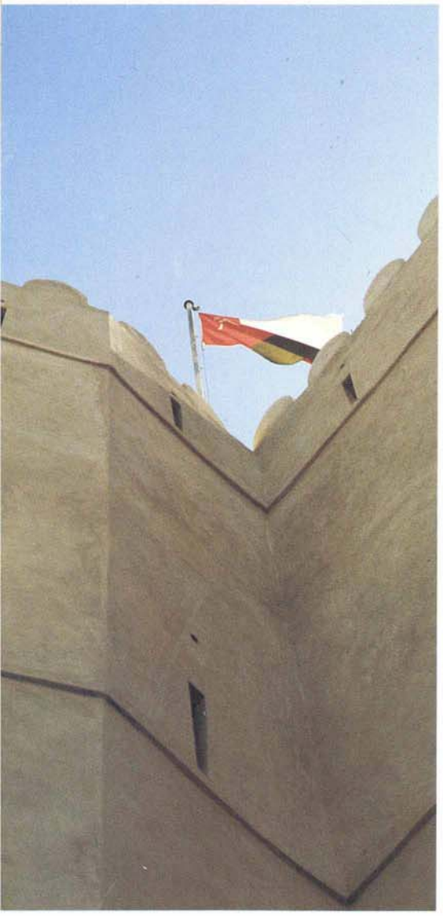
Did Mary have any regrets? Her marriage to Hamlin lasted over 40 years until her husband's death in 1900. And in the letter she had written to Alfred Hamlin, remarking on how young Alfred had sought her kiss in the midst of Cyrus's proposal, she wrote: "I have loved you always better for that kiss."

Marcia and Malcolm Stevens are co-authors of Against the Devil's Current: The Life and Times of Cyrus Hamlin, *published by University Press of America.*

FORTIFIED OMAN

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY LYNN TEO SIMARSKI

Four Omani forts, marked with the letters F, B, C and L, are shown on this chart of the bay of Muscat – "a very good bay to sail into" – produced by the master of the Dutch merchant vessel *De Hoop* in 1682.



Clean lines, arches and crenelations, shown on these two pages in the restored Barka fort, some 33 kilometers (20 miles) west of Muscat on the shore of the Gulf of Oman, characterize much of Oman's defensive military architecture.

Much of Oman's tumultuous history is written in the stone, stucco, and mud-brick dialects of its defensive architecture. The craggy countryside bristles so naturally with fortifications that it is difficult to imagine the landscape without them, from the chains of watchtowers perched along strategic mountain passes, to the great bastions guarding the coast and the historic capitals of the interior. As the political turbulence of the past subsided into history, however, the fortresses coveted by conquerers seemed destined to crumble into oblivion – until the 1980's, when the government of Oman began an enterprising program to restore the country's fortifications using traditional techniques and materials.

The government selects monuments for restoration based on their size and complexity, and the importance of their role in history, explains Malallah bin Ali bin Habib, advisor to the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture. Oman is fortunate, he adds, that its ruler, Sultan Qaboos bin Said, has an intense personal interest in history and preservation. Still, the sheer abundance of Oman's heritage of defensive monuments – more than 500 forts and castles, not to mention fortified houses and towers – makes conservation a daunting prospect.

The preserved forts will eventually constitute a collective record of how fortified architecture developed in Oman. Defensive elements such as towers, battlements, walled enclosures and gateways comprise "the most distinctive aspect of Omani architecture," according to archeologist Paolo Costa. Today, architectural features reminiscent of the old forts appear as artistic rather than utilitarian attributes in modern villas and commercial buildings. Even the smallest shops often feature crenelations decoratively *painted* across their facades.

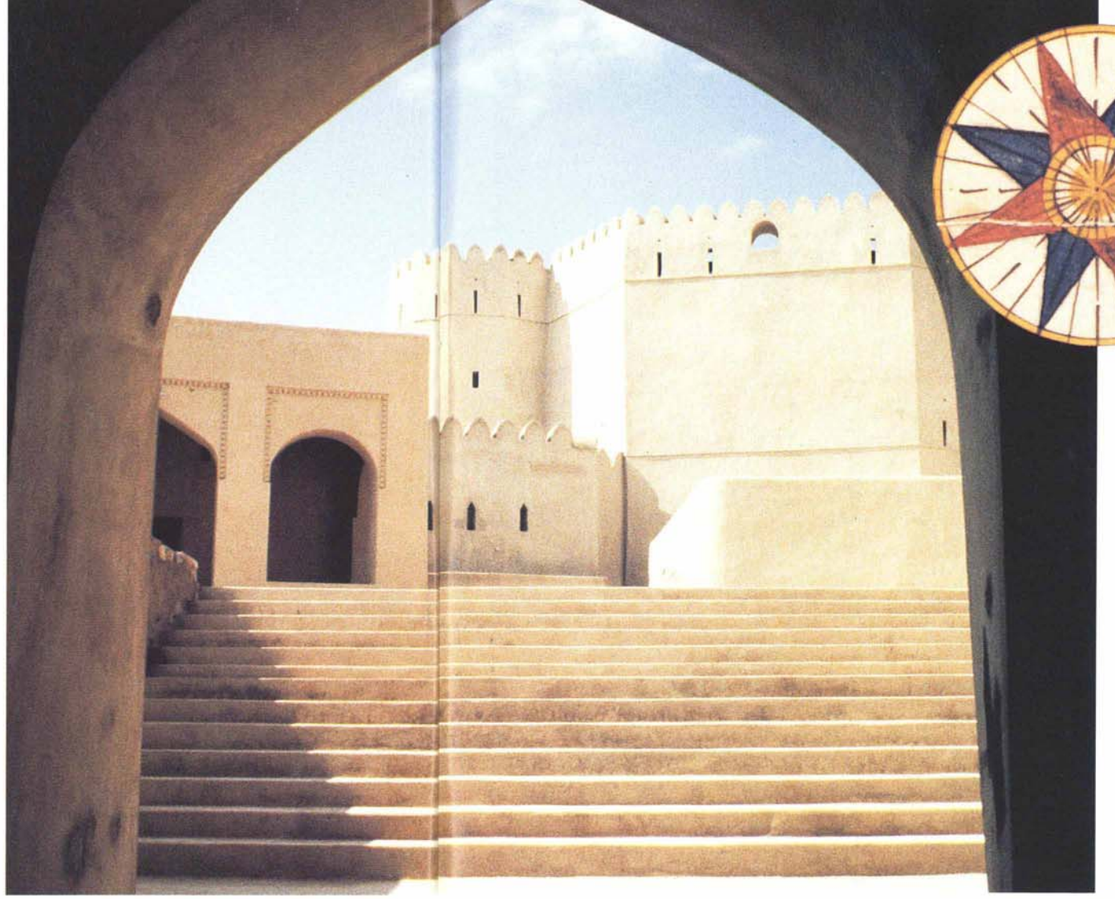
Rulers over the ages built forts as the physical manifestation of their authority in Oman and the lands Oman once controlled in India, southwestern Iran and East Africa. Yet the forts are frequently assumed to be a foreign legacy, largely because of the prominence of the famous twin sentinels of Jalali and Mirani, built by the Portuguese to guard Muscat bay. "It is not true that many of the forts in Oman were built by the Portuguese," stresses bin Habib. "The vast majority of forts, castles, and watchtowers are the work of [Oman's] Ya'ariba and Al Bu Said dynasties."

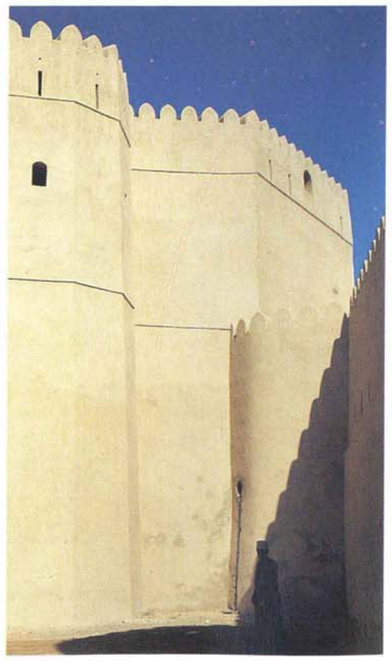
Nonetheless, in the past, travelers sailing toward the coast first saw the Portuguese-built bulwarks of Muscat and nearby Mutrah. Muscat was an important naval base for the Portuguese during their century and a half of domination, and they built fortifications there early on. After Ottoman naval forces temporarily dislodged them from the town, they returned to fortify the natural defensive pinnacles of Muscat, completing Jalali and Mirani – the latter still houses a small Portuguese chapel – by 1588. But the Portuguese were confined to coastal Oman. Donald Hawley describes them in *Oman and its Renaissance* as "locked up in their great forts,...unsympathetic toward the local people."

After the Portuguese were expelled by the Ya'ariba dynasty, the Omanis enlarged and transformed Jalali and Mirani into "purely Omani fortresses," according to Enrico d' Errico, who supervised restoration of a number of Omani monuments. The coastal forts continued to draw the envious glances of those who wished to control the trade of the Gulf and Indian Ocean. "I have little doubt," observed Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, in 1903, "that the time will come...when the Union Jack will be seen flying from the castles of Muscat." His prediction did not come to pass, however, and the forts of Muscat and Muttrah have now been restored as patriotic symbols of Oman's independence.

Another element in the defenses of Muscat was Bayt al-Falaj fort in nearby Ruwi, built in the 19th century by the Al Bu Said dynasty to which Sultan Qaboos belongs. Surrounded by steep mountain slopes, the whitewashed fort commanded access to valleys leading to Muscat, and was the stage in 1915 for a heroic victory by a small force of defenders over thousands of rebellious tribesmen. Headquarters for the Sultan's armed forces until 1978, Bayt al-Falaj is now a museum with superb carved doors and painted ceilings.

To the south of Muscat in the town of Sur, Snisla fort, with its fanciful wedding-cake tower, has also been restored, and restoration on two more forts, Bilas and Ras al-Hadd, is in progress. North of Muscat, along the miles of date palms and fishing villages, a string of clean-lined, dun-colored forts guards the shore. Perhaps the most impressive of these massive sand castles is the restored fort of Barka, where an inscription features the name of Ahmad bin Said, the first imam of the Al Bu Said dynasty, and winner of what became Oman's final victory over the Persians. In the palm groves some distance behind the fort nestles Bayt Naman, an elegant example of a 17th-century fortified palace now under restoration.





Farther up the coast in Sohar, Oman's northernmost important town, rise the seven towers of its restored fort, dazzling white against the deep blue of the sky and sea. Sohar protected the coastal approaches to several mountain passes, including the route to Buraymi Oasis in the interior. Although bypassed by recent history, Sohar was the legendary home of Sinbad and was called "the greatest seaport of Islam" by the 10th-century geographer al-Istakhri. "It is the most populous and wealthy town in Oman," he wrote, "and it is not possible to find on the shore of the Persian Sea nor in all the lands of Islam a city richer in fine buildings and foreign wares."

In 1507, the Portuguese conqueror Affonso de Albuquerque found at Sohar "a fortress of square shape, with six towers round it, having also over the gate two very large towers," a complex that called for defense by more than 1000 soldiers. The Portuguese transformed Sohar into one of their principal Omani bases. This was but one of many rebuildings; French archeologists recently unearthed the remains of a fort from the 13th or early 14th century within the present fort's precincts. Today, high in the tallest tower, the sea breeze blows gently through the governor's *majlis* or council chamber – it is still employed as such – and the sunlight casts intricate patterns through the white pargeted windows.

Inland from the coastal belt of palms, across the acacia-dotted plain, looms the purple-gray mountain spine of northern Oman. The massive, round-towered forts standing sentinel on both sides of the mountain, where foreign cultural influence was weaker than on the coast, chronicle the evolution of Oman's indigenous fortifications. From the time of Albuquerque, the introduction of gunpowder and cannon transformed the type of defensive architecture. The plan of the older, smaller, many-towered forts gave way to a new design: a square enclosure fortified, at diagonally opposite corners, with two round towers appropriate to the use of cannon. Walls were thickened to resist cannon-fire, and towers heightened to extend the cannons' reach. When enemies drew near the tower, musketeers could fire at them through narrow, downward-slanted loopholes.

It was under the strong and prosperous rule of the Ya'ariba imamate, from approximately 1624 to 1748, that the distinguishing characteristics of Omani military architecture began to crystallize. The Ya'ariba rulers, effectively uniting Oman for the first time in many centuries, rebuilt the old irrigation systems, renovated the towns, revitalized agriculture, and spurred the pace of trade. The promontories of the Sumayl Gap, the most important route to the interior, were crowned with one watchtower after another by the second Ya'ariba ruler, Sultan bin Sayf. At the coastal end of the pass, Bidbid Fort, now restored, anchored this chain of defenses.

At Nizwa, still a regional capital today, Sultan bin Sayf built the great, round, golden tower – the largest in Oman and one of the largest in the Gulf – that still stands in the oasis, next to the ruler's palace, as a monument to the genesis of the new architectural style. The tower is said to have taken 12 years to build, and its gunports command a 360-degree field of fire. Restoration of the tower was to be completed last year, and the town's traditional *suq* is also slated for renovation.

About a quarter century after Nizwa fort was constructed, Bilarab bin Sultan, son of Nizwa's builder and the third imam of the Ya'ariba, erected the splendid palace of Jabrin in the middle of an expansive inland plain. In the interpretation of Paolo Costa, the square layout of Jabrin palace, with its two towers at opposite corners, surpasses Nizwa by unifying its defensive and residential features. Bilarab, who was known for his benevolence to poets and scholars, endowed Jabrin with a *madrasa*, or school. The palace, now completely restored, still guards the tomb of its builder, who died in 1692.

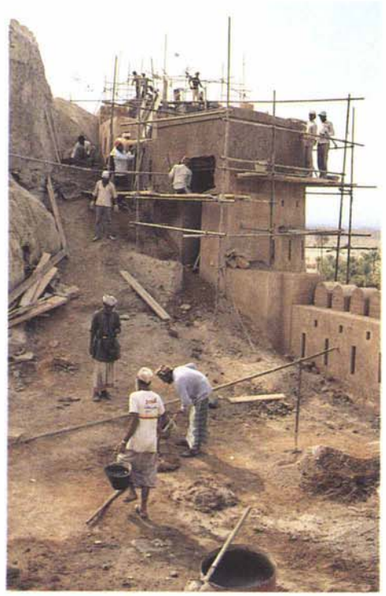
According to another scholar, Eugenio Galdieri, Jabrin shows the artistic influence of Safavid Persia in the design of its plaster grates and its general apportionment of space. The flowing patterns of its painted ceilings, such as the one in the Hall of the Sun and the Moon, echo carpet designs, and offer the finest examples of such painting in all of interior Oman.

Another charming stronghold on the inland side of the mountain, also more palace than fort, is Birkat al-Mawz or "Pool of the Plantains." It follows the basic layout of Jabrin. Poised across the yawning mouth of a great pass into the mountains, Birkat al-Mawz was one of the fortresses of the Bani Riyam tribe which controlled the mountain heartland. Collapsing into ruin until recently, the mud-brick fortress and its painted ceilings are now well on the way to restoration.

The fifth ruler of the Ya'ariba, Sultan bin Sayf II, established his capital at al-Hazm, on the coastward side of the mountain. His fort, built in 1725, once again echoes the plan of Jabrin. The central columns of the fort's round towers feature refined plaster pargeting above the bronze Portuguese cannon brought from Fort Mirani in the 19th century. Even today, the dark, brooding bulk of al-Hazm seems to evoke the melancholy of its ruler who, contemplating political and military reverses at the close of his life, reportedly said, "This is my castle and my grave. I am become an eyesore to everyone, and the quiet of death will be preferable to any happiness which dominion has afforded me." Al-Hazm's labyrinthine depths still guard the imam's grave and his silent prayer cell, as well as claustrophobic dungeons and – if tradition is to be believed – the ruler's hidden escape routes.

The many architectural features repeated in Oman's forts help today's restorers infer how various rooms and spaces were used in the past. Impressed with Morocco's expertise in restoration, Oman invited a technical team of about 60 Moroccans to work with the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture. "The Moroccans have done extensive restoration work in their own country," explains bin Habib. "Many of Oman's forts need specialized techniques, and Morocco has specialists in each field – calligraphy, carpentry, mechanical engineering – and they have the restoration know-how."

Nakhle fort, bottom and right, seems to spring from the "dark and desolate" rock of Oman's inland mountains. It is presently being restored (below).



The Moroccan team's director, Sidi Mohammed el-Alaoui, brings an architect's vision and a historian's imagination to his work. He explains that, before a monument can be restored, its milieu must be understood. "We must imagine the governor living inside the fort, and what his life was like," el-Alaoui says. "This means learning Omani history, reading religious and scientific books and poetry – everything about the period during which the monument was built." The restorers also survey and sketch the remains of the old forts, seeking clues to how rooms were used. Blackened walls, for instance, probably indicate the fort's kitchen, while the women's rooms, generally situated in the most private area of the fort, tended to be decorated more richly than others, perhaps with wooden or plaster lattice screens across the windows. Important rooms such as a *majlis* often had an elaborately painted ceiling.

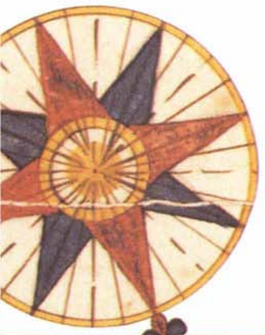
Many of the forts, then, served not only for defense but also provided for a comfortable daily life. El-Alaoui points out that although Oman's castles borrowed some features from Persian, Indian and Portuguese design, they are entirely adapted in utility and design to the demands of local political and social routine.

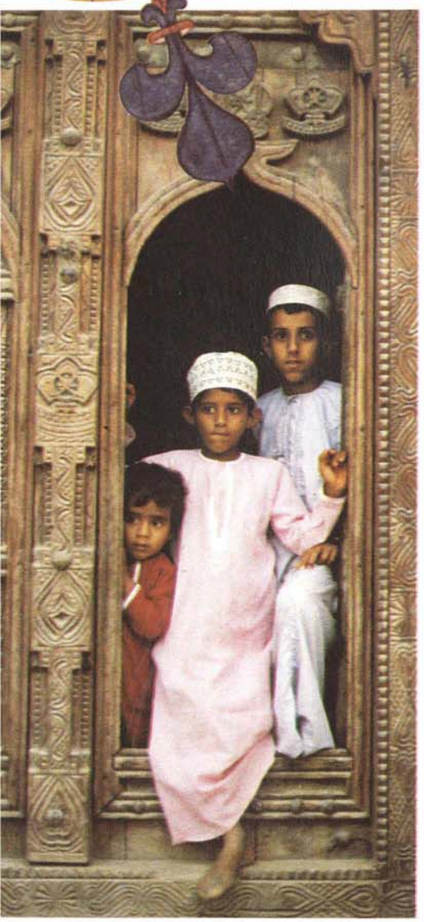
Omani forts are guarded by massive, ornately-carved wooden portals, with a small cut-out door that allows entrance to only one stooping visitor at a time. The houses of Oman also feature carved and decorated doors that contrast handsomely with the spare lines of the buildings. The ceilings of forts are typically beamed with trunks of palm or candlewood supporting simple but elegant patterns of crisscrossed palm ribs and palm-frond mats.

If invaders forced entrance to the forts, defenders could douse them, through a slot over the gateway, with *asal* – a sticky, boiling brew made from dates. Larger forts have a special room for processing dates, which were primarily, of course, an important food. A fort also invariably has a simple mosque, a *majlis*, men's and women's living quarters, soldiers' rooms, prisons, and storage chambers, among other facilities. At Jabrin, astonishing as it sounds, restorers have identified a room at the head of a long flight of stairs as a stall for the ruler's horse, which he apparently disdained to dismount outside the castle.

Important forts such as al-Hazm or Jabrin also had their own *falaj*, or water-supply channel, running through the lower level. If this was blocked by attackers, several wells provided an alternative in time of siege. To mitigate the scorching climate, windows of forts such as Nizwa and Rustaq invariably face north to let in cooling breezes. Sitting rooms are thick-walled and served by natural air conditioning: Cool air blows in through large lower windows, and rising hot air escapes through small upper windows.

Parts of Bahla castle, above and overleaf, date back to the pre-Islamic Persian occupation of Oman. As yet unrestored, the castle and parts of the surrounding oasis are on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites.





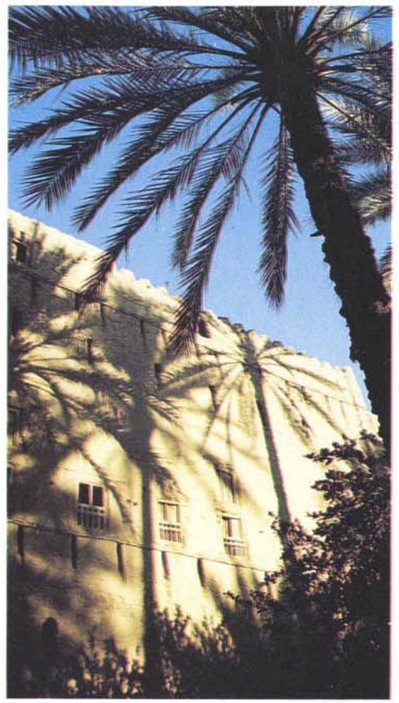
Elaborately carved and decorated doors, as on this example from a house in Mintirib, are a feature of domestic architecture in Oman.

Many of the forts have histories reaching back to ancient times. The large restored fortress of the town of Rustaq, set in an expansive oasis on the coastal side of the mountains, stands on what may have been the site of a fort since two millennia before the advent of Islam. The present fort, Qalat al-Kasra, includes a tower that tradition holds was originally built by the Persians in the year 600. Rustaq has long been important because of its strategic situation at the openings of mountain passes, as well as its benign climate and hot springs, which are believed to have medicinal benefits. It was the site in 1624 of the election of the first imam of the Ya'ariba, Nasir bin Murshid bin Sultan, and served as the imamate's capital a number of times.

Not far from Rustaq lies Nakhle oasis, whose own hot springs bubble out at the foot of barren mountains that slice into the earth like a guillotine. Here, one of Oman's most dramatically-sited castles poises upon a precipice, contoured so closely to its natural foundation as to seem sculpted from the rock. From the ramparts of Nakhle, Barka fort on the coast can be spotted on a clear day, some 40 kilometers (25 miles) away.

Colonel S. B. Miles, a British political agent in Muscat, visited Nakhle in 1876. Approaching the town, he wrote, "it seemed as if we were about to penetrate the very bowels of the mountain. No sign of human habitation, no cultivation, no gardens were visible, nothing but dark and desolate rocks met the eye ... when from above, in front of us, several matchlocks were suddenly discharged in our direction, and I perceived a watch tower perched on a steep pinnacle ... from which the sentries had fired to give notice of our approach. Rounding an angle, we were now confronted with the massive ramparts of the fortress, which, warned by the watch tower, immediately began to fire a salute from a battery of 12-pounder iron guns, the sound of which reverberated sharply from the rocky walls of the glen."

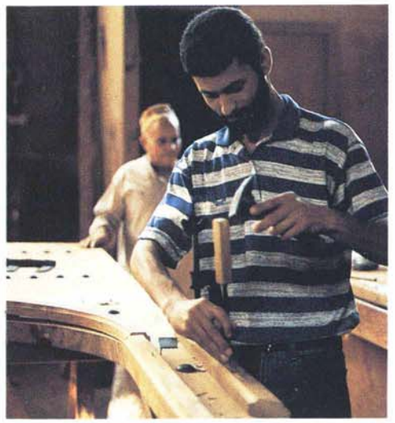
Today, visitors expecting the grim, black fortress described in guidebooks will find that Nakhle has been restored to its original golden splendor. It is presently the headquarters of the Moroccan restoration team, whose general rule is to employ virtually no materials that come from more than a few kilometers around a monument's site. The restorers' dedication to authenticity is exemplified in the painstaking process by which they learned to make *sarouj*, a local ingredient of both mortar and plaster. Cement plaster was tried in earlier restorations with unsatisfactory results: The mud-brick beneath was unable to give off moisture and the new facades soon fractured.

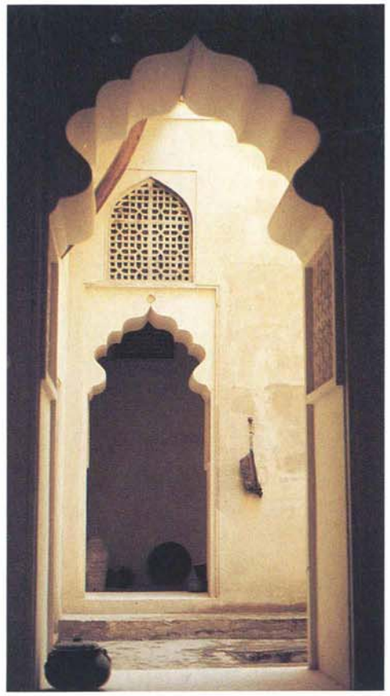


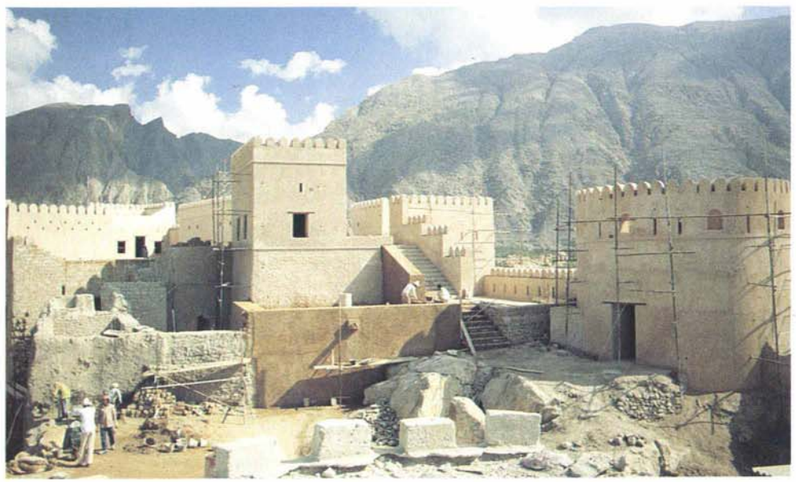
Fortified houses in the old town at Birkat al-Mawz.

Now, the restorers analyze the composition of the original building materials, and consult local elders about the proper way to produce *sarouj*. The raw material is soil from a date-palm grove, taken only with the owner's permission, which is mixed with water and dried in the sun. It is then baked in a traditional oven, baked again in the sun, and finally mixed with other materials into the appropriate blends for an individual fort.

Elaborate arches and painted ceilings decorate the palace of Jabrin, at right. Below, Moroccans and Omanis work together in a carpentry workshop at Nakhle.







Restoration under way inside Nakhle fort.

Only local earth from near a fort is used in its restoration to ensure that the genuine texture and color will be achieved. El-Alaoui admits that six months might be required to hit upon the correct *sarouj* for a particular fort. Similar care is taken to produce mud brick, woodwork, metalwork, and paint. In keeping with local esteem for the date palm, only the trunks of dead palms are employed as ceiling supports.

Oman's cooperative restoration effort has sparked a revival of disappearing local crafts. Young apprentices from local towns learn the arts of carpentry, *sarouj*-making, and every other step. "We work together and we think together," says el-Alaoui. "This training is also important because the Omanis can carry on with the maintenance later."

Constructed of fairly perishable materials, Oman's forts have necessarily been altered and renovated over the centuries. Even today, in keeping with this somewhat controversial tradition, the restorers are not above correcting the visual balance of a fort by adding an arch or a wall, or constructing a new facility such as a platform for governor's audiences – as long as these features fit stylistically and logically with the architectural tradition.

One of the most majestic monuments in all Oman, however, is still in ruins: the castle of Bahla, towering even in its dilapidated state more than 50 meters (165 feet) above the surrounding palms. According to historical manuscripts, sections of Bahla fort date back to pre-Islamic Persian occupation of Oman. For centuries, Bahla was also capital of the Banu Nabhan dynasty that preceded the Ya'ariba. As noted by the International Council on Monuments and Sites, "The fort has never been restored, representing a remarkable example of authenticity, and is not protected by any conservation measures; meanwhile, great chunks of wall collapse each year after the rainy season."

The situation began to improve in 1988, when the fort, the nearby mosque with its sculpted *mihrab*, or prayer niche, and the 12-kilometer (7.5-mile) wall enclosing the town of Bahla and much of the palm oasis were inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List. This act places Bahla among spectacular natural and cultural sites of "exceptional universal value ... which should remain intact for future generations."

Today, the restored forts, left behind by the masons and woodworkers, and watched over by traditional turbaned guards with cartridge belts round their waists, are immaculate refuges of silent and austere beauty. Their curving stairways, arches, courtyards, and crenellations are monumental sculptures of deep shadow and dazzling light – but they are touristic curiosities devoid of life. Traditionally the seats of authority, some restored forts, it is true, continue to host the traditional *majlis* of the regional governor. Still, Oman may look for other local uses – compatible with preservation – that will enliven these monuments of which the local people are so fiercely, and so justifiably, proud.

Lynn Teo Simarski is a Washington writer and editor who specializes in the Middle East.

A BRIDGE OF BOOKS

PHOTOGRAPHS © 1990 SETH RESNICK

Since the Tower of Babel, translators have been indispensable for human understanding. One of the busiest workers in the field is Dr. Salma Khadra Jayyusi, whose goal is to make more Arabic literature accessible to the English-speaking world.

Jayyusi grew up in Acre and Jerusalem. "My father fought incessantly for our national rights under the [British] Mandate and my mother was a great lover of literature," she remembers. "That's perhaps where I get my own inspiration."

Jayyusi, one of the first Arab women to earn a doctorate in modern Arabic literature from a Western university, first saw the need for more and better literary translations into English while lecturing at American universities; from this came the idea of the Project for Translation from Arabic, known as PROTA, which has since become her most forward-looking achievement. PROTA is a loose network of translators and advisors; as its founder and director, Jayyusi has overseen the translation of ten novels, seven single-author collections of short stories and poems and five important anthologies of poetry, fiction, and drama from all over the Arab world. The fact that her main publishers in the United States have been university presses is testimony to the high standards she sets.

"Besides being a fine poet and critic in her own right," says PROTA board member Dr. Ernest McCarus of the University of Michigan, "her genius lies in selecting the right people for the various stages of translation." PROTA's standard procedure is to team two translators on each text, one bilingual and the other a poet or writer whose native language is English, in order to balance the demanding – often conflicting – linguistic and literary requirements of good translation.

Jayyusi's most recent triumph was the US publication last year of *The Literature of Modern Arabia: An Anthology*, the first collection of its kind from Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states and Yemen. Jayyusi selected and edited the contents and supervised publication with the assistance of a distinguished editorial board in Saudi Arabia.

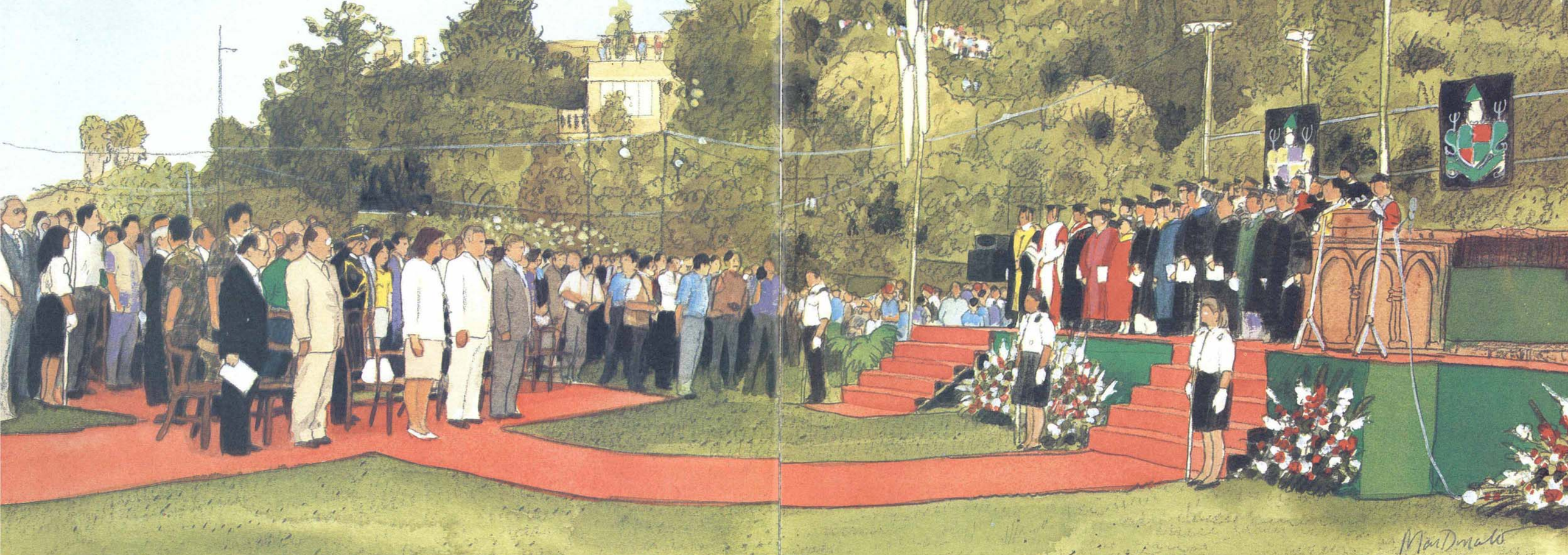
The anthology originated with an invitation from scholars at King Sa'ud University in Riyadh when she was lecturing at the Women's College there in 1983. "King Sa'ud is a pioneering university. Why, then, shouldn't it also pioneer in the literature of the Peninsula, especially when that literature is relatively unknown in the rest of the Arab world – and even less known in the West?" she asks. "Not many years ago, Peninsular literature was too shy to enter the mainstream. But now I think it has.

"The anthology was a voyage of discovery for everyone involved in the project, and for no one more than the writers themselves. It is an energizing experience to know your readers come from all over the world," Jayyusi says.

She is now editing a collection of essays on Islamic civilization in medieval Spain, to be published next year to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the end of Muslim rule in al-Andalus. She also hopes to edit a companion volume of the poetry and belles-lettres of the period. "There is so much literary greatness from Islamic Spain that by necessity this can be only the beginning," she says, glancing at tall stacks of manuscripts already piled high in her living room. But the same is true of the Arab world in general, and Salma Jayyusi has made a good beginning.

Author and filmmaker Louis Werner studied at Princeton and Johns Hopkins SAIS, and lives in New York.

WRITTEN BY LOUIS WERNER
PHOTOGRAPHED BY SETH RESNICK

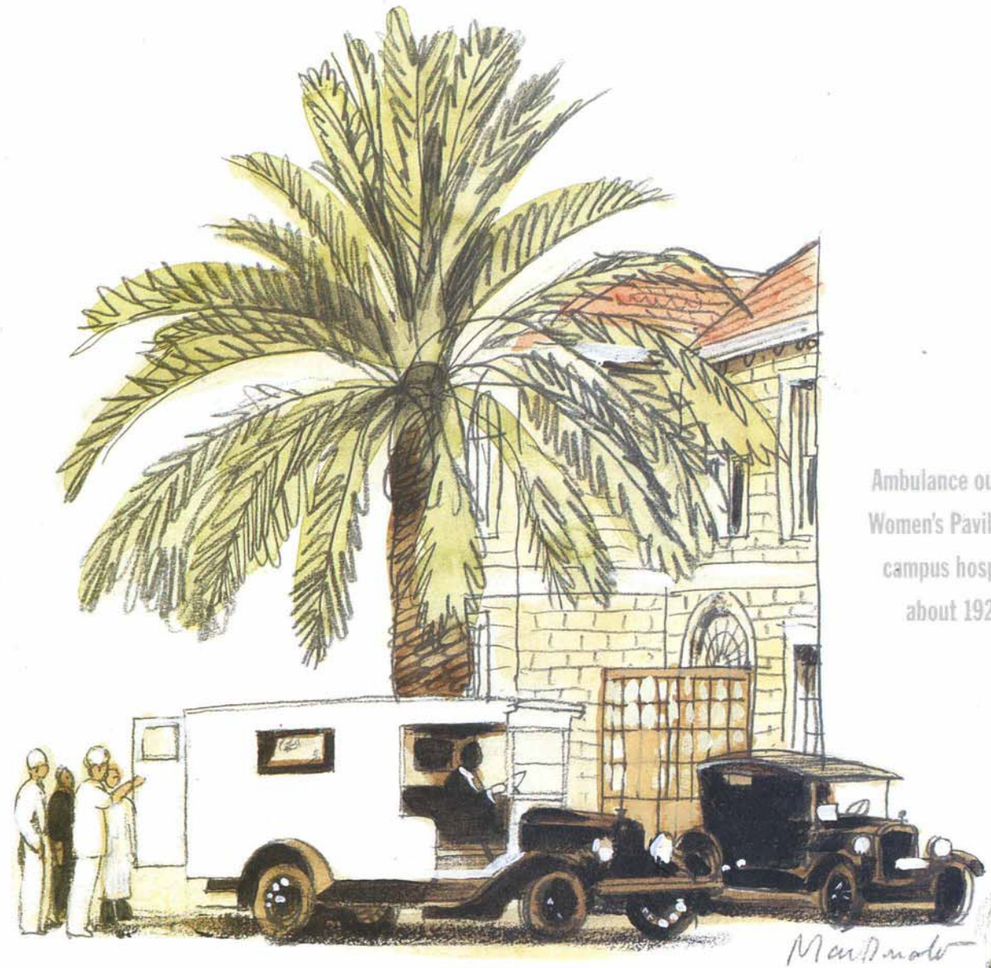


AUB: The Family Looks Ahead

WRITTEN BY AILEEN VINCENT-BARWOOD

ILLUSTRATED BY NORMAN MACDONALD

ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALLEN VINCENT-BARWOOD



Ambulance outside
Women's Pavilion of
campus hospital
about 1927

"We're the AUB family"

Over and over during the fifth annual reunion of the American University of Beirut's Alumni Association of North America (AANA), the words were heard: "We're the AUB family." And the alumnae and alumni who gathered in Boston that May weekend acted the way relatives always act at any family reunion: they hugged, kissed, cried, gossiped, laughed, partied, argued, reminisced, mourned, showed photographs, and talked, talked, talked – late into the night.

"We are the AUB family," they said, bridging the gaps created by time and distance and war, introducing new family members, drawing strength and pride and satisfaction from each other, and rededicating themselves to their alma mater's principle of service to all regardless of creed, gender or nationality.

In speeches, in private conversations and public discussions, over breakfast, lunch and dinner, the theme was repeated: "We are the AUB family. We believe in the students, the traditions, the mission, the survival and the future of AUB."

And, as Ann Kerr, university trustee and widow of slain AUB president Malcolm Kerr, opined, "In the last, dreadful, 15 years we have done more than survive. Inch by inch we have moved ahead." Despite dashed hopes and shattered dreams and the agonies of civil war, the AUB family never abandoned plans for the reconstruction of their university, and of Lebanon.

David Dodge,
former AUB President
(1981-82)
and now trustee

Looking forward with determined optimism, the graduates discussed not the wages of war but the ways AUB's influence and its quality education might be extended to the students of the 21st century; they talked of improvements, salaries, academic standards and the pursuit of excellence.

Though the AUB community has had to cope with Lebanon's intercommunal conflict for the past decade and a half, difficulties are nothing new in the annals of the university. Almost since its foundation on December 3, 1866, AUB and its family have faced a variety of trials and tribulations, from the bloody aftermath of the massacres in 1860, which claimed more than 11,000 dead, to the cholera epidemic of 1865, when the entire Middle East was swept by the dread disease. Panic reigned in Beirut and in one week 20,000 people fled to the safety of the mountain villages. In a population of 60,000 people, fully 3000 perished.

In 1874 there was an epidemic of fevers, and cholera hit again in 1875 and 1890. Five years later there was a typhoid epidemic, followed by scarlet fever in 1896, and another plague of cholera in 1903. All these epidemics claimed many among AUB students and faculty.

During World War I, Beirut became a German submarine base, AUB's hospital treated war casualties, and so many AUB students were called to military service that only 29 degrees were granted at the 1918 commencement. The ceremony was held early, in May, because supplies had given out and there was no more food in the city. That same year, 300,000 people in Lebanon died of disease, famine and starvation. Only 20 years later, the Middle East was plunged into World War II, with new deprivations and shortages.

All this, AUB survived. Through all this, the university continued to grow and blossom and extend its influence – until the spring of 1989. Then came its most severe trial yet, as internecine fighting increased in March of that year. In what Dr. Frederic Herter, the university's president, called a "heroic" effort, the American University Hospital treated 12,419 war wounded as out-patients, admitted 5733 casualties, and received 2570 more dead on arrival – more than 20,000 casualties in all. The

AUB Museum and Post Hall
during recent hostilities

AUB Deputy President
Ibrahim S. Salti, M.D.

AUB campus, virtually untouched through the past 14 years of civil strife, received 30 direct hits in a bombardment of 85 shells. They caused over a million dollars worth of damage and killed medical librarian Alice Haddad.

Throughout the artillery battles, and in the best tradition of its non-partisan ideals, the hospital served the wounded from all sides despite shelling, a nursing shortage, water rationing – or no water at all – breakdown of electricity and communications systems, and lack of fuel, food, oxygen, medicine and supplies. At one point in the fighting, the emergency room treated 60 casualties in one hour. Nurses worked 16-hour stretches, doctors around the clock, and with the help of the Lebanese Red Cross, they provided uninterrupted service to the people of Beirut.

Even while its hospital was treating Lebanon's greatest-ever number of war casualties, the AUB Medical Center never ceased to function, nor was its purpose lost. The medical school's 268 students continued to attend classes and take on their assignments. The *baccalauréat technique* nursing program continued, as did all the Center's other programs – and in June 127 general and specialized physicians graduated.

Across Rue Bliss, elsewhere on what had once been arguably one of the most beautiful campuses in the world, there were equally brave feats of perseverance and survival. Shellfire hit Post Hall, the Archaeological Museum and the Geology Department. Shells struck near the Post Office, Dodge Hall, College Hall and the Saab Medical Library, and others landed in the engineering, architecture and laundry areas. The Chemistry Building, the Agriculture Building, Green Field, the indoor courts and one of the faculty apartment blocks were hit.

Throughout it all, many AUB employees continued to work, sometimes taking up the assignments of their absent colleagues so that campus life could go on. AUB's maintenance crews – "those brave unsung heroes of the physical plant" – risked their lives to put out fires, defuse shells, fix gas leaks. And no sooner had the shelling stopped than they began campus reconstruction. They repaired and restored boilers, electricity, pumps, water

College Hall

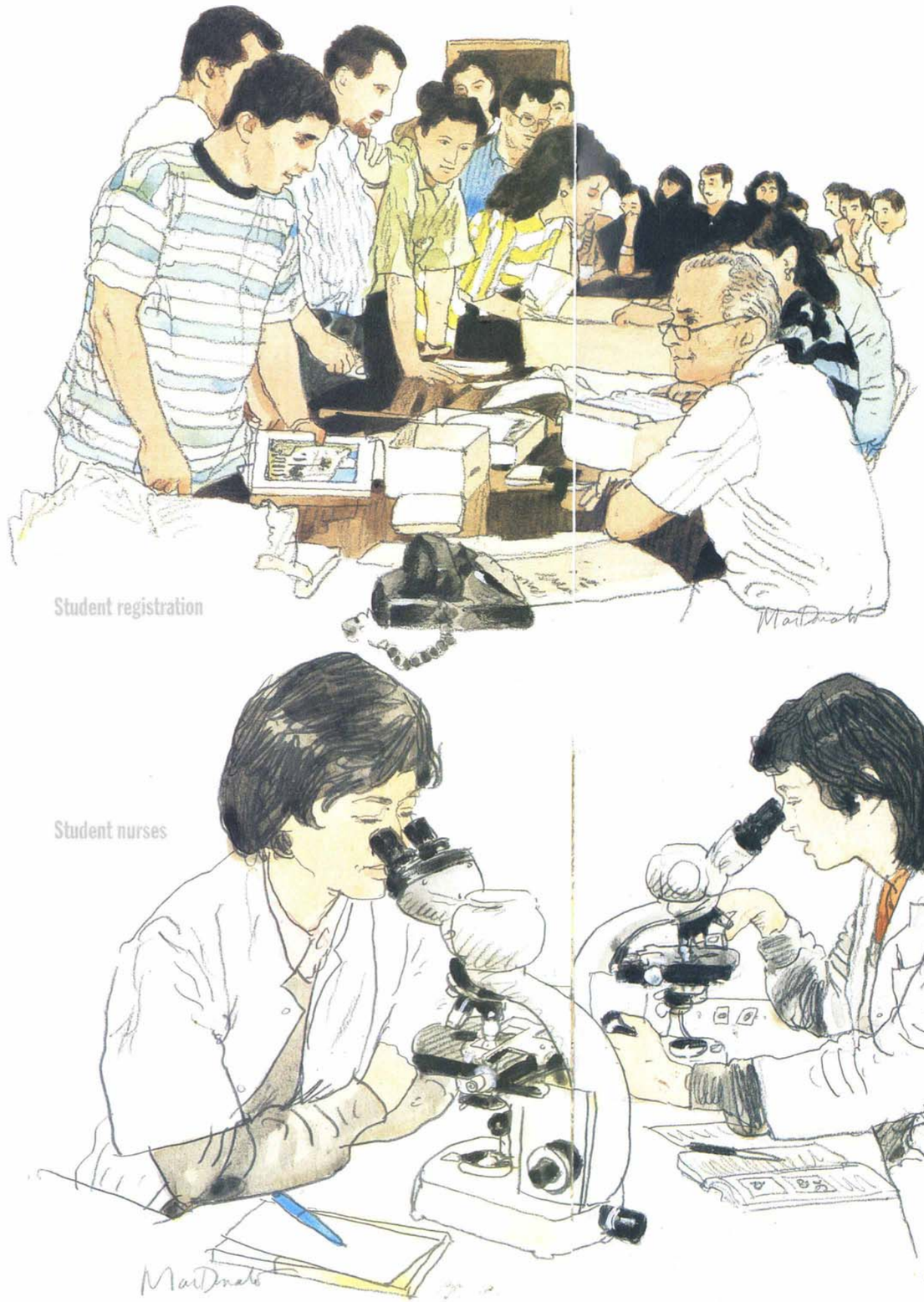
supplies, broken windows – almost every pane on the campus was shattered – roofs, grounds, and buildings. Yet despite these brave efforts, the university, in the summer of '89, closed for the first time in its history.

By October of that year, however, AUB had weathered the latest storm, too. The 400-member faculty, and the students, returned. Many wore mourning and told stories of long nights in shelters, of food shortages, of fractured families and lives shattered by violence. Nonetheless, they brought with them the essential commodity for restoring the university: the hope that characterizes many of today's Lebanese who, despite everything, retain a stubborn belief in tomorrow, and the conviction that it will be better than today.

Returning faculty and students bravely resumed college life. Students did homework by candlelight on an unkempt, shell-torn campus where, in happier days, dozens of flower beds had bloomed and splendid cypress trees spiked the sky. Now roads, lawns, flower beds, and trees were scarred and blackened. Classrooms, labs, lecture halls and offices were shabby, battered or wrecked altogether, and services were intermittent. Extracurricular life, once so rich and varied a part of AUB, slowed. The old patterns, according to Dr. Jean-Marie Cook, AUB trustee and chair of the English Department, were slipping away.

But the spirit of the university was intact and morale was high when, in January of 1990, commencement took place and 1059 students graduated in the fields of medicine, engineering, agriculture, and arts and sciences. "The Commencement exercises were the most poignant and moving I have ever witnessed," Cook wrote. "The ceremony, abbreviated, was nevertheless a reaffirmation of the University's meaning of mission, the medieval gowns in stately procession a celebration of ceremony and tradition so necessary and so lacking in the lives of our students today."

Though the Lebanese crisis is in remission, the university still faces numerous problems, not the least of which is financial. Yet an amazing number of its activities continue. An AUB base on Cyprus was established in two adjacent apartments in Larnaca. Here, non-degree extension courses of existing academic programs are held, the advantage being that international faculty who cannot travel to Lebanon can participate nonetheless, and



Student registration

Student nurses

Alumna and poet
Mariam Qassem El Saad

students and teachers from Beirut can attend without difficulty. In the summer of 1989, 20 teachers from Lebanon gathered for a week's instruction in teaching English as a second language; later 10 AUB faculty spent a week in a seminar on conflict resolution – the first such program in the Middle East. Plans are to link this program to the new University of Cyprus once the university is operational.

But, President Herter and others have emphasized, AUB is not about to leave West Beirut, or change its nature, or its academic role.

Instead, on the 30-hectare (73-acre) main campus, life has already resumed its near-normal pace. Students study and stage parades and parties; the business office prints reports, memos and a new 206-page telephone directory; faculty, staff and students hold seminars, do research, attend panel discussions, lecture, write and publish everything from bulletins to books, perform musicals and hold rock concerts, honor poets and artists, make archeological discoveries, keep the physical plant operating, pursue a whole range of sports, and above all, in the long tradition of the university, prepare students for life and a career.

Consistent with its charter, the university remains open to all civilizations and cultures. Before the civil war, nearly half of AUB's students were from other parts of the Arab world. Though Lebanese now make up the large majority of today's 5269-person student body, the proportion of non-Lebanese has begun to rise from its low of 10 percent. In 1990, the university received nearly 12,000 applications for its 1000 vacancies; several dozen new specialist faculty members have been appointed and others who had left for security or financial reasons have returned.

"AUB will remain a place where East and West, Christian and Muslim, meet, mingle and exchange ideas," said President Herter. "Dialogue and free inquiry, not hatred and dogma, are the order of the day. In a time of sectarian and partisan divisions, AUB's nonsectarian, nonpolitical education is that greatest of rarities – something everybody can trust."

The American University of Beirut was founded in 1866 by Daniel Bliss, a Vermont farmer

Dr. Nabil Husami,
Chairman of AUB's UK
Alumni Association

and graduate of Amherst College and the Andover Seminary. Assigned to a mission in Syria, he had, within ten years, raised the then remarkable sum of $100,000 to found in Beirut the first college of its kind in the Ottoman Empire. He hoped it would combine the best of Eastern traditions and Western education.

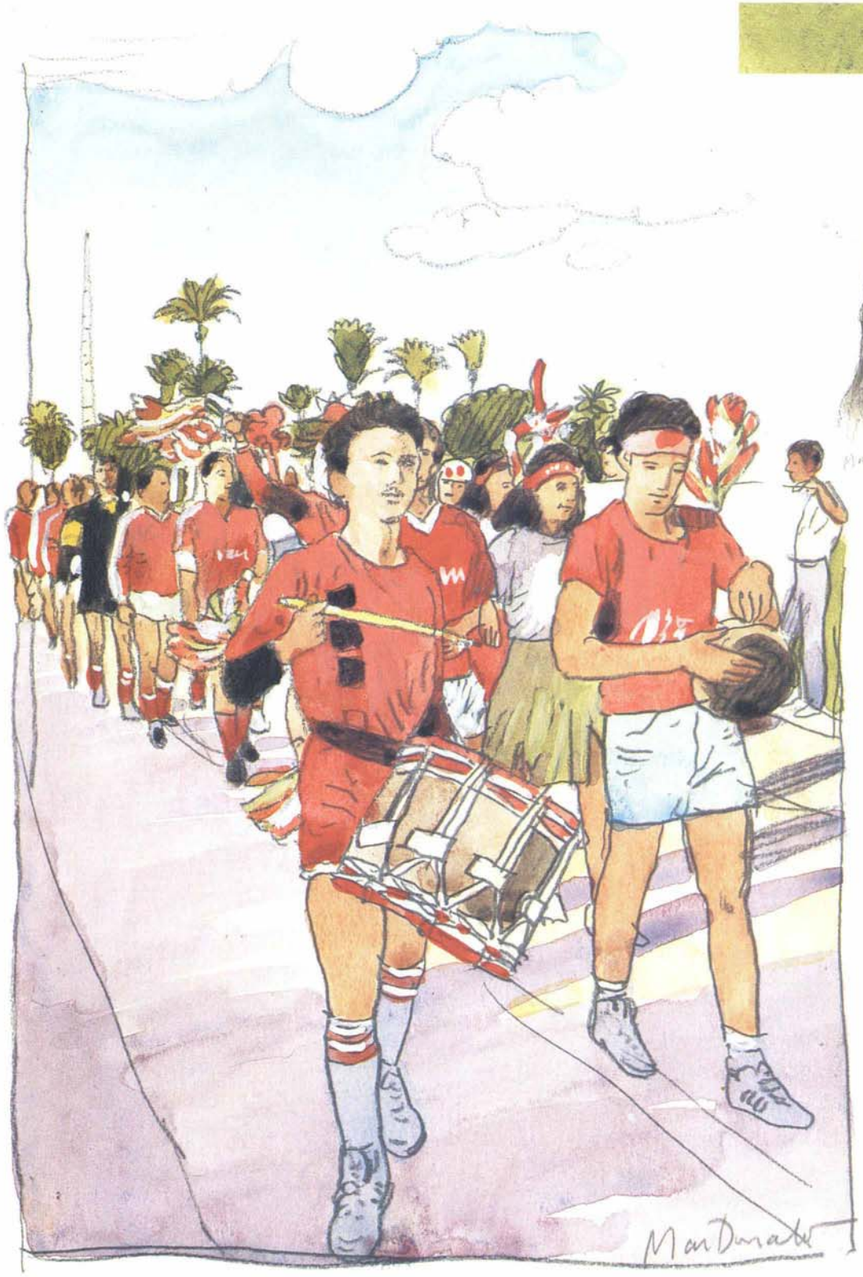
"We are not here as rivals," he said. "We are here to share with the people of the East the best things we have in the West, in exchange for the best the East has received. For the whole world needs the whole world...."

Starting in 1866 with a student body of 16 and a faculty of eight, AUB has grown in the last 124 years to harbor more than 5000 students of 50 nationalities, and a faculty of 400, in 81 buildings. And ever since the first graduating class of five men, in 1870, AUB graduates have done their alma mater proud. Two of those first graduates became officials in the Egyptian government, two became successful physicians, and the fifth, Yacoub Sarrouf, founded in Cairo what was to become, in its day, the Arab world's largest-circulation newspaper, *Al-Mukattam*.

Today there are over 31,000 living men and women graduates, a large number of whom hold positions of responsibility and influence. In the Arab world the AUB roll call of presidents, prime ministers, cabinet ministers, ambassadors, administrators, journalists, businessmen, scholars and scientists reads like a *Who's Who*. It is one of AUB's proudest claims that at the 1945 signing of the United Nations charter in San Francisco, no fewer than 19 of the delegates were AUB graduates.

In Europe and North and South American, for their part, doctors, lawyers, teachers, clergy and scientists of both sexes have brought kudos to Lebanon. A good cross-section of them were at the Boston reunion, ready to credit AUB for their success. They include people like Nuha Abudabbeh, clinical psychologist and founder of the Naim Foundation for Social Healthcare in Washington, D.C., which serves the psychological, social and medical needs of Arabic-speaking minorities, especially children and the elderly; and Munir and Naila Jirmanus, physicists in industry and at Tufts University respectively. "Everything we do now

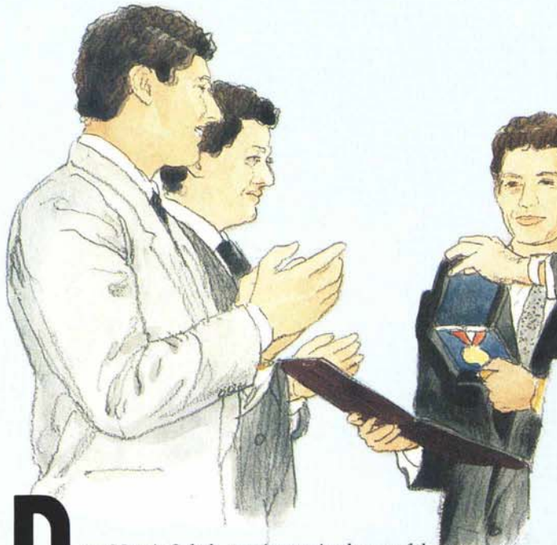
Sandbags in front of
Gate House



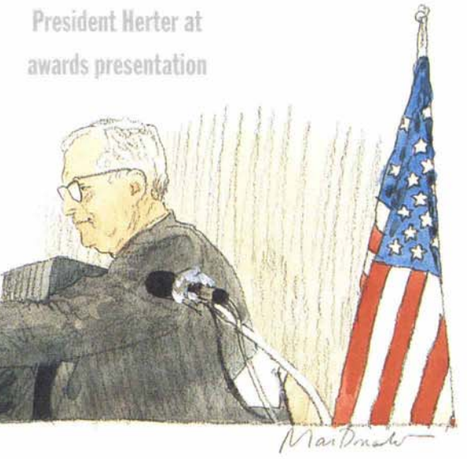
Dr. Munir Bashshur, Chairman, Department of Education

Student parade

The Cambridge-Beirut Link



President Herter at awards presentation



Dean Nassir Sabah, AUB's man in charge of the AUB-MIT collaboration on the reconstruction of Lebanon and the university, is a man of high hopes.

"Our recovery is inevitable and will be robust," he predicts. "However, if it's to succeed, reconstruction must be planned now. The AUB-MIT collaboration will do that."

The areas of collaboration include reconstruction and development of power-generation, transportation and communications systems; urban planning, housing and resettlement; and the introduction of new building forms, methods, materials, and techniques. The joint effort will also help restore water sources and supplies, protect traditional architecture, develop renewable energy sources and new methods for recycling wastes, give technical assistance to industry, assist in health-care development, and bring in new educational technology.

Sabah believes the physical reconstruction will be the easiest feat. Far more difficult, he says, will be the abstract work: rehabilitation of the social, cultural, health, education and financial resources of the country.

He describes the restoration of the university as a top priority. "AUB always shared the life of Lebanon," he says, "and so we have an obligation to our host country to once again provide quality education, research, and leadership."

"We are entrepreneurs," Sabah says, "talented, vibrant, and capable people. It will be hard work, but we can do it."

depends on AUB," Naila Jirmanus says. "That's where it all started."

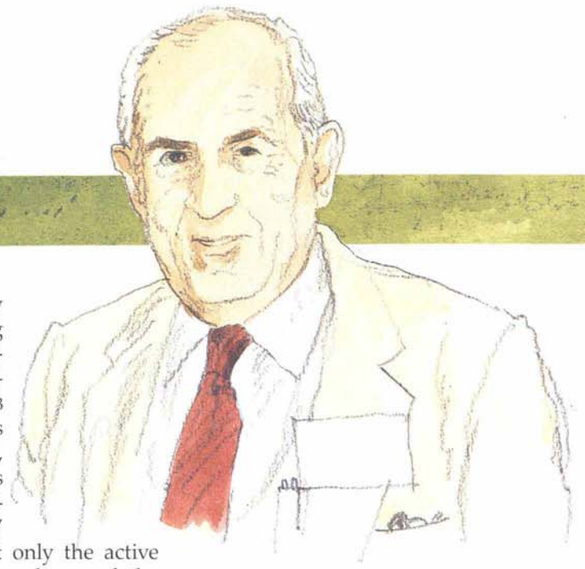
Added Randa Khuri, who earned an AUB nursing degree in 1967, "Without AUB I would have had to go abroad for my education and lose my identity and my culture. AUB helped me keep that."

To electrical engineer Roger Tarazi, whose AUB degree dates from 1976, AUB is an important part of his youth and "the focus of all the affection I have left in Lebanon." To Rima Nashashibi, a producer and director of Middle Eastern fashion shows in Los Angeles, AUB was the major influence of her life. "It is an emotional tie so strong that all factions disappear and we're all one family," she says.

And in the view of poet Mariam Qassem El-Saad, "AUB students have built the Middle East. I love AUB," she declares teary-eyed, "and I believe it will survive."

Nimr Ibrahim, organizer of the reunion, treasures his memories of campus life. "AUB is an experience that opens your outlook on life," he says. "I doubt there are many places like AUB, where you could have 20 students in a class who represent 14 nationalities. It is a very special kind of place and I'm grateful to be able to help keep that feeling alive among our alumni."

Newly-elected president of the 3500-member Alumni Association of North America is Dr. Jack Tohme of Ridgewood, New Jersey. Now on the



AUB Registrar
Farid Amin Fuleihan

faculty of Columbia University after four years of practicing and teaching medicine at American University Hospital, he is optimistic about AUB's future. "AUB will weather the present storms as it has others," he says, "and, believe me, it has many friends who will help rebuild its prominent position in the Middle East."

Those friends include not only the active alumnae and alumni in Boston and around the world, but also those Arab governments who view the university as a valuable training ground for Arab-world leaders. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, as well as the American government, have made significant contributions to the university.

Even more significant that reunion weekend was the announcement of a five-year, nine-million-dollar collaboration between AUB and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in research and education, with the reconstruction of Lebanon and of AUB as goals.

A large part of the funds for that program were donated by the Hariri Foundation, founded by Lebanese-born Saudi citizen Rafic Hariri, whose generosity in the name of his family seemed to echo the reunion's own family theme. At the reunion banquet, three of Hariri's adult sons stood beside AUB President Frederic Herter to receive the University's first medal of honor on their father's behalf. Bahaa, Saad and Houssam stood proudly as Herter paid homage to their father:

"We are pleased to bestow this first University Medal of Honor on Rafic Hariri," Herter announced. "It is given in recognition of his generous support of AUB and of Lebanon, ... for his dedication to education as the basis of Lebanon's future, ... and for his ceaseless pursuit of peace."

Conflict-resolution seminar in Cyprus

Administered at AUB by Nassir Sabah, dean of the faculty of engineering and architecture, and at MIT by Fred Movenzadeh, director of technology and development, the program "will ensure that, once political stability is reestablished, AUB will be a principal contributor to the rebuilding of Lebanon," Sabah said.

The collaboration in research and education between AUB's younger faculty members – most of them hired since the Lebanese crisis began in the mid-70's – and MIT's senior faculty will strengthen AUB, Sabah said, and have a further threefold effect: It will help the reconstruction and development of Lebanon; improve cooperation between AUB and industry, government and other educational institutions in Lebanon; and it will enhance AUB's ability to deliver professional and technical assistance to other Arab countries through its office of Research, External Programs and Planning.

Today, AUB is surviving, but the university is under great pressure. Lectures, lab work, seminars and study move forward, but there are considerable backlogs to overcome. Students must often take exams on weekends to make up for lost time. Even dedicated faculty members, said Dr. Ibrahim Salti, AUB's deputy president, must sometimes ask themselves why they remain. They do so, he said, because they believe in the traditions, survival and future of the university; because they believe there is important work to be done; and because they fervently believe AUB still has an important role to play in Lebanon and the Middle East.

Salti foresees a massive university program of rebuilding in science, technology, research and graduate programs.

"Our academic systems are intact," he maintains. "We have retained our independence and openness and we are still strong. The danger would come if we get skeptical, or lose hope. Arab leaders elsewhere have said, 'When will you start an AUB for us in our region?' So our future role may well be to help similar universities in other countries."

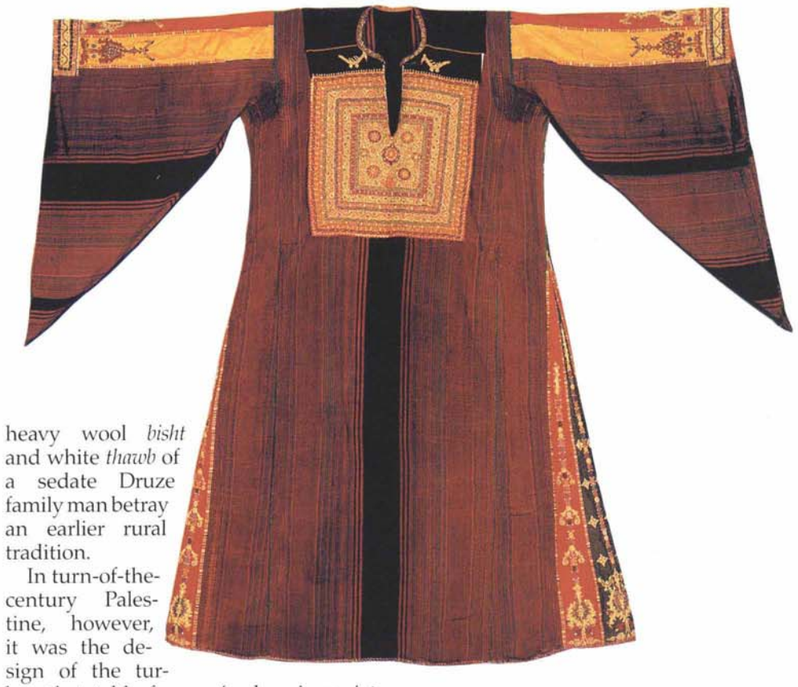
AUB's dedication to learning, tolerance, and service to the community continues unabated. The maintenance crews continue to work long hours with meager supplies. The hospital staff treats the wounded of all faiths and persuasions. The faculty teaches, advises and shows its traditional determination and perseverance in the face of adversity. And in Boston, the North American branch of the AUB family rededicated itself to the belief that education will, ultimately, bring together people of good will.

In the words of President Herter, "AUB remains the only major institution in Lebanon where people of all convictions and faiths can work, and learn, side by side in harmony. If this unity can exist at AUB there is hope that it can be realized, in time, in Lebanon itself. What makes a great university is the creation of students with vision and social responsibility, and AUB continues to do this. Let us then not be overly despairing of the chaos and the bloodshed, tragic as they are. Let us rather concentrate our efforts on keeping alive the essential significance of our university, a university unique in the Arab world."

Aileen Vincent-Barwood, former Middle East correspondent for the CBC in Beirut, now freelances from upstate New York.

WOVEN LEGACY WOVEN LANGUAGE

WRITTEN BY JANE WALDRON GRUTZ
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONATHAN S. WEAVER / INSIGHT AND COURTESY OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM



Fine, dense embroidery and heavy use of gilt cord make a spectacular chest panel (left) for a *thawb malaki* (right) – a "royal" dress – made near Bethlehem in the late 19th or early 20th century. Noted embroideress Miriam Ibrahim Jadallah is credited with introducing the twin-bird motif.

For most people it's just so rich, and so beautiful, and so complex, it's quite hard to take it in on a first visit," says Museum of Mankind anthropologist Shelagh Weir. She is speaking about the Palestinian costume exhibition on view in London through the end of this year. "It's like a complicated language. You've just got to give yourself time to absorb it."

Time to view the costumes, time to think about them, and time to mull over the nuances of the language they reveal are indeed what the visitor wants and needs. And nearly every visitor to the museum does seem to walk slowly and deliberately through the two large viewing galleries in an effort to absorb and remember as much as possible.

Of course, even in a collection as fine as this one, with dozens and dozens of costumes on display, some are more memorable than others. A deep-hued *thawb malaki*, or "royal dress," from Bethlehem is a case in point. Set out along one wall of the first gallery, its rich gold and multicolored silk couching echoes the ecclesiastical garments and Turkish uniforms that actually inspired its beautiful design.

Across the hall, a colorful *jillayah*, or coat, from Galilee creates quite another impression. Appliquéd with bright patches of red, green and yellow taffeta and embroidered in a myriad of vivid patterns, it hints at origins that might date back to Joseph's coat of many colors.

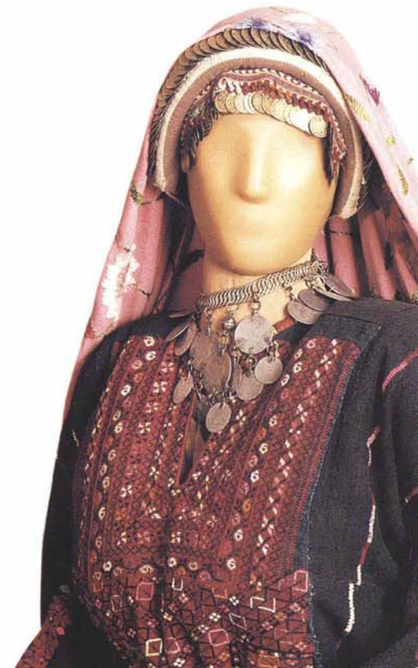
The men's costumes on view seem more straightforward. The *gumbaz* (another style of coat) made of white Syrian satin and worn by a young bridegroom clearly speaks its Ottoman influence, while the heavy wool *bisht* and white *thawb* of a sedate Druze family man betray an earlier rural tradition.

In turn-of-the-century Palestine, however, it was the design of the turban that told of a man's place in society, and one of the few glass cases in the exhibit shows a whole set of miniature turbans. Originally made for early-20th-century tourists, these models make it easy to see how different the green turban of the imam, or prayer leader, was from the plain white turban worn by Muslim scholars. The orange and yellow weave worn by lower-class urban workers looks quite pedestrian in comparison.

The differences between women's headdresses, on view in another glass case, are even more apparent. The small, soft cap of a woman from a village near Nablus looks modest indeed compared to the ornate headdress of a woman from Ramallah, where heavy rows of silver coins surround the face. The beautiful Palestinian veils, draped around and sometimes over these headdresses, proclaim their place of origin by their fabrics and colors and by the embroidery patterns used.

Though there are brief explanatory labels near all the displays, most of the background information about the exhibition is posted in the anteroom. More detailed information is available in the resting area near one end of the second gallery, where the visitor can sit down on

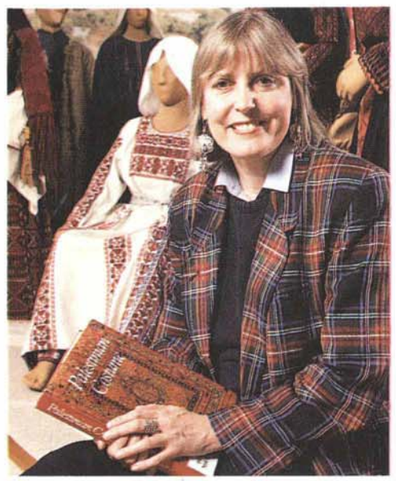
Complete costumes are displayed on mannequins (below) at the Museum of Mankind exhibition.



comfortable benches and page through books about Palestine, or simply gaze out over the colorful *shawal* dresses that Palestinian girls wear today.

"It's more or less as I wanted it. I feel satisfied now," says Weir, who visits the collection most days to "see everything is going all right." Sometimes she shows people around, or gives a talk, but for the most part, she says, "my work's done now." It began four years ago, when Weir wrote the outline for the exhibit, which was to follow her enormously popular "Nomad and City" exhibition of 10 years ago, as well as a 1970 exhibition on Palestinian costume "that could be said to be the predecessor of this one."

From the outset, Weir envisioned a far more comprehensive exhibit than the one of 20 years ago. She wanted more costumes, fewer glass cases, and an exhibition hall specially structured to emulate the



terraced fields of Palestine. The resting area was her idea, too. "It's really nice to have a place to sit and take stock and rest with your friends and look at the books," she explains.

Three books were called for in her original plan for the exhibition – her own comprehensive volume, *Palestinian Costume*; the book on *Palestinian Embroidery*, which she co-authored with Serene Shahid; and *The Palestinian Village Home* by Suad Amiry and Vera Tamari. So were the support personnel and materials needed for the educational program that runs in concert with the exhibit.

"We have education programs attached to most of our major projects," Weir explains, noting that an objective of the Museum of Mankind – the ethnographic department of the British Museum – is to show that the cultures presented are not just fossilized remnants from the past, but living, breathing entities today.

And what better way to show that than with living, breathing people? "To actually meet a human being from there, and see they're likable and attractive, well-informed, well-educated, is all part of the process of understanding other cultures. Children, especially, respond very well to teachers from the place concerned."

In an effort to find such people, Weir and Museum of Mankind education officer Penny Bateman traveled to the West Bank and Jordan in the spring of 1989 to interview artists, musicians, teachers and others who could convey one or another aspect of Palestinian culture.

Inam Raja, a native of Jerusalem who works as a kindergarten coordinator on the West Bank, was one of the first to arrive in London, spending a month working with the groups of schoolchildren who visit the exhibit on weekday mornings and afternoons. Other Palestinians have since come and gone, and in the coming months there will be a *hakawati* theater group from Jerusalem, an artist from Lebanon who, Bateman explains, does "a story in a box which he unrolls as he goes along, which is a traditional Arab thing," and artists from the West Bank who should provide the impetus for a series of art workshops.

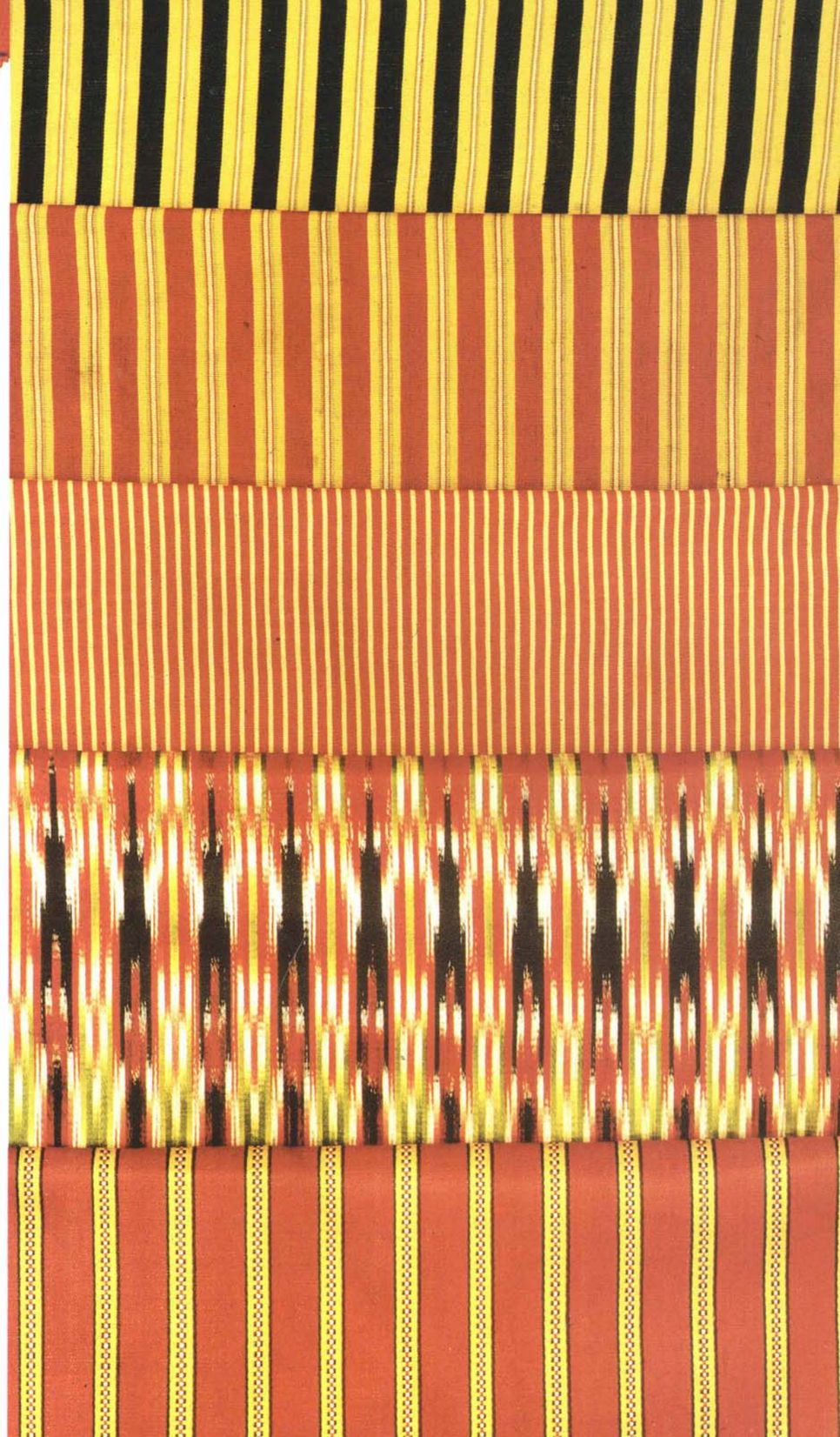
Not all the exhibition's Palestinian volunteers live in Palestine. Many live in England because, notes Weir, "that's an important aspect of being Palestinian too." Sonia al-Nimr of Nablus, now working on her doctorate in art history, devotes as much of her free time as she can to showing groups of schoolchildren aspects of Palestinian costume. "Without exception, they are amazed at the beauty of the costumes," she says. "They love to touch them. They love to feel them. And they love to see the little shiny, silvery bits on them, and the embroidery," she adds.

"The Palestinians are willing to help if they can, because they feel it's an opportunity to share their country with other people," explains education officer Ben Burt, who developed the program with Bateman. Walking through the exhibit one day, he chanced to run into a Palestinian woman who asked where she might find a tape of the Arabic background music being played. She soon volunteered to help in any way she could. "It turned out she was a folk singer," Burt said, who, as a result, will soon be presenting a Saturday afternoon of music accompanied by Palestinian musicians.

These "Saturday afternoons," held the last weekend of every month, have proved immensely popular both with visitors and with the many Palestinian graduate students in the area, who regularly volunteer to help out. Typical of these volunteers are Aliya Khalidi and Reem Abdelhadi.

Now working on her doctorate in Arab theater, Khalidi likes to don the baggy trousers and loose *thawb* of the *hakawati*, or storyteller, and embroider her Arab folk tales with information about Palestinian culture that she inserts as she goes along. In one story, for example, she has "a little girl go from one village to another with her grandmother, taking presents to people and receiving other presents in return, and the presents are very traditional things, like necklaces of jasmine flowers – a very common thing in Lebanon and Palestine."

Abdelhadi, who is now working on her doctorate on the political socialization of Palestinian women, teaches embroidery to youngsters, projecting her own enthusiasm to the children, who are delighted to



Syrian silk or silk-and-cotton fabrics (right) were important in Palestinian costume. From top, they are three different rep warp-faced silk fabrics with cotton weft, an ikat-patterned satin sometimes called *lisan al-asfur* (birds' tongues), and another satin with silk warp and cotton weft. The exhibition features a "handling collection" of costumes that children may touch. At left, Sonia al-Nimr shows a dress to a group of schoolchildren. Anthropologist Shelagh Weir (far left), who conceived and researched the exhibition, intended it to be broadly but informally educational.

make something beautiful. "It's fun, because you see little children, and they come in so excited. 'Is this right? Is this Palestinian?' I love children. And also I feel I am doing something for my country which, to me, is very important."

Serene Shahid, who has spent a good part of her life working on embroidery projects for Palestinian women, normally conducts her very popular embroidery workshops on weekdays. As she demonstrates the incredible fineness of the stitches, "just two threads to every stitch," Serene talks about how the patterns have evolved and changed in recent years.

As Bateman explains, each facet of the educational program shows the visitor one or another aspect of Palestinian culture in "an informal way, so that people have a nice time, and learn in a rather indirect way. It's not forced on them with lectures and things like that." The museum's objective, asserts Bateman, is to help people understand "that there's an historical depth to Palestinian culture, and that it's a real living culture today."

Through the costumes, the exhibit also talks about the history of Palestine, particularly the period of the British Mandate between 1918 and 1948.

To introduce the visitor to the period, Weir has placed a large map in the anteroom, showing the physical extent of Palestine at that time. Reaching from Galilee in the north to Gaza in the south, and from the Jordan River on the east to the Mediterranean on the west, Palestine was then a land of more than 800 towns and villages. Jerusalem was the largest city, and Nablus, Hebron, Nazareth and Jaffa were all important market towns. The Christian towns of Ramallah and Bethlehem were particularly affluent, and the dresses worn by the women of these towns are some of the loveliest in the exhibit.

Other towns achieved prominence as fine embroidery centers too, however. Lifta, near Jerusalem, and Bayt Dajan near Jaffa were among the wealthiest communities in their areas, and their embroideresses among the most artistic. Mejdel in the south, though not an embroidery center at all, was the largest weaving center in Palestine, with Gaza not far behind. These towns were known for their fine cottons and linens. The silks and satins used in the finer Palestinian gowns were imported from the great weaving centers of Syria – Aleppo, Homs and Damascus.

The exhibition's anteroom is filled with examples of these fabrics. There are the brightly-striped fabrics of Mejdel, bearing such colorful names as "heaven and hell" and "father of 200"; rich atlas satins and *heremzi* taffetas from Syria and even the rough-textured wool cloth that was woven in Nablus. There are also representative examples of patchwork, of cross-stitch, and of the elaborate couching associated with Bethlehem. Examples of the early European pattern books that added birds and flowers and other naturalistic motifs to the vocabulary of geometric patterns previously favored in Palestine are arranged in glass cases against the wall. Other cases display samples of embroidery floss – the silk-like cotton DMC and Anchor floss produced in France and England and still used by Palestinians today, as well as the bright-hued pure silks spun from cocoons in Homs and Mt. Lebanon.

"I can still remember the silks flashing in colors," says Serene Shahid, remembering the summers of her childhood in the village of Sharafat, outside Jerusalem. There, before the sun grew hot, she often watched the young village women as they sat out under the pine trees and embroidered their trousseau dresses with the vivid pinks, fuchsias and greens of Syrian silk. The same care and love these young women lavished on their dresses is evident throughout the whole exhibit.

For the visitor, the only problem is deciding which of these beautifully decorated garments to look at first. There is no set way to view the exhibit – no narrow path to follow from beginning to end. "I didn't want people to feel herded. I wanted large floor areas with nothing in at all, for spaciousness," says Weir, who also wanted to provide a comfortable resting spot for students and other "Middle Eastern on-the-floor-sitters like myself."

In so doing she has also provided plenty of room for the visitor to move around the costumes, which are "just as beautiful at the back as at the front," as well as to investigate the large murals, blown up from photographs of the country taken in the early years of this century. Arranged along the walls, these murals enable the visitor to see how well the costumes blended into the almost Biblical scenes of early 20th-century Palestine.

"Palestine is a land of hills and valleys, with mountaintop villages of beautiful limestone," says Weir. "Most Palestinians lived in the villages. People tend to think of the Palestinians as Bedouins, but they were mostly town-dwellers who might work in the fields that surrounded their village by day – woman shared in the work at harvest time – but who had a strong village social life. Their costumes reflected their standing in this society – their economic status, whether married or single, the town or area they were from." The way in which different fabrics, colors and decorative motifs are used to convey this information is the language of costume, and up through the 1940's most village women could decipher it. This was the language Weir was introduced to in 1965, shortly after she joined the Museum of Mankind. Asked by the museum to help fill out its collections by selecting costumes from the Church Missionary Society, which was then dispersing its own enormous costume collection, Weir became so involved with the subject that she decided to extend her research to Palestine. Once there, she explains, "I was captivated by the people and the area, and I decided to specialize." Weir spent three months in Palestine in 1967 and two more months in 1968. Basing herself in Jerusalem, she traveled from there to Galilee, the West Bank and Gaza in an attempt to learn the large vocabulary of costumes and identify the main regional styles. Subsequently, she extended her research and collecting to Palestinian refugees living in Jordan, all the while collecting more costumes and learning what she could.

Though Weir had originally hoped to document the types of costumes found in all the larger villages of Palestine, the sheer wealth of information ultimately forced her to confine her research to a single village in each area. Because of its beautiful

Linen fabrics with silk stripes, woven in Mejdel and Bethlehem (right), were Palestine's most luxurious. *Malaki* fabrics (bottom two) were most expensive because they used the most silk; woven flowers replacing stripes (middle and bottom) also added to the cost. Exhibition workshops include Serene Shahid's embroidery discussion and demonstration sessions for adults (above left) and tales for children told by a Palestinian *hakawati*, a role played by Rasha Hammami (left) and other young Palestinian women.

costumes, she began – and eventually concentrated on – the village of Bayt Dajan. In the 1970's, armed with names from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, she "sat for hours with a tape recorder" interviewing the women of Bayt Dajan, who were then living widely dispersed, as refugees.

Even now, Weir feels "very close to the village women. There's no doubt that the women of Palestine are very articulate, very strong characters, on the whole. They had a very secure and high place in their villages. They were – and are – greatly respected and had a high social status in the family. And there's a confidence, too. They're very proud of their traditions. I certainly did love the research," she adds. "I grew very fond of my main informants."

From these interviews, from interviews with other Palestinians, from discussions with students and collectors of costumes and from extensive archival research, Weir pieced together the changes that came to Palestinian costume from the late 19th century, through the 1940's and on to the present time. As an anthropologist, her main focus was the way the language of costume evolved over this period.

One thing remained constant, she discovered, through all variations and throughout Palestine: The most beautiful costumes were created for the great occasions of life, particularly the celebrations surrounding a wedding.

In Palestine, there were at least 10 different celebrations, with the bride playing the most prominent role in several of them. Among these were the henna night (*laylat al-henna*); the procession of the bride from her father's house to that of the groom (*tal'at min dar abuha*); the bride's money ceremony (*nqut*); and finally, and most important, the "going out to the well" (*tal'at al-bir*) ceremony.

The latter impressive event, for which the bride was expected to reserve her most elaborate and beautiful trousseau dress, took place following a week of seclusion with her husband, when she went out in procession with the other women to the village well to begin her proper duties as a wife.

With so much importance attached to the *tal'at al-bir* gown, and to the trousseau itself, which included festive dresses and everyday dresses, as well as cushion covers and other articles, it was no surprise that girls began to learn embroidery as soon as they could wield a needle, usually at about the age of six.

"Girls sat with their mothers and their sisters to learn the patterns of their village," explains Weir. "There were standard patterns you had to have in your village, but there was always room for innovation. Fashions would catch on, and people would copy someone; that person would gain prestige as she came to be recognized as an innovator."

Indeed, in addition to the basic patterns, which were embroidered on separate cloth panels over months or years as time allowed, every woman wanted to have the latest and most fashionable patterns, whether they originated in her own village or elsewhere.

A good example was the famous Bethlehem couching, a type of work in which gold and silver cord, along with silk cording of other colors, was fashioned into open floral patterns and stitched onto an underlying fabric. The women of Bethlehem, the acknowledged fashion leaders of central Palestine, had for some time applied this type of work to the chest panels and cuffs of their dresses. When, after a time, it became possible for women from other villages to purchase the finished panels from embroideresses in Bethlehem, or commission them from local embroideresses who copied the work, every woman wanted them for her "going out" dress. Often, the groom presented these decorative pieces to his bride-to-be as part of the *kiswah*, a present of materials or money that was usually negotiated between the families as part of the marriage agreement.

Once the date of the wedding was arranged and all the materials gathered together, the bride – or more likely the dressmaker – would build the embroidered pieces into a garment in the accepted style of the village.

Throughout the Galilee area and as far south as Nablus, that might be a *jillayah*, an ornamented coat with short sleeves and an open front. In southern Palestine, it would probably be a *thawb* with a round neck, a chest slit and very long pointed sleeves which could be tied behind the neck, freeing the forearms, when any work had to he done. In southwest Palestine, a *thawb* with a v-neck and long tight sleeves was preferred, while in the Hebron hills, where the people were very conservative, the *thawbs* had high necks.

The color of the dress would also help to identify its origin. In the Nablus and Tulkarm areas, dresses were always white, and usually of cotton with colored stripes of silk or cotton woven in. In the coastal plain south of Ramleh and in the Hebron hills, dresses were only "black," sometimes with variously colored silk stripes. In the Ramallah and Jaffa areas and around Jerusalem, but not as far south as Bethlehem, both white and "black" dresses were worn. None of the black dresses was truly black, however, as the color produced by repeated dyings with indigo was a mid- to dark blue, while the white was the natural color of linen. Only with the introduction of aniline dyes from Europe in the 1880's did dresses become truly black.

The most subtle differences between dresses were in the decorative designs. Every village had its own embroidery patterns, or ways of applying patchwork, or methods of joining fabrics together, including inserts of such rich fabrics as taffeta or satin, or later, European velvet. Still, there was a basic "grammar" to all the dresses. Every dress had a chest panel, long or short sleeves, two seams down the sides of the front, and two more seams down the sides of the back.

Shaded embroidery thread and the popular paired-bird pattern from imported copy-books distinguish a "six-branched" dress (left) made in the 1960's or 70's near Jerusalem. At far left, children visiting the exhibition dress up to act out a Palestinian wedding.

Usually, decoration was applied at the seams: down the sides, around the neck, down the sleeves, around the cuffs, and at the back along the hem, which was called the *shinyar*. At first, embroidery stitches seemed to be simply elaborations on the basic stitches needed to hold the pieces together. As time went on, however, more and more embroidery was used and by the 1930's, when the dresses were most elaborate, the embroidery was often so dense it hid the rich fabric underneath.

The visitor to the exhibit can easily see these changes by comparing costumes from the turn of the century with those made in the 1930's. In the earlier costumes, embroidery patterns were usually geometric, and nearly always attributable to their village of origin. For example, a dress from Ramallah would almost certainly bear the distinctive "tall palm" pattern, at least on the *shinyar*, while a dress from Bayt Dajan would feature the "pockets and cypress trees" pattern, for many years the hallmark of the area. By the 1930's, however, the dresses were fashioned in richer fabrics and featured a far greater variety of patterns, not always including the original village patterns. Headdresses too became more elaborate.

As Weir points out in *Palestinian Costume*, most of these changes could be traced to the prosperous era following World War I, which included the arrival of motor transport. Where previously journeys had been undertaken on foot or muleback, cars and trucks now made it possible for village people to travel to outlying markets and local shrines, to meet people from other villages, and to see how those costumes differed from their own.

Another change was the arrival of the new European materials – rich velvets, mercerized cotton embroidery flosses, curvilinear embroidery patterns and, of course, the new aniline dyes. These had begun to trickle in well before the turn of the century, but it was only in the 1930's, when more people could afford to buy them, that they had any real effect on the clothing people wore.

All these changes could be seen in the dresses of Bayt Dajan. For example, at the turn of the century, a bride prepared from one to three dresses for her trousseau. They might include a "big" *jillayah* which was always black; a "small" *jillayah*, also black; and a "small" *thawb*, which was always white. ("Big" and "small" referred to the amount of embroidery, not the size of the dress).

Vertical "branches" of small motifs on the skirt are typical of the Hebron hills, where this indigo linen dress with solid silk embroidery panels (left) was made in the 1930's. At right, Reem Abdelhadi in an embroidery workshop.

When the young men returned to Bayt Dajan following the end of World War I, however, they brought new ideas with them. The *jillayah* was relegated to obscurity and was replaced by a larger trousseau consisting of white and black *thawbs*, each featuring a different pattern of embroidery. By the late 1930's the preferred trousseau consisted of 12 black and white *thawbs*. This would include one set of four dresses featuring the beautiful Na'ani embroidery, named after the patterns of the town of Al-Na'ani, which the women of Bayt Dajan considered even finer and more beautiful than their own; one set of four "moon" dresses (*thawb abu gmar*) and one set of four "lamp" dresses (*thawb al-fanayir*), "moon" and "lamp" referring to the embroidery pattern on the *shinyar*.

Two of each set of dresses would be black, and two would be white, with one in each color being a "fully" embroidered version and one a "half-embroidered" version. As time went on, more and more changes were introduced until, by the mid-1930's, a dress of Bayt Dajan was a truly magnificent creation, worn with pride on as many occasions as possible.

Yet, one of the remarkable things visible in the exhibition is how well these dresses have lasted. The rich embroidery seems as beautiful as ever, and the dress fabrics seem only to have mellowed with time.

This comes as no surprise to Serene Shahid, who explains that the pure silk used in the embroidery patterns was "very strong." No one wanted to waste the hours they spent embroidering by using cheap thread or fabrics, and Palestinian women always took care to buy the best that they could afford. Even the cotton Anchor and DMC sewing threads were known to be long-lasting, which in large measure accounted for their popularity.

Today many of the changes that have come to Palestinian embroidery are due to the lack of materials of comparable quality. No one is more aware of this than Shahid, who turned to embroidery as an income source following the 1967 war, when so many village families were left without work or money.

Then living in Beirut, she joined with several Lebanese women to begin what they hoped would become a cottage industry for displaced village women. "At first we thought we would never succeed," she says. It wasn't just that the old embroidery silks and open-weave fabrics were impossible to find – the patterns too were a problem. The women came from many villages, with many different traditions. In the end, Shahid and the others simply "took the old patterns and redesigned them."

They made other innovations too. Instead of embroidering traditionally with silk on cotton, the women began to embroider with cotton on silk, "which is the more complicated way." The popular DMC threads were still available and, as Lebanon at that time was renewing its silk industry, fine silk fabric was available as well. Of course, the ease of embroidering directly on the old open-weave fabrics was gone. Instead, the women had to embroider on waste canvas and meticulously strip it away, thread by thread, after the embroidery was completed.

Her cottage industry was a success, but Shahid admits that Palestinian embroidery is not as it was. The old designs have become something new. But as she explains, that is how Palestinian embroidery has always been.

"Where did these designs come from?" she asks. "Those women were illiterate. They found the designs in mosques, in churches, in whatever they saw." The origins of these patterns, she points out, may go back to ancient times, even to the Babylonians. "It is because Palestine's culture was the result of so many ancient and more recent cultures. So many cultures passed through this country that it's not only the city that becomes influenced, but the villages too."

In truth, there is no telling where the patterns began or where they will end. One need only look at the embroidery of Reem Abdelhadi, who teaches embroidery to children at the museum's Saturday afternoons, to see that this is so.

Interested in embroidery since childhood, when she learned from her Nabulsi aunt how to do the European patterns, Abdelhadi one day decided to follow in the footsteps of her Ramallah aunt instead and began to use traditional Palestinian embroidery patterns.

"I didn't copy patterns. I wanted to be creative, you see, and I did my own – and apparently that's how, traditionally, Palestinian women do it." Abdelhadi even found she was using Palestinian colors. "I don't like red, but I was using red," she says, concluding that it must be because "red is the color of the earth of Palestine." As for the patterns, "they must have come from somewhere in the back of my mind," she says, "from what I saw as a child."

Today, Abdelhadi embroiders on the train going to and from classes, turning out designs the size of cushion covers which she gives to her friends.

"This is going to be a cushion for Sonia," she says, speaking of Sonia al-Nimr, who works with groups of school children at the Museum of Mankind. "This is how Sonia is. She has a basic sort of very sound, down-to-earth personality, but there are these little things that shine out of her. These are the little colorful bits." The piece is filled with complex stitches, "little colorful bits" radiating from the center of a wonderful design that seems to flow out of Abdelhadi's head as she goes along. She has no pattern to follow, and seems to have no need of one.

"Do people always do embroidery with things like that in mind?" asks Ben Burt, obviously intrigued with her work.

"Oh yes, I think so," she says, noting that those who understand the language of costume will know from the designs where the work originated. If they know the person who did the embroidery, they will understand even more.

She gives an example. "I was working on something, and over and over again came the star of Bethlehem. 'Why was that?' I thought. And then I realized, it is because I see this star over and over again in the Christmas decorations. And so, whenever I see that piece again, I will remember that I made it during Christmas in such and such a year, and I will think of all the things that happened then."

As Abdelhadi talks, Aliya Khalidi goes over to the children's "handling collection" of costumes, pulls one out and tries it on. The bright-colored embroidery and deep indigo cloth seem to suit her. "You need a *jarra* [a jar] to carry on your head," says her friend, barely suppressing a giggle.

The young, 20th-century college girl strikes a pose, and suddenly she looks like Rebecca at the well in a dress whose designs may well go back to Biblical times. Everyone else looks on, amazed at her transformation.

Penny Bateman speaks for all when she says, "I know no one planned these things, that they just evolved. But," she adds, "they certainly got it right."

Reem Abdelhadi looks up, pleased with the response to this dress of many colors. "That's how it is," she agrees with a nod. "That's how Palestinian costume is."

Jane Waldron Grutz wrote television commercials in New York and London, wrote for and edited The Arabian Sun *during 17 years' residence in Saudi Arabia, and now free-lances in Houston.*

EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS

MUSEUM NEGERI NUSA TENGGARA BARAT

From Lombok, Indonesia, a shirt embroidered with the Muslim shahada, *or creed.*

Beyond the Java Sea: *Art of Indonesia's Outer Islands.* This part of the Festival of Indonesia explores the cultural life and thought of the Muslim nation's Outer Island peoples, as expressed through their traditional arts. The Outer Islands, little known in the West, include all of Indonesia except populous Java and Bali. Most of the works in the exhibit were made in the "classic" 1800's or early 1900's, and highlight the powerful social and religious functions of this art. Displays cover eight regions of the archipelago nation, from Nias in the west to Irian Jaya in the east. Featured are textiles, jewelry, sculptures, architectural pieces, household goods and other artifacts. **Houston** Museum of Natural Science, through February 17, 1991.

In Our Time: *The World as Seen by Magnum Photographers.* From the Middle East and elsewhere, 300 images by 60 first-rate photo-journalists. Friends of Photography, **San Francisco**, January 15 through April 7, 1991; **Birmingham [Alabama]** Museum of Art, May 18 through July 7, 1991.

Saudi and Andi: *Artists of the Tuareg.* Works by a silversmith and a leatherworker, both Tuareg nomads. De Young Memorial Museum, **San Francisco**, January 24 through April 21, 1991.

Traditional Crafts of Saudi Arabia. The John Topham collection of weavings, jewelry, a Bedouin tent, and metal, wooden and leather handicraft objects. Texas Memorial Museum, **Austin**, January 25 through May 12, 1991.

The Art of Anatolian Kilims presents more than 60 examples from 19th-century Turkey, most of them slit-woven. De Young Memorial Museum, **San Francisco**, through January 27, 1991.

Glories of the Past: *Ancient Art From the Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection* includes Neolithic, Cycladic, Middle Eastern, Greek, Roman, Frankish, Gothic and Iranian objects. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through January 27, 1991.

A Singular Beauty: *Ceremonial Textiles From the Islands of Indonesia* includes double-ikat and gold-brocaded silks, bold abstracts, handspun and vegetable-dyed cloths and intricate batiks. **Los Angeles** County Museum of Art, through January 27, 1991.

Mirror of Empire: *Dutch Marine Art of the Seventeenth Century* covers Dutch trade and colonization efforts in parts of the Islamic world. Oman, Egypt, Java and other locales are featured. **Toledo [Ohio]** Museum of Art, January 27 through April 28, 1991; **Los Angeles** County Museum of Art, May 30 through September 1, 1991.

Siyah Kalam: *Contemporary Indian Miniatures* by artists from the Indian state of Rajasthan, heirs to an art brought from Persia by the Moghul rulers in the 15th century. Commonwealth Institute, **London**, through January 27, 1991.

Yemen: *A Culture of Builders.* A photographic and videotape exhibition sponsored by the American Architectural Foundation takes an artistic look at the landscape, built form and ornamentation that characterize Yemeni architecture. University of Arizona College of Architecture, **Tucson**, January 28 through March 8, 1991; Columbia University, **New York**, March 18 through May 10, 1991.

The Art of the Nile. An exhibit of jewelry and crafts from Al Ain Gallery in Egypt, designed by Azza and Randa Fahmy. Alif Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through January 31, 1991.

Islamic Decorative Arts includes ceramics, metalworks, calligraphy, rugs and clothing from the museum's permanent collection. **Portland [Oregon]** Art Museum, through February 1991.

The Afghan Folio: Luke Powell's impressive photographs of Afghanistan in the 1970's, displayed as dye transfer prints. Galerie d'Art, Bishop's University – Champlain College, **Lennoxville, Québec**, through February 1, 1991; Manesh Hall, **Moscow**, April 1991.

Court Arts of Indonesia. Some 160 works of art dating from the eighth to the 20th century reflect the 1000-year traditions of the royal courts of Indonesia. Sculpture, shadow puppets, dance masks, musical instruments, and precious objects are included. **Dallas** Museum of Art, February 10 through April 7, 1991.

Matisse in Morocco: *The Paintings and Drawings, 1912-1913* illuminates the effects of Moroccan space and light on an artist trying to balance intellect and emotion. The Hermitage Museum, **Leningrad**, through February 15, 1991.

Islamic Art and Patronage: *Selections From Kuwait:* More than 100 masterworks of Islamic art drawn from one of the world's foremost private collections. Walters Art Gallery, **Baltimore, Maryland**, through February 17, 1991; Kimbell Art Museum, **Fort Worth, Texas**, March 16 through May 12, 1991; Emory University Museum of Art and Archeology, **Atlanta, Georgia**, June 19 through September 22, 1991.

Turkish Pile Rugs from the Chris Alexander Collection presents pieces woven in the 13th through the 17th centuries. De Young Memorial Museum, **San Francisco**, through February 17, 1991.

Maurice Brazil Prendergast documents the stylistic evolution of the early modernist American painter, including influences from North Africa and the Middle East. **Los Angeles** County Museum of Art, February 21 through April 22, 1991; The Phillips Collection, **Washington, D.C.**, May 18 through August 25, 1991.

Brocade of the Pen: *The Art of Islamic Writing.* The exhibition demonstrates the use of "beautiful writing" on two- or three-dimensional objects, including metalwork, and its use on important Islamic architectural monuments. Michigan State University's Kresge Art Museum, **East Lansing**, February 23 through April 21, 1991.

Visions of Infinity: *Design and Pattern in Oriental Carpets.* Classical carpets of the 15th through 19th centuries from the museum's collections, offering a path to understanding spiritual aspects of Islamic art. The Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through February 24, 1991.

Artful Deception: *The Craft of the Forger.* The fascinating stories behind two dozen fakes from The Walters Art Gallery's permanent collection, some of which had been exhibited as genuine for years, including three from the Middle East. **Phoenix [Arizona]** Museum of Art, through March 3, 1991. **Columbia [South Carolina]** Museum of Art, March 31 through May 26, 1991.

Carthage: *A Mosaic of Ancient Tunisia.* Pictorial mosaics, Punic jewelry, Roman bronzes and 300 other pieces from 800 BC to the coming of Islam show ancient Tunisia as a center of culture and art. Musée de la civilisation, **Québec City**, Québec, through March 5, 1991.

Beyond the Pyramids: *Egyptian Regional Art From the Museo Egizio, Turin.* A selection of objects from one of the world's largest museums of Egyptian art outside Cairo. Emory University Museum of Art and Archeology, **Atlanta, Georgia**, through March 10, 1991.

Romance of the Taj Mahal. Shah Jahan's eye for beauty and his collector's instincts are demonstrated by 200 objects from European and American collections. The Asia Society, **New York**, through March 17, 1991.

The Sculpture of Indonesia opened the Festival of Indonesia in the United States with 135 masterpieces from the classical 8th to 15th centuries of the world's most populous Muslim country. Museum of Fine Art, **Houston**, through March 17, 1991; Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, April 27 through August 18, 1991.

Archeology and the Bible. Covers 150 years of archeology, focused on the periods of the biblical narratives. The British Museum, **London**, through March 24, 1991.

Mamluk and Ottoman Carpets. A major exhibition of the museum's unparalleled but little-known collection of Mamluk and Ottoman carpets. The Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, May 30, 1991 through January 5, 1992.

Trailing the Tiger – To Golden Cloths of Sumatra's Minangkabau. Some 50 examples of the striking golden cloth woven in the highlands of West Sumatra, and other cultural treasures. The Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through June 9, 1991.

Another Egypt: *Coptic Christians at Thebes.* Objects from the daily lives of Egyptians who, from the seventh to eighth centuries, lived in the shadow of pharaonic temples and ruins on the west bank of Thebes (modern Luxor). The Oriental Institute Museum, **Chicago**, through June 30, 1991.

Current Archeology in the Ancient World. A series of lectures on current research and discoveries, covering among other things Egypt, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, through July 10, 1991.

Palestinian Costume. Richly ornamented traditional costumes, headdresses and jewelry of Palestinian villagers and Bedouins. Photographs provide context. Museum of Mankind, **London**, until November, 1991.

Armenian Art: *3000 Years of History.* A panoramic look at the artistic achievements of the Armenian people over the centuries. The Armenian Museum, **Paris**, Thursdays and Sundays through 1991.

Pre-Islamic Arabia. A preview of pre-Islamic antiquities – inscriptions, sculpture, pottery and architectural elements from the Arabian Peninsula – to be exhibited later at the Louvre. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, until 1993.

Nomads and Nobility: *Art From the Ancient Near East.* Spectacular artifacts from the pre-Islamic Middle East, primarily gold, silver and bronze, but including ivory and ceramic objects. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, continuing indefinitely.

The Aramco Exhibit. Centered on the Arab-Islamic technical heritage, this permanent interactive, "learn-by-doing" scientific exhibit relates the historical background to today's petroleum exploration, production and transportation. **Dhahran, Saudi Arabia**.

Information is correct at press time, but please reconfirm dates and times before traveling. Readers are welcome to submit information for possible inclusion in this listing.

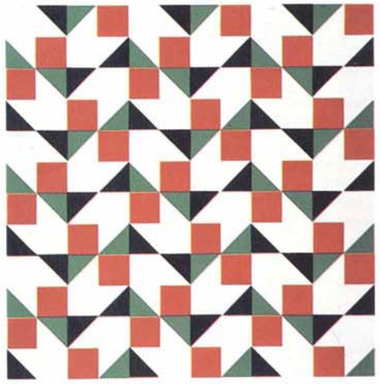
ARAMCO WORLD

Supplementary INDEX 1990

Authors

A-K

L-Z



Photographers

A

D

E

F

H

I–J

K

L

M

N–P

S

T–V

W

Illustrators

D

G

M

Photographic Sources

A–L

M–Z

Jillayah from Galilee

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