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The JOURNEY of a LIFETIME

Hajj

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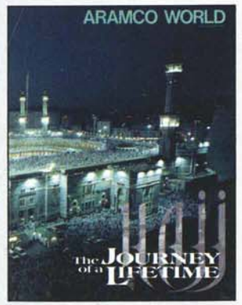

Cover: The Great Mosque at Makkah was built around the Ka'bah, "the House of God," and was most recently enlarged in the 1980's. Pilgrims traditionally enter the mosque through the Bab al-Salam, or Gate of Peace, between the two background minarets, to reach the courtyard. There, each one becomes part of "an endless ocean of those who have worshiped at this House," and faces "a brief yet intense encounter with the sublimity of God." Photo: Mehmet Biber.

◀ Iznik tiles and other Islamic sources provided motifs for Théodore Deck's ceramics.

ARAMCO WORLD

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The rain-swollen river, "agitated ... and splashing its muddy waters," lies across the caravan's path. To the handful of Europeans in the expedition, the Oued M'cazen in northern Morocco looks impossible to ford.

But the Moroccan chiefs think differently. First a man, then a baggage mule, are sent across. At the last minute, a reed raft arrives to ferry the caravan's principals across, including the new French ambassador to the Moroccan court.

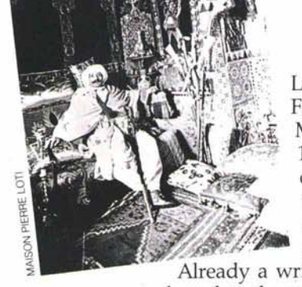
Then the "handsome Arab cavaliers" plunge into the stream, their robes held high above the water, their legs gripping their horses' flanks "like vises of bronze." Horses struggle and rear; some tumble with their riders into the chill waters. The camels and pack mules fare little better.

Finally, all scramble up the sheer, slick opposite bank. The caravan, muddy and wet but having suffered "neither drownings nor losses," resumes its journey through a countryside decked with asphodels and blue irises.

the orient of Pierre Loti

WRITTEN BY ARTHUR CLARK

Does this sound like the opening scene from a new Indiana Jones thriller? It's not: it's real – or as "real" as it can be when recorded by the romantic and irrepressible French novelist Pierre Loti, who journeyed to the imperial cities of Fez and Meknes in Morocco's heartland 103 years ago last spring.



MAISON PIERRE LOTI

The romantic in his element (above) and dressed as an Ottoman gentleman (right) at the grave of Aziyadé in Constantinople.

Loti was 39 when he took part in a French mission to the court of Sultan Moulay Hassan in April and May of 1889. Invited by ambassador-designate Jules Patenôtre to chronicle the journey, Loti, in fact, did much more than that when he wrote *Au Maroc* (*In Morocco*), published in 1890.

Already a writer of some renown – he would be elected to the prestigious French Academy in 1891 – Loti was uniquely prepared to observe and describe what he saw. The Morocco he discovered was one of "neither trains, nor cars, nor roads," he wrote; it was a Morocco he hoped would long remain free from all such modern developments.

Loti had first found an affinity with the Muslim world on a voyage to Algeria as a midshipman in the French navy in 1869. In fact, he wrote that those reading *Au Maroc* might suspect him of "partiality for Muslim countries" and admitted he had always felt he had a "half-Arab soul."

He had written nine books by the time he rode into Morocco, three springing wholly or in part from his experiences in the Muslim lands of Turkey, Senegal and Algeria. Probably the best known of those works is the first, the semi-autobiographical love story *Aziyadé*, set in and around the Ottoman capital, Constantinople.

By 1889, Loti had also become an avid collector of animals and artifacts acquired on his travels. His souvenirs quickly took over much of the family home in Rochefort, on France's Atlantic coast. In 1895, he purchased the house next door, and his collection spilled into it. Items ran all the way from a turtle he had picked up on his first trip to Algiers to the supposed tombstone of Aziyadé, the tragic heroine of his first novel.

The turtle is long dead and buried, but the tombstone is on display today in Loti's house, acquired by the Municipality of Rochefort in 1969 and turned into a museum. The three-story structure – modest outside but resplendent indoors with examples of the Islamic architecture, art and craftsmanship that Loti admired so much and collected so sweepingly – is to be found at 141, rue Pierre Loti.

The museum includes a suite of rooms designed by Loti whose furnishings reflect his romantic fascination with the Islamic world: the Turkish Salon, with a delicately carved cedarwood ceiling reminiscent of the Alhambra in southern Spain; the Arab Room, featuring windows of Arab design and 17th-century Turkish tiles; and the so-called Mosque. This last, in fact, is the reconstruction of part of a fire-damaged mosque in Damascus which Loti purchased in 1894 as authorities were about to raze it. He brought its stones to Rochefort, along with a team of Syrian workers who rebuilt it in a specially remodeled second-floor room.

While home between stints of sea duty, Loti spent much of his free time in those rooms, sitting on low divans, remembering and writing.

Homesick yet a voluntary exile, nostalgic for a past he never had, Loti's self-contradictory personality made its home in a provincial house and garden in Rochefort, in France's Charente-Maritime. In it, he invented a magical interior composed of brilliant fragments of the Middle East he loved.

Born Louis-Marie-Julien Viaud, the youngest child of a middle-class Huguenot family, Loti's naval service provided the inspiration for many other books, including *Le Mariage de Loti*, about Tahiti, *Madame Chrysanthème* (Japan) and *Pêcheur d'Islande* (Brittany and Iceland). Though he had long kept a diary, it was his family's financial difficulties early in his career that started him sketching and writing in French journals for a public anxious to learn about foreign lands.

Indeed, Louis Viaud received part of his pen name in Tahiti, where in 1872 he wrote some of his first articles. When "Viaud" proved hard for a Polynesian friend to pronounce, she called him "Loti," after an island flower.

COLLECTION CHR. GENET

It was the actress Sarah Bernhardt who first called him "Pierre." After seeing her perform in Paris while on leave in 1875, the story goes, the spellbound Loti, determined to meet her, had himself rolled up in a Persian carpet and delivered to Bernhardt's room by men in Arab dress, who unrolled it, and him, in front of her. The ploy worked, and two became fast friends.

Following his cruise to the South Seas and a period in Senegal, Loti sailed to Turkey in 1876. He went first to Salonika, now in Greece, where he met the girl whom he would call Aziyadé, and then traveled on to Constantinople. There he immersed himself in Turkish life, adopting local dress, learning the Turkish language and even taking quarters in the village of Eyüp, on the Asian side of the Bosporus. By the end of his stay in 1877, he could go where he pleased without attracting notice.

Loti's penchant for dressing in foreign costume, whether in Turkey, in Morocco or at the elaborate soirées he held in Rochefort, came partly from his desire to slip into a world other than his own. It reflected his wish to be someone other than who he was – a small-statured man who was never quite comfortable with the time and place into which he had been born – according to Marie-Pascale Bault, curator of the Municipal Museums of Rochefort.

"He said of himself when he was young that he wasn't of his 'genre.' That's to say: 'I don't like myself; I don't please myself,'" she explains. "Thus his costumes, and his need, over and above costuming himself, to costume his house."

Loti returned to Constantinople many times, officially and privately, and wrote no fewer than seven books about Turkey. On his last visit, in 1913, he was

welcomed by a cheering crowd when his ship docked. He was hosted at a dinner at the Topkapı Palace, a rare honor for a European, and lodged in splendor in the old part of the city that he loved. On the day he was buried in France, June 10, 1923, flags flew at half-staff in Constantinople.

A globetrotter by nature as well as by profession, Loti also paid return visits to Algeria and traveled in Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, India, Oman and Persia, writing books about many of those places.

In 1894, he journeyed from Cairo through the Sinai Peninsula to Palestine, traveling in style but taking a circuitous route over little-used caravan trails. From that journey came the trilogy *Le Desert, Jérusalem* and *Galilée*. Souvenirs of the voyage, now in Rochefort, include his dashing red leather boots, no bigger than size seven.

Loti visited Persia in 1900, stopping in Oman en route from India. In Muscat, the sultan gave him a dagger and a sword from his personal collection. The writer added them to the assortment of Arab arms already in Rochefort, including a silver-plated gun and a damascened saber that were gifts from the sultan of Morocco in 1889.

In Persia, he went to Isfahan, and also visited Shiraz, Qum and Tehran, traveling in the spring, "the season of roses." *Vers Ispahan* (*Toward Isfahan*) was published in 1904. "He who wants to come with me to Isfahan in the season of roses," Loti begins, "must ride by slow stages, as in olden days.... Who comes with me toward some lost oasis in fields of white poppies and gardens ... will find an old town of ruins and mystery, its blue domes and minarets of changeless azure...."

The book's flavor, it seems, has grown finer with age. Notes Leslie Blanch in her 1985 biography of Loti, "In the hotels and bookshops of Iran, new editions of *Vers Ispahan* have always taken pride of place among the latest travel books and guides of the region."

In 1907, Loti visited Egypt as a guest of Khedive Abbas Hilmi and nationalist leader Mustafa Kamel, and traveled slowly up the Nile by boat from Cairo to Aswan. That trip gave birth to *La Mort de Philae* (*The Death of Philae*), referring to an ancient island temple in Upper Egypt that was being flooded as a result of construction of a dam. In the book, Loti laments the modernization of Egypt and decries the invasion of pampered tourists, whom he calls "Cookis" and "Cookesses" after their sponsor, the English travel company Thomas Cook and Son.

COLLECTION CHR. GENET

In Cairo, Loti prevailed upon authorities to open the Egyptian Museum for him at night so that he could view the exhibits by candlelight. He was certain he would find himself there as he was in an earlier life, in Pharaonic form, and finally he did: in the mummy of Ramses II. Loti went so far as to have his profile printed on a postcard alongside that of the remains of the 14th-century BC Egyptian ruler, to show their resemblance. At the top of the card, he wrote: "Alas! It is him at the left whom I will soon resemble!"

Loti's world-weariness in *Le Mort de Philae* contrasts markedly with his sense of wonder – some might call it naïveté – in *Au Maroc*. The latter, sometimes more poetry than prose, was Loti's first pure travel book, and as such it contained many of the themes he developed later. In its introduction, he urges readers seeking a political study of Morocco to look elsewhere. Neither, he writes, will they find a treatise on how the country can join the "modern movement."

Instead, he presents Morocco as an unspoiled land, an almost-Eden still free of foreign influences, a country that is "silent, wild, inundated with light," where the ground is covered with "a carpet of flowers" and where even the wild animals don't fear him. Loti cites examples of the severe justice of the sultan, and doesn't hesitate to describe unattractive urban landscapes. But he focuses his heart on the country's charms, not its obstacles.

MARIE CLAIRE/PRIMOIS/PELLE

Brass trays, ewers and a charcoal stove, tiles and *mashrabiya* screens, cushions and skins are among the evocative fragments (below left) that Loti collected. His postcard from Cairo is a fine example of anticipatory romantic despair.

The almost claustrophobic effect of Loti's collection of Islamic crafts and art objects completely changed the house where he grew up, and shuts out the open, windy landscapes of his native coastal France. Inset, articles of hammered Middle Eastern copper.

MARIE CLAIRE/PRIMOIS/PELLE

In 1889, Pierre Loti traveled by caravan from Tangier to Fez. The trip took 12 days. In 1972, I took a fast intercity bus along the same route and arrived in just a few hours.

But the bus out of Fez the next morning was a different matter: It carried villagers to destinations all along a winding route north into the Rif Mountains. Among the passengers were several live chickens that rode in the luggage rack.

Unlike the French writer, I wasn't part of a diplomatic mission. I was going to teach school in a town called Taounate. And in the course of the next two years I took that bus back to Fez many times.

Loti, of course, saw no place for "trains, nor cars, nor roads" in Morocco. But the Frenchman, who found so much beauty in "old" Morocco, would still have recognized much that was familiar had he returned almost 85 years after his visit to the country that he portrayed in Au Maroc.

He'd have determined again, as I did, that it was most comfortable to stroll incognito, in Moroccan garb. He'd have danced deftly out of the way of the donkeys that still pass with heavy loads through the winding streets of old Fez. And he'd have discovered a few houses where, behind old wooden doors, fountains gushed water in tiled courtyards, and where tea was served with aplomb on a bed of mint leaves and sugar.

He'd have found craftsmen still hard at work: cobblers turning out heelless yellow slippers; metalworkers hammering designs into huge copper trays; saddlemakers, gunsmiths, woodcarvers.

He'd still have watched the shoppers bargaining for goods all around him, and the children playing, and the men getting ready to pray in the mosques.

He'd have heard and seen the storks in springtime, clack-clack-clacking their beaks as they perched on the minarets.

He'd have ridden a donkey to reach certain far-off villages, where he'd still have found farmers working small fields with their animals. There he'd have feasted on skewers of grilled meat, thick wheels of bread, olives and fresh figs. He'd have slept on a low couch stuffed with wool from the *suq*, or marketplace, and been covered with a blanket woven by hand on a loom in the house just down the hill.

He'd have awakened to the crowing of a rooster and been amazed, still, at the peace of the place around him.

another romantic remembers

I know what Loti meant when he wrote that he wished Morocco would never change. I felt that way, too, when I took the bus from Taounate for the last time, in 1974.

I've been back to Morocco several times since, though never again traveled by bus. Many things have changed. There is a new generation of students in the little school where I taught. But still, much remains the same.

MARIE CLAIRE/PRIMOIS/PELLE

MARIE CLAIRE MAISON/BAILHACHE/ARDOUIN

Many an upper-middle-class European home of the time had a "salon turc" or a "türkische Ecke" where a few exotic items were displayed. From such objects — and his genuine affection for the Middle East — Loti created a whole environment, an esthetic and a career.

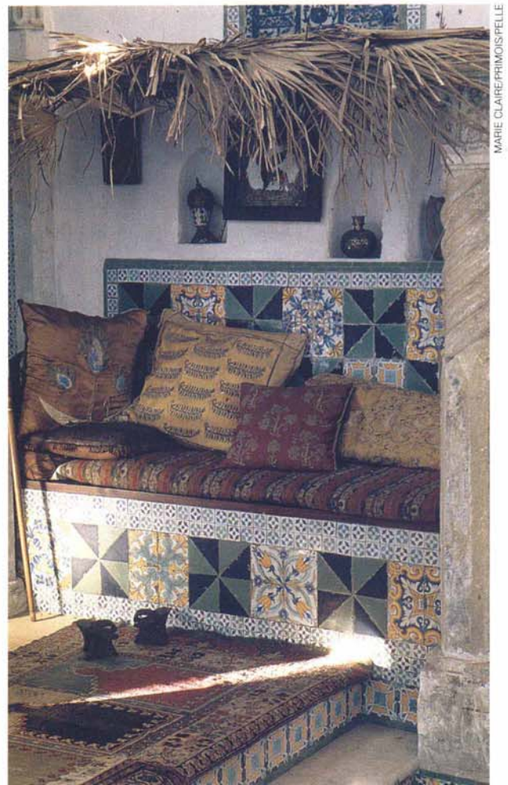
He marvels at the whirlwind of *fantasias* – the great, galloping, gun-firing Moroccan celebrations – that greet the official caravan he is part of on its 12-day journey from Tangier to Fez. He is awestruck by the openness of the countryside and the simplicity of life, "the same today as it was a thousand years ago."

He compares the fine Moorish architecture he finds in Fez and nearby Meknes with that of the Alhambra in southern Spain. The masterpieces in Andalusia lie "under a layer of dust," he feels, but in Morocco they seem to him to be alive "in all the splendor of their new-made freshness."

In Fez, where the French ambassador presents his credentials to the sultan, Loti occupies a house far removed from the rest of the French delegation, to better taste, feel and see the city and her people. Wearing local clothes, he disappears into the crowds. He is happiest when he is greeted as a native on the street – and, as an author, he is at his best when painting word portraits of what he sees there.

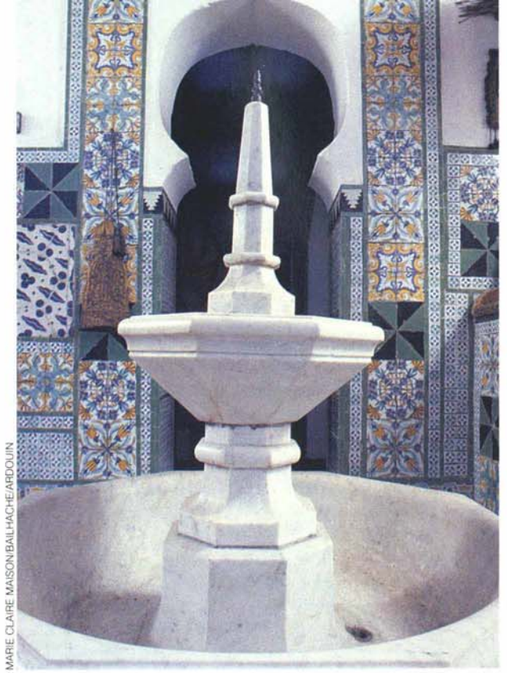
In Fez, white-veiled women watching a procession look, from a distance, like "heaps of white pebbles" atop the city's ramparts. Walking through the labyrinth of streets of the old town is tantamount to "being at the bottom of a well ... one gets only glimpses of the sky and it's impossible to orient oneself in the intractable web." In Meknes, the interior of a richly furnished house is spotlighted by sunlight streaming through stained-glass windows in striking rays of blue, yellow and red.

Toward the end of his month-long stay in Morocco, he writes: "Soon these familiar things will seem very



MARIE CLAIRE/PRIMOIS/PELLE

Wearing Turkish or Arab dress, and seated under a palm-frond canopy on a divan (right) faced with tiles from a Damascus mosque, Loti sometimes received visitors while the marble fountain played. "There is nothing urgent but décor," he is quoted as saying.



MARIE CLAIRE MAISON/BAILHACHE/ARDOUIN

astonishing, when I'm back in the modern world and I reconstruct them from afar."

Finally, the author begs Morocco to reject "progress" in order to hold tightly to its heritage. He pleads with the country to "turn your back to Europe and seal yourself in the past."

So, was Loti just a raving romantic, living blindly in a past that suited him better than his own time? The answer depends upon whom you consult.

His patron, Ambassador Jules Patenôtre, quickly distanced himself from Loti's appeal, in *Au Maroc*, against progress for Morocco, although he expressed support for "the thought which dictated your book." The critique by Louis Lyautey, the first resident-general of the French protectorate in Morocco, which ran from 1912 to 1956, was less diplomatic: *Au Maroc*, he said, depicted "Loti's Morocco" and bore no resemblance to the real thing. Modern critics call Loti an orientalist, and cite as outdated his "exoticism" and the central importance he gave to physical sensations, instincts and impulses, though they also admire his talents as a penetrating and accurate observer and a limpid stylist.

French artist Henri Matisse, who visited Tangier twice in 1912 and painted some strikingly colorful canvases there, puts Loti in another light. Through reading *Au Maroc*, Matisse said, he had gained both a familiarity with Morocco's landscapes and an appreciation of Loti's powers of description, whose brilliance he only realized when he witnessed similar scenes firsthand.

A romantic, for certain, then; outspoken, no doubt. But blind, never.

Arthur Clark, a Dhahran-based staff writer for Saudi Aramco, recently read Pierre Loti as a re-introduction to Morocco nearly 20 years after he left that country.

WRITTEN BY FREDERICA TODD HARLOW

DECK & THE ISLAMIC STYLE

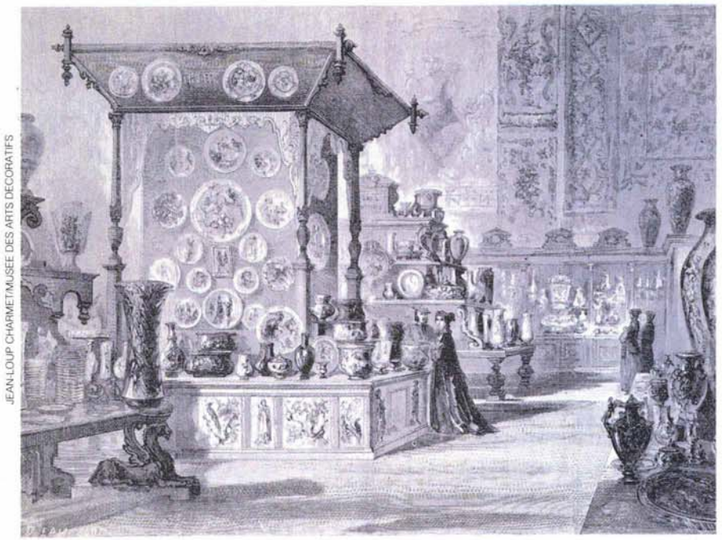
TD

INSIDE FRONT COVER PHOTO: MUSEE ADRIEN DUBOUCHE/RMN

FLOWER DETAIL: METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

JEAN-LOUP CHARMET/MUSÉE DES ARTS DECORATIFS

In the mid-19th century, Europe's artistic and fashionable circles were enthralled by a vogue for all that was Oriental. Visitors to London galleries and Paris salon exhibitions became familiar with Middle Eastern desert and village life, with Arab, Persian and Turkish costume and decorative arts as they were recorded – or sometimes imagined – on canvas or in watercolor by European artist-travelers. *De rigueur* for Victorian ladies were the sumptuous, colorfully patterned paisley shawls, while loose, cool pajamas, as worn in the Islamic world, were adopted into the well-dressed European male's wardrobe. European homes featured the new "divan" associated with life *à l'orientale* – furniture that invited lounging and relaxation – and the Turkish bath was introduced to Paris.



Above, Deck's ceramics are pictured on display at the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris, where he won a silver medal. At left, a flower detail from a Deck earthenware dish ca. 1870. The Deck monogram underneath is one of several used by his workshop.

The preferred jewelry motif was the so-called Algerian knot.

Against this backdrop, the acquisition of a single brilliantly colored Islamic tile prompted French ceramist Joseph-Théodore Deck to explore and revive Middle Eastern ceramic techniques in the creation of his own unique art.

Deck, the first of the artist-potters in what was to become a widespread revolution in European ceramics, was born in the Alsatian town of Guebwiller in 1823. He dreamed of becoming a sculptor, but his modest background dictated a more prosaic vocation. Deck apprenticed as a maker of ceramic stoves – large, room-warming structures of iron and plaster often elaborately covered with ceramic tiles – and traveled to Germany, Austria and Hungary to learn his trade. Moving to Paris in 1847, he worked as a foreman in a ceramic stove factory.

But by 1856, Deck had established his own decorative faïence workshop in partnership with his brother Xavier and nephew Richard. Painters and sculptors frequented "Atelier Deck," which became a design laboratory promoting ceramics as an art form in the face of prevailing industrial practices.

For Théodore Deck, the 1850's were an exciting decade of technical research and experimentation. Paradoxically, Deck looked back into history to develop new and improved ceramic techniques. He began by exploring lost Renaissance processes, making elaborate ceramics resembling those of France's Saint-Porchaire factory, extravagantly decorated with inlaid strapwork patterns and incrustation. Next, tantalized by the secrets locked within the luminescent glaze of his one Islamic tile, Deck began to unravel the mysteries of centuries-old ceramics techniques of that culture. He wanted to know more.

Since the Middle Ages, Islamic ceramics had been admired in Europe as much for their luscious, rich glazes as for their abundant and colorful decoration (See *Aramco World*, March-April 1992). Early Islamic potters initially developed their skills from the techniques of their ancestors, but as long-distance trade and contacts flourished, along the Silk Roads and by other routes, they adopted many Chinese techniques to achieve a superior product, and added others of their own. Many Islamic inventions – tin-glazed earthenware, luster and underglaze painting – were in turn crucial to the development of ceramics of other cultures.

Deck discovered that the brilliant color in Islamic ceramics is due to a base coating of white alkaline slip containing tin oxide. The decoration, done in enamel colors, is covered with a transparent glaze, and produces glowing, translucent effects. After much trial and error, Deck succeeded in rivaling the vivid palette of colors characteristic of Islamic ceramics. He created "bleu de Deck," his famous deep-turquoise blue glaze, using potash, carbonate of soda and chalk.

As interested in decoration as in technique, Deck found prototypes for his "Persian" faïence (called "Rhodian" in the 19th century) in ceramics that were in fact Turkish, specifically from the famous Iznik manufactory in the 16th and 17th centuries. At the time, Iznik ceramics were celebrated throughout the Islamic world for the astonishing depth, brilliance and luminosity of their glazes and colors; they were often boldly decorated with floral motifs

whose stylized forms resembled those found on Persian carpets. They recalled the Islamic love of gardens, with charming tendrils, leaves, blossoms and fruits – pomegranate, carnation and tulip – swaying gracefully across the surfaces of dishes, vases and tiles. Sprightly animals and highly decorative Arabic calligraphy also flickered across their lustrous surfaces, and Iznik ceramists formed beguiling arabesque patterns with flattened leaves, limbs and letters.

Deck sometimes copied directly from Iznik ceramics, but he also created variations, assimilating motifs from several examples into a single object. While Deck's designs are generally more symmetrical than those of his prototypes, it is nevertheless sometimes possible to identify the very pieces that inspired him.

Islamic source material for Deck to study was hard to come by in 19th-century France. A small but steadily increasing stream of hardy European adventurers braved the perils of contemporary travel to experience the wonders of Turkey, Persia and North Africa. Back home, their exotic souvenirs perforce became touchstones of

DAR AL-ATHAR AL-ISLAMIYA, KUWAIT

Islamic culture and sparked the European imagination.

One of the first artist-travelers to the region, Jules-Robert Auguste (1789-1850), returned to Paris with curios and artifacts of every description, selected from dozens of bazaars and merchants. At his frequent "at homes," Auguste displayed costumes, carpets, weapons, ceramics and glass in a dazzling Thousand-and-One-Nights setting to his spellbound artist friends, including Théodore Géricault, painter of "The Raft of the *Medusa*"; Horace Vernet, who was to produce the battle paintings at Versailles; and Eugène Delacroix, greatest of the French romantic painters. Auguste's souvenirs often found their way into his guests' paintings as props, and Orientalist subjects – on the increase in the annual paintings salons – now took on an air of verisimilitude, at least as far as artifacts were concerned.

Serious collections of Islamic artifacts began to be assembled in Europe. Nineteenth-century museums took a didactic approach to acquisitions, and avidly collected study materials for public instruction as well as to provide inspirational models to further the applied arts. The extensive medieval and Renaissance collections of Paris's Musée de Thermes – Hôtel de Cluny, opened to the public in 1844, provided Deck with Islamic models to emulate, and he recorded that its collection contained 132 examples of "Persian" ceramics.

Some Islamic artifacts had also filtered into France during the Crusades, and fragile survivors, along with a handful of fine examples of ceramics, metalwork and glass acquired over the years, had found their way into the French royal collections. These collections formed the basis of those of the Louvre Museum, another resource for 19th-century craftsmen.

Deck most frequently referred to the collection of the National Porcelain Museum at Sèvres, outside Paris. Open to the public since 1824, this specialized museum continually added to its large and important study collection of ceramics from around the world. Underscoring its avowed mission to provide models for industry, the museum complex even featured an applied arts school. It was here that lustrous Islamic glazes gave up their secrets and the sparkling enamel colors of exquisitely depicted Middle Eastern flora and fauna seduced Joseph-Théodore Deck.

In the same pedagogical spirit as the museums, private collectors lent objects to public exhibitions. On several occasions throughout the 1860's, privately-owned Islamic works of art were displayed through the auspices of the newly formed (1864) and commercially-minded Union Centrale des Beaux-Arts Appliqués à l'Industrie, the forerunner of Paris's Musée des Arts-Decoratifs. Important collectors of the period included Baron Alphonse de Rothschild and Charles Schefer, Emperor Napoleon III's Arabic interpreter.

Ironically, source material was also supplied by Deck's competition. Ceramist Eugène-Victor Collinot and his collaborator Adalbert de Beaumont, who had first encouraged Deck to look to Islamic prototypes, joined Deck in his early exploration of Islamic ceramics. In 1859, Collinot and Beaumont, themselves collectors of Islamic artifacts, published *Recueil de dessins pour l'art et l'industrie (A Collection of Designs for Art and Industry)*, which con-

The nine painted tiles arrayed in a panel at left are original 16th-century Iznik ceramics, which inspired Deck and his contemporaries. At right, Gallé's enameled and gilded glass vase, shaped like a mosque lamp, features his unusual Islamic-style French-language script. Far right: An Iznik dish from the early 16th century.

MUSÉE D'ORSAY/RMN

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

faïence fine glazed earthenware or pottery, often with highly colored designs

luster an iridescent metallic surface on a ceramic glaze

slip thick, creamy mixture of fine clay and water that can be used to cast ceramic objects in a mold, to pour, trickle or paint onto ceramic ware as decoration, or, as a cement, to attach handles and other applied parts

cloisonné an enamelwork technique in which areas of color are separated by narrow edgewise bands or strips of metal that keep the colors from mixing while they are liquid, and which remain visible in the completed work as narrow metallic lines

MUSÉE ADRIEN DUBOUCHÉ/RMN

CERAMIST'S EYE SPEAKS

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

flambé Chinese ceramic glaze that depends on partial reduction of copper oxides for its mingled red, purple and greenish tones

sang de boeuf "oxblood," a flambé glaze, varying between wine-red and brownish-red, developed in China

celadon iron-containing glaze developed in China that ranges from putty-colored, greenish brown or gray-green to true green or bluish green

craquelure intentional network of fine cracks in the surface varnish, glaze or enamel of a work of art; a crackle-pattern finish

In 1867, "Atelier Deck" created the Iznik-style dish at far left, now at the Musée Adrien Dubouché in Limoges. Beside it is another fine Deck dish, produced in 1863 and owned by the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The dish on the right, at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, was also fired in Deck's workshop, about 1870.

tained detailed illustrations of Islamic ceramics and glass seen in their travels.

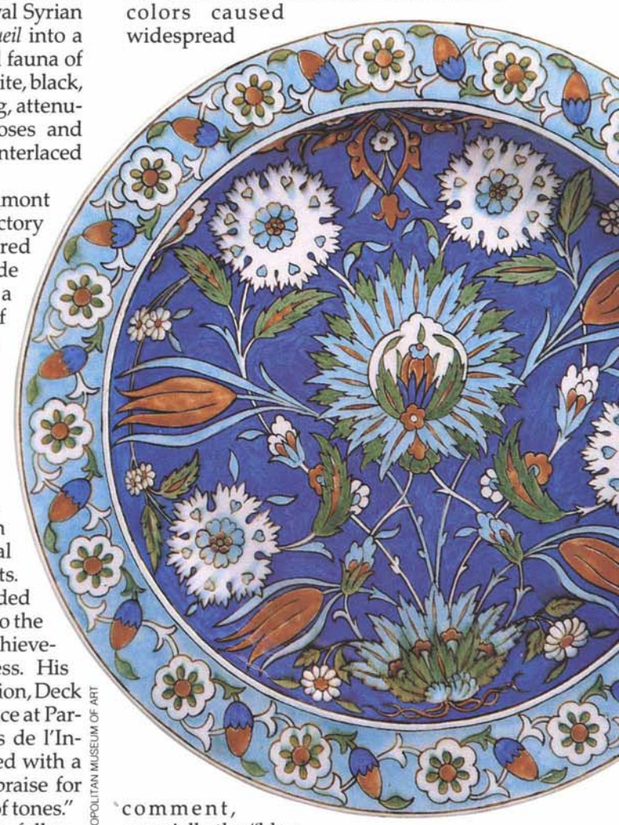
This influential design book revealed the arts of the Islamic world as a new source of inspiration to a receptive and enthusiastic audience of French artists and craftsmen. In its pages Deck found a 13th-century enamel and gilt glass mosque lamp from Cairo – part of the Rothschild collection – lavishly decorated with ornament and calligraphy. Deck translated the bulbous lamp with its wide-flaring neck into a pair of ceramic vases, replacing its calligraphy with more floral ornament. Likewise, he converted a medieval Syrian glass vase illustrated in the *Recueil* into a ceramic vase alive with flora and fauna of Persian inspiration. Glazed in white, black, red and cobalt, the vase's swelling, attenuated form is enlivened with roses and acanthus, tiny gazelles and bold interlaced arabesque patterns.

In 1863, Collinot and Beaumont founded their own faïence factory specializing in Islamic-inspired wares. Located in the Bois de Boulogne, the factory caused a sensation with its decoration of blue and white Islamic dishes. The competition with Deck was truly on.

Nineteenth-century industrial exhibitions invited such competition. Heavily attended and the subject of intensive commentary and discussion, they were the manifestation of an era of unprecedented official sponsorship of the applied arts. Held almost annually, they provided a forum for exhibitors to present to the public their best and newest achievements in the name of progress. His experiments having come to fruition, Deck presented his first "Persian" faïence at Paris's 1861 Exposition des Produits de l'Industrie. His efforts were rewarded with a silver medal and much critical praise for his "fine quality" and "intensity of tones."

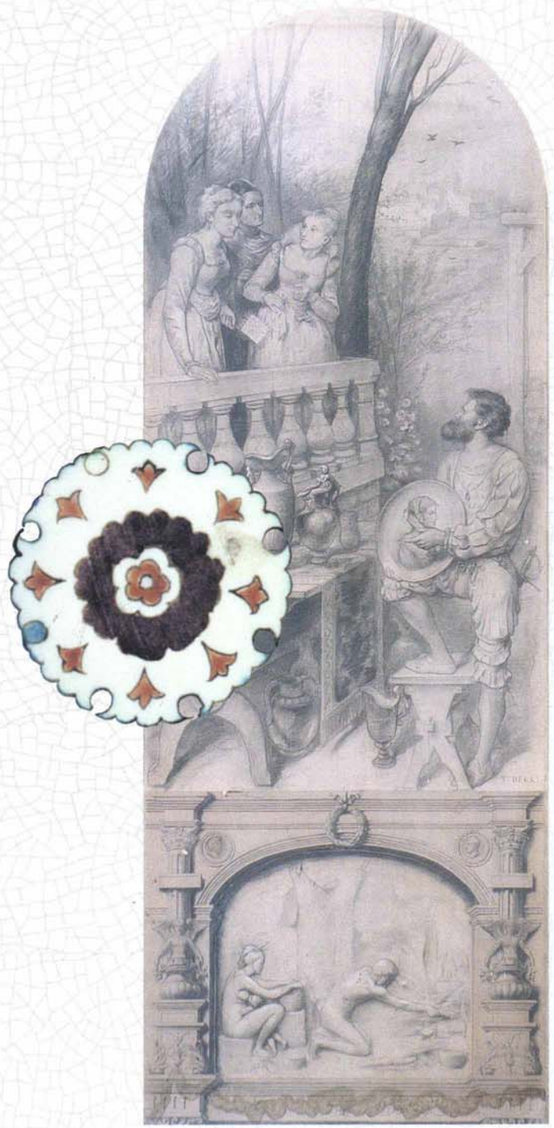
Deck also met with success the following year when he introduced metallic luster glazes, derived from Hispano-Moresque, or Andalusian, wares, at London's 1862 International Exhibition. While these vitreous, iridescent glazes were first popularized in Syria and Persia, they became inextricably linked with Spanish ceramic centers such as Malaga and Valencia. Arabic inscriptions and floral and figural motifs predominated within an elaborate overall design scheme. Deck's prize-winning example was a monumental vase copied from a model found in the Alhambra, the splendid 14th- and 15th-century Moorish palace in Granada (See *Aramco World*, May-June 1967). The vase's ornate designs were provided by Baron Davillier, a renowned scholar of Hispano-Moresque ware and a frequent advisor both to Deck and to the National Porcelain Museum at Sèvres.

The London exhibition brought Deck important official recognition: The recently established South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum), an active patron of the applied arts, bought three of Deck's works from the exhibition. Here also, Deck's brilliant colors caused widespread comment, especially the "bleu de Deck." Its "dazzling hues seemed like electric sparks," according to one source.

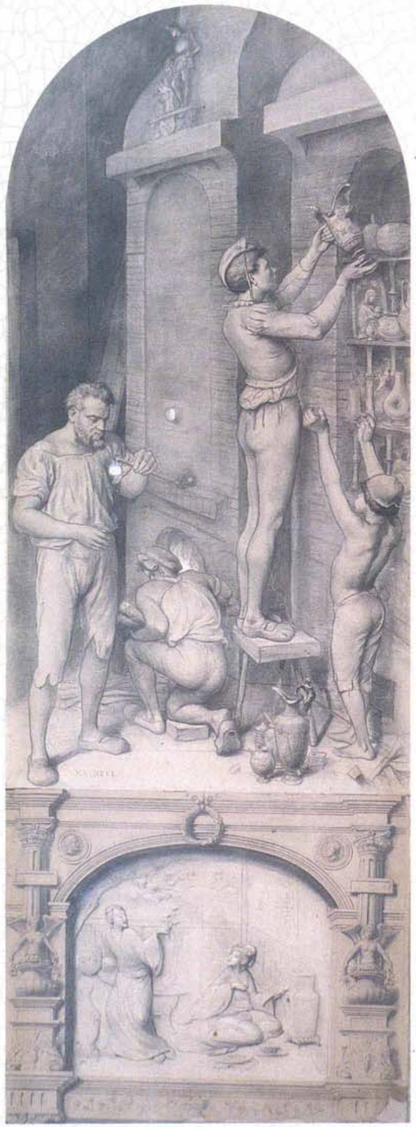


METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Then in 1863, the first year of their factory's operation, Collinot and Beaumont exhibited their own "Persian faïence" at the Union Centrale, where their work, like Deck's, was awarded a first-class medal. Both factories competed again at the Paris 1867 Exposition Universelle and were awarded silver medals. While critical comparison was inevitable, it was uncharitable of Deck to snipe that Collinot's "Persian wares were improperly and unauthentically decorated."



MUSÉE ADRIEN DUBOUCHÉ/RMN



OCTAVE ZIMMERMANN/MUSÉE D'UNTERLINDEN, COLMAR

Three window panels offer different views of Deck's ceramics workshop, as drawn by Louis Steinheil in 1878. Overlapping the left panel is a floral detail from a Deck dish at the Musée Adrien Dubouché in Limoges.

Sharing sources with Deck, Brocard revived the Islamic art of enameled and gilded glass, producing works like the footed bowl at right.

Islamic art also provided contemporary French glass artists with a new source of inspiration. Philippe-Joseph Brocard began his career as France's first art glassmaker by reviving the tedious process used to make Islamic enameled and gilded glass of the 13th and 14th centuries. Brocard, who first exhibited his work at the Paris 1867 Exposition Universelle, developed a cloisonné technique, outlining his designs in thick cells of gold or enamel paint. He shared many of Deck's sources – plates from Collinot and Beaumont's *Recueil*, Egyptian and Syrian mosque lamps and beakers in the Cluny Museum, and works of art that were part of various private collections.

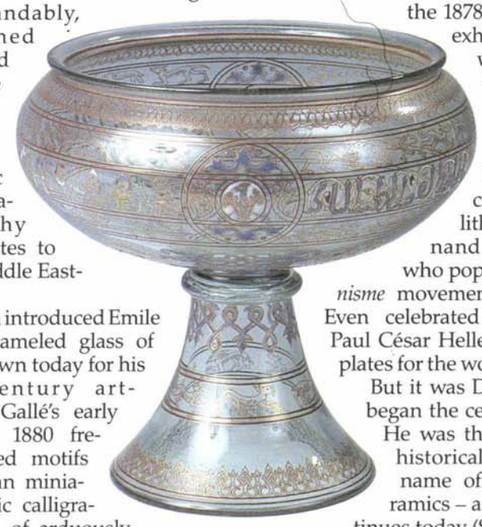
Like Deck, too, Brocard's design repertory consisted largely of floral and geometric ornament and Arabic calligraphy. But he could not read Arabic, and his calligraphy, understandably, often contained errors. It thus had only a decorative function on his glassware, lacking the intellectual or didactic element that Arabic calligraphy usually contributes to art objects of Middle Eastern provenance.

Brocard in turn introduced Emile Gallé to the enameled glass of Islam. Better known today for his turn-of-the-century art-nouveau glass, Gallé's early work of about 1880 frequently borrowed motifs from Indo-Persian miniatures and Islamic calligraphy. But instead of arduously trying to copy Arabic inscriptions which he too could not read, Gallé simply invented a fantastic Islamicate French-language alphabet with which he inscribed mottoes on his glass in bright colors.

Deck explored other cultures later in his career. In 1884, he exhibited flambé glazes in imitation of Chinese *sang de boeuf*. Deck's celadon glaze, used over designs incised in the body of the ceramic, also referred to Chinese origins, as did his many experiments with porcelain and with decorative craquelure effects. The asymmetrical designs and motifs of Japanese ceramics that were exhibited at Paris's 1878 Exposition Universelle were promptly reflected in Deck's offerings in the 1880 Union Centrale exhibition. No less exotic, Venice's glittering Byzantine mosaics inspired Deck to develop an underglaze gold to be used for background.

Because of his range of technical innovations and accomplishments, Deck was made art director of the Sèvres manufactory in 1887, the first ceramist to assume this prestigious post. In the same year, he published an exhaustive treatise called *La Faïence*. Half-historical, half-technical, it testified to Deck's debt to the potters of Islam. Deck continued to develop and improve the ceramic art at Sèvres, while his brother Xavier was charged with running the Paris workshop. After his untimely death only four years later, Deck was buried in Montparnasse Cemetery, beneath a tomb Xavier had appropriately decorated with floral ornament in colored faïence.

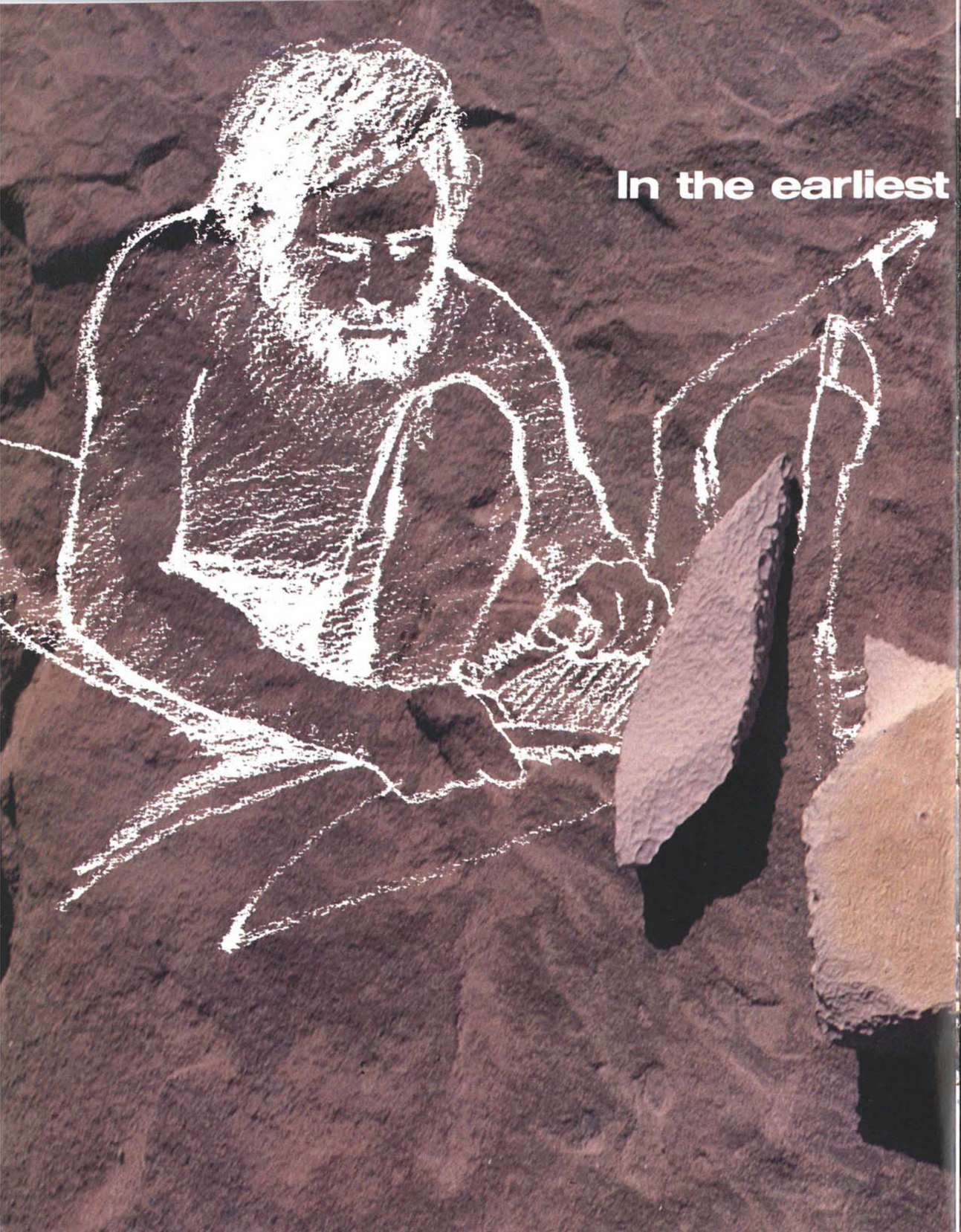
Deck's influence spread through the many artists and sculptors who worked in his studio or in collaboration with him. In the 1878 exposition, Deck exhibited wall plates with designs by, among others, ceramist Albert Anker, painter Henri Joseph Harpignies and caricaturist and lithographer Ferdinand Bracquemond, who popularized the *Japonisme* movement in French art. Even celebrated society painter Paul César Helleu once designed plates for the workshop.



MUSÉE ADRIEN DUBOUCHÉ/RMN

But it was Deck himself who began the ceramic revolution. He was the first to explore historical styles in the name of progress in ceramics – a process that continues today (See *Aramco World*, May-June 1990). Increasingly, a concern for the values and techniques of handicraft began to make itself felt in all the applied arts in his day, and that concern also continues to have repercussions in our own time. At the height of the industrial revolution, Deck returned to the artisanal tradition, laying the ground for the widespread art pottery movement of the next two generations. By the 1890's, that movement was widespread in Europe and the United States, and it had become commonplace to look to non-European prototypes for inspiration in technique and decoration. With Deck's vindication of the value of historical survivals, his work marked the beginning of a new era in faïence.

Frederica Todd Harlow is an art historian who writes and lectures on revival styles in the decorative arts.



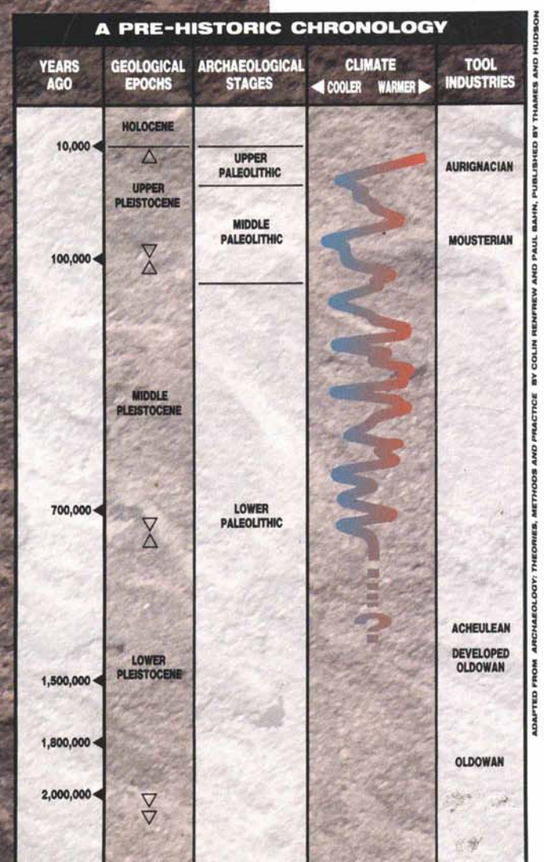
EARLY MANKIND IN ARABIA

In the earliest human expansion beyond Africa, Arabia played a pivotal role.

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY
NORMAN M. WHALEN AND DAVID W. PEASE
ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL GRIMSDALE

In the Saffaqah Valley of central Saudi Arabia, the only Acheulean site yet excavated yielded more than 11,000 stone tools. At left, the site from the top of the rock dike that parallels the valley; below left, the completed excavation.

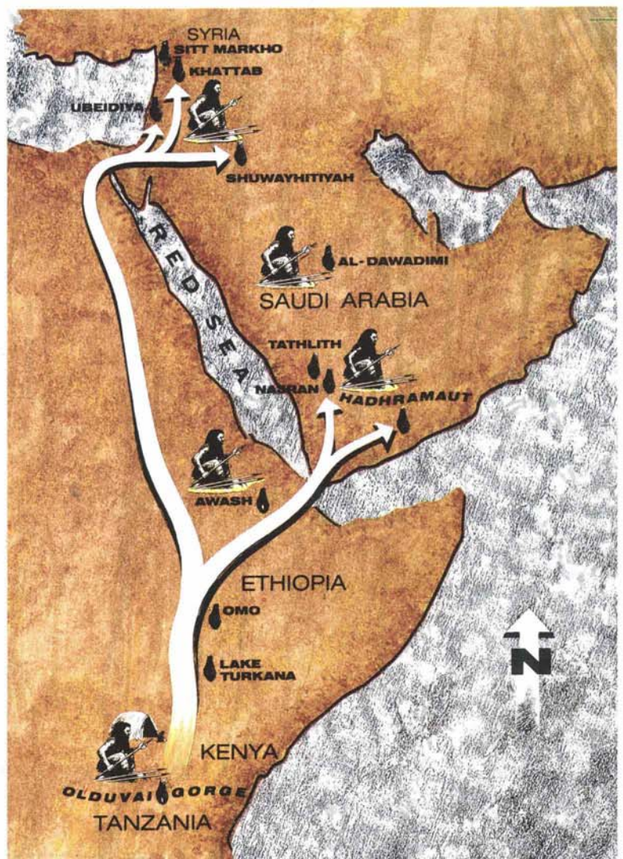
Below, two main routes postulated for the spread of *Homo erectus* beyond the confines of Africa. On previous spread, three tools fashioned from chert and found at Shuwayhitiyah, Saudi Arabia's oldest archeological site.



On a cold, windy day in February 1985, in a broad canyon in northern Saudi Arabia surrounded by high escarpments, two men walked slowly across the terrain, stooping occasionally to pick up stones from the ground.

They were American archeologists from Texas who had gone to the canyon to investigate an ancient site discovered eight years earlier. A few miles to the northeast, one could see the faint outline of the small village of Shuwayhitiyah, where these men and their Saudi colleagues had set up camp a few days before. As they walked along, intently searching the ground for artifacts, the archeologists commented on their good fortune: The stone artifacts they were collecting – man-made tools – were among the oldest ever found in Asia. With a feeling of awe, they realized that most, and perhaps all, of these artifacts had not been touched by human hands since their original makers discarded them, more than a million years in the past.

The archeological site of Shuwayhitiyah is the oldest found to date in Saudi Arabia. The 1517 separate artifacts that the binational team of archeologists removed from the site belonged to an early stone-tool tradition called the Developed Oldowan, first identified by Louis and Mary Leakey at their enormously productive digs at Olduvai Gorge, across the Red Sea in Tanzania. The age of the tools – choppers, polyhedrons, spheroids and discoids – exceeded one million years. The site, in the shape of a horseshoe almost five kilometers (three miles) long, consisted of 16 concentrations of artifacts separated by distances of 200 to 350 meters (700 to 1200 feet). The artifacts were made from quartzite, a granular form of quartz, that had eroded down from the top of the escarpments that overlooked the site.



At the southern end of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, hundreds of kilometers southwest of Shuwayhitiyah, lies the Saudi town of Najran. In 1980, an archeological survey team gathered a small collection of 34 stone tools from a wadi near the town. They, too, were made from quartzite and resembled the ones found earlier at Shuwayhitiyah. Buried in a deposit more than two meters (seven feet) deep, the artifacts came to light during sand quarrying operations that cut into the site and dislodged them onto the wadi floor, where they were discovered and collected. Despite the small number of artifacts in the sample, the tools strongly resembled those in the Developed Oldowan tradition of Africa, which suggested that they had been made during a time frame similar to that of the Shuwayhitiyah artifacts.

Shuwayhitiyah and Najran were two exceptionally old sites in Saudi Arabia. About 160 kilometers (100 miles) north of Najran was a probable third site, located on the east bank of Wadi Tathlith. Its artifacts represented a very early stage of another industry called Acheulean, but without the usual array of hand axes, cleavers and picks characteristic of an Acheulean collection. Although its artifacts differed from the other two, the Tathlith site could be as old as Shuwayhitiyah or Najran, since Early Acheulean stone tools were apparently made at the same time as Developed Oldowan ones at many sites in East Africa.

These three sites in Saudi Arabia apparently date from an early part of a geological epoch known as the Pleistocene, which began more than two million years ago and ended within the past ten thousand years. It was a time when huge ice masses covered the northern parts of Europe and North America in episodes called *glacials*, only to melt away during warmer intervals referred to as *interglacials*. No one knows how many glacials and interglacials crosscut the Pleistocene; deep-sea cores suggest that there were at least 10. And while ice sheets did not cover Arabia, climate changes certainly affected the whole region (See *Aramco World*, March-April 1980). During glacial episodes, Arabia became cooler and drier. In warmer interglacials, the climate became milder and more humid, and therefore more attractive for human occupation. Climatic variation during the Pleistocene thus had a direct impact on the number and location of early sites.

The discovery of these very early sites in Saudi Arabia raised some perplexing questions: Who were the people who made these tools? Were they the first ones to migrate to Arabia? Where did they come from? When? And what route did they take?

To answer those questions we must turn to Africa, where the earliest humans, a species known as *Homo habilis*, first appeared a little more than two million years ago. These remote ancestors of ours, with brains only half the size of our own, lived mainly in eastern and southern Africa at such places as Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania, Lake Turkana in Kenya, the Omo and Awash Valleys of Ethiopia and the Transvaal of South Africa. A little more than a million and a half years ago, a larger and more advanced hominid called *Homo erectus* made its debut. This species, with greater physical and intellectual powers, was the first true explorer – more daring, more enterprising and more determined than its predecessors. It was *Homo erectus* who introduced new tool forms into the artifact inventory of the forerunner species, gradually replacing Developed Oldowan types with new Acheulean forms.

Equally important, it was *Homo erectus* who, after expanding into other parts of Africa, turned eastward and crossed over into Asia, marking the first time humans had left their continent of origin to set foot in a continent totally uninhabited. This initial migration into Asia by *Homo erectus* was an epochal event of surpassing importance, the forerunner of all future feats of exploration by man, which culminated in the peopling of the entire planet.

Two routes were available for *Homo erectus* to enter Asia. One entailed a long land journey down the Nile and across the Sinai into northern Arabia; the other involved a brief water crossing at the Bab al-Mandab, the narrow strait at the entrance to the Red Sea that separates Africa from southern Arabia. In either case, Arabia would have been the doorway to the entire Asian continent.

Since the second of these two routes was shorter and more direct than the land passage along the Nile, we feel that this was probably the direction taken by small bands of *Homo erectus* on their first migration into Asia about a million and a half years ago. Thus, the tool sites at Najran and Tathlith may be vestiges of those early migrations, as may the five recently discovered pre-Acheulean sites in the Hadhramaut mountains of southern Yemen.

On the other hand, if *Homo erectus* first entered Asia by way of northern Arabia, Shuwayhitiyah could represent a surviving remnant of that journey, as could the other early sites of Ubeidiya in Palestine and Sitt Markho and Khattab in Syria.

In either case, whether migration proceeded by way of the north or the south, it was necessary to cross Arabia first before continuing further. For that reason, the oldest sites in the world, next to those in Africa, should be found in Arabia, which occupied

At al-Dawadimi, above, Whalen and Dr. Ghanim Wahida, professor of archeology at King Sa'ud University, work to define the stratigraphic profile of the dig. At far right, the completed excavation seen from the dike.

a pivotal position astride the path of early intercontinental migration in Lower Pleistocene times.

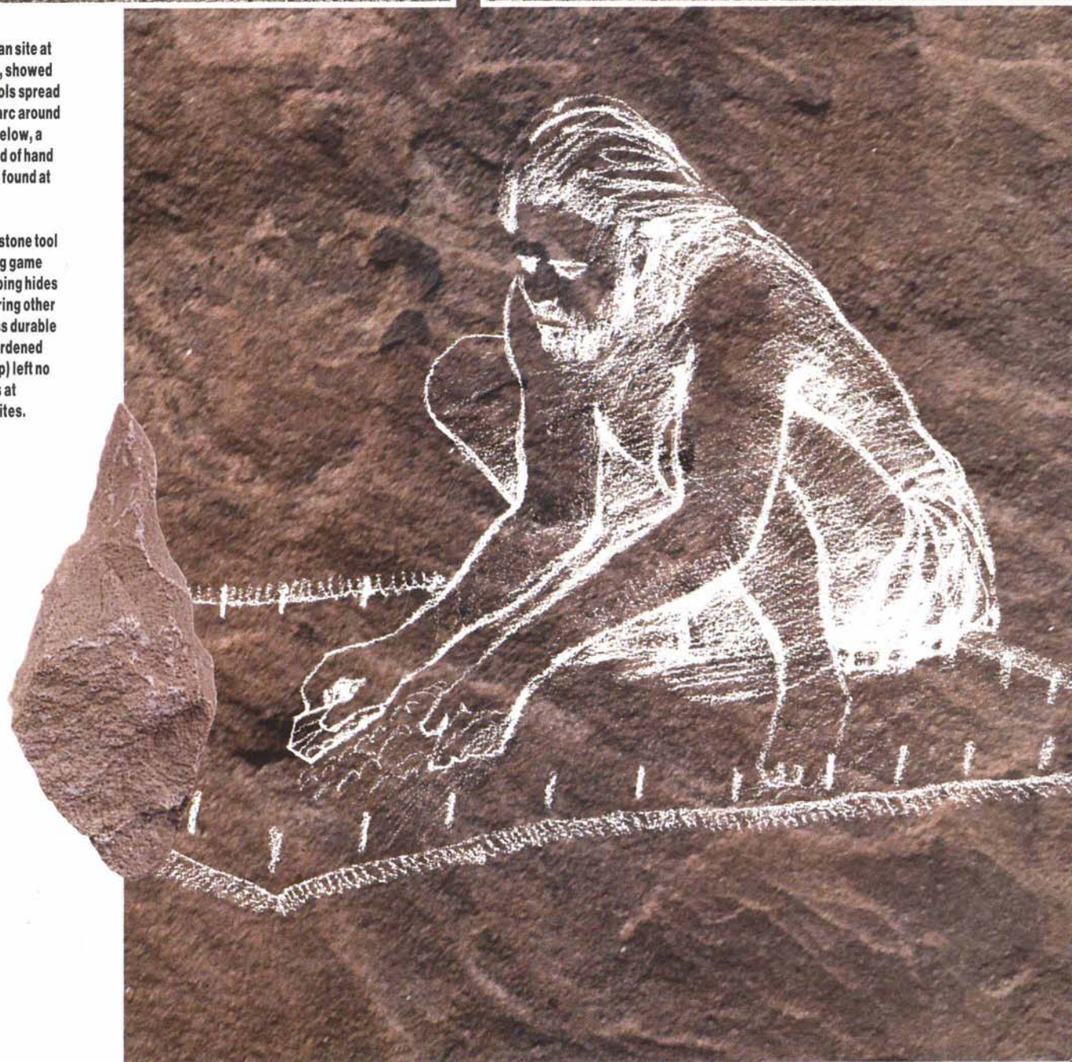
While Developed Oldowan sites more than a million years old are rare, Acheulean sites are more common – and with good reason. The Acheulean tradition lasted longer than any tool industry in human prehistory. It persisted almost a million and a half years, beginning while the Developed Oldowan tradition was still in place and ending only about 150,000 years ago. Its longevity accounts for its ubiquity.

In Arabia, some Acheulean sites were found by Aramco geologists between the 1930's and 1950's during petroleum surveys; others were identified by members of the US Geological Survey while mapping Saudi Arabia and defining its geology. The majority were discovered by small teams of archeologists, mostly Saudis and their American colleagues, during the five-year archeology survey program (1976-80) sponsored by the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums of the Ministry of Education (See *Aramco World*, November-December 1990). Others surfaced in subsequent years during more intensive local surveys, excavations and stabilization projects.

To date, nearly 200 Acheulean sites of Middle Pleistocene age have been recorded in Saudi Arabia. They occur with highest frequency in the central, western and southwestern provinces, and are fewer in the east toward the Gulf coast. They consist of artifacts found on the descending surface of alluvial fans – delta-shaped deposits of material left by rivers of bygone times – or on terraces, exposed by wind or water erosion, overlooking a wadi, spring or Pleistocene lake (See *Aramco World*, May-June 1989). Where water was in plentiful supply, a dozen or more sites could appear, although not all were necessarily occupied at the

The Developed Olduwan site at Shuwayhitiyah, above, showed 16 concentrations of tools spread in a horseshoe-shaped arc around a flat-topped *jabal*. Below, a "trihedral" tool – a kind of hand pick used for digging – found at al- Dawadimi.

Artist's impressions of stone tool uses include skinning game (opening spread), scraping hides (right), and manufacturing other tools (next spread). Less durable tools, such as fire-hardened wooden points (on map) left no actual remains at archeological sites.



Stone Age Industries

Archeologists classify early humans' stone tools by the way they were made, and tools made using a certain type of workmanship are collectively called an "industry." Industries are named after the archeological sites where that type of tool first came to scientists' attention, so the tool industry characteristic of the Olduvai Gorge sites was called Oldowan. Successive tool industries, or traditions, each later in time, show change and development, but they overlap, and archeologists do not believe there was ever any abrupt change from one industry to another. In the Paleolithic, or Old Stone Age, the *Oldowan* industry began 2,000,000 or more years ago. The *Acheulean* appeared about 1,500,000 years ago and lasted more than a million years. The *Levalloiso-Mousterian* followed some 100,000 years ago, and the *Perigordian* and *Aurignacian* industries of the Upper Paleolithic made their first appearance about 40,000 years ago, bringing to a close the Paleolithic age.

Among the tools yielded by the al-Dawadimi excavations, left, were cleavers – hand-axes wielded as Whalen demonstrates at far left.

same time. Usually, we believe, these sites were inhabited only temporarily, as transient stations to shelter residents for a few weeks.

It has become increasingly evident that climate changes in the Pleistocene triggered population fluctuations in Arabia. These population shifts corresponded to the prevalence of moist or arid conditions in the Peninsula. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Saffaqah Valley of central Arabia. The Saffaqah Valley is oriented in an east-west direction, about 27 kilometers (17 miles) southeast of the town of al-Dawadimi. Paralleling the south side of the valley is a long, narrow natural rock dike that continues for many kilometers, sometimes projecting above the surface some 25 to 50 meters (80 to 160 feet), at other times buried underground only to surface farther on. It was caused by the extrusion of molten andesite and rhyolite rock millions of years ago that punched up through a crack in the granite floor of the valley, creating both the series of elongated hills that form the dike and the long basin that adjoins it. Where they are exposed, the hills that make up the dike vary in length from 450 meters (1500 feet) to three kilometers (two miles), and are separated from one another by approximately a kilometer (⅔ mile).

During interglacials of the Pleistocene, the area experienced increased rainfall, which created a large lake in the middle of the valley. Emptying into the lake was the flow from two waterfalls that emerged from the dike. The presence of a freshwater lake, the influx of plant and animal life that such a body of water would attract, and the availability of andesite and rhyolite from the dike itself – good raw material for making stone tools – made the Saffaqah Valley a center for prehistoric occupation. It was not surprising, then, to find 26 Acheulean sites there in 1982-83, most of them dated at least a quarter of a million years old. Twenty-five of these sites were Middle Acheulean, one a later Upper Acheulean, and one other site represented an even later tradition called Mousterian. As climate deteriorated and the lake dried up, so did the population, until finally the valley was abandoned in Mousterian times, about 50,000 years ago.

Of the 25 Middle Acheulean sites near al-Dawadimi, one was excavated by archeologists. It extended down the slopes of the dike toward the former lake. Excavators dug a trench some three meters (10 feet) wide and 11 meters (35 feet) long to a depth of more than one and a half meters (five feet), until they reached bedrock. This excavation was significant for two reasons: First, it yielded firm uranium-thorium dates that placed the site more than 200,000 years before the present.

Uranium-series dating is a method used by archeologists based on the natural, unvarying radioactive decay of uranium and its daughter products, including thorium. Because we know just how rapidly uranium decays, and because uranium isotopes are soluble in water and those of the daughter elements are not, a specialized laboratory can take as little as 100 grams (3½ ounces) of calcium carbonate from rocks found at an archeological site and, by comparing the ratios of the different elements, date the rock with an accuracy of about seven percent, under ideal circumstances. The method is widely accepted, and is especially good for ages between 50,000 and 500,000 years ago, which lie beyond the range of reliable radiocarbon dating.

The second significant result of the al-Dawadimi excavation came from analysis of the artifacts found there. There were seven clusters of highly correlated tool types, indicating that the inhabitants of the site performed seven distinct functional activities, which took place on different parts of the site at different times. Three of these were animal-related – butchering, splitting bones, perhaps to obtain nourishing marrow, and scraping hides – and three involved tool production: woodworking, bone-working and stone-tool manufacture. The seventh activity dealt with plant gathering and processing.

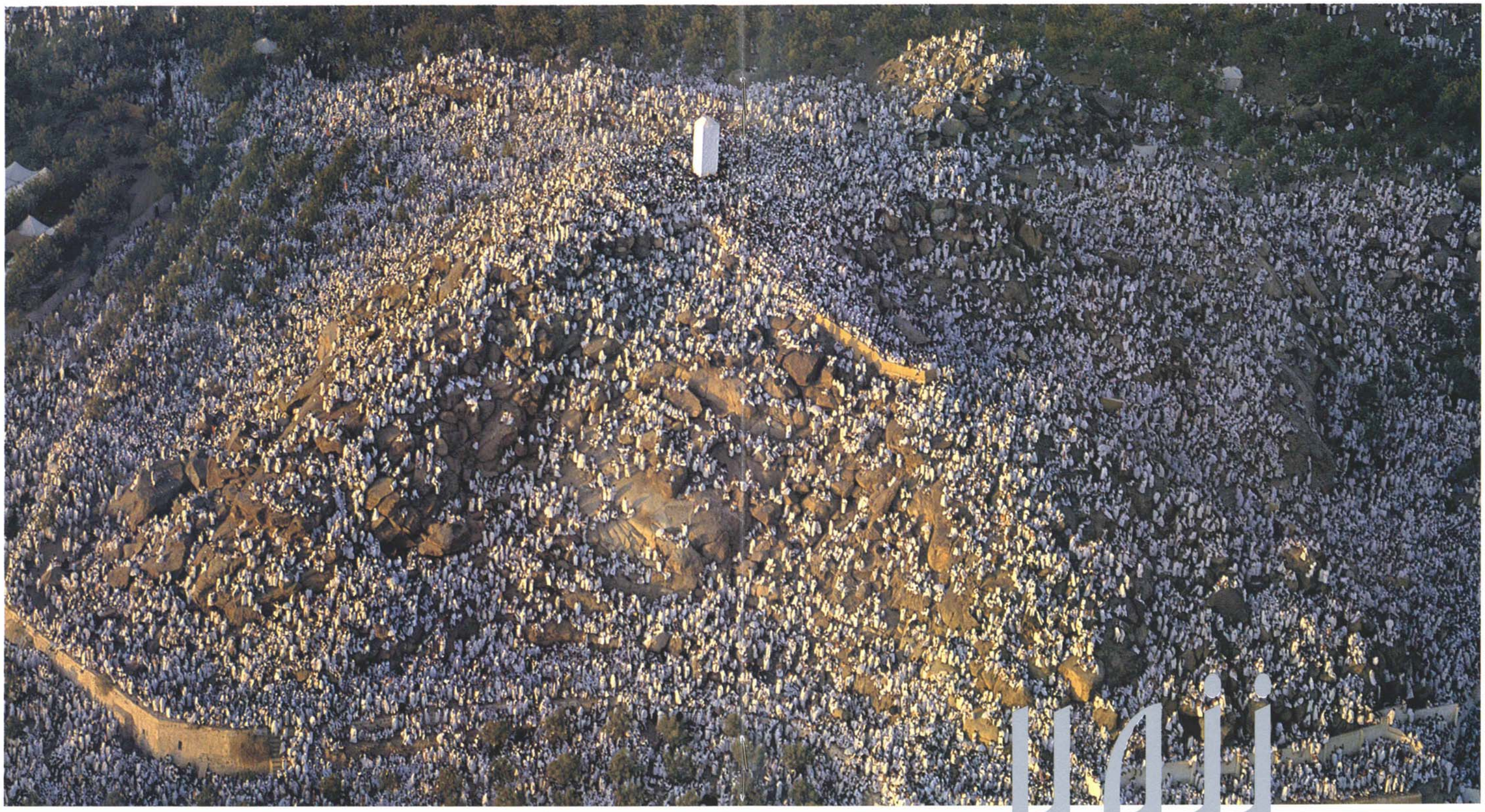
The corrosive effects of alkali in the soil at al-Dawadimi would have destroyed all organic remains such as bone, wood, or antler that may have been present. Thus, no artifacts made of these materials appeared, but we could nonetheless infer their existence from the presence of certain stone implements – burins, notches and chisels – that were used to produce them. Al-Dawadimi was the first excavation of a Pleistocene site in Saudi Arabia; it yielded a remarkable total of 11,630 Middle Acheulean artifacts.

In this brief overview, we have focused almost exclusively on the oldest sites in Arabia, those that fit into the category defined as Lower Paleolithic, or Old Stone Age. Besides those very ancient localities, sites of later periods also exist in abundance – such as the Mousterian period of the Middle Paleolithic; Upper Paleolithic and Neolithic remains; and sites dating from Greek, Roman and Islamic times. But it is in pursuit of the oldest sites that we concentrate our efforts, because we feel that Arabia stands on the threshold of a golden age of archeological research and discovery, with a vast potential in the form of sites connected with early humans, waiting to be discovered in the foothills, escarpments, wadis and deserts of the kingdom.

As archeological surveys and excavations continue and expand, Arabia, humankind's doorway to the world, may well emerge as the Olduvai Gorge of the 21st century.

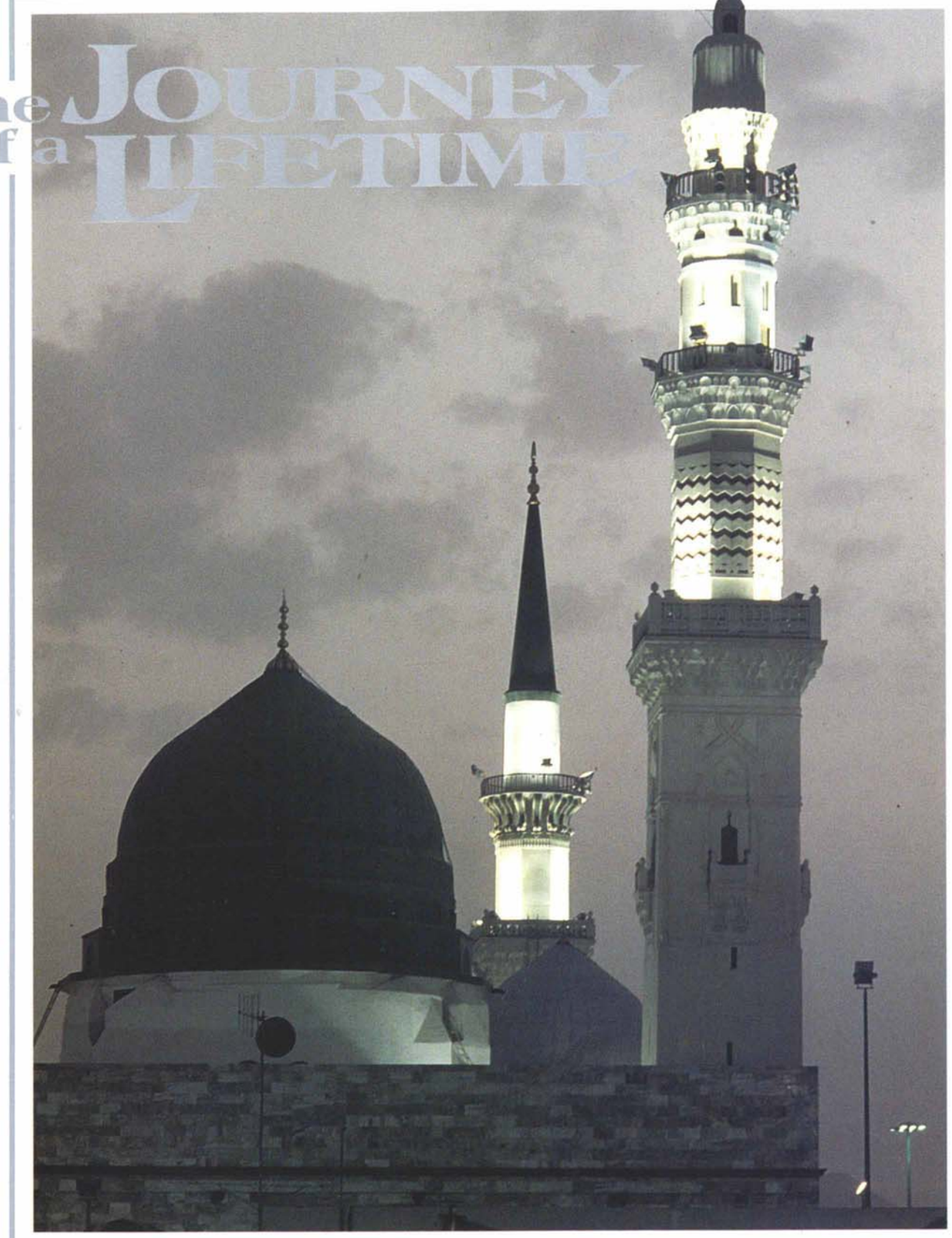
Dr. Norman M. Whalen is a professor of anthropology at Southwest Texas State University. David W. Pease is a doctoral candidate in anthropology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Under the auspices of Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education, they have worked together on four archeological expeditions in the kingdom, and a fifth in Yemen.

One fifth of humankind shares a single aspiration: to complete, at least once in a lifetime, the spiritual journey called the Hajj



WRITTEN BY NI'MAH ISMA'IL NAWWAB
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MEHMET BIBER

The Journey of a Lifetime



Previous spread: Pilgrims gather at the Mount of Mercy, where the Prophet delivered his Farewell Sermon. After completing the hajj, *many pilgrims visit the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah (above).*

For 14 centuries, countless millions of Muslims, men and women from the four corners of the earth, have made the pilgrimage to Makkah, the birthplace of Islam. In carrying out this obligation, they fulfill one of the five "pillars" of Islam, or central religious duties of the believer.

Muslims trace the recorded origins of the divinely prescribed pilgrimage to the Prophet Abraham, or Ibrahim, as he is called in Arabic. According to the Qur'an, it was Abraham who, together with Ishmael (Isma'il), built the Ka'bah, "the House of God," the focal point toward which Muslims turn in their worship five times each day. It was Abraham, too – known as *Khalil Allah*, "the friend of God" – who established the rituals of the hajj, which recall events or practices in his life and that of Hagar (Hajar) and their son Ishmael.

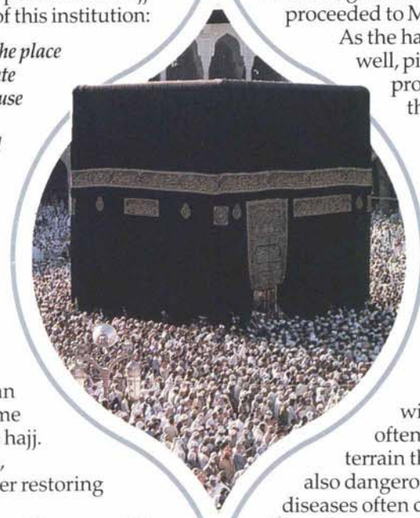
In the chapter entitled "The Pilgrimage," the Qur'an speaks of the divine command to perform the hajj and prophesies the permanence of this institution:

And when We assigned for Abraham the place
Of the House, saying: "Do not associate
Anything with Me, and purify My House
For those who go around it
And for those who stand and bow and
Prostrate themselves in worship.
And proclaim the Pilgrimage among
humankind:
They will come to you on foot and
On every camel made lean
By traveling deep, distant ravines.

By the time the Prophet Muhammad received the divine call, however (See *Aramco World*, November-December 1991), pagan practices had come to muddy some of the original observances of the hajj. The Prophet, as ordained by God, continued the Abrahamic hajj after restoring its rituals to their original purity.

Furthermore, Muhammad himself instructed the believers in the rituals of the hajj. He did this in two ways: by his own practice, or by approving the practices of his Companions. This added some complexity to the rituals, but also provided increased flexibility in carrying them out, much to the benefit of pilgrims ever since. It is lawful, for instance, to have some variation in the order in which the several rites are carried out, because the Prophet himself is recorded as having approved such actions. Thus, the rites of the hajj are elaborate, numerous and varied; aspects of some of them are highlighted below.

The hajj to Makkah is a once-in-a-lifetime obligation upon male and female adults whose health and means permit it, or, in the words of the Qur'an, upon "those who can make their way there." It is not an obligation on children, though some children do accompany their parents on this journey.



Before setting out, a pilgrim should redress all wrongs, pay all debts, plan to have enough funds for his own journey and for the maintenance of his family while he is away, and prepare himself for good conduct throughout the hajj.

When pilgrims undertake the hajj journey, they follow in the footsteps of millions before them. Nowadays hundreds of thousands of believers from over 70 nations arrive in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by road, sea and air every year, completing a journey now much shorter and in some ways less arduous than it often was in the past.

Till the 19th century, traveling the long distance to Makkah usually meant being part of a caravan. There were three main caravans: the Egyptian one, which formed in Cairo; the Iraqi one, which set out from Baghdad; and the Syrian, which, after 1453, started at Istanbul, gathered pilgrims along the way, and proceeded to Makkah from Damascus.

As the hajj journey took months if all went well, pilgrims carried with them the provisions they needed to sustain them on their trip. The caravans were elaborately supplied with amenities and security if the persons traveling were rich, but the poor often ran out of provisions and had to interrupt their journey in order to work, save up their earnings, and then go on their way. This resulted in long journeys which, in some cases, spanned ten years or more.

Travel in earlier days was filled with adventure. The roads were often unsafe due to bandit raids. The terrain the pilgrims passed through was also dangerous, and natural hazards and diseases often claimed many lives along the way. Thus, the successful return of pilgrims to their families was the occasion of joyous celebration and thanksgiving for their safe arrival.

Lured by the mystique of Makkah and Madinah, many Westerners have visited these two holy cities, on which the pilgrims converge, since the 15th century. Some of them disguised themselves as Muslims; others, who had genuinely converted, came to fulfill their duty. But all seem to have been moved by their experience, and many recorded their impressions of the journey and the rituals of the hajj in fascinating accounts. Many hajj travelogues exist, written in languages as diverse as the pilgrims themselves.

The pilgrimage takes place each year between the eighth and the 13th days of Dhu al-Hijjah, the 12th month of the Muslim lunar calendar (See *Aramco World*, July-August 1979). Its first rite is the donning of the *ihram*.

The Ka'bah, focal point of Muslims' prayers, highlights the unity of the believers.

The ihram, worn by men, is a white seamless garment made up of two pieces of cloth or toweling; one covers the body from waist to ankle and the other is thrown over the shoulder. This garb was worn by both Abraham and Muhammad. Women generally wear a simple white dress and a headcovering, but not a veil. Men's heads must be uncovered; both men and women may use an umbrella.

The ihram is a symbol of purity and of the renunciation of evil and mundane matters. It also indicates the equality of all people in the eyes of God. When the pilgrim wears his white apparel, he or she enters into a state of purity that prohibits quarreling, committing violence to man or animal and having conjugal relations. Once he puts on his hajj clothes the pilgrim cannot shave, cut his nails or wear any jewelry, and he will keep his unsewn garment on till he completes the pilgrimage.

A pilgrim who is already in Makkah starts his hajj from the moment he puts on the *ihram*. Some pilgrims coming from a distance may have entered Makkah earlier with their ihram on and may still be wearing it. The donning of the ihram is accompanied by the primary invocation of the hajj, the *talbiyah*:

Here I am, O God, at Thy Command!
Here I am at Thy Command!
Thou art without associate;
Here I am at Thy Command!
Thine are praise and grace and dominion!
Thou art without associate.

The thunderous, melodious chants of the talbiyah ring out not only in Makkah but also at other nearby sacred locations connected with the hajj.

On the first day of the hajj, pilgrims sweep out of Makkah toward Mina, a small uninhabited village east of the city. As their throngs spread through Mina, the pilgrims generally spend their time meditating and praying, as the Prophet did on his pilgrimage.

During the second day, the 9th of Dhu al-Hijjah, pilgrims leave Mina for the plain of 'Arafat for the *wuquf*, "the standing," the central rite of the hajj. As they congregate there, the pilgrims' stance and gathering reminds them of the Day of Judgment. Some of them gather at the Mount of Mercy, where the Prophet delivered his unforgettable Farewell Sermon, enunciating far-reaching religious, economic, social and political reforms. These are emotionally charged hours, which the pilgrims spend in worship and supplication. Many shed tears as they ask God to forgive them. On this sacred spot, they reach the culmination of their religious lives as they feel the presence and closeness of a merciful God.

The first Englishwoman to perform the hajj, Lady Evelyn Cobbold, described in 1934 the feelings pilgrims experience during the wuquf at 'Arafat. "It would require a master pen to describe the scene, poignant in its intensity, of that great concourse of humanity of which I was one small unit, completely lost to their surroundings in a fervour of religious enthusiasm. Many of the pilgrims had tears streaming down their cheeks; others raised their faces to the starlit sky that had witnessed this drama so often in the past centuries. The shining eyes, the passionate appeals, the pitiful hands outstretched in prayer moved me in a way that nothing had ever done before, and I felt caught up in a strong wave of spiritual exaltation. I was one with the rest of the pilgrims in a sublime act of complete surrender to the Supreme Will which is Islam."

She goes on to describe the closeness pilgrims feel to the Prophet while standing in 'Arafat: "...as I stand beside the granite pillar, I feel I am on sacred ground. I see with my mind's eye the Prophet delivering that last address, over thirteen hundred years ago, to the weeping multitudes. I visualize the many preachers who have spoken to countless millions who have assembled on the vast plain below; for this is the culminating scene of the Great Pilgrimage."

The Prophet is reported to have asked God to pardon the sins of pilgrims who "stood" at 'Arafat, and was granted his wish. Thus, the hopeful pilgrims prepare to leave this plain joyfully, feeling reborn without sin and intending to turn over a new leaf.

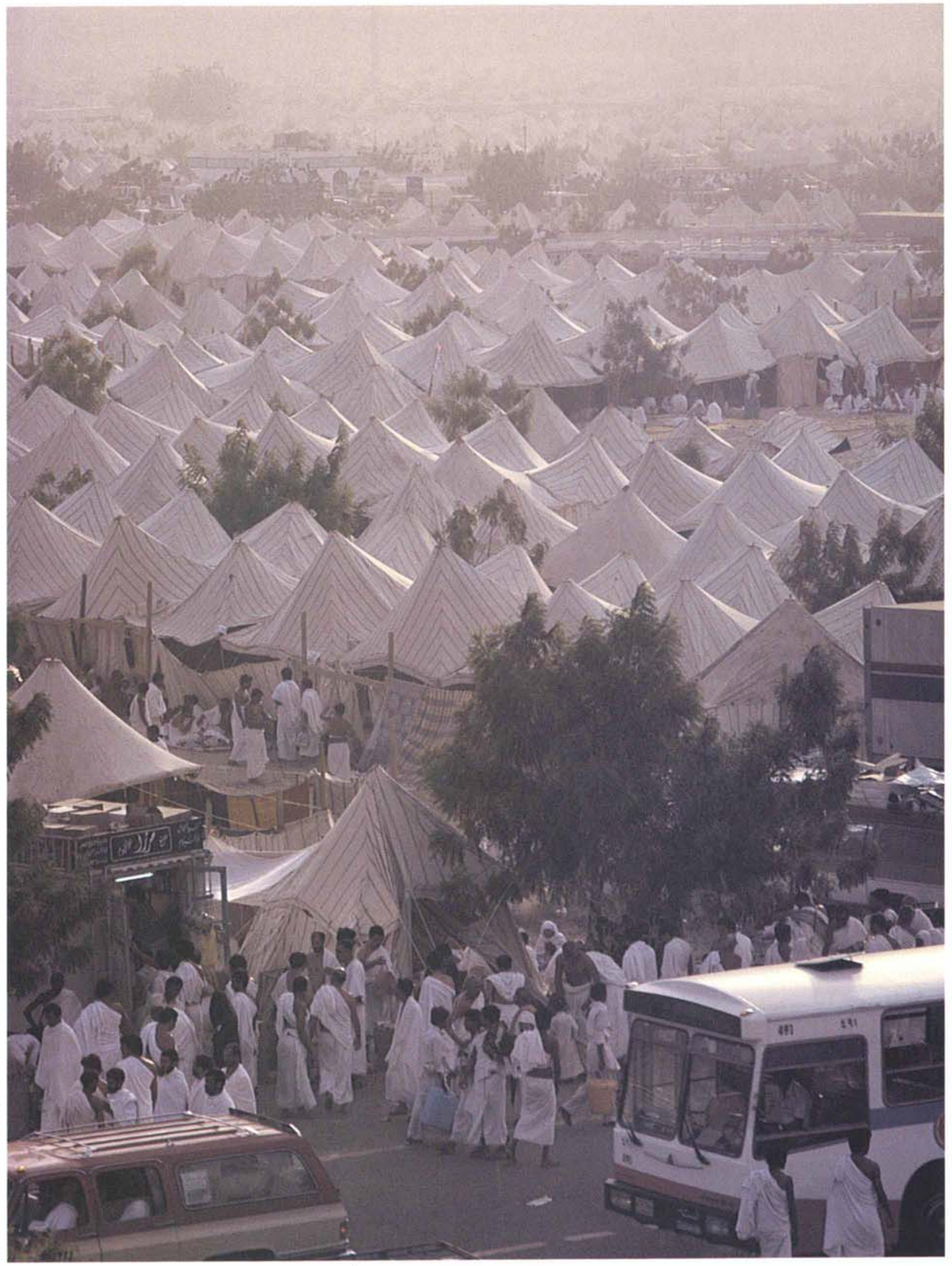
Just after sunset, the mass of pilgrims proceeds to Muzdalifah, an open plain about halfway between 'Arafat and Mina. There they first pray and then collect a fixed number of chickpea-sized pebbles to use on the following days.

Before daybreak on the third day, pilgrims move en masse from Muzdalifah to Mina. There they cast at white pillars the pebbles they have previously collected. According to some traditions, this practice is associated with the Prophet Abraham. As pilgrims throw seven pebbles at each of these pillars, they remember the story of Satan's attempt to persuade Abraham to disregard God's command to sacrifice his son.

Throwing the pebbles is symbolic of humans' attempt to cast away evil and vice, not once but seven times – the number seven symbolizing infinity.

Following the casting of the pebbles, most pilgrims sacrifice a goat, sheep or some other animal. They give

Pilgrims from Indonesia are among more than 70 nationalities that come to Makkah.



Saudi Arabia's government performs prodigies to provide services to as many as two million pilgrims each year.

the meat to the poor after, in some cases, keeping a small portion for themselves.

This rite is associated with Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son in accordance with God's wish. It symbolizes the Muslim's willingness to part with what is precious to him, and reminds us of the spirit of Islam, in which submission to God's will plays a leading role. This act also reminds the pilgrim to share worldly goods with those who are less fortunate, and serves as an offer of thanksgiving to God.

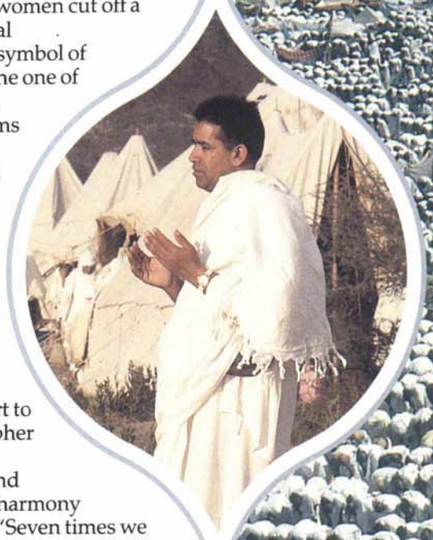
As the pilgrims have, at this stage, finished a major part of the hajj, they are now allowed to shed their ihram and put on everyday clothes. On this day Muslims around the world share the happiness the pilgrims feel and join them by performing identical, individual sacrifices in a worldwide celebration of 'Id al-Adha, "the Festival of Sacrifice." Men either shave their heads or clip their hair, and women cut off a symbolic lock, to mark their partial deconsecration. This is done as a symbol of humility. All proscriptions, save the one of conjugal relations, are now lifted.

Still sojourning in Mina, pilgrims visit Makkah to perform another essential rite of the hajj: the *tawaf*, the seven-fold circling of the Ka'bah, with a prayer recited during each circuit. Their circumambulation of the Ka'bah, the symbol of God's oneness, implies that all human activity must have God at its center. It also symbolizes the unity of God and man.

Thomas Abercrombie, a convert to Islam and a writer and photographer for *National Geographic Magazine,* performed the hajj in the 1970's and described the sense of unity and harmony pilgrims feel during the circling: "Seven times we circled the shrine," he wrote, "repeating the ritual devotions in Arabic: 'Lord God, from such a distant land I have come unto Thee.... Grant me shelter under Thy throne.' Caught up in the whirling scene, lifted by the poetry of the prayers, we orbited God's house in accord with the atoms, in harmony with the planets."

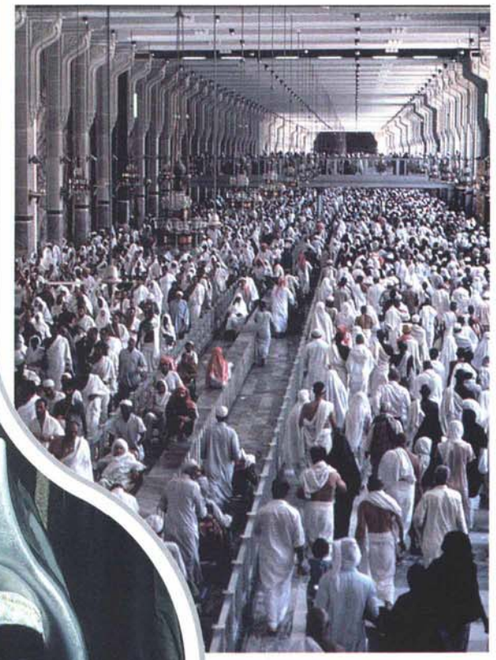
While making their circuits pilgrims may kiss or touch the Black Stone. This oval stone, first mounted in a silver frame late in the seventh century, has a special place in the hearts of Muslims as, according to some traditions, it is the sole remnant of the original structure built by Abraham and Ishmael. But perhaps the single most important reason for kissing the stone is that the Prophet did so.

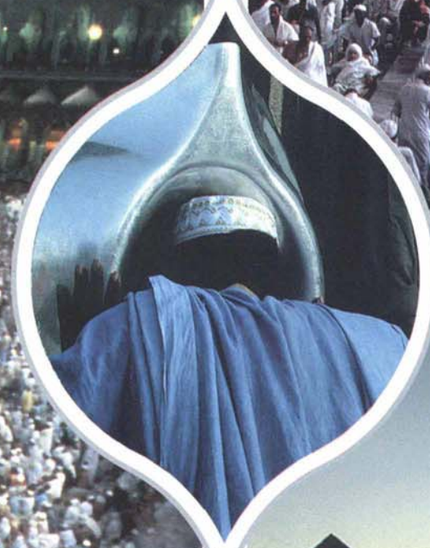
No devotional significance whatsoever is attached to the stone, for it is not, nor has ever been, an object of worship. The second caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, made this crystal clear when, on kissing the stone

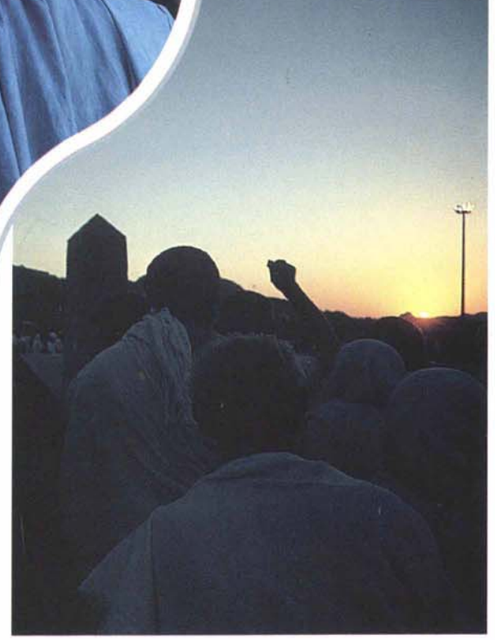


S.M. AMIN

Bowing in submission to God, thousands of pilgrims (above) pray on a street at 'Arafat. The ihram *they wear (inset) is a symbol of their equality.*

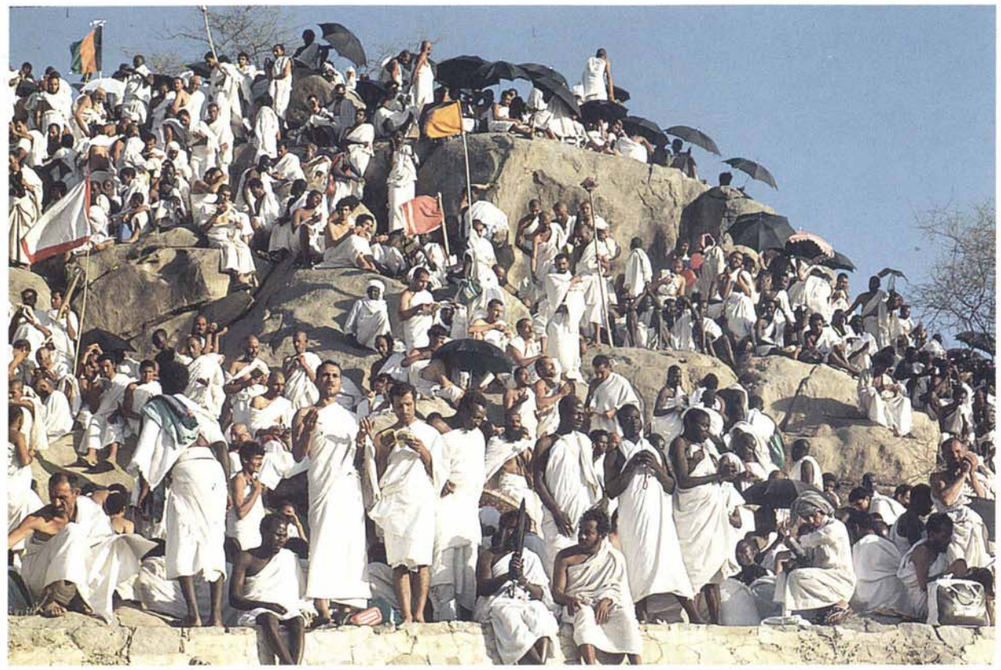


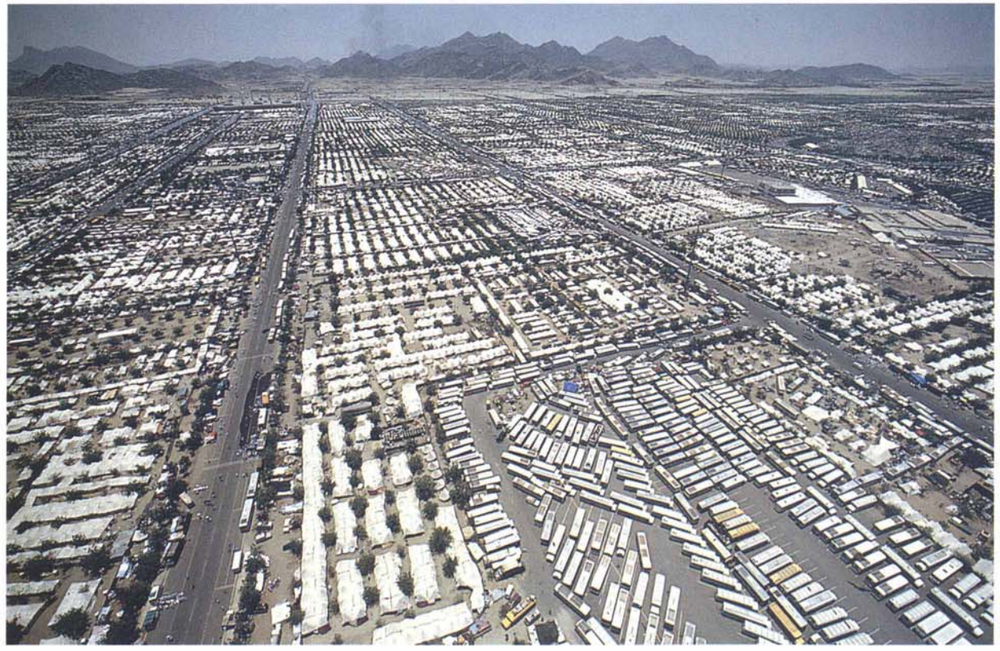




In the tawaf, *pilgrims circle the Ka'bah seven times, reciting a prayer during each circuit; they may also kiss the silver-framed Black Stone (inset) in imitation of the Prophet.*

"The running" (upper photo) commemorates Hagar's frantic search for water for her son Ishmael. At Mina (lower), pilgrims stone pillars in a ritual that symbolizes the rejection of evil.





In the central rite of the hajj *(upper photo), pilgrims "stand" at 'Arafat in worship and supplication. For a few days each year (lower), tent cities with a population the size of Barcelona's spring up in the pilgrimage sites near Makkah.*

himself in emulation of the Prophet, he proclaimed: "I know that you are but a stone, incapable of doing good or harm. Had I not seen the Messenger of God kiss you – may God's blessing and peace be upon him – I would not kiss you."

After completing the tawaf, pilgrims pray, preferably at the Station of Abraham, the site where Abraham stood while he built the Ka'bah. Then they drink of the water of Zamzam.

Another, and sometimes final, rite is the *sa'y*, or "the running." This is a reenactment of a memorable episode in the life of Hagar, who was taken into what the Qur'an calls the "uncultivable valley" of Makkah, with her infant son Ishmael, to settle there.

The sa'y commemorates Hagar's frantic search for water to quench Ishmael's thirst. She ran back and forth seven times between two rocky hillocks, al-Safa and al-Marwah, until she found the sacred water known as Zamzam. This water, which sprang forth miraculously under Ishmael's tiny feet, is now enclosed in a marble chamber near the Ka'bah.

These rites performed, the pilgrims are completely deconsecrated: They may resume all normal activities. According to the social customs of some countries, pilgrims can henceforth proudly claim the title of *al-Hajj* or *Hajji*.

They now return to Mina, where they stay up to the 12th or 13th day of Dhu al-Hijjah. There they throw their remaining pebbles at each of the pillars in the manner either practiced or approved by the Prophet. They then take their leave of the friends they have made during the Hajj. Before leaving Makkah, however, pilgrims usually make a final tawaf round the Ka'bah to bid farewell to the Holy City.

Usually pilgrims either precede or follow the hajj, "the greater pilgrimage," with the *'umrah*, "the lesser pilgrimage," which is sanctioned by the Qur'an and was performed by the Prophet. The 'umrah, unlike the hajj, takes place only in Makkah itself and can be performed at any time of the year. The ihram, talbiyah and the restrictions required by the state of consecration are equally essential in the 'umrah, which also shares three other rituals with the hajj: the tawaf, sa'y and shaving or clipping the hair. The observance of the 'umrah by pilgrims and visitors symbolizes veneration for the unique sanctity of Makkah.

Before or after going to Makkah, pilgrims also avail themselves of the opportunity provided by the hajj or the 'umrah to visit the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, the second holiest city in Islam. Here, the Prophet lies buried in a simple grave under the green dome of the mosque. The visit to Madinah is not obligatory, as it is not part of the hajj or 'umrah, but the city – which welcomed Muhammad when he migrated there from Makkah (See *Aramco World*, November-December 1991) – is rich in moving memories and historical sites that are evocative of him as a prophet and statesman.

In this city, loved by Muslims for centuries, people still feel the presence of the Prophet's spirit. Muhammad Asad, an Austrian Jew who converted to Islam in 1926 and made five pilgrimages between 1927 and 1932, comments on this aspect of the city:

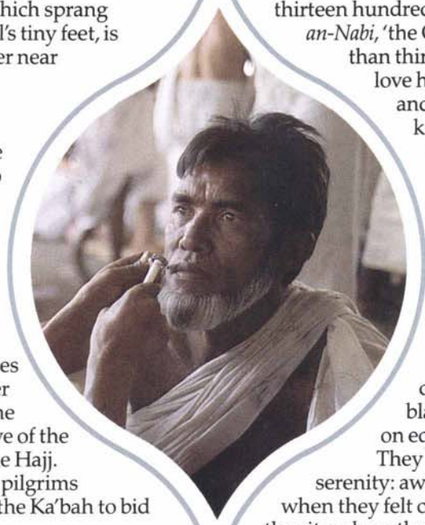
"Even after thirteen centuries [the Prophet's] spiritual presence is almost as alive here as it was then. It was only because of him that the scattered group of villages once called Yathrib became a city and has been loved by all Muslims down to this day as no city anywhere else in the world has ever been loved. It has not even a name of its own: for more than thirteen hundred years it has been called *Madinat an-Nabi*, 'the City of the Prophet.' For more than thirteen hundred years, so much love has converged here that all shapes and movements have acquired a kind of family resemblance, and all differences of appearance find a tonal transition into a common harmony."

As pilgrims of diverse races and tongues return to their homes, they carry with them cherished memories of Abraham, Ishmael, Hagar, and Muhammad. They will always remember that universal concourse, where poor and rich, black and white, young and old, met on equal footing.

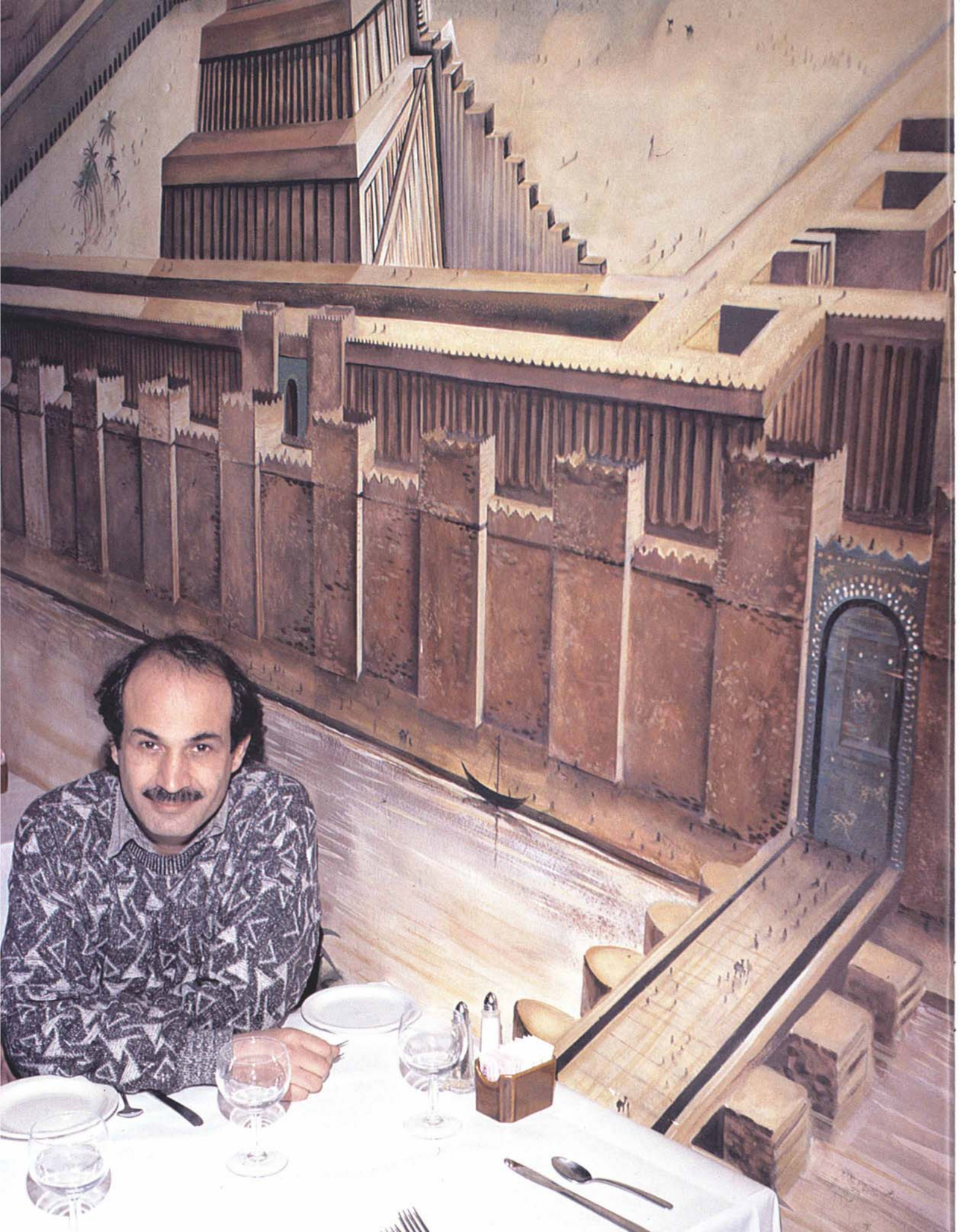
They return with a sense of awe and serenity: awe for their experience at 'Arafat, when they felt closest to God as they stood on the site where the Prophet delivered his sermon during his first and last pilgrimage; serenity for having shed their sins on that plain, and being thus relieved of such a heavy burden. They also return with a better understanding of the conditions of their brothers in Islam. Thus is born a spirit of caring for others and an understanding of their own rich heritage that will last throughout their lives.

The pilgrims go back radiant with hope and joy, for they have fulfilled God's ancient injunction to humankind to undertake the pilgrimage. Above all, they return with a prayer on their lips: May it please God, they pray, to find their hajj acceptable, and may what the Prophet said be true of their own individual journey: "There is no reward for a pious pilgrimage but Paradise."

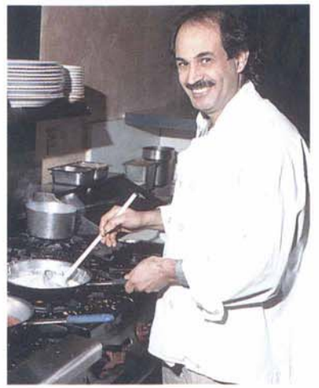
Ni'mah Isma'il Nawwab writes on Arabian history, customs and crafts from Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.



Shaving or cutting the hair marks pilgrims' partial deconsecration.



BLENDING FLAVORS



Yahya Salih doesn't know whether his skills as a chef would be appreciated in his native Mosul, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in northern Iraq. But he has no doubts about San Francisco, where his two popular restaurants feature a dazzling mixture of Mesopotamian and Californian cooking.

The *San Francisco Chronicle*'s food critics last year rated Salih one of the top five chefs in that restaurant-crazed city. His culinary skills have also earned glowing reviews in national magazines like *Travel and Leisure.*

As for recognition in his homeland, however, even his mother – who taught Salih his basic cooking skills – wouldn't have been impressed. "She was pleased that I went to California and got my degree in industrial design. Cooking – well, it wasn't something she thought a man should do," he says with a sigh.

The amiable Salih, now 40, came to the United States 16 years ago, and chose San Francisco because his older brother Kareem had settled there. His first job was washing dishes at an Indian restaurant, but soon he was cooking. Once enrolled at San Francisco State University, Salih continued to work in restaurants to pay his tuition – and because he loved to cook.

But while Salih was working as chef at the Balboa Cafe, James Beard, guru of American cuisine, dropped by to sample his wares and complimented him, and his talents were noticed by famed restaurateur Jeremiah Tower.

"Tower encouraged me," Salih says. "He liked what I did with sautés, and my blending of Middle Eastern and California flavors. *I* liked it when people said, 'Wow! What's that?'" One creation that drew that reaction was a potato stuffed with lamb, vegetables and herbs.

So when Salih won his degree in industrial design, he thought only briefly about working in that field. What he really wanted to do was cook and, ultimately, run his own restaurant.

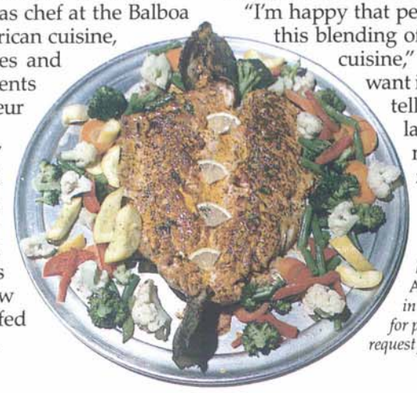
In 1987 he got his chance. Borrowing on credit cards, he opened "YaYa Cuisine," a small eatery south of Market Street. Within months, food critics were talking about his beautifully presented Mesopotamian dishes and their colorful sauces.

Today his menus include a *fattoosh* salad of herbs, eggplant, cucumbers and tomatoes, and a *perdaplau* – a "curtained" or covered rice pilav – made with chicken, almonds, raisins, cardamom and cloves, served in a filo crust with a raspberry sauce. Then there's his version of the traditional Iraqi grilled fish, or *mazgoof* – a steelhead salmon grilled over mesquite – and a *klecha*, a date-stuffed ravioli with walnut sauce, garnished with julienned roasted red-pepper strips.

Salih isn't afraid to experiment. His grilled Japanese eggplant with pomegranate sauce – "my own creation" – is mouth-watering.

The first YaYa's did so well that he opened a second one last year on the edge of Golden Gate Park. This restaurant features tiled arches and a large mural of Hammurabi's walled Babylon.

"I'm happy that people have responded so well to this blending of Mesopotamian and California cuisine," Salih said. "But what I really want is for my restaurants and food to tell about the culture of my homeland. So many people here have no idea about the great civilizations of the Middle East. In my small way, I'm doing something to correct that." ⊕

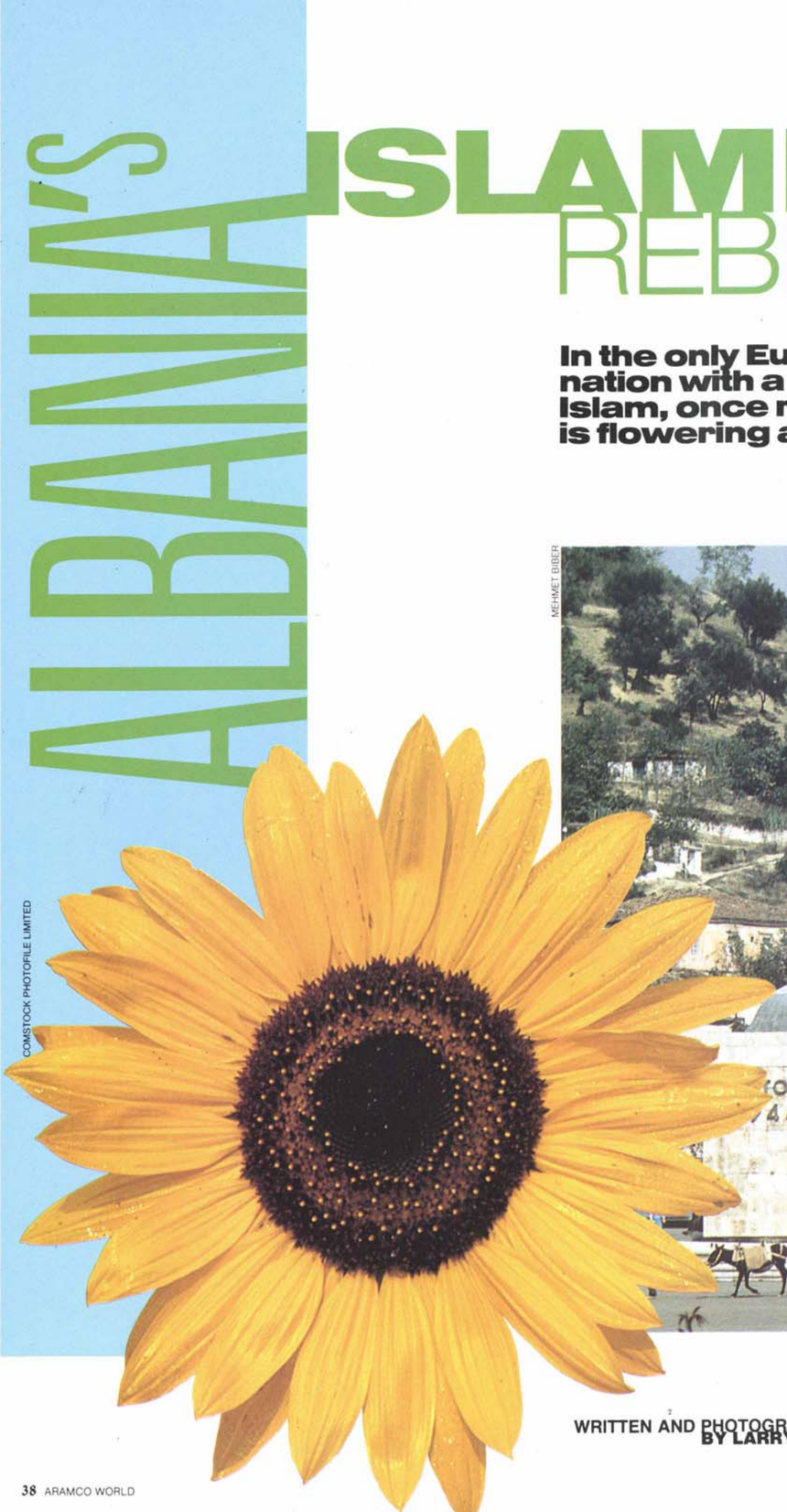


Brian Clark, a frequent contributor to Aramco World, *free-lances from his base in Washington state. Yahya Salih's recipes for perdaplau and klecha are available on request from the editors of* Aramco World.

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRIAN CLARK

ALBANIA'S ISLAMIC REBIRTH

In the only European nation with a Muslim majority, Islam, once repressed, is flowering again.



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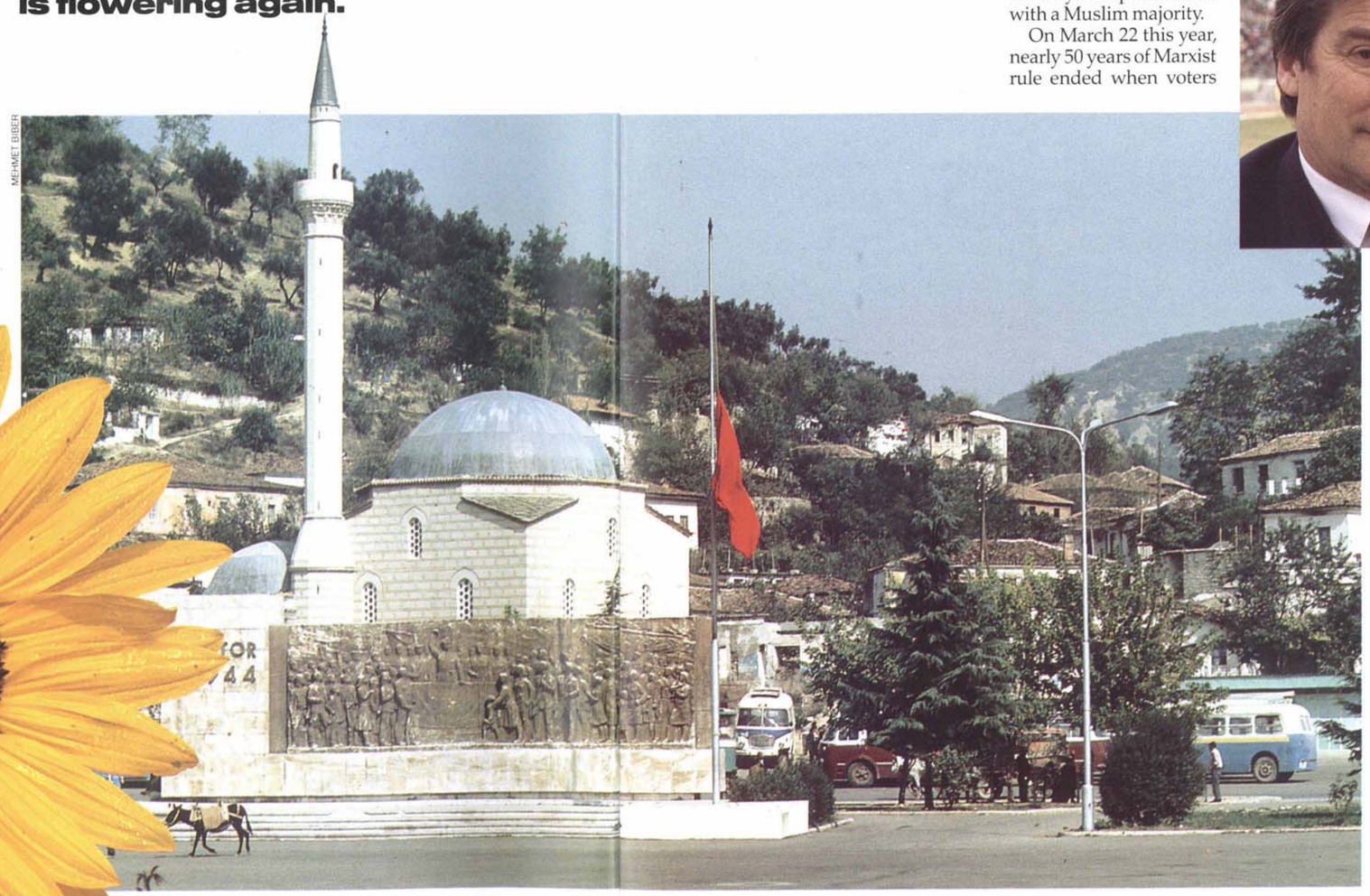


MEHMET BIBER

Religion and national pride stand together in the main square of Berat, in south central Albania. The mosque is again the site of regular prayers after 25 years of silence; the red-and-black Albanian flag flies permanently at half-staff beside a war memorial. Cardiologist-president Sali Berisha (above) hopes to lead the country toward a future different from its past.

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY LARRY LUXNER

One Friday midday several months ago, hundreds of devout Muslims crowded into the Ethem Bey mosque in downtown Tiranë for Albania's first legal Muslim prayer service in 24 years. Outside, some 15,000 onlookers listened in amazement as the long-forgotten call of the muezzin echoed through the city's streets.

The scene would have been unthinkable in Albania only five years ago. But ever since the collapse of Communism throughout the nations of Eastern Europe, scenarios once unthinkable seem to be unfolding almost daily in Albania, the only European nation with a Muslim majority.

On March 22 this year, nearly 50 years of Marxist rule ended when voters overwhelmingly chose a Muslim cardiologist, Sali Berisha, as president – the first democratically elected leader in Albanian history.

"We want to build a society of free enterprise, a state built on law with full respect for human rights, and we want to see our people and our nation integrated into Europe," Berisha told reporters during a pre-election rally last February at Tiranë's Qemal Stafa Stadium.

At that rally, thousands of students cheered as shaggy-haired stand-up comedians told anti-Communist jokes and Elvis Presley's "Jailhouse Rock" boomed from the loudspeakers. Only three years earlier, long hair or rock music were themselves grounds for arrest.

So, too, was admitted belief in God – and that in a nation where an official census taken in 1945, the year after the Communists came to power, showed that 72 percent of Albanians professed Islam, 17 percent Orthodox Christianity and 10 percent Roman Catholicism.

Yet until 1991, few of the country's 3.2 million inhabitants dared to openly profess anything but allegiance to the Albanian Workers' Party, which had dominated every aspect of life since its formation during World War II by the late Marxist dictator Enver Hoxha.

Throughout their long history, the tough, proud inhabitants of this small Balkan nation – descendants of the Illyrians, an Indo-European people whose orgins go back to the late Brozne Age – have rarely enjoyed political or religious freedom.

Archeological excavations at Butrint, along the Adriatic Sea near Albania's border with Greece, show that the first group to leave its mark on the country was the Kaon tribe, which lived in the area from around 800 to 600 BC. Albania, or Illyria, was subsequently invaded by the Greeks, the Romans, the Byzantines – around the 11th century of our era – and finally by the Turks. A beautifully preserved Roman amphitheater at Butrint dates from the second century. Nearby are Ottoman tombstones carved with Arabic script and dating from the 1400's.

Sulejman Dashi, a Tiranë architect specializing in restoration of medieval structures, says the country's oldest mosque was built in 1380 in the town of Berat, around the time the Ottoman Empire

began setting its sights on Albania. In Korçë, a town near the Greek border, one of Albania's oldest Muslim sites can be found: the mosque of Ilias Mirahori, constructed in 1494.

"My father and my mother were Muslims," the architect says. "When I was a child, we went to the mosque. My grandfather taught us the Qur'an."

According to Dashi, some 800 mosques are scattered around Albania, as well as 360 other Muslim sites. One of the most important is located in the picturesque mountain town of Krujë, 20 kilometers (12½ miles) north of Tiranë.

Dating from 1779, this remote mosque is accessible only by walking along a narrow path from the castle of Skanderbeg – Albania's 15th-century national hero – and through a village where all the houses are hewn from stone.

"The mosque of Krujë has a roof, not a cupola; in Albania you can find only two kinds of mosques: ones with a cupola or dome, and ones with a roof," Dashi explains. "Those with domes have a portico before the entrance, and usually a minaret on the left. In mosques with roofs, the sanctuary is rectangular, not square."

The architect is restoring a mosque in Gjirokastër, Enver Hoxha's birthplace, as well as the Abdurrahman Pashi mosque in Peqin, near Elbasan.

"The Peqin mosque is one of the most important examples of Islamic culture in Albania," he continues. "It was built in 1822 and has its clock tower and minaret connected together in the main section. And the mosque of Shkodër is the only one in Albania influenced by the imperial style of Istanbul."

Skanderbeg – the name is a conflation of his Muslim name, Iskander, and his Ottoman rank of *bey* – was an Albanian prince given to the Turkish sultan as a hostage while still a boy. In 1443 he left the Turks to fight against them for his country's independence. His statue dominates the main square of Tiranë, for he is still revered in Albania for having held the Ottoman Turks at bay for 36 years. He died in 1468, and his movement was ultimately defeated by Sultan Mehmet II in 1479.

Except for the beginning of the 19th century, when Ali Pasha of Tepelenë established a short-lived independent principality in the southern half of the country, Albania was thereafter little more than a backwater of the sprawling Ottoman Empire. That status continued until 1912, when another patriot, Ismail Qemal, rose up to declare Albania's independence.

Through the long years of Ottoman rule, most Albanians came to practice Islam, though a minority continued to follow the Orthodox rite of neighboring Greece, and still others, under Vatican influence, chose Roman Catholicism. It was in that period that religious tolerance, generally a characteristic of Ottoman rule, became an national trait that has since stood Albanians – and others – in good stead.

When Kemal Atatürk, the secularist founder of modern Turkey, banned dervish orders from the new republic, Albania accepted their adherents – thus becoming the world center of the Bektashi order. And during the Fascist and Nazi occupation of World War II, Albania refused to turn over its 300-member Jewish community to the Germans. "It was in the interests of Albanians not to cultivate religious hatred," says Albanian Jewish historian Joseph Yakoel. "The mosque and the church did not divide one Albanian from another."

But following the Communist victory over the Nazis and the declaration of an Albanian people's socialist republic, Hoxha warned Muslim and other clerics not to preach against his hard-line government, according to Muslim leader Baba Bajram Mahmetaj.

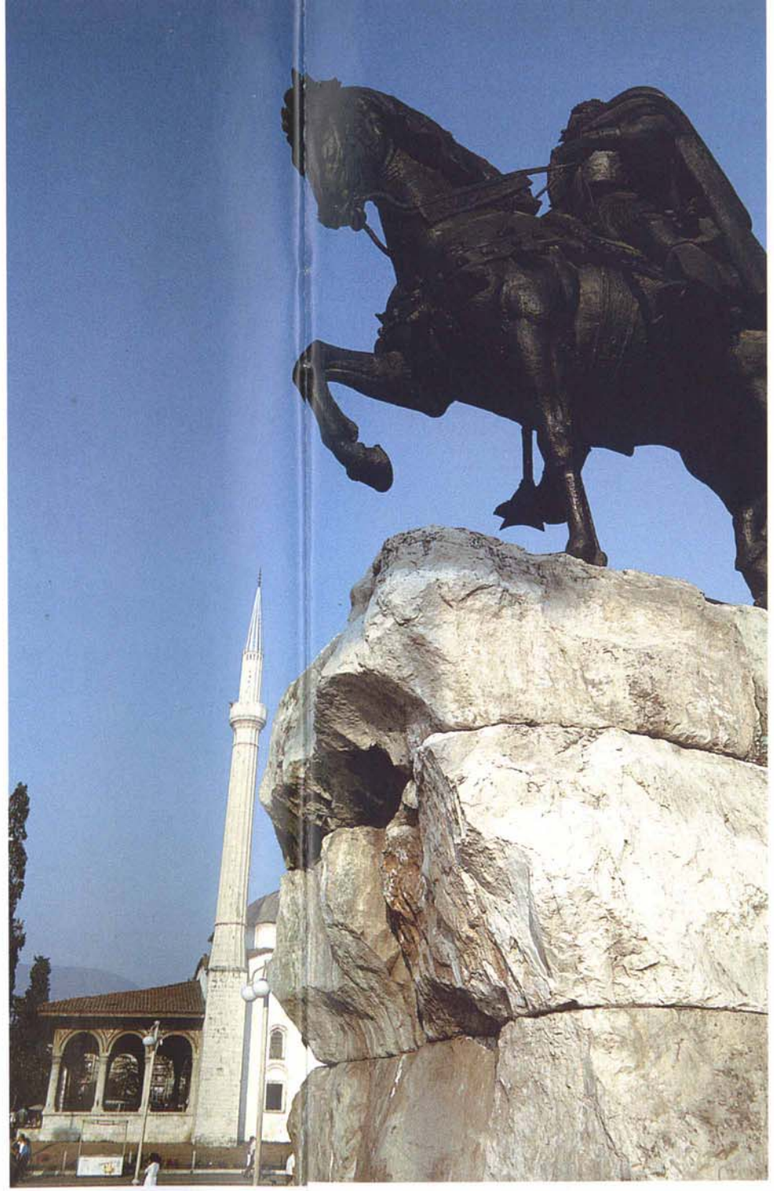
Bajram himself ignored the order and told fellow Muslims that the Communists would eventually destroy religion itself. For this he was imprisoned for 15 years, then sent into internal exile in northern Albania for another 15 years.

"There was so much torture that if I tell you, you'll say I'm lying," recalls Bajram, now 80. "They beat us, tried to drown us in canals, made us do hard labor in the swamps and marshes."

According to Peter R. Prifti, author of *Socialist Albania Since 1944*, two prominent Muslim leaders, Baba Fajo and Baba Fejzo, were murdered in March 1947 in circumstances that are still unclear. Other Muslim clerics disappeared, including Mustafa Effendi Varoshi, mufti of Durrës; Hafez Ibrahim Dibra, former grand mufti of Albania, and Sheh Xhemel Pazari ofTiranë. By 1968, says the New York-based Free Albania Committee, the Communists had executed or sentenced to labor camps some 200 religious leaders of all faiths.

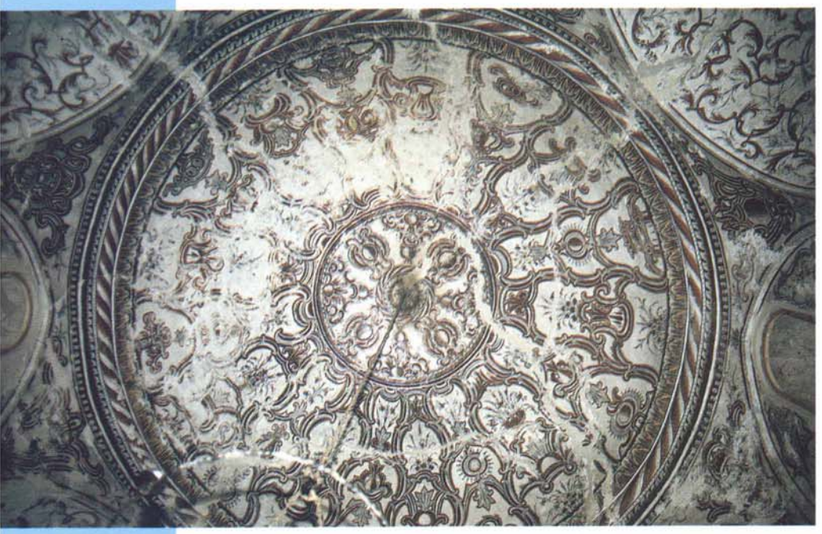
In 1967, Hoxha went a step further and declared Albania the world's first officially atheist state. By May of that year, 2169 mosques, churches, monasteries and other religious institutions had been closed, converted to other uses, or destroyed.

Finally, on November 13, 1967, the Albanian People's Assembly annulled earlier statutes guaranteeing freedom of religion. Believers caught wearing any kind of religious symbol now risked up to 10 years' imprisonment.



MEHMET BIBER

Renegade nationalist Skanderbeg (statue above) fought against the Ottoman Turks, but they dominated Albania for 500 years. Eighty percent of today's population is Muslim, and – since 1990 – again throngs into the mosques (right), including the one in mountain-ringed Gjirokastër (above right). Muslim Rukije Skifteri (far right) helped keep her faith alive.



The stony path (below) from Skanderbeg's castle at Krujë leads to the Dollmes mosque, one of the oldest in Albania. Its interior walls and ceilings (far left and left) are covered with arabesqe designs and quotations from the Qur'an. Like other mosques in villages and towns throughout the country, it is being restored by architect Sulejman Dashi (right).

"The mosques became stables for cows, and the churches became gymnasiums for volleyball," laments Yakoel. "In the town of Shkodër, there was a mosque with two minarets. They destroyed it."

Nonetheless, adds Sabie Bagosi, a devout Muslim woman who now visits the Krujë mosque regularly, "during the time religion was forbidden, people came here illegally and lit candles and prayed. But they were afraid because if someone caught them, they'd be put in prison."

"Before 1967," says Rukije Skifteri, whom her neighbors kindly refer to as "the dervish lady," "a lot of Muslims [recited the Qur'an] like I did. There were thousands. At one time, telegrams used to arrive here [from other Muslim countries,] congratulating us on the coming of 'Id al-Fitr."

Today, she fears, because of Albania's self-imposed isolation, Muslims here have lost all connections with their coreligionists outside the country. "A lot more people are going to the mosques than before, but many don't know how to worship as Muslims, because they forgot," she says.

Until World War II, says Mihal Dhima, a 43-year-old schoolteacher in Sarandë, Albania was essentially a feudal kingdom. British adventurer Edith Durham's classic travelogue, *High Albania*, is a chronicle of the blood feuds and vendettas that characterized most of Albanian history until the early 20th century.

"Throughout the history of Albania," Dhima says, "occupiers have tried to divide the people, even people within the same village. But when the moment came to fight against the occupiers, the Albanians were united."

Thus, with the onset of World War II, Albanians banded together to fight the Fascist and later Nazi occupiers. Today, nearly the entire countryside – from Sarandë in the south to Shkodër in the north – is dotted with memorials to partisans who died in battle.

"Before World War II, religious activities blossomed," says Dylber Vrioni, a high-ranking official of the ruling Democratic Party, which captured 92 of the new parliament's 140 seats in last March's elections.

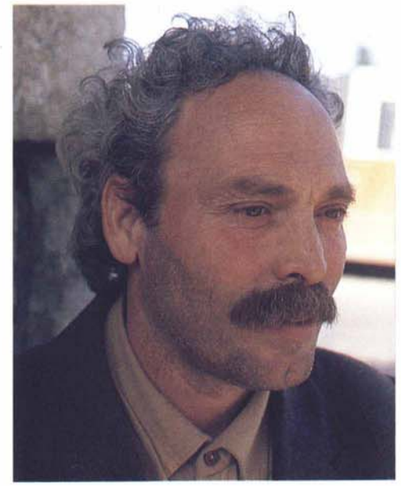
"The Greeks and the Italians both wanted to dominate us after independence from the Turks," Vrioni says. "Their struggle developed through religion – Italy worked through the Vatican and Greece through the Orthodox Church" – another example of outsiders trying to divide Albanians.

Yet, he adds, "for us, the ban on religious activities [in 1967] was a pity: It was one of the ways the government made clear to the people that even our dreams and hopes were controlled by the party."

In late 1990, Vrioni explains, "religious activity was allowed again because of international pressure. In Shkodër, within a day of the order, the people gathered and divided all the religious property evenly between the Christians and Muslims. There was a wonderful solidarity between the religions."

And, although grievous damage was done during Albania's official period of atheism, much remained intact for the faithful. According to architect Sulejman Dashi, of the 1050 mosques that existed before 1967, 800 survive today. About 30 of the most important ones have been well preserved as a result of a 1967 edict which, he says, "protected Albania's cultural patrimony while allowing the people to destroy those mosques and churches which had no historical value."

Dashi says the edict was issued only because the chief of Albania's institute of architectural preservation convinced the Communists that the destruction had to be stopped. "If it had gone on for another



three years," he says, "you wouldn't be able to find any mosques or churches in Albania today."

Dashi, whose tiny studio is tucked away into a medieval-looking stone structure a few blocks from the 15-story Hotel Tiranë – the city's only skyscraper – spends his days supervising the restoration of mosques, churches and other monuments.

"In Shkodër [the center of Albania's Catholic minority], four mosques were destroyed," he says. "The minarets of all the rest were destroyed. A normal man cannot understand this. Even in Durrës, the Xhamia Fatih, which was first a church

and later a mosque protected by the government, had its minaret destroyed – but now I'm building a new one." He adds that he's already helped restore one mosque in Vlorë and three in Berat.

Tiranë, Albania's capital and by far its largest city with some 200,000 inhabitants, also boasts its most important Islamic landmark – the Ethem Bey mosque fronting Skanderbeg Square.

A recent Friday afternoon visit to this imposing mosque revealed hundreds of men facing toward Makkah and praying to God, just the same way Muslims pray anywhere. In addition, several female worshipers, for whom no separate area had been set aside, congregated around the entrance; they included a teenage girl reading from an Albanian-language Qur'an printed in Yugoslavia's Kosovo province, home to two million ethnic Albanian Muslims.

Hassan Hafiz, the mosque's 61-year-old imam, estimates there are only 200 or so practicing imams like himself throughout Albania, and fewer than 3000 Albanian Muslims who can read Arabic.

"I finished school in 1953. That's where I learned Arabic," he says. The Islamic school where he studied was shut down in 1964. "After religion was abolished, the Muslims practiced secretly. Those who were caught were subject to ridicule," he recalls, adding that "even though Muslims and Christians were put in prison, only those who talked about political problems were killed."

In 1990, when religious worship was allowed once again, Hafiz and 180 other Albanian Muslims were permitted – for the first time ever – to make the pilgrimage to Makkah.

"I was very happy to go. It felt like being reborn," Hafiz says. "When I was on the airplane, it seemed to us that all the stars in the sky were Makkah."

Besides freedom of religion and freedom to travel, other big changes have left visible marks on long-suffering Albania. Enver Hoxha's name has been removed from every street, farm cooperative, school, factory, clinic and building in the country; slogans such as that found on a sign outside Hoxha's hometown of Gjirokastër – "Let's raise the flag of our heroic party and

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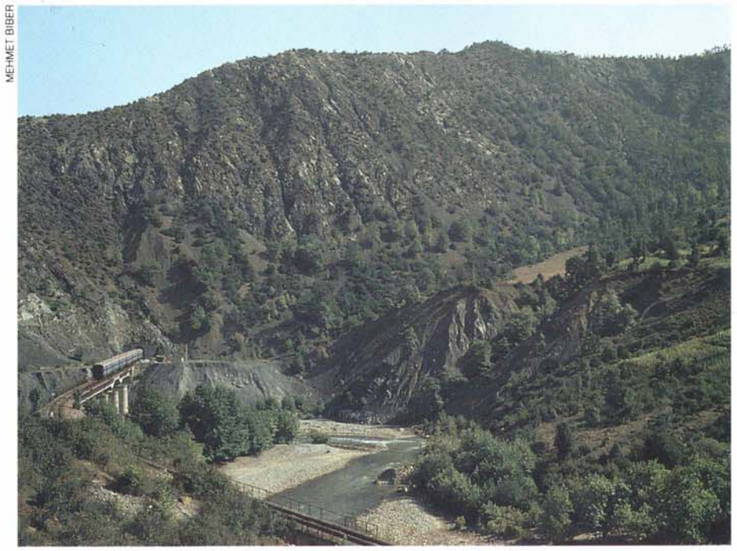

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Ismail Qemal, commemorated on street signs (above left) around the country, liberated Albania from Ottoman rule in 1912; independence lasted only till the Italian occupation in 1939. Nonetheless, the country's local name, "Shqipëri," meaning "eagles' country," hints at the Albanians' fierce spiritual independence. The country is heavily agricultural, with peppers (above) and sunflowers (above right) important crops; its stern topography decrees that rivers, such as the Vijosë (right), are often cultural and economic barriers, but a single railroad line (left) serves Albania's chromium, oil and soft-coal industries.

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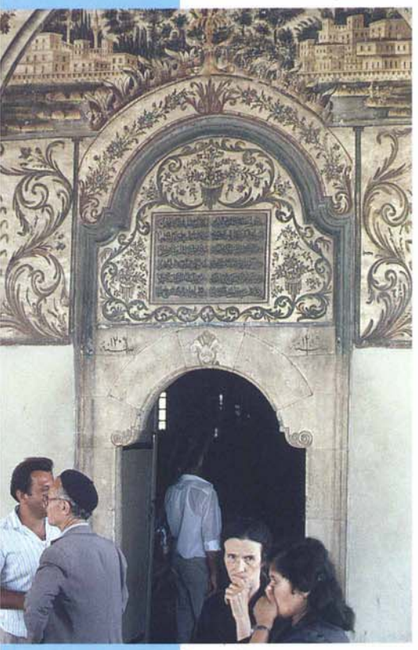

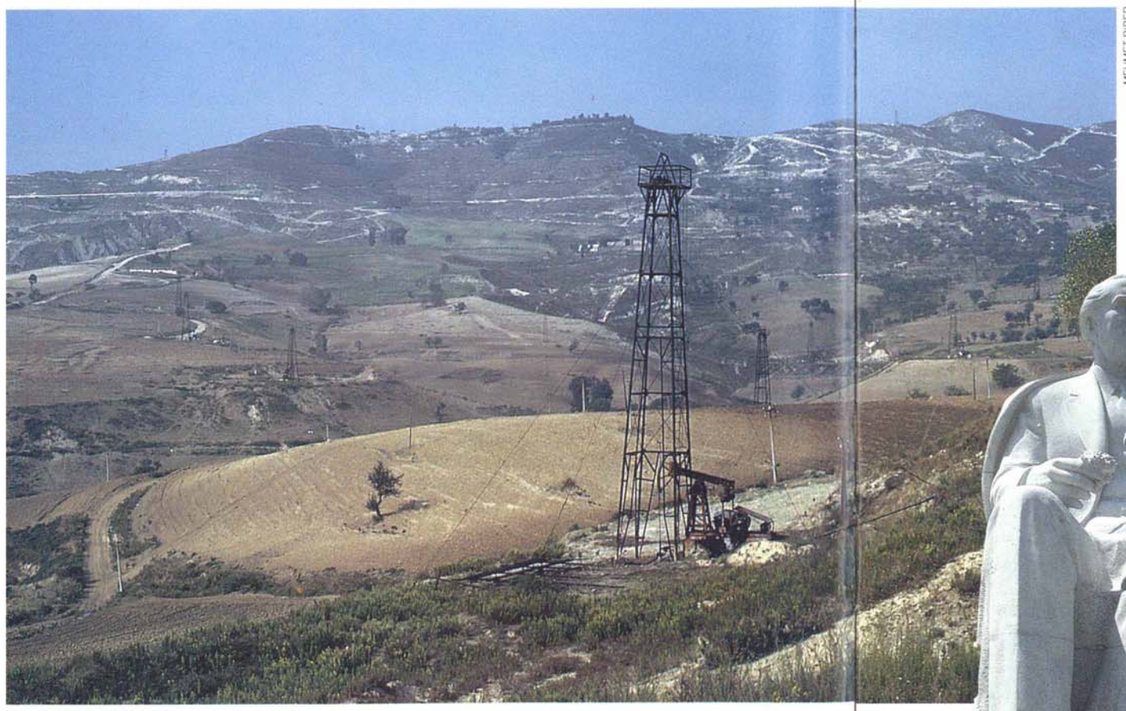

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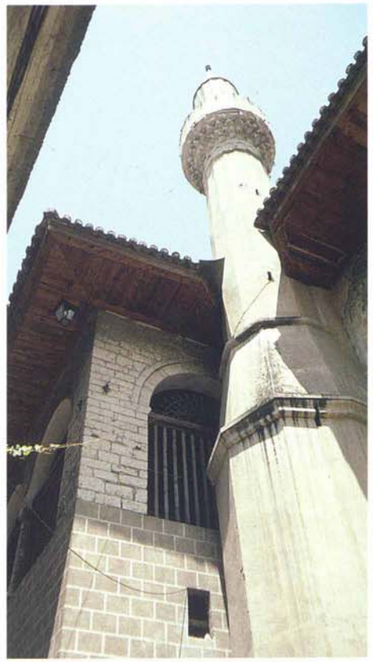
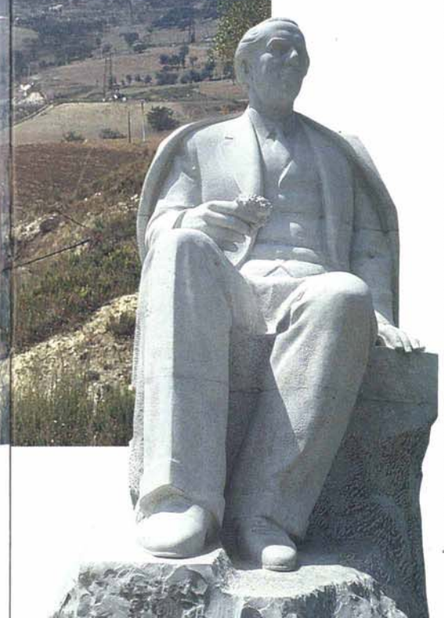
Social decompression in Albania since the departure in 1985 of resistance fighter turned dictator Enver Hoxha (statue below right) has brought citizens like this street-corner lemonade seller (above left) a struggle to make ends meet in a new, transitional economy. But it also means freedom to worship in the capital's Ottoman-era Ethem Bey mosque (left), and an expectation that other places of worship, like this mosque in Berat (right), will be restored. Restoration of the country's petroleum industry (below) is also a priority.





the monumental work of Comrade Enver Hoxha" – are rapidly disappearing from the Albanian countryside; automobiles, long banned as a sign of capitalist decadence, are being imported at the rate of 1500 a month.

Yet the few foreigners who venture into Albania these days get an impression of barely restrained anarchy. With elections out of the way, observers there felt it would take months to restore law and order – and years to revive Albania's shattered economy. "We are like a country destroyed by war," says Central Bank governor Ilir Burhan Hoti.

"We don't produce anything. Nothing functions here," laments Svetlana Roko, an official at Albania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Everything we eat comes from abroad. Raw materials don't exist. This is why the economic situation is so bad."

"Our food rations allow each family three kilos of meat [six pounds 10 ounces], three kilos of cheese and one kilo of butter per month," says Albturist guide Agim Neza, who earns the black-market equivalent of $20 a month. "For milk, you have to go at nine in the evening and stand in line till five the next morning. I'm worried that if we don't get help, if things don't improve soon, people will want to go back to Marxism."

One place help is already coming from is the United States. An estimated 250,000 Americans are of Albanian heritage; roughly a third are Muslim.

The Very Rev. Arthur Liolin, chancellor of the Albanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and pastor of St. George Cathedral in Boston, says there are four Albanian mosques in the United States – one each in Detroit, Brooklyn, Chicago and Waterbury, Connecticut.

"The original arrivals were mostly Orthodox and Muslim, and they all helped each other," says Liolin, who has traveled to Albania more than a dozen times. "When the first Albanian Orthodox church in America was established in the 1920's, many Muslims supported it. Later, when the first mosque was built, the Muslims got help from the Orthodox. In the 1950's, both groups helped the Albanian Catholics when they established themselves in the United States."

Ekrem Bardha is among the most successful Albanian Muslims in America. Having escaped from Albania in 1953 after one of his brothers was jailed for political crimes, he settled in Detroit and went into the restaurant business, eventually becoming the owner of seven McDonald's fast-food franchises.

Last year, Bardha returned to do business in the once-Marxist state. His goal: to see Big Mac replace Big Brother in the land of his birth. "My aim in opening a McDonald's here is to show Albanians how free enterprise works," the entrepreneur says. "It may be a joke now, but in the very near future, it could be a possibility."

William Ryerson, the newly appointed US ambassador to Albania, notes that in the midst of poverty, Albanians are curious about religion. Recently, he met a group of young boys who were learning Arabic so that they could study the Qur'an.

"Geographically Albania is a European country," says Central Bank governor Hoti, who puts the proportion of Muslims in today's Albanian population at 80 percent. "But spiritually the country is looking forward to closer ties with Arabs and Muslims, for whom we can be the bridge to Europe."

Today, Albania has not only renewed diplomatic ties with the once-hated United States – after a 52-year break – but has also established relations with Saudi Arabia. In recent months, Saudi government officials have visited Tiranë and offered substantial quantities of aid. And in June, an Islamic investment bank was established in Albania, with the memorandum of understanding signed in Jiddah.

For the first time, the Albanian government has also allowed foreign investors to participate in the country's oil industry, which produces about 1.5 million metric tons a year from onshore wells. American energy companies Occidental Petroleum and Chevron have signed agreements for offshore exploration in the Adriatic Sea, as have Italy's Agip and Germany's Deminex. Last month, the United States signed a bilateral trade agreement with Albania.

With Marxism thoroughly discredited and trade and investment likely to blossom, all of Albania's political parties, including the former Communists, now sing the same tune – democracy, free-market economy and reconciliation with the past. "All Albanians, especially the younger generation and the intellectuals, are determined to go forward," says Kastriot Islami, former chairman of the Albanian Parliament.

For President Sali Berisha, the key to Albania's future success is unwavering respect for human rights, as well as guaranteed religious freedom for all citizens and renewed faith in God. "It's very important to me," says the country's hopeful new leader, "because people who believe in God will have His blessing."

Larry Luxner, a frequent contributor to Aramco World, *has visited Albania twice. He writes from his base in San Juan, Puerto Rico.*

Ancient Egypt and Nubia Galleries. Some 2000 antiquities, including hundreds never seen before, are on display in two new permanent galleries at the Royal Ontario Museum. The ROM's Egyptian collection, not fully displayed since 1979, is the finest in Canada and among the top six in North America. Its Nubian collection is one of the world's largest, and is particularly strong in material dating from between AD 200 and 1820. Both galleries feature a wide range of artifacts, from simple agricultural tools and everyday eating utensils to spectacular jewelry, funerary furnishings and delicate pottery. The Ancient Egypt Gallery, developed by Egyptologist Dr. Nicholas B. Millet, is divided into four sections: history, daily life, religion and a large wall relief illustrating the "Voyage to Punt." The Nubia Gallery, developed by Nubian expert Dr. Krzysztof Grzymski, provides a chronological history of cultures from the formation of hunting and fishing villages in 4500 BC to modern Nubia. Royal Ontario Museum, **Toronto.**

Precisely to the Point: *Daggers and Drawings from India and Persia* brings together five daggers and 30 drawings ranging in subject from portraits to natural history studies, hunting scenes and dragons. Arthur M. Sackler Museum, **Cambridge, Massachusetts**, through July 26, 1992.

In the Language of Stitches: *Folk Embroideries of India and Pakistan*. Brightly colored, lavishly embroidered and mirror-studded costumes, bags and hangings constitute records of urban, nomadic and rural cultures. The Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through July 27, 1992.

Views of Paradise: *Tile Paintings by Marie Balian*. Near Eastern gardens during spring and summer is the theme of this exhibition of glazed tile pictures by an Armenian artist from Arab East Jerusalem. Smithsonian Institution's Ripley Center, **Washington, D.C.**, through July 28, 1992.

1492: *Reflections*. In its Fifth Annual Garden Series, the Middle East Institute presents lectures, music and other events highlighting Middle Eastern connections with the Columbus Quincentennial. The Middle East Institute, **Washington, D.C.**, Wednesdays, through July 29, 1992.

When Kingship Descended From Heaven: *Masterpieces of Mesopotamian Art From the Louvre*. Some of the world's most celebrated artworks, created between 3500 and 2000 BC in Sumer and Akkad, kingdoms in southern Mesopotamia, are on loan from the Paris museum. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through August 9, 1992.

Teaching About the Arab World and Islam. A series of seminars for educators around the country, conducted by AWAIR, Arab World And Islamic Resources and School Services of Berkeley, California. Brigham Young University, **Salt Lake City, Utah**, August 12, 1992; University of **Arkansas, Monticello**, August 14, 1992; University of **Toledo [Ohio]**, August 19, 1992; University of **Kentucky, Louisville**, November 13 through 14, 1992.

The Splendors of the Ottoman Sultans. Some 300 treasures from the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, including the legendary Topkapı Dagger, as well as from other Turkish museums are featured as part of "Wonders: The Memphis International Culture Series". Cook Convention Center, **Memphis, Tennessee**, through August 16, 1992.

Flowers and Leaves: *The Ottoman Pottery of Iznik*. Turkish ceramics from the 15th through the 17th century, selected from the museum's own collection. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York,** through August 30, 1992.

Gulf Arab States: *Beyond Camels, Oil and the Sand Dunes*. This year-long traveling exhibit on life in the Gulf Arab states features items from the Nance Museum, embassies, and other collections, and visits a different California library each month. Remaining schedule: July, Kern County Library, **Bakersfield**; August, **Santa Clara** City Library.

'Fired Earth': *A Thousand Years of Tiles in Europe*. The exhibition begins with medieval and Islamic tiles, covers European tin-glazed and Victorian inlaid tiles, among others, and ends with contemporary tile production. Walker Art Gallery, **Liverpool,** through September 1, 1992.

Head-shaped Nubian perfume bottle, AD 350-550

PHOTOS: BRIAN DOYLE/ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS

19th-Century Views of Egypt. Featured are lithographs by English artist Louis Haghe, made after watercolors by David Roberts (1796-1864), as well as prints by Francis Frith and other early European photographers who used the wet collodion process. **Cleveland [Ohio]** Museum of Art, through September 6, 1992.

The Afghan Folio. Luke Powell's striking photographs of Afghanistan in the 1970's. Traveling Exhibits Gallery, **Louisburg [North Carolina]** College, September 7 through October 23, 1992.

Textiles in Daily Life. Fabrics from Morocco, Egypt, India and Turkey are among the textiles to be discussed at the third biennial symposium of the Textile Society of America. **Seattle** Art Museum, September 24 through 26, 1992.

Al-Andalus: *The Art of Islamic Spain*. The largest collection of objects ever assembled from Islamic Spain went on display this past spring at Granada's legendary Alhambra Palace, and moved in July to New York. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York,** through September 27, 1992.

Egypt's Dazzling Sun: *Amenhotep III and His World*. The golden age of Egyptian art is recalled in this exhibition of nearly 150 works from major collections in the US, Egypt and Europe. **Cleveland [Ohio]** Museum of Art, through September 27, 1992; Kimbell Art Museum, **Fort Worth, Texas,** October 24, 1992, through January 31, 1993.

Windows on the Maghrib: *Tribal and Urban Weavings of Morocco*. Some 65 examples of Moroccan carpets and textiles include every major weaving area in Morocco. The exhibit originated at the University of Tennessee's Frank H. McClung Museum. The Museum for Textiles, **Toronto**, through October 1, 1992.

A World of Foreign Lands. Old maps, charts, letters and books in this Quincentennial exhibit explain Europe's changing perceptions of foreign places in medieval and early modern times. Walters Art Gallery, **Baltimore, Maryland,** through October 4, 1992.

Columbus: *The Triumphant Failure*. This Quincentennial exhibition takes a less than reverent look at the epic story of the European discovery of America – a chronicle of the triumph of good luck over folly. Merseyside Maritime Museum, **Liverpool,** October 5 through November 27, 1992.

Ancient Nubia: *Egypt's Rival in Africa*. Two hundred fifty artifacts from the museum's celebrated Nubian collection help trace the history of Nubia from about 3100 BC to AD 500. University of Pennsylvania Museum, **Philadelphia**, October 10, 1992, through October 1993.

Egyptian Reinstallation. After two years of renovations, parts of the Brooklyn Museum's world-famous Egyptian galleries will be reopened. The refurbished space will present a history of Egyptian art from the 13th century BC to the Roman conquest in 30 BC. **Brooklyn [New York]** Museum, from October 23, 1992.

Encountering the New World, 1493-1800: *Rare Prints, Maps, and Illustrated Books from the John Carter Brown Library*. This Quincentennial exhibition documents how European artists and mapmakers interpreted what they found – or thought they found – in the Americas. Natural History Museum of **Los Angeles** County, through October 25, 1992.

Textiles from Egypt, Syria and Spain: *7th Through 15th Centuries*. Fifty Islamic textiles from the Mediterranean Arab world have been selected from the museum's own collection. **Cleveland [Ohio]** Museum of Art, through November 1, 1992.

Arts of Moghul India. Twenty paintings and six objects from the late 16th to the 18th century provide a good introduction to the Moghul Empire. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.,** through December 6, 1992.

Sifting the Sands of Time: *The Oriental Institute and the Ancient Near East* traces the history of the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute in the forefront of ancient Near Eastern research and scholarship. Oriental Institute Museum, **Chicago**, through December 31, 1992.

Vanished Kingdoms of the Nile: *The Rediscovery of Ancient Nubia* offers an overview of the flourishing culture of the Nubians through objects excavated by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Oriental Institute Museum, **Chicago**, through December 31, 1992.

Seeds of Change tells the history of five "seeds" – sugar, corn, the potato, disease and the horse – that indelibly changed the New World and the Old. Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History, **Washington, D.C.**, through April 1, 1993.

Turkish Traditional Art Today. This display of contemporary Turkish folk art, 10 years in the gathering, emphasizes the religious and social environments that nurture the art. Museum of International Folk Art, **Santa Fe, New Mexico**, through June 30, 1993.

Temples, Tells and Tombs. Early civilizations of Egypt, Rome, Mesopotamia, Syria and Greece are brought to life in dramatic re-creations of the past. **Milwaukee [Wisconsin]** Public Museum, through September 30, 1993.

Stepping into Ancient Egypt: *The House of the Artist Pashed*. An exhibition on everyday life in Pharaonic Egypt, geared especially toward children. **Newark [New Jersey]** Museum, until June 1994.

Permanent Collection of Contemporary Art. A display of some 100 artworks by painters from the Arab world. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris,** 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.

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