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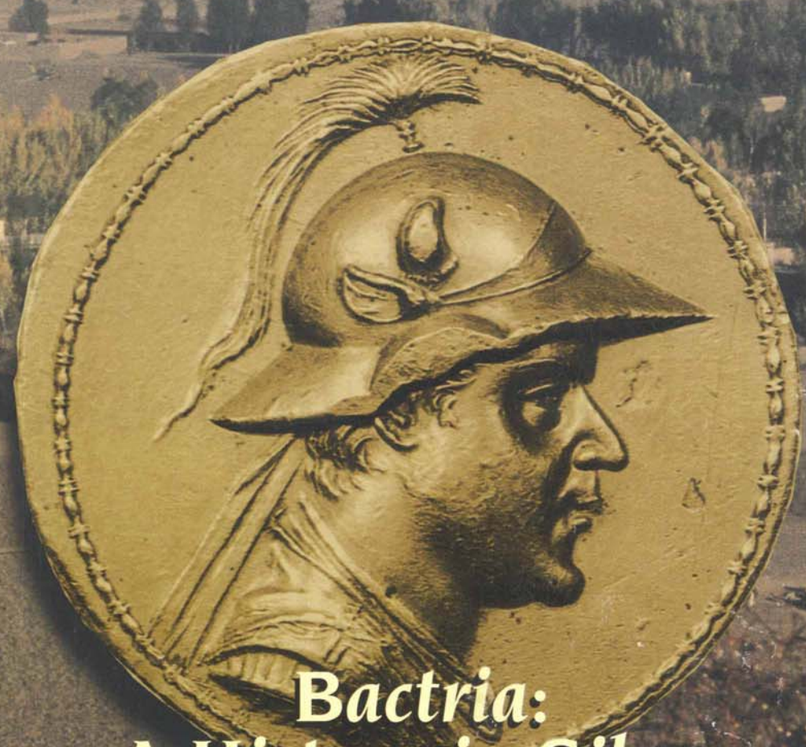

Bactria: A History in Silver and Gold

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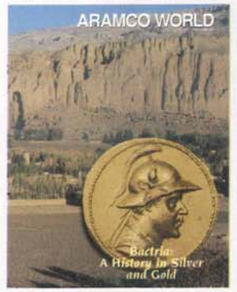

Cover: The Bamian Valley, in today's Afghanistan, was part of ancient Bactria. Colonized by Macedonian troops of Alexander the Great, the Central Asian region became a unique multinational kingdom that linked the disparate cultures and religions of India, Iran, Greece and China. Inset: The 20-stater gold coin minted by Bactrian king Eucratides is the world's largest—and perhaps rarest—ancient gold coin. Photos: Carla M. Dole and Bibliothèque Nationale.

◄ Hand-painted details embellish 19th-century merchants' houses in the old section of Plovdiv.

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HOLT


VINCENT-BARWOOD


LEWIS


AZAR


SEARIGHT

WRITTEN BY FRANK L. HOLT
PHOTOGRAPHED BY LUKE POWELL AND CARLA M. DOLE
COIN PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM,
BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE AND
AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

A HISTORY IN SILVER & GOLD

"Son, seek out a kingdom worthy of yourself, for Macedonia is much too small."

DOLE

BNF

BM

Against a backdrop of the people and poplars of 20th-century Afghanistan, a gold octodrachm depicts Bactrian king Euthydemus I, and a rare silver five-shekel, or decadrachm, coin, minted at Babylon, hails Alexander's campaign against elephant-mounted troops in India.

Thus, said Plutarch, did King Philip inspire his famous son, Alexander the Great, to a life of conquest. Marching out of northern Greece at the age of 22, Alexander boldly transformed the world in his quest for a worthy kingdom.

Four short years later, the young conqueror had covered more than 6400 kilometers (4000 miles) and captured much of the area of the modern Middle East. He had already won three brilliant battles, triumphed in one of history's greatest sieges, toppled the King of Kings from the Persian throne, received god-like honors as pharaoh of Egypt and plundered more wealth on a single day than his native Macedonia had ever seen. From his royal tomb, Philip must have marveled at his son's good fortune, but for Alexander it was not yet enough.

In 330 BC, Alexander and his Macedonian army moved on in the direction of India, setting only the ends of the earth as the limits of his own ambitions.

But these next four years were to bring the young hero more troubles than triumphs: After his glorious advance from Pella to Persepolis came the grueling campaigns which nearly failed to capture Bactria.

Located in the area of modern-day Afghanistan and the former Soviet republics of Central Asia, ancient Bactria was a rugged and remote region which stretched from the Hindu Kush to the Oxus River (the modern Amu Darya); Sogdiana, the northern extension of this old Persian province, reached across the Oxus and the Pamir Mountains to the banks of the Jaxartes River (the modern Syr Darya). Here Alexander, like so many great leaders before and after him, faltered in his pursuit of glory.

BM

Alexander—depicted on a silver tetradrachm minted at Myriandrus, Syria, in 325 BC—left some 13,000 Greek troops behind in Bactria, the nucleus of a remarkable multinational kingdom.

His army suffered horribly in these campaigns—in the mountains, his men froze to death or survived only by eating their own baggage animals; in the deserts, his troops died by the thousands of exhaustion and thirst. As if nature were not enemy enough, Alexander's army also faced a very hostile population. In Bactria and Sogdiana, some of Alexander's worst military setbacks were forced on him by hit-and-run guerrilla tactics not unlike those used so effectively by the modern *mujahidin* of Afghanistan. When one area seemed under control, another erupted into battle; if the major cities seemed safe and subdued, the roads and countryside between them remained in the hands of the native resistance. The many toils of Alexander in Bactria and Sogdiana, said Plutarch, resembled a war against a hydra, whose vicious heads grew back as fast as they were severed.

Finally, after years of bitter fighting on this far-off frontier, Alexander the Great sought a way out. He made some concessions to the native peoples, married the daughter of a local aristocrat and marched away to India, leaving behind over 13,000 Greek soldiers to colonize and try to control this difficult territory. None of these Greek mercenaries liked it, and not all of them stayed. But those who did stay were the start of something extraordinary in world history—the creation of a multinational kingdom in Central Asia which eventually bridged the disparate cultures of India, Iran, Greece and China.

There is still a romance about Hellenistic Bactria all but impossible to resist. The celebrated British historian Sir William W. Tarn felt it when he called this "a unique chapter in the dealings of Greeks with the peoples of Asia," and "the story of a very great adventure." But the exciting and extraordinary story of Bactria is also exasperating and sad, for time has erased almost every trace of what happened there after Alexander was gone. The narrative histories of Bactria written by ancient authors have all been lost, except where they have been quoted—or misquoted—by later writers. Lifted out of context and often terribly confusing, these citations amount to barely 400 words, telling the story of 200 years of history. Elsewhere, in all of Greek and Latin literature, there is but one incidental description of a specific event in Bactrian history—an account by Polybius of a brief war between a Bactrian king and a Seleucid emperor, Antiochus the Great. From all these scattered sources we can glean only the names of a few Bactrian towns, the names of seven Bactrian rulers and a few other general remarks. Our loss is immeasurable: Imagine the task of reconstructing the entire history of the United States if we knew only the names of seven presidents and of a few—as yet undiscovered—cities.

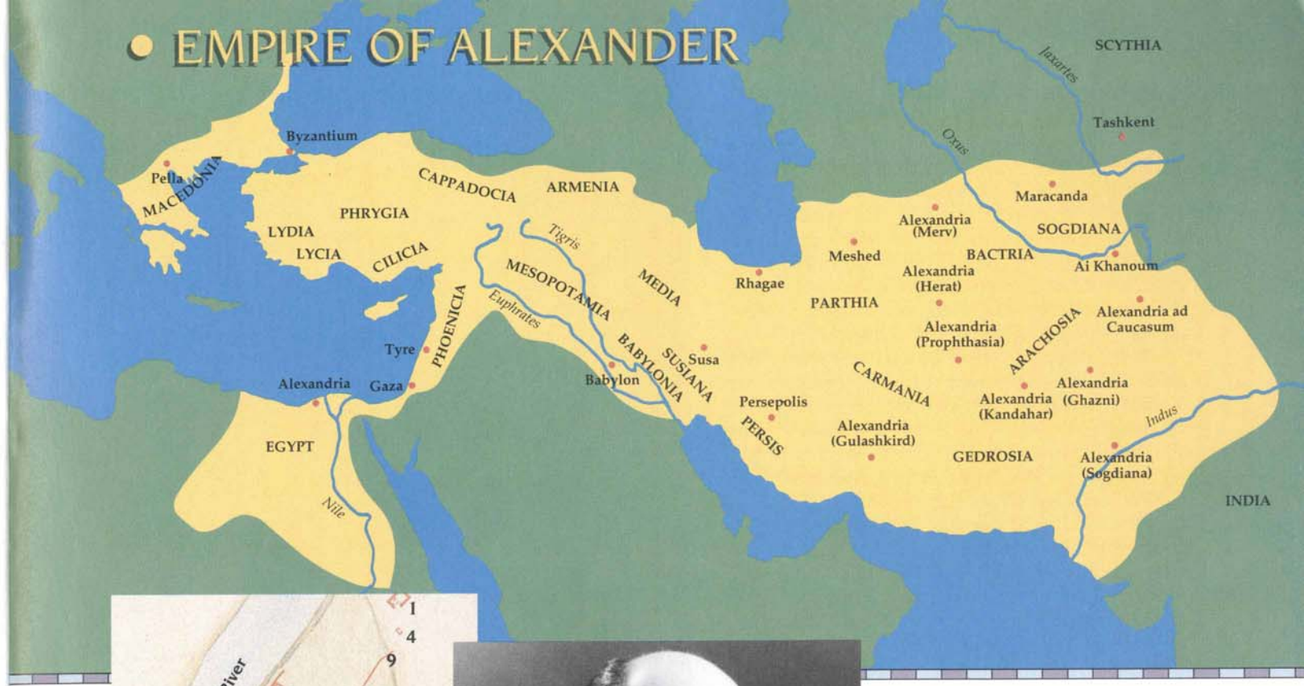
Even by the time of the Roman Empire, the West had forgotten much about Alexander's successors in Central Asia. For Propertius and other Roman writers, *Bactria* had become no more than a shorthand term for the unknown ends of the earth. The Middle Ages in Europe merely prolonged the silence, until, in the 14th century, Boccaccio included the Bactrian king Eucratides in his work *On the Downfall of Famous Men*, and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* included the rich and romantic figure of King Demetrius in "The Knight's Tale."

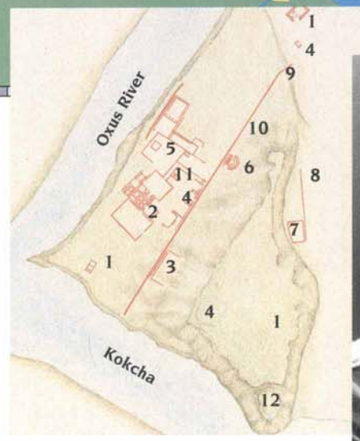
And so matters stood for centuries more. Bactria's rich history was locked in the deep, dark coffers of war, neglect and time. Its kings were forgotten except in fable; its place in the histories of Afghanistan, Greece, India, China and Pakistan was almost irrevocably lost.

But in more recent years, thanks to the patient labors of experts and amateurs from around the world, we have begun to bring ancient Bactria back to life; we are now literally buying back her lost legacy in the very coin of the Bactrian kings themselves. For here, stamped upon ancient silver and gold, are the names and portraits of nearly 40 monarchs who ruled Bactria and India in the aftermath of Alexander the Great—most of them names that have not been known or spoken for over two millennia.

These precious coins are a king's ransom indeed; without them, monarchs such as Antimachus, called "the God," and Agathocles "the Just" would remain totally unknown to us, their extraordinary reigns forever lost for want of a single clue. In ancient Bactria, more than anyplace else I know, money does talk, for coins can break through the silence of centuries to tell us tales of the past in the alluring language of numismatics.

The rediscovery of the ancient Greek kings of Bactria is one of the finest triumphs of modern numismatic science, that branch of scholarship which uses coins as its primary evidence. We are fortunate that Bactrian coins are more than beautiful masterworks of the engraver's art; they are also expressive testimonials to the political, economic, military and religious life of the people who made and used them. Stamped in metal are the names and titles of the Bactrian rulers, the regalia of kingship and military command, the images of Greek and non-Greek gods and goddesses, the symbols of conquest, the ties of kinship and the marks of mintage control. Coins' weights and designs tell us about values and exchange rates; the findspots of single coins or large hoards reveal patterns of circulation and trade. Bilingual issues help us to draw linguistic maps of ancient Central and South Asia—in fact, Bactrian coins first made intelligible the cursive Kharoshthi script of early India. To the numismatist, every coin is a text and every hoard an archive of invaluable new information.





AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

King Zahir of Afghanistan, above, was responsible for the excavation of the Greco-Bactrian city of Ai Khanoum, whose main features are numbered on the inset map: 1. Houses; 2. Palace; 3. Arsenal; 4. Temples; 5. Gymnasium with Pool; 6. Theater; 7. Vineyard; 8. Cemetery; 9. Gate; 10. Main Street; 11. Mausoleum; 12. Acropolis.

The archive was first opened in 1738, when Theophilus Bayer published a Latin treatise entitled *Historia Regni Graecorum Bactriani*. This work was based on the discovery of only two Bactrian coins, but it set in motion a great scramble by others to find and to publish more and more of these impressive artifacts. Coins were eventually collected by the tens of thousands from Samarkand to Patna, and, from them, numismatists were able to identify the names of more and more new kings to add to the history of the Bactrian realm. For example, the lost King Antimachus was first discovered in 1822, and Agathocles was found about a decade later. New coin types by known kings, and even new kings, are still being discovered today, and the considerable task of sorting these out into a proper historical picture is as challenging as ever.

Some of the discoveries made over the past two and a half centuries have been especially dramatic. Beginning in 1843, for example, it was learned that Agathocles and Antimachus also struck, in addition to their other types, an extraordinary series of commemorative coins in honor of earlier Bactrian kings. These special issues, sometimes called

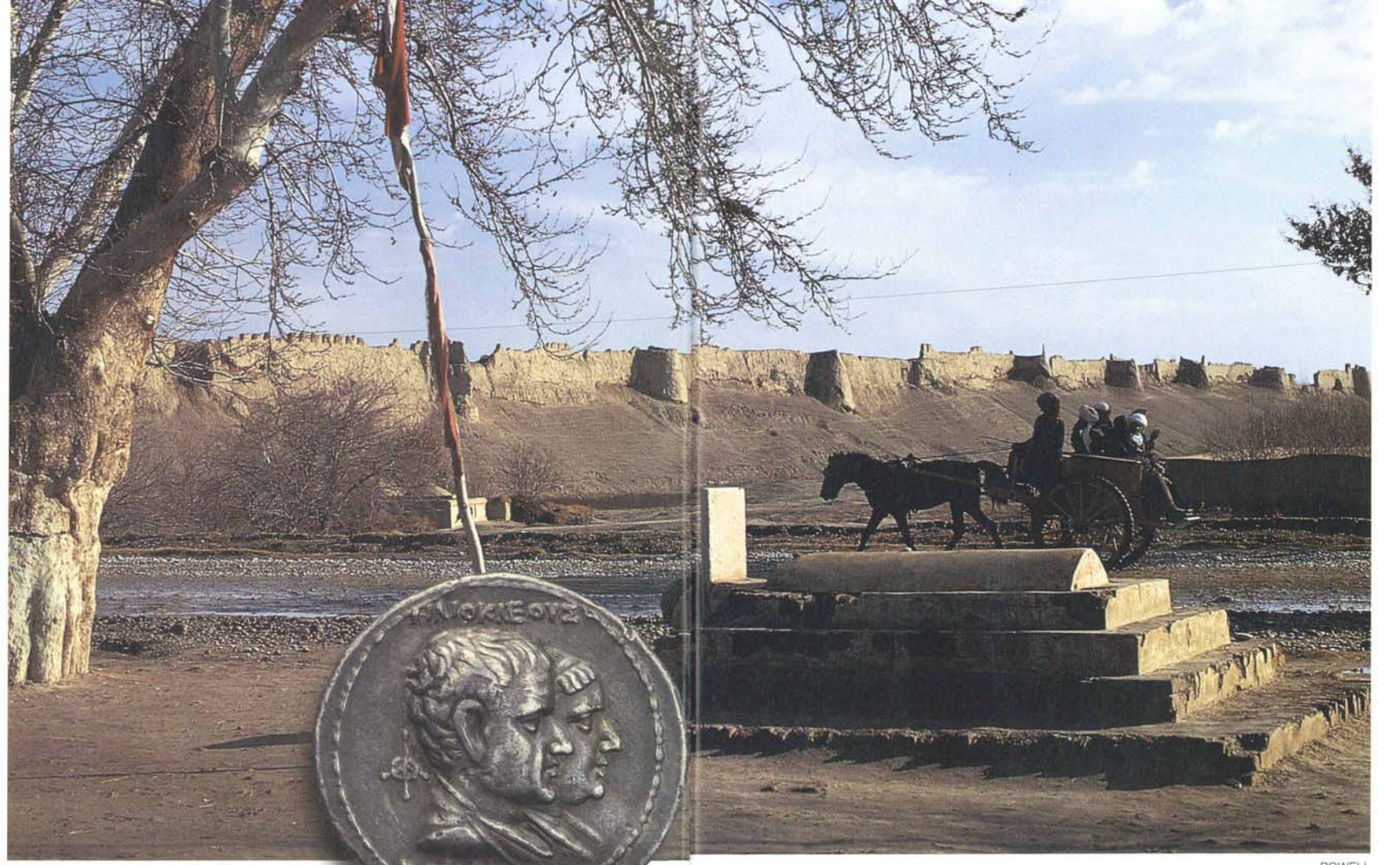
"pedigree coins," help us to set the reigns of the kings in proper order, from Alexander the Great to the ephemeral reign of a king named Pantaleon "the Savior." Three coins in the series are still unique, including two (honoring King Diodotus "the God" and King Pantaleon) only recently discovered; the list may yet grow longer. These rare coins have no numismatic parallel anywhere else, and they present to us the unexpected treat of an "official photo album" of the first monarchs of Bactria.

Even the discovery of coins of those few Bactrian kings known to us already from Western literature has opened our eyes in rather dramatic ways. Take, for example, King Euthydemus—one of the rulers commemorated by Agathocles and Antimachus. More information is recorded about Euthydemus than about any other king of Bactria, largely because we happen to have a 564-word description of a war he fought against the Seleucid emperor Antiochus the Great from 208 to 206 BC. Thus, we know that Euthydemus's family was originally from Magnesia in modern Turkey, that he usurped the throne by overthrowing the Diodotids, the first dynasty of Bactrian kings, and that he used his talented son Demetrius as an envoy to negotiate a truce with Antiochus. But how long did this upstart Euthydemus really last in rough-and-tumble Bactria?

Only his coins testify to the length of his reign. The portrait on some of his tetradrachms suggests that Euthydemus was quite old when they were minted, a wise if weary king. But did he come to Bactria late in life, using his years of experience to seize the throne shortly before leaving the kingdom to his son Demetrius? The coin portraits speak eloquently on this matter, telling the tale of a *young* Euthydemus who became king in his teens or early twenties, and who kept the crown until he had lost his teeth and some of his hair over the course of a very long reign.

Another Bactrian king about whom we know a little from ancient literature is a man named Eucratides. A brief description of his reign is given by a later Roman writer, based upon a lost Greek original. The Latin summary tells us that Eucratides was a great warrior-king of Bactria who defeated King Demetrius of India, as recalled in the works of Boccaccio and Chaucer. Eucratides's victory was short-lived, however. We are told his wars drained Bactria of vital manpower, and eventually led to a great decline when Eucratides himself was assassinated by his own son; to compound the tragedy, the king's body was defiled by his murderous son, who drove over it with a chariot and cast it away unburied.

Though brief, there is great drama and pathos in this account. But as it stands, the story tells us all too little. When did Eucratides reign? How did he come to power? How great was his triumph in India? Who was the insolent and murderous son? Clearly, Eucratides was considered one of the most important of all the Bactrian kings, but we cannot begin to reconstruct his reign without direct recourse to our major informant—the silver and gold coinage which bears his name.



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POWELL

The walled city of Balkh, above, long thought the site of Bactria's capital, has yielded no Greek level, to archeologists' dismay. Foreground: A silver tetradrachm commemorates King Eucratides's father, Heliocles, and mother, Laodice, who wears a royal diadem.

It was a tetradrachm of Eucratides which prompted Bayer to publish that first modern book about Bactria in 1738. He took that coin, and the Latin passage summarized above, as the starting point of his work. We are still at it today, only with a lot more numismatic evidence to guide us. In 1838, for instance, James Prinsep first published a new and unusual coin type. It shows Eucratides on the obverse—the "heads" side of the coin—with the title "Great King," but in the nominative case, unusual in ancient Greek coinages. On the reverse—the "tails" side—we find two portraits, male and female, with their names in the normal possessive case: "of Heliocles and Laodice," but without titles of any kind. This extraordinary coin is another kind of Bactrian commemorative issue: It apparently honors Eucratides's parents, the only reasonable explanation for the use of nominative and genitive cases in this way: "The Great King Eucratides, son of Heliocles and Laodice." On some examples of this coin, Eucratides strikes a daring pose as he hurls a spear, symbolizing the conquest of what the Greeks called "spear-won territory."

Also of interest is an important feature on the reverse of these coins: Laodice, Eucratides's mother, wears a royal diadem, while his father Heliocles does not. These coins speak volumes about the origins and ambitions of Eucratides the Great. His father was not a king, but his mother was of royal blood. Whereas Antimachus and Agathocles had commemorated earlier kings like Euthydemus and Demetrius, and set themselves in that lineage, Eucratides honored a different heritage. He clearly rose to power at about the same time, but in opposition to Agathocles and Antimachus.

And then there is King Heliocles "the Just," whose coins were first discovered in 1786. He cannot be the same Heliocles who was Eucratides's father, since the latter wore no diadem and was never a king at all. But because of the ancient Greek custom of naming sons after their grandfathers, King Heliocles must be a son of Eucratides, and a successor to the Bactrian throne. Was it he who killed Eucratides? I think, upon the testimony of other coins, that the verdict is "not guilty." The killer was probably a younger son, named Plato of all things, the only Bactrian king of this period who decorated his coins with a chariot scene that seems to boast of the desecration of Eucratides's body.

These commemorative coins of Eucratides are not his only types to excite the numismatic community. In fact, no single Bactrian coin has ever caused such a stir as his great gold masterpiece. This massive 20-stater coin is of the standard Eucratides type, with portrait of the king on the obverse wearing a commander's cloak, a royal diadem and a great plumed helmet decorated with the ears and horns of a bull. The reverse offers the king's usual type, two mounted horsemen—the heavenly twins, the Dioscuri of Greek legend—charging to the right. Eucratides's usual titles appear on the coin as well. It is not the style, exceptionally fine though it is, which makes this, in the words of one expert, "the rarest coin in the world"; it is the extraordinary size. At 63 millimeters in diameter (2½ inches) and more than 169 grams (six ounces) of Bactrian gold, it is the largest such coin ever minted in the ancient world, apparently to celebrate the king's conquest of Demetrius of India. There is only one specimen known in the world today—but that such a huge coin could escape the melting pot at all is amazing luck for us.

The unusual story of this coin's discovery can be tracked down through various newspaper accounts from over a century ago. In June of 1867, a French numismatist associated with the British Museum was dining with a group of collectors in London. One of the guests told about a strange encounter he had had that day with a shabby beggar trying to sell an ancient coin. He described a gold piece so large that all at the table agreed it must be a forgery. Yet, as the conversation drifted to other numismatic topics, the French expert could not get the gold coin out of his mind. Finally, in what he called "a fit of numismatic fever," he excused himself and set out to follow the trail of the beggar. When the two finally met late one night in a ramshackle London flat, the expert demanded to see the coin at once. The beggar explained that he had come all the way from Bukhara, where he and six others had found the coin. In a matter of minutes, he said, daggers were drawn and five of the men were dead. The two survivors agreed to smuggle the prize to Europe and share whatever price it brought. Then, his story told, the mysterious fellow took off his old coat, his shirt and his undershirt; he lifted his arm and pulled from his armpit a filthy, sweaty leather case with the gold coin sewn inside.

With an "electric shock," the numismatist held the coin and convinced himself that it was

no forgery—but he knew that he must conceal his enthusiasm as he bargained down the price. The traveler from Bukhara insisted upon £5000 for the giant coin; the expert handed it back and wrote a check ... for £1000, adding coolly that this was his offer for the next 20 minutes. After that, he said, "I'll give you only £800, and so on until I get to £500. If you don't close the deal tonight, tomorrow I will not take the coin at any price."

They stared at each other for more than 19 minutes. Then the beggar snatched the check for £1000, and handed over the coin. "This," reported the numismatist to the newspapers, "is the rarest coin in the world, and the one for which the highest price has been paid. Since it cost the lives of five men, I do not think anything more was paid for it than it was really worth. It ought to have been saved for the delectation of numismatic amateurs in all times to come, even had fifty or one hundred lives been sacrificed."

If you have in mind some numismatic delectation of your own, however, do not ask to see the coin at the British Museum. Though associated with that great institution, the buyer was a Frenchman first of all. Through the special attentions of Emperor Louis-Napoléon, the 20-stater gold piece of Eucratides was immediately purchased by the Bibliothèque Impériale, now the Bibliothèque Nationale, in Paris.

To see any number of copies of this great masterpiece, simply look though the forgery trays of the major public collections in the world. Imitation, Eucratides would know, is the sincerest form of flattery. In fact, it is an ancient look-alike of Eucratides's coins which tells us something very important: the approximate date of his reign. Compare, for example, the standard coin type of Great King Eucratides with a coin very much like it minted by "Great King Timarchus." The coins of this Timarchus are exceedingly rare—only four tetradrachms are known—but they are very precisely dated by Babylonian clay tablets, which set his ephemeral reign between January 11 and May 14, 161 BC. Obviously, the coins show that one king had been copying the designs of the other; but which was the numismatic plagiarist?

The coins of Eucratides are often found in regions controlled by Timarchus, whereas we have never found the coins of Timarchus outside his own realm in Media and Babylonia—modern-day Iraq and western Iran. In addition, we can trace the evolution of Eucratides's coins from a simple style, without helmet and elaborate titles, to their grandiose, final form. The same is not true for Timarchus, who began his reign with the fully-developed types in question. So, which king was copying from the dies of the other? Timarchus, surely, who liked what he saw on the fully developed Eucratides coins circulating in his area, and copied the style outright for himself. In this way, the coins tell on Timarchus, and tell us that Eucratides must have become king of Bactria, and developed his grand coin types, before 161 BC.

You cannot study these coins very long without wanting to learn all that is possible about the kings who minted them. Watching them grow old from coin to coin, witnessing their clever efforts to commemorate their forebears or celebrate great victories, reading in silver and gold their stories of cultural contacts with other peoples—all of this is a numismatic marvel, and it makes you want to know more. What, for example, were the cities like where these kings lived and issued their coins?

Until recently, we could not know. For all the fables about Eucratides's "kingdom of a thousand cities," not one Greek town could be found in Afghanistan. Yet, for 250 years, the coins have been convincing proof that there must be ancient Greek cities under the dust of this distant region. Guided by the work of numismatists, our colleagues the archeologists set out long ago to find a Bactrian city to excavate. They looked hardest at Balkh, an old walled fortress thought to be ancient Bactra, the legendary "Mother of All Cities" and capital of the Bactrian kingdom. Archeological pioneers, such as Alfred Foucher of France, dug into this heap with the highest hopes and were sorely disappointed. No Greek level was found, and finally Foucher himself dismissed the whole idea as a "Graeco-Bactrian mirage." Despite the coins, most archeologists had given up the search by 1925.

Perhaps to find royal cities you must rely upon royal help; that, at least, is how it turned out in Afghanistan. In 1961, while hunting along the barren northern frontier of his country, King Muhammad Zahir Shah of Afghanistan chanced upon an unusual sight near the village of Ai Khanoum. Looking down from a hillside, he recognized between himself and the Amu Darya, which separates Afghanistan from the former Soviet Union, the outlines of an ancient city. Others had seen it before; in March of 1838, British explorer Captain John Wood had stood on this same spot and seen the outlines of the city barely inches beneath the dry soil. He later wrote: "The appearance of the place ... does indicate the truth of [Tajik] tradition, that an ancient city once stood here. On the site of the town was an Uzbek encampment; but from its inmates we could glean no information, and to all our inquiries about coins and relics, they only vouchsafed a vacant stare or an idiotic laugh." So the soil kept its secrets until King Zahir chanced upon the site again. The monarch investigated more closely, and the Bactrian mirage became concrete at last.

The archeological excavations at Ai Khanoum were entrusted by the king to a team of French experts led by Dr. Paul

ANS

POWELL

The great length of Euthydemus's reign is known only from his coin portraits, which range from his rise to kingship as a teenager, at left, through loss of teeth and some hair, to the twilight of his rule, captured at far right. Background: A settlement in modern Afghanistan's Kunduz Province—part of ancient Bactria—reflects the traditional Central Asian mix of nomadic pastoralism and sedentary agriculture.

Bernard. Until their important work was interrupted by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, these archeologists devoted many difficult years to excavating this now barren and remote stretch of ground. They uncovered a huge triangular city with sides a mile long; inside it were many typical Greek monuments, including a gymnasium, a theater seating 6000, various temples and shrines—some of them more Persian than Greek—excellent plumbing and a palace so large that the entire acropolis of Athens could fit inside it with room to spare.

And next to the palace, in the last years of digging, the archeologists found a royal treasury. The storerooms had been looted in ancient times; indeed, the whole city had been ransacked and torn apart. But in the rubble of these treasure rooms were found a number of precious and semi-precious stones, some unstruck bronze flans—the metal disks from which coins are made—suggesting the presence of an ancient mint, and smashed earthen jars labeled as containing tens of thousands of captured Indian silver coins. Yet from the entire excavated city barely a thousand coins were actually recovered by the patient archeologists, and most of those corroded little bronze pieces were simply the lost "pocket change" of the ancient inhabitants.

Fortunately, one hoard of 677 Indian-style silver coins was uncovered near the treasury, no doubt loot taken from one of the smashed treasury jars and quickly hidden by the plunderer. That hoard included the only known specimens of an extraordinary type of silver coin minted by Agathocles. Rectangular in shape, the coin bears images of the Hindu gods Samkarshana and Vasudeva/Krishna; the royal inscription appears in both Greek and Brahmi scripts.

In the kitchen of a Greek house unearthed just outside the city wall, archeologists discovered another hoard containing 63 Bactrian Greek tetradrachms.

One other hoard of about 142 Greek coins was found nearby by an Afghan farmer in the winter of 1973. Naturally, those coins found their way to the bazaars of Kabul, and quickly passed onto the international coin market—the fate of most Bactrian coins, which normally fetch high prices because of their beauty and exotic provenance. The more valuable pieces, including some "pedigree coins" of Agathocles, were sold separately and reached the auction houses of Europe. The remainder, plus a few stray additions tossed into the pile by one dealer or another, circulated together around Europe and the United States for several years. Coins traceable to this Ai Khanoum hoard still show up regularly in major auctions, and only a few have found safe scholarly haven in the trays of public museums.

Two other famous Bactrian hoards illustrate well the divergent paths that coins may take on their way from ancient mint to modern museum. In 1877, a princely cache of ancient coins and works of art was found in northern Afghanistan; over the next few years more objects were found, allegedly in the same spot, and added to the discovery. Eventually, the objects were sold to three merchants traveling from Bukhara to Kabul. After perhaps selling some of the goods in Kabul, these Muslim merchants continued on to Peshawar. Three days into their journey, they were attacked and captured by bandits. To divide their spoils evenly, the robbers simply melted down some of this treasure; other items of jewelry and statuary were cut into equal pieces. Fortunately, a British captain rescued the merchants and part of their treasure. The surviving coins and art objects were sold to various buyers in Rawalpindi, and later about 1500 coins from the hoard reached European dealers and collectors. Many objects from the Oxus Hoard, as it came to be called, now reside in the British Museum. Unfortunately, most of the hoard was dispersed before it could be studied properly, and some of the coins proved to be modern forgeries.

The world had better luck on August 23, 1946. On that day, a vase containing over 600 silver coins was discovered at Khisht-Tepe, in the Afghan province of Kunduz. Found and protected by border guards who were digging the foundation for a new stable, the Kunduz Hoard made its way safely to the Ministry of the Interior at Kabul. Among the surprises of this discovery were five huge silver coins minted by a King Amyntas; these are the largest silver coins ever issued by an ancient Greek king,

BM

This silver tetradrachm depicts King Antimachus in a Macedonian cap. Lost to history, Antimachus was rediscovered on a Bactrian coin in 1822.

Another silver tetradrachm shows Eucratides hefting a spear, symbolizing his conquest of "spear-won" lands. In the background is Afghanistan's Bamian Valley.

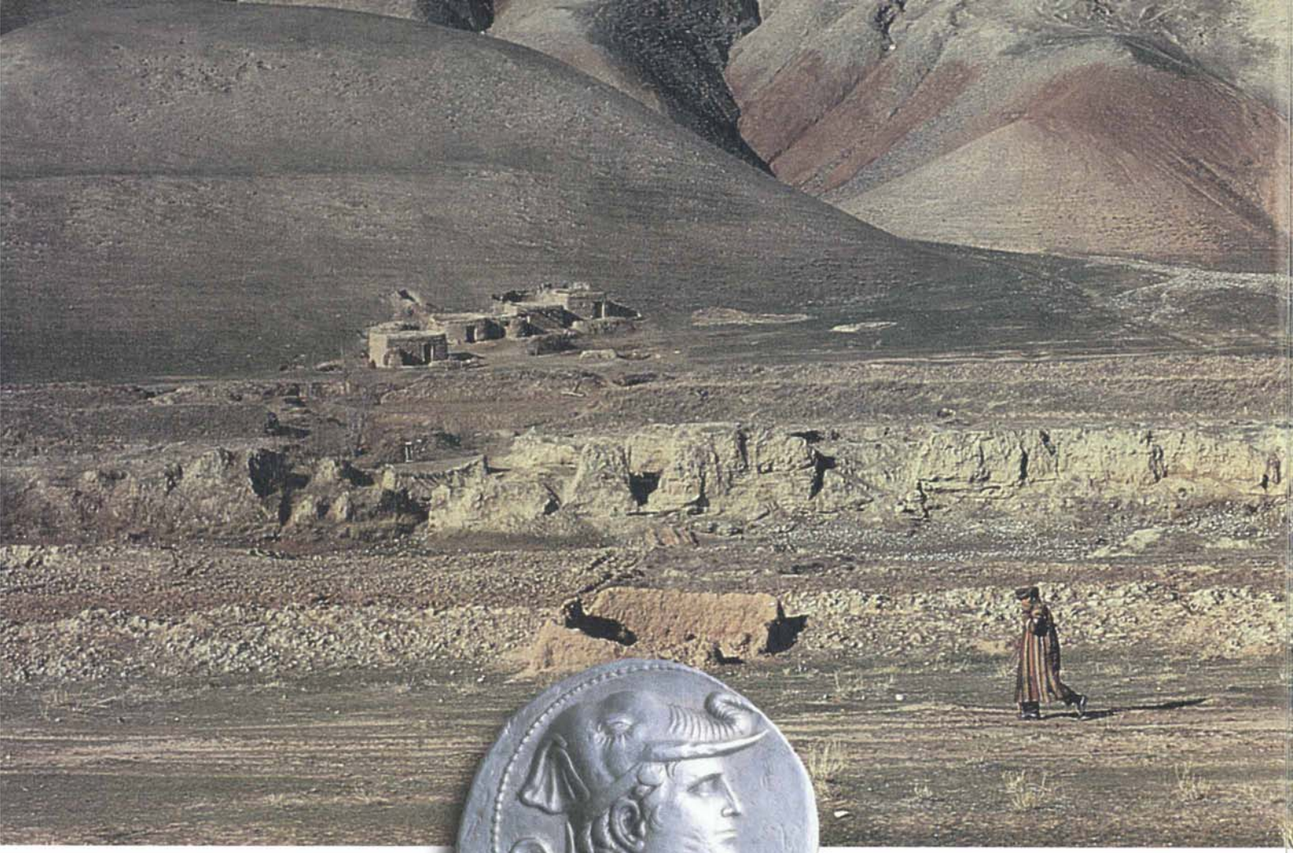
ANS

HAROLD SEQUEIRA

Sifting the Ashes, Again

As this article goes to press, I must add a tragic postscript on the future of Afghanistan's past. Reports and photographs indicate that the Kabul National Museum has been shelled and some of its antiquities looted—or destroyed. Rumors about the plundering of the numismatic collection abound, but no absolute confirmation has yet been possible.

Other Afghan antiquities have already been reported in the bazaars of neighboring countries, and one rare coin has allegedly been offered for sale to a European dealer. The country's patrimony, which has survived so much for so long, is not likely ever to be assembled again in one safe place as our witness to the past. The "library" of ancient Bactria has been burned, leaving us to mourn, and sift the ashes. —F.L.H.



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King Demetrius, shown on this silver tetradrachm wearing an elephant scalp in the style of Alexander the Great, added conquests in northwest India to his Bactrian realm. Background: Traveling traders, like this merchant in Afghanistan's Kunduz Province, have always been one of the ways coin types moved beyond the regions where they were minted.

and remind us of Eucratides's unrivaled issue in gold.

The Kunduz Hoard also contained 221 important coins of King Heliocles, the son of Eucratides. As a group, they now reveal a fact of special importance to the excavations at Ai Khanoum. We can see that the coins of Heliocles circulated actively in the Oxus Valley, because they comprised over a third of the coinage available to the unknown hoarder at Khisht-Tepe. Yet not one Heliocles coin was recovered from the Greek city at Ai Khanoum, which was therefore certainly destroyed before Heliocles became king of Bactria. The coins of Eucratides the Great are the latest to be found at Ai Khanoum, so the city must have fallen during his reign—in fact, in about 145 BC, if the regnal year inked on one of the treasury jars has been properly interpreted. We know, too, from Chinese sources, that in about 129 BC the envoy Chan K'ien found Bactria overrun by the nomadic Yüeh-chi, generally identified with the Tocharians. Thus, the Greek adventure in northern Afghanistan ended sometime between 145 and 130 BC, although Greek culture continued to influence the newcomers to a remarkable extent.

Thus Bactria's history in the tumultuous world of the Hellenistic Greeks can be read in silver and gold from beginning to end. Those of Alexander's soldiers who remained at their posts in Central Asia passed under the command of a new Macedonian lord, Seleucus I Nikator. Within a few generations, the Greeks in Bactria grew resentful of this Macedonian dynasty, and declared their independence from Nikator's successors. Thus, in the middle of the third century BC, Bactria became a separate state—a wealthy and powerful kingdom governed by two kings, father and son, both named Diodotus. It was against this dynasty that Euthydemus, in turn, rebelled toward the end of the century. We have seen how long Euthydemus lived and prospered before handing over the state to his son Demetrius.

King Demetrius opened a new era in Bactrian history by extending his dominion south across the Hindu Kush toward the Khyber Pass and India. Wearing the scalp of an Indian elephant to symbolize his success, Demetrius became king of both Bactria and northwest India. The coins also tell us that Eucratides, son of a non-royal father, rose to power and challenged Demetrius and other regal descendants of Euthydemus. Known to us only through numismatics, these defeated kings include little Euthydemus II, Pantaleon "the Savior" and the innovative coiners Antimachus and Agathocles. The commemorative coins have shown us how these last two kings tried to maintain their royal and religious claims to the Bactrian throne, but to no avail. The warrior-king Eucratides triumphed over his rivals, published his own pedigree and took the bold new title "Great King." To celebrate his victory, he struck the grand victory coin, and relaxed his guard just long enough to fall victim to a murderous son.

With the assassination of Eucratides, the eastern Greek cities of Bactria began to fall to the nomadic tribes of the Russian steppes. They plundered the treasuries newly filled with the booty of Eucratides's wars in India, and eventually they drove out his successors altogether. In the last decades of the second century BC, after the demise of Heliocles, Chinese envoys who passed through Bactria or Sogdiana found no Greek kings there.

Yet it seems possible that some of those intrepid Greeks remained in Bactria. Legends abound to this day of lineal descendants of Alexander's soldiers alive in the remote valleys of Afghanistan. As reported by one 19th-century explorer, some Afghans claim a more noble heritage: "The exploits of Alexander ... in this region have been preserved by legend, and are known to every inhabitant. Many of the petty princes in the mountain countries of the Upper Oxus claim to be descended from him." Their folktales remain filled with "Iskender," whose golden dam on the Zeraf-shan River accounted for the precious flecks which washed downstream to Samarkand, and whose war-horse Bucephalus sired the special breed of "Heavenly Horses" prized by the emperors of China.

As a continuing surprise, some part of that great adventure begun by Philip's dare and Alexander's daring continues into our own time. What Alexander and his successors tried to achieve in Central Asia can still be traced in the designs stamped upon ancient silver and gold, and the pulse of that remote past can still be felt in the lifeblood and legends of those—especially those in the lands of Bactria and Sogdiana—who never forgot at all.

Dr. Frank L. Holt, professor of history at the University of Houston, has a special interest in numismatic research.

POWELL

A Banquet for the Teacher

WRITTEN BY AILEEN VINCENT-BARWOOD
PHOTOGRAPHED BY JANICE RUBIN

The speaker drew warm applause. "Best workshop I've ever attended...," glowed the evaluation forms. "Fabulous materials!..." "A wealth of information...."

"An eye-opener!" added one member of the audience. "My bias and lack of knowledge came to light today." Another promised, "I intend to add some units on Muslim Spain to my Spanish-language classes."

The comments described a workshop for teachers conducted by educator Audrey Shabbas, executive director and founder of AWAIR, Arab World And Islamic Resources and School Services.

One of hundreds she has given nationwide in the last 30 years, the workshop sought to correct misconceptions about Islam and the Arab world, dispel stereotypes about the people of the region, provide sources for accurate classroom materials and offer curriculum aids and ideas. Over the years the workshops have attracted teachers, administrators, librarians, anthropologists, educational consultants, politicians, publishers, United Nations officials and educators from abroad; recently, most have been conducted in a joint program with the Middle East Policy Council.

In the cafeteria-auditorium of Fayetteville/Manlius High School in Manlius, New York, 33 teachers from around the state, two school principals, a writer, a school counselor, an education consultant, an anthropologist and two physicians gathered on a Saturday morning in October. They had come to learn more about Islamic and Arab culture, history, geography and language; they left with notebooks full of new teaching strategies and ideas for curriculum development, and they left without a great many common misconceptions about Islam and the Arab world.

Shabbas, a consummate teacher—vivacious, inspired and pleasantly informal—opened the workshop. "What I'm bringing you today," she said in a clear, firm voice, "is not meant to impose a curriculum that tells you to do this on day one and teach that on day six. Instead, I want to give you insights and strategies and resources that you will develop into your own classroom tools.

"How many of you are teaching about the Middle East right now?" she asked. About two-thirds of the participants raised their hands. "Then one of the questions you must hear frequently is: 'Who lives in the Middle East?' Right?" They nodded. "Well, today I want to give you an alternative way of looking at the Middle East that might prove useful in answering that question." During the Cold War, Shabbas said, Western nations tended to view the Middle East in terms of "good guys" versus "bad guys."

"Far better," she said, "to look at a region in terms of who lives there, and we will define the 'who' in terms of the language they speak." She showed the group a map of the Middle East and handed out a chart that listed the four major peoples of the region, their languages, countries and populations. She diagrammed how the Arab world as a geographical region fits into the larger Middle East, then added the far greater dimension of the Muslim world, seen as a community of faith rather than a geographical region, to her sketch.

It is a misconception, she noted, to think as many Westerners do, that Muslim is synonymous with Arab. "The former is a religious term, the latter cultural and linguistic. In fact, although Islam began in the Arab

heartland, in what is now Saudi Arabia, most Muslims today are not Arabs."

Nor do most Muslims live in the Middle East. The largest number in any one country—145 million—live in Indonesia. "And there are," she said, "90 million in Pakistan, and another 90 million in India." Six million Muslims live in the United States, she said, making Islam the second largest religion in the US, after Christianity. In all, there are one billion Muslims worldwide.

"Do all Moslems pray to a god called Allah?" asked one woman, "and believe in Mohammad?"

"Before we go any further," Shabbas said, "let's talk about some terms and spellings that lead to wrong assumptions. Much of what is taught in our schools about Islam, Allah and the Prophet Muhammad—even some of the transliterations of Arabic spellings and pronunciations—is incorrect, and some is actually offensive to Muslims."

She wrote on the board.

"For example, the word is *Muslim*, not Moslem. *Allah* is the Arabic word for God, not the name of a god called "Allah"; Arabic-speaking Christians and Jews use the same word for God. The name of the Prophet is transliterated *Muhammad*. It is the *Qur'an*, not the Koran; *Makkah*, not Mecca; and *jihad* does not mean 'war' but 'struggle,' usually implying a personal or inner struggle. Some textbooks now on the market have adopted these corrections."

People in the West, she said, generally fail to recognize Islam as part of the tradition of revealed religions that began with the prophet Abraham and continued through a line of prophets that includes Moses and Jesus. Muslims believe Muhammad to be the last of the great prophets in this tradition. Shabbas spoke of the similarities and differences marking the three great monotheistic religions born in the Middle East: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. To understand their similarities, the class was given a worksheet with 11 quotations, and asked to indicate whether the Old Testament, the New Testament or the Qur'an was the source of each one. The examples included:

We said: O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden, and eat of the bountiful things therein as ye will; but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression.

O Children of Israel! Call to mind the special favor I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all others.

Behold! The angels said: "O Mary! God hath chosen thee and purified thee—chosen thee above the women of all nations."

We sent inspiration to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David We gave the Psalms.

To everyone's surprise, all of the quotations were from the Qur'an.

Before long, it was time for lunch. An Arab feast catered by owner-chef Mike Ghabarou of La Cuisine, a Lebanese restaurant in nearby Syracuse, had been spread out at the rear of the room. The fragrance of *hummus, baba ghannuj, kibbeh* and *tabbouleh* enticed people away from their books—but not away from the absorbing discussions and questions, which went on throughout the meal:

"What does the Qur'an say about Adam and Eve?"

"What is the difference between Sunnis and Shiites?"

"What is the *shari'ah?*"

Earlier that morning, before the session began, Shabbas had explained how the workshops developed. She had become interested in teaching years before, while studying political science and international relations at the University of California at Berkeley. She was fascinated by the Arab world, began to concentrate her studies on the Middle East, studied Arabic and eventually became a social-studies teacher.

She married an Arab-American, and her personal interest in the region continued to grow. Long interested in anthropology and archeology, she found she wanted to know more about the region's history, the greatness of its past, and its 200 million inhabitants, who share a common heritage with the West. Audrey Shabbas set out to inform herself.

Over the next few years, she found that Western writings about the region were plagued with omissions, inaccuracies and misrepresentations, often the result of lack of research or first-hand knowledge. Not only were the Middle East and its peoples negatively portrayed in school textbooks from elementary to university level, but maps, dictionaries, encyclopedias, general reference works and the American news media were all liable to distort the realities of the Middle East,

Shabbas found. She began developing curricula for herself and her teaching colleagues.

In the mid-70's, Shabbas reviewed social-studies textbooks being considered for use in the California public schools. In response to what she and other reviewers found, *The Arab World: A Handbook for Teachers* was published in 1978. In that same year, Shabbas formed an educational consulting firm with two other educators, Carol El-Shaieb and Ahlam Nabulsi, and the three developed unique multi-media materials for elementary and junior-high classrooms. The materials garnered high praise from teachers and others who used them.

Out of these efforts grew *The Arab World Notebook*, of which Shabbas was principal author and co-editor with Dr. Ayad Al-Qazzaz, professor of sociology at California State University, Sacramento. The 460-page loose-leaf production, now before the workshop participants, contained a wealth of information on Islam and the Arab world, including facts on education, family, food, language, literature, folktales, music, archeology, the colonial legacy, Arab Christians, Arab women, oil, and the Palestine question, along with profiles and maps of the 22 countries of the Arab world.

The book also contained information about resources, video and slide sources, addresses, sample worksheets for students and—perhaps most important—a series of question-and-answer sheets to help teachers and students critically analyze what might be "loaded" language or biased commentary in textbooks and other educational material. Ever the teacher, Shabbas told workshop participants she was most proud of the fact that the book's lesson plans are used as examples by several universities in their education departments' "methods" courses.

In 1990, Shabbas founded AWAIR. The organization, whose Berkeley office is run by three full-time and three part-time staff members, attempts on a limited budget to provide film, video, teaching materials and resource information to anyone wanting them. AWAIR also operates a databank on curriculum resources and teaching materials. The non-profit group is funded by grants, tax-deductible private donations and contributions from organizations, including churches, peace-education and Middle East groups, and corporations—Saudi Aramco among them. AWAIR's advisory board includes members of the Arab-American and American Muslim communities, as well as academics and teaching professionals in various disciplines.

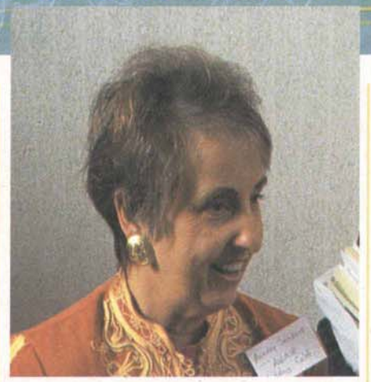
A final luncheon course of Arab desserts—*baqlawah, kunafah* and *bourma*—was consumed with delight. Then, one appetite sated, the teachers returned to their lessons to satisfy another.

Shabbas, drawing on personal knowledge, began speaking about the importance of the family in Arab culture, and common misconceptions about the role of Muslim women in that culture. "First of all," she said, "Arab and Muslim women are not, as some writers like to picture them, veiled, uneducated, oppressed or kept out of sight, nor do the majority of them share a husband with three other wives. The authors of such statements—and there are many, unfortunately—don't know Muslim women, Muslim history or Muslim customs and culture."

Such flawed and misleading generalizations, she maintained, ignored the fact that Muslim countries are lands of contrasts. Just as in the West, there are rich people and poor, traditional and Westernized, educated and uneducated. Islam does not advocate the subjugation of women or their relegation to a secondary role. The Qur'an, she noted, addresses "Muslims"—without distinction of gender.

In fact, well in advance of women's emancipation in Europe, the coming of Islam made revolutionary changes in the lives of women in sixth-century Arabia. Islam gave women the right to use their own names after marriage, to write their own conditions in marriage contracts, to own and sell property, to enter independently into contracts or sue others in court. Polygamy was always an exception rather than the rule.

What Makes Audrey Run?



"Why do I do this?"

Audrey Shabbas laughs, shakes her head and, in a rare moment of relaxation between one workshop and the next, ponders the question. "I do it because I'm a wife, a mother and a teacher. And I care very much about the next generation."

Shabbas is an ebullient woman, full of quick energy and good humor, proud to be the wife of Iraqi-American sociologist Baba Shabbas, director of a mental-health program for abused children in Berkeley, California, where the couple lives. She describes her husband as "a nurturing, loving man who has devoted his life to America's 'throw-away' children." She is also mother of three second-generation Arab-Americans—son Laith, 14, and daughters Sharifa, 23, and Jenan, 24, all strong supporters of their mother's work.

As a former social-studies teacher, Shabbas

is an ardent believer that teachers are a country's "vanguard of change."

"It's not politicians, philosophers, writers or the media who bring about change," she says. "It's teachers. If you give away 10,000 copies of a book, you've reached 10,000 people. But if you give the same book to 10,000 teachers, who each share it with just two other teachers, in a five-year period you've reached 25 million future leaders of this country."

Teachers and educators nationwide have conferred honors on Shabbas, named her twice to *Who's Who in American Education,* asked her advice and flocked to her workshops. In 1993 alone, she was invited to give workshops to 35 to 60 participants each in Texas, California, Arkansas, Utah, Oregon, Missouri, Kentucky, New York and Maryland. "My teachers and I came," said one high school principal, because "we felt bombarded with skewed points of view on Islam and the Middle East, and we wanted to correct our ideas and inform ourselves on other points of view."

"This makes me feel that I'm making a difference," Shabbas says. "By helping Americans transcend stereotypes of Islam and the Arab world, I'm adding to better global understanding and perhaps even to a world of peace and justice." The Middle East is once again a significant cultural, economic and political force, she points out; as such, it merits serious study in all American schools and universities.

"Unfortunately, much still needs to be done to make the portrayal of Islam and the Arab world in American textbooks more accurate," Shabbas adds, noting that while some textbooks have been revised and more undoubtedly will be, teachers bear the primary responsibility for providing accurate, current and suitable learning materials.

"AWAIR's workshops," she says, "and publications such as *The Arab World Notebook, The Arabs: Activities for the Elementary School Level* and *A Medieval Banquet in the Alhambra Palace* are meant to inform teachers, school administrators, publishers, parents and others who are concerned about quality education for our children." The National Geographic Society, National Public Radio, and the BBC World Service have all called teachers' attention to AWAIR'S expertise and materials.

Two honors Shabbas particularly cherishes: One is her selection in 1990 to represent Arab-Americans and American Muslims on an eight-person national task force to draw up the Equity and Multi-Ethnic Educational Guidelines for the United States. The other honor is the 1992 Janet Lee Stevens Award from the University of Pennsylvania for contributions to Arab-American understanding.

Asked about the future, Shabbas quickly sketches three of AWAIR'S major projects: A four-week summer institute on Islam to be held at Dar al-Islam in Abiquiu, New Mexico (See *Aramco World,* May-June 1988), partly funded by a federal-government grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities; a new work on the same subject as *The Arab World Notebook,* funded by a grant from the U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce; and a trip to the conference of the Near East/South Asia Council of Overseas Schools in Sri Lanka, where she and staffer Sophia Husain will give presentations to administrators of American and other English-language schools in those areas. "They teach the sons and daughters of diplomats, Foreign Service personnel and executives of transnational corporations, but many do a poor job of teaching about the very countries and cultures they're living in. AWAIR'S job will be to help correct that."

Then she looks at her watch, picks up her suitcase, looks hurriedly through her pocketbook for the airline ticket to her next destination, and says, "As for the future, you can say that doors are opening to us without our even knocking, and that our only obstacle is funding the staff we need to meet the demand for our services. And—oh, yes—I hope to do this for the rest of my professional life. Or at least as long as I can talk—and for a teacher, that's a long time!"

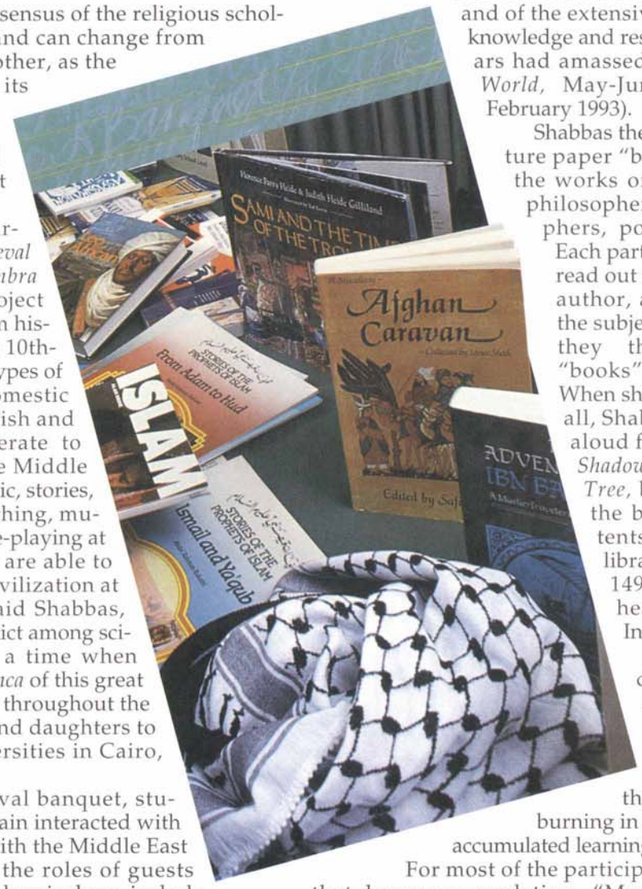
Many of the workshop's participants wanted to know about the *shari'ah,* the law governing Muslims. Again, Shabbas said, this had been misunderstood in the West. The *shari'ah* was not one law, but a series of laws, open to interpretation but informed always by religious faith. She listed its sources on the chalkboard:

The Qur'an: God's word as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. We may find an explicit answer to our questions here. If not, we look to ...

Hadith (Sunna): The collected, authenticated teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. If we find no specific answer here, we look to ...

Qiyas: Analogies as a way of applying the teachings of the Qur'an and the Hadith to the present problem. And we look to...

Ijma': This is the consensus of the religious scholars of the community, and can change from one time or place to another, as the community's ideas and its leaders change. Thus we have the details of the *shari'ah* interpreted differently in different Muslim countries.



AWAIR'S newest curriculum is called *A Medieval Banquet in the Alhambra Palace,* a "how-to" project intended to bring Muslim history to life for eighth- to 10th-graders. Students in all types of courses—art, shop, domestic arts, mathematics, English and Spanish classes—cooperate to learn about Islam in the Middle Ages. By producing music, stories, games, calligraphy, clothing, murals and food, and by role-playing at the banquet itself, they are able to explore Arab/Islamic civilization at its height—"a time," said Shabbas, "when there was no conflict among science, art and religion; a time when Arabic was the *lingua franca* of this great civilization, and families throughout the empire sent their sons and daughters to the great Muslim universities in Cairo, Timbuktu and Cordoba."

By staging a medieval banquet, students learn how Arab Spain interacted with the rest of Europe and with the Middle East and Africa. They play the roles of guests from all over the eastern hemisphere, including such historical figures as Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Thomas Aquinas, Ibn Khaldun, Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, Maimonides, Eleanor of Aquitaine, queens Arwa of Yemen and Amina of Zaria and queen-consort Zubeida of Baghdad, and geographers Ibn Battuta, al-Idrisi and Hassan al-Wazzan.

"Perhaps for the first time, students will understand that it was Islamic civilization that linked these disparate people," said Shabbas. Students long remember this "re-thinking" of history, she added, as they attend the banquet in the dress, say, of the Muslim physician-philosopher Ibn Sina (known in the West as Avicenna), or of the event's hostess, the Andalusian princess and poet Walladah bint al-Mustakfi. "They are not passively watching or reading: They are actively involved in the learning process," Shabbas said passionately, "and will therefore be affected in a way they will remember all their lives."

In a concluding class exercise that day, Shabbas spoke of the 800 years of Muslim Spain, of its great art, literature, music and science; of its hundreds of public libraries—70 in Granada alone—of the many original and translated works they contained, and of the extensive body of scientific knowledge and research Muslim scholars had amassed there (See *Aramco World,* May-June 1992, January-February 1993).

Shabbas then distributed miniature paper "books" representing the works of medieval Muslim philosophers, writers, calligraphers, poets and scientists. Each participant was asked to read out the book title and its author, and tell a bit about the subject. Having done so, they then placed their "books" on a copper tray. When she had collected them all, Shabbas began reading aloud from the book *In the Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree,* by Tariq Ali, about the burning of the contents of those fabulous libraries on December 1, 1499, by order of the head of the Spanish Inquisition.

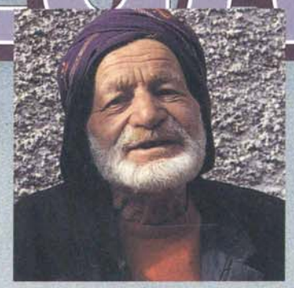
In a dramatic conclusion, she then set a match to the "books" on the tray. Shocked, the participants watched this symbolic book-burning in silence: 800 years of accumulated learning went up in flames.

For most of the participants, the workshop that day was a revelation. "My education, and my view of the Middle East, has always been from a Western point of view," commented Jeff Walters, who teaches 10th-grade global studies in New Hartford, New York. "As a social studies teacher, I really needed to know this."

Aileen Vincent-Barwood, former Middle East correspondent, newspaper editor and author, free-lances from upstate New York.

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEPHEN LEWIS

ISLAM IN BULGARIA



In the shadow of a nearby fratricidal war, Bulgaria's Muslim and Christian inhabitants struggle to preserve a legacy of tolerance.

Inset Photo: By the road outside Bogomilovo, a sign shows the Bulgarian lion breaking the chains of "Turkish oppression," and symbolizes the social stresses the country has yet to resolve.

Main photo: One of many hopeful signs of the end of a time of oppression in Bulgaria is a new mosque rising in a winter landscape near Avramovo. Inset: A spectator at a wedding in Ribnovo.

Bulgaria, a country of rich farm lands, spectacular mountain ranges, and a meandering coast of crowded resorts and deserted beaches, is both the cradle of Balkan Islam and the homeland of Slavic Christianity.

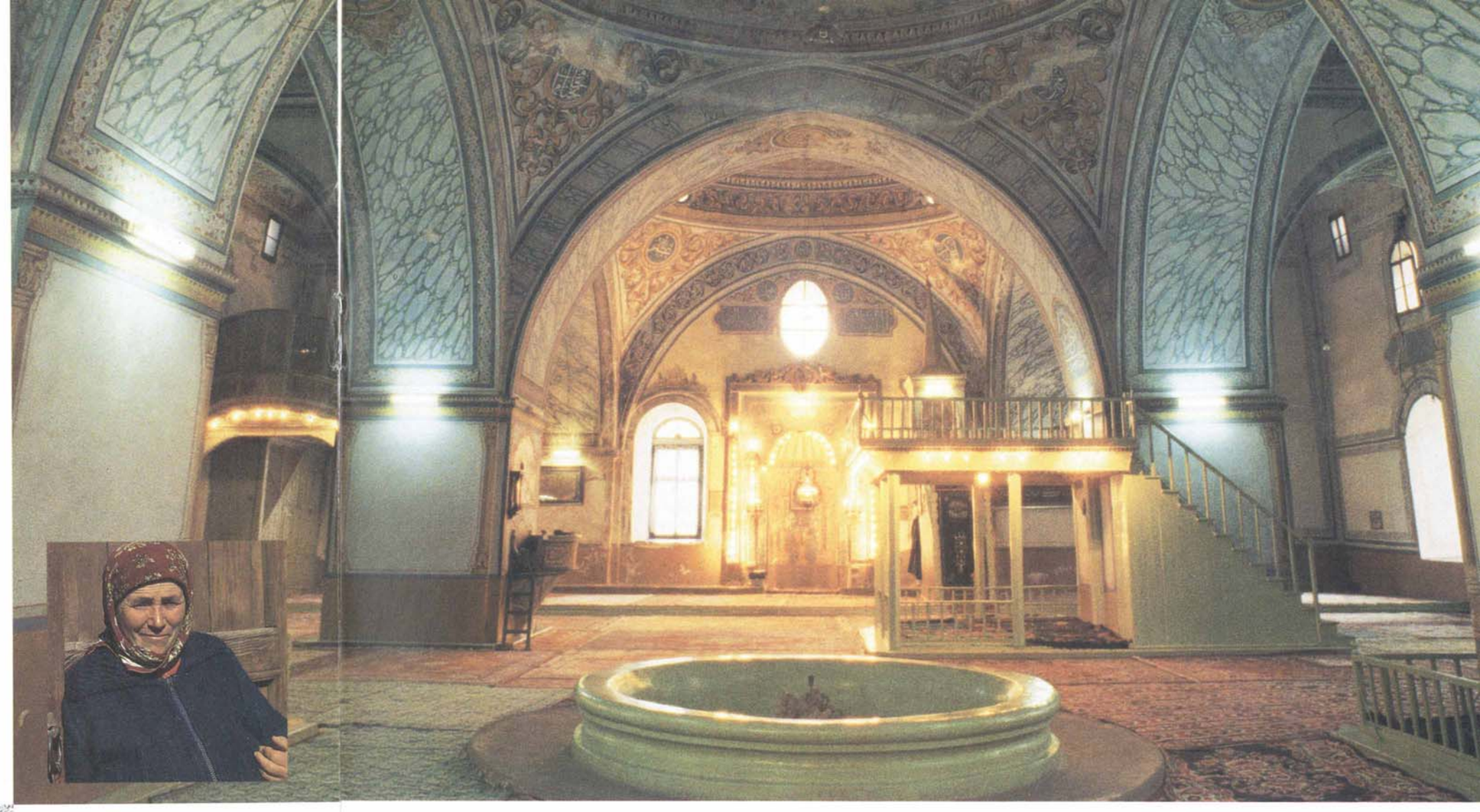
Wedged between Romania, Yugoslavia's fragments, Greece, Turkey and the Black Sea, Bulgaria straddles the historic overland trade routes linking Europe to the Aegean and the Muslim East. For three millennia, Bulgaria has absorbed waves of conquerors and migrants—Greeks and Romans, Avars and Pecenegs, Slavs and Bulgars, Seljuk and Ottoman Turks, Romanies, Jews, and Armenians—creating a society in which peoples of differing cultures, traditions, and beliefs could dwell side by side undisturbed.

Nobel laureate Elias Canetti, writing of his turn-of-the-century childhood in the Bulgarian city of Ruschük—present-day Ruse—captured the tranquillity and diversity that characterized the land of his birth: "Ruschük...was a marvelous city.... People of the most varied backgrounds lived there; on any one day you could hear seven or eight languages. Aside from Bulgarians...there were Turks, who lived in their own neighborhood; next to it was the neighborhood of the Sephardim, the Spanish Jews...and there were Greeks, Albanians, Armenians, and Gypsies."

Yet in 1989, Bulgaria's former government flew in the face of the country's centuries-long history of tolerance and caused the mass exodus of some 300,000 Muslim Bulgarian citizens, most of them of ethnic-Turkish origin.

The flight, mostly to Turkey, of almost a quarter of Bulgaria's Muslim population—people whose ancestors had dwelt in the country for centuries—represented the culmination of the Bulgarian government's *prekrustvane* ("regeneration") campaign, the final phase of a two-decade attempt to pressure the country's Muslims to abandon their religion, traditions, language, and even their names, and "assimilate" into the ethnic mainstream of Bulgarian society.

The campaign drove a wedge between Bulgarians of differing backgrounds by citing the suffering of the Bulgarian nation under "the Turkish yoke"—a view of history rejected by most contemporary scholars—and lauding the role of Russia, whose armies ended more than 500 years of Ottoman rule over Bulgaria



The broadly-proportioned arches of Plovdiv's Jumaya Jamiya, above right, have a Seljuk flavor, but the mosque's interior decoration comes more from the north than the east. Süleyman the Magnificent's vizier commissioned the so-called Black Mosque of Sofia, at left. Above, married women wear their scarves to cover their hair completely; unmarried women do not.

with the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878.

But *prekrustvane* backfired grotesquely. By the autumn of 1989, dozens of factories were left without employees and scores of villages without labor to harvest the country's crucial hard-currency tobacco crop. In 1990, shortly after the fall of Communist Party boss Todor Zhivkov, Bulgaria's freely elected parliament voted to end anti-Muslim and anti-Turkish measures.

In the years since, tens of thousands of Muslim émigrés have returned to their native Bulgaria. Like many of their Christian compatriots, they hope their country's centuries-old record of tolerance and its new commitment to democracy will prove stronger than the sectarian and ultra-nationalist politics now erupting in parts of Eastern Europe.

It is uncertain exactly how many Muslims live in Bulgaria today. Spokesmen for the office of President Zhelo Zhelev speak of 1.2 million, roughly 15 percent of the country's total population—a figure some Muslims contest as too low. Although the majority of Bulgaria's Muslims are of ethnic-Turkish origin, at least 250,000 are of ethnic-Bulgarian descent (See box, page 26); roughly the same number are Romanies—Gypsies—a people who have lived in Bulgaria for almost a millennium.

Despite the traumas of the 1970's and 1980's, visitors to Bulgaria today encounter relics of a rich Muslim past and signs of a promising future. Many mosques have reopened and new ones are being built to replace some of those demolished, vandalized, or neglected beyond repair in recent decades. Across Bulgaria, Muslim schools or *madrasas* are functioning once again. From the rolling agricultural lands south of the Danube to the heights of the Rhodope Mountains, muezzins call the country's Muslims to prayer five times daily.

The history of Islam in Bulgaria dates to the 14th century, when the Ottoman Empire turned its might against the kingdoms of the Balkans. In 1361, the armies of Sultan Murat I captured the Byzantine city of Adrianople—present day Edirne in European Turkey—gaining a foothold on the Maritsa River and opening the way to the conquest of Bulgaria and the lands beyond. In 1363, Plovdiv—ancient Philipopolis, the richest city in Bulgarian Thrace—surrendered after a lengthy siege. The fall of the medieval Bulgarian capital at Veliko Turnovo in 1393 marked the downfall of a kingdom whose power had once rivaled that of Byzantium.

In the wake of the Ottoman conquest, Muslim administrators, soldiers, and civilians flocked to Bulgarian lands, followed by masses of Anatolian peasants, nomadic herdsmen, and Turkoman and Tatar warriors forcibly resettled to consolidate Ottoman control. The Turkish origin of the names of modern Bulgarian cities and towns, such as Karnobat, Pazardzhik, and Novi Khan, mark the route of the Ottoman advance; village names such as

Tatarevo denote the ethnicity of their first settlers.

The overwhelming influx of Muslim settlers into Bulgaria created a need for the complete infrastructure of Islamic life. Muslim and Christian craftsmen labored to erect new cities outside the walls of medieval Bulgarian fortifications and towns, and to build mosques, public baths, khans and markets.

This rush of building led to a new style of Muslim architecture: rough, pragmatic and immense, influenced by the Seljuk architecture of Bursa—the first imperial city of the Ottoman Empire—but lacking its delicacy and refinement. Early monuments such as the single-domed Eski Jamiya in Stara Zagora, built in 1409, testify to the dynamism and expansiveness of Muslim Bulgaria, as do the nine-domed Jumaya Jamiya of Plovdiv and later works like the 18th-century Sherif Halil Pasha or Tomboul Jamiya in Shumen, until recent years the largest mosque in Europe north of Edirne.

Much of Bulgaria's Ottoman architectural heritage disappeared in the hundred years between the end of Ottoman rule and the excesses of *prekrustvane*. In Shumen alone, more than 40 mosques were mentioned in mid-19th-century records; only eight remained in 1980 and three in 1989.

Those Ottoman monuments that still grace the towns and countryside of Bulgaria reveal the glory of the country's Muslim past and the ways in which Muslim and Christian traditions once touched and blended. The openness of Bulgarian Christianity to a pantheon of local customs also influenced Bulgarian Muslims, generating in both religions a singular lack of fanaticism and acceptance of diversity. From the outset of Ottoman rule, Muslim life in Bulgaria was concentrated in and around military and mercantile towns such as Sofia, Vidin, Shumen, and Plovdiv. In rural Bulgaria, Muslim and Christian traditions overlapped. Village mosques looked to Bulgarian churches as their architectural models. To this day, many rural Muslim and Christian places of worship look uncannily alike in their shape and the rugged masonry of their basilica-like exteriors. Their richly decorated interiors reflect the openness of all Bulgarians to the motifs and colors of nature.

In Bulgaria's larger cities and towns, the religious architecture of Muslims and Christians remained divergent, but their secular architecture—like their daily lives—became indistinguishable. The 19th-century residences of the hilltop old-town of Plovdiv, the merchant estates of the picturesque Christian town of Koprivshtitsa, and the *konaks*, or walled compounds, of the great Rhodope

Samokov's Bayrakli Mosque was built in the city's 19th-century heyday as a regional trading center.

THE MINORITY'S MINORITY

"You may write about us if you wish, but please do not try to prove we are Bulgarian." The speaker is Ali, a 37-year-old unemployed bus driver from Sveta Petka, a village of 3000 inhabitants perched on a windswept peak high in the Rhodope Mountains. Ali is speaking Bulgarian, the only language spoken in Sveta Petka. Neither he nor his fellow villagers speak Turkish, the language of Bulgaria's largest Muslim ethnic group. Yet to visitors, Ali first describes himself and the people of Sveta Petka as Turks.

A decorated ram, destined to be a wedding sacrifice, is carried through the streets of Ribnovo.

After repeated inquiries, he simply says: "We are Muslims, nothing more, nothing less—and there are no differences among Muslims."

Ali's reticence is understandable. Sveta Petka and scores of villages in the Western and Central Rhodope Mountains are inhabited by a people some call Pomaks: Bulgarian-speaking Muslims whose forebears accepted Islam during the centuries following the Ottoman conquest, and whose Muslim faith and Bulgarian roots have brought them recent harassment and persecution.

The origin of Bulgarian-speaking Muslims puzzles the country's historians and ethnologists, who wonder why, under Ottoman rule, some Bulgarians accepted Islam while the great majority did not. Theories abound. Some hold that Christianity never developed a strong grip high in the Rhodope Mountains. Others hypothesize that the Rhodopes—like Bosnia—were once home to adherents of Bogomilism, an anti-authoritarian Christian heresy, native to Bulgaria, and that the Bogomils embraced Islam en masse in reaction to persecution by church authorities and secular rulers. Still others look to intermarriage among Turkish Muslims and the native Bulgarians among whom they settled.

Margarita Karamikhova of the Bulgarian Institute of Ethnology explains that economics also played a role in motivating undetermined numbers of Bulgarians to accept Islam. Under Ottoman rule, Muslims paid lower taxes than Christians or Jews, and initially enjoyed privileges as traders. Acceptance of Islam brought a rise in social status and the possibility of a future in the Ottoman military or bureaucracy, as well as the chance to start life anew.

A more sweeping explanation comes from a chance acquaintance in a tea house adjacent to an immense new mosque being built on an exposed plateau above the mountain village of Avramovo—a handsome and intense man who later proves to be the mufti of the Rhodope city of Smolyan. Referring to the Qur'an, he looks into the eyes of his inquirer and explains: "After reading this most perfect of books, nobody could resist accepting Islam."

Whatever the origin of Islam in Sveta Petka — and in scores of Bulgarian-speaking villages in the

Sign identifies the regional mufti's office in Shumen.

Rhodope Mountains and adjoining regions in Bulgaria, Northern Greece, and ex-Yugoslav Macedonia—the hospitality offered by Ali and his family is quintessentially Muslim. It is Ramadan and, despite their daytime fast, Ali and his family insist on serving lunch to their non-Muslim guests. Homemade preserved meats, pickled watermelons, and glasses of thick raspberry juice are brought to the table.

Sveta Petka is one of the most intensely religious Muslim villages in the Rhodope Mountains. Like most men in the village, Ali prays five times daily. He is proud that his son, Mehmet, age 11, is learning to read the Qur'an as well as pursuing his secular studies. Ali, who is one of three men in Sveta Petka trained to slaughter animals in accordance with Islamic law, will realize a lifelong dream later this year, when he joins an excursion of Bulgarian Muslims on the pilgrimage to Makkah, becoming one of the first residents in the recent history of Sveta

Her scarf indicates that this woman of Sveta Petka is unmarried.

Petka to perform the Hajj.

From the 1970's until only three and a half years ago, it was not easy to be a Muslim in Sveta Petka. The regime of former party boss Todor Zhivkov attempted to "reclaim" Bulgarian Muslims from the ostensibly forced conversion of their ancestors. The mosque was closed, residents were forced to adopt Christian names, and overnight the village—originally called Lutovo—was re-dubbed Sveta Petka, after the medieval patron saint of the Bulgarian nation.

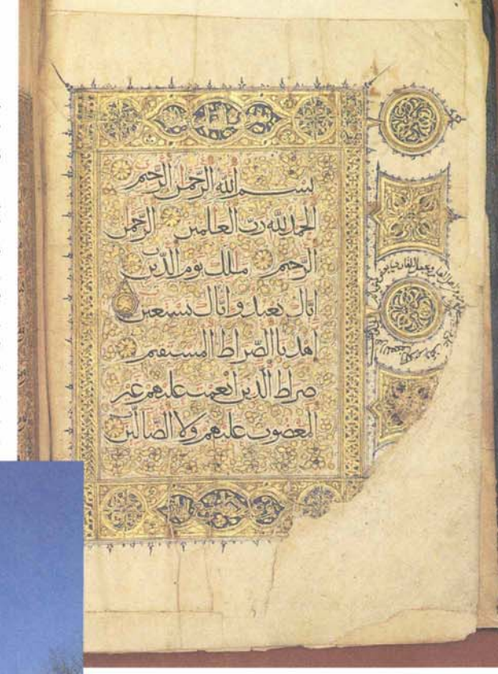
For almost two decades, circumcision was forbidden in Sveta Petka, as was the celebration of Muslim holy days. Soldiers and militiamen patrolled the streets to ensure that prohibitions were enforced, and in neighboring villages protesters were shot. Women were forbidden to wear their traditional dress of loose-fitting pantaloons under skirts or embroidered aprons; those refusing to abandon traditional attire were ejected from rural buses. Many chose to walk 10 or 20 kilometers to and from work or school each day rather than compromise Muslim codes of modest dress.

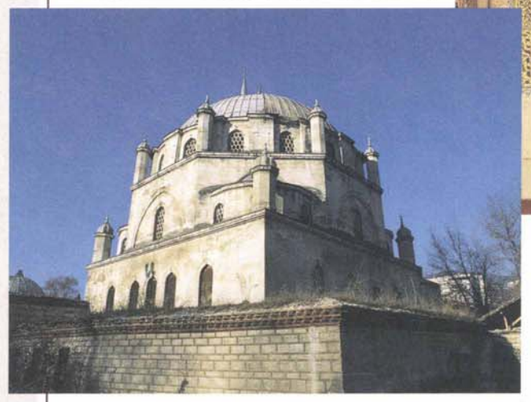
Today, the events of the past 20 years seem like a bad dream. Islam was strong enough to survive in Sveta Petka. The village's own imam, together with a second imam from abroad, leads prayers and instructs the young. Ali and his fellow villagers express no ill-will towards their Christian compatriots. They are too preoccupied with the problems and joys of daily life, the soaring unemployment that effects Muslims and Christians alike, and their preparations for weddings and feasts, high points of life in rural Bulgaria.

It is difficult to estimate the exact number of Bulgarian-speaking Muslims in the Balkans today. Preliminary results of Bulgaria's latest census place the country's ethnic-Bulgarian Muslim population at 250,000 or more but, according to Ilona Tomova of the President's Office for Minority Affairs, the precise number can only be guessed. Muslims, like all Bulgarians, now enjoy the freedom to identify their ethnicity and religion as they wish; some hide them in reaction to past persecution in their own country and the present events in nearby Bosnia, others make a point of their separateness.

According to Tomova, "In the Western Rhodopes, where Bulgarian Muslims live among Bulgarian Christians, they refer to themselves as Turks; in the Eastern Rhodopes, where they are surrounded by ethnic Turks, they stress their identity as Bulgarians."

Despite the strength of their beliefs, Bulgarian Muslims are caught between two worlds—that of the Bulgarian Christians to whom they are related linguistically and that of their ethnic-Turkish fellow Muslims. To complicate matters further, the arrival in the Rhodopes of Muslim teachers from Turkey, North Africa, and the Middle East gnaws away at local customs, even while strengthening the religious identification of Bulgarian-speaking Muslims.





Above, the frontispiece of the 13th-century copy of the Qur'an brought to Sofia with the body of the founder of the National Library's Oriental Department. Left, the Tomboul Jamiya in Shumen, one of Europe's largest mosques.

Mountain Muslim commercial dynasties provide examples of typically Balkan styles that both Bulgarians and Turks claim as their own.

In the closing years of Ottoman rule, Muslims turned increasingly to Bulgarian Christian architects and craftsmen to design and build their civil and religious works. The magnificent 19th-century Bayraklı Mosque (today a museum) in the industrial town of Samokov—once one of the richest trading centers in the Balkans—was decorated in Bulgarian folk style by local artists, providing a curious example of the fusion of two cultures. The ceiling of the Çarşı Jamiya in Ardino—a Rhodope Mountain town half of whose population fled Bulgaria during the 1980's—boasts spectacular carpet-like floral frescos painted long ago by Christian craftsmen from Plovdiv.

Bulgaria's capital, Sofia, is a sprawling city of one million inhabitants, picturesquely set at the foot of snow-topped Mt. Vitosha. At the center of the city—only a few hundred meters from the neo-Stalinist "wedding-cake" facades of the country's center of government and the palatial former headquarters of the Bulgarian Communist Party—a trio of domed sanctuaries almost identical in height, but dramatically different in style, face each other: the 19th-century rotunda-domed Church of St. Nedelya, the neo-Moorish Sephardic synagogue, and the 400-year-old Banya Bashi Mosque, fully restored during the 1970's.

The Banya Bashi is the only one of Sofia's historic mosques still open for prayer. Fridays at noon, it is packed with Muslims from Bulgaria, Turkey, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. The city's other remaining Ottoman mosques now serve different functions. The former Büyük Jamiya is now the country's National Archeological Museum. The handsome Bosnalı Mehmet Pasha Jamiya or Black Mosque—built during the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent by the great Sinan, the Michelangelo of the Muslim world—was deprived of its black granite minaret in 1905, when it was converted into a church and dedicated to the followers of Cyril and Methodius, patron saints of Bulgarian literacy.

Not surprisingly, the names of Cyril and Methodius adorn the facade of Bulgaria's National Library, whose Oriental Department comprises one of the most important collections of Ottoman manuscripts outside Turkey. At the core of the collection are archives abandoned by retreating Ottoman authorities during the 1870's and the contents of Bulgaria's great Ottoman libraries, such as the one founded in Vidin by Pasvanoğlu Osman Pasha, supporter of the Janissary movement and opponent of the 19th-century reforms of Sultan Selim III.

This September, the National Library will exhibit 23 volumes selected from the Oriental Department's precious collection of copies of the Qur'an used or transcribed in Bulgaria during the Ottoman period. The oldest volume dates

from 1271. It was acquired by Ivan Dimitrov, an accomplished linguist and scholar and the department's first director. As an officer in the Bulgarian Army during the Second Balkan War of 1912-1913, Dimitrov is said to have visited a mosque in Edirne during the fighting in that city. Muslims there, amazed to find a Christian who was conversant with Islam and could read the Qur'an, presented the volume to him as a gift. Some days later, Dimitrov was wounded in battle and died on his way back to Bulgaria. That copy of the Qur'an arrived in Sofia with his body.

Today, another generation of Bulgarian scholars—at the National Library, the University of St. Clement of Ochrid, the Institute of Ethnology, the National Monuments Authority and other institutions—continues to master the languages and traditions of their Muslim compatriots and of the long-vanished Ottoman Empire, whose history is so inextricably linked with their own. Sadly, they appear to be atypical of the majority of Bulgarians.

Physically, Bulgaria's Christians and Muslims have moved apart. Although many Bulgarian Christians nostalgically reminisce about how their parents or grandparents lived next to and knew the languages of Muslim Turks and Romanies, few have such first-hand knowledge today. As Margarita Karamikhova of Bulgaria's Institute of Ethnology explains, for more than a century Christians have migrated from the mountains to the lowlands and from rural Bulgaria to the growing towns and cities, a tendency far less pronounced among Muslims.

Muslims and Christians have also moved apart economically. Ethnic-Turkish regions have been devastated by the recent collapse of export markets for Bulgarian tobacco, and unemployment among Romany Muslims in some places approaches 90 percent.

Politically, Bulgaria's Muslims are in an ambiguous position. The country's two major parties—the formerly communist Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and the rightward-drifting Union of Democratic Forces (UDF)—largely ignore the interests of ethnic and religious minorities, and Bulgaria's new constitution forbids political parties based on ethnicity or religion. However, it is no secret that the country's third-largest party, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), headed by former human-rights activist and political prisoner Ahmed Doğan, attracts the support of the majority of the country's ethnic Turks and other Muslims. Its demonstrated ability to pull voters has made the MRF a coveted coalition partner courted by the BSP and UDF alike.

At this moment, the future of Islamic life in Bulgaria is uncertain. Extreme pessimists, like the Muslims of one village in southwest Bulgaria who stockpile food and blankets in their mosque "just in case of war," fear the eruption of hostilities like those destroying Bosnia. Others fear the rise of a xenophobic, anti-Romany, anti-Turkish, anti-Muslim cross-party coalition of ultra-nationalists. But such fears are far from universal. Many Bulgarians—Christians and Muslims—believe that their country is incapable of mustering the fanaticism that has turned their western neighbor, the former Yugoslavia, into a battlefield.

Dr. Ibrahim Tatarlı, an MRF member of parliament and a scholar whose pioneering works on the history of Bulgaria's Muslim religious shrines were banned during the 1970's, believes that the future of Muslim Bulgaria is linked to the re-establishment of Turkish and Islamic cultural and university-level educational institutions, such as existed up to the second decade of communist rule. Tatarlı is concerned that a clause in Bulgaria's constitution declaring Orthodox Christianity to be the country's "traditional" religion could provide potential legal barriers to the full revival of Muslim life. However, he tempers his concern by explaining to guests that Bulgaria has only just begun its transition away from a half-century of totalitarian rule and more than two decades of efforts to eject or force the assimilation of its Muslim minority.

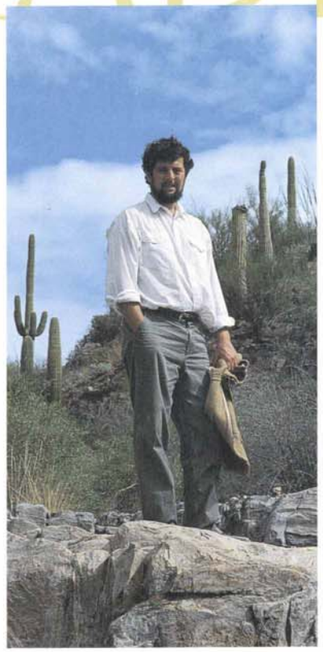
Perhaps the surest sign that Bulgaria's Muslims and Christians have the will to transcend the inheritance of the recent past and to continue their six-centuries-long history of mutual respect and acceptance can be found in the sentiments underlying the words of farewell this writer heard from both Muslims and Christians in a score of towns and villages across Bulgaria. Unsure of his nationality and religion, they took his hand and blessed him with the words, "May God protect you and keep you ... by whatever name you know Him."

Stephen Lewis is a New York- and Netherlands-based writer and photographer who makes frequent visits to Bulgaria, where he has participated in documentary film projects.

Builders inspect the interior of a new mosque in Kostadinovo, at left, built with contributions from both Muslim and Christian townspeople. At right, a young member of the wedding in Ribnovo.

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY GEORGE BARAMKI AZAR

CROSS-CULTURAL TRADER



Growing up among Lebanese fruit peddlers in Gary, Indiana, can actually be a good preparation for life exploring American-Indian agriculture in the desert Southwest. Ask ethnobotanist Gary Paul Nabhan.

"Because the Lebanese have played such a key role all around the world as cross-cultural traders, I think I had an intuitive sense of how to deal with people of a different culture—not in a paternalistic or dominating way, but simply offering the best from my own culture. My Lebanese family sensitized me to the possibilities of rich interaction with other cultures in ways that I don't think you could get from a dozen anthropology courses."

Nabhan's deep interest in ethnicity, his background in ethnobotany—the study of the relationship between plants and cultures—and his lyrical writing style have made him one of America's leading naturalists and most popular nature writers.

Recipient of a 1990 MacArthur Foundation "genius" award, Nabhan is writer-in-residence at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum near Tucson. In 1991, Sicily honored him with the Gaia Prize for his contributions to "a culture of the environment."

At 42, Nabhan is the author of eight books, including *The Desert Smells Like Rain: A Naturalist in Papago Indian Country; Enduring Seeds: Native American Agriculture and Wild Plant Conservation; Gathering the Desert;* and *Songbirds, Truffles and Wolves: An American Naturalist in Italy.* His most recent work is *The Geography of Childhood: Why Children Need Wild Places.*

Critics have called his writing "elegant," "passionate," "thoughtful and humane." He combines the trained eye and careful observations of a scientist with a poet's heartfelt sensibility.

Nabhan is perhaps best known for investigating the crucial role of beans and other legumes in the diet of the Papago Indians of Arizona and northern Mexico, and for co-founding Native Seeds/SEARCH in 1983, a nonprofit organization set up to preserve ancient American crops. Native Seeds/SEARCH maintains a seed bank in Tucson with more than 1250 varieties of native crops and their wild relatives, and distributes seeds to farmers and gardeners through its annual *Seedlisting.*

"The lotus seed, symbol of cultural wisdom, is a wonderful metaphor for our work in seed preservation," Nabhan says. "Something ancient, buried in our past, can germinate and find a new context, and be useful—even vital—in the future, very remote from the conditions under which that cultural wisdom emerged."

Nabhan was born in Gary in 1952 to a Lebanese father and Irish mother, and raised in the Lebanese community of Lake Michigan's Indiana Dunes, near Chicago. Nabhan's family had immigrated from Zahleh after World War I.

"Growing up eating lots of lentils, fava beans and garbanzo dishes predisposed me to seeing the cultural wisdom of legumes as a staple food. The different lentil and garbanzo dishes in Lebanese cuisine are a really good example of creating variety in cuisine by how one prepares things." He chuckles: "Legumes as a dietary foundation doesn't have to mean eating pinto beans every day."

Photojournalist George Baramki Azar is author of Palestine, A Photographic Journey, *published by University of California Press.*

Gardeners can obtain the annual catalogue Seedlisting *by sending one dollar to Native Seeds/SEARCH, 2509 N. Campbell #325, Tucson, Arizona 85719.*

WRITTEN BY SARAH SEARIGHT
ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF
THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

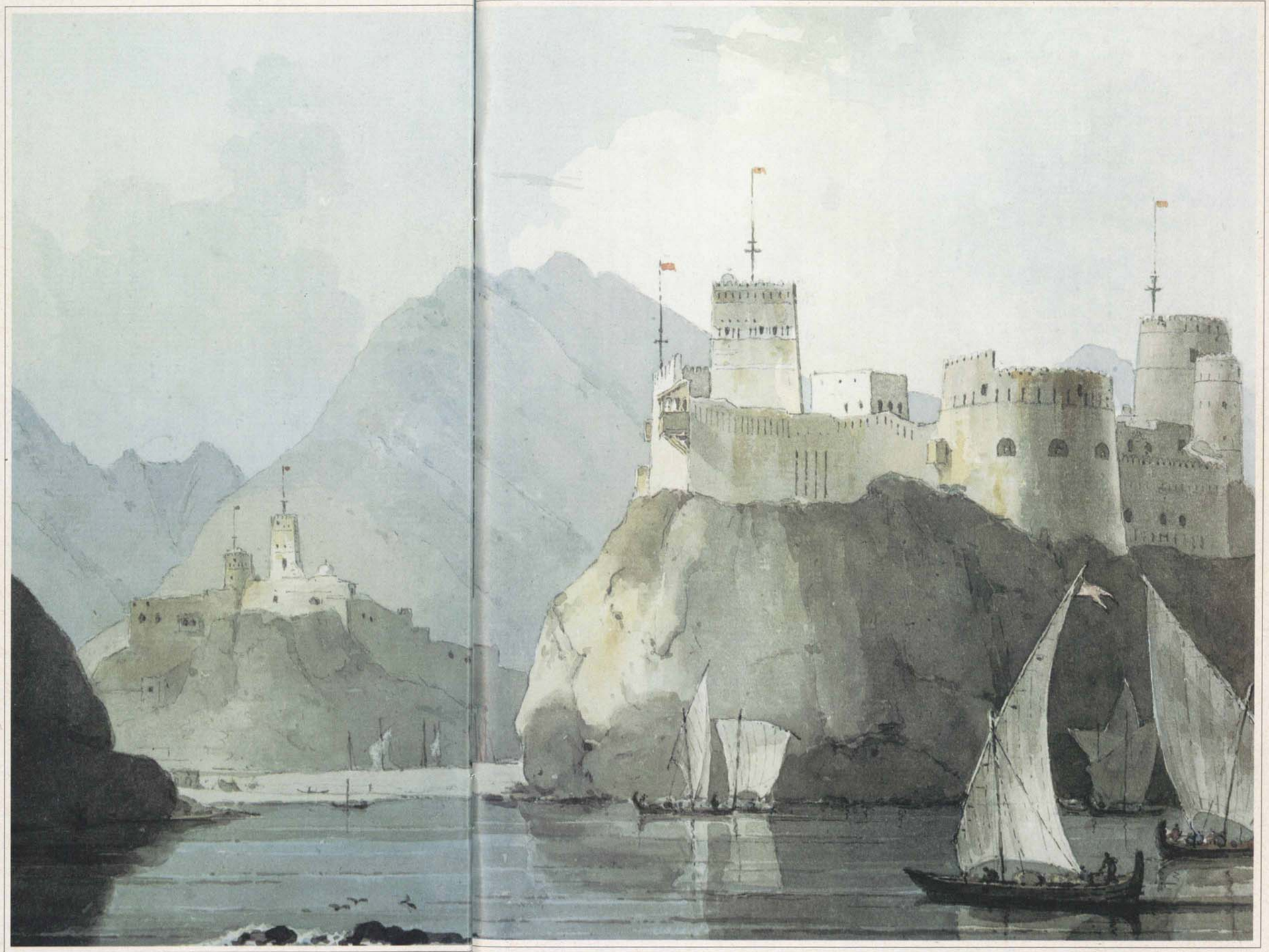
VISIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

"I BELONG TO A FLYING CORPS OF LIGHT ARMED SKIRMISHERS," WROTE W.H. BARTLETT, "WHO, GOING LIGHTLY OVER THE GROUND, BUSY THEMSELVES CHIEFLY WITH ITS PICTURESQUE ASPECT."

Bartlett was one of over 700 artists, writers and travelers whose works are included in my father's, Rodney Searight's, collection of "visions" of the Middle East. Many of those who trod more heavily upon the ground than Bartlett, living there over several years like Rodney Searight himself, also reveled in the picturesque of the Middle East, "those harsh, beautiful and strategic lands between Europe and India," as he described them.

Searight's enjoyment of the Middle East led in due course to his collection of watercolors, prints, drawings and books of the region, stretching in this context from Constantinople in the north to the Sudan in the south, west to the Maghrib and east to the Iranian border with Afghanistan. The Searight Collection was acquired in 1985 by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

The Middle East has fascinated Europeans since the days of Sir John Mandeville, a medieval weaver of imaginative oriental travel tales. An element of the fabulous has often affected European attitudes to the region, fostered in the 18th century by early translations of *A Thousand and One Nights*, with fashions for oriental costume stimulated by artists living in Constantinople. The mood led via such romantic poets as Lord Byron to the orientalism of the 19th century (See *Aramco World*, November-December 1984).

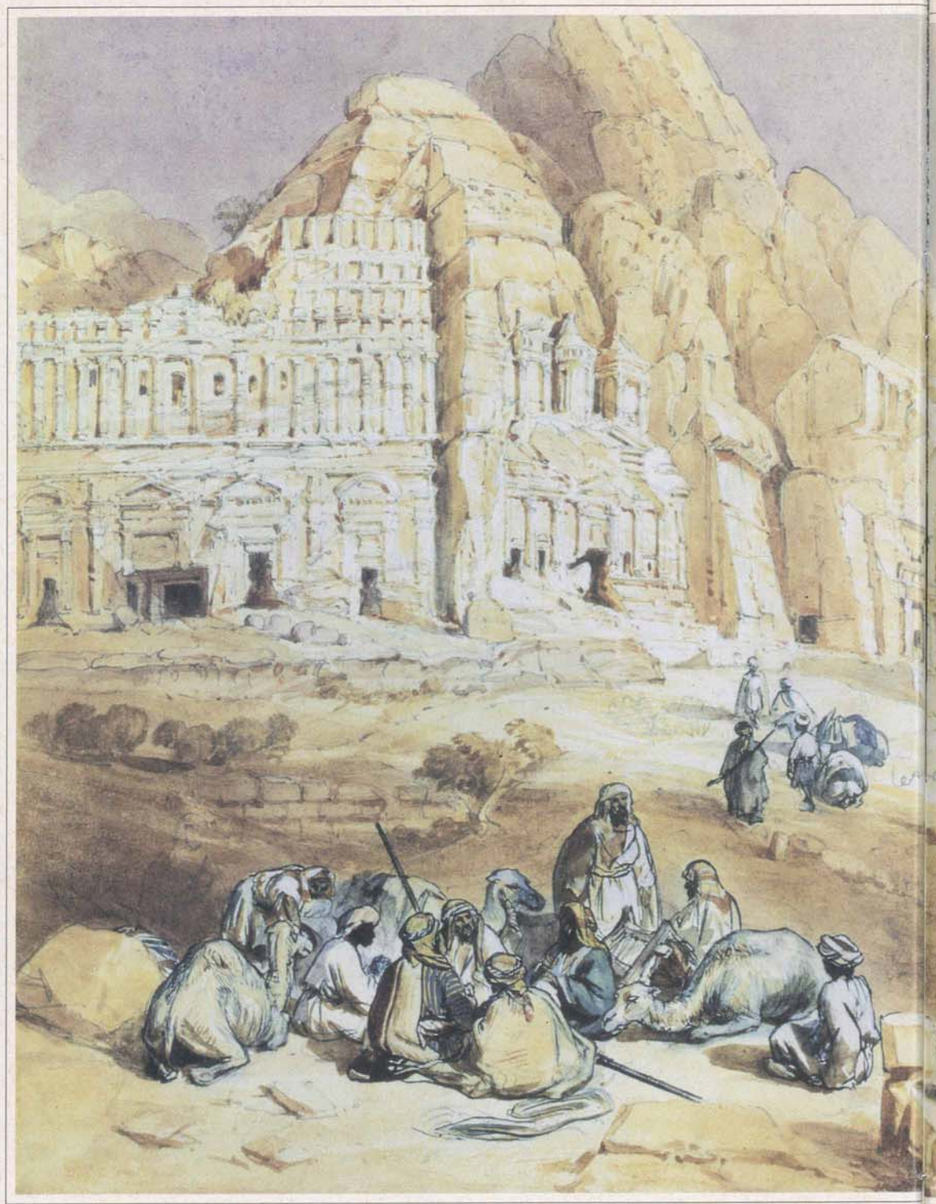


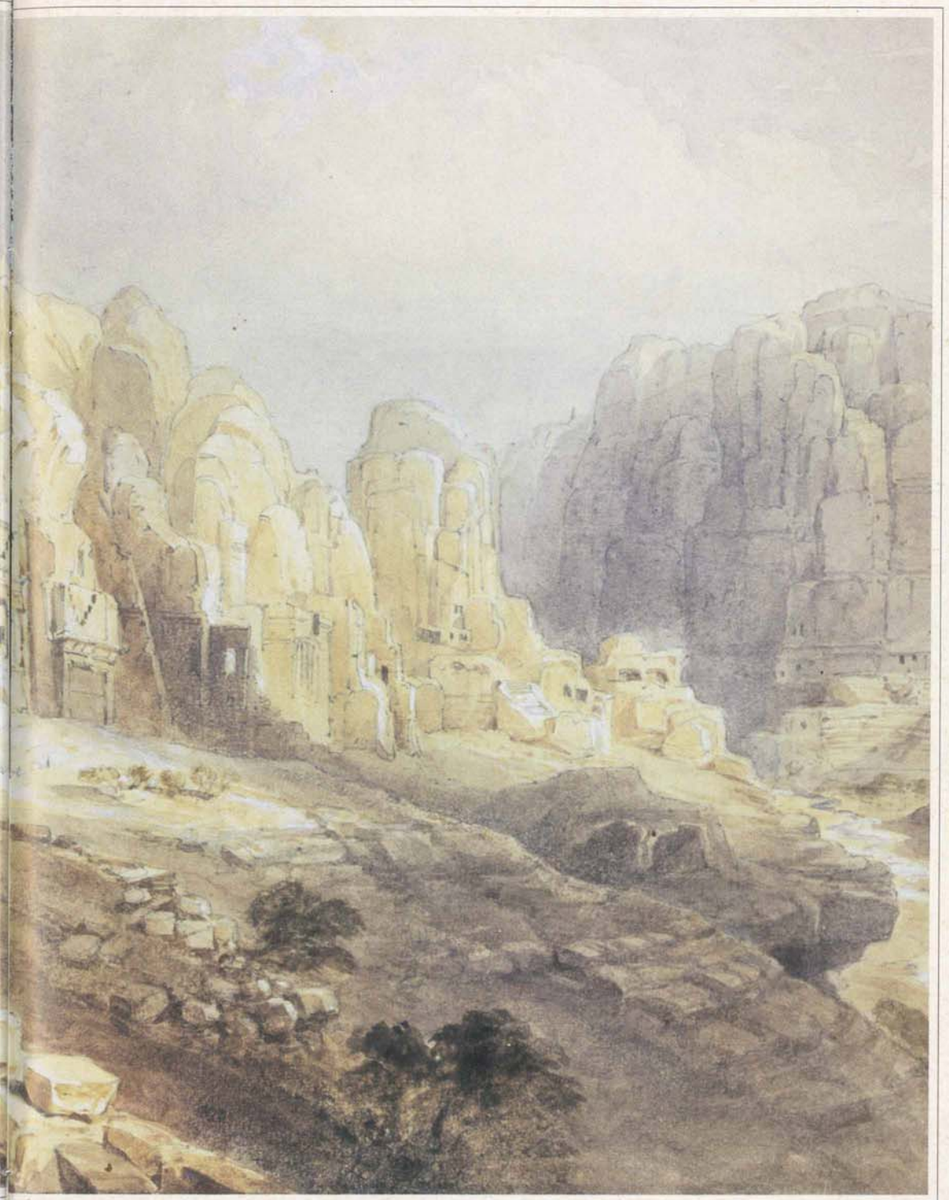
WILLIAM DANIELL, RA: *VIEW OF THE FORTS OF MARANI AND JALAI AT THE ENTRANCE TO MUSCAT HARBOUR*, 1793. WATERCOLOR OVER PENCIL. 22.3 X 30.8 CM.

But Searight always maintained that his was not an orientalist collection, with its implication of highly colored genre scenes—"houris all over the place," as he put it. Many of his artists were amateurs and, together with the professionals, more interested in the archeology, the architecture, the landscape of the regions through which they traveled than merely in its exoticism. They also covered a far wider region than the Near East of the orientalist, areas where only the more adventurous dared to tread.

European involvement with the Middle East took a new turn in the 16th century, with the forging of direct commercial links—connections that continue to this day and which, in fact, were responsible for Searight's stay in the region and his affection for it. That development was centered on Constantinople, capital and hub of the Ottoman Empire, and on such cities of the empire as Aleppo, Smyrna (Izmir) and Antioch. It is illustrated by several early prints in the collection, such as two engravings from a French travel account of 1551. Merchants such as Alexander Drummond and Alexander Russell produced illustrated books in 1754 and 1757 respectively—copies of which are in the collection — that reflect European fascination with a little-known part of the world, its manners and customs, its flora and fauna. Traveling outside the cities was dangerous as well as arduous, and only recommended to the intrepid. Local hostility to non-Muslims was reciprocated with an anti-Muslim bias that flavors most contemporary European accounts, such as that by a chaplain to the English community in Aleppo, Henry Maundrell, whose illustrated account of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem—also in the collection—was published in 1703.

As far as Egypt was concerned, few Europeans ventured beyond Alexandria before the late 18th century, though an exception is commemorated by a group of gouache views of the journey of an unknown Venetian magnate to Cairo about 1560-65. A later traveler was James Bruce, whose magnificently illustrated *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile,* in the collection, was published in 1768-73. Persia was also relatively unexplored, although the Dutchman Cornelius de Bruyn produced an illustrated account, *Travels in Muscovy, Persia and Part of the East Indies,* in 1737. Jonas Hanway's *Account of British Travel Over the Caspian Sea,*





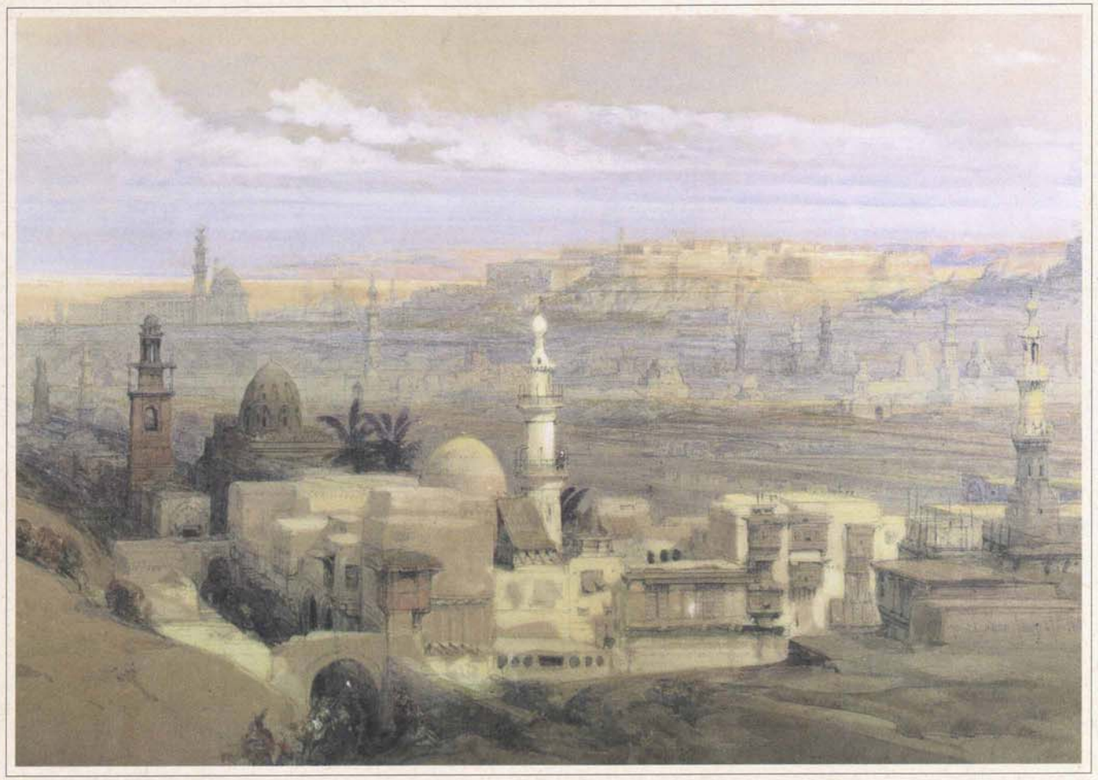
WILLIAM HENRY BARTLETT: *PRINCIPAL RANGE OF TOMBS, PETRA,* 1845-48. INK, WATERCOLOR. 22.3 x 35.9 CM.

published in 1753, gives enough hair-raising details of contemporary Persian anarchy to discourage any would-be traveler or trader. All these accounts are in the collection.

But from the moment of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798, ostensibly to interrupt British communications with India, Egypt assumed a central strategic importance in European eyes which prevailed until the Suez crisis in 1956. Napoleon's expedition included a group of French scholars commissioned to investigate every aspect of contemporary Egypt. The impact of their investigations was captured by the artist Baron Dominique Vivant Denon, whose independent illustrated account, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte,* was published in 1802, before their 20-volume *Déscription de l'Egypte* (1809-1822), and alerted Europe to the splendor of Egypt's antiquities. The invasion brought Egypt into the realm of European trade and politics, and its subsequent ruler, viceroy Muhammad Ali, dedicated himself to the modernization of the country.

Many pictures in the Searight Collection reflect the "opening" of Egypt to European investment, as railway and bridge builders, cotton planters and dealers, bankers and shipping merchants flocked to that country. Behind and in front of them, reveling in this extension of the Grand Tour, came the travelers, the tourists, the antiquarians, some of them en route to and from India, others on pilgrimages to the Holy Land and most as ready with pencil, brush, paint and paper as the modern visitor with his camera. Communications with India are well illustrated in the collection by paintings of the Overland Route through Egypt, by watercolors by Robert Moresby, sent by Bombay Marine to chart the dangerous shoals of the Red Sea, as well as by paintings of the Suez Canal and its construction, including a fine watercolor by William Simpson of Ferdinand de Lesseps's steam yacht *Mathilde.*

By the 1930's, when Searight arrived in Egypt to work for Shell, the European community there included several thousand people. During his time in Egypt a facade of Egyptian independence disguised not only the extent of foreign control but, more important, the resentment it caused among Egyptians. It seldom disturbed the congenial pattern of life of the expatriate



DAVID ROBERTS, RA: *GRAND CAIRO*, 1839-49. WATERCOLOR AND BODYCOLOR OVER PENCIL. 31.8 X 48 CM.

community, which amused itself with cricket at the Gezirah Club and picnics in the desert. The first question his new boss asked Searight, on his arriving in Cairo in 1931, was about his cricket prowess: "Do you bowl or bat?" A horse and donkey hospital founded during my father's years in Egypt by his mother, my grandmother, who was also living in Cairo, represented a real, if modest, expatriate commitment to Egyptian welfare. This endeavor, the Brooke Hospital for Animals, is still going strong, a philanthropic reflection of the interest in the Arab horse shown by such artists as Henry Alken in the 19th century.

Predictably, Searight always said, the foundation of his collection was a painting of Cairo—a watercolor of the city by David Roberts which he bought in 1960 for the princely sum of £52 10s. Other paintings of Cairo reflect his interest in the city where he lived so long, in particular one by the Englishman J.F. Lewis, who lived in a typical Cairene house for many years and adopted a Turkish lifestyle. In due course Lewis produced some of the most magnificent genre paintings of his time; one of the finest paintings in the collection is his "Scene in a Cairo Bazaar."

The collection also contains some interesting sketches of the Middle East campaign of World War I, including James McBey's "First Sight of Jerusalem" after the British defeat of the Turks in 1918. Searight spent much of World War II in the Middle East, and after the war lived in Cairo until 1951. His later career was spent mostly in London but he remained involved with the Middle East, and from 1958 to 1960 he lived in Iraq.

His observer's experience of Iraqi politics then was a reminder of the uneasy situation that had reigned in Mesopotamia in the 19th century. One of the few depictions of Baghdad in the collection is a lithograph by Robert Clive, published as part of a series on the region between the Black Sea and the Gulf in 1851 and 1852. A rare and interesting item on the Arabian Gulf is Lieutenant Richard Temple's lithographic record of 16 locations visited by a British expedition that had been mounted from India to suppress "piracy" in the lower Gulf. And one of the most valuable paintings in the collection is William Daniell's fine early watercolor of the entrance to Muscat harbor, painted after a visit in 1793.

A career in the oil world frequently took Searight to Iran, never a particularly tranquil country in which to travel, least of all in the 19th century. Many of those who did so were Russian or British diplomats and soldiers, more interested in playing the so-called Great Game of imperial rivalry between their respective countries than in pausing to sketch or paint.

Among those who did paint, however, was the Scottish artist Sir Robert Ker Porter, several of whose sketches are in the collection, as well as his *Travels in Georgia, etc.* published in 1821 and 1822. French artists Eugène-Napoléon Flandin and Pascal Coste accompanied a French embassy as official artists from 1839 to 1842, publishing their descriptions of Persia's ancient and Islamic monuments in eight volumes between 1843 and 1845; these and other books of their drawings are in the collection.

Retirement in 1966 put collecting at the top of my father's list of priorities, and in 1969 he held his first exhibition at Leighton House in Kensington, London, breaking new ground in demonstrating the breadth of interest 19th-century Europe evinced in the Middle East (See *Aramco World*, November-December 1973). Critical acclaim gave him the courage to continue expanding the collection, including contemporary volumes of travels, many of them illustrated with engravings of which he now possessed the original watercolors.

"Being a draftsman myself often helped me to recognize an artist's hand," Searight maintained; early years in a London office had been combined with evening art classes at the Chelsea Art School, and the walls of his apartment, laid bare when his collection moved to the V&A, were covered with his own drawings, including caricatures of Cairo friends and contemporaries. "To distinguish between amateur and professional is irrelevant," he stressed; an album of sketches of Turkey, already in the V&A, by a prolific and sensitive amateur, Selina Bracebridge—a friend of Florence Nightingale and well represented in the collection—was skillful enough to have been attributed to Edward Lear until Searight pointed out the error. Such gifts of recognition also helped him spot two unattributed pencil drawings of Cairo in the collection of a dealer as being by David Roberts, one of them a preliminary sketch for the finished watercolor mentioned above.

What emerges from the collection is a vivid reminder of the impact of both ancient and modern oriental culture on 19th-century Europe. Victorian coffee tables were laden with Finden's *Landscape Illustrations of the Bible*, a dozen volumes by Bartlett, a succession of editions of Roberts's lithographs of *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt and Nubia*, originally published from 1842 to 1849. Architects played with Egyptian facades, while the public poured into museum galleries to marvel at antiquities transported to the Louvre and the British Museum; the collection contains a watercolor of British traveler and self-

FREDERICK CHARLES COOPER: *RAFT CONVEYING WINGED BULL TO BAGHDAD*, PROBABLY CA. 1850. WATERCOLOR. 23 X 33 CM.

WILLIAM WIEHE COLLINS: *NORTH AFRICAN MAN IN TRAVELLING COSTUME*, CA. 1890-1910. WATERCOLOR OVER PENCIL, 22.4 X 14.1 CM.

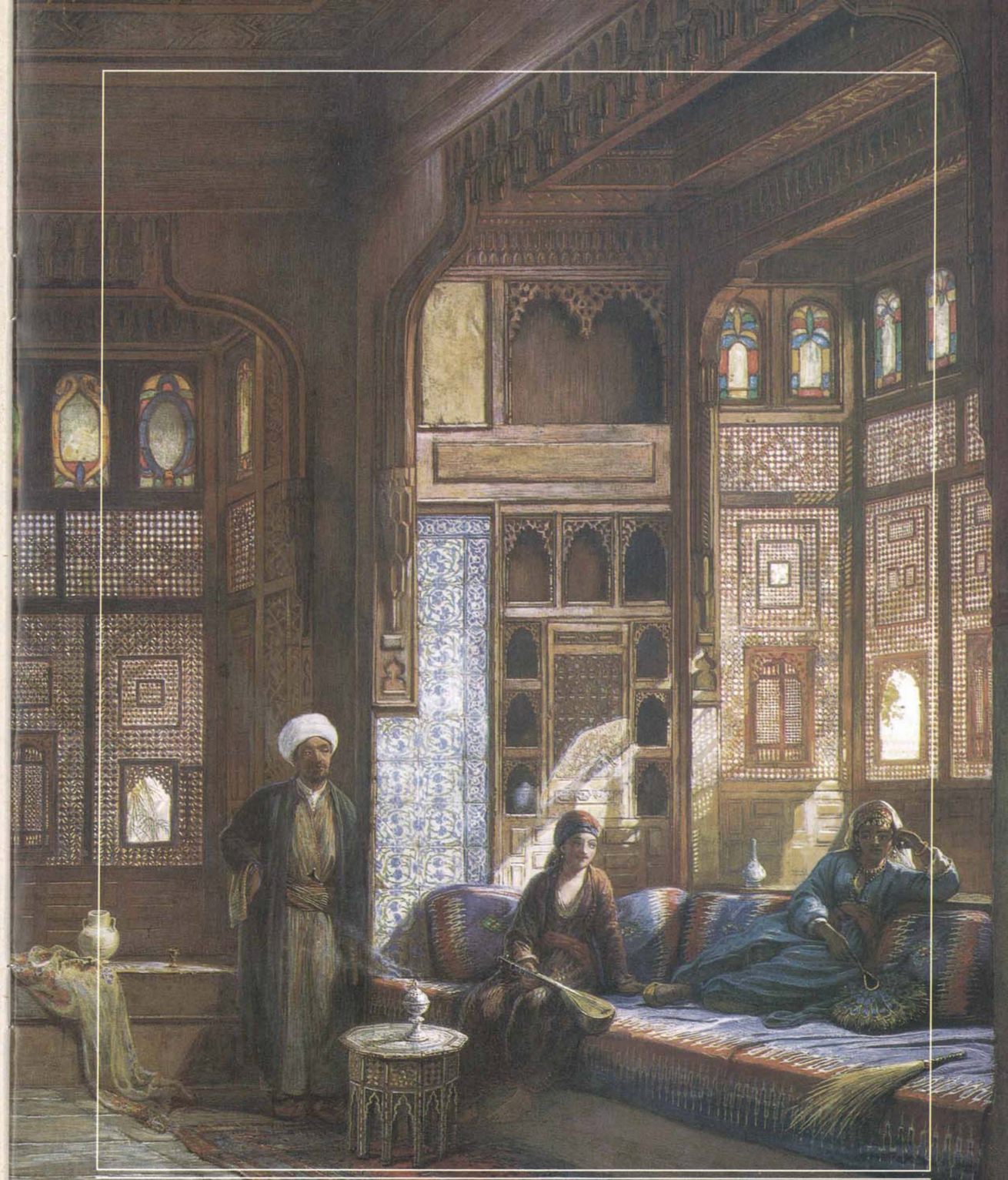
appointed archeologist Henry Layard floating an Assyrian bull sculpture from Nimrud down the river Tigris on its way to the British Museum. Or people visited contemporary "picture palaces" to be entertained by dioramas, a kind of slide show of the Near East, often of the Overland Route.

The range of contributors grew as the collection grew—soldiers, sailors, architects, archeologists, diplomats and engineers. "History and topography caught my interest quite as much as the artistic merit of many of my quarries," Searight wrote. Most of the artists represented are British but the collection also includes French, Italian, German, Swiss, Scandinavian, Spanish, Dutch, Russian and even one or two American artists. "They'd been drawn to the Middle East by the same attractions that had drawn me there, and also drew me to them—the architectural, archeological, topographical and human subjects so satisfyingly available in that part of the world."

Finding a home for so vast a collection—it comprised more than 2000 watercolors and drawings, several thousand prints and several hundred illustrated books—was a major problem, since Searight was anxious that it should be kept together. This the Victoria and Albert Museum was able to do—with help from Shell International Petroleum Company and other organizations—and there it may now be consulted, with the aid of a comprehensive microfiche catalogue compiled by Briony Llewellyn, Tanya Szrajber and Jenny Elkan. Plans are now being made for the collection to be exhibited in 1995 in the United States by the Smithsonian Institution.

Briony Llewellyn worked with my father on the collection for many years, and in her preface to the printed catalogue, published by the V&A in 1989, she calls it "unique as a pictorial record of the cultural interaction between the West and the Middle East before the widespread use of photography." It is a fine, broad view: one man's vision of many people's visions of the Middle East.

Sarah Searight, a Middle East specialist, is the author of The British in the Middle East *and of* Steaming East, *a record of travel between Europe and India in the 19th century. She would like to express her thanks to Briony Llewellyn for her cooperation and assistance.*



FRANK DILLON: *INTERIOR OF A ROOM IN THE HOUSE OF SHAYKH SADAT, CAIRO* CA. 1875. GOUACHE, 75 X 59.5 CM.

EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS

Forces of Change: *Artists of the Arab World.* This major exhibition of 160 artworks by 70 contemporary Arab women artists from 15 countries seeks to de-mystify the region and its women. National Museum of Women in the Arts, **Washington, D.C.,** through May 15, 1994; **Chicago** Cultural Center, October 23 through December 9, 1994; other venues.

Tribal Treasures: *Carpets and Jewelry From Central Asia.* The tribal culture of Turkmenistan and adjacent lands is explored in an exhibit from private collections. The carpets are famed for brilliant colors, elegant designs, and superior craftsmanship. The jewelry is frequently covered in gold and inlaid with carnelian or colored glass. Bruce Museum, **Greenwich, Connecticut,** May 15 through September 18, 1994.

Euro-Arab Book Fair. This year's event—the third held since 1990, organized by the Institut du Monde Arabe and Editions Sindbad—will feature not only books but also periodicals from the Middle East and Europe. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris,** May 24 through 29, 1994.

Current Archeology of the Ancient World. A series of talks on current research and discoveries. Among upcoming Middle Eastern or Islamic topics: French Activities in Sumer, May 27; Current Coptic Archeology in Egypt, June 10; New Excavations on the Turkish Euphrates, June 17; Occupation of the Syrian Euphrates and Khabur Valleys to the Uruk Period, Fourth Millennium BC, June 20; Monastery of Baouit (Middle Egypt), June 24. Musée du Louvre, **Paris.**

Indian Paintings and Drawings From the Collection of Howard Hodgkin. The variety and vibrance of India's artistic output from the 16th through 19th centuries are reflected in 42 exceptional works from the Moghul, Rajput, Pahari and Deccani schools. British Museum, **London,** May 27 through August 21, 1994.

A Stitch Through Time: *The Journey of an Islamic Embroidery Stitch to Europe and the New World.* The double running stitch is followed on its 700-year journey from Egypt and the Mediterranean world to Northern Europe, and from England and Spain to their respective New World colonies. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.,** May 27 through October 16, 1994.

From Hannibal to St. Augustine: *Ancient Art of North Africa From the Musée du Louvre.* Marble sculptures, mosaics, jewelry, vases and other artworks illustrate the history of North Africa from the Punic settlements of the third century BC through the Early Christian period. Emory University's Michael C. Carlos Museum, **Atlanta,** through May 29, 1994.

A Treasury of Indian Miniatures. Forty recently acquired works, including Moghul, Rajasthani, Pahari and Company paintings, will go on display to inaugurate a new museum wing. Museum of Arts and Sciences, **Daytona Beach, Florida,** through May 30, 1994.

Thundering Hooves: *Five Centuries of Horse Power in the American West* highlights the vital role of the horse and rider in settlement of the Hispanic Southwest. Much was derived from the horsemanship traditions of Muslim Spain, including the American western saddle. **Albuquerque [New Mexico]** Museum, June 4 through September 4, 1994; Buffalo Bill Historical Center, **Cody, Wyoming,** October 1, 1994 through January 1, 1995; other venues.

Teaching About the Arab World and Islam is the theme of teacher workshops cosponsored by the Middle East Policy Council in Washington, D.C., and conducted by AWAIR, Arab World And Islamic Resources and School Services in Berkeley, California. Confirmed sites and dates include: Texas Tech University, **Lubbock,** June 9; Ohio State University, Columbus, June 23; State Office of Education, **Salt Lake City, Utah,** June 28; Natrona County Schools, **Casper, Wyoming,** September 17; Clark County Schools, **Las Vegas, Nevada,** September 24; The Maine Collaborative, **Portland, Maine,** September 30, and **Orono, Maine,** October 1; Roland Park Country School, **Baltimore,** October 29; New Hampshire Social Studies, **Epping, New Hampshire,** November 15. For details, call (202) 296-6767 or (510) 704-0517.

The Maritime Silk Route, part of the UNESCO Festival of the Silk Roads, describes the ocean trade routes between East and West, and the Arab, European and Asian views of the world and their trading partners. The four parts of the exhibition, sponsored by Portugal and Oman, are called "The Real and the Imaginary," "Arab and Asian Navigation," "The Portuguese Approach" and "The Encounter." Musée de la Marine, **Paris,** through June 15, 1994.

The Arts of Islam. Persian manuscripts, miniatures and ceramics stand out in this survey of Islamic art. Works from Mamluk Egypt, Moghul India and Ottoman Turkey are also featured. **Minneapolis [Minnesota]** Institute of Arts, June 18 through December 4, 1994.

A rare set of royal earrings, perhaps from Andhra Pradesh, made in about the first century BC.

Florence and Herbert Irving Galleries for the Arts of South and Southeast Asia. One of the world's finest and most comprehensive collections of South and Southeast Asian art goes on display for the first time in new permanent galleries. Eighteen new rooms house some 1300 works of art from over a dozen countries, including India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Tibet, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia. "For much of the public, we are opening what will seem like a new world," says Martin Lerner, senior curator for the new galleries. "At last, we can display the great breadth and variety of this collection and convey the substantial cultural contributions of South Asia." The galleries, which opened on April 13, are distinctive in size, coloration and architectural detail, to place the art in context and give the visitor "a sense of traveling through time and space from India to Cambodia—from inner sanctums to open-air courts," says project manager Steven M. Kossak. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York,** indefinitely.

Metropolitan Museum of Art

Art of Nigeria From the William S. Arnett Collection. This exhibit, held in conjunction with this year's National Black Arts Festival, includes 100 of the Southeast's most important African art objects. Featured are sculptures from a country with a substantial Muslim population. Emory University's Michael C. Carlos Museum, **Atlanta,** June 22, 1994 through May 31, 1995.

The Crisp Appeal of Metal. This highly varied display looks at the arts and crafts of metalwork in the Turko-Indo-Iranian world from ancient times onward. Harvard University's Arthur M. Sackler Museum, **Cambridge, Massachusetts,** through July 3, 1994.

A Golden Legacy: *Ancient Jewelry from the Burton Y. Berry Collection* features some 150 pieces from the vast Berry holdings of the Indiana University Art Museum, ranging in date from 3400 BC to AD 1400, with an emphasis on the Hellenistic period. **St. Louis** Art Museum, through July 10, 1994.

Islam: *The Qur'an and Hadith As Texts for Understanding Islamic Tenets, Civilization and World View.* Secondary school social studies teachers take part in this four-week summer institute to study Islam, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and directed by AWAIR: Arab World And Islamic Resources and School Services. Dar al-Islam, **Abiquiu, New Mexico,** July 18 through August 12, 1994. For details, call (510) 704-0517.

The Grace of White. The color white—the sum of all other colors—was explored boldly and inventively by Persian and Indian artists of almost all periods and schools. Safavid, Moghul and Rajput artworks are among those considered. Harvard University's Arthur M. Sackler Museum, **Cambridge, Massachusetts,** July 23 through September 25, 1994.

Treasures in Heaven: *Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts.* The exhibition explores one of the Armenian people's principal artistic legacies in the context of Armenia's troubled history. Walters Art Gallery, **Baltimore, Maryland,** August 28 through October 23, 1994.

Before Persepolis: *Anshan in Highland Iran* details excavations at the site of the Elamite capital from 1971-78. Artifacts, photos and drawings focus on the Elamite federation and its prehistory, from 3000 to 1300 BC, as well as on the subsequent Middle Elamite and Achaeminid periods. University [of Pennsylvania] Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, **Philadelphia,** through August 31, 1994.

From Kuba to Kars: *Flat-Woven Textiles From the Caucasus.* Just as beautiful as the better-known pile rugs, the Caucasian flat-woven fabrics bear traces of Byzantium and Sassanian Persia, of Arabia and Islam and of the Central Asian Turks, as well as the Ottoman, Safavid and Russian empires. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.,** through September 4, 1994.

The Gold of Meroë. Some of the finest jewelry created in antiquity is featured in this collection recovered in the last century from the Pyramid of Nubian Queen Amanishakheto. On loan from museums in Berlin and Munich, the jewelry has been brought together for the first time, thanks to the reunification of Germany. Royal Ontario Museum, **Toronto,** through September 5, 1994.

A Moghul Hunt. This small exhibit explains how experts identified a 17th-century painting from India showing a young Moghul prince shooting an antelope. Smithsonian Institution's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.,** through September 11, 1994.

Turkish Traditional Art Today. The exhibition, along with related programs involving visiting Turkish artists, introduces the history, art and culture of modern Turkey, through 500 traditional artworks and 200 mounted photographs. Indiana University's Art Museum, **Bloomington,** October 26, 1994 through January 8, 1995.

The Orientalists, An Extended View. Traditional Middle Eastern artifacts of the 19th century are linked to four dozen prints of Orientalist paintings of the period. Nance Museum, **Kingsville, Missouri,** through October 31, 1994.

The Ancient Greek World. A new, long-term exhibition reopens the ancient Greek gallery after six years of renovation, and gives visitors a broad overview of the history and culture of ancient Greece and the lands that it influenced, including Turkey, Egypt and Libya. University [of Pennsylvania] Museum, **Philadelphia,** indefinitely.

Face to Face With Tutankhamun. The Egyptian boy-king's tomb is reconstructed in this permanent exhibition about Howard Carter's discovery. Tutankhamun Exhibition Center, **Dorchester, England,** indefinitely.

Galleries of Ancient Art: Egypt, Greece, Rome. A group of important Egyptian pieces unseen by the public for 50 years is highlighted in the reinstallation of galleries offering Chicago's only comprehensive permanent display of ancient Mediterranean art. Art Institute of **Chicago,** indefinitely.

The Saudi 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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S. FABRIZI: *MOSQUE OF SIDI BU MADYAN, TLEMCEN,* 1881. WATERCOLOR WITH GUM OVER PENCIL. 56.5 X 38.5 CM.