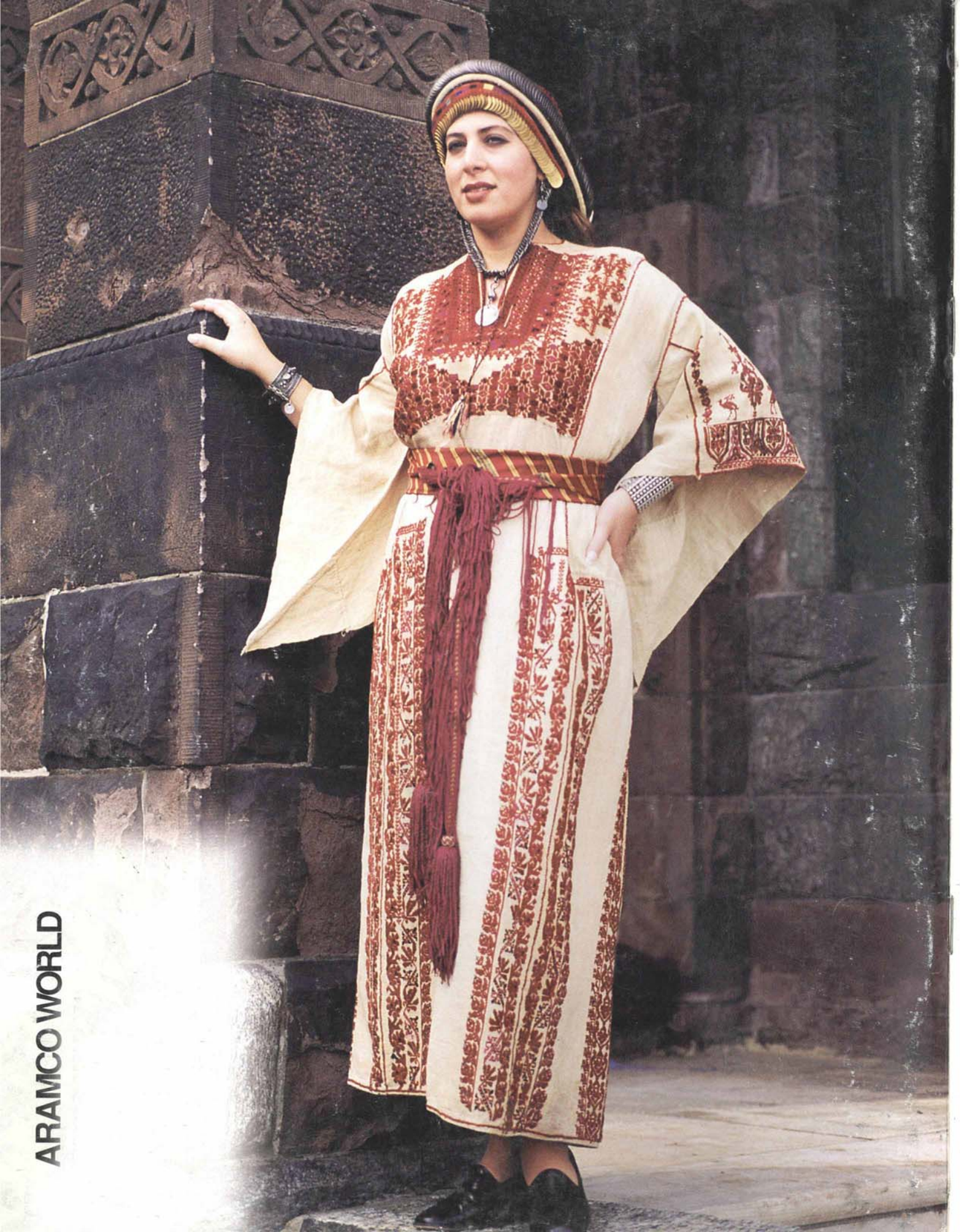
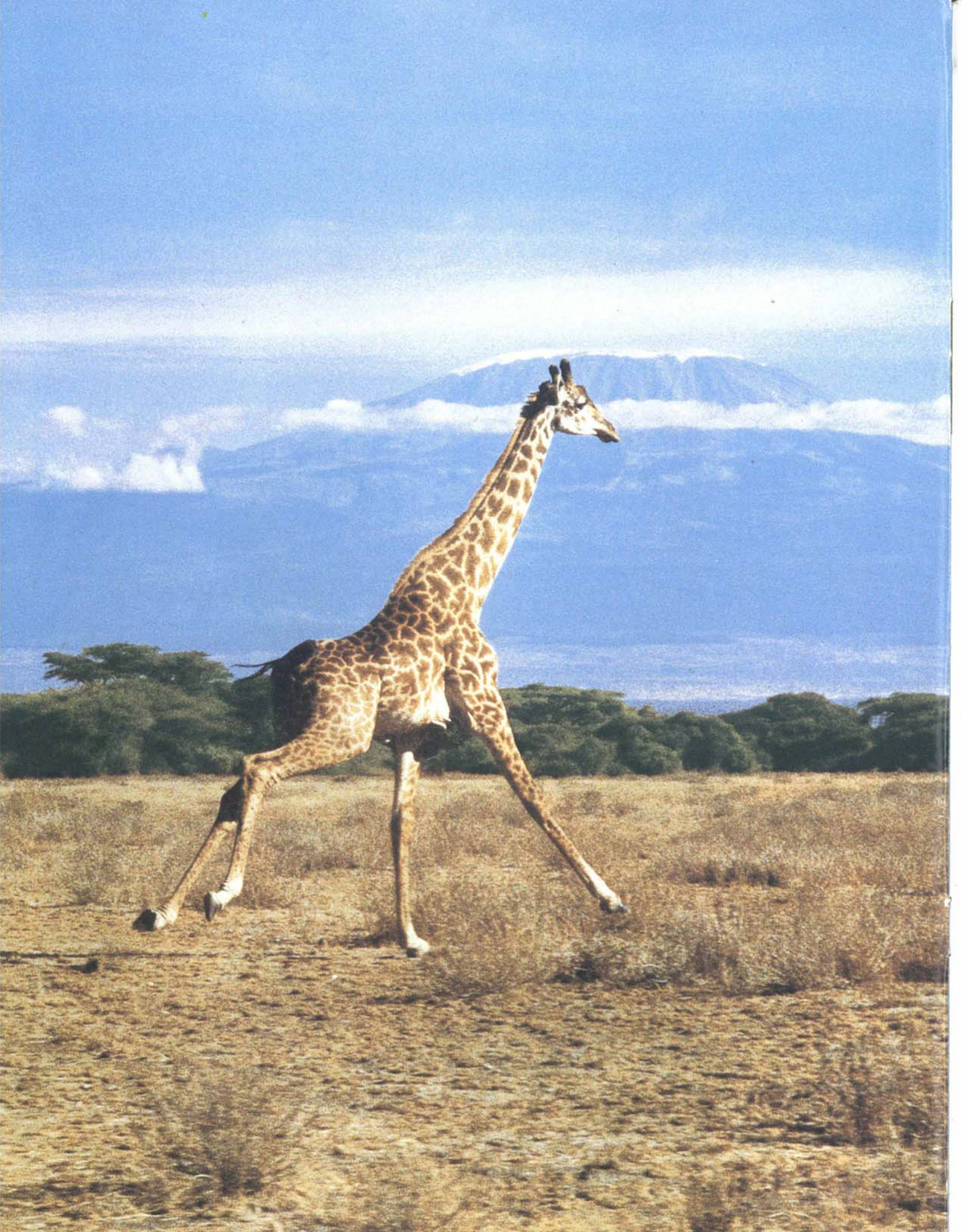


ARAMCO WORLD

ARAMCO WORLD

MARCH/APRIL 1997



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ARAMCO WORLD

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March/April 1997

COVER:
The "calligraphic school" of Islamic art, asserts the curator of the "Right to Write" exhibition, includes even entirely abstract works that use what seems to be Arabic calligraphy to invoke the power and unique resonance of the word in Islamic culture. An example is Burhan Doğançay's large untitled acrylic, whose "lettering" shifts from two to three dimensions. Courtesy Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts and Agnes Scott College.

OPPOSITE:
Mohamed Amin's photograph of a cantering Masai giraffe was part of his life-long effort to acquaint the West with Africa. Photo courtesy of Camerpix.

BACK COVER:
A handwoven white linen dress with extensive silk embroidery, and a smadih *headdress decorated with coins, is what a newly married woman of Ramallah would have worn early this century. Photo by Bassel H. Sakkab.*

Saudi Aramco, the oil company born as a bold international enterprise more than half a century ago, distributes Aramco World *to increase cross-cultural understanding. The magazine's goal is to broaden knowledge of the culture of the Arab and Muslim worlds and the history, geography and economy of Saudi Arabia.* Aramco World *is distributed without charge, upon request, to a limited number of interested readers.*

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WRITTEN BY JANE M. FRIEDMAN • PHOTOGRAPHED BY BASSEL H. SAKKAB

These Stitches Speak

A trip to the New Jersey home of Hanan and Farah Munayyer takes the traveler through the pleasantly suburban towns of Bloomfield, Clifton, Montclair, Verona and, finally, West Caldwell. But New Jersey seems to stop at the front door of the Munayyer's red-brick house.

Inside, fragments of antique Palestinian embroideries embellish the walls, a Turkish coffee set sits on a brass tray, and pillows, also embroidered with Palestinian patterns, are placed on the floor around a water-pipe.

But these are not the real treasures of the Munayyer home. The real treasures are hundreds of traditional, antique, embroidered Palestinian dresses, shawls and scarves. Over the past decade, the Munayyers, both Palestinian-Americans and both pharmaceutical research scientists, have assembled the largest collection of antique Palestinian embroidery in the United States, and one of the largest such collections in the world. It spans almost a century—from the 1860's to the 1940's—and represents, they say, every stylistic tradition of what once was Palestine.

The Munayyers are not typical art collectors, however. They have a mission. They are committed to salvaging a dying tradition and, to do so, they are eager to educate both Palestinians and Americans about one aspect of Palestinian culture.

"We want to display Palestinian art to Western audiences that have never seen it before," says Hanan, "and to show Palestinians of today a part of their own culture."

RAMALLAH
CA. 1910

A wedding dress of handwoven linen embroidered with cross-stitching in silk. The coin-edged headdress is known as smadih *and the shawl is locally called* khirqah.

RAMALLAH
CA. 1860

A jilliyyah *bridal dress, worn during the wedding feast.*

Although today Palestinian embroidery documents the history and culture of a people, in the past, and for centuries, embroidered clothes were simply the stuff of everyday life.

No one is sure how far back traditional Palestinian dress goes. Hanan, who has been researching the subject since she bought her first dresses in 1987, traces the craft back even to Canaanite times. (See next page.) By the mid-19th century, certainly, it is documented that intricately embroidered dresses for ceremonial occasions were usual from Gaza in the south to the Dead Sea in the east and Syria in the north.

As a girl approached marriageable age, she set about embroidering both her wedding dress and her bridal trousseau, which usually included another three to eight dresses. Embroidering one dress could take up to a year, Hanan says, if the girl did it all by herself. Although many girls did indeed labor for years, others with less time, less talent or more money commissioned embroidered panels from workshops in Bethlehem and other towns. Those could then be easily inset into the proper positions to produce a dress in a few weeks or even days.

Typically, Palestinian embroidered dresses were made either of white or dark linen. They reached the floor and had long, triangular sleeves. The embroidered panels included a square chest piece, front and back lower panels running down from the waist, and symmetrical side panels, also from the waist down. But within the embroidered panels, variations flourished, determined by the region or town where the dress had been made.

Because travel from town to town was difficult in the 19th century—mostly by donkey over the high rolling hills—towns and villages were relatively isolated, and thus the style of each region could remain distinct.

"The way it used to be," says Hanan, "was that dress designs would say, 'We are this clan and you are that clan, and we each know because your patterns are this way, and ours are that way.'"

In the hills north of Jerusalem, and especially in Ramallah, the local style was immediately recognizable by the palm trunk-shaped embroidery in cross stitch on the back panels of the dresses. Although Ramallah girls wore both black and

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HAIFA
EARLY 20TH C.

This dress is worn with the asbih, *or headband, typical of northern Palestine.*

Embroidery patterns from coastal towns south of Jaffa.

TOP: KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM, VIENNA/ART RESOURCE; RIGHT: GALLERIA DEGLI UFFIZI, FLORENCE/ART RESOURCE

New Images, Old Patterns
A HISTORICAL GLIMPSE

— WRITTEN BY HANAN KARAMAN MUNAYYER —

TEXTILE ARTS HAVE BEEN OF UNIQUE IMPORTANCE in the Middle East since antiquity. In every age, the crafts of spinning, weaving, dyeing and embroidery have been held in high esteem and their traditions have changed relatively little over time. This is demonstrated eloquently in Palestinian costume styles, which have remained virtually unchanged over many centuries.

Around 1500 BC, the land that would later be called Palestine became known as Canaan, "The Land of the Purple." Its Semitic inhabitants decorated linen and woolen cloth with a precious purple dye extracted from murex sea-snails, and these textiles were prized trade items around the Mediterranean.

On ancient Egyptian paintings, Canaanites can be recognized by their distinctive clothing, a long A-shaped dress worn by both men and women and known to modern archeologists as the "Syrian tunic." An ivory engraving dating from 1200 BC, from Megiddo in ancient Palestine, depicts similar women's tunics decorated at the neckline and hem. This long A-shaped tunic is still the basic shape of most Palestinian costumes. Similarly, surviving ivory statues of Canaanites—apparently women—from 1500 BC show a headdress then prevalent in many areas of the Eastern Mediterranean that bears a remarkable similarity to the *shatwih* headdress worn in Bethlehem into the early 20th century. (See page 6.)

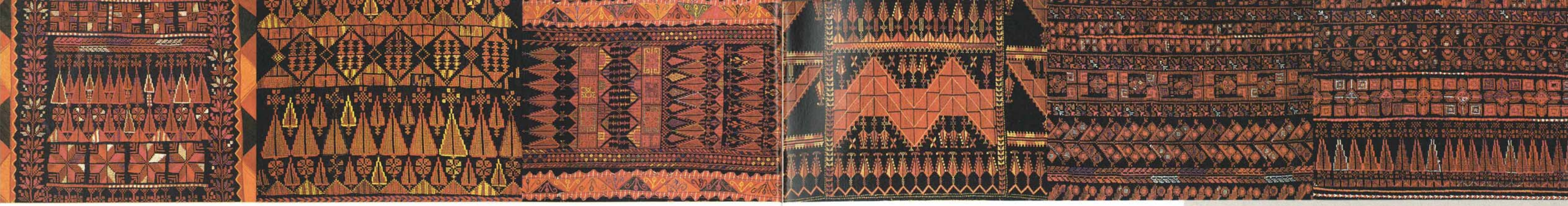
In the *Iliad*, Homer recounted that Paris, abductor of Helen of Troy, imported Eastern Mediterranean needlewomen from Tyre and Sidon—confirmation of the reputation of these cities as famous early embroidery centers.

In later Roman times, the basic linen tunic was decorated from shoulder to hem with two woven bands of intricate patterns called *clavi*. This eastern Mediterranean tunic, or "dalmatic," was introduced to Rome in AD 220 by the Syrian-born Emperor Elagabalus. The dalmatic was frequently depicted in early Christian paintings and Byzantine mosaics, and the style endures today in ecclesiastical vestments.

Women's headdresses, too, were often rendered according to the style commonly used in the Levant since antiquity. Seventh-century sarcophagi in Palmyra, Syria, display the same style that survives today in Palestinian costume in the traditional headdresses of Ramallah and Jerusalem.

Byzantine emperors adopted the rich tradition of costume decoration from Mesopotamia and the Levant. Clergy in Jerusalem, a spiritual center of the Byzantine Empire, wore robes heavily embroidered with metallic thread, another stylistic feature that survives in some present-day churches. In time, the inhabitants

Around the circumference of the magnificent coronation mantle (above) of Roger II, Norman king of Sicily, is an Arabic inscription praising the king and wishing him fulfillment and protection. Almost three hundred years later, Italian Renaissance painter Gentile da Fabriano used similar edge-bands in his "Adoration of the Magi," but by then the "Arabic" (at right and on page 9) consisted only of meaningless letterforms, with no function but to lend richness to the textiles and emphasize the magnificence of the three kings.



white dresses, the town eventually became known for its white linen ones, usually embroidered in red or rust colors, because that fabric was woven in the town.

According to Hanan, the Americans and Europeans who came to Ramallah in the late 19th century mistakenly "thought the white embroidered dress was Christian art. So they highlighted it" in their accounts of the region, attributing it and other aspects of local needlecraft to the influence of the Crusaders in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries.

Bethlehem, south of Jerusalem, had the most elegant embroidery, Hanan says, done in what is known as the Bethlehem couching stitch. That stitch, combined with a distinctive purple linen and the use of metallic thread in the back panel, characterized some of the most elaborate—and expensive—of all Palestinian dresses. In the Jerusalem area, the body of the dress tended to be made of Syrian silk, but patterns were influenced by the Bethlehem style. The chest piece was like Bethlehem's in shape and embroidery, but on the back were three embroidered medallions.

BETHLEHEM
LATE 19TH C.

A rare ikhdar malaki, *or "royal green," wedding dress, so called because of the green lines in the skirt; it includes the* shatwih *headdress, which dates back to antiquity, and a rare 19th-century scarf.*

HEBRON
CA. 1920

Back panels of dresses from the coastal area between Jaffa and Gaza.

In the low-lying coastal areas around Jaffa, dress was quite different. Here, where it was hot all year round, women spent their lives in the fields and orchards, and they embroidered the natural motifs that filled their lives—cypress trees for example—onto their dresses.

In Mejdel, a town which no longer exists, the purplish-blue dress fabric was woven locally. Embroidery colors were bright, and typical motifs included the triangular amulet and a stair-step pattern. Both, says Hanan, were used by the Nabataeans around the first century after Christ. (See *Aramco World*, March/April 1981.)

North of Jerusalem, in Nablus, the Galilee and the foothills of the Golan, Palestinian apparel more closely resembled Syrian and Lebanese styles, which featured long jackets and pantaloons, but the embroidery patterns remained distinct.

By the 1920's, during the years of the British Mandate in Palestine, local styles began to influence each other and, in some cases, fuse. The automobile had come, and with it came easier travel and the easier exchange of patterns and techniques of embroidery from one town to another. British influence also made European pattern-books available, and some European motifs, such as horses and peacocks, began to appear on Palestinian dresses. European fabrics, such as velvet, also made their way to Palestine.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SYRIA/ART RESOURCE

The war of 1948 and the onset of the Palestinian diaspora dealt a devastating blow to the embroiderers' tradition. As hundreds of thousands of people sought safety in Lebanon, Jordan and what became the West Bank and Gaza Strip, hundreds of Palestine's coastal villages ceased to exist, and many others were transformed.

The refugees fled with their basic possessions. "In many cases, all that was left of a village—the only way you knew there had been a village—was the dresses on women's backs," says Farah Munayyer. Some sold dresses for desperately needed cash.

The war of 1967 aggravated the process, explain the Munayyers. "With each war, with each new wave of refugees from new places, you would see new kinds of dresses being sold," says Hanan. "The refugees would sell them secretly, because [such a sale] was considered a shame."

Still more dresses have been sold to tourists since 1967, especially in the market of Jerusalem's Old City. The older Palestinian women, many of whom still don traditional dress for important occasions, must thus often settle for contemporary imitations, poor by comparison to the old styles: The modern commercial "traditional" dress is frequently made of polyester, and the embroidery is often machine-stitched with chemically dyed thread. Younger generations are leaving such traditions behind altogether: At their weddings, many young women in today's West Bank and Gaza Strip wear frothy white dresses, just like their Western counterparts.

"The refugees haven't had the materials or the money or the time to make expensive dresses," says Hanan. "Wherever the finest embroidery was done, it was at least partly a leisure activity; it was done in an atmosphere of prosperity."

The fading of the artistic tradition of Palestinian embroidery has caught the attention of collectors in several countries. One of the first was Widad Kawar of Amman, who began her work as early as the 1950's and whose collection is regarded as one of the world's finest.

Several museums in the United States now have modest but high-quality collections. In England, from 1989 to 1991,

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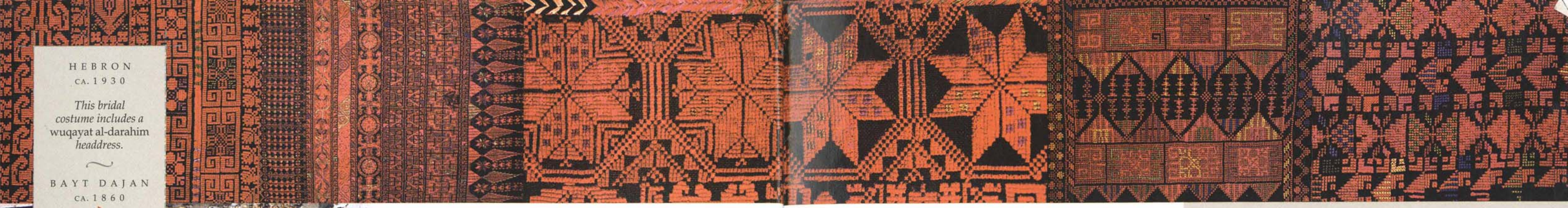
This carved head from the 13th century BC, *found at Ugarit in present-day Syria, wears a headdress that resembles the Bethlehem* shatwih *of this century.*

of Jerusalem and Bethlehem copied this style in their dresses, and it eventually spread to the surrounding villages.

The period of Muslim Arab rule that followed the Byzantine era in the seventh century (See *Aramco World*, September/October 1996) witnessed a flourishing of the textile arts. Weavers combined the Byzantine and Persian legacies and elaborated on them. The Arabs introduced a style of ornamentation called *tiraz*, a word borrowed from the Persian for "embroidery," which incorporated Arabic calligraphy into the patterns. The Arab world, which then stretched from Baghdad to Granada, led the world in production of textiles, one of the great commodities of that era, in terms of both volume and magnificence. The weaving and embroidery expertise introduced into Spain and Sicily by the Umayyad Arab rulers was subsequently passed on to the rest of Europe, where it was influential in the development of textile centers in Italy and France. In 1133, Arab textile workshops in Palermo produced the famous coronation mantle of Roger II, Norman king of Sicily, which is embroidered around its edge with Arabic written in kufic calligraphy.

Other prized Arab textiles were used throughout Christian medieval Europe by the nobility and clergy in ceremonial and ecclesiastical clothing and even in the linings of ornate boxes. Several European paintings from the 14th century show embroidered Arabic calligraphy in the costumes of wealthy Europeans. In Gentile da Fabriano's "Adoration of the Magi," painted in 1423, bands edging a woman's shawl are decorated with prominent mock-Arabic calligraphy, and a squire wears a sash from shoulder to waist that is embroidered in gold in Arabic letter-forms.

Remnants of finely embroidered 10th-century fabrics have also been found in Egypt. The geometric patterns



HEBRON
CA. 1930

This bridal costume includes a wuqayat al-darahim *headdress.*

BAYT DAJAN
CA. 1860

Bridal dress embroidered with an inverted cypress-tree pattern.

Embroidery patterns from (left to right) Hebron, Masmiyyah, Saffrayah, Hebron, Bayt Jabril and Masmiyyah.

London's Museum of Mankind showed its collection of Palestinian embroidered objects in a show, curated by Shelagh Weir, that won worldwide coverage and acclaim. (See *Aramco World*, January/February 1991.)

The Munayyers, at the outset, were apparently typical of diaspora Palestinians in their motivation: They simply wanted to remain close to their native culture.

Born in the 1940's in what is now Israel, they decided in 1970 to study in the United States. They hoped eventually to return to Jerusalem, but time passed, their children were born and their careers proved challenging. Fifteen years passed quickly, but the Munayyers' attachment to Palestine remained.

"On one of our trips back, Hanan bought a dress in Jerusalem," says Farah. On the next trip, Farah returned to New Jersey with 10 dresses he had purchased in the Jerusalem *suq*, along with a book on embroidery. Unfortunately, all 10 dresses were stylistically similar and from the same region.

Hanan wanted to exchange some of them to achieve some diversity, and thus began seeing the dresses they owned as a collection with a story of its own to tell. But the Munayyers' interest in antique costume didn't become an obsession until one day in April 1987, when the Jerusalem dealer who had been their contact arrived in New York with more than 65 antique dresses. "We bought the whole group," says Hanan. "We knew that otherwise the collection would be scattered."

By 1990, the Munayyers had bought three more groups of embroideries, even taking out loans to finance what had become far more than a mere hobby. Their most important acquisition was a collection owned by Rolla Foley, an American who had gone to Palestine in 1938 to teach at the Friends' School in Ramallah.

"Mr. Foley's collection made ours a *real* collection," says Farah. "He filled all the gaps."

Foley's collection included dresses from the 1860's, shortly before European influence became strong in Palestine. In addition, he had labeled each dress according to its village of origin, which gave the Munayyers vital information not only about regional stylistic differences but also about variations from one village to another within regions.

In 1992, the Munayyers established the Palestinian Heritage Foundation, which has since acquired more than 100 additional embroideries. The full collection, says Hanan, now exceeds 1000 pieces.

Owning a collection of educational value for both Palestinian-Americans and unhyphenated Americans has transformed the Munayyers' lives. Hanan realized she had to educate herself about the history of Palestinian costume. "I looked up hundreds of books, on archeology, history, and embroidery," she recalls. "In the beginning, I'd put the kids to bed and I'd read. I exhausted all the local libraries."

Being able to correctly identify the period of a dress and its town of origin—often by the stitching techniques used—became essential, but

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embroidered on these recreate woven designs known as early as the fourth to second centuries BC. This delicate embroidery had become possible thanks to finer needles, which were probably the result of improved steel-manufacturing techniques in the Arab world, particularly in Damascus. These embroidery patterns are similar to some Palestinian ones still in use today.

Thus by the end of the 14th century, the main features of a slowly evolving basic style had been established. Robes found in Arab-ruled Spain and dating from the 13th century have the same cut, the same square chestpiece and the same decorated back panel as many Palestinian dresses up through the present day.

GALLERIA DEGLI UFFIZI, FLORENCE/ART RESOURCE

During Ottoman rule of the Middle East, in the 16th through 19th centuries, urban fashions followed the styles of the ruling class, and during the 19th century those styles became increasingly Westernized. But in Palestinian towns and villages, the traditional style of costume remained unchanged. The fabric was always linen, and the embroidery was silk stitched in the centuries-old patterns.

The 19th-century Western Christian missionaries who assumed that local embroidery styles were borrowed from the Crusaders were 180 degrees wrong: The influence flowed the other way, from East to West. Costume historians generally agree that the rich embroidery and ornate headdresses fashionable in medieval Europe are another example of Near Eastern influence in domestic style and comfort, mediated by returning Crusaders.

In fact, the Crusaders in

BAYT DAJAN
CA. 1930

Sleeves and center skirt panel of this Jaffa-area dress are silk heremsih *fabric.*

BETHLEHEM
CA. 1940

A taqsirah, *or jacket, of velvet embroidered with silk and metallic thread.*

Scarf patterns from (left to right) Hebron, Hebron, Ramallah, Hebron, Jaffa and Gaza.

ABOVE: PALESTINIAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION

not easy. Embroidered 19th-century chest pieces and panels were frequently removed when a dress became worn or frayed and reapplied to newer dresses. Identifying one piece of embroidery did not mean that the dress it was a part of had also been identified.

"At age six, the girls would learn how to embroider," says Hanan. "Their mothers would buy the thread as they went along. So, for example, the orange thread that was used to begin the embroidery didn't match the orange thread used at the end." But, she adds, "when you look at the underside of the embroidery, it is clean. You were taught from a very young age strict rules and a professional attitude. It's an ingrained part of the culture."

These days, the Munayyers are constantly seeking new venues in which to display the collection. Last year, they exhibited at the United Nations headquarters in New York and at the US Military Academy at West Point, and lectured at the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C.

The Munayyers do not stop there. Where their collection still falls short, Farah has begun to photograph pieces in other collections that might make their own more complete. From a workshop in Beirut, he has commissioned replicas to be made using the photographs. In addition, the Munayyers are purchasing contemporary Palestinian embroidery—including pillows, jackets and dresses—to bring their history up to date.

In March, they celebrated the 10th anniversary of the beginning of their cultural mission. "We hope to keep expanding our activities to reach the American public," says Hanan, "and one day to house the collection in an American museum." ⊕

Washington free-lancer Jane M. Friedman was a correspondent in the Middle East for CNN *and the* Christian Science Monitor.

Free-lance photographer Bassel H. Sakkab lives in Washington, D.C.

Palestine often adopted Arab dress. The Frankish chronicler Foucher de Chartres, who took part in the First Crusade, deplored this. "The man who was Roman or Frankish is here a Galilean or Palestinian.... We have forgotten where we were born," he huffed. These styles and habits of dress were carried back to Europe. According to Ibn Jubayr, writing between 1180 and 1185, "Christian ladies [in Sicily] completely follow the fashions of Muslim women in the way they veil themselves and wear their mantles,...[and] flaunt themselves in church in perfectly Muslim toilettes."

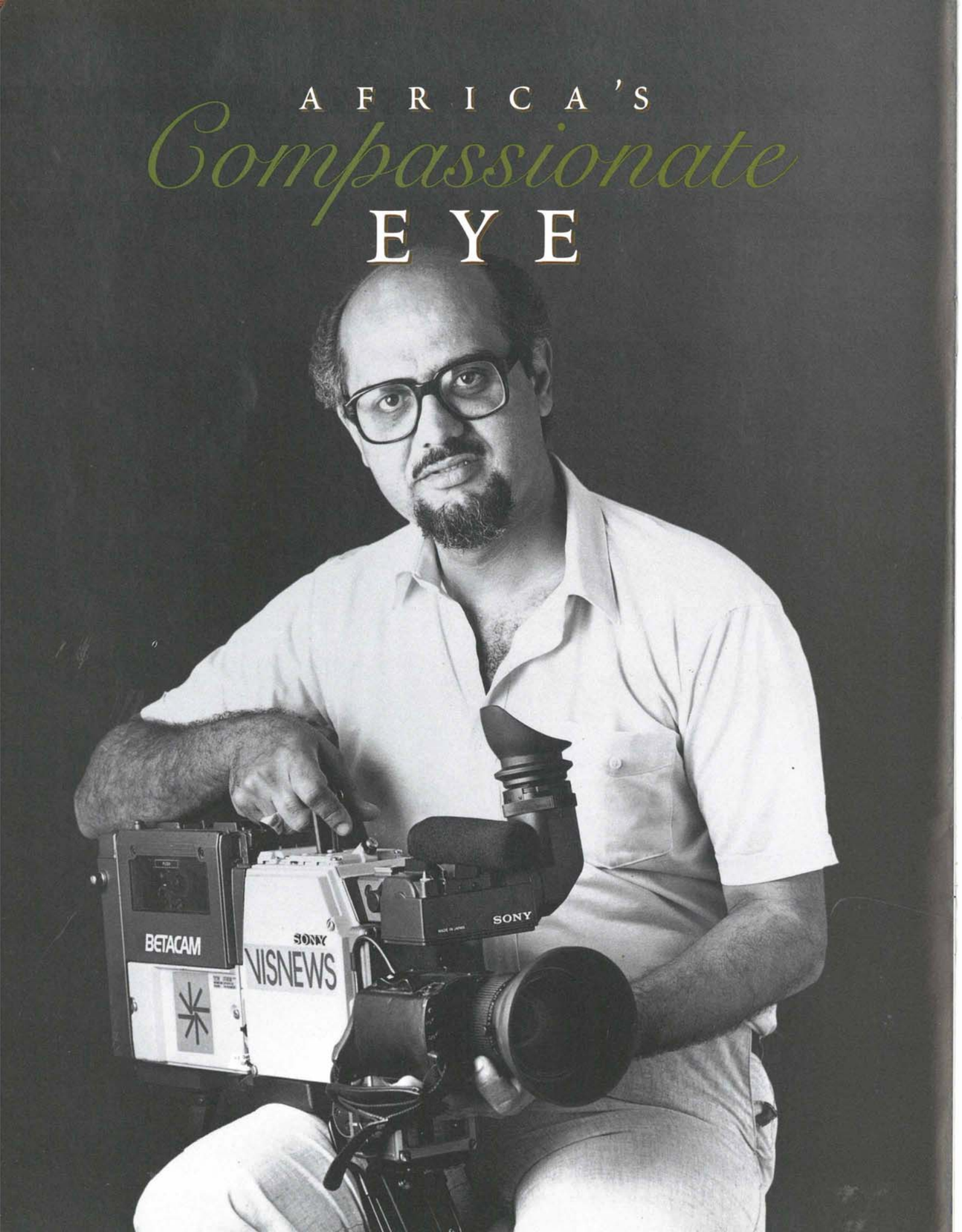
In Palestine, the traditional style was itself influenced by the important nearby textile centers of Syria, famous for their silk weaving since the fifth century. Syrian fabrics were used in many Palestinian costumes, and Syrian traditional dresses share a similar repertoire of motifs with their Palestinian counterparts. The influence of the Arabian Peninsula is seen in the ornate silver jewelry brought in by trade and incorporated into the Palestinian costume.

Although the influences on Palestinian costumes have been numerous, the end result is a legacy that is uniquely and distinctly Palestinian, transcending its role as an art form to become a symbol of Palestinian identity. The ancient embroidered patterns bore symbols of hope, prosperity, good health and protection, and had traditional names that reflected natural features: the moon, the cypress tree, the tree of life, the bird of paradise. Though every woman could express her creativity by her choice of patterns and their arrangement on the dress, each region of Palestine followed its own distinctive stylistic rules.

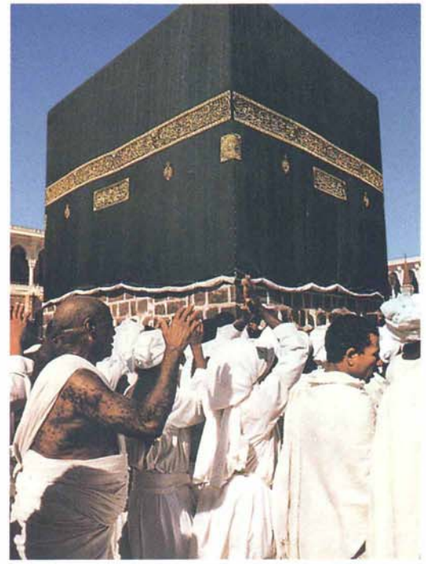
Embroidery of costume and home accessories was done—and still is done—by women who preserved the traditional patterns by copying older dresses. In so doing they created costumes of lasting beauty that have earned a special place among the ethnic folkdress traditions of the world. More significantly, this tradition of Palestinian needlework has kept alive ancient styles and symbols that have provided us with a unique window to the past. ⊕

Hanan Karaman Munayyer and Farah Munayyer are the founders of the Palestinian Heritage Foundation.

AFRICA'S *Compassionate* EYE



OPPOSITE: DUNCAN WILLETTS



Above left: King Khalid ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, ruler of Saudi Arabia from 1975 to 1982, prays in Makkah's Grand Mosque. Above right: Wearing the plain, seamless ihram *prescribed for the Hajj, Muslim pilgrims circle the Ka'ba. Amin's photographs of the pilgrimage to Makkah, unprecedented at the time, were published in 1976 after his television documentary on the Hajj had been dubbed into 27 languages. Opposite: Amin with a video camera from Visnews (now Reuters Television), the international television news agency for which he served as Africa bureau chief. "He transformed television coverage of Africa," said Mark Wood, Amin's former editor.*

— Written by Louis Werner —

As television news cameraman, photojournalist, editor and writer, the late Mohamed Amin kept his focus on a single goal: to bear witness to the paradoxically entwined beauty and suffering of modern Africa.

"I consider myself a commuter between the underprivileged and the privileged worlds," he once said to his long-time colleague and biographer, Brian Tetley. This role cost Amin his life November 23 when he was among more than 125 people killed in the crash of a hijacked Ethiopian Airlines jet. He was 53.

Amin was born in Kenya but raised in Tanzania, where at 13 he founded a school camera club. As a middle-schooler he covered an East African auto rally, and by 19 he had set up his own photo agency, Camerapix, which today is the leading source for photographs and news footage of East Africa. He paid his first hard dues as a newsman at the ripe age of 22: expulsion from Tanzania to neighboring Kenya, where he was thereafter based, for making pictures of a coup in Zanzibar.

Amin went on to count his own news coups, from exclusive pictures of a 1966 French police massacre in Djibouti, during former President Charles de Gaulle's visit there, to rare interviews with Uganda's Idi Amin both before and after his downfall. When

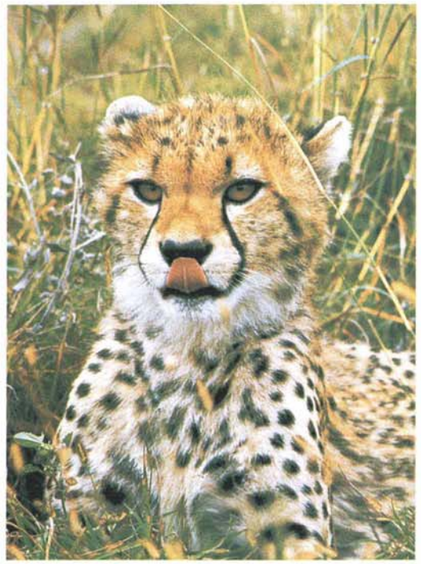
Amin astride the motor scooter he used in launching his news-photography career at age 13.

Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta died in 1978, Amin covered his death and the transition of power. He produced books exposing the illegal ivory trade and the plight of endangered rhinos.

But Amin's commitments went beyond news. In 1976, he produced "Journey of a Lifetime," the first full-length documentary on the Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah. It was dubbed into 27 languages, and his stills were adapted into a lavish photographic book, *Pilgrimage to Mecca* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1978), which Amin dedicated to "my Muslim brothers throughout the world." Amin's lyrical prologue, which lays out the historical basis of his faith, is a deeply personal introduction both to the Hajj and to the man behind the camera.

These assignments and projects brought Amin a measure of fame, but they were nothing compared to what followed his foray into Ethiopia in October 1984. The previous May, a story of Amin's about impending famine in northern Ethiopia had run on page one of the Nairobi *Sunday Nation* but, like many other stories carrying this warning in the previous several years, it was largely ignored by the rest of the world.

Following delicate negotiations with Ethiopian officials—Amin was known among his colleagues as a master of "the access



When he wasn't shooting news for his agency's clients, Amin photographed and published more than 35 books on the wildlife, lands and peoples of Africa and Asia. He photographed this cheetah cub and the smiling young Okiek woman for Journey Through Kenya. *At his death, Amin had more than 20 more book projects under way in various stages of completion. Opposite: For years after his groundbreaking coverage, Amin visited and revisted Ethiopia's "famine camps," where he saw children begin to benefit from the outpouring of international aid his coverage had triggered. "Ethiopia is a scar I will carry for the rest of my life," he said of that assignment.*

game"—Amin arranged to return to Ethiopia in October with BBC reporter Michael Buerk. There, in the province of Tigre, they found the famine that Amin had warned of, and the suffering that they witnessed seared Amin's soul—and his film—as no other story ever had.

Amin and Buerk left Ethiopia at once. By nightfall the next day, Amin's footage had run before millions of viewers around the world.

In the coming weeks, it ran again and again: Never in the history of television news have pictures taken on such a life of their own. Almost at once, money and food donations from governments and individuals poured into international relief agencies. United States President Ronald Reagan said he could not get Amin's images out of his head, and authorized $45 million in emergency funding on the spot. At the bill-signing ceremony, Vice President George Bush said, "Many millions are alive today because Mohamed Amin risked his life time and again."

But Amin, the veteran newsman, knew that the attention of the press would quickly flag. "I feel it is absolutely crucial to keep this story on TV as long as possible, ...and my duty to keep working on it," Tetley recorded him saying at the time. In acceptance speeches for the many awards he received that year—Overseas Press Club, World Media Hunger, British Film and TV Arts among others—he continued to prod news agencies to do more. A year later, Amin himself enlisted support from world leaders, who appeared in his BBC production, "African Calvary." *The Guardian* called it "not an orthodox documentary, more a requiem."

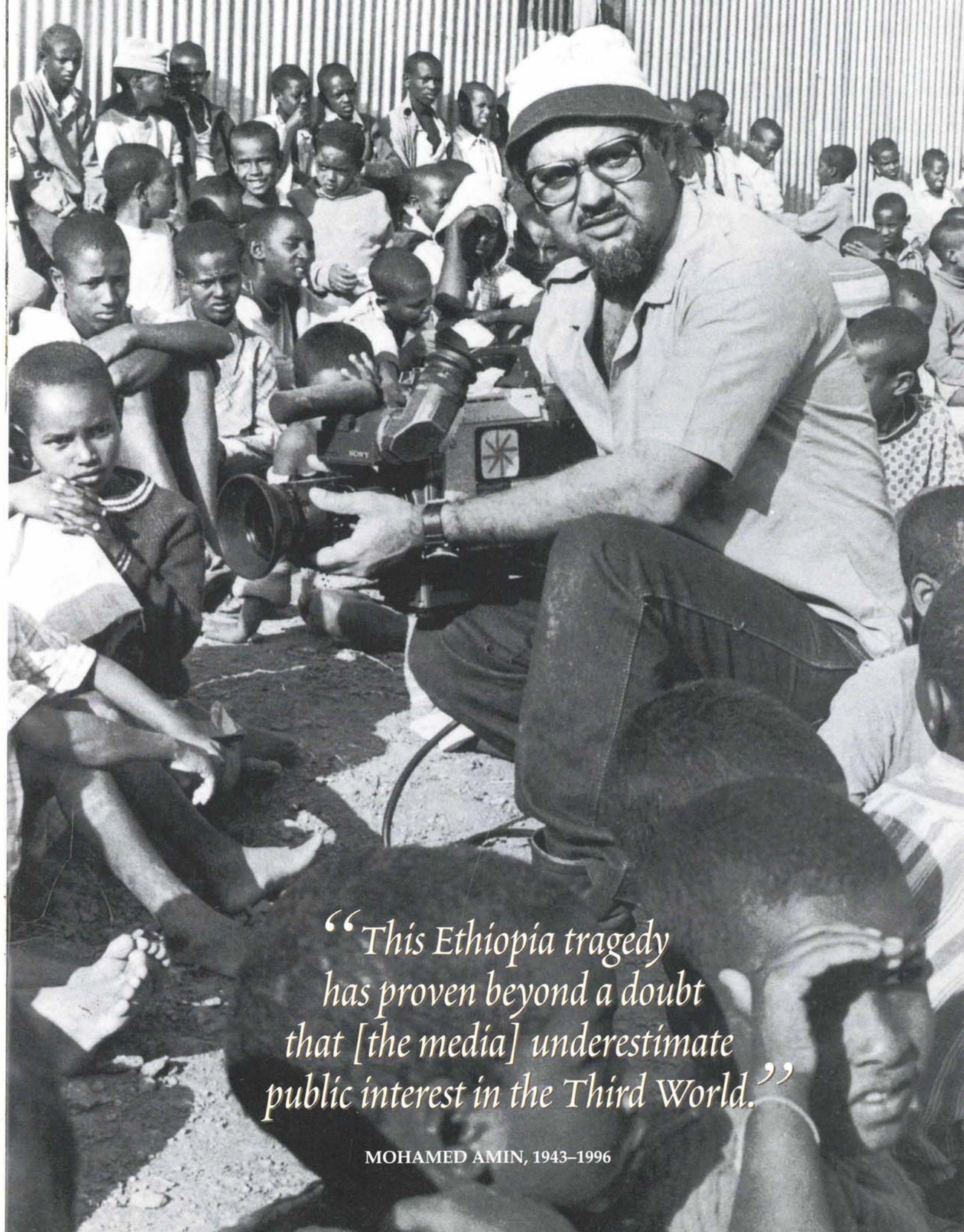
Amin films an Afghan soldier in 1988. He often rolled film and shot stills at the same event, typically using different cameras for different clients, a talent that earned him the nickname "Six-Camera Mo."

Ahmad Fawzi, United Nations spokesman and another of Amin's news colleagues, called Amin's death "a sad loss to journalism and to the human race. His pictures brought the conscience of the world to orphan conflicts otherwise unseen, and he contributed mightily to mankind's understanding of the suffering of our fellow man."

Amin is survived by his wife, Dolly, and his son, Salim, who is also an accomplished news cameraman.

"Dad's work was his life, which we will continue," says Salim, who has taken over direction of Camerapix. "We'll complete the projects he left unfinished, such as his autobiography, and mount an exhibition of his pictures to take around the world. We plan to push the agency ever upwards and onwards, as he would have wanted." ⊕

Louis Werner, writer and filmmaker, studied at the American University in Cairo, lives in New York, and contributes frequently to Aramco World.



"This Ethiopia tragedy has proven beyond a doubt that [the media] underestimate public interest in the Third World."

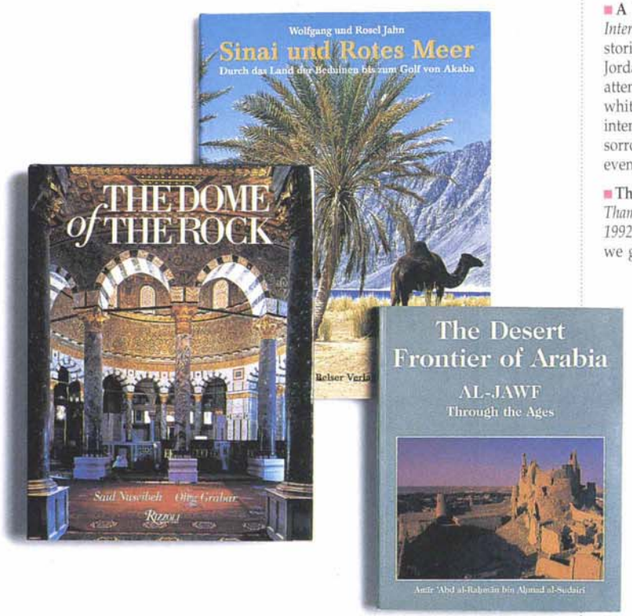
MOHAMED AMIN, 1943–1996

Suggestions for Reading

***Aramco World* readers who want to explore aspects of the Arab and Muslim worlds on their own will find interesting material here, most of it recently published. Without endorsing the views of any of the authors, we encourage omnivorous and varied reading as a winding but ultimately certain path to greater understanding.**

■ **Admiring Silence:** *Abdulrazak Gurnah. Hamish Hamilton, 1996, 0-241-00184-6, £16, hb; New Press, 1996, 1-56584-349-5, $19.95, hb.* England itself is the main character in this painfully honest novel about the difficulties of being an immigrant and the impossibility of being anything but a foreigner in a country one has adopted as one's own. "Sometimes I think that what I feel for England is disappointed love."

■ **Ali & Nino:** *Kurban Said, tr. Jenia Graman. Overlook, 1996, 0-87951-668-2, $21.95, hb; Robin Clark, 1991, 0-86072-130-2, £5.95, pb.* War, political upheaval and young love are the surface elements of this 1937 novel, but it is also a sensitive and accurate depiction of the difficult marriage of East and West during that shining moment before and during World War I when Azerbaijan and other countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia were promised future independence by Germany or Russia, and believed the promises. Nino Kipiani, a Georgian Christian, and Ali Khan Shirvanshir, a Tatar Muslim, are the childhood friends who marry. The pseudonymous author was born in Baku in 1905, and writes from his own experience. Another movie is said to be in the making.



■ **The Animal World of the Pharaohs:** *Patrick F. Houlihan. Thames and Hudson, 1996, 0-500-01731-X, $39.95/£24.95, hb.* Animals were enormously important in ancient Egypt, as food, quarry, labor or pets; some were associated with the gods and goddesses of the Egyptian pantheon. Almost 200 illustrations—too few of them in color—here supplement a very informative text that illuminates many aspects of the daily lives of the people of ancient Egypt.

■ **Arab Influence in Medieval Europe:** *Dionisius A. Agnius and Richard Hitchcock, eds. Ithaca Press, 1996, 0-86372-213-X, £12.95, pb.* Seven essays from the 1990 Oxford conference of the same name chart the gradual infusion of Muslim knowledge of the arts, commerce and science into Christian Europe. A particularly interesting chapter evaluates possible Muslim literary influences on Dante's *Divine Comedy*, which demonstrates the often-underestimated degree to which ideas crossed cultural boundaries during that era. Other essays discuss trade, mechanics, geography, divination and song.

■ **The Art of the Saracens in Egypt:** *Stanley Lane-Poole. Darf Publishers, 1993 (facsimile of 1886 edn.), 1-85077-142-1, £30, hb.* Though more than a century old, Lane-Poole's descriptions of a wide range of arts—architecture, frescoes, pottery, mosaics, *mashrabiyyah* and other woodwork—from the earliest Islamic times to his own century remain some of the most detailed in English. This is a benchmark work for anyone reading seriously on Islamic art in Egypt. The numerous engravings are reminders of the succinct clarity possible with this bygone medium.

■ **Aunt Safiyya and the Monastery:** *Bahaa' Taher, tr. Barbara Romaine. University of California Press, 1996, 0-520-20074-8, $35, hb; 0-520-20075-6, $12.95/£9.95, pb.* Obliquely questioning tradition and exploring events that reconcile religious differences, one of Egypt's leading writers tells a compact tale of a young man who receives sanctuary in a monastery when the wife of a man he killed in self-defense demands vengeance. Although some of the transliterated vocabulary may be difficult at first for readers unfamiliar with Arabic, perseverance is quickly rewarded with a realistic, well-translated window on village life.

■ **A Balcony Over the Fakihani:** *Liyana Badr, tr. Peter Clark with Christopher Tingley. Interlink Books, 1993, 1-56656-107-8, $9.95/£7.99, pb.* Three interwoven novellas tell the stories of three Palestinians, each uprooted by political cataclysms: the war of 1948, Jordan's Black September in 1970 and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Badr's attention to detail is memorable, as when she describes a mother's shock at finding a white hair on her baby's head the morning after a mortar attack in Beirut. With the intensity that is so often a byproduct of war, Badr personalizes a full range of joys and sorrows, and shines a light into the emotional world of those who live in the shadow of events beyond their control.

■ **The British Museum Book of Ancient Egypt.** *Stephen Quirke and Jeffrey Spencer, eds. Thames and Hudson, 1996 (reprint of 1992 edn.), 0-500-27902-0, $24.95, pb; British Library, 1992, 0-7141-0965-7, £14.99, pb.* In 240 densely informative, generously illustrated pages we get thorough overviews of ancient Egypt's religion, funerary customs, language and writing, art and architecture and technology, along with chapters on the country's geography, history and relations with other powers. The information is authoritative—the editors and writers are members of the Museum's curatorial staff—and written in a plain, understandable style. Appendices include "Suggestions for Further Reading" (unfortunately not updated from 1992), dynasty and king lists, and kings' names in hieroglyphics.

■ **Christians and Muslims:** From Double Standards to Mutual Understanding: *Hugh Goddard. Curzon Press, 1996, 0-7007-0364-0, $29.95/£14.99, pb; 0-7007-0363-2, $68/£37.50, hb.* Believing that "mutual ignorance is far more widespread than mutual understanding," Goddard, lecturer in Islamic theology at Nottingham University, looks in detail not only at what Christians and Muslims might agree on or "agree to disagree" about, but also at how believers of both faiths have tended to perceive—and misperceive—each other. This volume, which covers scriptures, laws, histories and the problems of both Christian and Muslim "fundamentalism," is a healthy resource for interfaith discussions from either perspective.

■ **City of Stone:** The Hidden History of Jerusalem: *Meron Benvenisti, tr. Maxine Kaufman Nunn. University of California Press, 1996, 0-520-20521-9, $24.95, hb.* Perhaps no city has been so closely studied by historians as Jerusalem. A former deputy mayor of the city, the prolific Benvenisti (this is his eighth book about Jerusalem) writes with an insider's intimacy and an uncommonly disinterested eye. He focuses on the ways contemporary political interests manipulate versions of the city's, and the region's, history in their struggles to "appropriate physical and … chronological space." His grasp of multiple points of view is exemplary, and the result is a book with few heroes but much passionate humanity.

■ **Classic Turkish Cookery:** *Ghillie Başan, phot. Jonathan Başan. Tauris Parke, 1996, 1-86064-011-7, £19.95, hb; St. Martin's Press, 1997, 0-312-15617-0, $29.95, hb.* This is an unusual cookbook in that it goes far beyond Istanbul to provide recipes from seven different regions of Turkey, selecting dishes that one is unlikely to encounter except in private homes, and providing evidence that it wasn't only the palace cooking of Topkapı that made Turkish cuisine one of the world's great ones. Author and photographer, by blood and art, are descended from an Ottoman grand vizier's family that dined on both palace and Anatolian fare. The photographs are mouthwatering; the recipes, which also include familiar dishes, are detailed, and reveal a deep understanding of how the cuisine developed. The book may indeed, as the jacket says, be destined to become the standard work on the subject.

■ **The Complete Valley of the Kings:** Tombs and Treasures of Egypt's Greatest Pharaohs. *Nicholas Reeves and Richard H. Wilkinson. Thames and Hudson, 1996, 0-500-05080-5, $29.95/£19.95, hb.* This is an encyclopedic treatment of the history of the archeology of the world's most famous—and romanticized—necropolis. With anecdotal information presented in frequent sidebars; generous, well-captioned photographs and diagrams; and tiny "factfiles" pointing to original sources, the book remains lively and readable in spite of the enormous amount of information it contains. At the end there is a five-page list of further reading and a page of tips for planning a visit.

■ **Constantinople:** City of the World's Desire, 1453-1924: *Philip Mansel. St. Martin's Press, 1995, 0-312-14574-8, $35, hb; John Murray, 1995, 0-7195-5076-9, £25, hb.* Throughout the Ottoman half-millennium covered by this richly detailed, well researched history, no city captured the imagination like Constantinople and, for much of the era, few rivaled it in global influence. It was, writes Mansel (a specialist in court histories), "the only capital to function on every level: political, military, naval, religious (both Muslim and Christian), economic, cultural and gastronomic." One of the reasons may have been its diversity, explicitly encouraged by Mehmet the Conqueror—himself of mixed race—and extended by his son, Beyazit II, who opened the Empire to the Jews expelled from Spain. Scholars, laymen and Turkey-bound travelers will all find this book useful and a pleasure to read.

■ **The Desert Frontier of Arabia:** Al-Jawf Through the Ages: *'Abd al-Rahman bin Ahmad al-Sudairi. Stacey International, 1995, 0-905743-86-5, £30, hb; 0-905743-75-X, £18.50, pb.* The learned prince who was governor of the Saudi Arabian province of al-Jawf for nearly 50 years wrote most of this detailed and fascinating account of the history of the region, with contributions from other scholars. Prehistory, pre-Islamic history and the period up to the rise of the Saudi state are covered as well as modern history and the accounts of Western travelers. It is particularly valuable for its use of Arabic sources not widely available, and though its geographical focus is narrow, the book sheds light on events that were influential far beyond al-Jawf.

■ **Desert Queen:** The Extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell: *Janet Wallach. Doubleday, 1996, 0-385-47408-3, $27.50, hb; Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996, 0-297-81249-1, £20, hb.* A fascinating, historically important and—fortunately—volubly articulate, diary-writing subject far outweigh this biography's patches of awful writing and the author's oddly gappy knowledge of the Arab Middle East. Bell, "the mother of Iraq," was Britain's only female Political Officer during World War I and the only female Oriental Secretary afterward, and was arguably the Empire's most knowledgeable and sympathetic Middle East hand. The most confident product of a confident age, she traveled alone in Turkey, Mesopotamia, Arabia and Persia, mastering not only the languages but the histories and relationships of the peoples. She campaigned for Arab independence and the end of the British Mandate, and herself drew the borders of the first Arab state in Mesopotamia since the 13th century. This book provides good evidence that not empires but people, especially policy-making people, make history.

■ **Dir'iyyah and the First Saudi State:** *William Facey. Stacey International, 1997, 0-905743-80-6, £25/$49.95, hb.* From 1745 to 1818, in a fertile wadi northwest of present-day Riyadh, the first Saudi state arose, in defiance of the Ottoman Empire, under the leadership of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. The capital of this state was Dir'iyyah, today a labyrinthine complex of adobe ruins, many of which preserve outstanding architectural details. It is one of the most significant historical sites in modern Saudi Arabia, which looks to 'Abd al-Wahhab as its spiritual founder. Facey, a director at the London Centre of Arab Studies, has detailed this history in a picture-book format that will bring new attention to a fascinating chapter in Arabian history.

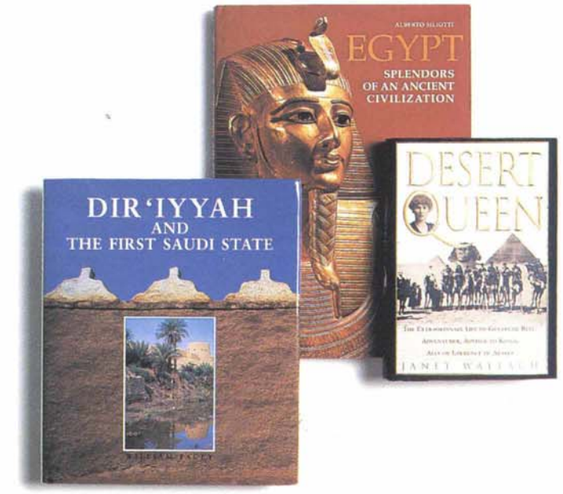
■ **The Dome of the Rock:** *Saïd Nuseibeh and Oleg Grabar. Rizzoli, 1996, 0-8478-1942-6, $60, hb.* Photographed by Nuseibeh with extensive cooperation by the Dome's curators and using a large-format view camera, this is the best photographic study to date of the monument, built in 692, that stands on Islam's third holiest site. The marbles, mosaics and crafted stonework of the Dome—and of many other monuments in the surrounding *Haram al-Sharif*—are displayed in all their magnificence. Grabar's essay, exhaustive but very readable, details not only the building's history but the history and significance of its decoration.

■ **Egypt: Splendors of an Ancient Civilization:** *Alberto Siliotti. Thames and Hudson, 1994, 0-500-01647-X, $50/£29.95, hb.* One would hardly think that another survey of ancient Egyptian art would be necessary, and yet here is a well-organized visual feast that takes full advantage of photography, illustrated maps and top-notch color reproduction to traverse 4000 years of history in surprising comfort. Numerous large, often double-page, photographs in this overscale (10x14") book encourage careful contemplation of the architecture and artifacts, while equally large maps locate the ancient sites with uncommon clarity—and are often supplemented by stunning aerial photographs. This is a book with something for young and old, novice and specialist. Its cover price is a bargain for the riches within.

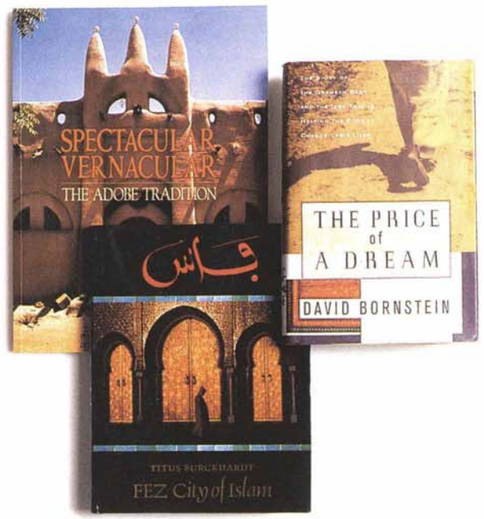
■ **Faces of Lebanon:** *William Harris. Markus Wiener, 1997, 1-55876-115-2, $39.95/£27.50, hb; 1-55876-116-0, $16.95/£12.95, pb.* Sectarian, ethnic and nationalist rejection of existing territorial states has become a major geopolitical concern in this decade, and Lebanon's troubled modern history as a multi-communal state has been viewed variously as avatar and harbinger. Harris, who lived in Lebanon through the mid- and late 1980's, is refreshingly cautious about pointing out "lessons," preferring instead a careful analysis of the complex mosaic of stresses that continue to bear on 20th-century Lebanon. Personal asides from the author's own experiences illuminate the historical discussions.

■ **Fez, City of Islam:** *Titus Burckhardt, tr. William Stoddart. Islamic Texts Society, 1992, 0-946621-17-9, £14.95/$39.95, hb.* The book is a classic, written with the simplicity of great scholarship combined with great love of its subject. The author cherished the closest ties to the city—religious, academic, artistic and practical. The stately translation is worthy, the production is elegant. The whole is a history of a people and that people's religion, a history which also demonstrates the arts and crafts of one Islamic civilization, its sciences and its administrative skills. It would be hard to imagine a greater treasure for a reader who wants to understand a city and a civilization.

■ **Histoire d'Istanbul:** *Robert Mantran. Fayard, 1996, 2-213-59246-2, FF145; in French.* No US publisher has yet bought English-language rights to this wide-ranging "biography" of one of the world's great cities. With one foot in Asia and one in Europe, Istanbul has an important role to play in today's relations between the West and the Middle East—a role it took up during its 1000 years as the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, and which it polished during the 470 years it was the Ottoman Empire's capital. Istanbul's modern energy matches its cultural legacy, and it has hopes today of becoming a competitor of renascent Beirut. A chronology and bibliography add to the utility of this book.



■ **The Hittites and Their Contemporaries in Asia Minor:** *J. G. Macqueen. Thames and Hudson, 1996, 0-500-27887-3, $15.95/£9.95, pb.* This classic summary of all that is known about the long-forgotten Hittites of Anatolia was written in 1975 and updated in 1986. The paperback edition includes a page of added prefatory material summarizing—too briefly—finds made and new theories proposed in the last 10 years, including the discovery at last of tin mines in central Anatolia. Despite being behind the times, however, this information-packed 176-page book is an excellent source of solid information.



■ **Hood Hood Books** is a new publisher dedicated to bringing folkloric and religious tales of the Islamic world to young readers in the West. Launched in 1995 in London, it now offers more than a dozen titles, the first installments in five planned series. Each paperback is illustrated with art commissioned from award-winning young artists; each is a keepsake-quality production priced between £4.50 and £10 ($7.50 – $17). The series include "Heroes from the East" (*Sinan; Saladin; Akbar* and *The Queen of Sheba*); "Treasures from the East" (*Ibn Tulun: The Story of a Mosque; Shah Jahan and the Story of the Taj Mahal*); "The Travels of Ibn Battutah" (*Ibn Battutah in the Valley of Doom; Ibn Battutah, Son of the Mighty Eagle*); "Fables from the East" (*The Animals of Paradise*) and "The Lives of the Prophets" (*The Lives of the Prophets* and *The Three Shirts of Joseph*). Most are best suited for ages eight through 13, although grown-ups—particularly non-Muslims—will learn much from them and will appreciate the illustrations, too. Several new titles in each series are planned for release within the coming year. Hood Hood has established itself quickly as an outstanding provider of multicultural resources. Its books are available in the US through Amideast, 1730 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-4505.

■ **Illuminated Manuscripts of Medieval Spain:** *Mireille Mentré. Thames and Hudson, 1996, 0-500-01732-8, $75/£48, hb.* The Mozarabe illuminations of these Christian manuscripts, all produced in the years of anxiety between 900 and 1100, show the diffusion of Islamic art styles beyond al-Andalus into the Christian portions of Spain, and their forceful interaction with Byzantine, Carolingian and Visigothic styles. This is a detailed and scholarly text, with 252 illustrations of which 146 are in color.

■ **Jemen:** Landschaft Menschen Kulturgeschichte: *Peter and Alexandra Weikenmeier and Peter Wald. Belser Verlag, 1994, 3-7630-2223-6, DM68, hb; in German.* Handsome photographs and a very well-informed text make this an excellent guide to the geography, history, architecture, people and religion of Yemen, many of whose early European explorers were German. Region by region, group by group and period by period, a detailed but accessible overall picture of *Arabia felix* is built up, greatly enriched by photographs of landscapes, buildings and daily life.

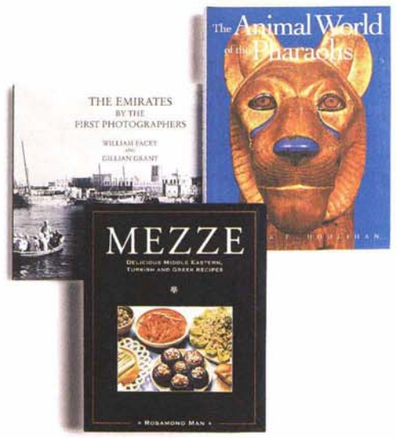
■ **Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe:** *Barbara Daly Metcalf, ed. University of California Press, 1996, 0-520-20403-4, $50, hb; 0-520-20404-2, $20, pb.* The authors use a broad cultural definition of "space" that emphasizes communal and individual quests for recognition and identity as well as locations for religious expression. They emphasize those Muslim communities that are growing most rapidly, and whose members often share experiences of cultural displacement, for those individuals and communities are generally the most active in forging new social, cultural and economic relations at the interface between Islam and non-Islam. The essays are aimed at social-science professionals, but present interesting ideas for lay readers.

■ **The Message of the Sphinx:** A Quest for the Hidden Legacy of Mankind: *Graham Hancock and Robert Bauval. Crown, 1996, 0-517-70503-6, $27.50, hb.* The Sphinx remains a riddle! Two well-credentialed revisionist Egyptologists here present their evidence that the leonine statue may be not 4500 but 12,000 years old, and that the layout of the pyramids and other features of the Giza plain replicate the alignment of the stars at *Zep Tepi* or "first time," the spring equinox in 10,500 BC when time began. The argument is well presented, though it outrages many Egyptologists, and it remains to be seen whether this is "junk science" or an important contribution toward a better understanding of ancient Egypt.

■ **Mezze:** Delicious Middle Eastern, Turkish and Greek Recipes. *Rosamond Man. Garnet Publishing, 1-85964-049-4, £16.95/$35, hb. Mezze* (or *mezedes* or *al-mazzah*), the enormously varied *hors d'oeuvres* of Mediterranean cuisine, are one of the most wonderful features of eating in countries from Greece to Iran and back to the Levant and Arabia. The author's love not only for the foods but also for the people of those countries shines forth from this collection of excellent, authentic and varied recipes.

■ **Palestine:** A Nation Occupied: *Joe Sacco. Fantagraphics Books, 1-15097-150-9, $14.95, pb.* **Palestine:** In the Gaza Strip: *Joe Sacco. Fantagraphics Books, 1-15097-300-5, $16.95, pb.* Stretching the "comic book" into the realm of serious reportage, cartoonist Sacco takes over where photojournalists leave off. He renders with irony, compassion and uncompromising detail his abundantly visual—and well-reported—chronicles of sojourns in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem before the 1993 Oslo Accord. He never shies from humor, nor from contradictions, in himself or in others: Refugees, reporters, taxi drivers, or families at dinner. Interviews with activists and former prisoners and his own less-than-brave responses to street battles are all presented in his hip, war-tourist-with-a-conscience style. Although his cool gets chilly at times, he makes daily life for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip uniquely comprehensible to a younger generation.

■ **Prairies of Fever:** *Ibrahim Nasrallah, tr. May Jayyusi and Jeremy Reed. Interlink Books, 1993, 1-56656-106-X, $9.95/£8.99, pb.* In this poetic, uniquely structured novel, Nasrallah evokes the multifaceted mind in a style that invites parallels with Jung, Hesse and Sartre. The story concerns the struggle of a young Arab teacher to retain a sense of identity while adapting to a new job in the Arabian Peninsula; however, Nasrallah devotes his writer's attention largely to his protagonist's interior world, where reality and fantasy mix freely and transformation takes a uniquely modern, Arab cast.



■ **The Price of a Dream:** The Story of the Grameen Bank and the Idea That is Helping the Poor to Change Their Lives: *David Bornstein. Simon & Schuster, 1996, 0-684-81191-X, $25.* "Give a man a fish, and you have fed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you have fed him for a lifetime." Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus saw the catch in this old dictum, and said, in effect, "Give a man a loan to buy a net, then he can catch and sell fish, make a profit, increase his family's well-being, improve the diet of his customers and fuel the economy of his village." Credit for the very poor—particularly for village women—was Yunus's idea and the goal of the Grameen Bank, now the most successful antipoverty program in the world. With more than two million borrowers and a repayment rate close to 98 percent, the Grameen ("Village") Bank has inspired imitators worldwide, including some in the United States. Like the bank, this book is humane, somewhat chaotic and ultimately successful, describing the best new hope in developmental economics since the Marshall Plan.

■ **Puritans in Babylon:** The Ancient Near East and American Intellectual Life, 1880–1930. *Bruce Kuklick. Princeton University Press, 1996, 0-691-02582-7, $29.95/£22.50, hb.* The development of scientific archeology a century ago and the resulting eager, competitive excavations throughout the Middle East had broad intellectual consequences in the United States. Scholars' preconceptions shaped their choices of sites and their interpretation of finds; what they found challenged and gradually changed their beliefs, and led to "a revolution in the way ... Americans comprehended the world."

■ **The Ramadan Sonnets.** *Daniel Moore. Kitab/City Lights, 1996, 0-9652031-0-7, $10.95, pb; Jusoor Press, 1996, 0-9652031-0-7, £8.99, pb.* An American convert to Islam presents a moving documentation of his encounter with the fast of Ramadan. Each day of the holy month is honored with from one to seven poems, some rhymed and strict in their form, others—the better ones—free, deeply felt and worshipful. One delectably describes dishes at the break-fast meal and explains, "This is the taste buds remembering Allah's Divine Names in their own way."

■ **Saudi Arabia by the First Photographers:** *William Facey and Gillian Grant. Stacey International, 1996, 0-905743-74-1, £25, hb.*
The Emirates by the First Photographers: *William Facey and Gillian Grant. Stacey International, 1996, 0-905743-91-1, £25, hb.* In 1861, an Egyptian officer stood on the heights above the city of Madinah and made the first known photograph in what later became Saudi Arabia. Over the next 90 years, many of the changes that swept the Peninsula were documented by camera-bearing diplomats, businessmen, pilgrims and journalists. In contrast, the first known photograph of Abu Dhabi dates to 1901; photography over the years in what became the United Arab Emirates was frequently bound up in the promotion of British business and political interests. Through painstaking research, the authors assembled these twin collections. While the range and quality of the images may disappoint some accustomed to Western historical photography, these books are filled nonetheless with meaningful glimpses into ways of life that have largely vanished, yet which form the roots of much contemporary cultural life in the Arabian Peninsula.

■ **Shadows in the Sand:** Following the Forty Days Road: *Lorraine B. Chittock. Camel Caravan Press (31 Golf St., Maadi, Cairo), 1996, 977-5762-00-6, $60, hb.* The *darb al-arbayyin*, or "40 days' road," from western Sudan into Egypt, was one of the trade routes that knitted together the economies of North Africa and Arabia from the seventh century on. It crossed some of the most inhospitable desert in Africa. Camels have always been an important commodity on this route: up to 50,000 a year today. Cairo-based photojournalist Chittock joined the men who keep this trade alive and produced a multifaceted visual record of a business where transactions are bound by honor, transport is on the hoof and nights are passed under desert stars—for better or for worse. She displays her photos unconventionally—but usually successfully—on two-page spreads whose sequence roughly tracks the northward journey. Her accompanying text interweaves reportage, anthropological detail and disarmingly intimate, often humorous, personal notes.

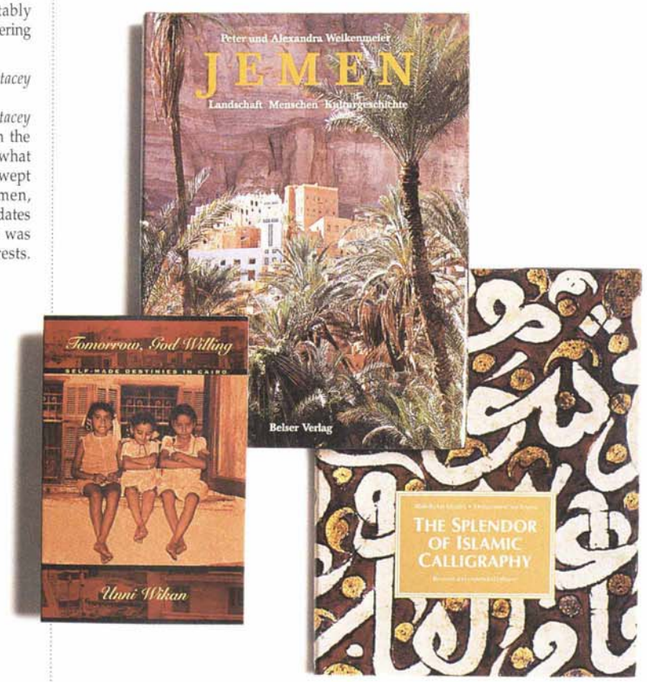
■ **Sinai und Rotes Meer:** Durch das Land der Beduinen bis zum Golf von Akaba: *Wolfgang and Rosel Jahn. Belser Verlag, 1994, 3-7630-2215-5, DM68, hb; in German.* Another thorough, accessible, beautifully photographed survey of an interesting part of the Arab world, with sections on the geology, flora and fauna, marine biology, ecology, history and people of the peninsula. The authors' 10 years' experience in the Sinai make this a valuable guide.

■ **Spectacular Vernacular:** The Adobe Tradition: *Jean-Louis Bourgeois and Carollee Pelos. Aperture Foundation, 1996, 0-89381-672-8, $39.95/£29, pb.* A New York architecture critic and a photographer, disillusioned with "architectural late-Modernism," set out to "relegitimize...local or popular building" that used that most elemental material—earth. Over more than a decade they journeyed from the American Southwest to the Middle East, West Africa and the Central Asian steppes. Their devotion to adobe deepened as they saw how communities in diverse cultures continue to use it to express (often spiritual) tradition. Their undisguised romanticism, tempered with pragmatism, is contagious. Text and photographs cover nearly all major vernacular adobe styles. This edition is a considerable expansion of the original 1983 book, and includes several revised chapters and much new material from West Africa.

■ **The Splendor of Islamic Calligraphy:** *Abdelkebir Khatibi and Mohammed Sijelmassi. Thames and Hudson, 1994, 0-500-01675-5, $65/£38, hb.* This revised and expanded version of the original 1976 edition now includes chapters on lively developments in contemporary painting and architecture that use calligraphy. It begins with explanations of the historical development of Arabic scripts, and then discusses the evolution of aesthetic principles, major schools of calligraphy and symbolism. With more than 200 illustrations, it is one of the most comprehensive—and most beautifully produced—works on the subject.

■ **Tomorrow, God Willing:** *Unni Wikan. University of Chicago, 1996, 0-226-89835-0, $17.95, pb; $50/£43.95, hb.* This moving and intimate account is the result of 25 years of visits by the author, a Norwegian anthropologist, with Umm 'Ali, a "vivacious, eloquent" and poor Cairo housewife. With scholarly precision, but also with great depth of understanding and empathy, Wikan describes some of the ways poverty damages the human spirit—and some of the ways it cannot.

■ **Traditional Textiles of Central Asia:** *Janet Harvey. Thames and Hudson, 1996, 0-500-27875-X, $24.95, pb; 0-500-01670-4, £24.95, hb.* For thousands of years, Central Asia has been a font of textile design and technique for much of Eurasia, and its peoples have preserved till today a varied, living tradition of textile production. With diagrams, more than 200 color illustrations and a text that is detailed but easy to understand, this book provides an excellent survey of the history, materials, fabrics, dress and decoration that make up that tradition.



■ **The United Arab Emirates:** *Trident Press, 1996, 1-900724-12-X, £15 (CD-ROM).* This is a textbook-length introduction to the nation founded in 1971 on the Arabian Gulf between Saudi Arabia and Oman. Ancient, modern and natural histories, the structure of government, the development of the economy and of society are all explained. Both writing and illustrations reflect a public-relations perspective, but the depth of the material makes it a worthwhile resource. It is also a CD-ROM in which content rightfully overshadows technological gimmickry; nonetheless, the recordings of bird calls of species common to the UAE highlight the unique advantages of the medium.

■ **What Everyone Should Know about Islam and Muslims:** *Suzanne Haneef. Kazi Publications, 1993, 0-935782-00-1, $14.95/£6, pb.* Written by a Christian convert to help the non-Muslim reader understand Islam, this is a clear and logically organized guide to the basic tenets of the faith and their general, though not universal, expression in the daily lives of Muslims. Beliefs, acts of worship, festivals, values and standards of conduct are all explained.

The books listed are available from libraries, bookstores and online "virtual bookstores," or can be ordered from the publishers, whose addresses can be found in *Books in Print* and other sources. We have included International Standard Book Numbers (ISBN) to simplify identifying and ordering them, though in some cases other editions than those listed may be available. Please do not order books from *Aramco World*.

COMPILED BY DICK DOUGHTY AND ROBERT ARNDT

THE SILVER SHIP

Written by Arthur Clark

A SUNKEN TREASURE

OF SILVER COINS,

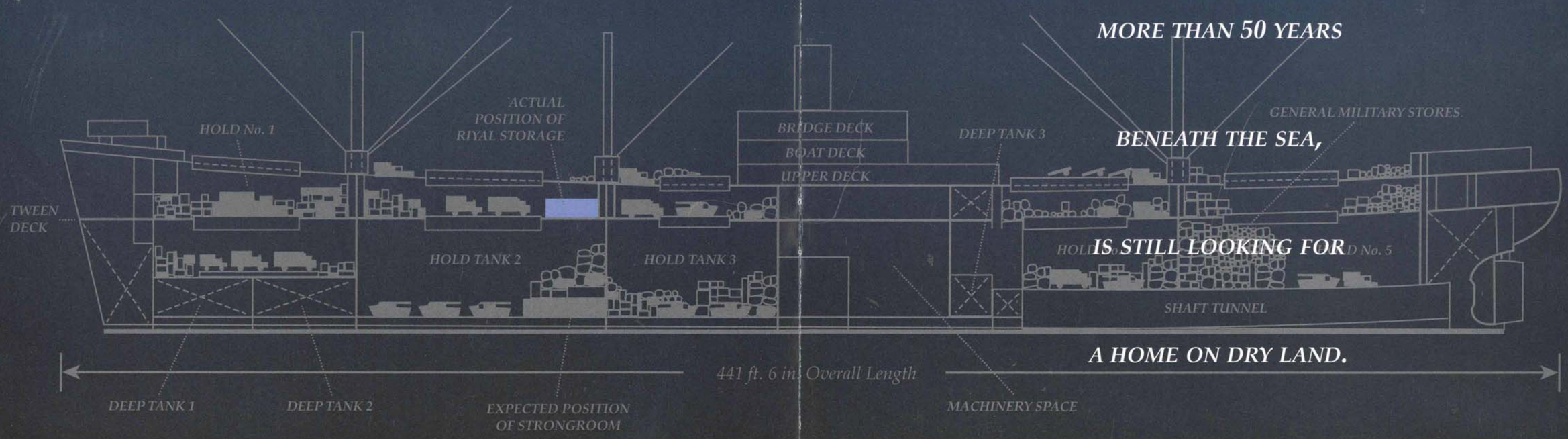
RECOVERED AFTER

MORE THAN 50 YEARS

BENEATH THE SEA,

IS STILL LOOKING FOR

A HOME ON DRY LAND.



Aboard the *Flex LD* recovery ship, after five years of planning and preparation (below): British salvage expert Robert Hudson, left, who commanded the overall effort, and retired US Navy captain Brian Shoemaker, whose early curiosity about the *S.S. John Barry* led him to form a salvage group in 1989 with California restaurateur and marine salvor Jay Fiondella, right.

Minted in Philadelphia at Saudi Arabia's request, a cargo of three million silver Saudi one-riyal coins was shipped to the oil port of Dhahran, in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, late in World War II. But the Liberty ship that was transporting them, the *S. S. John Barry,* never arrived. Torpedoed by a German U-boat in the Arabian Sea more than 185 kilometers (100 nautical miles) off Oman in August 1944, the *John Barry* sank in waters so deep that no one thought she could ever be reached.

Among the debris that marked her grave swirled rumors that, in addition to the coins, she was carrying a huge cargo of silver bullion.

Gerald Richards, now in his mid-70's, vividly recalls the night the *John Barry* sank. He was a Merchant Marine purser aboard the US cargo ship.

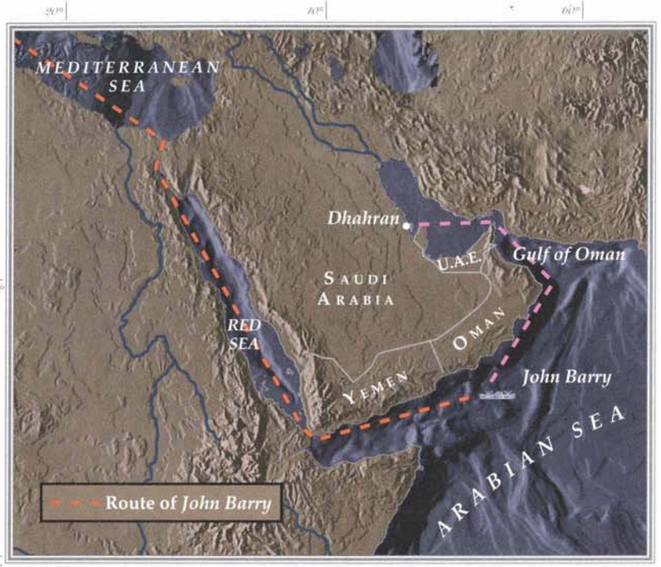
Liberty ship's last voyage, Richards knew there was something special about the *John Barry*'s cargo when he saw guards with machine-guns on board as the ship loaded in Philadelphia in July 1944. That kind of security was "very, very unusual," he recalls.

Amid a torrent of cargo that included refinery equipment, lengths of pipe, military trucks and a Caterpillar tractor, Richards didn't see 750 wooden boxes go into the heavily guarded No. 2 hold. Stencilled on each box was the word "Dhahran," the name of a new Middle East oil outpost.

Secrecy was the watchword in wartime, and the *John Barry*'s crew should have known nothing about her secret cargo. But, says Richards, "I always figured there was silver bullion aboard because of the security they put on until we sailed." After the war, he says, he forgot about the matter until 1994, when he was shown a 50-year-old letter from the

Shoemaker and Fiondella were undaunted by the fact

that no commercial salvage had ever been attempted at 2600-meter depths.



"We were two days and eight hours out from Aden," he says. "I was just getting around to going to bed at 9:55 p.m. when the first torpedo hit. It rocked us, I'll say that."

Richards was thrown into oil-covered, wreckage-strewn seas when one of the davits holding his lifeboat snapped before the boat could be lowered. After an endless 15 minutes in the water, he was picked up by another lifeboat. Later that night he and his shipmates watched as another torpedo slammed into the *John Barry*, breaking her in two and sinking her in 2600 meters (8500') of water.

One of the few remaining survivors of the sinking, both Richards and the *Barry*'s captain, Joseph Ellerwald, stated that the ship had been carrying $26 million worth of silver bullion. Since silver was then worth 48 cents per troy ounce, that reckoning—never corroborated by the US government—would mean that the vessel's cargo had included more than 1688 metric tons (1857 US tons) of silver.

"I've asked myself how I knew: Everything was confidential then," says Richards, who now lives in Independence, Missouri. "Up till I saw the letter from the mint, I just figured there was silver bullion."

Richards might also have asked himself why the silver, whether bullion or coins, was headed for Dhahran.

The small town on Saudi Arabia's east coast was the regional headquarters of what was then the Arabian American Oil Company, known as Aramco, now the Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco). It was also the site of a new US consulate. Oil had been discovered there just six years before (See *Aramco World*, May/June 1988), and Dhahran's population was only a few hundred men. But it was becoming clear that there were considerable oil deposits under Saudi Arabia's soil, certainly in commercially interesting quantities, and oil was the lifeblood of the war effort.

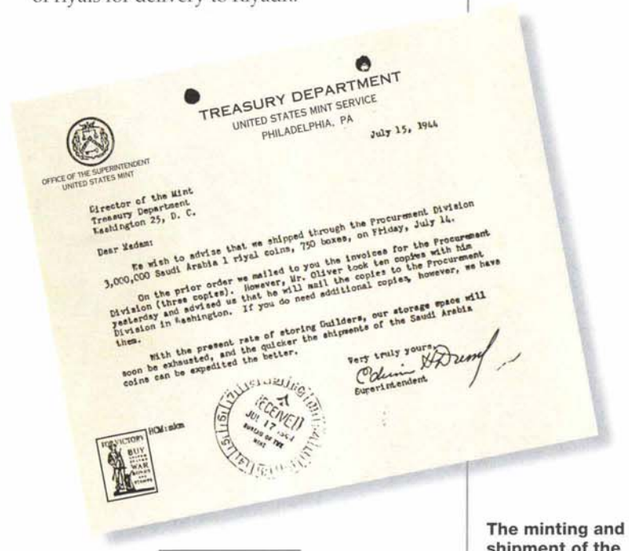
Though Germany was reeling under Allied attacks, the war in Europe was not over; in Asia and the Pacific, Japan looked far from finished. In Washington, there was mounting worry about the adequacy of American oil reserves. Securing additional supplies was crucial to winning the war. Late in 1943, the US government—which controlled such commodities in wartime—allocated steel and other materials for sale to Aramco for the construction of a new refinery, tank farm and marine terminal at Ras Tanura, 25 kilometers (15 miles) north of Dhahran.

But there was a further problem: Workers building the new refinery had to be paid; paper money was not yet in use in Saudi Arabia; and by 1943 the kingdom—and Aramco—had run short of riyal coins. The world economy was so unsettled that the riyals in circulation were valued more for their silver content than as a medium of exchange. Les Snyder, who was an Aramco employee in Dhahran in 1944, recalled that the company had to "scrounge for local supplies of riyals," even sending him to Riyadh to buy coins from merchants there.

The currency shortage was finally resolved when the Saudi government, under the terms of the 1941 Lend-Lease Act, arranged to buy silver in the United States to be minted into riyals in Philadelphia. The first American-minted coins arrived in Saudi Arabia in the autumn of 1943, marking the beginning of a new relationship between Washington and Riyadh, and by the end of the war a total of 49 million riyals had been shipped unscathed from the United States to Saudi Arabia. The only consignment lost was on the *John Barry*.

Snyder doesn't recall the loss of the coins on the *John Barry*; he was upset that the loss of the ship's general cargo set back refinery construction. But Parker Hart, then the United States consul-general in Dhahran, was furious that Britain, which was supposed to guard the sea lanes off the Arabian Peninsula, hadn't provided adequate protection for the *John Barry*. Hart was to have collected the shipment of riyals for delivery to Riyadh.

Oman-based entrepreneur Shaykh Ahmed Farid al-Aulaqi, head of Ocean Group, bought salvage rights to the *John Barry* from Shoemaker and Fiondella.



TREASURY DEPARTMENT
UNITED STATES MINT SERVICE
PHILADELPHIA, PA

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
UNITED STATES MINT

July 15, 1944

Director of the Mint
Treasury Department
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Madam:

We wish to advise that we shipped through the Procurement Division 3,000,000 Saudi Arabia 1 riyal coins, 750 boxes, on Friday, July 14.

On the prior order we mailed to you the invoices for the Procurement Division (three copies). However, Mr. Oliver took ten copies with him yesterday and advised us that he will mail the copies to the Procurement Division in Washington. If you do need additional copies, however, we have them.

With the present rate of storing Guilders, our storage space will soon be exhausted, and the quicker the shipments of the Saudi Arabia coins can be expedited the better.

Very truly yours,

Superintendent

RECEIVED JUL 17 1944 BUREAU OF THE MINT

HCM:akm

When the *Barry* went down, the riyal was worth 30 US cents. The ship's three-million-riyal cargo therefore had a face value of $900,000. The silver in each coin, about 10 grams (3/8 of an ounce), was worth 18 cents, so the coins' silver value was $540,000. Neither figure is anywhere near the $26 million that the *Barry*'s captain and purser were quoted as saying the cargo was worth. Hart's cables about the sinking, secret when they were sent, don't mention any uncoined silver, but with time the rumor of sunken bullion became accepted as colorful fact.

Thus, in his 1972 book *Liberty Ships: The Ugly Ducklings of World War II,* John Gorley Bunker writes, "The *John Barry* [was] a most unlikely treasure ship,...but securely crated and locked in her holds was a fortune more

The minting and shipment of the coins, paid for by Saudi Arabia under the terms of America's 1941 Lend-Lease Act, was not secret, but their purpose was not declassified until 1984: The coins increased the amount of money circulating in the Saudi economy, making it possible to pay the workers who were building Aramco's new refinery at Ras Tanura. Other shipments of silver riyals, totaling 49 million by war's end, reached Saudi Arabia safely.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: COINS: SOTHEBY'S; DIAGRAM: U.S. NAVY; THIS PAGE: PHOTO COURTESY JAY FIONDELLA

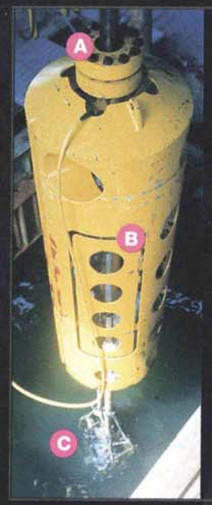
SID JORDAN

Going to great depths...

Using side-scanning sonar and video cameras mounted on one crewed and two uncrewed underwater "rovers," it took two years to locate and positively identify the *John Barry*. Here, video cameras mounted on a "remote-operated vehicle" show an anti-aircraft gun on the deck of the *Barry*.

With a lifting power of 300 tons—enough to tear away decks and hatches of the sunken ship—the French-owned *Flex LD* was a "dynamically positioned" drilling ship modified for the deep-water *John Barry* salvage effort. A transponder placed on the ocean floor and satellite positioning equipment allowed the ship's onboard computers to hold the grab precisely above the wreck.

IFREMER, the French research institute whose surveys had located the *Titanic*, custom-built the *Flex LD*'s recovery grab. Before the coins could be found and raised, however, the grab had to clear the deck of debris and tear through to the No. 2 hold. Swirling mud often meant hours of waiting for visibility to improve between lifts.



The two-part grab was lowered and supported (A) by more than ninety 27-meter lengths of drill pipe. Each length of pipe had to be screwed onto the previous length, one by one, each time the grab was lowered, and unscrewed one by one when it was raised. Each such "trip" took some eight hours to complete. The grab housing (B) held remotely operated control equipment, video cameras and the powerful lights needed to penetrate the total darkness in which the *Barry* rested. The jaws of the grab hung just below this housing (C).

The two halves of the *John Barry* landed upright on the sea floor, about 360 meters (1200 feet) apart. The second of the two torpedoes that struck on August 28, 1944, broke the ship in two just aft of the hold that carried the silver riyals.

After three weeks of clearing overlying debris and tearing away decking, the grab reached the coins, which it spilled onto the deck of the *Flex LD* along with fragments of the wooden boxes in which they had been packed. It took seven days to recover nearly half of the *Barry*'s three million riyals, which crew members shoveled like gravel. The salvors spent another five days searching unsuccessfully for the silver bullion rumored to have been aboard.

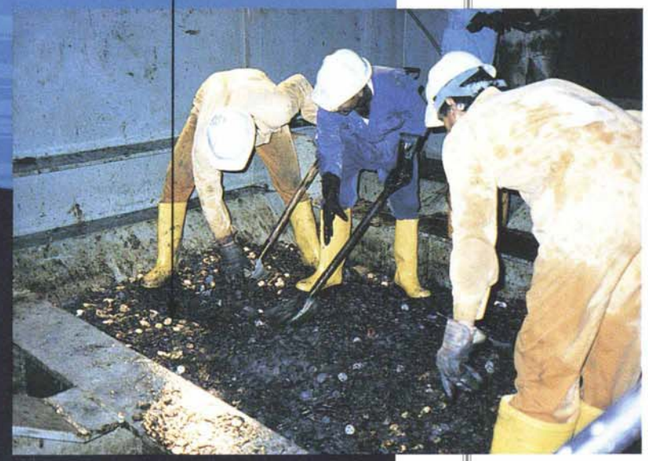


ILLUSTRATION: TOM McNEFF. INSETS, FROM LEFT: JAY FIONDELLA; SID JORDAN; JAY FIONDELLA; ROBERT HUDSON

fabulous than even Ali Baba and his forty thieves could have hoped for—$26 million in silver bullion.... Somewhere in the Arabian Sea one of the richest treasures of all time waits, well protected by a mile of seawater, for the future technique that may enable a salvage crew to bring it up."

After aborting a scheduled auction of salvage rights to the ship in 1978, the US government re-advertised the rights in 1989. It reported that the *Barry* had been carrying a cargo of assorted vehicles and an unspecified amount of "silver bullion."

That caught the attention of Brian Shoemaker and Jay Fiondella, who were undaunted by the fact that no commercial salvage had ever been attempted at 2600-meter depths. But they weren't after the riyal coins: By themselves, the coins probably wouldn't pay for a recovery effort. They were interested in the bullion. Silver valued at $26 million in 1944 would have been worth about $380 million in 1987, when the metal was priced at just over seven dollars an ounce. That much treasure, they calculated, might attract the kind of investors who could finance a pioneering deep-sea salvage mission.

So Shoemaker, then a Navy captain, turned all his spare time to finding evidence that the *John Barry* had been carrying silver ingots. Though he couldn't prove that the bullion had been aboard, he did turn up tantalizing tidbits of information that pointed that way.

He discovered official wartime papers showing that the United States had signed an agreement in June 1944 to send some 100 million ounces of Lend-Lease silver to India—just a month before the John Barry docked in Philadelphia. Later, he found proof that 90

According to published accounts of the sinking, the ship had also been carrying $26 million worth of silver bullion—but those statements have never been confirmed.

The *S.S. John Barry*'s cargo of three million riyals was packed in 1500 canvas bags, some of which were recovered substantially intact. The bags were packed two by two in wooden boxes; the entire cargo weighed 37 US tons.

million ounces of silver destined for India had been delivered to the port of New York at the same time the *John Barry* was docked there, just before she sailed—supposedly in ballast—to Philadelphia to collect the riyals.

In November 1989, with a bid of $50,010, Shoemaker, Fiondella and two Washington lawyers won the right to salvage the Liberty ship, if they could. But before the newly named John Barry Group could launch its project, it had to deal with an immovable provision of international law. The wreck lay off the coast of Oman, not in Omani territorial waters but certainly in the sultanate's declared economic zone. The project couldn't proceed without Omani participation.

Fortunately, Omani participants were ready. The mission to raise the *Barry*'s cargo had captured the imagination of British salvage expert Robert Hudson and of Shaykh Ahmed Farid al-Aulaqi, a wealthy Yemeni-born businessman who lives in Oman. Hudson, now managing director of Blue Water Recoveries of Surrey, England, was a member of Ocean Group, an organization set up by al-Aulaqi. Ocean Group would represent Oman in a bid to solve the *John Barry* mystery once and for all.

In a deal reportedly worth $750,000, Ocean Group bought the salvage rights from the John Barry Group in 1990. The deal "was a bitter pill to swallow" despite its profitability, notes Fiondella, who had been as interested in the adventure as the money. But there was a sugar coating, in the form of a provision that, if Ocean Group recovered the bullion, "it would make me a millionaire."

Ocean Group moved quickly. A side-scan sonar survey at the coordinates shown in American and German war records promptly located a hulk in March 1990, says Hudson, whose Blue Water Recoveries was offshore project manager. In early 1991, a video-equipped remote-operated vehicle (ROV) sent back images of a wreck in two pieces. It was a Liberty ship, but it could not be positively identified as the *John Barry*.

Still, those first images made it almost certain the mission was on target. In his book *Stalin's Silver*, Ocean Group spokesman John Beasant quotes a technician on the scene as saying that the ROV showed the ship's deck covered with "American World War II military vehicles...together with gun turrets and stacked drill pipes."

Early in 1992 a more detailed video survey showed the *John Barry*'s nameplate and ended any doubt. It also showed that the No. 2 hold was intact, though its hatch was blocked by debris. Views of the seafloor between the two halves of the ship—where silver bullion might have spilled when the ship broke in two—showed no sign of any ingots.

Salvage contractors from Houston, Texas handled the first two stages of the operation. In 1992, the French government marine-research organization, the Toulon-based Institut Français de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer (IFREMER), joined the search. IFREMER had located the wreck of the *Titanic* in 1985; their task here was to send down a minisub with a crew to examine the wreck and pick the right spot to place explosives that would tear it open.

The prow of the ship, where the salvors thought bullion might have been stored in deep tanks, had angled into the seabed and lay partly buried in mud. The experts chose the more accessible No. 2 hold, with its documented cargo of coins, as their target.

The underwater charges went off, but they proved so weak at that depth that they did little damage. IFREMER got the green light to develop riskier "smash-and-grab" technology that would allow the team to break into the *John Barry* by main force.

Taking such chances wasn't unusual for Ahmed Farid al-Aulaqi. "The element of chance, the element of risk, is part of Shaykh Ahmed Farid's character," says Beasant. In *Stalin's Silver*, Beasant states that al-Aulaqi had, in fact, risked "some $10 million" to make the mission possible.

In October 1994, a modified drilling ship, *Flex LD*, carrying a 50-ton video-equipped grab designed by IFREMER and resembling the jaws of a giant steam shovel, sailed to the location of the *John Barry*'s grave. With its satellite positioning system holding it on station to within a few meters, the ship's crew fitted together section after 27-meter (90') section of pipe, building a "string" that lowered the grab toward the target.

In early November, after the grab had stripped away the deck over the No. 2 hold and cleared away obstructing cargo, Hudson spotted the first glimmer of silver on the video screen. Over the next five days, the grab brought up 1.3 million Saudi riyals weighing 17 tons and showered them onto the drill-ship's deck. One mighty lift alone brought up 60,000 coins.

Even after the grab had harvested all the coins it could—the rest were abandoned as irrecoverable—the salvors continued to ransack the No. 2 hold. Hoping to find a safe containing the ship's loading plan, they even peeled open the captain's cabin. "We were still trying to prove the silver-bullion theory," Hudson says, "but we failed."

Today, Hudson is convinced that there never were silver ingots aboard the *John Barry*. "It was all hearsay," he says. "The crew of the *Barry* sat around and talked every night after watch...and eventually put a value on the [imaginary] silver." The idea that the ship was carrying bullion to India on Britain's Lend-Lease account doesn't hold water, Hudson says; his own research shows that almost all the silver shipped there was actually delivered.

Beasant, on the other hand, argues that there could have been bullion aboard that was bound for the Soviet Union. His idea is based on wartime records from the Kremlin, which he received from the Russian Embassy in Muscat in 1995, that show that Washington agreed to supply Moscow with a "special" unnamed cargo worth $25 million in 1943.

The near match between the value of that cargo and the $26-million value of the rumored silver on the *John Barry* "is beyond the bounds of credible coincidence," Beasant writes. He theorizes that the *Barry* had a secret itinerary, and was scheduled to sail on from Ras Tanura to an Iranian port from which the USSR, an American ally in World War II, was being supplied with materiel. In fact, the Allies had developed the ports of Khorramshahr and Bandar Shahpur, at the head of the Arabian Gulf, for just this purpose, and completed both a highway and a rail line from there to the Caspian Sea in January of 1943.

Al-Aulaqi is a believer in the silver bullion too, says Beasant, and in fact still hopes to find it. There is a "distinct possibility" that he might return to the site in the future, he says.

Hudson says that building the recovery equipment and raising the coins from such unprecedented depths was a victory in itself. "It was a great relief that we found the riyals. It gave us all a buzz," he says. "It was rewarding to see such an effort prove itself."

Financial rewards were harder to come by, however. Almost exactly a year after the recovery, on a rainy November night in Geneva, the coins were put up for auction by Sotheby's as a single lot. In spite of heavy advance publicity, they failed to attract a bid at a starting price of about eight million dollars.

Coin reference books list the value of uncirculated 1944 riyals as about $12 each, so the entire hoard, if each coin could be restored to mint condition, might be valued at $15.6 million. Sotheby's representatives, in pre-auction interviews, described the coins as representing a unique "slice of history—more valuable than just the coins themselves."

A spokesman for Blue Water Recoveries said in Geneva that the company had been approached by individuals, including some Saudi citizens, about buying smaller lots of the coins, but had opted for a one-lot sale in the hope of finding a collector who might give the coins to a museum. In a bid to share some of the drama and history surrounding the recovered treasure—and to recoup expenses—Blue Water began a campaign in 1996 to sell the coins, initially in the United States.

Success in that phase of the operation would, in effect, bring the riyals—perhaps the *John Barry*'s only *real* sunken treasure—back full circle to America, where the coins were minted to assist an important new ally more than 50 years ago.

Offered as a single lot by Sotheby's at a 1995 auction at the Beau Rivage hotel in Geneva, the *John Barry*'s treasure failed to attract bids above the sellers' reserve figure. Blue Water thus began to offer the coins singly to collectors. In the United States, they are available from Dakota International of Jacksonville, Florida.

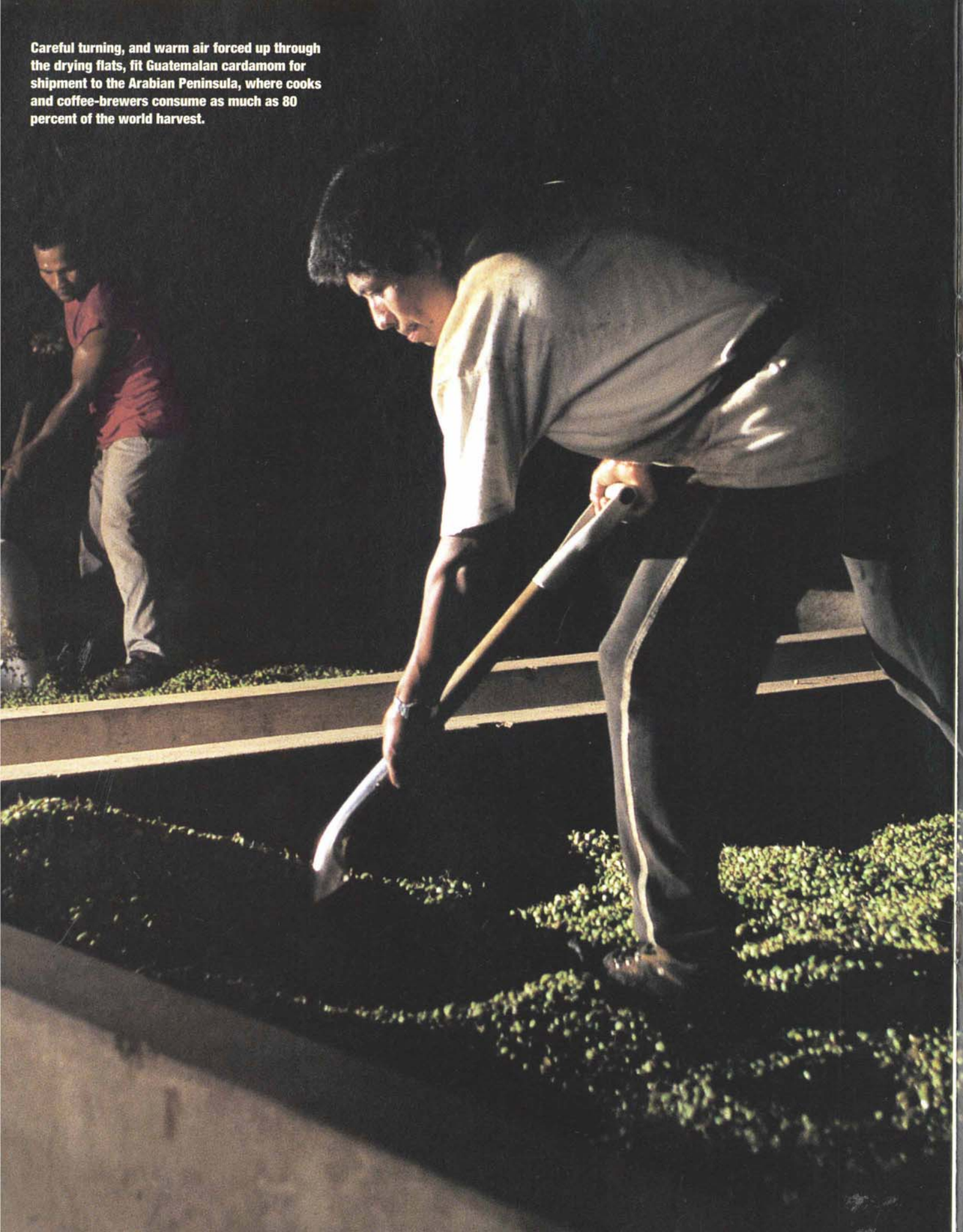
Arthur Clark is a staff writer for Saudi Aramco in Dhahran, and has written more than 40 articles for Aramco World.

SOTHEBY'S

ARTHUR CLARK

Today, Hudson is convinced that there never were silver ingots aboard the John Barry. "It was all hearsay," he says.

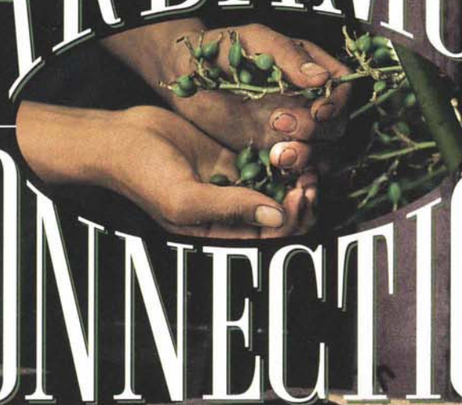
Careful turning, and warm air forced up through the drying flats, fit Guatemalan cardamom for shipment to the Arabian Peninsula, where cooks and coffee-brewers consume as much as 80 percent of the world harvest.



WRITTEN BY
LARRY LUXNER

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
PIET VAN LIER

The CARDAMOM CONNECTION



If it weren't for the tastes of coffee drinkers half a world away in Saudi Arabia, the Guatemalan town of Cobán might well go out of business.

Capital of Guatemala's mountainous Alta Verapáz province, Cobán is the source of much of the Arab world's cardamom, a sweet, camphorous and highly aromatic spice widely used as an additive in coffee, especially in the Arabian Gulf countries. In fact, cardamom coffee—*al-qahwah al-'arabiyyah* or *qahwat al-hail* in Arabic—is a nearly universal symbol of hospitality on the Arabian Peninsula.

In Cobán, none of the town's 125,000 residents speak Arabic, nor do any put cardamom in their own coffee. Yet the spice's Arab connections are well-known to all.

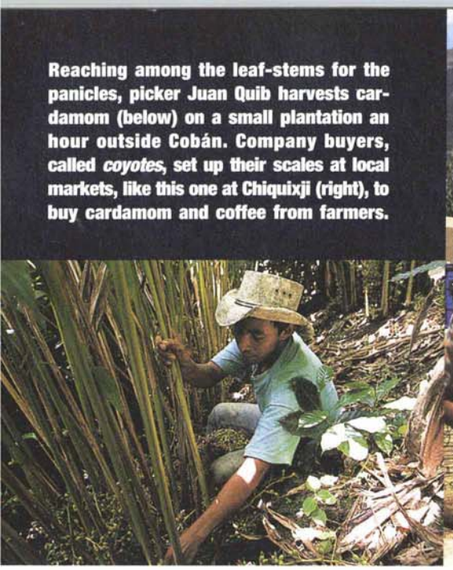
"Cardamom is the heart of our economy, and Guatemala is the biggest exporter in the world," says Otto Chavarría, a leading *cardamomero* and one of an estimated 200,000 Guatemalans who live, directly or indirectly, on the cardamom industry. "In this province, cardamom is even more important than coffee."

Today, cardamom ranks right behind coffee, sugar & bananas as an agricultural export.

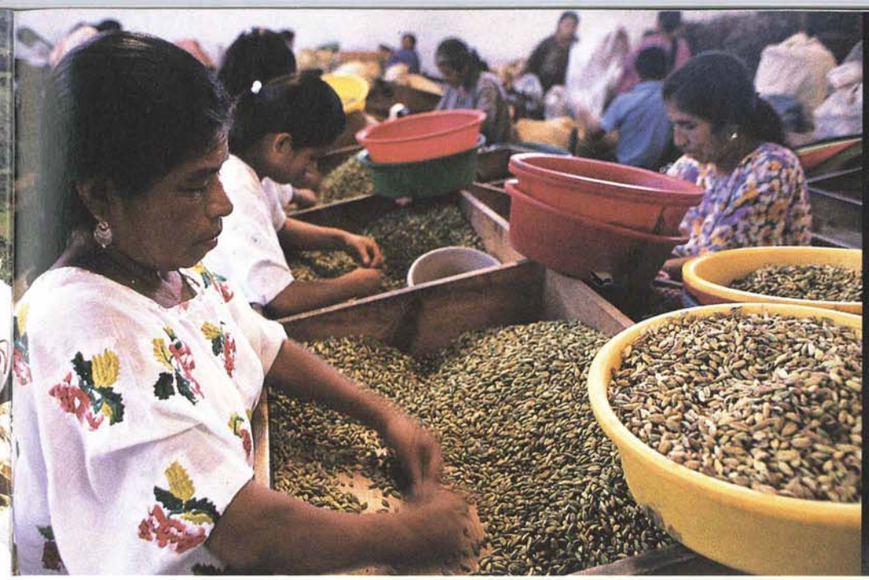
Interestingly, cardamom isn't indigenous to Guatemala, but to southern India and Sri Lanka. It is still produced in both countries, and India remains a major exporter.

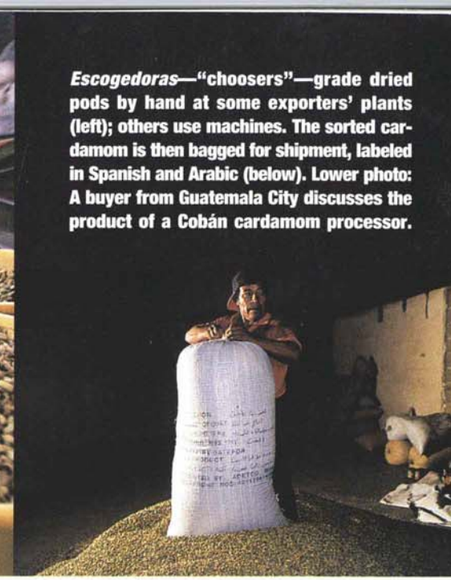
Long before cardamom's 20th-century arrival in Guatemala—indeed, some 2000 years before Europeans set foot in the New World—it was among the spices carried from India to the Middle East by Arabian mariners and caravan traders. Like many spices, it was used as a medicine well before it found culinary uses. The Ebers Papyrus, a pharmacological document dating from about 1550 BC, provides evidence that Egyptians were already using cardamom, as well as other spices, in medicines; they also used it in cosmetic ointments, perfumes and aromatic oils, for fumigation and for embalming.

In India, cardamom was sometimes prescribed, along with cinnamon, ginger and turmeric, to remove fat and cure jaundice and urinary infections. The Indian Ayurvedic system of medicine, based on the



Reaching among the leaf-stems for the panicles, picker Juan Quib harvests cardamom (below) on a small plantation an hour outside Cobán. Company buyers, called *coyotes*, set up their scales at local markets, like this one at Chiquixji (right), to buy cardamom and coffee from farmers.





Escogedoras—"choosers"—grade dried pods by hand at some exporters' plants (left); others use machines. The sorted cardamom is then bagged for shipment, labeled in Spanish and Arabic (below). Lower photo: A buyer from Guatemala City discusses the product of a Cobán cardamom processor.

earliest Brahmanic texts, recommended that spices such as cardamom and cloves be wrapped in betel-nut leaves and chewed after meals to increase the flow of saliva, help digestion and eliminate bad breath, and millions of Indians do precisely that today.

Cardamom first appeared in Europe after the scientists attached to the staff of Alexander the Great sent it back from India in the fourth century BC. Alexander had plants and other specimens sent to his tutor, Aristotle, and it was Aristotle's successor, Theophrastes, "the father of botany," who first mentioned cardamom in the West. It was later used in Rome to make perfume. When Roman trade collapsed after the empire's fall, cardamom, too, disappeared from Europe. It reappeared only in the early Middle Ages when the Crusaders returned from the Middle East, bringing with them—among many other comforts—spices used for medicinal and culinary purposes. In Scandinavia, Germany and Russia, cardamom is still commonly used in breads, cakes and pastries, though it has not been as warmly accepted elsewhere in Europe.

In Saudi Arabia, however, cardamom enjoys almost universal popularity, and a well-prepared pot of Arab coffee—with praise for the generous quantities of cardamon in it—is a staple subject of traditional colloquial poetry in Arabia. During the period between Ramadan and the Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah, consumption increases as between one and two million Muslims enter the country as pilgrims, swelling the population during a three-month period. Throughout the kingdom, green coffee beans are lightly roasted, crushed with a mortar and pestle, or ground in an electric coffee mill, and boiled briefly with ground cardamom seeds. If you order ready-ground cardamom coffee in a speciality store in Arabia, the clerk will add five or 10 grams of ground spice to 250 grams of coffee, but for special occasions, or to honor a guest with a particular display of generosity and good manners, quite large quantities of cardamom may be used. The spice gives the brew a greenish tint and a heady fragrance, and in some variations, it is the cardamom, and not the coffee, that is the dominant flavor.

The cardamom cultivated in Guatemala is *Elettaria cardamomum*, a native of India's Malabar coast. Growing from large rhizomes resembling ginger, the plant puts out clusters of tall, graceful stems topped with rough, palm-like leaves. From the base of the cluster grow soft, horizontal, crooked panicles up to a meter (3') long that bear white flowers and, eventually, cardamom pods. The plant thrives in the moisture of a tropical climate.

Today, cardamom ranks as Guatemala's fourth-largest agricultural export, right behind coffee, sugar and bananas. In 1995, the country shipped cardamom worth some $40 million—and roughly 60 percent of it went to Saudi Arabia, with another 10 percent to the United Arab Emirates. Only a small fraction was sent to non-Arab countries. Local exporters hope that the next crop will be even larger, perhaps enough to increase revenue by as much as 50 percent.

"Saudi Arabia consumes the bulk of the cardamom in the world," explains Milad Saad, who emigrated from Lebanon to Guatemala two decades ago. He is the owner of Imexa SA, one of 15 companies that export the spice to the Middle East. "And demand is especially high one month before Ramadan," he adds. This is because, during the holy month, making cardamom coffee is a daily task in every family, in preparation for the breaking of the fast.

Manfred Topke, a leading Guatemalan coffee exporter who also grows cardamom, says that 70 percent of the Central American nation's cardamom crop is grown by small producers: farmers with less than four hectares (10 acres) of land.

"Cardamom in Guatemala first became a big crop on the volcanic slopes of the Pacific coast, but then a virus wiped out those plantations," Topke says. Most production, he adds, then moved north from the coast to Alta Verapáz, the humid, mountainous region where higher altitude, it turned out, helped increase yields.

"The people who brought the seed here, mainly Germans, found that the climate in Guatemala, especially in Alta Verapáz, was similar to that of India," says Chavarría, who has been in the business for nearly 30 years.

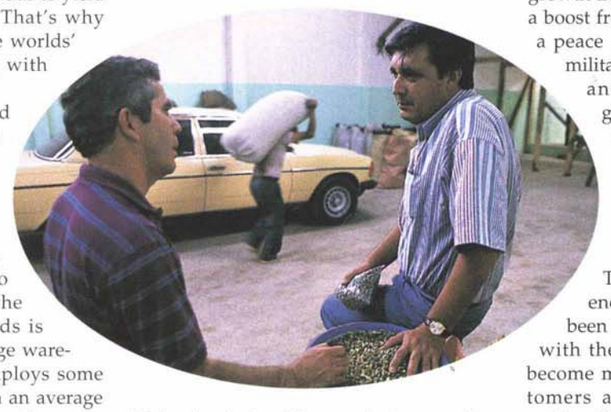
In Guatemala, cardamom plants take about three years to bear fruit and produce for four to six years before yields decline. The pods, which grow spaced at intervals along the panicle, contain brown or black seeds so tiny that it takes four pods to yield a quarter-teaspoon of them. That's why cardamom ranks as one of the worlds' most expensive spices, along with saffron and vanilla.

Picking the pods is hard work. The panicles lie on the ground, so workers must squat while picking the pods and gathering them into bags, and the pods do not all ripen at once, so enough skill is required to judge which pods to pick and which to leave on the plant. Sorting the picked pods is usually done by women in large warehouses. Chavarría himself employs some 300 women and girls who earn an average of 20 *quetzales* ($3.40) a day sorting cardamom into six grades by color and size. (Saudi wholesale buyers judge the product by aroma first, then color and size.)

"Cardamom pods are like Christmas trees," says Dr. Luis Pedro Torrebiarte, president of the Gremial de Exportadores de Cardamomo, the Cardamom Exporters' Association. "The greener and bigger they are, the more they're worth."

Torrebiarte, 49, has been in charge of his family's cardamom business, Comercial Agricola Magdalena SA, since 1985. He's also a psychiatrist with a degree from Syracuse University. In the mornings, Torrebiarte surrounds himself with cardamom samples and spreadsheets in his Guatemala City office; afternoons, he sees patients at a nearby clinic.

"Right now, we're at a very even balance between production and consumption," he observes, noting that Guatemala surpassed India in overall production volume about 10 years ago. Other cardamom-exporting countries include Tanzania and Sri Lanka, but neither markets more than 40 percent of Guatemala's totals. Costa Rica, Colombia, Mexico and Brazil have each tried to cultivate the spice commercially, but inhospitable growing conditions have kept them from success.



But other countries, such as Papua New Guinea, Costa Rica and Honduras, Guatemala's neighbor to the south, have successfully entered the global market in recent years. Thus, a Guatemalan government report points out, global supply has grown faster than demand, causing export prices to drop 8.3 percent between 1994 and 1995.

For the foreseeable future, Guatemala seems likely to remain the world's foremost exporter of cardamom. An optimist, Torrebiarte has requested that the Guatemalan government open its first trade office in the Middle East in order to facilitate sales not only of cardamom, but also of other Guatemalan products such as fine coffee, apparel and manufactured goods.

Momentum for his and other economic-growth initiatives appears to have received a boost from the signing, last December, of a peace accord between the Guatemalan military, under President Alvaro Arzú, and the country's largest rebel groups. The agreement formally ended Latin America's oldest and deadliest armed conflict, the 36-year-old Guatemalan civil war, which cost the nation an estimated 140,000 lives.

The economic cost, too, Torrebiarte points out, has been enormous. "Many man-hours have been wasted," he says. "We hope that with the signing of this treaty, we can become more productive." His Arab customers assure him that the market is waiting.

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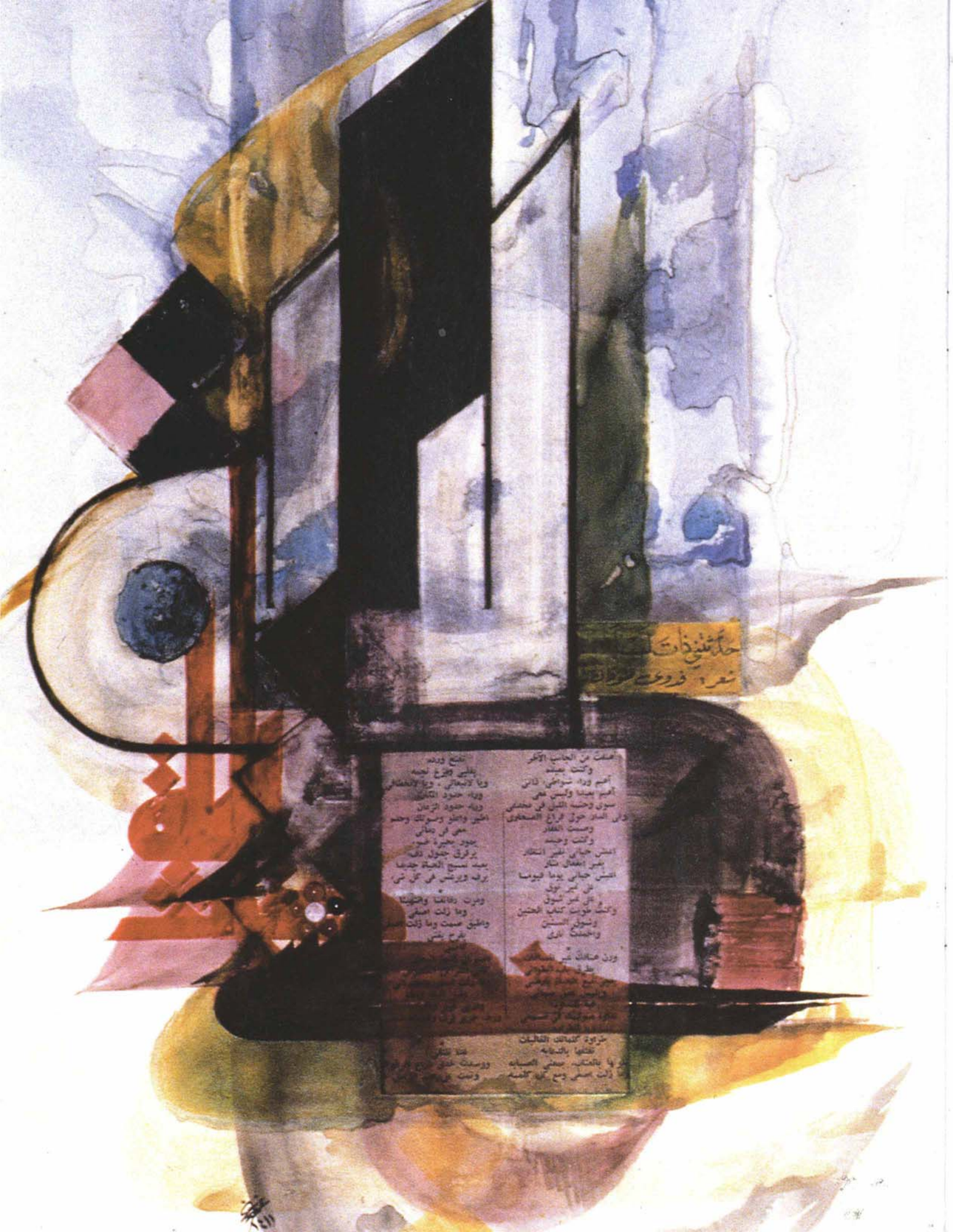

(2)

Venture into almost any bank, airport, or corporate headquarters in the Gulf; wander through an art gallery in Bombay, Karachi or Beirut and you'll see them: Renditions of Arabic letters in sometimes gigantic, sometimes three-dimensional, and always unconventional formats. Art that featured Arabic script used to be confined to illustrated manuscripts, mosques and monuments. Today, Arabic appears in an unprecedented range of artworks. By Lee Adair Lawrence.

(1)

A cross-section of such art, from the collection of the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, is on display at the Chicago Cultural Center through May 18, following a successful three-month exhibition at Agnes Scott College in Atlanta. It includes Osman Waqialla's strong, stylized letters in a wash of reds and ochres (1); Husain's fluid hand, which transforms "*Huwwallah*" ("He is God") into the outline of a boat upon the sea (12); busy, illegible swarms of words in works by Yussef Ahmad (8) and Mehdi Qotb; a single letter crafted by Ali Omar Ermes with one sure stroke of his thick brush (2); the interlocking Kufic script in Amin Gulgee's sculptures (19); and the illusion of depth Ahmed Moustafa creates solely with calligraphy (15).

Directly or indirectly, these artists, and numerous others from countries as far apart as Algeria and Pakistan, draw on Arabic letters and texts for their art, tapping their shape, meaning, and potent cultural resonance. This common element prompts Princess Wijdan Ali of Jordan to affirm the existence of a "calligraphic school" of modern Arab art—*al-madrasah al-khattiyyah fi al-fann*—that has emerged over the past 50 years. Paradoxically, the fact that Arabic writing has been linked with art for centuries poses the greatest challenge to her idea, while also highlighting its most valuable contribution.

"On the whole, any work that has calligraphy [in it] is a calligraphic work," Wijdan says, adding that she uses the words "calligraphy" and "writing" interchangeably. This definition throws open the school's doors to any artist who has ever incorporated as much as a letter in his or her work, whether he is a master calligrapher drawing letters with a meticulously sharpened *qalam* or a computer aficionado designing letterforms on her screen.

Wijdan also maintains that the calligraphic school is not confined to a single country or geographical region, but reaches across the Islamic world, and is identifiable in terms of a shared philosophical stance. "The Calligraphic School," as she sees it, "consists of all works where artists have used calligraphy in their work for the purposes of identity."

The claim is thought-provoking, and the credentials with which Wijdan backs them are impressive: She is herself an artist for whom "calligraphy has been a liberating element"; she holds a doctorate in Islamic art history from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London; and she is the founder and president of Jordan's National Gallery of Fine Arts, whose collection, devoted exclusively to contemporary Islamic works, she drew upon for the "Right to Write" exhibition—which she also curated. A book detailing her research into modern calligraphic art is scheduled for publication next year.

As she defines it, the calligraphic school began in 1947 when the Iraqi artist Madiha Umar held an exhibition in Washington, D.C. and displayed letters that swirled and curled, white shapes etched from the black surface of the scratchboard. (See *Aramco World*, January/February 1994.) According to Salwa Nashashibi, president and founder of the International Council for Women in the Arts, "that was when the actual letter was liberated from the word."

In Umar's wake, the movement spread, emerging in Morocco, Sudan, Iran and Iraq, Wijdan explains. For the most part, the works were independent experiments, but their numbers grew and reached their peak in the 1980's.

Different artists pursued different avenues, and Wijdan posits as many as four branches of the school. The paintings of Ahmed Moustafa and Osman Waqialla exemplify what she terms "pure" calligraphic works—a branch that includes her own work—in which the meaning of letters and words plays as important a role as the form. "Pure" calligraphic works are distinct from the abstract works of artists like Shakir Hassan Al Said, who abstracts the letter and the word from its original context and meaning. Under the heading of "figurative calligraphy," Wijdan includes human, animal and other recognizable shapes that Hassan Massoudy, Ameena Ahuja (11) and Husain form with writing.

Wijdan seems to vacillate on whether or not to include a fourth category of works in the school. These are what she terms "calligraphic combinations," which range from mixed-media pieces by Palestinian Laila Shawa, in which Arabic script appears in the background, to paintings by Nirmala Shanmughalingam in which the Malaysian artist superimposes text on the image.

Working in familiar Western media and formats, these calligraphic artists create works that can be appreciated by the same criteria we apply to European and American works. However, these works are at the same time distinguishably non-Western: They point to a culture in which the word, poetry, writing and geometric, abstract letterforms have historically occupied a central place.

According to Wijdan, this distinctly non-Western element is tied to the issue of identity, and conversations with Arab artists confirm that identity has indeed many aspects worth exploring. "Asserting one's identity," as Shawa, a Palestinian artist living in London, asserts, "is an act of survival."

When artists from the Islamic world first appeared on the international art scene in the early post-colonial years, they arrived with their heads full of Western masterpieces and Western avant-garde concerns. After all, they had been trained as Western artists, whether they studied in Cairo or London, Tunis or Paris, Tehran or Rome. But unlike their European and American peers, many felt marginalized. No matter what they did, they ran the risk of being dismissed as mere foreign imitators.

As newly independent countries struggled to define themselves, so did their artists cast about for a visual vocabulary that would reflect their cultural identity—an identity that, for good or ill, included the legacy of colonialism. For many, turning to Arabic script proved to be the answer. "Using calligraphy in contemporary modes," Wijdan explains, "tells people 'This is how we are trained, but we're not cut off from our heritage, and our heritage did not stop with the demise of the Ottoman Empire.'"

The Lebanese poet and painter Etel Adnan (16) was among the first to paint the word. "When I started [in the 1960's]," she says, "I felt I was pioneering." And indeed she was, by consciously tapping the Islamic tradition of linking poetry and imagery. Adnan created what she calls "visual readings of poems" in which modern painting and poetry joined forces on the page. In the process, she recalls, "it dawned on me that any writing is drawing."

Meanwhile Waqialla, who, unlike Adnan, had trained as a calligrapher, had been experimenting with the letter since returning in 1951 to his native Khartoum in Sudan. As a result of his studies in England, he looked at his tradition afresh and liberated calligraphy from the formal rules that govern its traditional styles. Others followed Waqialla's lead, prompting critics to speak of a "Khartoum school," composed of artists who drew inspiration from indigenous Sudanese art forms.

The desire for a culturally identifiable art also stirred artists elsewhere, among them Charles Hossein Zenderoudi (14) (18), an Iranian artist who has lived in France since 1961. "Ever since I completed the École des Beaux Arts of Tehran in 1957," he says, "I wanted to take advantage of the richness of Eastern art and mix it with Western art to produce a synthesis in works that would be avant-garde." This mission drew him to the water wells and fountains of Iran's towns and villages—the *saqqa khanneh;* he immersed himself in folk art, including decorated vessels and tools. The designs, the writing and the images he found gave rise to a style that critics in France dubbed the "*saqqa khanneh* movement."

It is difficult to tell whether artists across the Islamic world directly influenced each other, or whether their common search was simply an outgrowth of the spirit of the times or, as Zenderoudi calls it, *"la soif du siecle."*

The experience of Ali Omar Ermes seems to confirm that it was the latter. "Muslims and Arabs consider themselves international people," he says. "They learn from others, and they teach others. So there is no real resistance to what is going on [around them]. But they also want to see their own culture demonstrated in their own daily life." Ermes, living in England, found that meant that he had to look hard at himself and his work: "Is this really something I can embrace as my own thing, or am I just translating something and following the herd?"

Eventually he rejected Western representative painting on the grounds that it was merely "repeating what had already been created beautifully by God." By the same token, he also rejected geometrical designs—"you cannot just go on drawing squares or circles," he laughs. He put away his brushes and concentrated on writing poetry and reading literature, "waiting for an idea to come."

It did. He realized that "one of the main things that can distinguish Arab and Islamic culture is writing." Not formally trained as a calligrapher, Ermes nevertheless chose to focus on the letter and its mystical connotations. "It became a symbol of Arab and Islamic culture" expressed in the essentially Western medium of three-dimensional images painted on canvas.

As the years went by, however, the link between written language and identity subtly changed. If writing had once served primarily as a mark of cultural authenticity for Adnan, it began to take on a more personal purpose. "I am more drawn to Arabic script," says the artist, who has lived in California for the past 30 years, "because it is the only domain in which I function as an Arab."

Later generations can be said to have generally bypassed that first stage. From 1969 to 1975, Iraqi-born Hassan Massoudy studied at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, years that he recalls spending "in conflict, unhappy and sad." A chance encounter after graduation involved him in a multimedia project wherein his role was to write calligraphy that was projected onto a screen. This drew him back to his roots, which included extensive training in classical calligraphy. He rediscovered the tools he had packed away, and the movements his hand had not practiced for years. "Here I felt that something deep inside me was getting out, and there was suddenly a great urgency to express myself," he recalls. "I felt such a happiness."

Like other Islamic artists, he responded to the letter in ways he had never responded to the human figure, the center of all Western art teaching. Calligraphy, words and letters became the means to self-knowledge. They also provided the tools with which he could express himself in what he hopes is "a truly universal language of geometry, rhythm, proportion, space, light, color."

Nashashibi notes that the same quest for identity has led increasing numbers of artists to collaborate with poets, reviving and expanding a longstanding Islamic tradition. A prime example is the Algerian-born Rachid Koraichi (10), who speaks in terms of "running the film backwards, returning to the moment when emotion triggered a text" composed by a poet friend.

Working closely with poets such as Palestinian Mahmoud Darwish, he does not illustrate the text, but rather adds his own expression to another's words. The resulting synergy creates works in which drawings intermingle with words sometimes composed of Arabic letters, sometimes of invented symbols. For Koraichi, the purpose is to leave behind "traces and markings" that, while emanating from an individual shaped by a particular culture and tradition, in the end belong to humanity as a whole.

Curiously enough, legibility is seldom an issue. Koraichi invents signs and uses mirror-writing; Adnan sometimes scatters the words of a poem around the page, making it impossible for the viewer to stitch it back together. Shawa, in her "Walls of Gaza" series, sometimes blows up photographs of graffiti until the words are unrecognizable. But they all nevertheless evoke the Arabic word or letter, and thus have a particular resonance with an Islamic audience. "We are looking at the aesthetics," Nashashibi explains. "And we have a good feeling that the words, by virtue of *being* words, are blessings."

The popularity of works centered on calligraphy and script points to another level at which Arabic writing relates to the question of identity. Massoudy attributes the following he has among young émigrés to their need for "a cultural identity, some tie to their roots—one that does not harken to the past but rather looks at the future." In the experience of London gallery owner and dealer Dale Egee, the same holds true for many in the modern Arab world who find that contemporary works which contain references to Arabic writing speak to the various facets of themselves. Such works suit the tastes of Armani-clad businessmen and Levis-wearing young people, yet they also resonate in ways that no purely Western painting can.

As a result, calligraphy and Arabic script have in the last four decades leapt from mosques, monuments and the pages of manuscripts to land on framed canvases, in metal sculptures, and in the very weave of tapestries, displaying an array of colors and shapes that would have the master calligraphers of old clutching their hearts.

Or would they? Perhaps those masters would instead smile in admiration, for as far-out and experimental as they might first appear, many contemporary works carry forward a centuries-old tradition of experimentation and abstraction.

In that case, we have to ask whether it is meaningful to use the presence of calligraphy and writing as the defining criterion of a school of art. Salah Hassan, assistant professor of African art at Cornell University and the author of numerous works on contemporary African art, insists that calligraphy is not a school, "but just one possible way for artists to relate to their heritage." This is exactly what happened in the *saqqa khanneh* movement, where, according to Zenderoudi, calligraphy dominated for a time, then gave way to other concerns.

Even Adnan, for whom writing has always been central, wonders whether any talk of schools should not focus on "the different ways of using words and letters rather than on the fact of using them."

For Wijdan, however, the issue is clear. "We can speak of a Calligraphic School because it is defined in time: It began, gained momentum and ebbed." She notes that, after a flurry of calligraphic works in the 1960's and 1970's, their number gradually diminished as many artists no longer dealt exclusively with letters and script, while their younger colleagues chose international modes of expression such as video art and installations that included no reference to Arabic. But whether calligraphy or writing appears as an artist's primary concern or not, it is, according to Wijdan, "a means to identify the modern Islamic artist."

No doubt her contention will raise questions and generate vigorous debate. Whether or not her definition becomes part of accepted art history, her thesis highlights a vibrant—and often overlooked—branch of contemporary art. And it focuses attention on the complex and crucial role that writing and language continue to play in the personal and cultural identity of people from the Islamic world.

Previous spread: (1) Osman Waqialla (Sudan), untitled, 1991, watercolor on paper, 58 x 41 cm; (2) Ali Omar Ermes (Libya), "Letter *kaf*," 1979, mixed media on paper, 65 x 95 cm. *The images in this article, except where otherwise noted, appear by courtesy of the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts and of Agnes Scott College.*

A freelance journalist based in Washington, D.C., Lee Lawrence frequently writes about non-Western art and culture for publications in the US and abroad.

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3 Ali Hassan (Qatar), "Letter *nun*," 1993, mixed media on paper, 120 x 100 cm.

letter / word / art / letter / word / art

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4 Chant Avedissian (Egypt), "Star of the Orient," 1994, mixed media on recycled paper, 50 x 70 cm; 5 Abdullah Hariri (Morocco), untitled, 1988, mixed media on paper, 36 x 50 cm; 6 Dia Azzawi (Iraq), "'A Prayer in the Temple,' by Yusuf al-Khal," 1990, mixed media, 39 x 28.5 cm.

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7 Maisoon Qasimi (United Arab Emirates), "Telling it as is," 1993, mixed media on paper, 50 x 41cm; 8 Yussef Ahmad (Qatar), "Attempt at Unity," 1982, India ink on raw canvas, 150 x 150 cm; 9 Parviz Tanavoli (Palestine), "*Hich*," undated, bronze, 17 x 5 x 5 cm; 10 Mahmoud Rachid Koraichi (Algeria), "Tea of Absence I," 1995, lithograph, 62 x 45 cm.

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10 : ICWA/CULTURAL AND VISUAL ARTS RESOURCE

11 Ameena Ahuja (India), "The Lion Weeps," undated, India ink on handmade paper, 105 x 70 cm; 12 Husain (India), "*Huwwallah*," 1980, watercolor on paper, 33 x 42 cm; 13 Khairat Saleh (Syria), "Taj series 3 *Noor*," undated, gouache and watercolor on paper, 33 x 23 cm.

(14)

(14) Hossein Zenderoudi (Iran), "Homage to a Master Calligrapher," 1986, etching, 56.5 x 76 cm; (15) Ahmed Moustafa (Egypt), "*alif, lam, ha*," 1976, silkscreen on paper, 65 x 90 cm; (16) Etel Adnan (Lebanon), "*Allah*," 1987, mixed media on Japanese paper, 30 x 70 x 10 cm.

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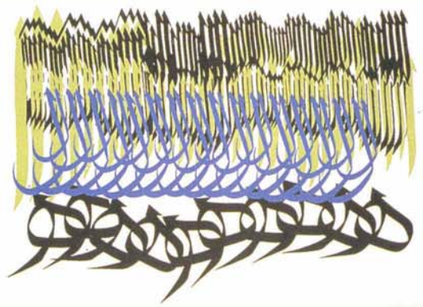

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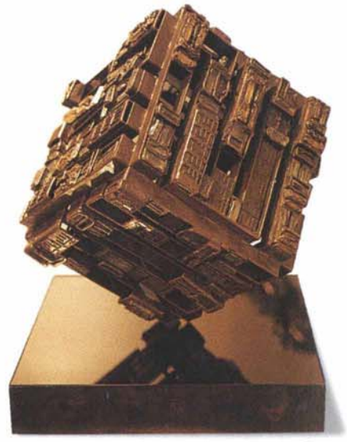

(19)

(19) : WILLIAM LAWRENCE

(17) Abdel Basit Khatim (Sudan), untitled, 1981, oil on carved wood, 44 x 44 cm; (18) Hossein Zenderoudi (Iran), untitled, 1990, etching, 59 x 79 cm; (19) Amin Gulgee (Pakistan), "The Cube".

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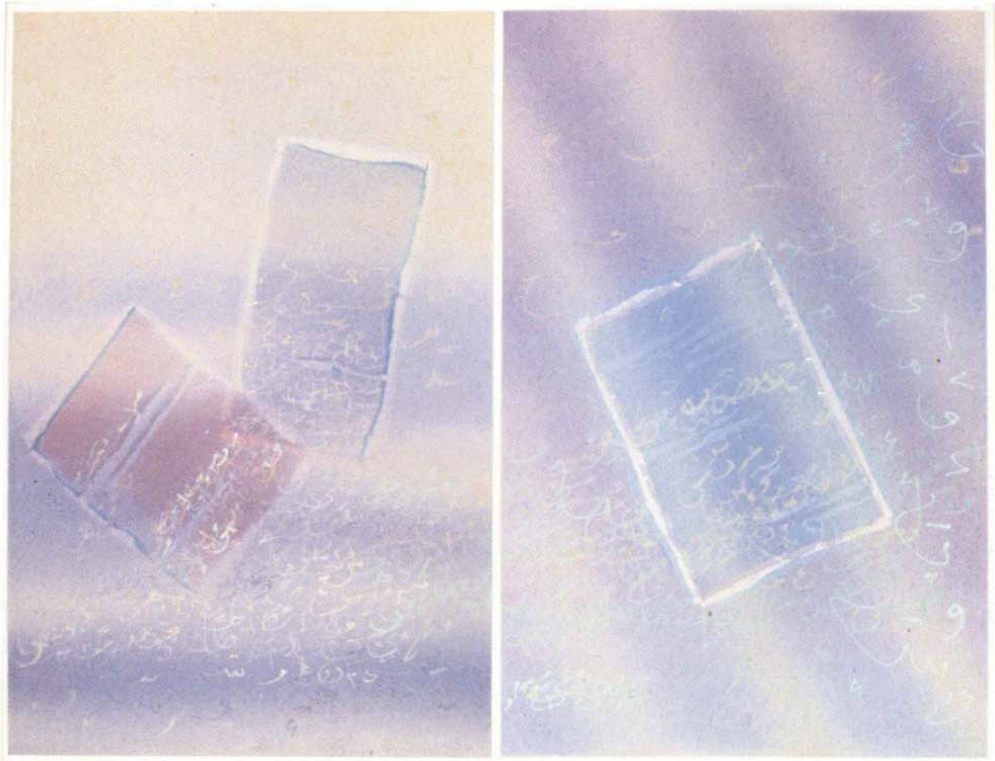

22

20 Wasma Chorbachi (Iraq), untitled, 1993, glazed ceramic, 33 cm ∅; 21 Mahmoud Taha (Jordan), untitled, 1980, glazed ceramic, 40 x 40 x 9 cm;
22 Ahmad Khalid Yusuf (Malaysia), "Down Memory Lane," 1992, acrylic on paper, 76 x 97 cm.

letter / word / art / letter / word / art

23

23 Erol Akyavaş (Turkey), "*Hem Batın*," 1993, etching, 76 x 63 cm;
Inside back cover: 24 Kamal Boullata (Palestine), "He is the First and the Last," 1983, silkscreen, 60 x 50 cm.

Events & Exhibitions

Teaching About the Arab World and Islam is the theme of teacher workshops co-sponsored by the Middle East Policy Council in Washington, D.C., and conducted by AWAIR, Arab World And Islamic Resources and School Services of Berkeley, California. Sites and dates include: **Palmer, Arkansas**, March 28; **Worcester, Massachusetts**, April 12; **Vermillion, South Dakota**, April 17; **Belleville, Illinois**, April 25. For details, call (202) 296-6767 or (510) 704-0517.

Between Empires: *Turks of Central Asia 1850–1925* shows 75 evocative and information-packed historical prints of people and places in Russia's newly acquired Central Asian territories. Texas Memorial Museum, University of **Texas, Austin,** through March 29.

Art of the Persian Courts uses more than 100 paintings, manuscripts and calligraphic works from the 14th to the 19th century to explore the spread of Persian culture across the Middle East and Asia. Sackler Gallery, **Washington D.C.**, through April 6.

Mongolia Observed: *Photographs by Robert McCracken Peck* examine daily life among families near Lake Hovsgöl in northern Mongolia. University of **Pennsylvania** Museum, **Philadelphia**, through April 20.

New Displays of Egyptian Collections is the topic of this all-day colloquium with presentations by representatives of museums in Cairo, Toronto, Munich, Berlin, Boston and **Paris**. Musée du Louvre, April 23.

The Afghan Folio: *Photographs by Luke Powell* exhibits 32 dye-transfer color prints of images made in the years just prior to the Soviet occupation. University of **Pennsylvania** Museum, **Philadelphia**, April 26 through August 23.

Pulling the Thread: *1,000 Years of Knitting Design* reflects the belief that knitting found its way to Europe in the Middle Ages through the Arab textile industries of southern Spain. Documentation Center and Textile Museum, **Terrassa [Barcelona], Spain,** April through March, 1998.

Light From the Christian East: *Icons from the Collection of Abu Adal* displays 140 icons from a private Lebanese collection. Museum of Art and History, **Geneva**, through May 4.

A Sampler from India: *Masterpieces of Painting from the Virginia Museum* presents an overview of Indian painting from the 13th to the 19th century. **Virginia** Museum of Fine Arts, **Richmond**, through May 11.

Domes, Minarets and Mashrabiyyas of Cairo features photographer John Feeney's views of Cairo's architecture from the 11th to 16th century. Sony Gallery for Photography, American University in **Cairo,** May 12 through June 5.

Discovery and Deceit: *Archaeology and the Forger's Craft* juxtaposes authentic ancient art with forgeries to demonstrate how scholars distinguish between the two. Carlos Museum, Emory University, **Atlanta**, through May 18.

Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven: *Women in Ancient Egypt* uses 250 artifacts and artworks to look at the roles of women. The **Brooklyn [New York]** Museum, through May 18.

History of Islamic Medicine is a workshop-format course sponsored by the International Institute of Islamic Medicine. **Orlando, Florida**, May 23 through 26. For information call (813) 661-6161.

Third Annual World Sacred Music Festival brings Uzbek, Persian, Arab, Berber and Western musicians together to perform in historic venues throughout **Fez, Morocco**, May 24 through 31. For information call (800) 267-0036 or fax (703) 765-7809.

The Future of Arab Christians and Christianity in Jerusalem is the topic of a conference sponsored by Georgetown University's Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding. Invited speakers include Karen Armstrong, Hanan Ashrawi, Naim Ateek, Jonathan Kuttab and David Jaeger. **Washington, D.C.,** June 5. For information, call (202) 687-8211 or fax (202) 687-8376.

Sewn Together by Peace of Mind: *Islamic Album Pages from Harvard's Collections.* Paintings, drawings and calligraphy from Iran, India and Turkey stimulate appreciation of both interpretation and beauty of the genre. Sackler Museum, **Boston**, through June 8.

The Glory of Byzantium highlights the middle period of the Byzantine Empire (9th through 13th century) with works that had profound influence throughout Western Europe, the Middle East and the Caucasus. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through July 6.

Indian Court Painting: *16th–19th Centuries* traces the interconnections among traditions from Punjab, Rajasthan, the Deccan and the Mughal courts. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through July 6.

Looping and Knitting: *A History* shows the distinct origins of the two techniques and traces their roles from the earliest knitted Egyptian socks of the Middle Ages. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through July 27.

2000 Years on the Silk Road: *Treasures from Uzbekistan* displays manuscripts, textiles, metalwork and ceramics to highlight the intermingling of cultures along the ancient highway. Museum voor Volkenkunde, **Rotterdam**, through August 10.

The Bathhouse: *The Culture of the Bath in East and West* tells the history of the public bathhouse in both the Islamic Middle East and in the Netherlands. Museum voor Volkenkunde, **Rotterdam**, through Summer.

The Gods of War: *Sacred Imagery and the Decoration of Arms and Armor* includes artifacts from the Middle East to India and Japan. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through November.

Ancient Egypt: *The Eternal Voice.* The sarcophagus and mummy of Djed-Khons-Iwef-Ankh of the 26th dynasty are featured among more than 200 artifacts, including reproductions of Egyptian buildings and statues. University of **Tennessee**'s McClung Museum, **Knoxville**, 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.

Hajj Paintings: *Folk Art of the Great Pilgrimage.* Ann Parker, author and photographer of the 1995 book of this title, has recorded the rich variety of murals that often adorn the

homes of Egyptian men and women who complete the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Makkah. For many, fulfillment of this one of the five "pillars" of Islam is a lifetime ambition and a major financial undertaking that brings not only spiritual growth but also increased community respect. The celebratory murals on the homes of *hajjis* (or *hajjas*) thus bear a distant, modest resemblance, in function and occasionally in form, to Pharaonic reliefs, which likewise served as public chronicles of personal achievements. In their symbolism, Hajj paintings most frequently refer to the religious sites at Makkah, Arafat, Mina and Madinah; the departure, travel and homecoming, and the transformative spiritual power of the experience. The degree of a mural's simplicity or complexity depends upon what the family can afford to commission from a local, self-taught artist, as well as on the artist's skill. Sony Gallery for Photography, American University in **Cairo**, April 2 through May 8.

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