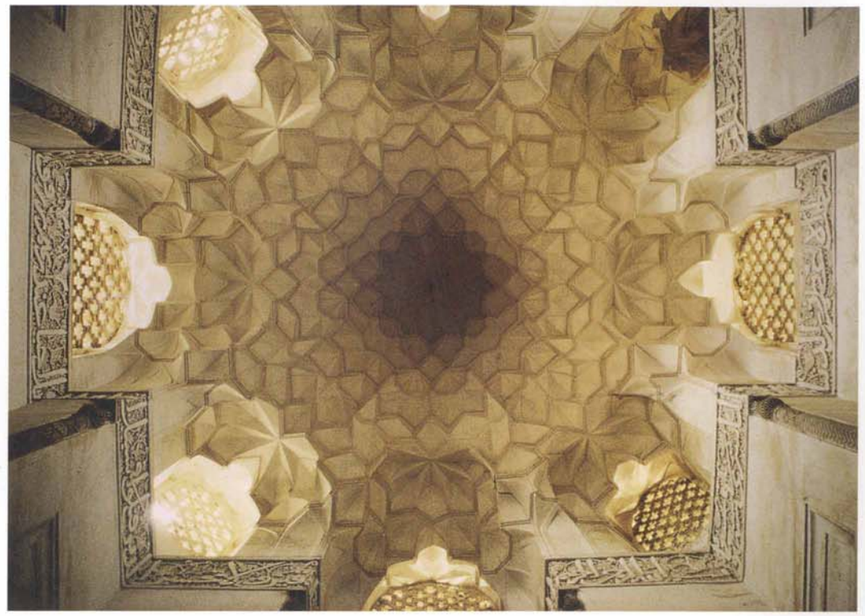

Saudi Aramco World

January/February 2003

Saudi Aramco World

Agadez

Sultanate of the Sahara

Saudi Aramco world

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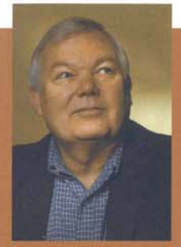


Responding to what the US Congress in late 2001 called "an urgent need…to enhance the nation's in-depth knowledge of world areas and transnational issues," US federal funding last year rose 26 percent for the 40 university-based centers devoted to the relationships among cultures, histories, politics and languages in major world regions. Among them are 15 centers that focus on the Middle East and the Islamic world—the nation's most extensive network of expert knowledge on the region—now reaching out more than ever to an increasingly curious public.

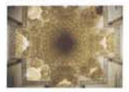
Minted first in the Habsburg capital of Vienna, the silver Maria Theresa *thaler*—the word rhymes with "dollar" and is the origin of the modern American term—was one of the world's most widely used currencies in the late 18th and much of the 19th century. It could be found from the Americas to China, often adapted, and sometimes counterfeited. One of the places it was hugely popular was the Arabian Peninsula, where its reliably high silver content made it valuable both for commerce and for silversmithing.

14: MARTIN MEYTENS, 1756 (DETAIL) / RÉUNION DES MUSÉES NATIONAUX / ART RESOURCE; 24: ©2003 MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON (DETAIL)

Cover:

A young Tuareg man, dressed in a traditional robe and headscarf, sells jewelry and ceremonial knives to tourists in Agadez, Niger. The need to maintain caravan routes and delineate grazing rights first led the several Tuareg tribes of the Aïr region to form a sultanate in 1404. Today in Niger, Tuaregs comprise only about eight percent of a population that is mostly of Hausa descent. Photo by Kevin Bubriski.

Back Cover:



A kaleidoscopic *muqarnas* ceiling covers the interior of the tomb of 'Abd al-Samad at Natanz, Iran, built in 1307. The walls were originally decorated with interlocking star- and x-shaped, luster-glazed tiles, similar to the eight-pointed tile (opposite page) that shows a horse—the mount upon which the Mongols conquered most of Asia in the 12th century. Photo by Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom.

The legacy of the Mongols is far from being entirely apocalyptic. In addition to the hemispheric Silk Roads trade made possible by stable Mongol rule, some of the finest arts and architecture of the Middle Ages flourished when Persian, Turkic, Arab and Chinese styles met under the Mongol *ilkhans*, who embraced Islam and patronized the arts from present-day Iran.

The town of Agadez, today in central Niger, was from the 15th century a crossroads for pastoralists, caravaneers and artisans. From the north came Tuaregs and Berbers; from the east, Arabs; from the south and west came Hausa, Songhai and Fulani. Security for trade and passage lay with the elected Sultan of Aïr, named for the highlands to the north. Today, the 126th sultan is an honorary official who still adjudicates affairs in a city that remains an ethnic crossroads.

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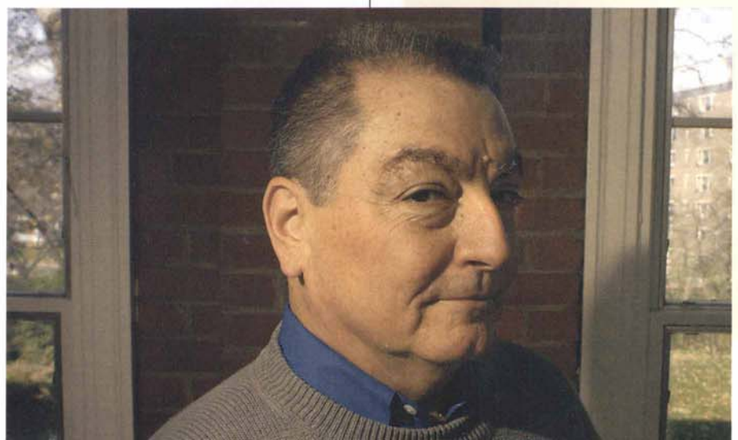
The New Push for Middle East Studies

Written by Arthur Clark
Photographed by Susana Raab/Aurora & Quanta

When Will Smith needed a crash course in Islam to play Muslim prizefighter Muhammad Ali in the 2001 film "Ali," he turned to the Center for Near Eastern Studies at the University of California at Los Angeles. Munir Shaikh, a Ph.D. candidate there, took on the job of instructing the actor after film director Michael Mann promised Smith that "he would get to the point where he understood Islam from the inside," Shaikh says.

Mann knew that if his film biography were to show respect for its subject, it would have to show respect for the religion Muhammad Ali embraced in 1964. That meant Will Smith would have to reach beyond the Muslim boxer's external behavior and come to some understanding of the faith in his heart. So Shaikh not only taught the actor how to perform the physical postures of Muslim prayers and to recite them in Arabic, but also taught him the principles of Islam. "He was very interested in understanding the meaning behind the religious acts," says Shaikh, "things like the value of fasting during Ramadan in terms of curbing one's ego and one's desires."



Shaikh's role on the set of "Ali" is one—somewhat unusual—part of a fabric of formal education, scholarly research and public outreach being woven by a group of 15 Middle East area-studies centers partly funded by the federal government under Title VI of the Higher Education Act and the Fulbright-Hays International Studies Program. The centers, located on university campuses across America, focus on a region that, traditionally defined, stretches from Morocco in the west to Iran and Turkey in the east—but which lately has also come to include countries with Muslim populations in Central Asia and the former Soviet Union. Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, these centers have found their services more in demand than ever.

In a sign of their importance, Congress hiked their funding in late 2001 by 26 percent—from $78 million to $98.5 million—along with that of 28 area-studies institutes focusing on other regions. Congress also doubled to 130 the number of one-year Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships for the Middle East studies centers, and increased their value from $21,000 to $25,000 each. The number of summer fellowships rose from 41 to 73.

"An urgent need exists," said the congressional conference committee that finalized the appropriations act, "to enhance the nation's in-depth knowledge of world areas and transnational issues, and [the] fluency of U.S. citizens in languages relevant to understanding societies where Islamic and/or Muslim culture, politics, religion and economy are a significant factor." The appropriations act included $1.5 million in supplemental awards for existing Title VI Middle East studies centers, provisions to establish four new area-studies centers and $1 million for three new language-training centers at US universities, including one for Arabic, Hebrew, Turkish and Persian at Brigham Young University.

> After World War II, "the idea was to create cadres of people informed about these parts of the world. Our job is to stimulate, encourage and coordinate Middle East studies, from anthropology to political science."
>
> *—John Woods, University of Chicago*

"We learned from 9/11 that there's a shortage of people trained in Middle Eastern and Central Asian languages, and that there are not enough people with this expertise working for the government. Across the spectrum, we very badly need specialists trained with these language skills," said Congressman David Obey of Wisconsin, a leader of the campaign to increase center funding.

"We also learned…that the world is very much an interconnected place, and that America's two oceans no longer insulate us from events across the globe," he added. "We need more understanding of the Middle East, its cultures and the issues facing the region. Area-studies centers do more than just teach languages: They help people develop a greater understanding across cultures, and that is critically important in resolving the immediate crisis and in developing long-term solutions."

America's Middle East studies centers are no overnight phenomenon. Indeed, they have roots running back to 1640, when Harvard established a Semitic language chair, as a tool to further Biblical studies, just four years after the college was founded. In the 1660's, Arabic was added to Hebrew, Chaldaic and Syriac. In the 18th and 19th centuries, studies of the Middle East took root at schools such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Pennsylvania, Berkeley and Chicago, focused mainly on philology, the study of ancient languages and literary texts.

Princeton broke new ground in the 1920's when it established a Department of Oriental Languages and Literature and hired Philip Hitti from the American University of Beirut. He organized special summer programs offering courses in the culture, history and languages of the Middle East.

But the real push to build modern Middle East studies centers began after World War II when "the US was catapulted onto the world scene and all sorts of areas, including the Middle East, became strategically important" in the ensuing Cold War, explains John Woods, a historian who heads the University of Chicago's Center for Middle Eastern Studies. "The idea was to create cadres of people informed about these parts of the world" to build the skills required to understand the region.

> "I remember studying about ancient Egypt and the cradle of civilization in Mesopotamia in grade school and middle school—and then the Middle East disappeared from my classrooms. Our job is to fill in that great empty space."
>
> *—Anne Betteridge, University of Arizona*

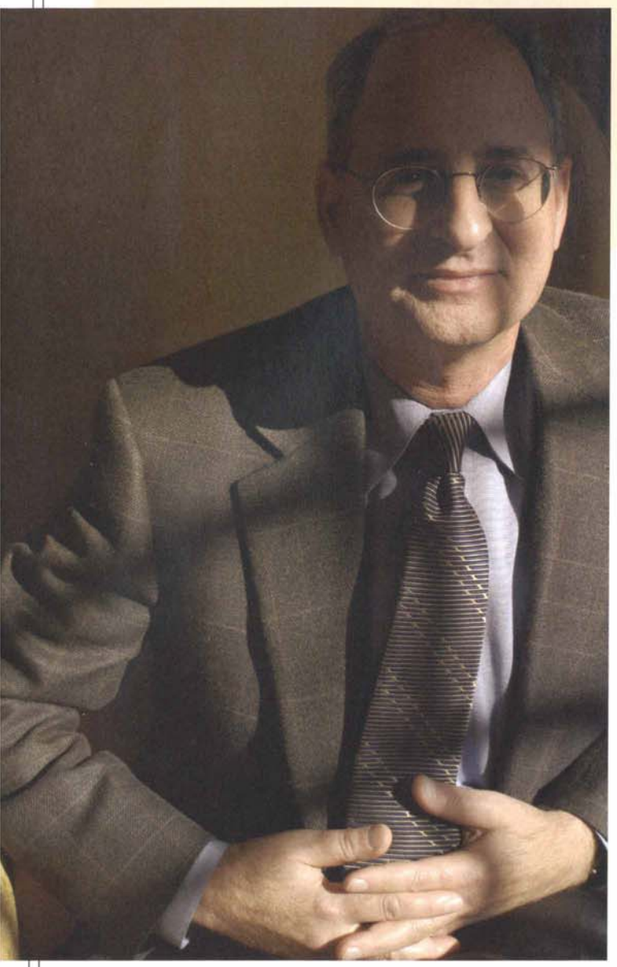
> "Our world shrinks every day, and [the University of Arizona Center for Middle Eastern Studies is] in the position of making it shrink even more. You are a vital bridge to an area that offers so much, culturally, but that is so misunderstood."
>
> *—Congressman Jim Kolbe (R-AZ)*

That work continues today, in a new geopolitical era. In broadest terms, the centers' job is to provide a firm foundation for professors, students and the public to build their knowledge of the Middle East. Notably, however, most centers do not have their own faculty or offer their own courses. Rather, they serve as umbrella organizations for faculty and students with expertise in, or curiosity about, the region.

The Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, for example, is a base for some 60 affiliated faculty members "teaching everything from 'The Politics of Middle East Oil' to 'Middle Eastern Carpets,'" says director Abraham Marcus, a Middle Eastern historian who chairs the university's Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures. What ties the professors together is "a passion for the region," he explains. This love may arise from a stint in the Peace Corps in Tunisia, as for associate director Keith Walters, an associate

Students who travel abroad "get to meet people and they realize there is a certain shared humanity. At the same time, they notice all the differences.... They come back and they have something to compare America with."

—Abraham Marcus, University of Texas



professor in linguistics, or, as in Marcus's case, from the fact that his family came from Aleppo, Syria.

Some centers, like those at Harvard and the universities of Chicago and Arizona, administer degrees with or through academic departments. Others, like Georgetown and Texas, offer their own degrees. To meet the needs of students with specific cross-disciplinary interests, some centers also sponsor joint Middle Eastern studies graduate degrees in cooperation with schools of business, law or public policy.

Historical papers from Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies highlight the forces that propelled the development of today's centers. History professor Richard Frye, associate director of the center when it opened in 1954, writes that the American Council of Learned Society's Committee on Near Eastern Studies received an "ultimatum" from the Rockefeller Foundation, a key higher-education funding agency, in 1948. It told the committee members—all of them university professors—that they "would have to change their departments from Semitic languages to expand into more contemporary matters of the entire area."

Scholars from schools including Harvard and Columbia balked, but a University of Chicago specialist in the Elamite languages of ancient Iran accepted an invitation from the University of Michigan at mid-century to head "the first center for Middle Eastern studies in the United States," writes Frye. Harvard opened its Middle East center after establishing two other area institutes—for Russia and East Asia—all under the direction of historian William R. Langar.

In his unpublished autobiography, Langar notes that he'd long been a proponent of multidisciplinary area studies, a view that was buttressed by his experience in the Research and Analysis (R&A) group of the Office of Strategic Services in World War II, where "historians might rub elbows with economists, anthropologists, writers, politicians and scientists" doing country studies. After the war, the Carnegie Foundation—another major supporter of American educational endeavors—asked if R&A's integrated approach to area studies "might not be introduced in our universities," Langar writes, and he pushed that philosophy forward at Harvard.

However, it took the shock of the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik in 1957, and Congress's subsequent declaration of a "national educational emergency," to swing the government four-square behind area studies. Title VI of the 1958 National Defense Education Act appropriated $8 million a year to contract with colleges and universities to "establish institutes to teach modern foreign languages" of strategically important areas that were not available elsewhere. It also directed the institutes to teach related subjects, including the history, economics and geography of those areas.

Middle East studies centers at the University of Michigan, Princeton University and Harvard University qualified for funding in 1959–1960, and schools including the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Utah and the University of California at Los Angeles came on board in 1960–1961. In 1965, Title VI became part of the Higher Education Act. Today, the Title VI roster also includes New York University, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of California at Berkeley, Georgetown University, Ohio State University, the University of Arizona, the University of California at Santa Barbara, the University of Chicago, the University of Washington and Emory University. In addition, a half-dozen Middle East centers, and a number of universities with Middle Eastern studies departments or a sprinkling of Middle East specialists, operate without Title VI funding.

At a public forum on the historical background of September 11, Julia Clancy-Smith, associate professor of history at the University of Arizona, addresses a capacity crowd. The forum was sponsored by the university's Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

Emory, Ohio State and Arizona have undergraduate-focused Middle East studies centers; the rest are "comprehensive" institutes with broader graduate programs. Centers compete every three years to renew their Title VI status.

Last fall, I visited the centers at Harvard, Georgetown, Texas, Arizona, Chicago, UCLA and Berkeley to discover how they are working to meet spiraling enrollment and fast-growing public interest, and how they are responding to those who fault center academics for failing to foresee the attacks of September 11, 2001.

"We cultivate what we feel is a deeper understanding of the Middle East rather than a focus on current affairs," explains Cemal Kafadar, director of Harvard's Center for Middle East Studies. The center oversees a master's degree program for around 20 students; affiliated faculty supervise some 60 Ph.D. candidates. The center also sponsors or participates in an array of initiatives on contemporary topics, ranging from the Arab Education Forum, which is developing "imaginative ways of teaching in Arab secondary schools," to a project with the Harvard Business School and Law School to study Islamic investment practices. They also include forums featuring experts from government, business and universities in America and the Middle East, as well as an extensive educational outreach effort for the general public. (See "Beyond the Ivory Tower," page 7.)

"We encourage students to look at art and archeology, at the medieval Middle East, at the 18th century of Bosnia—a range of subjects and periods—to make sense of what is going on now," Kafadar says. But he rejects the idea that the center can be a crystal ball. "The main activity here is teaching and research. This is not an occupation where people are trained to have predictive powers," he says.

"We cultivate what we feel is a deeper understanding of the Middle East rather than a focus on current affairs. Title VI is a very enlightened form of support. If you make any tighter link between the government's needs and academic activity, then you jeopardize the quality of academic life."

—Cemal Kafadar, Harvard University

TOP: JAMES S. WOOD / *ARIZONA DAILY STAR*; RIGHT: ARTHUR CLARK

Title VI National Resource Centers (2002)

Region Studied	*Number of Centers*
Inner Asia	1
Middle East	15
Russia and Eastern Europe	16
South Asia	11
Other Regions	75
TOTAL	**118**

"The security, stability and economic vitality of the United States...depend upon American experts in and citizens knowledgeable about world regions, foreign languages, and international affairs...."

—Public Law 105–244

Anne Betteridge, director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Arizona in Tucson, says scholars offer valuable insights into the region, but agrees they can't be held accountable for events, good or bad. "Our job is to provide some level of understanding and a solid education in Middle East studies," she explains. "Academics tend each to work in their own field of expertise—historians, linguists, social scientists, economists—and the results of their work have to be brought together, like so many threads, to see the pattern."

Betteridge argues that there is a gaping information hole in America when it comes to the Middle East. "I remember studying about ancient Egypt and the cradle of civilization in Mesopotamia in grade school and middle school—and then the Middle East disappeared from my classrooms," she says. "Our job is to fill in that great empty space." Although funded as an undergraduate institute, the Arizona center also assists the work of more than 100 graduate and Ph.D. students. As well as advancing scholarship, Betteridge says, the center has been working with the press and the community at large to make available information about the Middle East.

The center nominated Noah Haidcu-Dale, a graduate student in Near Eastern studies, to serve on a panel of community and university representatives that met with editors of the *Arizona Daily Star* to discuss balanced coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in part because he's lived and studied in the region. Haidcu-Dale believes he's had an impact, "however small," on coverage of the conflict.

> "After September 11, I wanted to understand better, so I took a Near Eastern studies course. What struck me most were the very close historical connections between Islam, Judaism and Christianity. I hadn't been aware of that before."
>
> *—Kris Cuaresma-Primm, University of California-Berkeley, mass communications major*

Last December, Arizona's center organized a workshop on the history, politics and culture of the Middle East for 50 *Arizona Daily Star* reporters and copy editors, at the newspaper's request. "We've developed very good relationships with reporters," says Betteridge. "They often call us about a story."

The center also serves as a resource for Arizona Congressman Jim Kolbe. He met with center representatives four times in 2001 and 2002, including "a closed-door meeting to get a sense of what was going on" after September 11, notes Anne Bennett, assistant director.

The University of Chicago has links to the Middle East dating back to the start of Semitic studies in the 1890's and the establishment of its Oriental Institute in 1919 to carry out comprehensive study of the region's past. Local members of the state's delegation to Congress are "honorary members" of the center, says John Woods, director.

"We have information that people need right now, [but] we are not advocates," he emphasizes, noting that the scholar's role is to "present information about the Middle East in ways that people may not have thought of before." The center administers a graduate-degree program enrolling around 20 students, while affiliated faculty members advise approximately 60 doctoral candidates.

Woods says that the geographical limits of the Middle East center's focus are flexible and are expanding in coordination with the university's other area-studies centers. "We collaborate with the Russia–Central Eurasian Center in offering Uzbek," Woods says. "Uzbekistan was part of the Soviet Union before, but we're increasingly thinking of it as part of the Middle East [and] reaching into the Islamic parts of Central Asia."

> "Without knowing the history, you will have no idea how present events are seen by Middle Easterners, who have a much better historical memory than we do. You don't know what you're doing if you have no historical context."
>
> *—Barbara Stowasser, Georgetown University*

Graduates from Middle East studies centers have played—and continue to play—important roles in the region and in America. They

Continued on page 8

Beyond the Ivory Tower

"One of the things we have to remember is that we're teaching about several cultures as a Middle East center. It's not just Islam. We've got Judaism and Christianity, and I've even got my first kid's book on Zoroastrianism, which originated in the Middle East."

So says Christopher Rose, outreach coordinator at the University of Texas Center for Middle Eastern Studies in Austin, who works with his counterparts at the school's South Asian, Latin American and Russian centers in an organization called Hemispheres to help public schools meet the state's "world studies" teaching requirements. Teacher workshops, as well as presentations for students and the public, are the bread and butter of the Middle East studies center's outreach operation, which is mandated by Title VI funding from the federal government.

The operation has a lending library, along with curriculum units and "curriculum trunks" containing inspiring and illustrative objects for teachers. The library includes a Turkish version of a Harry Potter novel and the trunks are chock-full of items to give students a feel for the countries in the region. As well as games, clothing and toys in the Egypt trunk, for example, there's a menu from a Cairo fast-food restaurant. The center's Middle East Network Information Center (MENIC) website provides a gallery of links to the region. One offers poetry and music from an "Afghan café"; others enable visitors to read the latest newspapers from Arab capitals.

> "I really want to tell you how important it was that we were in place after September 11, not just for Georgetown but across the city. We've never been so inundated by requests for information."
>
> *—Zeina Seikaly, Georgetown University*

Like outreach directors at Middle East studies centers across the country, Rose went into overdrive in the autumn of 2001. Hits on the MENIC website quadrupled to 4000 a day after September 11, and phone calls rose to "hundreds a week from a couple of dozen a week," he says. The outreach center fielded a team of 20 to 25 professors and graduate students who spoke to a cumulative audience of 20,000 people from mid-September through January 2002—at schools, businesses, church groups, community groups and clubs.

Demand for information increased dramatically everywhere. "We've never been so inundated by requests for information and speakers for teacher groups," says Zeina Seikaly, outreach coordinator at Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies. "We were in place, the teachers knew about us, and they knew where to turn. There was such a need for resources and information."

Seikaly has developed good relationships with numbers of teachers through workshops and a two-week summer

study trip to Syria and Turkey for a dozen educators in 2002. "We try to provide teachers with opportunities, resources and information so that they can teach better about the Arab world and Islam," she explains. "Every elementary teacher reaches 25 to 30 students and each secondary-school teacher reaches up to 75. It's a very good investment."

Barbara Petzen, outreach coordinator at Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, says that as well as working closely with teachers and arranging for speakers at schools and community groups, she and her colleagues served as an educational resource for outside organizations as diverse as the Massachusetts State Police and the *Christian Science Monitor*. "We're trying to correct misinterpretations of the Muslim and Arab worlds in terms of geography, lifestyle and theology," she says.

After September 11, the outreach organizations from Harvard and UCLA teamed up with WGBH, the public-television station in Boston, to provide the content for a

new website called "Global Connections: Putting World Events in Context." Although the site is designed for the classroom, with 18 downloadable lesson plans for teachers, it's also useful for anyone who wants to understand the Middle East and its relationships with the West. WGBH filmed forums at Harvard and at a local high school and meshed them with other critical information about the region on the website.

"We believed it was very important to fill a gap out there for teachers and students about what's going on in the Middle East," says Julie Benyo, Global Connections content director. "We try to get rid of some stereotypes." The site, which debuted in September 2002, has averaged 100,000 page views a month and is popular with teachers up to the university level. "Some people argued that the site didn't represent the viewpoint they thought it should," notes Benyo. "But others have said it has definitely helped them explore and understand the roots of what's happening in the Middle East."

Jonathan Friedlander, outreach coordinator at UCLA's Center for Near Eastern Studies, has been researching the large Middle Eastern community in California for 30 years and shares what he's found through books and workshops for public school teachers, like one last October at nearby Loyola Marymount University. The seminars offer teacher training and resources and create networks to integrate the Middle East into classes, in line with state standards.

"The Middle East and Africa were the two areas that teachers had the hardest time comprehending. They didn't understand the complexities and tended to see things in black and white," says Friedlander. "The learning process has to be slow and in depth."

The workshops are producing results in the classroom, says participant Bucky Schmidt, chairman of the history department at Holmes Middle School in the Los Angeles suburb of Northridge. He says he measures success not just by test scores, but by the attitudes of his students. "When a Muslim boy in the seventh grade fasts during Ramadan and his classmates support him—that's a success," he says.

Another arm of outreach is publishing. The Middle East studies center at the University of Texas has published some 60 titles, for example. One series, Middle East Literature in Translation, includes works by 11 contemporary authors from Yemen to Morocco. The work "is an important part of our outreach effort," says editor Annes McCann-Baker. "Our books are marketed around the world and used by lay people as well as scholars. We try to choose fiction that presents a composite picture of the Middle East to help in understanding the culture."

www.pbs.org/wgbh/globalconnections/mideast/
link.lanic.utexas.edu/menic/

"The average person only knows about the Islamic world through headlines, and headlines are about conflict."

—Barbara Petzen, Harvard University

Continued from page 6

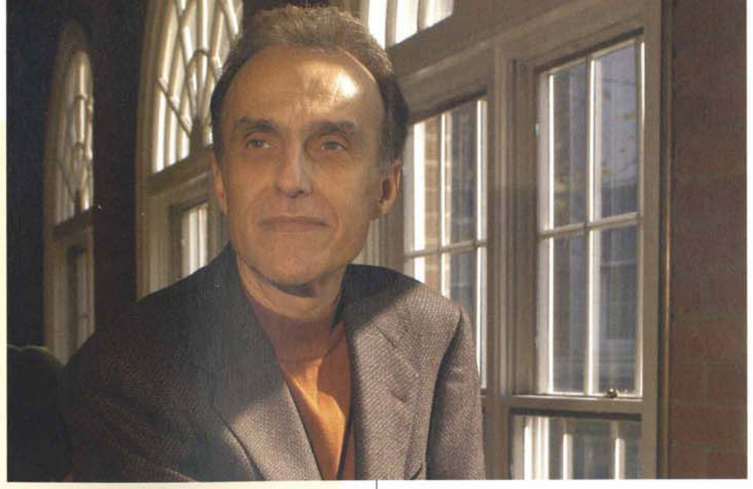
include US diplomats such as Brad Hanson and Catherine Sweet (both UCLA) and Susan Ziadeh (Michigan), now serving in Afghanistan, Chad and Jordan, respectively, and Aaron David Miller (Michigan), who completed a 25-year Foreign Service career and is now president of Seeds for Peace, an international non-profit organization. Journalists with Middle East studies center credentials include Linda Gradstein (Georgetown), Jerusalem correspondent for National Public Radio, and Cairo-based photojournalist Thomas Hartwell (Texas), whose work appears in *Time*, *Newsweek* and *The New York Times*. President Bush's special emissary to Afghan President Hamid Karzai is a graduate of the Chicago center; Adnan Mazarei (UCLA) is an economist with the International Monetary Fund; and an advisor to the president of Lebanon studied at the Georgetown University center.

Barbara Stowasser, director of Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies (CCAS), calls the Middle East "an area of great economic and strategic concern to the United States," but contends that American policymaking is often blinkered. "Unfortunately, there is not much interest in the culture or internal dynamics of the society. The Middle East is looked at from a fairly nationalistic point of view, and that does it a lot of disservice because it's a very rich culture," she says. To help rectify that, the center's goal is to "train a whole new generation of students who are linguistically and culturally literate.

"Without knowing the language, you can't even read the newspapers and are reduced to looking through someone else's filter,...and that filter is too simplistic or prejudiced or both," she notes. "Without knowing the history, you will have no idea how present events are seen by Middle Easterners, who have a much better historical memory than we do. In the Arab world, historical events at the beginning of the 20th century are very much alive and kept alive, but are totally unknown among average Americans."

CCAS is unique because it focuses on the 20th century and the present day in the 22 countries of the Arab world. Some 50 students are enrolled in its master's degree program.

"Rather than being like a museum where you consider past epochs, we want to be up on contemporary issues such as women's rights, human rights and strategies for economic development," explains former CCAS director Michael Hudson, pausing between chairing a forum on Iraq and heading to a meeting with members of the National Security Council. Other focal points include "political reform, democratization, the phenomenon of political Islam, and internal politics and conflicts, including the Gulf War and the war on terrorism," he says.



"Some people see Islam, historically and today, as part of the problem and not part of the solution. But look at [the intercultural flowering in] Andalusia: It's not just the past, but a paradigm for the present."

—John Esposito, Georgetown University

CCAS affiliates include Georgetown's Institute of Turkish Studies and the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (CMCU). John Esposito, CMCU director, notes that his operation also deals with the non-Arab Muslim world, giving it a broader field than CCAS, located just down the hall. But he makes some of the same points as Stowasser. "[We are] building bridges of understanding," he says, adding that the attacks on September 11 "both complicated and enhanced" that mission.

"Some people have realized that dialogue is important, internationally and inside Europe and America," he says. Some see September 11 as a "validation of the 'clash of civilizations' idea," he notes, referring to Harvard government professor Samuel Huntington's thesis about conflict between the West and Islam. "What we risk is *provoking* a clash by not understanding what the civilizations are talking about. There are political, economic and social—as well as religious—causes for misunderstanding."

"I wanted a place that was a real mosaic—with Lebanese, Jordanians, Egyptians and Iraqis—because, for me, it's important to go out and see the Middle East from a different point of view."

—Roni Ziriński, Harvard University Ph.D. candidate in history

As at other Middle East centers, interest in enrolling at CCAS rose sharply after September 11, due partly to the international spotlight on the region. The increase may also be linked to the lackluster US economy in which some students enroll in graduate studies to avoid a tight job market, says Liz Kepferle, academic programs coordinator. CCAS received around 70 applications for 25 first-year places early in the autumn of 2001, she says. Application requests normally number around 25 for the whole summer, but last summer they poured in at a rate of 25 a week, and 200 applicants are expected for the 2003 class.

September 11 shattered communications barriers inside and outside the university, says Amer Mohsen, a CCAS student from Lebanon: "There was a lot of discussion about the Arab world and foreign policy, and I had to interact more than I expected. More and more people are asking questions about democracy, about the US role in the region, and even about Arabic novels. On the popular level, more and more people see the Arab world as a place of interest, but on the political level it is different."

Samer Shehata, assistant professor of politics at CCAS, recently taught a course called "The United States, the Middle East and Terrorism." "It's important to address topics of national importance," he says. "'Why did September 11 happen' and 'What has been the relationship between the United States and the Middle East?' are questions worthy of discussion."

Shehata has made scores of media appearances to discuss politics and policy in the region. "I think it's incumbent on us academic specialists to participate, to tell people in power how we feel and why we feel that way," he explains. "If people say over and over again that there is a problem and highlight the consequences, eventually they have to listen."

"The job of these Title VI centers is not only to talk to schools, but also to help community colleges and four-year colleges that don't have the resources of major research universities."

—Rashid Khalidi, University of Chicago

Shehata faults the mainstream media for offering "a sound-bite diet" of news to Americans, noting that CCAS has "tried, significantly," to put critical information before the public. Initiatives include lectures and forums, as well as newspaper op-eds by individual professors. But "our voices were drowned out" by stories "short on substance that were really not full, exhaustive discussions of events," he says.

That view is seconded by Kamran Aghaie, assistant professor of history at the University of Texas Center for Middle Eastern Studies. Aghaie, who teaches undergraduate survey courses like "The Prophet of Islam" or "Introduction to Islam" to more than 100 students at a time, says enrollment has grown by "40 to 50 percent a year" since the 1999–2000 academic year because people are increasingly interested in religion, Islam and the Middle East. But he adds that the media "spend 99 percent of their time covering less than one percent of what the Middle East really is—they cover the sensational, violent stuff. I spend most of my time [in talks to the public] trying to counteract the effect of CNN and Fox News."

Students enrich the educational process at the centers, particularly if they've studied in the Middle East. At Berkeley's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, which advises undergraduates and has some 150 graduate students affiliated with it, Robert O'Neill talks about his insights into events in the region where—while participating in a year-abroad program in Egypt—he got a firsthand look at the Palestinian *intifadah*. O'Neill, who's majoring in Middle East studies and anthropology, hopes to go to work for the State Department.

"As a journalist in the Middle East, I often encounter fellow graduates in important positions. We're all over today, in politics, business and journalism."

—Linda Gradstein, National Public Radio Jerusalem correspondent

The experience "taught me more about humanity than any educational institution could ever hope to," O'Neill says. "You can't really understand what these cultures are like until you're there, on the ground, in that environment, and then everything starts to come to life. Then you see which theories about the Middle East hold true and which begin to erode."

At the University of Texas, as at other university Middle East studies centers, a $30,000 grant from the Alcoa Foundation in the late 1990's supported the establishment of a summer program offered in several countries in the Middle East—in addition to the center's academic-year study-abroad program. In the summer program, students take courses related to their travel in the spring, go abroad for the summer, and then do a research project when they return in the fall. In 2002, 10 UT students journeyed to Turkey and Egypt with two faculty members.

Studying abroad opens students' eyes like nothing else, says Abraham Marcus, center director. "The world ceases to be distant and abstract," he notes. "They get to meet people and they realize that there is a certain shared humanity. At the same time, they notice all the differences… including political systems that may be rather different from our own. They come back and they have something to compare America with. In some ways, they have become wiser about who they are."

Rashid Khalidi, professor of history and languages at the University of Chicago and a former director of its Center for Middle Eastern Studies, puts the argument for foreign study even more strongly. Anyone who hopes to understand the area must have "many years of language training and on-the-spot regional experience," says Khalidi, who now heads the university's Center for International Studies.

Similarly, Leonard Binder, interim director of UCLA's Center for Near Eastern Studies, warns that academics must not isolate themselves from the societies they

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MESA: Scholarship and Communication

The Middle East Studies Association (MESA) was established in 1966 by 50 men, mostly from US universities, to further scholarship on the Middle East, North Africa and the Islamic world. Today, its membership counts some 2600 men and women from institutions around the world.

"We have scholars, former Foreign Service officers, and people who did master's degrees or Ph.D.s and then went out into business, but retained a compelling interest in the Middle East," says Amy Newhall, MESA executive director. "MESA provides a venue for all those people and gives them the chance to mix with others who share that regional interest. It promotes networking and multidisciplinary conversation, which is the essence of cultural studies."

MESA "filled an important gap in the Middle East studies network," according to a Middle East Research and Information Project report in June 1975. "MESA emerged as the representative of new trends [that were] interdisciplinary, ostensibly representing the viewpoints of both the social science and humanistic disciplines."

Leonard Binder, one of MESA's founding fathers and today interim director of the Center for Near Eastern Studies at UCLA, explains that one of the original ideas behind MESA "was that we could bring social sciences [such as sociology, economics and political science] and Middle East studies together, out of the realm of Orientalism and the perceived profound 'otherness' of Muslims, by applying terms of reference that were supposed to be universal." That work must continue, he says.

MESA publishes a quarterly newsletter and the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, a scholarly journal carrying articles based on current research. It also sponsors an annual meeting devoted to papers on a rainbow of topics about the region, as well as displays of books, software, teaching tools, art and photography. At the 2002 gathering in Washington, D.C., the photography exhibitions included a photographic tour of Middle Eastern–influenced vernacular architecture in Southern California, photographed by Jonathan Friedlander of UCLA's Center for Near Eastern Studies.

"It was the busiest schedule we've ever had," says Newhall. "The largest proportion of the papers was on either history or political science, but they included everything from archeology and business and economics to anthropology and women's studies and language."

Notably, the annual meeting offers a venue for graduate students to present papers before some of the most erudite audiences in the field. "So our members are encouraging their students to join the 'club' and become active scholars and active communicators… and be willing to answer questions about their research," says Newhall.

"The pursuit of scholarship is of course a scholar's and a professor's aim, but to share one's passion is the other big aim."

—Amy Newhall, Executive Director of MESA

http://fp.arizona.edu/mesassoc/

Continued from page 10

study. He says that's particularly true for disciplines such as sociology, economics and political science. "Many people teaching in the social sciences have never been to the Middle East and their language skills are weak. We are still in a situation of needing people who are better trained," says Binder, a veteran political scientist himself.

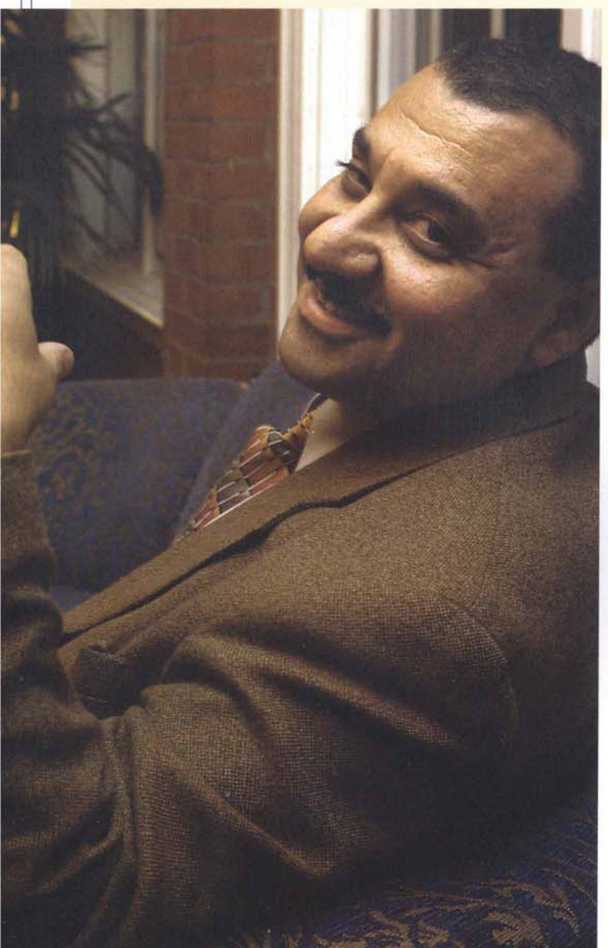
"You need cultural skills to be able to understand what people mean when they talk to you, because it's not always transparent," he says. "We need to listen to Al-Jazeera [satellite television] and read newspapers, but we need much more in terms of people who can work in the area itself. People have to have internships, training experience abroad—practical experience in the region. You have to have this kind of understanding, in good times and bad. Then the good times will be better and the bad times less bad." The UCLA center sponsors undergraduate majors in Middle Eastern and North African studies, and master's and Ph.D. degrees in Islamic studies for around 180 students.

UCLA's International Institute links all the international activities of the university. Geoff Garret, vice provost and director of the institute, wants to build on area centers' traditional strengths as regional "pillars of knowledge" to support studies of "big, thematic issues that cut across regional boundaries." That is particularly pertinent for the Middle East. "If one asks, 'Where is and what is Islam?' the answer can't be a geographical focus on the Middle East, traditionally defined. The answers don't fit the map the way we've traditionally divided it," he explains.

One project of the International Institute, the Indian Ocean Initiative, would cover the Muslim world from East Africa to Indonesia, using Middle Eastern, South Asian and African area-studies expertise to develop a comprehensive overview of a region whose trade and cultural links date back millennia. Another would link the North African and European sides of the Mediterranean basin "to study the relationship between Muslim immigrants and migrants to France and Africa," says Garret. Such projects illustrate "how one can have area studies as vitally important to your enterprise without excluding other issues that don't easily fit into an area-studies rubric," he explains.

"The center's approach is transnational. Any intellectual subject that involves either the Arabs or Islam, contemporarily or historically, is a legitimate subject."

—Nezar AlSayyad, University of California–Berkeley



The focus on the Muslim world is widening elsewhere, too. Nezar AlSayyad, chairman of Berkeley's Middle East center, recently co-edited *Muslim Europe or Euro-Islam*, a book about the changing identity of Europe in an age of globalization. "The Middle East is the only area study that is not really geographically based—it refers to the middle of what, and east of what?" he says. "The center's approach in this regard is very transnational: Any intellectual subject that involves either the Arabs or Islam, contemporarily or historically, is a legitimate subject for scholars to take on."

The Berkeley center is a leader in using Title VI money to add Middle East content to survey courses, such as "History of World Cultures" or "History of Architecture," that are traditionally taught by faculty using only materials from the western world, says AlSayyad. The center has assembled lecture materials and has even provided fellowships for faculty to travel to the Middle East so they could include Middle Eastern content in their teaching. "It was a cultural sea change," he says, and asks, "Why should the study of the Middle East, the Arab world and Islam be 'ghettoized' outside the mainstream curricula?"

New endowments may be paving the way to greater interregional understanding, however. Among major donations, Berkeley received two large gifts in the late 1990's from Saudi benefactors, one for technology-transfer studies and one for Arab studies. The Al-Falah ("Success") Program was established with a $2 million endowment from the Alireza family to support a better understanding of Muslims and to promote technology transfer to the Muslim world, particularly Saudi Arabia. The Sultan Endowment for Arab Studies, established by a $5 million gift from the Sultan ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Charity Foundation, is dedicated to broadening understanding of the Arab and Islamic worlds. The program's first three-year cycle focused on "Arab Identity"; the second, beginning this year, looks into "Traditions and Transformations in Arab Culture." The center also received a $2 million gift from the Helen Dillar family to establish a Jewish studies program. All the endowments and programs are fully controlled by the center.

At the University of Chicago, where sign-ups for first-year Arabic classes rose from around 20 in 2001 to more than 50 in 2002, four businessmen from Chicago's Arab-American community gave $333,000 for the Ibn Rushd Arabic lectureship. A Turkish-American businessman from Boston gave a similar amount for a Turkish lectureship. Each gift was matched $1-for-$2 by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, boosting their value to $500,000.

Harvard received two major endowments for Arabic lectureships in 2001. One, a $500,000 gift early in the year from Khalid Alturki, a Saudi businessman, was in addition to the $1.5 million he had given to establish the Contemporary Arab Studies Program at the Harvard center. In December, spurred by the events of September 11, alumnus Gordon Gray Jr. gave $1.5 million to the school, most of it for a chair of Arabic language.

Harvard's first-year Arabic enrollment nearly doubled, to 93, between 2001 and 2002, says William Granara, a professor of Arabic, who notes that heightened interest in Arabic and the Muslim world has been a boon for job-hunting scholars. "There are normally two to three [academic] positions in Arabic language and literature in a good year" nationwide, Granara says, but in 2002 he counted 15. Openings for jobs in history and Islamic studies were also well above those of the previous year, reports the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

If expertise in foreign languages and comprehension of other cultures are the keys to successful interaction and security in today's globally interconnected world, then America's Middle East studies centers are serving critical national and international needs. Today, they are guiding bumper crops of students toward solid futures in fields from statecraft to teaching, linguistics to law and business to humanitarian work.

"I think we are making progress [in outreach to schools], but the problem is that the public schools in California form such a giant constituency. There is so much need."

—Laurence Michalak, University of California–Berkeley

Indeed, the need for well-trained regional specialists is so critical that if they didn't exist, "you'd have to invent them," says Roy Mottahedeh, a professor of history and a former director of Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies. The same, certainly, can be said of the centers themselves.

"I find people hungry—starving!—for knowledge [about the Middle East] and frustrated because they cannot get it through the mainstream media. I've been very impressed with the thoughtfulness and questioning out there."

—Leila Hudson, University of Arizona

Free-lance writer **Arthur Clark** is a former staff writer for Saudi Aramco whose byline has appeared in this magazine more than 40 times over the past 20 years.

Washington-based photographer **Susana Raab** is represented by Aurora & Quanta Productions.

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

Center for Christian-Muslim Understanding: M/J 98
Oriental Institute: S/O 94
Philip Hitti: J/A 71; M/J 79

Tales of a Thaler

"The favourite coin in use in this part of Arabia is the Maria Theresa dollar (riyal), the value of which is affected by the local demand. For the remoter parts of the interior little information is available; but it appears that the Maria Theresa dollar is current almost everywhere."

—British Admiralty's *Handbook of Arabia 1, 1920 (Aden and Vicinity)*

Written by Peter Harrigan

On Tuesday November 5, 2002, the operator of the lever press at the Austrian Mint in Vienna struck the final coin of a two-day minting. The almost 2000 proof coins, their cameo portraits frosted in relief against a mirror-bright background, were packed individually in glassine wrappers. Most of the remaining 12,974 coins, of normal "bright uncirculated" quality, were packed 500 to a burlap bag and prepared for dispatch to banks in Austria and Germany and to overseas coin dealers. The date on the newly struck coins was the same date that had appeared on these coins for 222 years: 1780.

"The mint received several orders from the USA and England that caught us with low stocks, so we had to schedule a striking," says Kerry Tattersall, marketing and sales director of the 800-year-old official national mint of the Republic of Austria. "We are always happy on the infrequent occasions when we mint this coin. It is to us our *Aufhängerschild*, our shingle, the sign hanging outside our premises. This is our oldest, most traditional and most famous coin in production, and we will never stop striking it."

That coin is the silver Maria Theresa thaler, pronounced **tah**-ler and known by numismatists and scholars simply as the MTT. Its design, luster and fine detail have earned it a reputation as one of the most beautiful coins in the world. Arabs have referred to it as *abu nuqta* ("the one with the dots"), *abu tayr* ("the one with birds") and *abu*

Maria Theresa inherited the throne at age 23, becoming monarch of a European empire whose alliances and borders shifted dozens of times during her 40-year reign. She proved a remarkably astute ruler, arranged her husband's election as Holy Roman Emperor and was the mother of 16 children. Thalers had been minted since the 15th century, but Maria Theresa's insistence on strict standards made hers the leading global currency by the time of her death in 1780. One reason for the Maria Theresa thaler's wide acceptance was its embossed edge (opposite), **which bears the empress's motto,** IUSTITIA ET CLEMENTIA **("justice and clemency"), and which prevented "clipping" or shaving of the silver by the unscrupulous.** At left, **a Yemeni money-changer photographed in 1980 was still dealing in thalers.**

In the Arabian Peninsula, the MTT carried nicknames: Abu nuqta, abu tayr and abu reesh referred to its design; riyal kabir highlighted its size; and riyal nimsawi and the misnomer riyal fransawi pointed to its origins, which were often unclear to people far from major trading ports.

reesh ("the one with feathers"), all allusions to features of its intricate design.

Another name, "Levantine thaler," points to one of the paths of its diffusion, as does the Arab misnomer, *riyal fransawi* ("French riyal"). The French, less flatteringly, called it "*la grosse madame*." Only *riyal nimsawi* ("Austrian riyal") referred both to the coin's true origin and to the fact that Arabs preferred the term *riyal*—from the Spanish silver *real* coin—to *thaler* or *dollar*.

First struck in Spain in the 15th century, the *real* had circulated widely in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. By the beginning of the 19th century, however, the Maria Theresa thaler had supplanted it and become one of the most widely circulated coins on the globe. Passed from hand to hand by traders, it spread across the eastern Mediterranean into Arabia, along both shores of the Red Sea, around the Horn of Africa, into (present-day) Ethiopia and Eritrea and down the coast of East Africa as far south as Lourenço Marques, the Portuguese port now known as Maputo in southern Mozambique, and the islands of Zanzibar and Madagascar. It crossed the Sahara from the Maghrib and reached into Java and as far east as China. To the west, it crossed the Atlantic and was known, though not as widely used, in both North and South America. In countries that had no currency of their own, such as Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Ethiopia, the thaler survived well into the last century—as late as 1970 in Muscat and Oman. The rise, circulation and widespread appeal of the MTT at a time of shifting borders make it a remarkable early example of international money.

The origin of the term *thaler* goes back to the 16th century and the opening of silver deposits at St. Joachimsthal in Bohemia. Here the Counts of Schlick were given the right by the Habsburg court to mint coins in their own names, and their large silver coins became known as *thalers* (also often spelled *taler*), short for *Joachimsthaler*, "the ones from the St. Joachim valley." The Dutch picked up the word in the 17th century and called their own silver coins *daalder*, which English-speakers naturalized as "dollar." Meanwhile, *thaler* also became a generic name for any large silver coin.

Maria Theresa's thaler coin had its origins in the 16th century as well, when the first Habsburg thalers were minted in an empire that then included Central Europe, the Low Countries and Spain with its American dominions. Maria Theresa entered into the Habsburg inheritance in 1740 on the death of her father, Emperor Charles VI. Then an archduchess of 23, she was beautiful, talented, intelligent and multilingual. Though she had no experience of statecraft—her father, always believing that there would be a male heir, had given her no regnal responsibilities—she soon proved to be a skillful diplomat and ruler. She was crowned queen of Hungary in 1741 and queen of Bohemia two years later. In 1745 she arranged for the election of her husband, Prince Francis Stephen of Lorraine, as Holy Roman Emperor Francis I, and took the title of empress. Thereafter, Maria Theresa's thalers carried the Latin inscription IMP MARIA THERESIA along with some of her other regnal titles, also abbreviated.

Maria Theresa reigned over the Habsburg Empire from Vienna for 40 years. At the outset, hers was a daunting inheritance: The state coffers were empty, and there was skepticism about her ability. In addition to the burdens of rule, she bore 16 children, including Marie-Antoinette, who would become queen of France. She was known to attend to and sign state papers during childbirth, and she was, it turned out, energetic and tenacious. Throughout her reign, she devoted herself to agrarian, educational and economic reforms.

She also picked the ablest of men to help her implement the changes. One of them was her treasury head, Count Johann von Fries. He was shrewd enough to promote the MTT abroad. From its first striking in 1741, there were many versions, including half-thalers and smaller denominations, but it was the full thaler coin that, at the insistence of the empress, was minted to the highest standards of design and with the most stringent control of its silver content. In 1753 she signed one of the first European coinage conventions, a treaty with Bavaria, which defined the silver content of the thaler and other coins and set exchange rates. As a result, the MTT won trust and soon became a major export, helping the balance of trade and paying for Austrians' appetite for imported coffee.

Actual Size

Actual Size

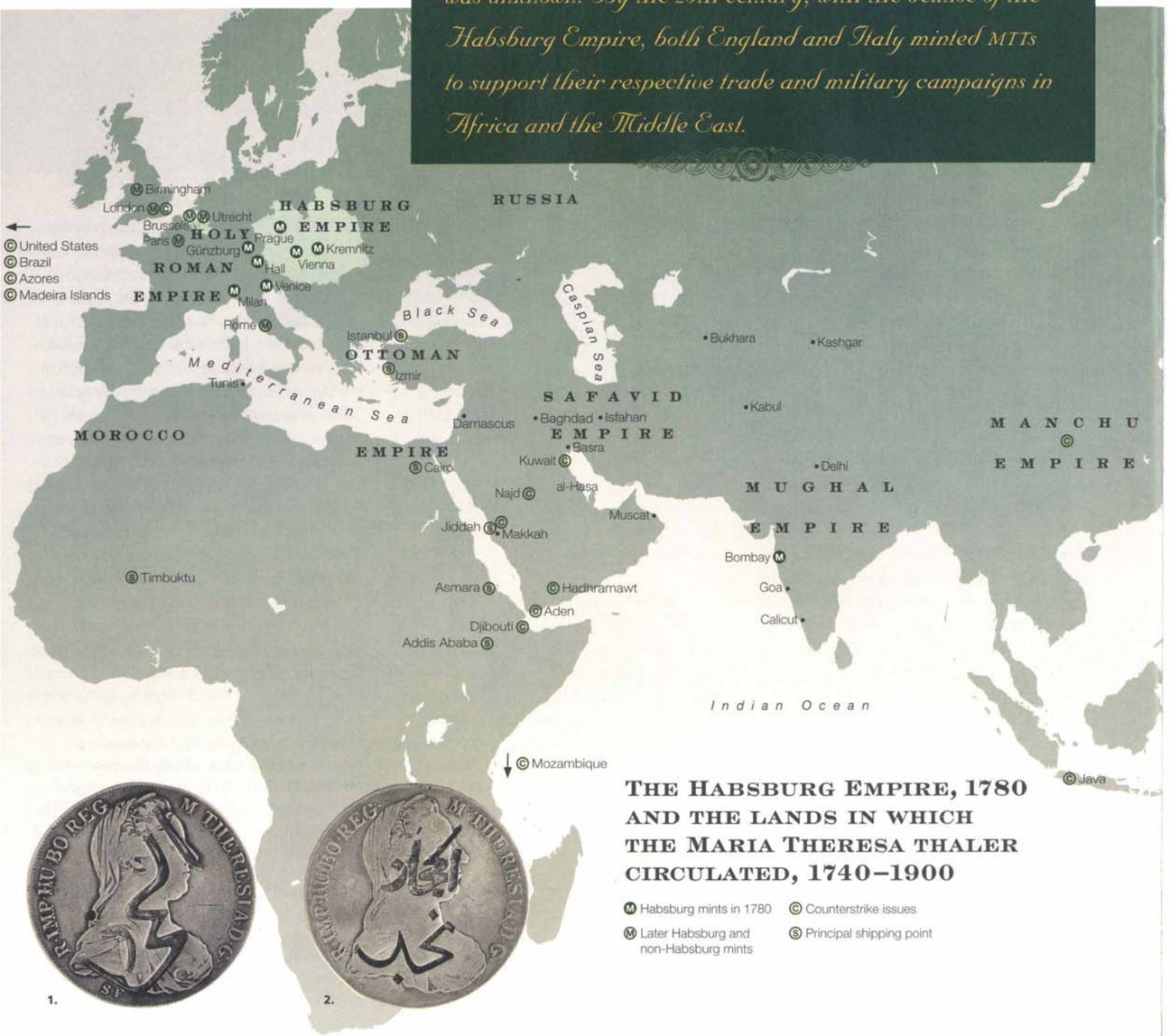
Empress Maria Theresa died in 1780, and MTTs since then have carried that date. By that year, the four Habsburg mints had struck more than 30 million thalers, more than any other coin of the time, with the possible exception of the Spanish dollar. She had literally coined a legacy, one that continued to proliferate beyond anything she herself might have imagined.

"The minting records of two and a half centuries are not complete," says Tattersall, who searches for and acquires MTTs for the Austrian Mint's own museum and modestly admits to being a hobby historian with a small private collection. "But I have seen estimates of totals of around 400 million pieces produced from eight Habsburg or Austrian mints and from an additional six mints in Europe and one in Bombay."

By way of ports such as Genoa, Trieste, Livorno and Marseille, the MTTs made their way to Levantine, Egyptian and Red Sea ports along with consignments of metals, mirrors, Bohemian-glass bottles, clothing, trinkets, flint lighters, knives and razors,

With a weight of 28 grams (.99 oz) and a diameter of 39.5 millimeters (1.55"), the MTT is a substantial coin, which many believe contributed to its success. While its silver content of 833.3 parts per thousand has been unvarying since 1740, and the empress is always shown wearing a diamond-studded tiara and a pearl brooch, details of her face and dress, as well as of the double eagle and coat-of-arms on the reverse, have varied considerably: Note the double chin in the 1765 coin from the Günzberg mint, top, and, on the 1780 coin (actually minted in 2000) at left, the veil that she adopted for the rest of her life following the death of her husband in 1765. Circling the portrait on this coin is the abbreviated Latin inscription M[ARIA] THERESIA D[EI] G[RATIA] R[OMANORUM] IMP[ERATRIX] HU[NGARIAE] BO[HEMIAE] REG[INA] ("Maria Theresa by the grace of God Roman Empress, Queen of Hungary and Bohemia"). The letters "S.F." below the bust are the initials of the family names of the mint master and the warden of the Günzberg mint in 1780. On the reverse, a crown tops a double-headed eagle whose breast shield displays the quartered arms of Hungary, Bohemia, Burgundy and Burgau. (Note the more complex quartering on the 1765 coin.) The inscription reads: ARCHID[UX] AUST[RIAE] DUX BURG[UNDIAE] CO[MES] TYR[OLIS] 1780 ("Archduchess of Austria, Duchess of Burgundy, Countess of Tyrol, 1780"). Following the date is the assayer's "X" that verifies that the coin is the correct weight. Opposite: **Maria Theresa visiting the troops at Heidelberg in 1745, the year her husband was elected Holy Roman Emperor.**

By the 19th century, there were few places where the MTT was unknown. By the 20th century, with the demise of the Habsburg Empire, both England and Italy minted MTTs to support their respective trade and military campaigns in Africa and the Middle East.



THE HABSBURG EMPIRE, 1780 AND THE LANDS IN WHICH THE MARIA THERESA THALER CIRCULATED, 1740–1900

Habsburg mints in 1780 · Later Habsburg and non-Habsburg mints · Counterstrike issues · Principal shipping point

1. Hijaz, ca. 1920
2. Hijaz and Najd, ca. 1926. The double counterstrike allowed circulation in the two regions united two years earlier by 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud.
3. Yemen, Al-Qu'ati state, 1889–1900
4. Yemen, 1948–1962
5. Prague, 1780. The 11 pearls in the brooch, instead of the usual nine, made this coin of dubious circulatory value.
6. United States, Carson City, 1878. The large "X" is a second counterstrike that invalidated its circulatory value. The MTT was one of several European coins that enjoyed unofficial circulation in the United States well into the 19th century.
7. Italian tallero, 1918. This counterfeit—using a young model—failed to displace the MTT in Ethiopia.
8. England, 1936–1961. A slight difference in the feather pattern indicates the British mintings.
9. Vienna, 1984. Commemorative counterstrike with the Hafner family coat-of-arms.
10. China, ca. 1920

1.

2.


3.


4.


5.


6.

COINS COURTESY OF THE HAFNER COLLECTION


7.


8.


9.


10.

sealing wax and Leghorn and Florence silks. From trading centers like Suez, Jiddah, Suakin, Mokka and Massawa they diffused further still, re-exported —like many European goods—to the interior of Africa and Arabia and, by way of the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, to India, China and Southeast Asia. And Muslim pilgrims used them, an internationally recognized currency, as they traveled to and from the holy places.

Like a wire closing an electrical circuit, the MTT filled a need. Europe was endlessly interested in the vast and exotic plenty that the Middle East offered: spices, aromatics, coffee, gum Arabic, indigo, mother of pearl, tortoise shells, ostrich feathers, Arabian horses and more. And in Asia and the Arab world, there was an insatiable demand for silver, no small part of it linked to the use of the coin in dowry payments and jewelry.

It was jewelry that drew Clara Semple to her investigations of the Maria Theresa thaler. "The richness and diversity of Arabian jewelry was overwhelming," she says, recalling her first encounter with the coin in the women's market in Riyadh in 1968. "The MTT became a familiar sight as a component in the jewelry or as a pendant, sometimes heavily embossed with stones or fringed with bells and chains. In Yemeni markets I saw it used in exchange for goods and frequently employed as a standard weight," says Semple, who, for more than three decades, has researched, photographed, recorded and collected jewelry and tribal ornaments throughout the Islamic world. During her travels she often saw silversmiths throw thalers into crucibles to melt them down to make jewelry: "The MTT was not just in itself an essential component of jewelry; it was an *ingredient*."

As part of her research project on the MTT, Semple started to collect anecdotes and "thaler tales" from silversmiths and merchants, old consular reports, mint and bank records, and references to MTTs in travelers' accounts. "From the 18th century onward, most of those passing through the thaler realms—be they traders, diplomats or explorers—allude to it," she says. "A frequent complaint, of course, was their weight and the difficulty of transporting large quantities of MTTs by camel or mule across deserts and mountains."

And wherever it was used, the coin was subjected to careful scrutiny. "Locals would count the number of pearls on Maria Theresa's oval brooch, or check the feathers on the imperial eagle. (These were the features that the names *abu nuqta* and *abu reesh* refer to.) Recipients would reject coins out of hand if they did not precisely match the original 1780 strike," explains Semple.

The wide acceptability and inherent bullion value of the MTT made it as valuable in war as in trade, Semple's research reveals. For example, the 1867 expedition in which General Sir Robert Napier led 30,000 soldiers from India into the highlands of Ethiopia, to rescue the British consul and others taken hostage by Emperor Theodore, needed money to purchase supplies as it advanced into the interior, and "the only acceptable currency at the time was the MTT," says Semple. "So an urgent dispatch was sent to the mint in Vienna, and they obliged by minting five million MTTs. The coins were carried on the backs of thousands of mules, horses and elephants, along with munitions and supplies."

The Maria Theresa thaler was similarly enmeshed in political intrigue, hoarded in subterranean chambers and used by European governments in the purchase and rental of such strategic Arabian Sea and Red Sea ports as Aden and Massawa. The intrepid Dutch heiress Alexine Tinne, who explored the deserts of North Africa in the 19th century, was murdered in a Tuareg raid, supposedly on account of her conspicuous quantities of MTTs. And in 1935, Mussolini demanded the dies from Austria so Italy could mint the coin for use in the Italian campaign in Abyssinia. The Italians

refused to provide thalers to Britain and France, who needed them for trade, so between 1936 and 1941 the London Mint, with the full agreement of the British government, turned out more than 14 million Maria Theresa thalers of its own.

"Initially it was the ethnographic aspect of jewelry, rather than the numismatic or economic aspects, that inspired my interest in the Maria Theresa thaler," Semple says. "However, there are so many other strands to the story—political, social, historical and esthetic—that I am now working on drawing them all together" in a book.

Almost as much as its high and reliable silver content, indeed, esthetics played a role in the coin's extraordinary success. The Maria Theresa thaler is an object of unusually intricate design and fine manufacture. Both faces and its inscribed edge seem to have projected an almost mesmeric appeal. Just four years before the death of Maria Theresa, economist Adam Smith alluded to the esthetic value of precious metals in his classic *Wealth of Nations*: "The principal merit…arises from their beauty, which renders them peculiarly fit for the ornaments of dress and furniture."

On the Arabian Peninsula, customers would bring coins to silversmiths to be melted down and made into jewelry. In India, too, countless MTTs were melted down, but usually for bullion.

"As well as being used as ornaments, amulets and mounted in jewelry items, thalers were also the standard for dowry payments," says Semple. In Semple's own collection is a necklace that alternates thalers with coral and glass beads; there are pendants, an elaborate headband, and a wide leather and embroidery belt incorporating a clutch of layered thalers worn smooth with use. Thalers were also sewn into garments as decorative elements.

These adornments gave the wearer status, and some ascribed apotropaic value to them. "The amuletic value of the coins derived from both the effigy of the empress and the brilliant sheen, which some believed attracts the evil eye to the coin and away from the wearer," says Semple, who adds that, although the MTT was ubiquitous, "there was always a sense of mystery about its origins and the reasons for its being there, and this aura still remains."

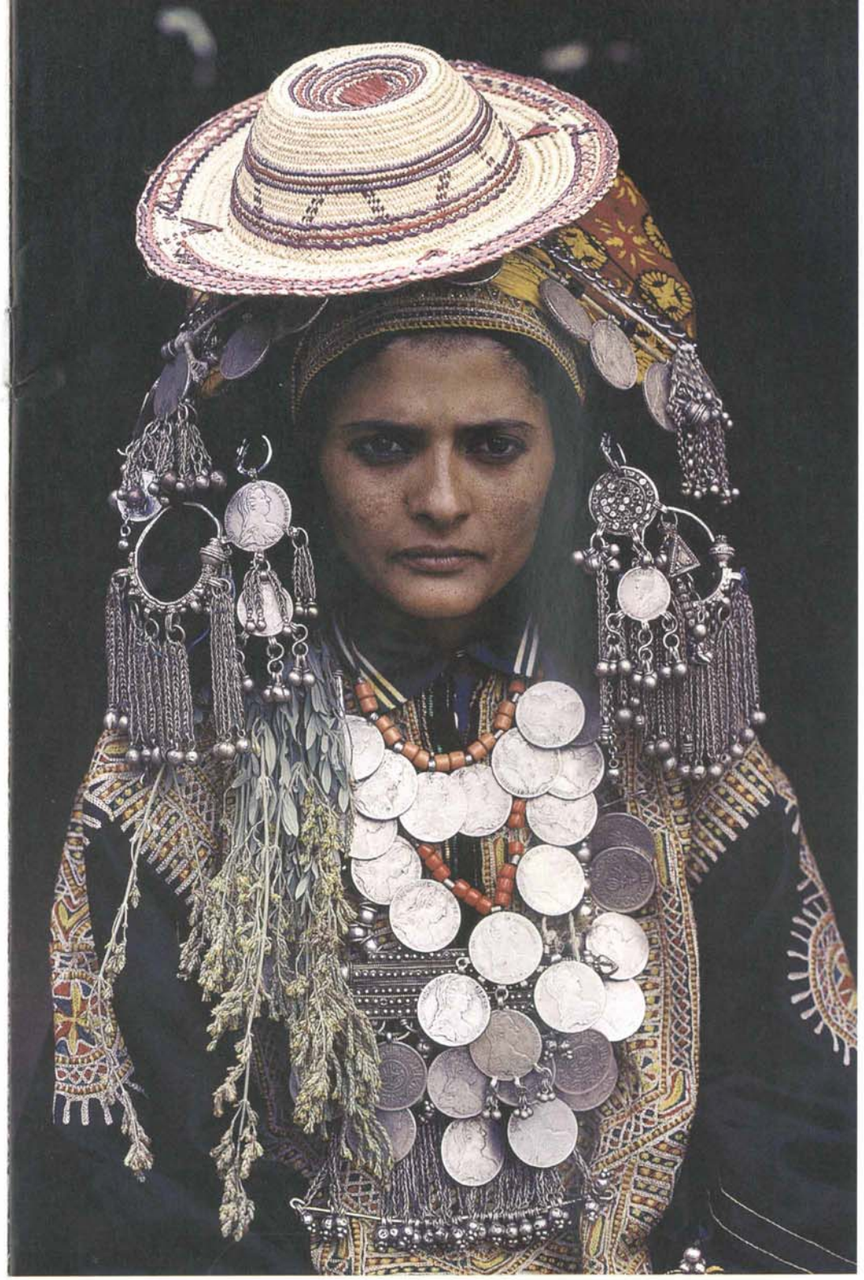
Intrinsic value, esthetic appeal and the popularity of the MTT as trade or commodity money spurred its diffusion. The Maria Theresa thaler reached the Arabian Peninsula only a decade after it was first coined in Vienna, coming into the hands of coffee merchants in Aden and Mokka who supplied buyers in Austria via Trieste. Greek, Levantine, Turkish, Jewish and Armenian merchants also took thalers on their journeys to trading centers like Cairo, Alexandria, Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, from where links maintained by Arab merchants extended south across the Sahara and into Arabia, Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan. MTTs began to circulate within the Ottoman Empire both as a means of hoarding bullion and as an accepted and semi-official currency.

The Ottoman authorities did not encourage use of the MTT, but their own silver coinage, the *mejidiye*, was generally regarded as inferior. The fact that soldiers and others in Ottoman service received payments in *mejidiye* by weight rather than by count meant that clipped and damaged coins were still acceptable, and this, as well as shortages of supply, debased the currency. As Ottoman debt piled up, their mints decreased the silver content of the coins: Both the central treasury and provincial pashas took in "good" money—coins with a high silver content—melted them down and alloyed them, then minted new coins with the same nominal value but a lower silver content. The acceptability of Turkish specie coins was thus further undermined. By the mid-19th century, the Maria Theresa thaler had become the monetary standard in the Levant, where it remained legal tender until 1960.

There was no shortage of other coins to compete with both the *mejidiye* and the MTT. Mid-19th century merchants' records and gazetteers researched by Semple reveal money traders in Jiddah dealing in numerous gold and silver coins: French, English and German crowns; pillar, lion, cobb and Mexican dollars; ducatoons, Venetians, Stamboles, rubles, old and new abassees, old Seville estimates, gingelees, zermabobs, zelottas, Pope's coins and, when all else failed, plain bar silver. With the MTT, all were part of the cash piles of local money changers in Jiddah and other Arab ports.

In the Hijaz, the traditionally unfavorable trade balance meant that MTTs were exported in large quantities to pay for imported goods. The thalers found their way back to Europe and also to places as far away as Singapore. A British consular report of 1884 describes the movement of thalers: "The great balance of trade always existing against Jiddah necessitates large remittances of specie to India, Singapore, the Persian Gulf, Egypt and Europe. The total cannot be ascertained, but every steamer takes large amounts in various coins such as Maria Theresa dollars (the standard coin of Jiddah and the Red Sea)." Reports from some 50 years earlier reveal that nearly half of the yearly value of merchandise shipped from Jiddah to Suez was made up of MTTs, among jars of perfume oils and quantities of cinnamon, nutmeg, styrax resin, frankincense, gum Arabic, tobacco, ginger, pepper, muslin and shawls.

The MTT was for this time the most popular coin in the region. It was substantial to hold—which brought it yet another nickname, *riyal kabir*, the "big riyal"—well-made and always in good supply. The coin's unusual edging prevented clipping, a technique by which unscrupulous handlers trim and shave silver from coin edges.



LEFT: MARIA MARECHAUX; RIGHT: PETER HARRIGAN

Left: **In the hands of jewelers and silversmiths, the MTT became an ornamental object often used in ceremonial and dowry designs, as in this Yemeni headdress and necklace.** Above: **"Crude and obvious fakes," as Semple calls these replica thalers, are also used in jewelry.**

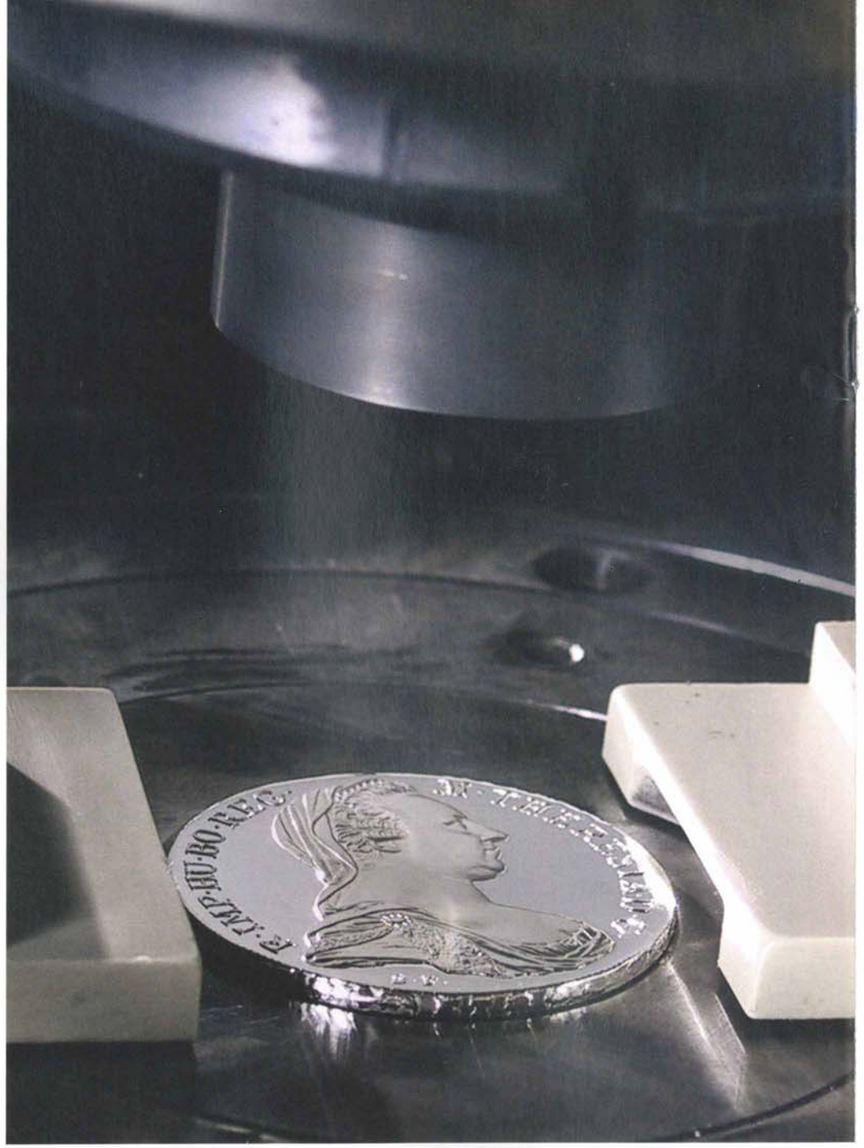
Ghalib bin 'Awadh Al-Qu'ati, the last sultan of the Qu'ati state in Hadhramawt, is a scholar of Arabian history. He too has recorded stories and memories of the Maria Theresa thaler in his former territories. "Whenever I ask elders about the coin's history, they invariably reply '*gadeem jiddan*'—'it is very old.' Why did it spread and become so widely accepted? The reasons are complex. It took hold when Ottoman authority in the region was in decay," he explains, adding that this coincided with an intrusion of European powers and a rise in trade, including weapons smuggling by French, Italians and Austrians.

"Our people traveled abroad to Suez, the Hijaz, Ethiopia, India and Java," says Al-Qu'ati, who now lives in Jiddah. "They would often go by way of Jiddah, where they could board pilgrim ships. Many served rulers in India and elsewhere as soldiers, and acquired landholdings and wealth. Entrepreneurial families from Hadhramawt built up prosperous mercantile interests in Java, which became one of the easternmost MTT circulation areas."

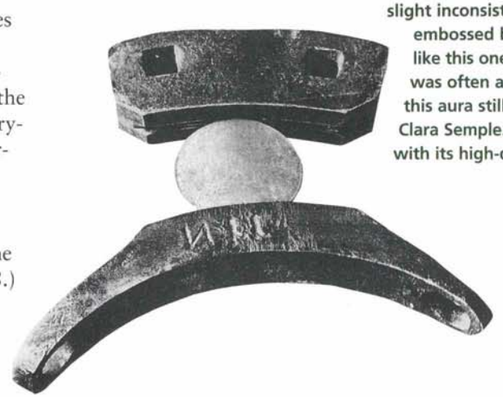
Sharp fluctuations in the price of silver in the second half of the 19th century provided windfall profits in trading thalers, in addition to opportunities to move thalers into interior regions where they fetched a premium. After the growth in exports of silver to the Arab world, there was a surge in demand for silver in India. Shipments of bullion and coins via Aden quadrupled from 1850 to 1860. Then the US Civil War halted American cotton exports to Europe, and this led to more trade with Egypt, Sudan and India—paid invariably with thalers. But at the same time, other events

foreshadowed the coin's eventual demise: Huge silver deposits were discovered in Nevada in 1859, and governments gradually offloaded silver, starting with the British adoption of the gold standard in 1821, followed by other European nations.

Furthermore, the second half of the 19th century was an era in which colonial powers reinforced their interests. Part of this involved introducing their own currencies, and this often involved suppressing the MTT. Thus, with British interest in Aden and Hadhramawt, the British Indian administration set the Indian rupee against the MTT, but with only limited success: "Whenever members of my grandfather's family traveled abroad, they would send trusted servants from Mukhala to Aden by *dhow* with chests of thalers to exchange into paper currency," says Al-Qu'ati. "But convenience aside, the thaler was always considered superior. When silver prices were high, it became worthwhile to send the coins to India for their bullion content. When prices fell, then the coins could easily be hoarded by burying them, and there was always internal demand for jewelry and dowry payments." Al-Qu'ati's own family counterstruck the MTT in the 1880's to provide additional legitimacy to the coin in their territories. (See page 18.)



The Austrian Mint's modern electronically engraved dies are made to the same specifications as the hand-engraved originals. The MTT has always been an unusual coin in that the striking method is known as a "free strike": The coin is not gripped in a collar, which would mar the relief letters of the edging, and thus the silver tends to "overflow" on striking, resulting in slight inconsistencies in size. Left: **The edging letters are embossed by rolling the blank through an edge die like this one used in the 18th century.** Opposite: **"There was often a sense of mystery about its origins, and this aura still remains," says Arabian jewelry collector Clara Semple. "An MTT can still cast a spell anywhere with its high-quality silver and its lustrous sheen."**



LORENZO BAKEWELL: OPPOSITE: AUSTRIAN MINT (2); EDGE DIE: *ÖSTERREICHISCHE MUNZPRÄGUNGEN 15-1938* BY V. MILLER VON AICHHOLZ, A. LOEHR AND E. HOLZMAIR, VEREIN DER MUSEUMSFREUNDE, VIENNA, 1948

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Independence in India in 1947 led to a switch to the British East African shilling in Aden and Hadhramawt. But the MTT still remained popular and accepted as currency into the 1960's, its silver value recognized particularly in inaccessible regions. Today it is still being used for jewelry in Yemen, Oman and Saudi Arabia, often to satisfy demand from foreigners for locally crafted items. The coin also lingers in the drawers of silversmiths in markets across Arabia and elsewhere in its old territories, ready for a local or a visitor to pick up as a keepsake, a curiosity and sometimes even a collector's item. "An MTT is *the* perfect souvenir," says Semple. "It's the right price—typically $15 or less—and the right size, worth almost its weight in silver, and it can be worn as jewelry. It's a fascinating coin to have." From other modern travelers, Semple has received recent reports of MTT purchases in markets of China, Indonesia and Libya.

Adrian Tschoegl's encounter with the MTT is that of an economic scholar. He is a specialist in international banking and finance who teaches multinational strategy at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He used the Maria Theresa thaler to illuminate the general phenomenon of international money in an article for the *Eastern Economic Journal* (v.27 no.4). "The MTT provides a fascinating and entertaining anecdote for teachers and students of international finance, money and banking," he wrote.

"The MTT was the very first coin I bought," he says by way of explaining his interest in the coin. "I was in Vienna, and I saw it in a window with the date 1780. I had no idea that as a re-strike thaler it carried a fraudulent date [by today's standards]. It intrigued me, and with my research into banks and my travels, I became interested in money as a physical entity, as distinct from its theoretical aspects. Whenever I reflected on money, I remembered my MTT. I started to research the coin, and the more I sleuthed and trawled, the more I found," says Tschoegl, whose own Austro-Hungarian background spurred him further.

To Tschoegl, what makes the MTT unique is its combination of longevity and geographical spread. "It succeeded and survived not because it changed but rather because it did not." He argues that the demise of the MTT was caused by the rise of the modern state with its national money, and the fact that states were able to require their citizens to use domestic currency.

"Money is an amazing invention that took centuries to develop and perfect. The MTT plays a key role in this history, and I believe it would have been even more successful had they come out with half, quarter and double thaler denominations," he adds wistfully.

Although the MTT's displacement has consigned the coin to obscurity, its transnational concept is, if anything, on the rise in the Arabian Peninsula. A year after the introduction of the euro in Europe, the six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, having launched a customs union this January, approved a timetable for monetary union by 2005 and a single currency in 2010 that will, like the thaler, circulate as transnational money—but it will be Arabian money this time.

For now, the MTT legacy stands out as perhaps the world's best example of a truly international money, a coin that bore the portrait of a deceased empress of a realm that no longer existed in a denomination long superceded, yet was still universally accepted over vast areas with fluid borders. ⊕

Today, MTTs are still minted for collectors by the Austrian Mint. Older, circulated MTTs can still be found in markets and antique shops from North Africa across the Arabian Peninsula to East Asia.

Peter Harrigan (harrigan@fastmail.fm) works with Saudi Arabian Airlines in Jiddah, where he is also contributing editor and columnist for *Diwaniya*, the weekly cultural supplement of the *Saudi Gazette*. "This was an assignment that turned up a cornucopia of intrigue and endless surprises," he says. "I encountered people who said they knew of current hordes of what they claimed were millions of MTTs, boxed in bonded warehouses and stashed underground, but I was never able to persuade anyone to take me to see a cache. Who knows if they exist? It is all part of the mystique of this largely forgotten, yet entirely remarkable coin."

Thanks to **Clara Semple** (semple@semple99.fsnet.co.uk) for her assistance in researching this article. Her book on the Maria Theresa thaler, *The Empress Who Coined a Legend*, is due to be published in 2004 by Barzan Press.

Thanks also to **Walter Hafner**, author of the definitive *Lexicon of the 1780 Maria Theresa Thaler* (Vienna, 1984).

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

Ottoman silver coinage: M/J 92

From Warriors to Connoisseurs:

The Arts of the Mongols

Written by Sheila S. Blair

TAPESTRY: DAVID COLLECTION / METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART; BATTLE: EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY / METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

"A monstrous and inhuman race of men," Matthew Paris called the Mongols in the 12th century. They "feed on raw flesh, and even on human beings," he wrote in his history, *Chronica Majora*. "They are incomparable archers,...impious and inexorable men."

The Mongols themselves traded on this reputation to intimidate their enemies. "Our horses are swift,...our swords like thunderbolts, our hearts as hard as the mountains.... We are not moved by tears nor touched by lamentations," they warned the Mamluk sultan Qutuz. And in fact, the reputation was largely deserved. Genghis Khan was as brutal as he was brilliant, uniting disparate Turko-Mongolian tribes to form the most extensive land empire known to history, stretching from the Yellow Sea to the Caucasus Mountains. In February 1258, his grandson Hülegü sacked and burned Baghdad in one of the bloodiest conquests of the age, whose aftershocks shook the entire Islamic world.

This round tapestry combines an abundance of color with much gold-wrapped cotton thread. Woven in the first half of the 14th century in Iraq or Iran, its motifs draw from all of China, Central Asia, Iran and the Islamic traditions; the central prince is clearly Mongol in his features. (Ø 69 cm / 27⅛") Above: A battle scene from among 110 illustrations in the *Jami' al-Tavarikh* (*Compendium of Chronicles*), written by historian Rashid al-Din Tabib in Tabriz, Iran in 1314–1315, shows Chinese influences on the artist's style. (Detail; page size 42 x 32 cm / 16½ x 12½")

TILE: VICTORIA AND ALBERT PICTURE LIBRARY; SADDLE: NASSER D. KHALILI COLLECTION / METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

This tile, showing a dragon chasing a flaming pearl, was probably part of a frieze in the summer palace at Takht-i Sulayman, Iran. It was molded and glazed about 1270. (35.7 x 36.5 cm / 14 x 14⅜")

Hammered gold plates designed to adorn a saddle, crafted in the first half of the 13th century, are similar to those that appear in manuscript illustrations from both Iran and China during the era of Mongol rule. (29.7 x 30.5 cm / 11¾ x 12" and 24.2 x 34 cm / 9½ x 13⅜")

Yet these efficient and ruthless conquerors also created, in the empire they won, what historians today call the *pax mongolica*, a century of peace and order so complete that it was said that a young woman could walk across Asia carrying a golden tray on her head without concern for her safety. During this period, approximately 1250 to 1350, unfettered trade linked the Mediterranean and China. This was the age of Ibn Battuta, William of Rubruck and Marco Polo, the most famous globe-trotters of the Middle Ages.

The Mongols adopted and adapted the religions and customs of the areas they had conquered. They became patrons of the arts and architecture, commissioning large buildings, fine manuscripts, shining ceramics and metalware, rich textiles and many other objects whose beauty stands in dramatic contrast to the destructive violence of their ascent to power.

More than 200 of the finest surviving works of Mongol art have been gathered from world collections in an exhibition called *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia*, on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York through February 16 and at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from April 13 through July 27. The exhibition provokes broad questions: How were the nomads of the Mongolian steppe transformed into settlers in western Asia, and then into patrons of magnificent works of art? What themes distinguish the art of the Mongols in West Asia? How does their visual culture illustrate the spread of ideas and tastes across Eurasia?

All the Mongol successor states in Eurasia traced their lineage to Genghis Khan, and indeed, descent from him was the primary source of political legitimacy for centuries. Born around 1167 in northeastern Mongolia, Genghis was originally known as Temüjin ("Blacksmith"). By 1206, he overcame rival chiefs, or *khan*s, who that year proclaimed him supreme ruler, or Great Khan. He took the name

One of the largest Ilkhanid candlesticks, made of brass inlaid with silver, was donated in the *hijri* year 708 (AD 1308 or 1309) by Karim al-Din Shughani, a vizier of Öljaytü. (32 x 46 cm / 12⅝ x 18⅛")

Chinghiz, meaning "oceanic" or "universal" (usually anglicized as "Genghis"), and set out on military campaigns, conquering east as far as Zhongdu (Coleridge's fabled Xanadu) and west to Caucasia and southern Russia.

Genghis's most impressive creation was the Mongol army. Organized in the typical steppe fashion based on powers of 10, it was a nearly invincible force of cavalry archers, supplemented by a siege train. But Genghis's achievements were not only military: To administer his vast territories, he also set up the nucleus of an imperial administration that incorporated indigenous peoples with greater administrative experience, such as the Uighurs of the Tarim Basin and the Khitans of North China. His successors went even further, maintaining a courier system to facilitate the transport of goods, the travels of envoys, the transmission of royal orders and the accumulation of intelligence. Known as the *yam*, it was modeled on the system established by the Khitans, including post stations set up one day's journey apart where wells were dug and grain stored, and the issuance of "passports" or tablets of authority for the use of authorized travelers. (See photograph below.)

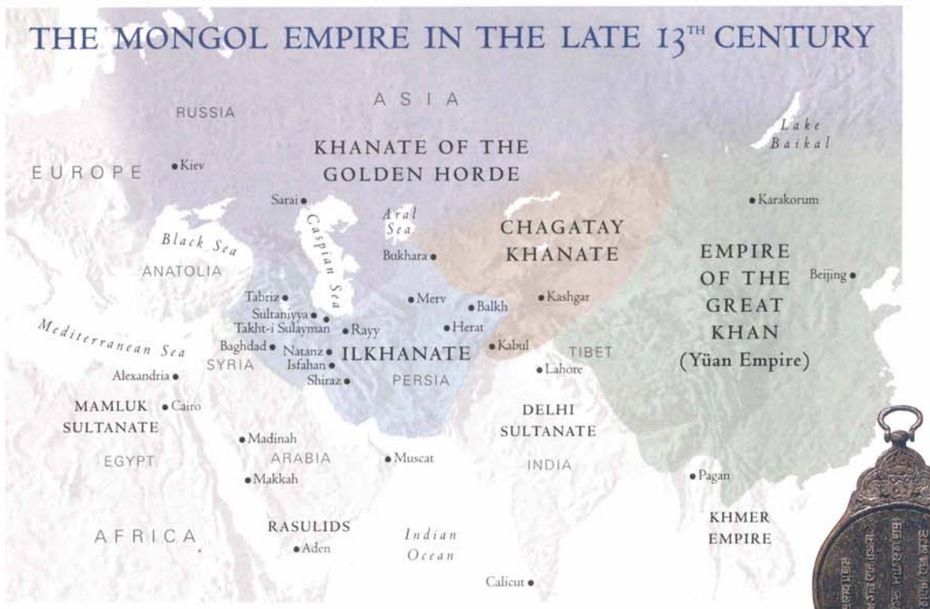
After Genghis's death in 1227, his empire was divided among his four sons. (See "A Mongol Family Tree," opposite.) Genghis's eldest son, Jochi, received the territories farthest from the homeland: southern Russia and Khwarizm south of the Aral Sea. There, Jochi's sons Batu and Orda established kingdoms that merged in the 14th century to become the fabled "Golden Horde."

Genghis's second son, Chagatay, received Central Asia, where his descendants continued to rule for a century. Three hundred years later, one of their descendants through the maternal line, Babur, established the Mughal line of emperors that ruled India until the British conquest in 1858. (The name Mughal is a variant of *mongol*.)

Genghis's third and favorite son, Ögödei, was elected his father's successor, but within a generation the title of Great Khan had passed to descendants of Genghis's fourth son, Tolui. Following the Mongol practice formally known as ultimogeniture—inheritance by the youngest—Tolui had received the heartland of the empire, Mongolia itself. Tolui's sons Möngke and Qubilay succeeded their uncle Ögödei as Great Khan, and Qubilay expanded Mongol territories in China, defeating the Southern Sung in 1279 and establishing the Yüan dynasty. He transferred the capital from Karakorum in Mongolia to Khanbalik, "city of the khans," site of today's Beijing.

To cement control of his western frontier, Möngke sent a third brother, Hülegü, across Asia in 1253. Hülegü moved slowly but inexorably, overcoming the Ismailis of northern Persia in 1256 and routing the Abbasid caliph from Baghdad in 1258, putting an end to the dynasty that had ruled the Islamic lands in name, if not always in fact, for some 500 years. Hülegü's military steamroller continued west into Syria, but was finally stopped by the Mamluks of Egypt at 'Ayn Jalut in Galilee. Retreating to Mesopotamia and Persia, he and his successors, under the title of *ilkhan* ("sub-*khan*"), ruled the lands of western Asia for the next century. Inheriting a rich cultural legacy, their contributions to Islamic art became some of the greatest.

THE MONGOL EMPIRE IN THE LATE 13TH CENTURY



This *paiza*, or passport, made of cast iron and silver, dates from late 13th-century China under the rule of Qubilay Khan. It was large enough to be hung from a traveler's belt to display his right to unfettered passage in the Mongol realms. The script on it is of a type developed by a Tibetan monk who served in Qubilay's court. (↕18.1 cm / 7⅛")

A MONGOL FAMILY TREE

GENGHIS: Born Temüjin ("Blacksmith") about 1167. In 1206 he became Great Khan of the Turko-Mongol peoples, taking the name Genghis ("oceanic," "universal") and the title Khan ("lord"). Founded the largest continuous land empire ever known, extending from China to the Ukraine, which was divided among his four sons on his death in 1227.

JOCHI: As eldest son of Genghis, he received the lands furthest from the home camp, in southern Russia and Khwarizm, but when he predeceased his father in 1226 his inheritance passed to his sons Batu and Orda, who founded, respectively, the Blue Horde (1227–1380) and the White Horde (1226–1378), which later merged to become the Golden Horde.

CHAGATAY: Second son of Genghis, he inherited the lands of Central Asia, including Transoxiana, Mogholistan and eastern Turkestan, where he founded the dynasty known as the Chagatayids (1227–1370).

ÖGÖDEI: Third and favorite son of Genghis, he became his father's successor, but within a generation the title of Great Khan passed to descendants of Genghis's fourth son Tolui.

TOLUI: Following Mongol practice, he became "guardian of the hearth" at his father's death and received the heartland of the empire, Mongolia. His sons Möngke and Qubilay eventually succeeded Ögödei as Great Khan.

MÖNGKE: As Great Khan (1251–1260), he sent his brother Hülegü to recover and consolidate the Mongol conquests in West Asia.

QUBILAY: Succeeding his brother as Great Khan (1260–1294), he conquered the Sung rulers and founded the Yüan dynasty that ruled China from 1279 to 1368.

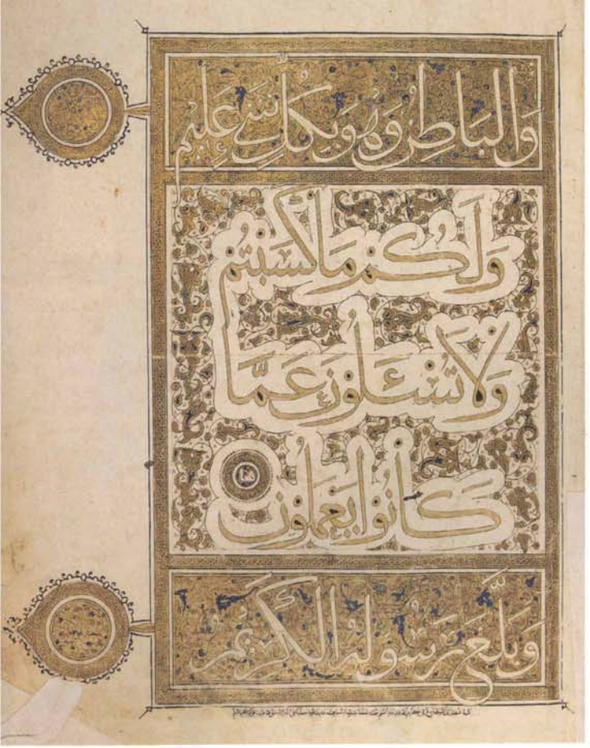
HÜLEGÜ: After conquering Baghdad in 1258, he established the Mongol dynasty of the Ilkhanids, who ruled western Asia until 1353.

GHAZAN: Great-grandson of Hülegü and seventh in the Ilkhanid line, he converted to Islam on June 17, 1295, adopting the title *padshah* of Islam and establishing Islam as the official religion of the Ilkhanid state. His wide-ranging reforms, many instituted by his prime minister, Rashid al-Din, led to a revitalization of the economy. His reign (1295–1304) marked the golden age of Ilkhanid rule.

ÖLJAYTÜ: Eighth in the Ilkhanid line, he reaped the benefits of his brother Ghazan's economic reforms and became one of the major patrons of art and architecture.

ABU SA'ID: He was the last of the great Ilkhanids but his lack of a male successor led to squabbling among princes and amirs until the downfall of the dynasty two decades later.

The antelope, shown here in a gilt-bronze mirror stand made in the 12th to 14th century, and depicted reclining and in profile so that its two horns seem to merge into one, is a motif that predates the Mongol period in China. There are still earlier Central Asian and Islamic depictions of one-horned animals, which may be precursors of the European unicorn. (27 cm / 10⅝")



To a greater extent than the art of other rulers in other times and places, Ilkhanid art is simply very big.

Over the first few generations, the Ilkhanids, as they are known today, adapted to local traditions, like their Mongol brethren farther to the east. For example, the Ilkhanids maintained the Mongol custom of seasonal migration, moving regularly between winter quarters in the lowlands of Mesopotamia and summer pastures in the highlands of northwestern Iran. But their tent encampments were gradually replaced by more permanent structures, as their capitals at Baghdad, Tabriz, and Sultaniyya (see "Memories of Sultaniyya," page 32) became entrepôts on the web of trade routes connecting Europe and Asia.

At first, the Mongols maintained the shamanist beliefs they had held in the Mongolian steppe, but under Qubilay, the Mongols in China adopted Buddhism in a form heavily influenced by Tibetan Lamaism. The Ilkhanids in Iran and Mesopotamia also flirted with Buddhism and other religions, but a watershed change occurred on June 17, 1295 when Hülegü's great-grandson Ghazan, seventh ruler of the Ilkhanid line, officially converted to Islam and adopted the Persian title *padshah-i Islam*, or "Great King of Islam."

The reigns of Ghazan, his brother Öljaytü and Öljaytü's son Abu Sa'id in the 14th century mark the apogee of Ilkhanid culture, as the Ilkhanid court used art and architecture to flaunt what had become extraordinary wealth and power. Ilkhanid princes and courtiers decked the capital cities with fine buildings housing innumerable luxuries. Across different media and styles, however, a few themes underlay all the arts they commissioned.

Large size readily distinguishes the art of the Ilkhanids from that of their predecessors and contemporaries. To a greater extent than the art of other rulers in other times and places, Ilkhanid art is simply very big. For example, the congregational mosque erected by the vizier 'Ali Shah at Tabriz comprises a single huge *iwan* (open barrel-vaulted room) 30 meters (100') across, whose walls had to be 10 meters (33') thick to absorb the enormous thrust of the vault. Öljaytü's charitable foundation in his new capital of Sultaniyya comprised six or seven separate structures, including a congregational mosque, a *madrasa* (Islamic school), a hospital and a hospice, along with lodgings for guests, descendants of the Prophet and reciters of the Qur'an. The complex was centered around the sultan's tomb, the biggest building on the site, with an enormous dome 25 meters (80') wide and 50 meters (160') tall. A contemporary Mamluk historian reported that 5000 stonecutters, carpenters and marble workers were employed to build it.

The 30-volume manuscripts of the Qur'an with which these rulers endowed their foundations were equally magnificent. Most were written on sheets of handmade paper 50 cm (20") high—very large for the time—and at least one copy donated to Öljaytü's complex at Sultaniyya was transcribed on even larger sheets of the full *baghdadi* size, more than 70 cm (24") high.

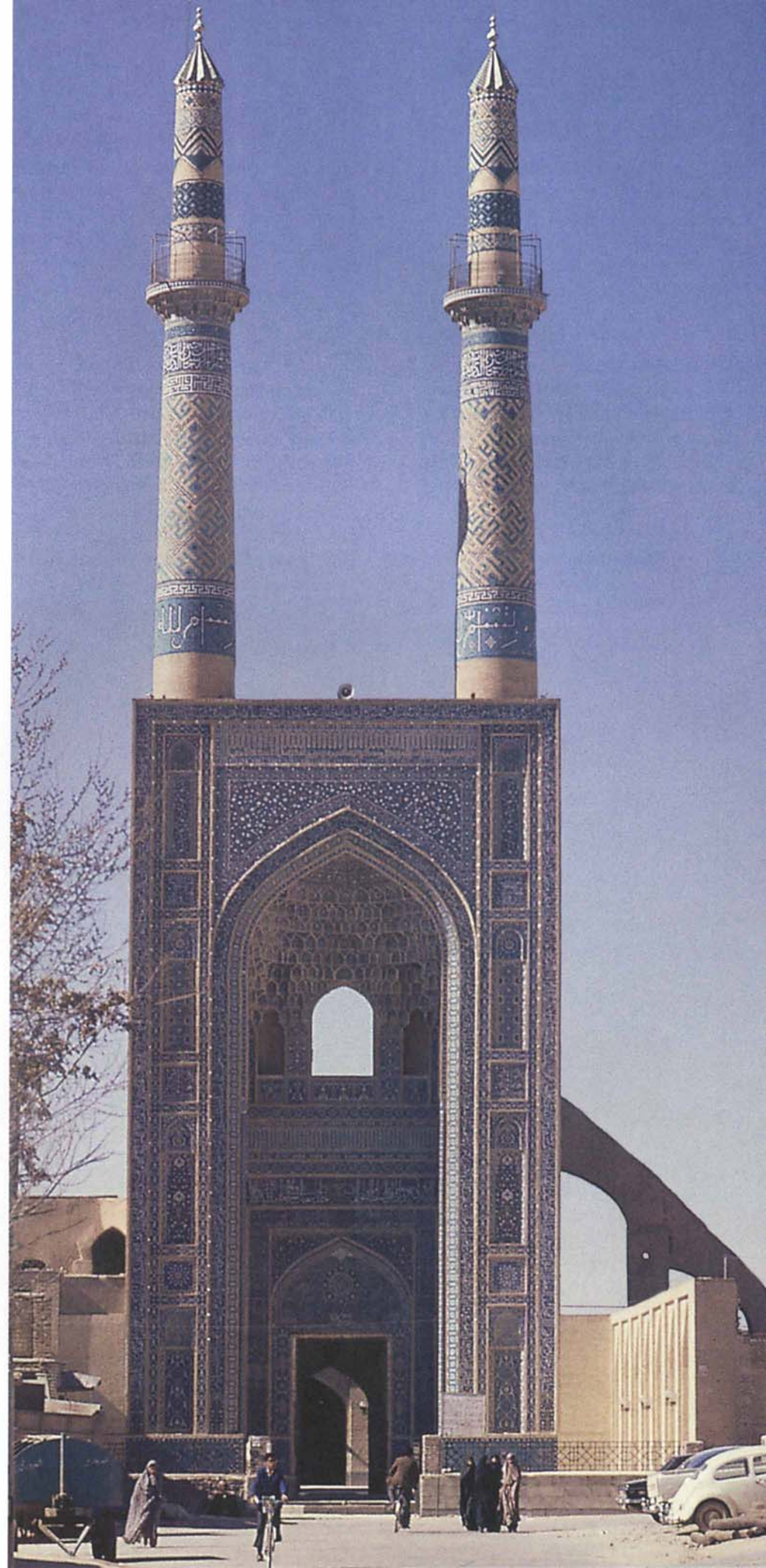
One reason that the Ilkhanids could commission such large works of art was simply financial: They had deep pockets. Ghazan had inherited a kingdom on the verge of bankruptcy due to long-term mismanagement, rapacious taxation and royal profligacy. The 1294 introduction of paper money—

SHEILA BLAIR AND JONATHAN BLOOM; OPPOSITE, MANUSCRIPT: UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK LEIPZIG; QUR'AN STAND: METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

which the Mongols had used in China—was a fiasco that brought commerce in the bazaars of Tabriz to a sudden halt. To remedy the fiscal crisis, Ghazan, under the supervision of his vizier, Rashid al-Din, instituted reforms to control greedy officials and establish realistic taxation. His program succeeded, and he and his immediate successors reaped the rewards. Technical innovation also helped the Ilkhanids work on a grand scale. For example, the introduction of new methods of beating paper pulp, perhaps using mechanical hammer mills introduced from China, may have contributed to the manufacture of the large, fine sheets of paper used for these magnificent manuscripts.

But most importantly, size brought prestige. It connoted raw power. The Ilkhanids exploited size to display their might over that of their predecessors and rivals. 'Ali Shah's mosque at Tabriz, for example, was explicitly designed to be 10 cubits wider and taller than the giant Taq-i Kisra ("Arch of Khosraw"), the Sasanian palace whose ruins stood at Ctesiphon outside Baghdad—a graphic assertion of the Ilkhanids' superiority over the pre-Islamic Persians. Öljaytü's tomb at Sultaniyya was designed to surpass the one that the Seljuq sultan Sanjar had erected in the mid-12th century at Merv, then the largest mausoleum in the Muslim lands. Monumental tombs became one of the most visible symbols of Mongol power and authority, erected by their successors all the way down to the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan and his construction of the most famous tomb in the world, the Taj Mahal.

One of the most dramatic of the characteristically massive Ilkhanid structures is the Friday Mosque in Yazd, which employs a double flying buttress. Opposite, top: **A page from Öljaytü's "Baghdad Qur'an." The 30-volume manuscript required more than 1000 sheets of precious, polished paper to produce.** Opposite, bottom: **Such an oversize Qur'an manuscript was likely displayed on and read from a very large stand such as this one carved and inlaid by Hasan ibn Sulayman al-Isfahani in 1360. (130.2 x 41 cm / 51¼ x 16⅛")**



Large manuscripts too were designed for conspicuous consumption. The huge sheets of paper used in Öljaytü's copy of the Qur'an, like most large manuscripts of their type, contain only five lines of writing per page. The empty space around the text reflects and enhances the glory of the calligraphy. Such a profligate use of paper meant that 1000 sheets, each a whopping 100 x 70 centimeters (39 x 27½"), almost 12 times the area of the page you are reading now, were required to transcribe the 30-volume set. The inlaid bronze candlestick that one vizier ordered for a religious site at Bastam is the largest to survive from Iran in Muslim times. (See photograph, page 26.)

Vibrant color also distinguishes the art of the Ilkhanids. Most Ilkhanid buildings, though now weathered to a monochrome dusty brown, were once covered in glistening glazed tiles, which Iranian builders had made at least since the 12th century in dark and light blue. The Ilkhanids also produced them in black, white, brownish purple and yellowish green. With the matte buff tone of unglazed tile, artists were able to employ a full seven-color palette. Tile-makers cut the individually glazed tiles into small pieces and fitted them together in elaborate floral and geometric patterns, a technique that was to become the hallmark of Persian architecture for centuries. The play of light and shade over relief patterns worked in monochrome brick that had characterized earlier Persian architecture was now superseded by the glint of sunlight on smooth and glassy multicolored surfaces.

Interiors were even more lavishly decorated. Small rectangular, octagonal or x-shaped tiles were molded to give them surface relief and then painted with a luster glaze that shimmered like gold. Floors were fitted with brightly woven woolen carpets and walls were hung with patterned brocades. Stunning objects filled these rooms, including manuscripts enriched with glowing headings, as well as polychrome paintings and metalware inlaid to resemble pictures painted in silver and gold.

Six courses of luster-glazed tiles showing Qur'anic inscriptions, bas-relief and patterned bands decorate a frieze at the tomb complex of 'Abd al-Samad at Natanz. (A view of the interior dome of this complex appears on the back cover.) Below: **Showing hunters or cavalry in a style similar to that used in manuscripts, this elaborately tooled brass bowl, originally inlaid with silver and gold, was made in Iran in 1347 or 1348. (Ø 18.2 cm / 7¼")**

Again, there were both practical and symbolic reasons for this extensive use of color. Materials for making pigments are readily available on the Iranian plateau, especially the cobalt used for glazing and the lapis lazuli that is ground to make ultramarine. Big sheets of paper allowed more space for illustration, and painters soon replaced the strip-like boxes filled with thin washes of color, used in the earliest Ilkhanid manuscripts, with larger, squarer paintings in which opaque pigments covered the surface. The brilliant colors also satisfied Mongol taste: They were attention-grabbers.

The Mongols' favorite colors were blue and gold. Blue was traditionally considered auspicious and carried celestial connotations. Visually satisfying, it also connoted luxury, as ultramarine blue was the most expensive of all pigments. Persian potters in the Seljuq period had already developed the technique of painting in cobalt blue under a transparent glaze, and under the Mongol Yüan dynasty in China potters at the great kilns of Jingdezhen took up this idea in the first half of the 14th century. Their magnificent porcelains, underglaze-painted in blue on white, became a hallmark of Chinese art. Exported to both East and West, they were imitated in a wide area across Eurasia, from Spain to Japan, and the color combination remains popular to this day.

To the Mongols, gold was even more desirable. The early Mongols of the steppe had adored gold, using it as commodity, currency and luxury good. Ilkhanid rulers continued the

The Mongols' favorite colors were blue and gold. The celestial connotations of blue are common across Eurasia: Roof tiles made for the Mongol Yüan are blue, and so are the glazed tiles of Persian domes.

MUSÉE DES BEAUX ARTS, LYON / METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART; OPPOSITE: SHEILA BLAIR AND JONATHAN BLOOM

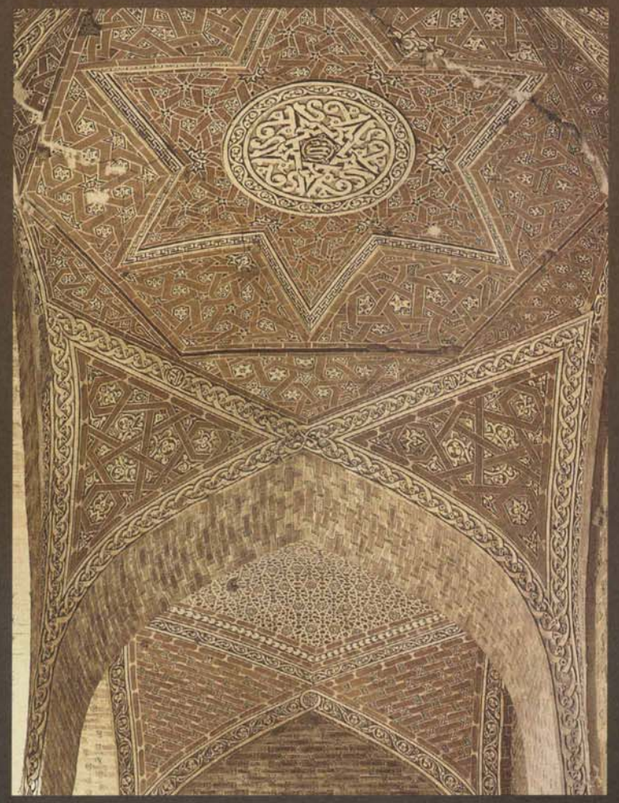
tradition, drinking from gold and silver cups. Most were subsequently melted down to retrieve the precious metal when times turned tough, but a few examples belonging to the Golden Horde have been excavated along the Volga River, and others appear in contemporary scenes depicting the Mongol court. The Mongols even wrapped silk thread with gold and wove sumptuous textiles of it for ceremonial robes, and such cloth-of-gold was an important trade item.

Panni tartarici, or "Tartar cloth," was prized as far away as England, and Chaucer describes it in *The Canterbury Tales* when mentioning an Indian king named Emetrius. Nevill Coghill's translation reads:

> On a bay steed whose trappings were of steel
> Covered in cloth of gold from haunch to heel
> Fretted with a diaper. Like Mars to see.
> His surcoat in cloth of Tartary
> Studded with great white pearls; beneath its fold
> A saddle of new-beaten, burnished gold.

The magnificent arts produced under Ilkhanid patronage in western Asia also illustrate how ideas traveled in the pre-industrial world, culminating in the creation of a new and integrated visual language. On the simplest level we can trace the transfer of motifs.

Memories of Sultaniyya



The upper gallery of Öljaytü's tomb at Sultaniyya is a masterpiece of tile art. A bas-relief, five-pointed star adds an unusual note of asymmetry as it fills the central area of a six-pointed star that in turn fills a hexagon; the hexagon meets the four squinches and two side arches, and all spaces are filled with ceramic marquetry, star patterns and floral arabesque.

Though now a mud-brick village in the middle of a grassy plain, this was the site of one of the summer capitals of the Ilkhanids. The Mongols selected the site for its cool climate, verdant pastures and abundant game. Under Öljaytü, it became a bustling entrepôt known as Sultaniyya ("royal"). The Spanish ambassador Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo, who passed through the city in the early 15th century en route from the court of Henry III of Castile and Leon to the Mongol court of Tamerlane in Samarkand, described the fabulous wares on sale in its bazaars. Every summer, he wrote, caravans of camels arrived with spices from India, all the silk that was produced in Gilan, the province along the southern shores of the Caspian, and Shamakhi in Caucasia, many kinds of cloths woven of silk or cotton, and great quantities of pearls, mother-of-pearl and rubies brought by ship from Cathay [China] via the port of Hormuz on the Gulf. Merchants from the Christian lands, namely Kaffa [in the Crimea] and Trebizond [on the Black Sea], met Muslim merchants there from Turkey, Syria and Baghdad. The town was laid out with many water conduits, streets and squares where merchandise was exposed for sale. Hostels for merchants were conveniently disposed in all quarters. Genoese and Venetian merchants flocked to the city, and in 1318 the Pope even established an archdiocese there. All that survives, however, is the single gargantuan tomb of Sultan Öljaytü.

A favorite Chinese one, the coiled dragon, often depicted with a tuft of hair at its neck, crops up in western Asia in many places, ranging from the ruined, possibly Buddhist, buildings in Viar to glazed tiles from the Ilkhanid palace at Takht-i Sulayman in northwestern Iran. The motif found its way further westward as well, emerging in Armenian manuscripts and eventually in European painting. It is possible to trace a similar path for the motifs of the phoenix with outstretched wings, the chrysanthemum and the lotus. Most motifs moved from east to west, but a few traveled the opposite way: the halo, set around the head of holy personages in European painting, also appears in Persian art at this time.

Artistic designs moved not only in space but also from one medium to another. Dense patterns of alternating animals set in roundels are typical of textiles and tiles. The idea of depicting landscape with receding planes of mountains and trees outlined with heavy contours was probably transmitted through textiles, particularly the Chinese *kesi*, or silk tapestries, which often depicted lush aquatic scenes or swirling dragons set in roundels. In China, paintings served as guides to make woven versions of the same scenes, which could be reproduced in quantity for maximum display and easy portability. In Iran, the process was likely reversed: The imported weavings may have been used as sources for drawings and paintings.

Many of these motifs and designs were adopted without necessarily understanding their original meaning. The dragon, for example, was an auspicious sign in Chinese mythology, but we have no evidence that it was interpreted this way in western Asia. Similarly, the halo, used to denote sanctity in the West, was clearly not used this way in western Asia, where it shows up around the heads of kings and other secular notables. This misunderstanding also seems to have occurred when works of art from western Asia, especially gold textiles, were transported to Europe. There, garments themselves were reused for different purposes and depicted in different ways. Thus, Italian painters sometimes showed the Virgin Mary wearing blue robes inscribed with gold bands of Arabic letters, whose originals contained such phrases as the Muslim profession of faith, "There is no god but God." Artistic adaptation does not always imply mutual understanding.

About the middle of the 14th century, this extraordinary period of international exchange came to an abrupt end. Abu Sa'id left no immediate heir in the Ilkhanid realm, and for two decades rival claimants to the throne jockeyed until local dynasties carved up the remains in 1353. The Chagatayids too disintegrated in the 1330's among rival claimants. More decisively, the Yüan of China were deposed in 1368 by the native Ming, who cut off contact with the outside world.

The causes of this upheaval were not only political: The free exchange of goods and ideas across the Mongol realms also brought disease, specifically rats carrying the fleas that transmitted the Black Death, as the bubonic plague became known in the West. It began during the early 14th century on the Asian steppes, where a permanent reservoir of plague infection existed among the wild rodents of the region. Riding on the coattails of international trade, the pandemic spread south and west, descending first on China and India, then moving west through Central Asia to the Crimean Peninsula on the north shore of the Black Sea. From there, merchant ships brought plague to Constantinople in 1347 and then to other ports around the Mediterranean. According to some estimates, a quarter or even a third of the population of Eurasia died, and in many places it took centuries for full demographic and economic recovery. When it finally occurred, Ottoman Turkey, Europe and—the last flowering of the Mongol legacy—Mughal India were in the ascendant. The *pax mongolica* was a memory, one of the most remarkably fruitful periods of intercultural exchange that grew from one of the most remarkably inauspicious of beginnings. ⊕

SULTANIYYA: SHEILA BLAIR AND JONATHAN BLOOM

A lampas-weave textile with a pair of griffins in each medallion was woven from silk in China during the Yüan dynasty. The griffin is among the design motifs that may have traveled from West to East. (118 x 204 cm / 46½ x 80¼") Below: **Like the dragon, the figure of the phoenix likely traveled from China westward to Central Asia. This fritware bowl from 14th-century Iran shows three phoenixes with long tail feathers. (25.4 x 21 cm / 10 x 8¼")**

BOWL: MUSEE DU LOUVRE / METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART; TAPESTRY: INNER MONGOLIA MUSEUM, HOHHOT / METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Sheila S. Blair, Norma Jean Calderwood University Professor of Islamic and Asian Art at Boston College, writes on all aspects of Islamic art. Her most recent book, co-authored with Jonathan Bloom, is *Islam: A Thousand Years of Faith and Power* (2002, Yale UP). She is working on her 10th book, a survey of Islamic calligraphy, to be published by Edinburgh University Press. She can be reached at sheila.blair@bc.edu.

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

Ibn Battuta: J/A 00
Mongolia and Mongols: J/F 90; M/A 94; S/O 96
Oversize Qur'an manuscripts: M/J 99
"Arabic" in western textiles: M/A 97
Papermaking: M/J 99
Silk Roads: J/A 88

Agadez

Sultanate of the Sahara

Written by Louis Werner
Photographed by Kevin Bubriski

It is the merest accident that this town has not attracted as much interest in Europe as her sister town Timbuktu.

—Henry Barth, 1850

The mud-walled city of Agadez lies in the far upper reach of the Republic of Niger, below the foothills of the Aïr Massif and west of the Tenere Sand Sea. Here caravan routes cross that link places whose names long preceded the coming of nation-states to the Sahara: Northward lie the Hoggar, Tassili and Fezzan; the southward routes lead to Hausaland, Benin and Bornu. For more than 500 years Agadez has been a crossroads for Berbers and sub-Saharan Africans, Arab traders and European explorers, a place of Ghanaian gold and Makkan pilgrims, Barbary horses and Ottoman brocades.

What once made Agadez a thriving entrepôt is now a thing of the past. Herodotus remarked on the once bountiful salt mines, located near springs that watered the thousand-camel caravans that set out each February. "At the distance of 10 days' journey from one another," he wrote in about 440 BC, "heaps of salt lie upon the hills. At the top of every hill gushes forth a stream of water cold and sweet." Now the mines stand mostly idle, and the springs are dry.

Today what brings outsiders to Agadez are the goods and services of a new millennium—high-grade uranium and high-end tourism. The French-owned mine at Arlit, 250 kilometers (150 mi) to the north along the so-called "Uranium Highway" that connects the Aïr to Niamey, Niger's capital, fuels France's nuclear power plants. On a roughly parallel course are *pont d'Afrique* charter flights—nonstop airbridge flights from Paris—bearing tourists in search of what many regard as the Sahara's most beautiful dunes.

But one thing that Agadez has maintained, and that continues to survive even the assault of modern technology and new money, is the office of the sultan. The Sultanate of Aïr is still a living institution, a body of men and women whose functions in the city and surrounding region are both very much of the moment and deeply embedded in the past.

An Islamic sultanate was usually created, by custom if not by law, on the order of the ruling caliph. The fact that, throughout the lands of Islam, sultanates nonetheless exist today that were never so decreed shows the power of customary rights.

The origin of the Aïr sultanate is found in the oral histories of certain Tuareg tribes: the Kel Owi, Kel Ferwan and Itesen. According to their traditions, the tribes had been embroiled in internecine strife for so long that they finally sent an emissary to Istanbul seeking the appointment of a common ruler. The obvious flaw in this history is that, at the time they say this occurred, Istanbul was still Constantinople and still a Byzantine city.

The *Rihla* of the great Tangier-born geographer Ibn Battuta, who came this way in 1352 at the end of his world travels, is a standard reference for West African place names. The fact that he passed through the nearby copper-mining and trading center of Tiggida, but nowhere mentions Agadez, probably signifies that at that time Agadez was not a place of importance.

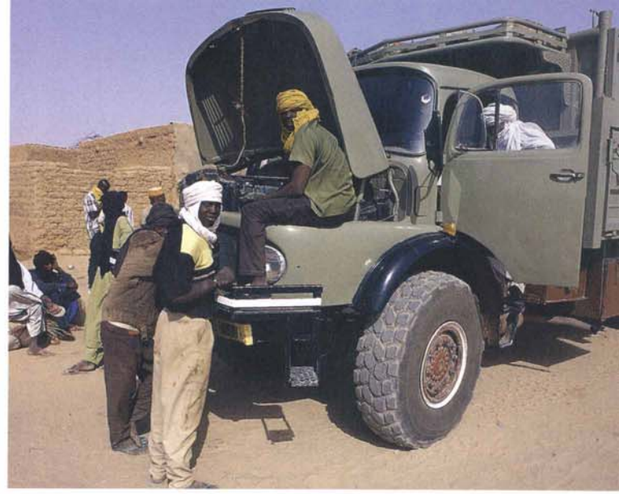
The sultanate's early history is also obscure and complicated by instability and rapid change of rulers. Fragmentary 16th-century Arab chronicles archived at the University of Niamey indicate that the first sultan was named Yunus, and he commenced his rule in 1404. The names of his mother and aunt are recorded, unlike those of his father and grandfather, which hints that Yunus was of a matriarchal lineage, and thus probably a Tuareg. The sultanate's initial seat of power was Tadaliza, now an archeological site in the Aïr uplands.

By about 1510, when Leo Africanus—the Arab traveler and scholar Hassan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan—claims to have visited Agadez, the sultanate had been based in that city for fewer than 50 years, having been moved there by Yusuf bin Aishata, who ruled from 1461 to 1477. In the Tamasheq language of the Tuareg, the sultan's palace in Agadez is still called Gidan Isuf, or "House of Yusuf."

Although modern scholars doubt that Leo indeed saw Agadez himself, his description was surely based on someone's eyewitness account: "Agadez is a walled city built by the modern sultans near Libya," he wrote. "It is the city of Blacks that is the closest to the cities of Whites, excepting Oualet [Oualata, in modern day Mauritania]. Its houses are well constructed in the style of Barbary because their inhabitants are almost all foreign merchants."

What Leo wrote next rings true even today: "It has very few indigenous people and they are almost all artisans or soldiers of the sultan." Artisans, soldiers, traders, courtiers and townsmen speaking any or all of Tamasheq, Hausa, Arabic, Songhai and French, Niger's official language—there is still today a rich mix of cultures, skin tones and tongues in Agadez.

Djibo Hamani, a professor at the University of Niamey and author of *The Tuareg Sultanate of Aïr: Crossroads of Blacks and Berbers*, guesses that Agadez was first settled by Hausa immigrants from the south, a population that has grown in recent years. As the 500-year-old seat of a Tuareg sultanate, the city naturally attracted its fair share of Tamasheq speakers too.



With caravan routes secured by the sultan, Arab merchants were quick to make their way down from the north. For most of the 16th century, Agadez was the easternmost outpost of the Songhai, a Niger River–based empire centered in present-day Mali. Riverine Songhai is still spoken near Agadez in the town of Ingall.

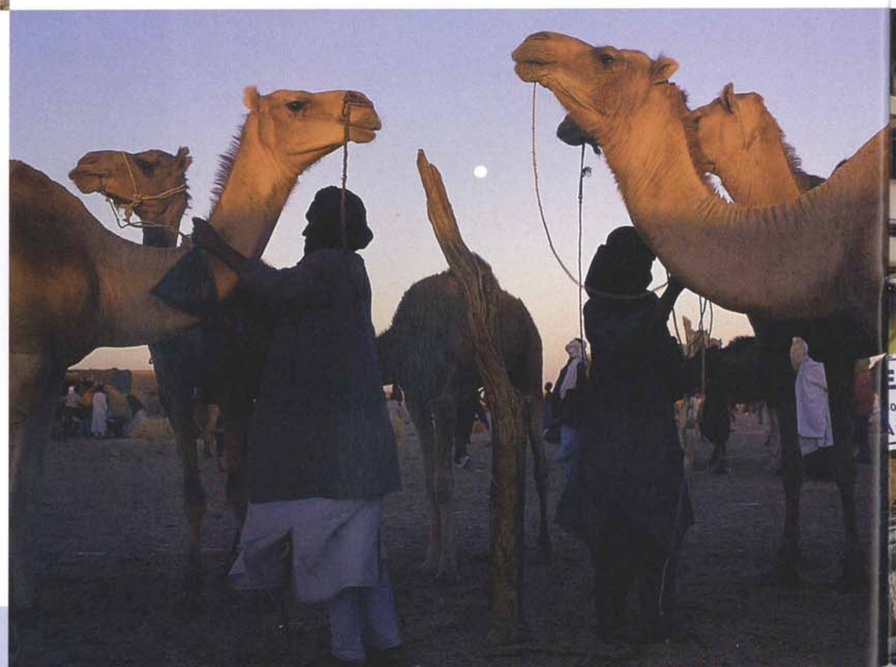
More recently, it was the French who sent soldiers. Their force of arms pressed hard on Agadez—and throughout Tuareg lands generally—following a rebellion in 1916 which threatened to break apart colonial holdings throughout French West Africa. The rebellion was led locally by a warrior named Kawsoun, and the Hotel de l'Aïr, currently housing French tourists, was said to have been his headquarters.

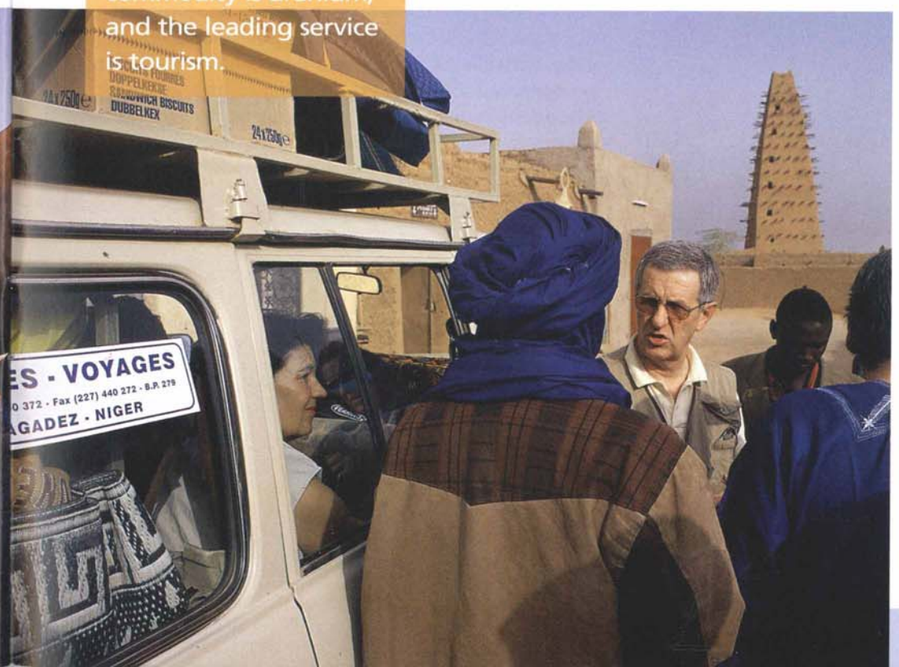
Today, Ibrahim Oumarou is the 126th Sultan of the Aïr, and his 40-year reign has been exceeded in length only by that of his father. "It has not been easy, but I am still here," he says. "As sultan I have dealt with drought, tribal rebellion, a mining boom, and now, a drop in uranium prices."

Matters brought before his court touch on marriages, inheritances, intertribal complaints and tax grievances. The sultan hears disputations with the *qadi* (judge) and *imam* (prayer leader) sitting on his right, and the *massou oungoriwa*, the chiefs of Agadez's 16 governmental districts, sitting on his left. Decisions are final.

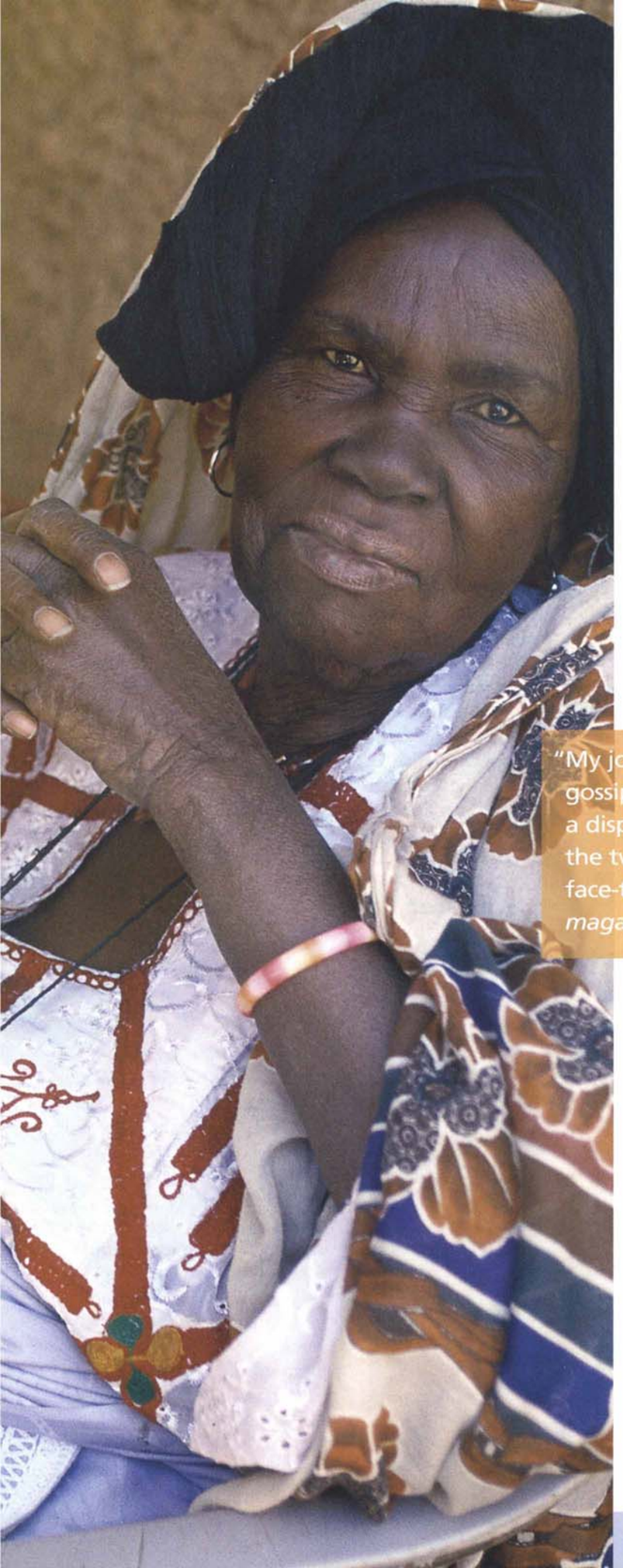
"But these are nowadays small things," the sultan continues, "compared to what my father Oumarou Sofo faced. He was sultan during World War II, and the Italians had taken the town of Ghat, not far from the Libyan border. The French said it was his duty to protect the northern

Agadez is still a center of Saharan trade—only now the leading commodity is uranium, and the leading service is tourism.





Previous spread: Since 1515, the mud-brick minaret of Agadez's Grand Mosque has beckoned travelers to the oasis city, now populated by some 40,000 people. Many non-governmental affairs are still overseen by the 126th Sultan of the Aïr, Ibrahim Oumarou, right. Above: **The modest palace in which Sultan Oumarou's court meets is named after Yusuf bin Aishata, who moved the sultanate to Agadez in 1461. Until early 20th-century French rule made the office hereditary, the sultan was elected by the region's tribes. Today, he works in the shadow of the regional governor, who is appointed by the central government in Niamey, Niger's capital.** Right and opposite: **In town, the camel market serves pastoralists, while European tourists flock to the minaret of the Grand Mosque.** Opposite, top: **Today truck convoys connect Agadez with Nigeria to the south and Algeria and Libya to the north.**



"My job is to quiet the gossipmongers. When a dispute arises, I bring the two parties together face-to-face," says *magajia* Hajjiya Zeynaba.

frontier, so he personally patrolled the lines by camel. Every stranger entering Agadez was brought before him for close questioning."

An audience with the sultan and his senior officers today is convened in a congenial manner. He sits in an armchair in the formal hall next to the palace. His seconds gather cross-legged at his feet. Photographs of him greeting foreign dignitaries rim the room. Closely attending are his secretary, Al-Qasim Chibba, and his *dangaladima*, or second-in-command, Al-Bachir Ibrahim. After a brief tête-à-tête, they agree on the current list of titles and functions in his extensive court.

First in importance, if not precedence, is the *sarkin kofa*, or Chief Doorkeeper, and the *sarkin doggarai*, or Chief Bodyguard. "It is much quieter nowadays," says the gray-headed doorkeeper Jibou Wakata. "I remember having to throw some people out headfirst when they did not respect the decorum of the room."

Among the other titles, some apparently less relevant today than others, are the *manzo* and the *wakili*, Envoy to the South and Envoy to the North, respectively; the *zargui* and the *sarkin tamboura*, Horseman and Chief Drummer; the *sarkin fawa* and the *sarkin kassoua*, Chief of the Butchers and Chief of the Merchants; the *tourawa* and the *madha*, Chief of Defense and Keeper of [Islamic] Texts; and the *agarabe* and the *agastan*, Envoy to Itinerant Marabouts and Envoy to Tuareg Tribes.

There is also the *magajia*, or Women's Representative, who is the Sultan's elder sister Hajjiya Zeynaba. She presides over a parallel court consisting of the *tambari*, or female delegates from the city's districts. "My job is to quiet the gossipmongers," she says. "When a dispute arises, I bring the two parties together face-to-face. If one refuses to come, I have her brought by force, and keep her here for 24 hours without food. Most likely after that she will listen to reason."

The *magajia*'s other function is to welcome new Tuareg brides when they present themselves for blessing. On the occasion of the wedding of Hawa Turawa, women had been dancing exuberantly outside her house, accompanied by wailing from a double-reed, oboe-like *ghaita* and the pounding of Hausa-style cloth-covered tom-toms and a kettle drum. It was some time before the bride was able to drift away unnoticed to the palace door, a head scarf covering her complex wedding braid, the *atapa*. She carried a ceremonial knife to ward off evil in her first week of married life.

The dancing itself recalled a similar moonlit entertainment seen in the city by the German explorer Henry Barth, who resided in Agadez for the month of October 1850 "under the Auspices of Her Britannic Majesty's Government" and whose five-volume *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa. ...1849–55* is a classic of 19th-century expeditionary literature. "Four young men, placed opposite each other in pairs," he wrote, "were dancing with warlike motions and stamping the ground violently with the left foot, turned round in a circle, the motions being accompanied by the energetic clapping of hands of a numerous ring of spectators."

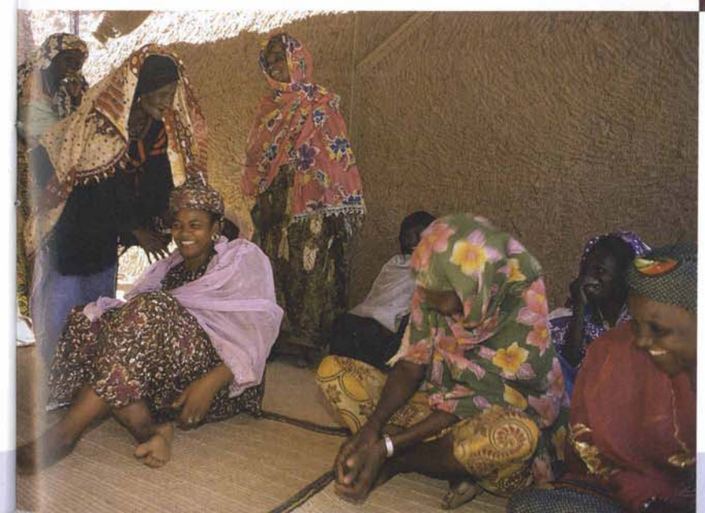
Before the arrival of the French, the custom had been for the tribes who originated the sultanate to select and depose their leaders by popular vote. As Leo Africanus wrote in the 16th century, "sometimes his people replace him with a relative, but they do not kill him. He who gives the greatest satisfaction to the people of the desert is named sultan." Sultans commonly took the throne two and even three times.

But historian Djibo Hamani is perhaps more accurate when he writes that "the role of the Sultan, as governor and Imam, was essentially that of a conciliator between tribes and federations, a caller-to-arms in case of conflict with outsiders, and a guarantor of caravan routes. Mostly, however, each tribe managed its own affairs and completely ignored this centralizing institution."

As a means of tightening control, the French imposed a system of hereditary rule upon the office, based on the approval of five electing tribes: the Kel Owi, Kel Ferwan, Kel Fade, Imakkitan and Ikaskazan.

Barth, whose house in Agadez, furnished in a traditional manner and secured with a wooden lock and key, can still be visited, first saw the city from the south. Like any traveler arriving across the interminable laterite plateaus, he was struck by the 30-meter (90') square-sided minaret, skewered by 14 courses of protruding timbers, which towers over the squat-arched Grand Mosque. "My companions," wrote Barth, "with a certain amount of pride, showed me in the distance the high minaret, the glory of Agadez." Its form recalls the dovecotes of the Nile Valley almost as much as the mud-brick minarets and mosques of Mali to the west.

A mosque first rose on that site in 1515 by order of the Songhai emperor Muhammad Askia, following his conquest of Agadez. But today's minaret, said to be the tallest mud-brick minaret in Africa, dates from just before Barth's arrival. Still evident today is what Barth also first noted—the minaret's elegant *entasis*, or midpoint swell, as in a Greek column. Today, it is slightly asymmetrical, due to prevailing easterly winds that



Presiding over a court for women is Hajjiya Zeynaba, sister of Sultan Oumarou, who serves as *magajia*, or women's representative. Opposite: **Members of the women's court greet each other during a meeting.** Far right: **Zahra Mohamed Attayeb is the founder of a microcredit lending organization whose name means "together." She also runs a Jeep-repair business.**

bring the heaviest rain to that side, thus requiring heavier annual replastering on that side, from top to bottom.

As muezzin, or caller to prayer, of the Grand Mosque, it falls on Muhammad Suleiman to climb the minaret's winding stairs, their mud-brick treads worn smooth from a century and a half of weekly trips to the crow's nest–like parapet wall at the top, from which he seems to aim his Friday call to prayer to the summits of the distant Aïr. "No, I have never left Agadez," Muhammad says with a sheepish grin. "I graduated from Qur'an school here and here I have stayed."

The interior of the mosque is a low-ceilinged maze of side rows and forward sight lines, checkerboarded by head-bumping arches at three-meter (10') intervals. When the space fills with the faithful, it resonates with an intimacy impossible under loftier vaults.

The city's other historical sites suffer from relative neglect. The austere Tande Mosque in the Amdit district, where the sultan and his *marabouts*, or religious scholars, gather once a year, is kept locked the rest of the time. New buildings encroach on the Cherifian cemeteries, testimony to Agadez's noble past. The ruins of a second palace, built by the twin brothers and co-sultans Muhammad Humad and Muhammad al-Adil, who ruled in alternating weeks and who jointly bear the ignominy of having delivered the city to Songhai invaders, are trodden underfoot in the livestock market.

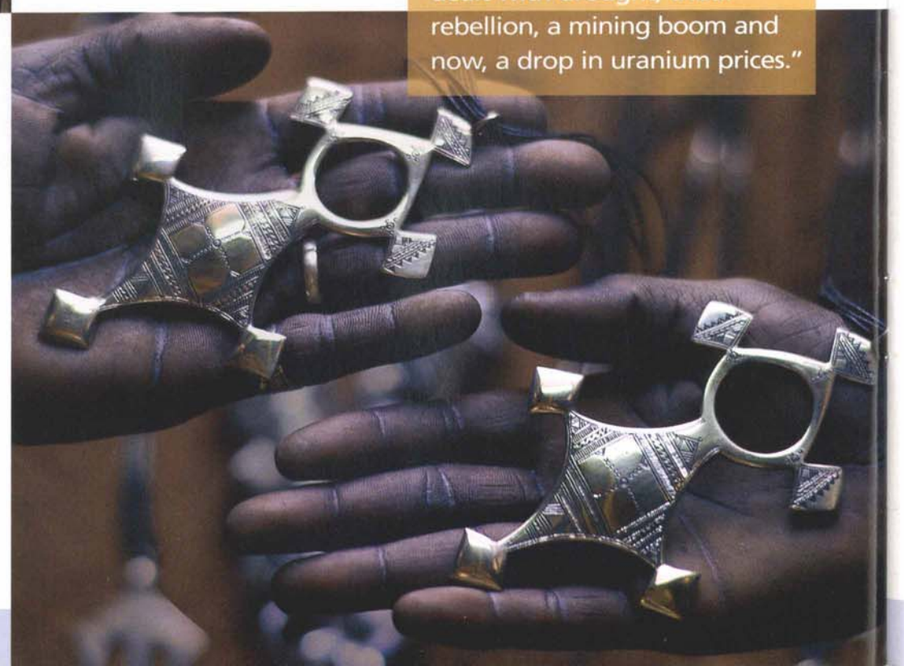
Ghubayd Ag al-Awjeli, a 1958 Cairo University graduate and a 35-year employee of Radio Agadez, has a historian's perspective on changes now under way in his city. "Times are changing fast here for the Tuareg," he says, "and that changes people even faster. When you can't read and write, it's hard to preserve the past. That is especially true today, as the city is now over 50 percent Hausa or Hausa-speaking."

Doing his part to preserve Tuareg culture, Ghubayd broadcasts three times a week in Tamasheq on subjects ranging from animal husbandry to Saharan pre-history. He is a co-editor of the first French–Tamasheq dictionary compiled since the landmark work of the Catholic priest and Berber linguist Charles de Foucauld at the turn of the last century, and he helped collect the oral history of the Kel Denneg tribe.

Ghubayd is saddened when bright Tuareg youths are "lost" to Hausa and French schooling, and he finds it ironic that Tifinak, the indigenous alphabet of the Sahara first used for etching messages on rocky outcrops, is now mostly written by uneducated migrant workers in letters home to their families.

Another tack among efforts to uplift Tuareg life in Agadez is that of Zahra Mohamed Attayeb. She has recently started a microcredit organization for women; it is called Tidawt, the Tamasheq word for "together." She hopes to strengthen even further her people's high valuation of women's social roles by putting the economic means of production directly into their hands. Zahra knows the benefits of this from personal experience: Her Jeep-repair business thrives only because she keeps a steady grip on the operation.

"It has not been easy, but I am still here," says Sultan Oumanou. "As sultan I have dealt with drought, tribal rebellion, a mining boom and now, a drop in uranium prices."



One of the most elegant examples of Agadez's adobe architecture is the Maison de la Boulangerie, a bakery, where styles from Saharan and central African lands meet. Right: **Silver jewelry in traditionally Tuareg designs harks back to the caravan days.** Opposite, from top: **Although the official language of Agadez—and all of Niger—is French, historian Ghubayd Ag al-Awjeli broadcasts three times a week on Radio Agadez in Tamasheq, the Tuareg language, in an effort to preserve it. Muhammad Suleiman is the muezzin, or caller to prayer, of the Grand Mosque, where the famous minaret's height is accentuated by its subtle *entasis*, or mid-height convexity, like that of a Greek column. Along the streets of the town, home styles reflect the city's multicultural mix.**

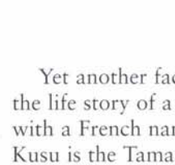
Yet another face of Tuareg culture is reflected in the life story of a 70-year-old semiliterate oral poet with a French name, Abdurrahman François Kusu. Kusu is the Tamasheq word for mouse, "because I was born so small," he says.

Kusu is of mixed parentage. His father was a French lieutenant; his mother was of the Imezouren lineage in the Kel Ferwan tribe. "My father did not stay in Africa long enough to see my birth," he says, "so he left me a herd of animals and sent money back through a fellow officer. But some of the animals disappeared, so I challenged the officer and he threatened my life. After that, my mother moved me out onto the bush."

There he was mocked unmercifully by other children for having a French father, and an absent one at that. Kusu learned to console himself in verse. "I composed acts of defiance," he says. "They gave me strength." With difficulty, because the Tamasheq vocabulary is so tightly compressed, a translator tries to paraphrase a short poem: "I'm proud to be a white man's son / So now I need not please you. / Whites do one thing and you another. / My father bought animals for me, / So now I need not beg anything from you."

"If I had found my father, I wouldn't be this way now," says Kusu. "I'd be somebody else. Those who knew him said he was a very good man. What a loss that I never met him!"

Al-Qasim Chibba, secretary to the sultan, has heard of Kusu's fame. He has been told that Kusu brings credit to his Tuareg kinsmen because he stood to defend his honor and that of his mother. "There is already a Chief Drummer in the sultan's court," says Chibba, "but maybe there is room for a Chief Poet." This because the sultan too, through his office and his loyal Tuareg courtiers, stands in a kind of defiance of all who say he is out of step with the times.

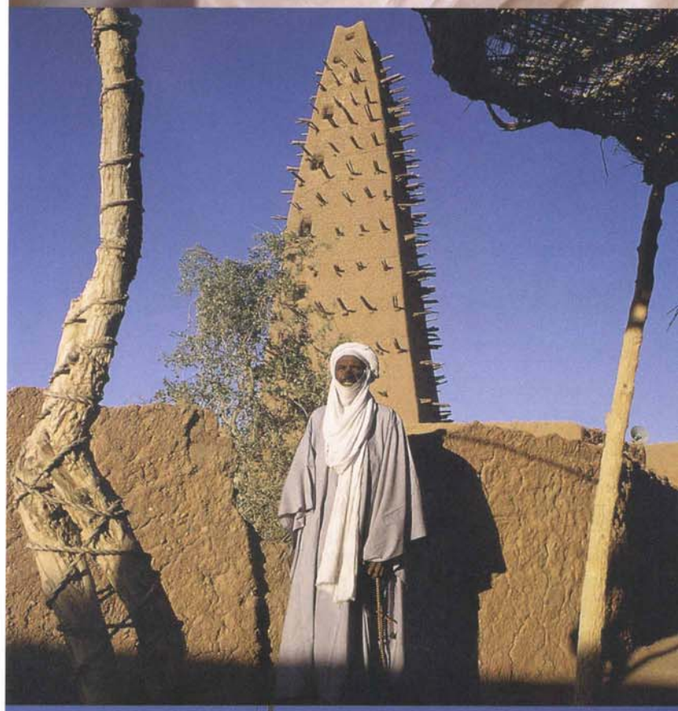


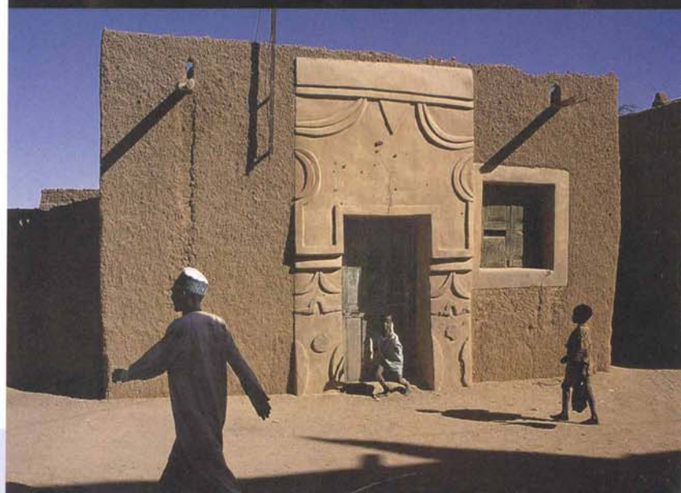
Louis Werner (wernerworks@msn.com) is a free-lance writer and contributing editor to *Americas* magazine. He lives in New York.

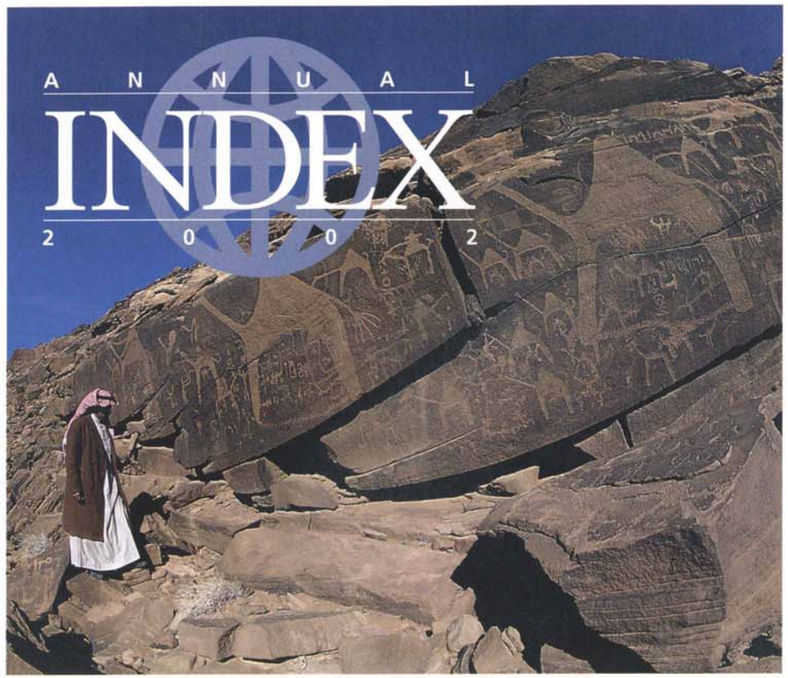
Free-lance photographer **Kevin Bubriski** (bubriski@sover.net) recently published *Pilgrimage: Looking at Ground Zero* (PowerHouse, 2002), portraits of visitors to the site of the World Trade Center. His photographs are in numerous museum collections worldwide.

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

Djenné, Mali: N/D 90
Ibn Battuta: J/A 00
Minarets: M/A 02
Mosques of Mali: N/D 90
Niger River: J/A 90







SUBJECTS

TITLES

AUTHORS

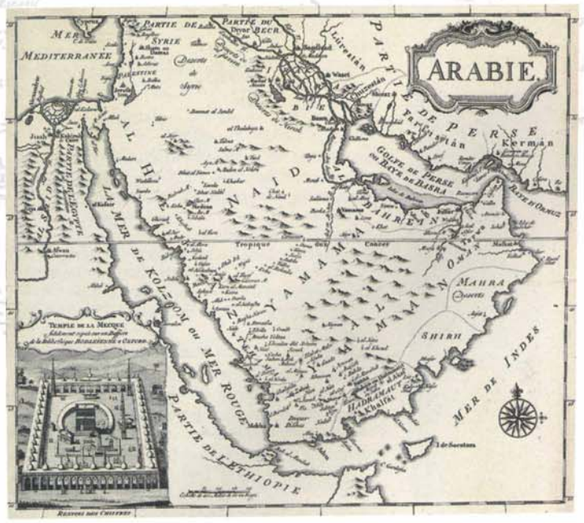
PHOTOGRAPHERS

ILLUSTRATORS

INSTITUTIONS

Events&Exhibitions

COMPILED BY KYLE PAKKA



Mapping the Treasures of Arabia examines the changing face and varying knowledge of the Arabian Peninsula through maps, photographs and engravings. The Peninsula has long served as the land bridge linking Asia, Africa and Europe and was crisscrossed with trade routes; pilgrims on the annual Hajj used many of the same routes to make their way to the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah. The exhibition comprises maps of the Arabian Peninsula; views of Makkah and Medina and the Hajj; and images of life in the desert. The maps range from some of the earliest woodcuts from the late 15th century to lithographs produced at the end of the 19th century. Eighteenth- and 19th-century engravings of the Grand Mosque in Makkah, Madinah, the Hajj and desert landscapes are shown alongside contemporary photographs by Faruk Aksoy and Peter Sanders. Accompanying lectures: February 5: Geoffrey King, "Coastal Pilgrim Routes From Syria to the Holy Cities"; February 12: John Lawton, "Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh Trade Routes"; February 19: Majeed Khan, "Petroglyphs and Rock Art of Arabia"; February 26: Jonathan Potter, "Cartography and the Mapping of Arabia"; March 5: Martin Lings, "Makkah, Madinah and the Pilgrimage"; March 12: Saad Al Rashid, "Darb Zubaidah and the Hajj Routes"; March 19: Mustafa Aksay, "The Hijaz Railway as One of the Hajj Routes." Sponsorship: Saudi Aramco. Brunei Gallery, SOAS, **London**, January 28 through March 21.

Map of the Arabian Peninsula drawn in 1777 by an unknown artist; attributed to Chiffres.

<<< January

Ancient Egypt is an elaborate re-creation of the interior of an Egyptian temple complex, including the actual mummy of Padihershef, a 26th-Dynasty Theban stonecutter, along with his decorated coffins, plus tools, baskets and other objects from everyday Egyptian life. Smith Art Museum, **Springfield, Massachusetts**, January 15 through January 6.

Life in Late Roman and Early Islamic Egypt includes coins, papyri, ostraca and ceramics. Andersen Library, **Minneapolis**, January 15 through March 15.

The Hidden Half: Iranian Women Directors showcases feature films and includes an evening of experimental works and a weekend devoted to the life and work of legendary poet and filmmaker Forough Farrokhzad. Films are subtitled in English.
January 17 and 19: *Daughters of the Sun*, Maryam Shahriar
January 24 and 26: *Women's Prison*, Manijeh Hekmat
February 7: Other Visions: An Evening of Shorts
February 9: *Blackboards*, Samira Makhmalbaf
February 14: *The Green Cold* and *The Mirror of the Soul*, Nasser Saffarian
February 21 and 23: *Under the Skin of the City*, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad
February 28: *The Hidden Half*, Tamineh Milani
Freer Gallery of Art, **Washington, D.C.**

Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur presents 150 extraordinary objects revealing traditions of royal life and death, excavated in the 1920's by Sir Leonard Woolley. They include the famous "Ram in the Thicket"—a statuette of a goat nibbling the leaves of a tree—jewelry, games, furniture, and seals and vessels of gold, silver and alabaster. Catalog $50/$35. Carlos Museum, **Atlanta**, through January 19.

Tutankhamun's Wardrobe exhibits 25 replicas of the boy-king's garments. Medelhavsmuseet, **Stockholm**, January 22 through April 27.

Human Rights Watch International Film Festival
January 24: *Gaza Strip*, James Longley
January 25: *Afghanistan Year 1380*, Alberto Vendemmiati and Fabrizio Lazzaretti
Immigration Museum, **Boston**.

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 Arab World And Islamic Resources and School Services (AWAIR) of Berkeley, California. The program is fully funded and workshops can be requested by any school, district, office of education or university. Sites and dates include: **Richmond, Virginia**, January 25; **Denver**, February 1; **Dallas**, February 14 and 15; **Chico, California**, February 22; **San Francisco**, March 1 and 2; **Elmira, New York**, March 14; **Houston**, April 5; **Boston**, July 8 and 9. Information: awair@igc.org and www.awaironline.org.

The Adventures of Hamza (the *Hamzanama*) is a fantastic traditional adventure story based very loosely on the travels of Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, who traveled the world spreading Islam. The narrative tells of his encounters with giants, demons and dragons; of abductions, chases and escapes; of those who believed and those who resisted the truth. The tale was told in coffeehouses from Iran to northern India and was also a favorite story for illustration. The greatest manuscript of the *Hamzanama* was made for the 16th-century Mughal emperor Akbar, and originally included 1400 oversize illustrations, of which only a fraction survive. Sixty of them are presented, alongside new translations of the related text passages, in this exhibition, the first to examine narrative aspects of the text in such depth. A catalog, and additional works displayed, explore the pivotal role of this manuscript in the development of Mughal painting. Brooklyn Museum, **New York**, through January 26; Royal Academy of Arts, **London**, March 15 through June 8; Rietberg Museum, **Zurich**, June 28 through October 20.

Contemporary Arabic Calligraphy is the first one-person show by Khaled al-Saa'i, a native of Syria and an internationally recognized master of Arabic calligraphy. University of Michigan Museum of Art, **Ann Arbor, Michigan**, through January 26.

Empire of the Sultans: Ottoman Art from the Khalili Collection explores the influence of the Ottoman sultans on affairs of state and religion with displays of calligraphy, Qur'anic and other manuscripts, arms and armor, metalwork, ceramics, textiles and scientific instruments from the Khalili Collection of Islamic Art. Catalog. Museum of Art, Brigham Young University, **Provo, Utah**, through January 26; **Oklahoma City** Art Museum, February 15 through April 27; Frist Center for the Visual Arts, **Nashville**, May 16 through August 10.

Journey into the Past: Ancient Mediterranean Art in Context is the most ambitious display of the museum's ancient art collection in its history, exhibiting sculpture, pottery, glass and metalwork from Egypt, the Near East, Greece and Rome. Ackland Art Museum, **Chapel Hill, North Carolina**, January 26 through March 23.

Breaking the Veil: Women Painters from the Islamic World breaks stereotypes about Muslim women, using 63 paintings and etchings in a variety of genres by 52 artists. The artists themselves reflect the mixed faiths and cultures found within the 21 Islamic countries represented in the show. Benaki Museum, **Athens**, January 27 through February 23; UNESCO, **Paris**, March 11 through early April.

Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait displays jewel-encrusted objects, rare ceramics and finely detailed miniature paintings and calligraphy on loan from the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah. Art Gallery of New South Wales, **Sydney**, through January 27.

Afghanistan 1980–2002: Photographs by Edward Grazda form a powerful social and cultural document. John Hope Franklin Center, Duke University, **Durham, North Carolina**, through January 31.

Hold It! Textiles as Containers celebrates the use of textiles as utilitarian containers. The objects in the exhibition, such as the Iranian *mafrash*, demonstrate the artistic nature of textile containers and shed light on the various cultures that use them. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, January 31 through June 8.

Weekend Seminar on the Qur'an explores Islam's scripture from religious, historical and literary perspectives and examines the text as a shaping force in law, human rights, ethics, politics and gender. Information: 919-962-2502. University of **North Carolina** at **Chapel Hill**, January 31 through February 1.

<<< February

Tutankhamun: Wonderful Things From the Pharaoh's Tomb displays more than 100 reproductions of items from the treasure trove of the boy-king, including his mummy and state chariot. Brevard Museum, **Cocoa, Florida**, through February 3.

Afghanistan: A Timeless History provides an overview from the Bronze Age to the Islamic period. In its only North American venue, the exhibit illustrates the exceptional riches of Afghanistan's heritage, including early bronze representations of human and animal forms, ceramics from the era of Alexander the Great, Chinese lacquer boxes, Indian ivories and paintings and metalwork from Persia. Museum of Fine Arts, **Houston**, through February 9.

French Nineteenth-Century Drawings in the Robert Lehman Collection features more than 80 works, including drawings by noted orientalist Eugène Delacroix. Catalog. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through February 9.

Pharaoh's Artists: Deir el-Madinah and the Valley of the Kings uses 300 objects from the museum's collection to present the private, daily and imaginative lives of the artists, craftsmen and workers who lived at Deir el-Madinah in the New Kingdom period and worked to create the royal tombs of the Valley of the Kings. Palazzo Bricherasio, **Torino, Italy**, February 11 through May 18.

Sheherazade: Risking the Passage is an exhibition of contemporary Muslim women artists born or raised in Muslim communities. El Colegio Gallery, **Minneapolis**, February 12 through May 15.

7000 Years of Persian Art: Treasures From the Iranian National Museum in Tehran provides a panoramic overview of one of the world's great cultures through approximately 180 objects that illustrate the most important phases of its development. Antikenmuseum, **Basel, Switzerland**, February 13 through June 29.

Muscat Festival 2003 features sports, music, dance, exhibitions, stage performances and children's activities. **Muscat, Oman**, through February 14.

The Classical Tradition in Anatolian Carpets presents more than 50 carpets dating from the 15th to the 19th century and constituting a body of art immensely varied in technique, design, symbolism and function. Catalog. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through February 16.

Contemporary Iranian Cinema presents a series of free films in Farsi with English subtitles.
February 16: *The Cherries Which Were Canned*, Mohammad Shirvani, and *Bashu, the Little Stranger*, Bahram Bayza'i;
March 2: *Through the Olive Trees*, Abbas Kiarostami, and *The Candidate*, Mohammad Shirvani
March 23: *The Circle*, Mohammad Shirvani, and *The Wind Will Carry Us*, Abbas Kiarostami
April 6: *The Apple*, Samira Makhmalbaf
April 13: *Under the Skin of the City* [tentative], Rakhashan Bani-Etemad
8:00 p.m., Griffith Theater or Richard White Auditorium, Duke University, **Durham, North Carolina**.

The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353 focuses on the period of Ilkhanid rule when contact with Far Eastern art of the Yüan period transformed local artistic traditions, especially the arts of the book. Some 200 objects are on display, including illustrated manuscripts, the decorative arts and architectural decoration. Catalog. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through February 16; **Los Angeles** County Museum of Art, April 13 through July 27.

Renoir and Algeria is the first exhibition devoted to the Algerian subjects of Pierre Auguste Renoir. On display are roughly 12 portraits, landscapes and genre scenes inspired by the artist's two trips to Algeria in 1881 and 1882. Catalog $45/$30. Clark Art Institute, **Williamstown, Massachusetts**, February 16 through May 11.

Egypt: A Bird's-Eye View is a traveling exhibit of photographs of Egypt organized by *National Geographic*. **Poznan [Poland]** Archaeological Museum, through February 20.

Luxury Textiles East and West celebrates the 50th anniversary of the museum's costume and textile department by highlighting more than 75 items dating from the 14th to the 20th century, including an Ottoman sultan's ceremonial barbering apron, a Mughal velvet tent panel and an Indonesian gilded wedding skirt. **Los Angeles** County Museum of Art, February 20 through February 29, 2004.

Knots: Symmetric-Asymmetric presents a selection of Anatolian, Caucasian and Central Asian carpets and Turkish prayer rugs. Catalog. MAK Museum, **Vienna**, through February 23.

Land of the Pharaohs displays Predynastic pottery, *shawabti* figures, bronze figurines, jewelry, amulets and an extremely rare jackal head of the god Anubis, most likely part of a costume worn by an Egyptian priest while performing mummification rituals. Royal Pump Room Museum, **Harrogate, North Yorkshire, England**, through February 23.

The Myth of Tutankhamun features a 24-square-meter walk-in replica of the 20-year-old pharaoh's burial chamber, along with artifacts that illuminate his life and relationships, especially with Echnaton and Nofretete. The history of the burial chamber itself is also documented. Badisches Landesmuseum, **Karlsruhe, Germany**, through February 23.

Bright Stones, Dark Images: Magical Gems. Precious and semiprecious stones engraved with images and inscriptions were often used as amulets in Roman Egypt, especially in the second century. The exhibition includes some 150 stones. Kestner Museum, **Hannover, Germany**, Spring 2003.

<<< March

Egyptian Galleries Reinstallation marks the completion of a 10-year project when 557 objects go on display in seven newly designed galleries. These items, some not on view since the early 20th century, date from the Predynastic period (4400 BC) to the 18th-Dynasty reign of Amenhotep III (1353 BC) and include the exquisite chlorite-stone head of a Middle Kingdom princess, an early classic stone deity from 2650 BC and the completely reassembled tomb of a major 12th-Dynasty official. **Brooklyn** Museum of Art, opens March.

From the Heart of Persia displays photographs taken by Sir Percy Sykes and his cousin Gilbert over the course of 25 years, capturing the architecture, landscapes and people of Iran in the early 20th century. British Museum, **London**, March through September.

A Century of Collecting marks the 100th anniversary of the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology and offers nearly 700 objects drawn from diverse world cultures and civilizations dating back to 4000 BC. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, **Berkeley, California**, through March 1.

Herzfeld in Samarra displays the notebooks, sketchbooks, travel journals, watercolors and ink drawings, site maps, architectural plans and photographs of Ernst Emile Herzfeld, one of the most prominent archeologists and scholars of Islamic art in the first half of the 20th century. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through March 2.

150 Years of the New Hermitage Book Museum displays 150 printed books and manuscripts from the 11th to the 20th century, including early copies of the Qur'an. Hermitage Museum, **St. Petersburg, Russia**, through March 2.

A Woman's Treasure: Bedouin Jewelry of the Arabian Peninsula features more than 100 pieces, including jewelry, headdresses, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, coffee urns, incense burners and other artifacts in gold, silver and brass. The craftsmanship and design of the pieces reflect a variety of cultural references, both social and religious, and reveal the significant roles played by jewelry in the lives of nomadic women of the Peninsula—as dowry, talisman and endowment. The exhibit is drawn mainly from the collections of Francis Meade and Gabrielle Liese; Meade gives a special lecture on March 13. Bead Museum, **Glendale, Arizona**, March 6 through February 2004.

Individual and Society in Ancient Egypt draws upon recent work in the Old Kingdom cemetery at Abydos to consider how individuals manipulated the representation of identity and concludes with a display of two volumes from the deluxe edition of the early 19th-century *Description de l'Égypte*. Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, **Ann Arbor, Michigan**, March 7 through August 8.

Shawabtis: Pharaonic Workers for Eternity illustrates the diversity and evolution of *shawabtis*, the statuettes of assistants who would serve the deceased in the afterworld. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, March 7 through June 30.

Carpets of Andalusia explores the diverse cultural influences that affected the designs of carpets woven during the final century of Islamic rule and after the Christian reconquest of Spain. The designs and patterns are drawn from Roman, Islamic, Christian, Visigoth and indigenous Iberian traditions. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, March 8 through August 10.

In the Fullness of Time: Masterpieces of Egyptian Art from American Collections displays 48 objects on loan from some of the most distinguished Egyptian collections in the United States, including examples of painting, relief, sculpture and the personal arts ranging from the Predynastic era to the Roman period. Lectures and a film series are also scheduled. **Journey to the Afterlife:** Cartonnage Mummy Case of Pa-di-mut features a mummy case from the 22nd Dynasty (945–730 BC) and related Egyptian funerary objects such as necklaces, amulets, an alabaster vase and papyrus sandals. Catalog. **Boise [Idaho]** Art Museum, March 8 through June 29.

Auto Focus: Raghubir Singh's Way Into India presents 50 photographs by Singh (1942–1999) that document the Indian landscape, viewed from, framed by or reflected in the mirrors of the quintessentially Indian Ambassador car, whose silhouette has remained unchanged since Indian independence in 1949. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, March 9 through August 10.

The Lands Within Me: Expressions by Canadian Artists of Arab Origin presents the largest exhibition of works by contemporary Canadian artists of Arab origin ever shown in Canada. More than 60 works form an "homage to cultural intermixing" in varied styles and genres, including figurative and abstract painting, folk art and fine crafts. Musée Canadien, **Quebec**, through March 9.

Nomads Between the Nile and the Red Sea presents the everyday life of the Abada tribes in southern Egypt and northern Sudan. Photographs, objects of everyday use and drawings by Abada schoolchildren reveal a nomadic culture in the course of change. Wereldmuseum, **Rotterdam**, through March 9.

Eternal Egypt: Egyptian Art from the British Museum is the first loan ever of some 150 pieces that span 3000 years of Egyptian history, from a tiny royal portrait in carved ivory to the colossal granite statue of Seti II. **Minneapolis** Institute of Arts, through March 16; Field Museum, **Chicago**, April 25 through August 10.

Shirin Neshat presents five acclaimed video environments accompanied by a series of related photographs exploring issues of the artist's native Iran. **Miami** Art Museum, March 20 through June 1.

Aladdin's Cave features hidden finds from the Petrie Museum and includes ivory sculpture, papyrus and paper manuscripts from the first century of Islam, Mamluk metalwork and Fatimid rock crystal. British Museum, **London**, through March 23.

So Much I Want to Say is a four-day film festival showing new and experimental films by filmmakers from the Arab world. Titles to be announced. Information: www.mizna.org. **Minneapolis**, March 27 through 30.

Mamluk Rugs of Egypt: Jewels of the Textile Museum's Collections displays one of the most significant groups of classical carpets—those woven for the Mamluk rulers of Egypt. Dating from the late 15th century, the rugs form a cohesive design group showing exuberant play with geometric shapes and stylized forms. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, March 28 through September 7.

The Arab Horse in Islamic culture and civilization, and its diffusion into the West, are covered in five thematic and chronological sections: pre-Islamic Turko-Mongolian, Iranian and Arab horsemanship; Muslim Arab horsemanship; the horse as symbol of power and authority; the horse as "hero" of religious and profane literature; and the diffusion of the Arab horse and its mythology in the West. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, through March 30.

The Art of African Women: Empowering Traditions features more than 75 photographs by internationally acclaimed photojournalist Margaret Courtney-Clarke, taken over the course of her 20-year quest to document artistic traditions in North, West and South Africa. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, **New York**, through March 30.

The Eye of the Traveler: David Roberts' Egypt and the Holy Land displays 20 prints from the famous collaboration between Roberts and master lithographer Louis Haghe. **Minneapolis** Institute of Arts, through March 30.

The Quest for Immortality: Treasures of Ancient Egypt displays coffins, masks, jewelry, papyri, sarcophagi and sculpture drawn from Cairo's Egyptian Museum. An IMAX film, *Mysteries of Egypt*, and a planetarium program, *Stars of the Pharaohs*, are shown in conjunction with the exhibit. Museum of Science, **Boston**, through March 30; Kimbell Art Museum, **Fort Worth**, May 4 through September 14.

11'09 is a documentary film composed of eleven 11-minute segments in reaction to the September 11 attacks, made by filmmakers from around the world, including Youssef Chahine (Egypt) and Samira Makhmalbaf (Iran). **Perth [Australia]** International Arts Festival, March 31 through April 6.

War in Islamic Painting reflects the central role played by war and warriors in the historical and epic literature of Turkey, Iran and India. On display are manuscript illustrations and single-page paintings, including scenes from the Persian national epic, the *Shahnamah*. British Museum, **London**, through March.

April >>

The Nance Collection contains some 2500 artifacts from Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, including metalwork, clothing, jewelry and textiles. Formerly housed in the Nance Museum in Lone Jack, **Missouri**, the entire collection has been donated to the Archives and Museum of Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg. The museum will create a permanent rotating display of objects from the collection, beginning with one of the few original Bedouin tents on view in the United States, April through June.

Our Man in Persia focuses on explorer extraordinaire and historian of Iran Sir Percy Sykes and displays a substantial number of Persian tiles and other objects acquired by Sykes on his journeys. British Museum, **London**, April through October.

Noble Steeds: Horses in Islamic Art celebrates the bond between chevalier and horse through displays of equine equipment and works of art from throughout the ages. Islamic Arts Museum, **Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**, opens April 2.

Purists at the Hindu Court explores the interconnections between the Muslim and Hindu court traditions through 18 paintings of hunting scenes, garden parties and historical events. Dating from the 17th to the 19th century, the works reveal a time when "artists at the Hindu courts appropriated Mughal subject matter and style, and show how they ultimately manipulated them to make them their own." Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through April 6.

Jefferson's America and Napoleon's France: The Arts of the Republic and the Empire contrasts the opulence of the Bonapartes with the simplicity of Jefferson. Included in the exhibit are antiquities collected during Napoleon's campaign in Egypt. **New Orleans** Museum of Art, April 12 through August 31.

Up the Nile: Egypt in 19th-Century Photographs showcases approximately 45 photographs of Egypt and includes some of the earliest camera images of the country's dramatic landscapes, inhabitants and imposing monuments. **Minneapolis** Institute of Arts, through April 13.

"The Poem of the Creation," written down in Babylon near the end of the second millennium BC, will be retold on April 14 by Muriel Bloch as part of the activities surrounding the opening of the new Mesopotamian Galleries. Other events include a presentation by a curator and an architect on the new Code of Hammurabi Room (April 16); a discussion of a single object, "Head of a Babylonian King" (April 18); lectures on "Sumerian Chronicles" by Gerald Cooper of the University of Baltimore (April 23, 25 and 28); and a reading of "Ninurta the Proud," a Mesopotamian mythological poem translated by Samuel Noah Kramer and Jean Bottéro (April 28). Musée du Louvre, **Paris**.

Tenth International Conference on Oriental Carpets features exhibitions, scholarly presentations, and a carpet fair showcasing the wares of more than 70 international dealers, auction houses and booksellers. Information: www.icoc-orientalrugs.org. **Washington, D.C.**, April 17 through 21.

The Path of Beauty and Happiness features objects—including a decorative carpet from Makkah—related to the personal quest for happiness within Islam. Wereldmuseum, **Rotterdam**, April 19 through September 5, 2004.

An Englishman's Travels in Egypt: Edward Lane in Cairo (1825–35) features diaries and sketches from Lane's travels in Egypt and the full set of Turkish clothing that he wore during his two extensive visits to Cairo between 1825 and 1835. Lane, translator of *The Thousand and One Nights* and author of an *Arabic-English Lexicon*, recorded contemporary life in Cairo and many of the ancient sites of Egypt. Ashmolean Museum, **Oxford**, April 23 through July 20.

May >>

Ramesses I: Science and the Search for the Lost Pharaoh sifts the scientific and archeological evidence in a quest to discover whether a male mummy acquired by the museum in 1999 is that of Ramesses I. This show marks the mummy's only exhibition in the United States. Carlos Museum, **Atlanta**, May 3 through September 14.

Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium BC from the Mediterranean to the Indus explores the emergence of the world's first city-states in Syria and Mesopotamia and relates these developments to artistic and cultural connections stretching from the eastern Aegean to the Indus Valley and Central Asia. The works of art, many brought together for the first time, include nearly 400 examples of sculpture, jewelry, seals, relief carvings, metalwork and cuneiform tablets, and illustrate the splendor of the most famous sites of the ancient world, including the Royal Graves of Ur, the citadel of Troy, and the great cities of the Indus Valley civilization. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, May 8 through August 17.

The Blue Head of Tutankhamun is the subject of a single-object curator's talk at the Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, May 15.

Image and Empire: Picturing India during the Colonial Era examines the arts produced in and about India during the period of European colonization from the 17th to the early 20th century. On display are works ranging from paintings and luxury objects to documentary drawings and historical photographs. Sackler Museum, **Cambridge, Massachusetts**, through May 25.

The Pharaohs illustrates the multifaceted nature of the Egyptian sovereign and sheds light on life at court in ancient Egypt. On display are 140 items from the Cairo Museum, including an 18th-dynasty quartz statue of Akhenaton. Palazzo Grassi, **Venice**, through May 25.

Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection presents approximately 90 Indian miniature paintings from the Philadelphia Museum of Art dating between 1375 and 1890 and including both religious and secular subjects. Complementing the exhibit is **Conversations with Traditions:** Nilima Sheikh/Shahzia Sikander, an exploration of the work to two contemporary artists, Indian-born Sheikh and Pakistani native Sikander, who use the tradition of miniature painting as the basis for portrayals of complex contemporary issues. **Seattle** Art Museum, June 12 through September 8.

Later >>

Arms and Armor for the Permanent Collection: Acquisitions Since 1991 celebrates more than a decade of acquisitions including examples of Islamic arms. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through June 29.

Courtly Arts of the Indian Subcontinent are displayed in an installation depicting the Maha-rajah's library. Royal portraits from the 18th and 19th century and 22 miniature paintings are on display, along with ivory figures, an embroidered tent hanging and a marble table inlaid with semiprecious stones, all in the Mughal style. **Newark [New Jersey]** Museum, through June.

Cerámica y Cultura: The Story of Spanish and Mexican Mayólica explores the rich interplay of history and culture between the Iberian Peninsula and the Americas through the growth and trade of tin-glazed ceramics that originated with Islamic artifacts from the Middle East. Under the Moors in Iberia, this style of ceramics was known as *mayólica*; as trade with the New World expanded, it evolved to become Mexican *talavera*. Museum of International Folk Art, **Sante Fe, New Mexico**, through September 7.

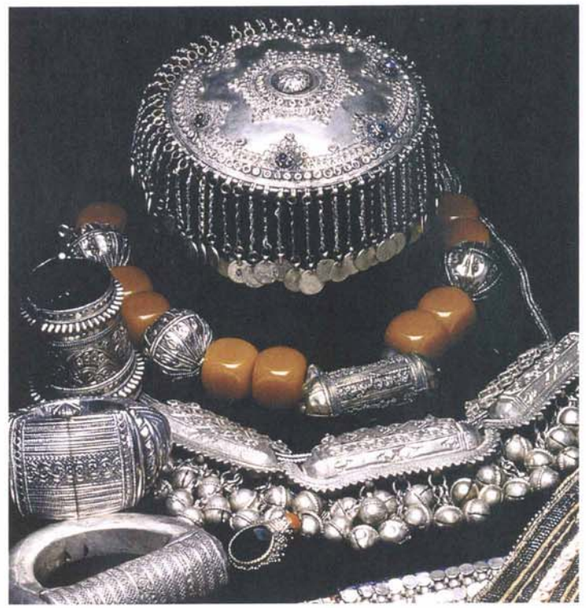
Crossing the Channel: French and British Painting in the Age of Romanticism features some 80 paintings and 35 works on paper by artists such as Constable, Gericault and noted orientalist Eugène Delacroix. Catalog. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, October 7 through January 4.

Seattle Arab Festival includes folk-dancing performances and workshops, cultural and educational exhibits, a bazaar, children's activities and Middle Eastern food and drink. October 18 and 19.

The Hidden Treasures of the Egyptian Museum marks the great museum's centenary celebration. On display will be nearly 150 artifacts brought up from the basement and not seen in public for many years, including gold amulets and jewelry from the tomb of Tutankhamun. Egyptian Museum, **Cairo**, through December.

The Saudi Aramco Exhibit relates the heritage of Arab-Islamic scientists and scholars of the past to the technology of today's petroleum exploration, production and transportation, set against the background of the natural history of Saudi Arabia. **Dhahran, Saudi Arabia**, permanent.

Information is correct at press time, but please reconfirm dates and times before traveling. Most institutions listed have further information available on the World Wide Web. Readers are welcome to submit information for possible inclusion in this listing.



Silver Speaks: Traditional Jewelry from the Middle East.

Rural women around the Mediterranean and on the Arabian Peninsula customarily adorned themselves with locally made silver jewelry in the distinctive fashions of their village or tribe. Jewelry served as a form of symbolic communication, revealing the social and economic roles of individuals, their marital status and community affiliation, and their religious beliefs. Silversmiths, generally from the minority groups and using mostly melted-down Maria Theresa *thalers*, employed a variety of techniques, including molding, hammering, casting, chain-making, granulation, filigree, embossing and repoussé. This exhibition, drawn from the personal collection of Marjorie Ransom, features bracelets, anklets, finger and toe rings, headdresses and hair ornaments, earrings, necklaces, buckles, belts, chains, charms and amulets from Oman, Yemen's northern and Hadhramawt regions, Saudi Arabia, Siwa and al-Arish in Egypt, Syria and Kurdish regions. Catalog. Funded in part by Saudi Aramco. Bead Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through May 31.

From top: **Syrian Kurdish headpiece (15cm / 5.9"); Yemeni necklace of hollow silver beads, a hollow *hijab* amulet and faux amber beads; Yemeni necklace from the Hadhramawt with three hollow *hijab* amulets and silver bells; silver ring with coral-colored glass bead; top cuff is Omani, as is the anklet; bracelet is Hadhrami.**

BEAD MUSEUM / ROBERT K. LIU

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