

Housing and History in Islamic Ascalon

by Tracy L. Hoffman

In 1985 the Leon Levy Ashkelon Excavation, under the direction of Lawrence Stager of the University of Chicago (now of Harvard University), began the first systematic excavation of the ancient city located on Israel's southern Mediterranean coast. Excavation of the 150-acre site has uncovered an occupational sequence at Ascalon lasting from the Bronze Age through the Crusader period. While the primary interest of the project is in exploring the Canaanite and Philistine periods, work from all over the site has provided significant evidence for the Islamic and Crusader periods. The result is that for the first time it is possible to more fully explore the city said to have been called the "Bride of Syria" by the Prophet Muhammad.

Ascalon came under Muslim rule when the city capitulated on terms to Mu'awiya in 640 AD. There are no descriptions of the city of itself in the 7th century but texts do record that both Mu'awiya and then 'Abd al-Malik fortified the city and encouraged settlement in

order to better secure Ascalon which was on the maritime frontier between the emerging Islamic World and the Byzantine Empire. Texts further indicate that in the 8th century a mint was established and a congregational mosque was built. The archaeological evidence for the early Islamic period is not well defined but it is traceable both in the architecture and in the material culture. The architecture reveals a pattern of addition of wells and drainage systems. The resulting houses had rooms around a courtyard that usually contained a well or a fountain. Five houses of the Islamic period have been excavated at Ascalon and preliminary analysis shows they all follow this pattern. This phenomenon is dated by the presence of Byzantine period ceramics associated with exterior walls and early Islamic ceramics, such as White Wares, Coptic Painted Wares and early glazed wares such as Coptic Glazed Wares, Splash and Fayyumi Wares associated with inte-

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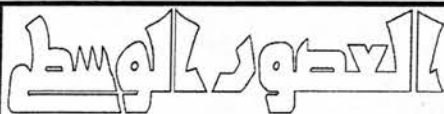
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ASCALON, FROM PAGE 1.

rior walls and floors.

Writing in the late 10th century, Muqaddasi provides the first good description of Ascalon, which he describes as a *ribât*, saying it was healthy, well fortified, spacious and opulent. He notes the beauty of the marble paved Great Mosque located in the Market of the Clothes Merchants, the good markets, the abundance of the city's fruits, the famous silkworms and excellent wares in spite of the absence of a safe, usable harbor. Perhaps this description offers a clue as to why there is no evidence new houses were being built during this period. If Ascalon was a *ribât*, a fortified outpost, in which resources were primarily devoted to maintaining the defensive systems, it is possible those resources came at the expense of new construction projects, such as houses, within the city. The archaeological record neither confirms nor disproves Muqaddasi's description but it does suggest that the houses constructed in the early Islamic period continued into the 10th century.

The Fatimids conquered Ascalon in 970 and for the first time some of the houses, House A adjacent to the southern fortification wall and House D on the North Tell, were abandoned. This dating is not based on the architecture but rather the ceramics found in and around the structures. The last good stratified contexts within the houses contained 10th or possibly 11th century ceramics. Three houses, located on the highest mounds in the site, did continue in use and can be dated by ceramics such as Lustre Wares, Fustat Fatimid Sgraffiato and Egyptian Under-Glaze Painted Wares in addition to large numbers of unglazed ceramic forms, datable to the Fatimid period.

In 1096 CE, the Crusaders reached Palestine and in 1099 they conquered Jerusalem. It was not long before much of Palestine, including the coastal strip, fell under Crusader control. Ascalon, which briefly paid tribute in 1100, remained the last Muslim stronghold in Palestine after Tyre fell in 1124. The Fatimids believed the city controlled access to Egypt and decided to defend it by enrolling every man, woman and child. Fatimid efforts to retain control of the city during the early 12th century are clearly visible in the ar-

chaeological record. A monumental twenty-two line Fatimid inscription, published in detail by Moshe Sharon in *'Atiqot* 1995, commemorated the reconstruction of one of the city's towers in 1151. This stone was found while excavating a section of the city's moat. The Crusaders also understood the strategic importance of the city and began their attacks by constructing a series of castles from 1135-1140 to cut Ascalon off from its hinterland. It was not until 1153, however, that Baldwin III was successful in capturing the city after a long seven-month siege. William of Tyre's description of the city's fortifications, the importance the Fatimids placed on the city and their efforts to defend it is vivid and detailed although it was written thirty years after the Crusaders captured Ascalon.

There is extensive archaeological evidence from this first Crusader occupation of Ascalon, the most important of which is the continuation of a pattern already apparent in the Islamic period: the reuse of already existing structures. The three houses, Houses B, C and E, previously mentioned as occupied through the Fatimid period were subsequently occupied by the new Crusader population. The evidence for this is the further modification of the houses, through the addition of

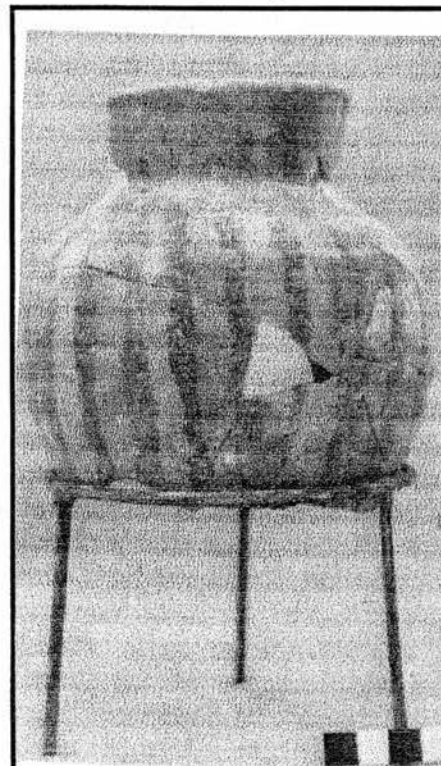


Figure 1. Fayyumi Ware vessel (9th/10th century).

small dividing walls and new floors, as well as the introduction of ceramics commonly associated with the Crusaders during the 12th century. The most important ceramic type for establishing dating is local sgraffiatos known as Rough or Coarse Sgraffiato types comparable to examples published by Pringle at Caesarea and Acre. In addition, Common Glazed Wares and imported Sgraffiato Wares confirm the Crusader date. Recently, the date for some sgraffiatos has been pushed back to the early 12th or even the late 11th century. Further research at Ascalon should further help to clarify the dating for this important

ceramic ware.

Ascalon remained in Crusader hands until 1187 when Saladin captured the city after defeating the Crusader armies at the Battle of Ḥaṭṭin. At this point one of the remaining three houses went out of use; a layer, full of ash and burned debris, with two coins dated to the Crusader period prior to 1187 plus absence of 13th century Crusader or Islamic ceramics implies a violent destruction during this reoccupation. In 1191 Saladin destroyed Ascalon's fortifications and abandoned the city in order to defend other holdings against the armies of the Third Crusade. Richard the Lionheart reached Ascalon in 1192 and promptly began re-fortifying the city. Almost immediately after finishing the defensive wall, he destroyed the fortifications as part of an agreement with Saladin that allowed the Richard to return to England.

Not a great deal is known about Ascalon in the subsequent period until the Crusaders regained the city in 1229. Ten years later work was resumed on the rebuilding of the city's fortifications, a project that was completed in 1241 by Richard, Earl of Cornwall. Evidence of this period at Ascalon has great potential for helping to clarify the ceramic chronology for the late 12th and early 13th centuries.

The house located on the North Tell seems to have been adapted for an industrial purpose, tentatively identified as an iron working facility by the excavators, with the addition of at least two stone structures in and around which large amounts of iron and iron slag were discovered. The ceramic assemblage, including Under-Glaze Painted Wares, suggests a 13th century Crusader occupation of the building. The last occupied house, located hundreds of meters away on the South Tell, contained similar ceramics but surprisingly few were imported wares of the western Mediterranean, such as Proto-Maiolica. In 1247, the Ayyubids captured and then destroyed the city for the final time and in 1270 the Mamluks dismantled and buried what remained standing. The end of Ascalon is confirmed in the destroyed city walls and the architectural debris thrown into the city moat filling it and making it unusable. Additionally, the absence of Mamluk period ceramics throughout most of the site indicates there was no real occupation of the site after the mid-13th century.

Preliminary observations about Islamic Ascalon suggest there was settlement in all areas of the site in the early Islamic period. Evidence from excavation shows that already existing buildings were converted into domestic structures and there is no evidence, in the excavated areas, that new houses were constructed. These houses then continued to be used into the Fatimid

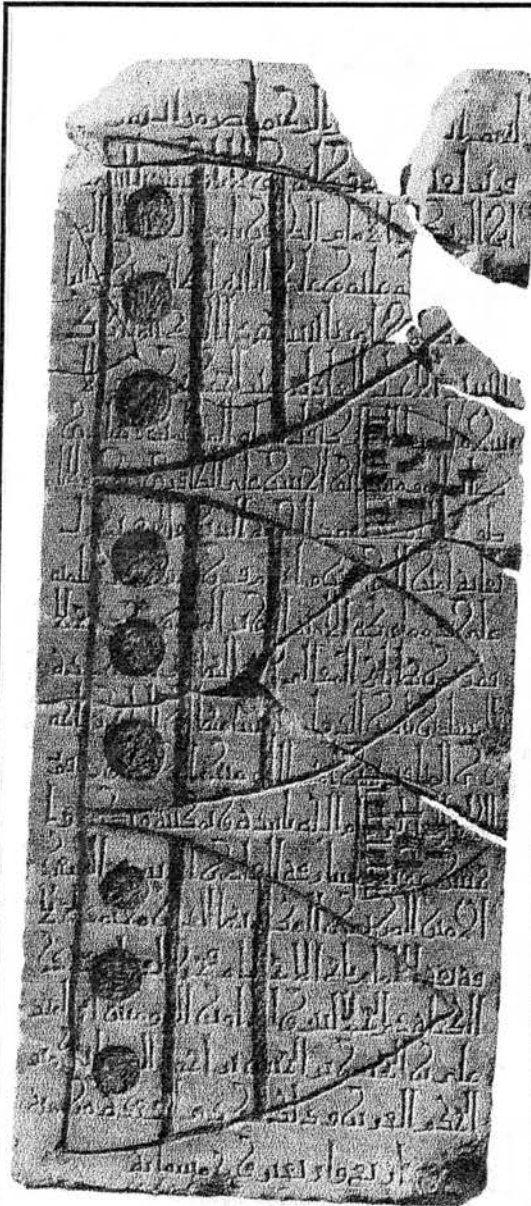


Figure 3. Fatimid inscription found at Ascalon.

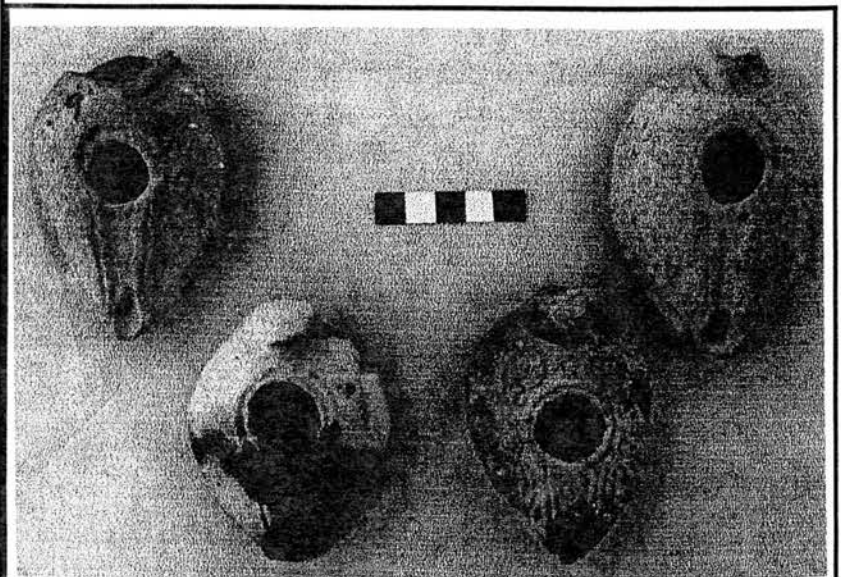


Figure 4. Islamic period oil lamps found at Ascalon.

and Crusader periods undergoing additional modification as needed. In general, the concentration of settlement at Ascalon seems to have shifted from all over the site, in both high and low lying areas, to only the high mounds within the city wall. There is strong evidence for this on the North Tell where ceramics associated both with architecture and with robber's trenches clearly indicate a 13th century date. This continual reuse of structures without evidence for new construction during the Islamic period is somewhat unexpected at

Ascalon, a city that received high praise in the writings of Muqaddasi and other Arab geographers.

A second pattern in the archaeological record of Ascalon is that the Islamic period ceramics point towards local production and to ties with Syria that were as strong as ties with Egypt. During the Crusader period, the ceramics reflect extensive trade within the Eastern Mediterranean and less evidence for connections with the Western Mediterranean. The strong presence of local ceramics is not surprising

during either the Islamic or Crusader periods. What is noteworthy, and deserving further analysis, is the absence of evidence for clear ties with Egypt particularly during the Fatimid period. In this instance the archaeological evidence seems to tell a different story than the textual evidence does about Ascalon's relationship with Egypt. This issue, as well as that of the absence of Crusader period imports needs to be addressed as does the evolution, or lack of, housing in Ascalon during the Islamic period.

Conferences and Symposia

Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies, 1900-1950

May 3-5, 2001

The Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, the national museum of Asian art at the Smithsonian Institution, is hosting a three-day symposium, "Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of Near Eastern Studies, 1900-1950," from Thursday, 3 May, through Saturday, 5 May 2001. Papers by an international group of specialists in history, archaeology, art history, and philology will evaluate the development of different disciplines concerned with the ancient and Islamic Near East. Special attention is devoted to the impact of German scholar Ernst Herzfeld (1879-1948) as an individual scholar and pioneer with respect to various disciplines under the umbrella of Near Eastern studies, drawing in part on new research on the Ernst Herzfeld Papers, a collection of journals, notebooks, drawings, photographs, and other materials housed in the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives. The symposium also situates Herzfeld's contributions within broader intellectual, institutional, and political frameworks of his era.

The symposium is organized in association with the Iran Heritage Foundation and is made possible by a generous grant from Marietta Lutze Sackler, M.D., and support from the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung.

Some of the papers which will be presented at the symposium include: Josef Wiesehöfer (Christian-Albrechts University, Kiel): "Herzfeld und die Sasaniden in der Forschung bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts;" P. Oktor Skjaervø (Harvard University): "Herzfeld and Sasanian Epigraphy;" Thomas Leisten (Princeton University): "The Mschatta Problem: Herzfeld and the Beginnings of Islamic Art History;" Alistair Northedge (University of Paris I, Sorbonne): "Samarra: Research in the Abbasid Capital;" Robert Hillenbrand (University of Edinburgh): "Herzfeld and Medieval Islamic Architecture in Iran;" Stefan R. Hauser (Columbia University and Free University, Berlin): "Eduard Meyer and Ernst Herzfeld: Remarks on the Problem of Universal History and Orientalism;"

There is no fee for the symposium, but registration will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Please provide your name, address, affiliation, phone and fax numbers, e-mail address, and any special accessibility requirements, and indicate which days you will attend. You may send the information by e-mail to symposium@asia.si.edu or by postal address to: Herzfeld Symposium, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560-0707.

The pyramidal Structure in Arabic *siyar*: The example of *Sirat 'Antar*

by Driss Cherkaoui

In the *siyar* of medieval Arabic literature, a triangular or pyramidal structure is demonstrable not only for the characters playing heroic roles but also for those directly opposed to the hero(s). We find two important triangular structures in equilibrium with one another: the heroic triangle of hero/'*ayyār* (the hero's faithful companion)/outlaw knight; and the enemy triangle of primary enemy/the hero's future father-in-law/enemy knight.

Such a triangular structure is not limited to Arabic *siyar*, but is found in certain stories from *The Thousand and One Nights* as well, such as the story of '*Agīb and Gharīb*. We also find it in the Persian literary tradition. And according to Georges Dumézil, the Indo-European tradition also comports three types of epic characters, the hero, the sorcerer and the king. He says that these are based on ancient archetypes. Modern examples of triangular structures in literature are abundant; we need only think for a moment of the many novels and films based on the trio of hero, villain and victim, for example.

The members of the two trios in the *siyar* each have specific traits. In the heroic triangle, the hero is characterized by courage and physical prowess; the '*ayyār* by cleverness; and the outlaw knight by brutality in the service of the hero. In some cases the latter character is socially marginal, as is, for example, 'Urwa Ibn al-Ward in *Sirat 'Antar*.

In the enemy triangle, the primary enemy is typically clever and subversive, acting through the other enemies rather than entering into direct conflict with the hero. The future father-in-law is character-

istically and continually manipulated by the primary enemy; the enemy knight is characterized by his physical force and openly combats the hero.

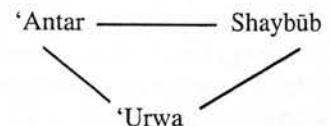
The heroic triangle is unified, there is no victim or "bad guy" within the triangle and the second and third characters are faithfully devoted to the hero and his causes; in the enemy triangle, however, the relationships among the three characters may be conflictual.

It should be noted that we are discussing the structural roles composing the triangles, as opposed to individual and personalized characters. In the *siyar* it is common for a character (other than the hero) playing one of these roles to die and be replaced with a new character. This does not affect the role itself in any way. However, it is convenient to use specific examples while discussing these roles. The *siyar* we will consider are *Sirat 'Antar*, *Sirat Ḥamza al-Bahlawān*, *Sirat al-Amīra Dhāt al-Himma*, *Sirat Fayrūz Shāh*, and *Sirat Sayf Ibn Dhī Yazan*.

In *Sirat 'Antar*, the heroic triangle is composed of 'Antar, his faithful companion and brother Shaybūb, and his outlaw knight 'Urwa. Shaybūb seconds the hero from childhood, while 'Urwa becomes his devoted follower in the first of the *sīra*'s eight volumes. 'Antar and Shaybūb have a family relationship; the relationship between the hero and 'Urwa is founded on the nearly fraternal respect and admiration of 'Urwa for the hero. While the personalities of the two brothers are complementary (in many situations, the hero's courage and vigor would not be enough without Shaybūb's clever and wily help), 'Urwa's

personality is the hero's taken one step further. 'Urwa, born a free man, is rejected by the tribal society in which he was born; while 'Antar, although born a slave, carves himself out a place in the same society relatively early in the story. Thus 'Urwa represents what 'Antar might have become; with no possibility of becoming a hero in his own right in *Sirat 'Antar* (here, we are not considering his historical role), he dedicates his savage life to the service of the more refined hero.

The relationships among the members of the heroic triangle in *Sirat 'Antar* can be represented graphically as follows:



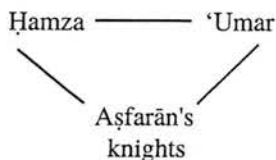
where the complementary qualities of the hero and his brother are considered of equal importance to the evolution of the story, while their projects are often built upon the foundation of 'Urwa's military strength. However, if 'Urwa is not available to fulfill his supporting role, 'Antar may act alone or with Shaybūb, or 'Urwa may be replaced by another knight, Muqri al-Waḥsh.

The heroic triangle in *Sirat 'Antar* is typical, although its members are not. If we look at other *siyar* such as *Ḥamza al-Bahlawān* and *Fayrūz Shāh*, we find that the heroes are of royal blood and do not have 'Antar's difficulties of social acceptance. Privileged from birth, these heroes need only concern themselves with be-

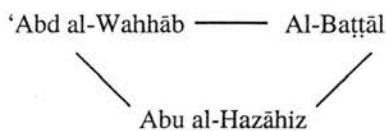
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coming great knights, developing qualities of generosity and courage, recovering their lost kingdoms, etc.

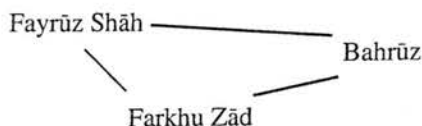
In *Sirat Ḥamza al-Bahlawān*, the heroic triangle is composed of the hero Ḥamza (strong and courageous); his companion since childhood 'Umar (agile, a gifted scout and sometimes thief); and a group of outlaw knights lead by Al-Aṣfarān ad-Darbāndi. The two companions work as a team but count on the strength of Al-Aṣfarān's group:



In *Sirat Dhāt al-Himma*, we again find the hero, in this case 'Abd al-Wahhāb, aided by his 'ayyār Al-Baṭṭāl, and both calling upon the strength of the outlaw knight Abu al-Hazāhiz:



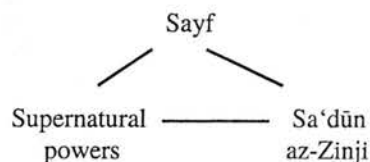
In *Sirat Fayrūz Shāh*, the heroic triangle is a bit different. The hero Fayrūz Shāh is strong, courageous and quick. His childhood companion Bahrūz is forceful and clever, son of a ghou. The third member of the triangle, Farkhu Zād, is not, strictly speaking, an outlaw knight, although for narrative purposes the role he plays is much the same. He is a member of the royal family who can help the hero militarily. The relationships of the members of this trio can be depicted by a triangle without a dominant side, although due to the hero's importance to the story, he occupies a more elevated place in the triangle than the other two.



In *Sirat Sayf*, we find yet another orientation for the triangle, with the hero Sayf at its apex while his 'ayyār and his

outlaw knight form the triangle's base. Although there is nothing unusual about the outlaw knight, Sa'dūn az-Zinji, the "'ayyār" is extraordinary in this case. Indeed, to designate a single name, we must call it the supernatural. The supernatural aspect found in this *sīra* fulfills the role that would otherwise be played by the character of the 'ayyār. When the hero has difficulties, it is usually the 'ayyār who helps him. When the hero Fayrūz was captured, for example, his 'ayyār liberated him. In the story of Sayf, this type of help is sometimes offered by Sayf's half-sister, the genie 'Āqiṣa. In other situations, Sayf calls on the genie 'Ayrūḍ. In both cases, the help they give is supernatural.

The graphic representation of this trio is:



The hero's enemies manifest the same pyramidal structure found in the heroic triangle, but with different characters. In *Sirat 'Antar*, the enemy triangle is composed of the primary enemy Ar-Rabī' Ibn Ziyyād; the future father-in-law Mālik Ibn Qurād; and the enemy knight is a series of characters, Al-Ḥārith Ibn Zālim, Dhu al-Khimār, Al-Asad ar-Rahiṣ.

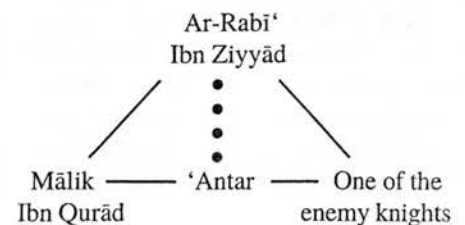
Ar-Rabī' Ibn Ziyyād is a typical primary enemy; he is a man of importance and represents the status quo. His hatred could be called ideological, rather than personal, his goal is to keep the hero Zīn in his place. In addition to ideological reasons, there may also be personal roots for the primary enemy's hatred; for example, in *Sirat 'Antar*, Ar-Rabī' Ibn Ziyyād wants to arrange a marriage between 'Abla and his own brother, although 'Antar hopes to marry this woman himself.

The future father-in-law's opposition to the hero is personal, based on a doubt of the hero's worthiness of his daughter's hand. As in the other *siyar*, the future father-in-law in *Sirat 'Antar* is a key element, continually present, tying the various adventures of the hero together into a single tale. Typically he is manipulated by

the primary enemy who makes use of the father-in-law's aversion to the hero to put his own schemes into action. He may suggest, for example, difficult or impossible tasks to the father-in-law who will then impose these on the hero as obstacles that must be overcome to prove the hero's worthiness of his daughter. Thus, although the father-in-law is not the hero's most ferocious enemy, he serves as a henchman to a much more fearsome character, the primary enemy.

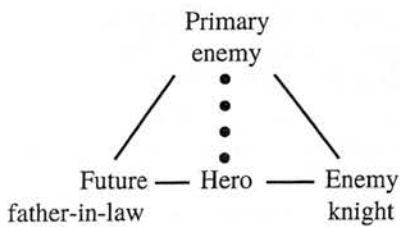
The third member of the trio, the enemy knight, contributes his physical prowess to the group. He is not a noble and honorable knight, but is distinguished by his penchant for treachery. He is jealous of the hero, and his hatred is fueled by this jealousy. When he has been captured or vanquished by the hero, he is capable of pretending to make peace to save himself and then turn around and attack the hero again, either directly or by attacking a member of the hero's family. The enemy knight may also align himself with other enemies of the hero, as we see, for instance, in the alliance between the enemy knight Dhu al-Khimār and Jabbār Ibn Ṣakhr in *Sirat 'Antar*.

As in the case of the heroic triangle, we can represent the enemy triangle graphically, although it does not present a noticeable difference in form from one *sīra* to another in the examples we are considering here. In *Sirat 'Antar*, Ar-Rabī' Ibn Ziyyād manipulates both the father-in-law Mālik and the enemy knight, who then work against 'Antar. In rare instances, Ar-Rabī' challenges the hero directly; this possibility is represented by the dotted line:



In the other *siyar* we are considering the relationships within the enemy triangle follow the same pattern:

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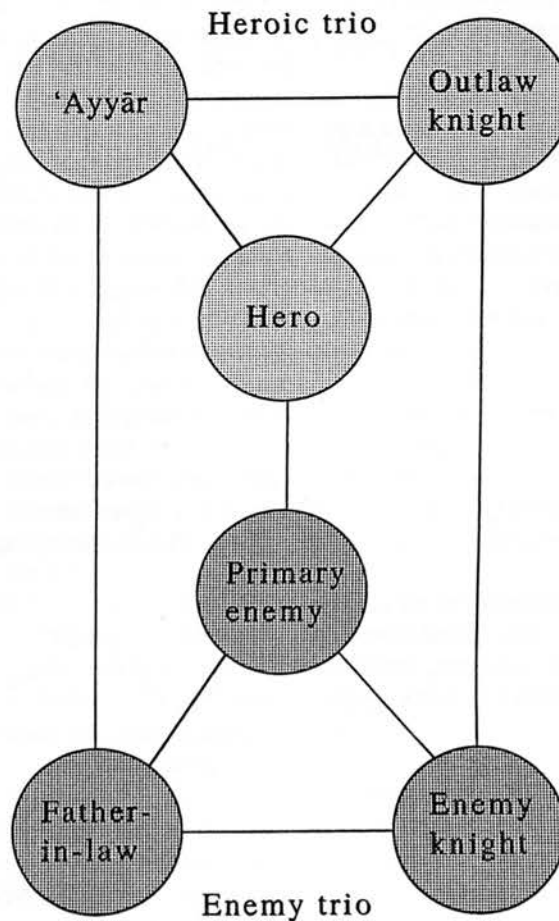
In *Sīrat Ḥamza al-Bahlawān*, the primary enemy Bakhtak works through the future father-in-law Kisra and the enemy knight Zūbin, who then oppose the hero Ḥamza. Again, it is not impossible for Bakhtak to find himself in direct conflict with Ḥamza.

In *Sīrat Dhāt al-Himma*, although the heroic triangle is typical, the enemy triangle does not conform as closely to the model, perhaps reflecting a change in social and governmental structures, as well as an emphasis in this *sīra* on the religious conflict between Islam and Christianity. The primary enemy 'Uqba works through the caliph Hārūn ar-Rashīd and a series of enemy knights, who then oppose the hero 'Abd al-Wahhāb. The caliph is not 'Abd al-Wahhāb's future father-in-law, but is presented as the "father" of the whole society. He is head of an empire, not the chief of a warring desert tribe. The enemy knights are motivated by: personal jealousy of the hero, a religious difference with him, and the influence of the primary enemy, who secretly works for the Christians while pretending in Hārūn ar-Rashīd's court to be an Islamic theologian.

In *Sīrat Fayrūz Shāh*, the primary enemy Tayfūr influences the future father-in-law Surūr and the enemy knight Tūmār to attack Fayrūz Shāh; once again direct confrontation is not totally excluded.

In *Sīrat Sayf*, the primary enemy is a pair of brothers, Sqardīs and Sqardyūn, but their influence on the father-in-law Afrāḥ and the enemy knight Sayf Ar'ad (himself a king who sometimes designates subordinate knights to play the role) may as well originate from a single character. The structure of the triangle is the same as explained above.

Finally, if we consider the relationship between the two triangular structures in the *siyar*, we can present them graphically as shown here:



In the heroic trio, the hero plays the central role, helped on the one hand by his 'ayyār and on the other hand by the outlaw knight. In the enemy trio, the primary enemy is the most important character, even though he remains behind the scenes most of the time. He is abetted by the father-in-law and the enemy knight who are the equivalents, respectively, of the 'ayyār and the outlaw knight. We have indicated these relationships by lines in the schematic representation, while the trios are represented by the black triangles. The members of the heroic trio are indicted by light colored circles while the members of the enemy trio are indicated by the darker circles.

We can see that the double pyramid is fundamental to the narrative structure. The multitude of characters and numerous digressions found in the *siyar* pro-

vide entertainment, but the stability of the underlying structure provides continuity. We mentioned in the introduction of this article that the roles rather than the individual characters are important, and we would like to emphasize that again here. A given character other than the hero can die or disappear, be replaced by another character who brings in his wake new secondary characters, different digressions, other stories, etc., without changing the role itself in any way. This structure provides coherence while affording the storyteller almost unlimited freedom to develop his narration.

Bibliographic Note: see next page

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Conferences and Symposia

**“The Heritage of Sasanian Iran:
Dinars, Drahms and Coppers of the Late
Sasanian and early Muslim Periods”:**

A Conference in Honor of William B. Warden, Numismatist (1947-2000)

June 8-9, 2001

The American Numismatic Society

at Audubon Place (155th and Broadway), New York, NY

Late Sasanian coins and their subsequent Muslim, Dabuyid and Hunnic imitations formed an important part of the monetary systems of late Classical and early medieval Iran. Late Sasanian coins became the pre-eminent silver coinage in the Near East during this period. The early Muslims in Iran and dynasts of northern and eastern Iran later copied these coins creating distinct provincial and inter-regional coinages. The coins today represent documents of social, political and economic life at a time of great cultural efflorescence as well as social and political change.

The conference will consist of a workshop where collectors and scholars of all levels may learn how to read or improve their abilities in reading the Pahlavi legends on these coins, a roundtable where collectors and scholars will discuss issues of common interest and coins if any wish to bring them in, and several panels of papers addressing various topics about these coinages.

The conference invites papers treating any aspect of the Late Sasanian and early Muslim coins of Iran as artefacts of civilization and culture. The topics of papers may be numismatic, historical or art historical. They may examine problems in the reading and interpretation of the Pahlavi and Arabic legends or the iconography, the representation of sovereignty, Zoroastrianism and Islam, or the production, use and regulation of these coinages.

Abstracts and / or queries about further information and registration should be sent by email to: sears@aucegypt.edu or by mail to: Dr. Stuart D. Sears, The American University in Cairo, Department of Arabic Studies, Box 2511, Cairo, Egypt 11511. Communications by E-mail are preferred.

ANNUAL MEETINGS

Organization	When and Where	Information	Telephone/Fax/Email/Web
Middle East Studies Association (2001 Meeting)	Nov. 17-20, 2001 San Francisco, CA [Paper Deadline: Past]	MESA Secretariat University of Arizona 1232 N. Cherry Ave. Tucson, AZ 85721	(520)-621-5850 mesa@ccit.arizona.edu www.mesa.arizona.edu
Middle East Studies Association (2002 Meeting)	Nov. 17-20, 2002 Washington, DC [Abstract Deadline: Feb. 15 2002]	see preceding	see preceding
Middle East Studies Association (2003 Meeting)	Nov. 6-9, 2003 Anchorage, AK	see preceding	see preceding
American Oriental Society (2002 Meeting)	Mar. 22-25, 2002 Houston, TX [Abstract Deadline: Oct. 31 2001]	American Oriental Society Hatcher Graduate Library University of Michigan Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1205	(734)-764-7555 www.umich.edu/~aos
American Historical Association (2002 Meeting)	Jan. 3-6, 2002 San Francisco, CA [Paper Deadline: Past]	American Historical Assn. 400 A Street, S. E. Washington, DC 20003	(202)-544-2422 www.Theaha.org
American Historical Association (2003 Meeting)	Jan. 2-5, 2003 Chicago, IL [Paper Deadline: Feb. 2002]	see preceding	see preceding
The Medieval Institute (2001 Meeting)	May 3-6, 2001 Kalamazoo, MI [Abstract Deadline: Past]	The Medieval Institute Western Michigan Univ. 1201 Oliver Street Kalamazoo, MI 49008-3851	Tel.: (616)-387-8745 or (616)-387-8717 Fax: (616)-387-8750 mdvl_congres@wmich.edu www.wmich.edu/medieval
College Art Association (2002 Meeting)	Feb. 20-24, 2002 Philadelphia, PA [Paper Deadline: Past]	Suzanne Schanzer 275 Seventh Ave. New York, NY 10001	(212)-691-1051 ext13 www.collegeart.org

ANNUAL MEETINGS

Organization	When and Where	Information	Telephone No.
International Medieval Congress (2001 Meeting) "Familia and Domus"	July 9-12, 2001 Leeds, UK [Paper Deadline: Past]	M. O'Doherty/J. Opmeer IMC, Parkinson 1.03 University of Leeds Leeds LS2 9JT, UK	Tel.: +44 (113) 233-3614 Fax: +44 (113) 233-3616 IMC@leeds.ac.uk www.leeds.ac.uk/imi/imc/imc.htm
International Medieval Congress (2002 Meeting)	July 8-11, 2002 Leeds, UK [Proposal Deadline: Aug. 31 2001]	see preceding	see preceding\
Dumbarton Oaks Conference (2001 Meeting) "Late Byzantine Thessalonike"	May 4-6, 2001 Washington, DC [Paper: Invitation only]	Dumbarton Oaks 1703 32nd St., N. W. Washington, DC 20007	(202)-339-6940 www.doaks.org
ARAM International Conference (2001 Meeting) "Palestinian Christianity"	July 16-18, 2001 Oxford, UK	ARAM The Oriental Institute Oxford University Pusey Lane Oxford OX1 2LE England	Tel.: 44-1865-514041 Fax: 44-1865-516824 aram@ermine.ox.ac.uk users.ox.ac.uk/~aram
ARAM International Conference (2002 Meeting) "Wine"	July 15-17, 2002 Oxford, UK	see preceding	see preceding
American Academy of Religion (2001 Meeting)	Nov. 17-20, 2001 Denver, CO [Paper Deadline: Past]	American Academy of Religion 1703 Clifton Rd., Suite G-5 Atlanta, GA 30329-4019	(404)-727-7920 aar@emory.edu www.aarweb.org/annualmeet
American Academy of Religion (2002 Meeting)	Nov. 23-26, 2002 Toronto, Canada [Paper Deadline: Feb 2001]	see preceding	see preceding
American Academy of Religion (2003 Meeting)	Nov. 22-25, 2003 Atlanta, GA [Paper Deadline: Feb 2002]	see preceding	see preceding

NEWS OF MEM

MEM Elects New Officers

At its annual business meeting, held November 16, 2000 in conjunction with the MESA conference in Orlando, Florida, MEM members elected a new President and Vice-President, to replace MEM's outgoing President, Jere Bacharach, and Vice-President, Margaret Larkin, whose terms expire December 31, 2000.

MEM's new President is Irene Bierman, Associate Professor of Art History at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Director of the Von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies. Professor Bierman received her B.A. degree from Harvard University. She then attended the University of Chicago, where she received her Ph.D. in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in 1980, with a dissertation on "Art and Politics: The Impact of Fātimid uses of *tirāz* fabrics." She then joined the Department of Art History at UCLA. In September, 1994, she was appointed Director of UCLA's G.E. von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies. Professor Bierman is especially interested in Art, Architecture, Archaeology, and Urban Studies. She has published *Writing Signs: The Fatimid Public Text* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). She has also co-edited two volumes: *The Warp and Weft of Islam. Oriental Carpets and Weavings from the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, 1978) and *The Ottoman City and Its Parts: Urban Structure and Social Order* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Caratzas, 1991).

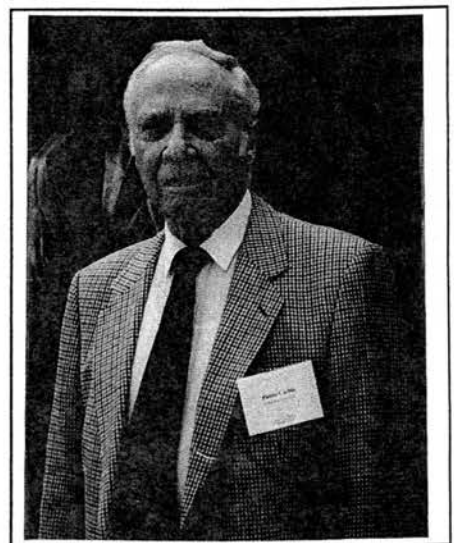
MEM's new Vice-President is Carl Petry, Professor of History at Northwestern University. Professor Petry received his B.A. degree from Carleton College in 1965. He then received his M.A., in 1966, and in his Ph.D., in 1974, from the University of Michigan. He joined the Department of History at Northwestern University in 1974. He has published: *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages: Social Autonomy and Political Adversity in Mamluk Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamluk Sultans al-Ashraf Qaytbay and Qansuh al-Ghawri in Egypt* (University of Washington Press, 1993); *Protectors or Praetorians? The Last Mamluk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power* (State University of New York Press, 1994). He is currently interested in: scholasticism as a profession; the institution of waqf endowments in Mamluk, Ottoman and Safavid states as aspects of comparative political economy; and crime and criminality in medieval Islamic societies.

Pierre Cachia Receives MEM's Lifetime Achievement Award

At the MEM business meeting, held at the annual MESA conference in Orlando, Florida, MEM gave a Lifetime Achievement Award to Prof. Pierre Cachia of Columbia University in recognition of his longtime interest in medieval Arabic literature and his work as mentor and teacher of many younger colleagues in the field of Arabic literature.

Professor Cachia treated those present at the meeting to a wonderful overview of just how much things have changed in the field of Arabic literature since he entered the field almost a half-century ago. He noted that at that time there were very few courses offered on modern Arabic literature; the emphasis then was definitely on classical Arabic literature. This situation began to change very rapidly in the 1970s, however, so that today one finds in the curricula of Arabic literature programs an overwhelming preponderance of courses devoted to modern Arabic literature.

After a few words on the etymology of the word "Arab" and the way it suggests a linguistic basis for group identity, Cachia noted that among the traditional literate elite of medieval Arabophone society, only the Classical Arabic idiom was considered a proper vehicle for literature; the notion of "folk literature" or literature in dialect would have been seen as an oxymoron. Classical or *badi'* literature emphasized stylistic sophistication and subtle plays on words by which members of the literate elite impressed



one another with their mastery of this elaborate system. Whether or not this kind of literature was marked by stagnation or superficiality, as some have suggested, remains a matter for debate, but there can be no doubt that this literary orientation isolated classical Arabic literature from the masses of the Arabic-speaking populace who did not belong to the literary or social elite.

Western scholarship, until recently, in a sense replicated this bias toward the elite literature and neglect of "folk" elements. It has been asked why, in classical Arabic literature, narrative fiction, the epic, and drama were so undeveloped? Cachia suggested that this might have been the case because these forms were associated with "folk art," and therefore deemed too base to be part of the literary canon. Several folk epics are known, such as *Sirat 'Antar* or *Sirat Bani Hilal*, and works such as the play of Ibn Daniyal are presumably the remnants of what was probably a much larger corpus of popular literature of this kind, most of which has unfortunately vanished. The assertion that true tragedy is unknown in Arabic literature, moreover, was challenged by Cachia as dubious.

Cachia closed his fascinating survey with a call for a greater interest in medieval Arabic folk literature in order to restore a more balanced view of the full range of the literary imagination and output of Arabic-speaking societies of premodern times.

MEMBER NEWS

Muhammad al-Faruque (Hoover Institution, Stanford University) presented a paper on "Abbasid Mission to Volga Bulgars: Was it a Religious or Trade Mission" at MESA 2000. His review of Sherman Jackson's *Islamic Law and the State* appeared in *Muslim World Book Review* 21, no.1 (2000). He has also reviewed the *Encyclopedia Iranica* 9/i-iii for *MELA Note* (2001).

Asma Asfaruddin (Notre Dame) edited the book *Hermeneutics and Honor: Negotiating Female "Public" Space in Islamic/ate Societies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) in the *Middle East Monograph Series of Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies*. She also published the article "In Praise of the Caliphs: Reconstructing History from the Manaqib Literature," *IJMES* 31 (1999): 329-50. Her article "Constructing Narratives of Monition and Guile: The Politics of Interpretation," is forthcoming in *Arabica*, and entry on "Garden" is forthcoming in the *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*. She also completed the article "The Ideology of Praise: Tracing Medieval Debates about Leadership in the Manaqib Literature," forthcoming in Paul Hardy, ed., *Muslim Tradition: New Perspectives on Hadith Literature* (London: IB Taurus, 2001). During the academic year 1999-2000, she was on leave mostly in Cairo, Egypt, where, as an ARCE fellow, she completed her book manuscript *Excelsior and Precedence: Medieval Islamic Discourse on Legitimate Leadership*, forthcoming from Brill. Currently

she is serving as a member of the editorial board of the *Dictionary of Islam* (editor-in-chief John Esposito), to be published in 2002 by Oxford University Press, and has contributed several entries to it.

James A. Bellamy (Emeritus, University of Michigan) has an article "Textual Criticism of the Koran" forthcoming in *JAOS* 121.1.

Robert I. Burns (UCLA) has prepared a new edition of *Las Siete Partidas* in 5 volumes published by the University of Pennsylvania Press. His recent articles include: "The 'Mudejars' of Sicily and Hungary," in *Sharq al-Andalus* 14-15 (1997-98): 97-99 [appeared in 2000]; "Muslims as Property: Slavery Episodes in the Realms of Aragon, 1224-1291," in *Sharq al-Andalus* 14-15 (1997-98): 57-75; and "King Alfonso and the Wild West: Medieval Hispanic Laws on the US Frontier," in *Medieval Encounters* 6 (2000): 79-98.

Mark R. Cohen's (Princeton University) article "What was the Pact of 'Umar?: A Literary-Historical Study," appeared in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 23 (1999): 100-157. His current research concerns poverty and charity in the Jewish community of medieval Cairo, and is based mainly on the Geniza documents. He is also at work on an on-line project, "The Princeton Geniza Project," which entails building a searchable, full-text database of transcriptions of historical documents from the Cairo Geniza. The project is supported by the Friedberg Geniza Project. The URL is HYPERLINK <http://www.Princeton.edu/~Geniza>.

Avner Giladi (University of Haifa) published *Infants, Parents, and Wetnurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications* (Brill, 1999); and has the entries "Children," "Family," "Fosterage," "Guardianship," "Lactation," "Orphans," and "Parenting" forthcoming in *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an* (Brill).

Besim S. Hakim (Independent Scholar/Consultant) has recently published: "Urban form in traditional Islamic cultures: Further studies needed for formulating theory," *CITIES*, vol.16, No.1 (February 1999), pp.51-55; "Reviving the rule system: An approach for revitalizing traditional towns in Maghreb," *CITIES*, vol.18, No.2 (April 2001), pp. 87-92; "Julian of Ascalon's Treatise of Construction and Design Rules from Sixth-Century Palestine," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol.60, No.1 (March 2001), pp. 4-25; Paperback edition of *Arabic-Islamic Cities: Building and Planning Principles* will soon be available from Columbia University Press - the US and Canada distributor for Kegan Paul International, London, UK. He is currently working on a project titled: Rules for the built environment in 19th century Northern Nigeria. Work in progress will be presented at the conference titled: Islam in Africa: A Global, Cultural, and Historical Perspective, April 19-22, 2001 at Binghamton University, Binghamton, NY.

Stephan Heidemann (Jena) edited *Islamische Numismatik in Deutschland - eine Bestandsaufnahme* (Jenaer Beiträge zum Vordern Orient 2), Wiesbaden, 2000, in which he has three articles. His article "The Merger of Two Currency Zones in

Early Islam: The Byzantine and Sasanian Impact on the Circulation in former Byzantine Syria and Northern Mesopotamia" appeared in *Iran* 36 (1998): 95-112. His "Ein Schatzfund aus dem Raqqa der Numairidenzeit, die 'Siedlungslücke' in Nordmesopotamien und eine Werkstatt in der Großen Moschee" appeared in *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 11 (2000). His "A new Ruler of the Marwanid Emirate in 401/1010 and further considerations on the Legitimizing Power of Regicide" appeared in *ARAM* 9-10 (1997-98); and along with Claudia Sode, "Christlich-orientalische Bleiseigel im Orientalischen Münzkabinett, Jena" in *ARAM* 12 (2000). His "Timur's Campmint during the Siege of Damascus in 803/1401" appeared in *Cahiers de Studia Iranica* 21 (2000) Matériaux pour l'histoire économique du Monde Iranien, ed. by Rika Gyselen and Maria Szuppe. He is serving as historian and numismatist for the excavation of the citadel of Aleppo under the direction of Wahil al-Khayatta and Kay Kohlmeyer. His Habilitation thesis concerns "The Renaissance of the Cities: Urban Development and Economic Conditions in al-Raqqa and Harran from the Period of Bedouin Domination (5th/11th c.) to the Seljuq Supremacy (early 6th/12th c.)."

Robert Irwin's *Night and Horses and the Desert: The Penguin Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature* was published as a UK paperback by Penguin in 2000. In the USA, it is published by Overlook Press. His article "Under Western Eyes: A History of Mamluk Studies," was published in *Mamluk Studies Review* 4 (2000); and his "Louis Massignon and the Esoteric Interpretation of Islamic Art" appeared in Stephen Vernoit, ed., *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collectors and Collections*, (London: I.B. Taurus, 2000). He is currently at work on a two volume history of *Orientalism*, as well as some shorter pieces on Mamluk history.

Stefan Leder (Universität Halle-Wittenberg) has recently published "Die Botschaft und das Wirken Mahomets in der Vorstellung Goethes" in *Oriens* 36 (2000). His "Helaklios uerkennt den Propheten. Ein Beispiel zur Funktionsweise islamischer Geschichtskonstruktionen"

will appear in *ZDMG* 151 (2001).

Gary Leiser: After being "in press" at *Türk Tarih Kurumu* since 1991, his translation of M.F. Köprülü's *Some Observations on the Influence of Byzantine Institutions on Ottoman Institutions* was published in Ankara in 1999. An additional recent publication was *A Brief History of Ankara*, written with Toni Cross, the director of the Ankara branch of ARIT, Indian Ford Press, Vacaville, CA, 2000. The latter, for which he was the publisher, was meant in part as a fund raiser for ARIT. Both works may be ordered from him at HYPERLINK mailto:gleiser@juno.com. Meanwhile, his translation, with Robert Dankoff, of Köprülü's *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature* continues in preparation.

Josef W. Meri (University of California, Berkeley) is completing work on two monographs: *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* will be published by the Oxford University Press as part of the *Oxford Oriental Monographs* series; and a study and annotated English translation of 'Ali b. Abi Bakr al-Harawi's *Kitab al-Isharat il Ma'rifat al-Ziyarat*. He has also produced a brief study and annotated translation of Ibn al-Hawrani's *Al-Isharat ila Amakin al-Ziyarat*, which will appear in the March 2001 issue of *Medieval Encounters* (Brill).

Alastair Northedge (UFR d'Art et d'Archeologie) was appointed Maître de Conférences, Islamic Art and Archeology, Université de Paris I, 1999. His article "The Ja'fari palace of al-Mutawakkil" appeared in *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 11 (1999): 345-64. He completed his habilitation dissertation, "Entre Amman et Samarra: l'archéologie et les élites au début de l'Islam (VIIe-IXe siècles)," at the Université de Paris I in October 2000.

James Pavlin (Rutgers) delivered a paper entitled "The Body-Mind-Soul Connection in Islam: the View of Ibn Taymiyya" at the 2000 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. His current research is a study of the 8th/14th century Salafis, e.g. Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, and Ibn Kathir, concerning their under-

standing of the *ruh* (spirit), *nafs* (soul) and *'aql* (intellect).

Paula Sanders' (Rice) chapter on the Fatimids appeared in the *Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 1 (1998). Her current research is on the invention of the medieval in Cairo in the 19th century. She will spend March 2001 as an invited professor at the Ecole des hautes Etudes en sciences sociales, giving a series of lectures on her current research.

Warren C. Schultz (DePaul University) is the new book review editor for Islamic and Modern Egypt for the *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, having succeeded Jonathan Berkey of Davidson College in that position. MEMBERS interested in reviewing books for *JARCE* are encouraged to contact him. His article "Mamluk Egyptian Copper Coinage Before 759/1357-1358: A Preliminary Inquiry," appeared in *Mamluk Studies Review* V (2001): 25-43.

Irfan Shahid (Georgetown) has completed work on the sixth volume of his series, "Byzantium and the Arabs." It deals with the monuments of the Ghassanids and the historical geography of the region. He is on sabbatical in Oxford until July 2001. His recently published articles include: "Miles Quondam et Graecus: Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae, xxxi.16.9," *Festschrift, Teubner, Leipzig* (1998); "Arab Christian Pilgrimage in the Proto-Byzantine Period," in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antiquity*, ed. David Frankfurter (Leiden: Brill, 1998): 373-99; the entries Tayyi, Tanukh, and Thamud for the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; "The Madaba Mosaic Map Revisited," in *The Madaba Map Centenary*, ed. M. Piccirillo and E. Alliata, *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Collectio Maior*, 40 (Jerusalem: 1999): 147-54; "Mu'allaqat" in *Late Antiquity*, ed. G.W. Bowersock, P. Brown, O. Grabar, (Cambridge: HUP, 1999): 594-5; "Fawatih al-Suwar: The Mysterious Letters of the Koran," in a volume on the Qur'an edited by Issa Boullata; "The Women of the Christian Arab Orient in the Roman and Byzantine Period," *Parole de l'Orient* (1999).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28.

Thematic Panel on Issues in Teaching and Research in Medieval Islamic Studies

At the Middle East Studies Association annual conference in Orlando, Florida, MEM sponsored a thematic panel discussion on "Issues in Teaching and Research in Medieval Islamic Studies" on November 19, 2000. This panel was conceived by Dr. Josef W. Meri and co-chaired by Dr. Meri and MEM President Jere Bacharach, and was attended by about fifty people.

After brief opening comments by the co-chairs, including a number of general points raised by Dr. Meri, five speakers made very short presentations designed to raise a particular issue, which was followed by a lively general discussion among all present. The five scheduled speakers were Richard C. Martin (Emory University), Stuart D. Sears (American University in Cairo), S. M. Ghazanfar (University of Idaho), Fred M. Donner (University of Chicago), and R. Stephen Humphreys (University of California, Santa Barbara).

Although it is unfortunately impossible to capture the sense of the general discussion, the text of the five formal presentations is provided below.

Introduction

by Josef W. Meri

Fundamental changes in teaching and research have left many of us wondering about the future role of medieval Islamic Studies in the Humanities curriculum at academic institutions in the West. (cf. J.W. Meri, "The Changing Face of Medieval Near Eastern Studies: Challenges and Strategies," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, Winter 1999, pp. 164-68, [HYPERLINK "http://w3fp.arizona.edu/mesassoc/Bulletin/meri.htm"](http://w3fp.arizona.edu/mesassoc/Bulletin/meri.htm)). Faced with diminishing funding and publishing opportunities, scholars have had to diversify, often beyond their area of expertise, in order to make their teaching and research accessible to non-specialists, or otherwise, have had to compose more marketable broad sweeping studies focusing on particular phenomena in the pre-modern and modern contexts, thus calling into question

the purpose and nature of scholarly inquiry. With respect to teaching at public and private institutions, two noticeable changes have occurred: first, an emphasis on the early-modern and modern Middle East, dictated in part by ever-changing public perceptions of the strategic importance of the Middle East and the Islamic world; second, a shift from classical and traditional training with an emphasis on mastery of Middle Eastern languages and the intensive reading of primary sources to interdisciplinary training, which emphasizes comparative approaches and methodologies.

Is it possible to reconcile the requirements of interdisciplinary and traditional training such that future generations of medievalists will obtain proper training without scholars and departments merely succumbing to what is fashionable, or to

institutional demands? What approaches, strategies, solutions and ideas can we as medievalists adopt to redefine the field in terms of the exigencies of teaching and scholarship in the 21st century?

One of the shortcomings of scholars of medieval Islamic Studies until recently was our inability to communicate effectively with colleagues at the geographical center of our scholarship -- the Middle East and the Islamic world. In a 1994 essay on "Orientalism and Medieval Islamic Studies," Richard Bulliet called for a reevaluation of the relationship of North American and European academies to their counterparts in the Middle East and Islamic world by urging our academies to strive for a more horizontal relationship as exists between European and North American institutions. Especially important is reaching out to traditional scholars and

engaging them in a dialog meant to familiarize each side with the diverse methods and approaches to scholarly inquiry concerning issues of common interest.

Medieval Islamic and Near Eastern Studies are no longer regarded as the "other medieval" which exists at the periphery of Medieval European Studies. Indeed, Middle East medievalists have become increasingly active in such organizations as the Medieval Academy of America and have become more visible at annual international Medieval Studies conferences at Kalamazoo, Michigan and Leeds in the United Kingdom.

More importantly, we have made significant strides toward addressing these issues among ourselves. On November 19, 2000, a thematic conversation panel on "Issues in Teaching and Research in Medieval Islamic Studies" was convened by Jere Bacharach and Josef Meri at Orlando, Florida at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association. This panel marks a new beginning toward promoting a fruitful exchange among historians and scholars of religion and literature and is the first time in the history of the field that Middle East medievalists have come together on this scale to promote dialog about various issues which they confront in teaching and research and to propose strategies and solutions and exchange ideas. With nearly 60 participants from North America, Europe, and the Middle East in attendance, the two-hour conversation was a success. The discussion focused on the following issues: 1) Language training, 2) Interdisciplinary and comparative approaches, 3) Nationalistic interpretations of pre-modern history and

the projection of ethnic labels and identities, 4) Interpreting and analyzing texts, 5) Outreach, 6) Multiculturalism and teaching, 7) Communication within the field, and 8) Primary sources in translation.

The discussants were: Richard C. Martin (Emory University), Stuart D. Sears (American University in Cairo), S.M. Ghazanfar (University of Idaho, Moscow), Fred M. Donner (University of Chicago), and R. Stephen Humphreys (University of California, Santa Barbara).

Richard Martin offered a historian of religion's perspective of the institutional changes that have occurred in the field over the past four decades and argued for the need to balance rigorous language training and the institutional demands of course requirements so as to best serve future generations of scholars. Stuart Sears discussed the challenges of teaching Islamic history in a multicultural classroom to students with little or no background in history and suggested adopting a multifaceted thematic approach, which incorporates the use of narrative and other elements to engage students. Through an economist's vantage point, S.M. Ghazanfar explored changing perceptions toward Islamic civilization in the academy and demonstrated the need to reorient current thinking about the relationship of Western to Islamic intellectual traditions and strive for a more inclusive discourse. Fred Donner adopted a novel approach to the problem of nationalist-ideological-based scholarship which projects modern national identities and ethnic labels unto pre-modern history by sensitizing us to the importance of carefully interpreting history through defining

ethnic groupings and affiliations. Finally, Stephen Humphreys revisited the problem of teaching texts to sing by emphasizing the need to be sensitive to the context and intended audience of primary sources without merely imposing theoretical interpretations upon them. He highlighted the uneasy relationship between text and interpreter.

We hope that the revised discussant position statements reproduced below will serve as a basis for further promoting dialog among our colleagues throughout the world.

The thematic conversation will resume at MESA San Francisco in November 2001 with a focus on publishing and the Internet in teaching and research in medieval Islamic Studies. The discussants are Marigold Acland (Cambridge University Press), Richard W. Bulliet (Columbia University), Patricia Crone (Institute for Advanced Study), Fred M. Donner (University of Chicago), R. Stephen Humphreys (University of California, Santa Barbara) and Julie S. Meisami (Oxford University). We hope that you will join us. Further details about MESA and the upcoming San Francisco conference are available at the MESA web site: [HYPERLINK "http://w3fp.arizona.edu/mesassoc/"](http://w3fp.arizona.edu/mesassoc/).

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the MESA 2000 discussants for making this panel a success: Richard C. Martin, Stuart D. Sears, S.M. Ghazanfar, Fred M. Donner, and R. Stephen Humphreys as well as to our co-session leader Jere Bacharach.

Issues in History of Religions Approaches to Medieval Islamic Studies

by Richard C. Martin

This panel convenes with a sense among its members that historical and textual scholarship in medieval Middle East Studies is in a state of rapid change if not crisis.

Contributing to that perception are such factors as the downward glide in Federal support for Area Studies. As Federal monies diminish, Middle East centers are having to approach reluctant deans and pro-

voists not only for Area Studies, but in particular for Medieval Studies. Another factor is the assault on Orientalism over the past century. In 1977, most scholars trained as I was in Middle Eastern languages hesi-

tated to apply the term "Orientalist" to themselves because most of us knew that we could never command the languages and texts that a Joseph Schacht or a Helmut Ritter did or more recently, a Josef van Ess does. Two years, or one year and one book later, virtually all younger career scholars trained in the tradition of Orientalism eschewed the label and distanced themselves from the previous generation of scholars whose sunna they no longer wished to be seen following. Twenty-five years ago, MESA commissioned Leonard Binder to conduct an analysis entitled, *The Study of the Middle East: Research and Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences*. The dilemma raised by the varied structure of the study -- individual academic disciplines reporting on the state of Middle East Studies within their disciplines -- was set forth in clear terms in Binder's introductory essay. Are theory and method within discreet academic disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences the necessary tools for valid scholarship? Or is it language study but narrow and deep specialization in Middle Eastern Studies that provides the most acceptable training? This is the old problem of discipline versus area studies.

Another challenge to Middle East Studies and by implication Middle Eastern Medieval Studies came in the mid-1980s with the formation within the Social Science Research Council of a new Joint Committee on the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies. Although the focus of the Joint Committee was on post-colonial developments in Islamic societies viewed comparatively, globally, the influence on curriculum and development in modern comparative studies was manifested in the limited capacity for most departments and programs to withstand the new directions and still retain breadth and depth in medieval and classical studies, as Josef Meri has so cogently stated. In addition to these fiscal and epistemological shifts, as Steve Humphreys and others have pointed out, information technology is revolutionizing the way we do business as teachers and publishing scholars. We return to the question -- How shall we respond to these challenges? What moves can we make in Middle East Studies that will highlight the continuing importance of Islamic and

Middle Eastern medieval studies in the contemporary university curriculum to the training of scholars? Are there any choices other than sticking our heads in the sand in hoping that all these dislocations will disappear, on the one side, and completely focusing scholarship and training on the modern globalized concerns of the education establishment and funding agencies inside the beltway? In recent papers and conferences, I have tried to make a case for comparative medieval studies and comparative historical studies, tracing aspects of modern Islamic thought back to early and medieval schools of problem. And I would be happy to discuss my efforts in other areas of comparative studies as the discussion takes shape later. In the few remaining minutes allotted to me -- since comparative studies and mention of the modern period are seen by many in our group as the problem and not the solution, I must first say a word about my training because it's a kind of icon, I think, of the problem that many of us face. Then I will briefly describe a productive consortium arrangement in Islamic religious studies in the Southeast United States.

I am a historian of religion. One implication of my academic identity is that I have two sorts of training; I wear two hats. In fact, this week is an example of that. I am here in Florida for three days at the Middle East Studies Association and then I fly to the American Academy of Religion in Nashville. So the context of this intellectual splurge is between Disney World and the Grand Ole Opry. To put the matter more bluntly, because of this kind of schizophrenia, I play myself up both sides of the divide between Area Studies and Medieval Islamic Studies on the one hand, and interdisciplinary and comparative studies on the other. From 1967-70, I did graduate work in History of Religion at Princeton Seminary and Princeton University, specializing in Arabic and Islamic Studies, which for all practical purposes meant Middle Eastern Studies. Doing History of Religions primarily with a protestant seminary faculty turned out not to be my cup of tea, particularly in light of the demands of language and Area Studies -- Arabic, Syriac, and Greek in my case and seminars in Middle Eastern Studies towards which I was gravitating.

So I left the seminary and after a year's interim in the Orientalische Seminar at the University of Tübingen and a half year in Cairo, I began a four year doctoral program as an advanced student at N.Y.U. specializing in Mu'tazili texts. As completion of my dissertation approached, in the winter and spring of 1975, there were few opportunities for people with my skills. There were, however, a handful of jobs in religious studies departments that typically, in those days, advertised for someone who could teach world religions and who specialized in one or another Middle Eastern or Asian religious traditions. This was known fondly in Religious Studies in the 1970s as "the rest of the world position" that many Bible-chaired Christian Studies oriented departments were beginning to open up.

Twenty-five years later the situation has improved immensely for historians of religion who specialize in Islamic Studies but who also know a second religious tradition well enough to teach it at the Undergraduate level and who have some training in method and theory in Religious Studies. In the first place, such scholars exist in respectful numbers. They are being trained in growing numbers in doctoral programs in Religion where language and textual study is also available from Middle Eastern Studies and Area Studies programs. This year one of my students is being interviewed at AAR for five different positions. And he has an edge on many applicants, one could argue, because in all of these positions in religion departments, they are asking for comparative understanding and training in eastern traditions. On the other hand -- and this is the real point I want to make -- many of these younger scholars, such as the student I just referred to, are drawn to the study of Islamic theology, law and history in greater depth than requirements for comparative studies would seem to allow. Even when their projects focus on more contemporary or comparative topics, the students I have worked with have wanted more seminars on medieval Islam and reading courses in kalam, fiqh and historical texts. At Emory in our Comparative West and South Asian Religions Doctoral Program, we have had to cut back on the number of required issues-oriented seminars to allow our stu-

dents more opportunity to study Arabic, Persian, Hindi and/or Sanskrit and related text reading courses or tutorials.

Lastly, I will briefly mention an innovation that started four years ago. We established with Duke University and the University of North Carolina graduate programs in religion a consortium called, "The Carolina-Duke-Emory Institute for the Study of Islam" (CDEISI), (see [HYPERLINK "http://www.unc.edu/depts/cdeisi/events.htm"](http://www.unc.edu/depts/cdeisi/events.htm)) which combines in ways that we hope become more practical as we move along, opportunities for our graduate students to spend a semester at one of the other universities. This enables students to work with a scholar who has an area of expertise closer to that student or in a field that student needs for his or her

training. And that has actually begun to pay off. We are also exchanging faculty each semester between Emory and the Research Triangle area in North Carolina, thus enriching the network that's available to our graduate students and to ourselves as faculty. So, one answer to Josef Meri's observation about the problems that he mentioned in his article about cutting back on Arabists and other Middle Eastern specialists, is that we have to be proactive and try to expand beyond the borders of our own departments and programs in this electronic age in order to bring more resources together.

So I close by admitting that I am still a schizophrenic. My own experience as a mentor to graduate students is that they and I recognize the need for in-depth study

of language and texts more than many doctoral programs now allow for training. On the other side, the study of Islam is no longer the narrow interest of a handful of Title VI Centers. Our colleagues in medieval European studies, gender studies, comparative historical studies and many other fields are gravitating toward the study of Islamic civilization in ways that we first perhaps, had not even thought of. It is their own interests that are bringing them there. Our students will build careers in intellectual environments in which they will have more conversation partners than many of us have had, or even thought we needed. It behooves us then to take that reality seriously in our training and preparation of our students, including those in medieval Islamic Studies.

Teaching Islamic History in the 21st Century

by Stuart D. Sears

The teaching of Middle East and Islamic history is increasingly beset with the problems and challenges of a multi-cultural and technology orientated world. Successful teaching strategies must more than ever before establish the relevance of history, communicate effectively and develop skills in critical thinking in addition to imparting basic knowledge. This is important when one considers what training and resources will be needed to teach Islamic history in the future. My experience teaching Middle East and Islamic history at The American University in Cairo has greatly influenced my views on these issues.

AUC requires a one-semester Survey of Arab History for all undergraduates. The primary aim of the Survey is to stimulate interest in and understanding of Middle East history among students who have limited knowledge and probably will never take another history class. Engaging

students in thinking critically about this history is perhaps a more important goal than imparting basic knowledge.

The course is an important part of the AUC's Core Curriculum. It serves to fulfill the bi-cultural mission of the institution. Most AUC students have graduated from international schools or special science programs where history requirements are reduced or waived so they have had little or no Middle East history when they enter. While most students are Egyptian, many have lived abroad for extended periods of time and attended schools outside of Egypt for at least part of their education. Many lack a strong cultural affinity to Egypt. The survey is also intended to develop skills in communication and critical thinking. AUC has created in recent years many new programs in technical and professional fields such as business administration, engineering and computer science. While AUC once established its reputation

on its humanities curriculum, majors in the new technical and professional fields have come to far outstrip those in the humanities. Students in these majors, consequently, often have special needs to develop skills in reading and arguing critically and writing effectively which are not met in their other classes.

Faculty in charge of the Survey of Arab History have developed a variety of approaches in teaching the class. In general, they emphasize learning about historical processes rather than mastering content. Each professor is encouraged to experiment thoughtfully in the organization of his or her class. Meetings once or twice a semester are opportunities for colleagues to exchange notes and offer suggestions. The faculty have long since resisted suggestions by administrators and others to standardize the curriculum and to teach from a single textbook.

One professor, Dr. Michael

Reimer, teaches the course backwards; that is, he begins with the modern history of the Middle East and works backwards to the early Islamic period. This approach emphasizes the relevance of historical development by beginning with what is most familiar to students. Carefully planned questions lead the student back into history. For example, if the Arab world became adamantly opposed to Western imperialism, why didn't it develop a similar attitude toward the Ottoman Turks who preceded the Europeans? This then naturally leads the discussion from the 20th century to the 16th to early 20th centuries when the Ottomans largely controlled the Arab world.

Other professors have used works of historical fiction in addition to textbooks. This approach engages students through creative narrative. Once students realize that an author is using his imagination to weave historical elements into a narrative, they are much more willing to make connections themselves between any set of facts and to synthesize their own interpretations. Amin Maalouf's *Leo Africanus*, for example, deftly unifies for the student the otherwise fragmented social and political terrain of the late medieval Mediterranean world. Students once reading this narrative are often also capable of imagining bases for inter-dependence and interaction in the Middle East for other periods lacking social and political unity.

I have, in turn, organized my course in roughly chronological and thematic units relying on primary source readings in translation and short interpretive readings. The students read no textbooks. This approach is useful in teaching students to critically examine historical paradigms. Without the cues of chronology or the authoritative narrative of a textbook, they have to "think about" rather than "recite" history. The thematic organization makes possible broad historical comparisons. Under the rubric of "Piety," for example, students compare the biography of a Christian saint such as St. Daniel the Stylite with selections from Ibn Hisham's *Life of the Prophet*. In this way, they begin to understand the concept of Holy Man as a unique response to social crisis in Late Antiquity and early Islam. In a unit on "Cross-Cultural Encounters," students compare and contrast the different experiences of the Seljuq, Crusader and Mongol penetrations of the Middle East. They learn in this way to consider different models of cross-cultural contact. The thematic units also offer possibilities for teaching across the curriculum. A unit on "Long-distance trade," for example, can appeal to those majoring in business or economics. A unit on "Government," might appeal to a Political Science major, and so on.

The experience of teaching this survey raises the question of the adequacy of current resources for teaching surveys on Middle East and Islamic history gener-

ally. The AUC student body is not unlike the multi-cultural technology-oriented students bodies that increasingly make up US campuses. The teaching strategies for the university's survey classes are similar to those in use on US campuses today or probably in the future. The experience of its teachers, however, suggests that current textbooks do not satisfy these diverse teaching needs. Given the many different ways these classes are organized, the choice of textbooks is very limited. Very few textbooks are available. Pre-modern history is treated cursorily in one of the two textbooks used by our teachers. Readings in translation, in addition, are in short supply. While some anthologies have appeared in recent years, these tend by nature to fit the particular pedagogical visions of their editors but not necessarily the teacher in the classroom. More translations are thus needed of basic works from which teachers may assign selections.

It may be a useful purpose of this thematic conversation to identify ways historians can teach more effectively. This will go long way toward making Middle East and Islamic history more relevant on our campuses. If so, our conversation needs to address the training and resources needed to reach pedagogical goals as they are currently and practically defined. This means taking stock of the way teachers are teaching especially in survey classes where our largest audience is found.

Medieval Islamic Studies: The Intellectual 'Gaps'

by S. M. Ghazanfar

I. SOME BACKGROUND

It seems appropriate to provide some contextual background for the present forum. In the wake of the Cold-War politics, the U.S. government adopted a "Cultural Relations Policy," whereby several research/academic groups emerged in the 1950s --

Middle East Institute, Ford Foundation, Rand Corporation, and others. Their key focus was to enhance national security by understanding and containing the "contending forces in the Near-East: Communism and Islam."

Then the Middle East Studies Association was established in 1967 with

the objective of stimulating discussion on all aspects of the Middle East since the rise of Islam and from the viewpoint of the social sciences and humanities. However, the first MESA President Morroe Berger (Princeton) dismissed the region as "not worth studying -- region is not a center of great cultural achievement, nor likely to

become one ... also not of any political significance... does not warrant much scholarly attention." On the other hand, a 1976 MESA study on "Islamic Studies," with the background of the 1973 Middle-East crisis and the oil-embargo, came to a different conclusion, "we must study the region ... important to us politically -- in our national interest" Given this environment, some elite universities established academic programs to generate specialists for the diplomatic/intelligence corps and for private businesses interested in the Middle East. Many thought of this educational response by the post-war new global power as shallow.

Thus, at least till recently the main stimulus to Islamic/Middle-Eastern studies has been "hegemonic," i.e., containment and dominance, or, as Edward Said would see it, "orientalistic" -- about what it has been for centuries, even during the medieval centuries (something Said failed to explore in his *Orientalism*). The "Islamic problem" has never quite disappeared. And ten years after Said's path-breaking book, the editors of the *Review of Middle Eastern Studies* (1988), after examining the subject, "argued that despite the efforts of many ... it is not clear yet that there has been any marked improvement in the overall standard of the work." For the most part, "the Middle East is still represented, rather than being allowed to represent itself" (see Rex Bryman, "The State of the Art in Middle Eastern Studies," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Fall 1986).

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS/DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

Let me state that while I am not a medieval historian, my roots are Islamic. And my recent research focus has some relevance to the present topic. I must hasten to note that in recent years one does indeed observe some openness to Islamic Studies and some shift away from the "establishment" approach. Several related academic programs are emerging in the country and numerous faculty positions are being recruited (many with scholars of Islamic background). A distinct example is the recently-announced research program at the University of Oklahoma, "Scientific Exchanges Between Islam and Europe:

The Making Of The Modern World 1300-1800," funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. I suspect increasing population diversity has something to do with it; also the post-Communist "civilization clash" theme has stimulated much debate. Having said that, my experience at professional forums and attempts at publishing suggests there is still much greater need for dispassionate inclusiveness.

Now a few words about my own recent explorations, having to do with economics but relevant to the present discourse. As an undergraduate a few decades ago, history of economic thought was one of my passions; but like most undergraduates, written word was hardly to be questioned, so I accepted a section in late Joseph Schumpeter's *History of Economic Analysis* (1954), entitled, "The Great Gap." He argued that as far as intellectual history was concerned, nothing significant (especially in economics) took place anywhere during the 500 years prior to St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). About 15 years ago, however, curiosity led me to discover the absurdity of this theme, though it persists unchallenged. This is what I call a "literature gap" in my field; about every book I know begins with the Greeks, then jumps to the Latin-Scholastics.

Precisely during these "blank" centuries, however, there were numerous Islamic scholastics who wrote extensively on economic issues and whose writings penetrated various Latin-European scholastics, including St. Thomas Aquinas. My focus has been on the origins of economic thought in the Islamic world during the early-medieval centuries. Briefly, I find just about the same concepts and notions that one finds with subsequent European scholars -- Aquinas, Canitllon, Hume, Adam Smith and others: voluntary-market exchange, division of labor and specialization (interestingly, Ghazali, 1058-1111 A.D., talked of the same "pin factory" illustration that emerged with Adam Smith eight centuries later), evolution of money, notions of demand-supply, hierarchy of economic activities and needs, trade among regions, ethics of market behavior, etc.

I submit there is a gold mine to "discover" in other fields as well. From my observations, there exists a "literature gap" in other fields -- be it mathematics, medi-

cine, chemistry, astronomy, geography, etc. Not that there isn't any mention of the Arab-Islamic precursors in those fields; but any references are typically remote, exclusionary, even offensive. The emphasis is on the Greeks and then Europe, as though the medieval Islamic world, having rediscovered the Greek reservoir, simply kept it in storage and then at the appropriate moment, passed on the package untouched to Latin-Europe. I submit the prevailing paradigm, deeply rooted in historical antagonisms, tends to be quite rigid and there is institutionalized resistance to change; in the words of Said, "learned ignorance" tends to be perpetuated. It is such resistance that compels the Yale iconoclast, Maria Rosa Menocal, to ask, how can our basic reading lists for the budding medievalist/historian "include Aquinas and Augustine but not include Ibn Hazm and Avicenna," and Norman Daniel to talk of "the cultural filter in acquiring knowledge from an alien source considered to be tainted."

Furthermore, there is the legacy of Islamic heritage that penetrated Latin-Europe and served as the "turning point" for not only Europe's 12th-century Renaissance but also served as stimulus for subsequent Reformation and Enlightenment. According to late Etienne Gilson (the French philosopher), "reason" came to Dark Europe from the Islamic world, recognized not only by numerous early-medieval Latin scholastics (Abelaard of Bath, Roger Bacon, and others) but also by numerous medievalists. Yet, the mainstream literature barely touches upon such civilizational "knowledge-transfer" linkages; if it does, it is a footnote. The essential point is that much of our literary history, while inextricably linked with the Islamic world, tends to be heavily "Eurocentric." It is this sort of "gap" in Islamic Studies that was a major reason for the 1998 UN General Assembly Declaration of "2001 as the Year of Civilization Dialogue."

Clearly, teaching and research in Islamic studies must become more inclusive; some paradigmatic adjustments and revisionism seem eminently in order and long overdue.

III. POSSIBILITIES AT THE ACADEMIC LEVELS

Well-known scholars of Muslim-Christian relations, such as John Esposito of Georgetown University, have argued for "rehabilitative" efforts in our knowledge of Islam and Islamic history. There is need for a genuine intellectual accommodation, one based on the realization that despite our differences and our history, there is a common Judeo-Christian-and-Islamic heritage, and that Islam is not a "foreign" or Middle-Eastern religion any more than Judaism and Christianity. The failure of our educational system to generate awareness of these facts and our media's distorted presentation of Islam and Muslims have obscured realities. Thus, Islamic studies must be re-oriented. At least three dimensions, in terms of content, style, and tone, are important: (i) presentation of Islam as a religion, a *din*, historically and contemporaneously; (ii) coverage of Islam as a civilization, especially during its golden-age, including the intellectual contributions that evolved from that civilization; and (iii) linkages between early Islam and Latin-Europe, in terms of stimulating Western Renaissance and Enlightenment. After all, such revisionism concerning the Islamic past is critical to understanding and explaining contemporary Islam and Muslims. And for all of this, I submit, there must be scholars who are more than medieval Islamists. It is important that they must also have the background of Islamic culture, for, without that background, they are likely to be perceived as "outsiders

both in time and culture," possibly arousing suspicion about their scholarship (see Richard Bulliet, "Orientalism and Medieval Islamic Studies," in John Van Engen (Editor), *The Past and Future of Medieval Studies*, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana; 1994).

But how does this happen? Workshops/forums for teachers at all levels, curricular changes (especially the liberal arts), faculty development efforts, new and/or refocused undergraduate/graduate programs, re-oriented textbooks, etc. The graduate schools? As a colleague remarked recently, "trained as a medievalist, he knew absolutely nothing about Andalusia ... the graduate education of Western medievalists does not include things Arabic and Islamic." Thus, there must be re-orientation of those who "run" things, those who are at the gates. And, then what about acceptance in the professions at large? Research, publications, etc.? The incentives, the rewards? The fact is that when survival is the key, professional pressures require conformity with the status quo. So re-orientation of the paradigm is not easy - status quo is deeply entrenched.

IV. POSSIBILITIES IN THE GENERAL PUBLIC ARENA

Similar re-orientation concerning the Islamic world, past and present, must take place with the public at large, but especially with the media -- for obvious reasons, for that is where opinions and images are formed and become influential in matters of public policy. Numerous examples

can be cited, but one stands out. In November 1998, *Time* magazine published a special issue on the "History of Medicine;" a time-line is presented, starting with Hippocrates and Galen, then jumping to 13th century's Roger Bacon, without a word about Muslims who contributed much to the medical science in the intervening centuries. Typically, it is either Greek or Europe -- not much in between; no intellectual history elsewhere! Numerous similar mishaps can be cited.

In the general public perceptions, Islam continues to be viewed as the "hostile other," and Muslims as "ultimate others," the "generic terrorists," about like the Jews and other groups used to be viewed. And part of the responsibility lies with how "Islamic Studies" has been done in the past. Unlike with other groups, such perceptions of Muslims/Arabs continue to be "politically correct" and durable, thanks to Hollywood and other "utilitarian" image-makers. Especially through the cyberspace resources of informational technology, ample opportunities for the academic profession and others exist to counter such stereotyping. However, first there must be the strength of convictions in the mainstream community of scholars whether the efforts are worthy of pursuing. Meantime, scholars with Islamic roots continue to wonder whether the liberal tradition of Western education is flexible enough to accommodate the Islamic heritage that was historically instrumental in shaping that tradition.

Modern Nationalism and Medieval Islamic History

by Fred M. Donner

The origins of the nationalist idea and the history of nationalist movements the world over have become well-established fields of study. Like other historians, specialists on the Middle East have spent much time on this theme, writing extensively on the

beginnings of Arab nationalism, Zionism, Turkish nationalism, Armenian nationalism, Kurdish nationalism, and so on. Such studies whether focused on the national idea in the Middle East, in Europe or elsewhere, make it amply clear that national identities are not natural phenomena, but

rather historical/cultural constructs.

However, European historiography (including that on the Middle East) was dominated for much of the nineteenth and well into the twentieth centuries by nationalist interpretations. That is, it assumed the validity of a conceptualization

that saw national identity groups (and sometimes "races") as enduring natural phenomena. In the Middle Eastern field, this took the form of distinctive nationalist interpretations of various medieval phenomena; a striking example was the tendency to see the "Abbasid revolution" as an uprising of the "Persian nation" or of the "Iranians" against "Arab domination."

While for the most part, recent historical work has moved beyond such crude nationalist interpretations, the residue of such concepts still seems to me to prevail in some parts of our field. In particular, I perceive a problem of projecting modern national identities, such as that of "Arabs," back into the medieval period.

The most obvious evidence, or trace of this, is the persistence of the term "the Arab conquests" to refer to the expansion of the early Islamic state in the Near East. Related to this is the tendency to designate the political institutions or actions of the early caliphate as "Arab." So we have not only an "Arab conquest," but also the "Arab empire," "Arab armies," "Byzantine-Arab relations," "Arab taxation," an "Arab policy of expansion," and so on. The untutored observer can be forgiven for concluding from these terms that there was in fact, a group of people, who could be identified and identified themselves simply as "the Arabs" already in the seventh century. The question is whether there is any evidence for such a collective identity in this period.

It is not merely a quibble to my way of thinking to insist that we say for example, "Arabian," rather than "Arab," to identify someone or something that has a certain geographical origin, or to insist that we say "Arabic," rather than "Arab" when speaking of certain linguistic phenomena. Nor is it splitting hairs to insist that "Muslim" (or, if one prefers, "proto-Muslim" or some other formulation) be used instead of "Arab," when speaking of matters relating to religion. For the indiscriminate use of the term "Arab" -- a term so closely intertwined with modern conceptions of national identity that it is difficult for most of us to understand it in any other way -- carries the risk of blinding us to non-nationalist categories of explanation that might be in play in the historical context of earlier times; for the seventh century, the

obscuring of religious explanations in particular.

The impact of this blinding process can be seen even in the way primary sources are sometimes handled. The Arabic sources, as most of you know, speak only occasionally of the Arabs for this early period, using in most instances terms like "Muslims," or "the Muslims" or "believers" or the names of particular subgroups, tribal groups (e.g., Quraysh, Tamim) or of political or other groupings (e.g., "Ansar," the "Muhajirun").

The non-Arabic sources -- Greek, Syriac and so on -- having been written mainly by outsiders to what I like to call the "Believers' movement," are more likely than the Arabic sources to resort to broad collective designations when speaking of the people in it. "*Sarakenoi*" (Saracens), "*Ishmaelites*" (sons of Ishmael), in Syriac "*Tayyaye*," or "*Agarenoi*" (Hagarenes) in Greek, or "*Mhaggraye*" in Syriac, (Hagarenes or Muhajirun?) are among the most common of these terms and account for the overwhelming majority of such usages. There are two facts about this that I find striking, maybe more than two. First, none of these terms is a cognate to the word "Arab," (which as we noted the Believers themselves seem to use as a self-designation only rarely). Second, few of these terms -- the main exception being the Syriac "*Mhaggraye*" (evidently related to Arabic "*Muhajirun*") -- reflects a term that the early Muslims/Believers used to refer to themselves.

The truly astonishing thing to me, though, is that many modern scholars, even in recent years, feel free to translate these terms simply as "Arabs." So, for example, a key passage from the important work of Thomas the Presbyter (ca. 640), which refers to the "*tayyaye d-Mhmt*," is rendered by one author as "the Arabs of Muhammad;" and translations of "*Mhaggraye*" or "*Sarakenoi*" as "Arabs" are not infrequent. In such cases, the translator's internalization of a sort of nationalist based conceptualization of social groupings has shaped the way he/she has translated the original Syriac or Greek terms. And, by adopting such a translation, the translator in turn helps to reinforce or perpetuate in the minds of the rest of us, and particularly in the minds of the unwit-

ting non-specialist who trusts the specialist to "get it right," the notion that the nationalist terminology is appropriate and that it is, therefore, "natural" to speak of "Arabs" in the seventh century. But this tends then to distort the record, disguising what appears to me to be the powerful current of religious ideology associated with early Believers' movement and putting in its place a suggestion or hint of some kind of nationalist motivations. So the Islamic conquest and Believers' movement become the "Arab conquests."

The evidence on "Arabs" is, of course, not quite so simplistic as my preceding brief presentation suggests. We know that the term "*arab*" did exist in Arabic from an early date, and that it was, apparently, used as some kind of ethnic or cultural identifier. This is a subject that has never been properly explored, but that needs much more careful study, by someone who is thoroughly trained in philological method and has an interest in socio-linguistics. (Is anyone looking for a dissertation topic?) But I am pretty confident that the Arabic word "*arab*," whatever it meant in the seventh century, was not a term that articulated a broad collective identity that had significant political or religious content. Perhaps, just perhaps, it acquired some of that political force for the ruling elite of the empire, most of whom hailed from Arabia, as a consequence of the experience of empire. But to assume that such a collective identity was the cause of the movement that created the empire -- to speak, in other words, of an "Arab conquest" -- is at the very least to put the cart before the horse, if it is not to invent the cart completely.

Much the same kind of argument could be made, I suspect, for other modern-nationalist collectives that are commonly imported into our discourse on earlier times: "Persians," "Turks," "Kurds," "Berbers," etc. Each of these cases needs to be examined on its own, but in general I think we must strive harder to attain a kind of conceptual shift or change of perception when dealing with the premodern Middle East. We cannot hope to understand the history of the medieval period if we insist on describing it by using crude nationalist designations that only came into existence many centuries later.

Conversations with the Past

by R. Stephen Humphreys

My teaching and writing tend to spread all over the map, and over the years I have tried to think of some way of thinking about this that can bring it all together and make it seem coherent and purposeful. In recent years, I have come to regard what I do as entering into a conversation -- sometimes a real two-way conversation with the living, but more often (since I am a medievalist) a conversation with those not present, a conversation that was never meant to include me at all. In such conversations, our partners are not persons but texts, and of course these texts represent only the debris of actual conversations. What we have is what is on the paper, no more; somehow we have to get beyond the scratches on the page and recover, so far as we can, the living milieu which produced those scratches. We cannot do that if we look at these texts as isolated objects, as so many separate puzzles to be solved one at a time. On the contrary, we have to see them as produced and reproduced as pieces of a continuous debate and discussion.

Sometimes these discussions take place among people living at the same time and place -- ninth-century Baghdad, thirteenth-century Damascus, fifteenth-century Samarqand. But more often they are discussions that stretched out over decades and centuries, across the whole Dar al-Islam. The earliest participants continue to be an integral part of things, actual participants whose words must be taken seriously. Their statements and arguments are memorized, transmitted, absorbed, reshaped by the constant travel of scholars and writers, by a very active book trade, by the need to show that one's own opinions are solidly grounded in an unbroken tradition of knowledge and understanding. That is why we have all those isnads, after all, and why isnads are not add-ons or window-dressing, but 'of the essence.' But even

without isnads, others beside the author are always present in these texts; however silent they may seem, they are the ones who provoked the author to write in the first place. It is easy to see that in vitriolic disputations, where an author's allies and opponents are explicitly named, much harder in the case of calm, Olympian texts that simply claim to state self-evident truth (e.g. al-Mawardi's *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya*) or to lay out the facts objectively utterly without parti-pris (e.g., al-Tabari's *Ta'rikh*).

The problem for us is that the people who composed these texts, who used them as one way (not the only or always the most important way) to embody their ongoing conversations and debates, were not speaking to us at all. They could not imagine in their worst nightmares that people like us would ever exist. They totally ignore us. If we want to be part of their conversations, we have to figure it out for ourselves; we have to slip into the circle, sit quietly, listen, and hope that ultimately it will all begin to make sense. (For me, it is rather like sitting on a bench in the Luxembourg Gardens and eavesdropping on the chatter all around, most of which is a pleasant but perfectly opaque buzz.) And of course the other conversationalists will never acknowledge us or even know that we are there.

What is the value of this approach to the texts? It reminds us of the character of historical studies, which -- to my mind -- typically tries to achieve two goals. First, historians should want to allow the subjects of their inquiry to speak for themselves, or at least to act as honest and faithful interlocutors between them and a modern audience. That goal requires very high skill in the art of making oneself an invisible listener, someone who can not only hear the 'voice' of the text before him but can also pick up the 'voices' of those with whom the writer of the text is engaged

-- in short, someone who can reconstruct a conversation.

But historians are seldom content to be transcribers, however astute and sensitive. They also want to pursue a second goal, which is to place these conversations in a broad interpretive context, most often a context which their subjects were unaware of and would probably have found unintelligible. This sort of analysis may draw on contemporary social or literary theory, or it may focus on questions of change and development. It is an essential part of understanding, because it is the only way that we can connect the words and deeds of the past with our own. But it inevitably imposes anachronistic structures on the events of the past, and not least on the sorts of conversations that we are trying to grasp. If one does, for example, a feminist analysis of seventh and eighth-century Arabic poetry, that can be a very valuable exercise, but it has absolutely nothing to do with the way that the people of that time and place understood the poet's craft or social role. So we have to be very careful about the manifold ways (some very subtle, almost unnoticeable) in which modern concerns can displace, distort, or mask the conversations that we so desperately need to hear.

I propose here simply what I have tried to do in my own work and in my teaching -- that we start with the self-effacing task of listening to our texts, leaving modern theory and modern concerns aside until we are pretty sure we have understood what these people were saying to one another. It is no simple matter, and on some level we will always wind up missing the point. On the other hand, to grasp these centuries-old conversations represents an enormous expansion of our own understanding, because they only really make sense when we have searched out the conceptual and theoretical frameworks in and through which they took

place. The words of others cease to be chatter and become meaningful discourse only insofar as we have entered into the world of meaning in which they were spoken. And apart from the pleasure and satis-

faction of knowing that we know what al-Jahiz and his contemporaries were up to, these 'worlds of meaning' have a real utility for us, because they give us a fresh standpoint from which to view and assess

the theories and concepts about the past and about human societies which we commonly use so naively and uncritically.

Conferences and Symposia

Exploring the Frontiers of Islamic Art and Architecture **A Symposium Organized by the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture** **Massachusetts Institute of Technology May 18-19, 2001**

In recent years, art and architectural historical focus has shifted from intracultural to intercultural study. Long established geographic, historical, religious, and cultural boundaries are no longer easily accepted as disciplinary boundaries. In fact, terms such as boundaries, frontiers, limits, and area-studies are being critically questioned as analytical and methodological tools. More research is being conducted in the overlapping spaces where empires, cultures, traditions, or even styles meet and exchange ideas, views, beliefs, peoples, and practices, and, in the process, create art and architecture.

The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at MIT is organizing a symposium to explore artistic and architectural transformations on the Islamic frontiers: territorial, conceptual, and cultural. The symposium will gather together scholars who are engaged in investigating topics pertaining to its theme, such as the emergence of an "Islamic" artistic culture from the Classical Mediterranean, Iranian, and Hindu-Buddhist cultures, the role of various European, Asian, and African cultures in the articulation of Islamic visual expressions, the rejection and/or cultivation of past experiences in contemporary creativity, and esthetic values which transcend their cultural settings. Invited scholars will present their research in the context of Islamic history. Every presentation will be followed by a discussion period. The symposium is open to all. Graduate students in particular are encouraged to attend and take active part in the discussion. The symposium will take place at MIT on the 18 and 19 of May, 2001. The final program will be available in late February.

For further information please send email to akpiarch@mit.edu, or call 253-1400.

Symposium organizer:
 Professor Nasser Rabbat
 The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture
 MIT, Room 10-390
 Cambridge, MA 02139.

Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean

by Stephen Album

The Heberden Coin Room at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, England, has begun the publication of combined sylloge-style catalogues of its own collection of Islamic coins together with the massive collection of Samir Shamma, which has been loaned to the Museum from 1994 to 2004. It is expected that the entire series, consisting of ten volumes, will be completed between 2000 and 2005 or 2006. The two collections together comprise more than 18,000 coins, but in order to save cost and delays, excessive duplicates and poor quality specimens are to be omitted from the sylloges, resulting in a total publication of close to 14,000 specimens in all, each one carefully described and handsomely photographed. Also omitted are Ottoman coins of all periods and modern machine-struck coins. The ten proposed volumes are described in the following list, which also indicates (when known) the approximate number of coins, the dynasties included, and the author. Volumes preceded by * are currently available, and are accompanied by the current US dollar price. The proposed title of each volume is also noted.

Volume 1 — *The Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period* — 'Arab-Sasanian, 'Arab-Hephthalite and 'Arab-Byzantine coins. The volume is nearly completed and includes about 740 coins. The joint authors are Stephen Album and Tony Goodwin. Unlike other volumes, extensive introductions have been written for both the Arab-Sasanian and Arab-Byzantine coinage. Each of these introductions are anticipated to be the most significant historical analyses of these coinages thus composed. Expect in late 2001.

Volume 2 — *Early Post-Reform Umayyad and Copper 'Abbâsid Coinage* — Umayyad precious metal and copper coins, together with early 'Abbâsid copper, in all some 1500-1600 pieces. No author has yet been selected. No date of publication assigned, hope for in 2005/2006.

Volume 3 — *Early 'Abbâsid Precious Metal Coinage (Until 218 AH)* — This work and volume 4 are based primarily on the Shamma collection, for the 'Abbâsid coinage was always his favorite. This volume will include about 1850-1900 coins. Author not yet selected; date of publication unassigned. It is hoped that both this volume and volume four will be published no later than 2005/2006.

Volume 4 — *Later 'Abbâsid Precious Metal Coinage (from AH 219)* — Like the last, neither author nor date of production is as yet determined. About 1600-1650 coins will be included.

Volume 5 — *The Islamic West to 1069 AH* — Coinage of al-Andalus and the Maghrib, following the end of the Umayyad and 'Abbasid coinage in those regions, about 850 coins. Author is to be Stephen Album, with completion expected by the end of 2001 and publication no later than the Spring of 2002.

Volume 6 — *The Egyptian Dynasties* — Including the Tûlûnid, Ikhshîdid, Fâtimid, Ayyûbid and Mamlûk dynasties, about 1500 coins. Authored by N. Douglas Nicol, with publication anticipated in early 2002.

Volume 7 — *The Nearer East to 656 AH* — Saffârid, Ziyârid, Buwayhid, Hamdânid, Kâkwayhid, 'Uqaylid, Marwânid, Great Seljuq, Rûm Seljuq and minor dynasties of the Caspian region and Armenia, with a total of approximately 1100-1150 coins. Tentative author is Stephen Album, with publication expected in 2004.

Volume 8 — *The Further East to 656 AH and Later Central Asia* — Sâmânid, Qarakhânid, Ghaznavid, Khwârizmshâh, Ghûrid and related minor dynasties, together with later coins of the Golden Horde, Girây Khâns, Shaybânids and Manghîts, in all about 850 coins. The author is Boris Kochnev, with publication predicted to occur in 2003.

Volume 9 — *Later Iran: Coinage after the Mongol Conquest* — Mongols, Îlkhâns, Tîmûrids, Safavids, Qâjârs, Durrâns, Bârazâyis and related lesser dynasties, including a total of just over 1840 coins. Author is Stephen Album, with publication to be completed approximately May 2001.

*Volume 10 — *Arabia and East Africa* — All types of mints in Arabia and East Africa from the 2nd/8th century until late in the 13th/19th century, totaling about 730 coins. Composed by Stephen Album and published in 2000 (\$60).

REVIEWS • OF • BOOKS

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REVIEW POLICY

Members of MEM are invited to submit reviews of recent books in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Hebrew, or other Middle Eastern languages that they have read and that deal with subjects of interest to MEM's membership. In exceptional cases, reviews of books in English or other European languages will be printed, but the main focus will be books in Middle Eastern languages, because generally these are not reviewed in Western journals. *Al-'Usur al-Wusta* relies on the voluntary submission of reviews because review copies of books in Middle Eastern languages are not usually made available.

Reviews should be brief, 250 words or, if possible, fewer. A short note is sufficient in many cases, as it serves the main purpose of bringing a worthwhile work of scholarship to the attention of MEM members who may be interested in the subject it treats. Be sure to include full bibliographical information: full name of author, full title, place and date of publication, publisher, and number of pages. Send reviews directly to the editor.

Tharwat 'Ukasha, *al-Qiyam al-jamāliya fī al-'imāra al-islāmīya* [Aesthetic Values in Islamic Architecture] (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1994). 448 pages.

The author, Tharwat 'Ukasha, is a prolific Egyptian writer and translator of more than fifty books on the art, literature, and culture of Islam, Europe, and the ancient world. His book *al-Qiyam al-jamāliya fī al-'imāra al-islāmīya*, "aesthetic values in Islamic architecture," belongs to a now well-established genre of art historical scholarship that valorizes the aesthetic and perennial aspects of Islamic art over its historical and cultural dimensions. This approach, which is especially favored by scholars and architects of Arab or Muslim background -- including Titus Burckhardt, S.H. Nasr, Nader Ardalan, and the Farouqis -- espouses an essentialist approach based on some fundamentalist or esoteric knowledge of Islam that emphasizes the concept of unity in Islamic art.

Although this book generally falls within the perennialist camp, it is also

informed by earlier archaeological and orientalist scholarship and by a French formalist sensibility, as seen in the writings of André Malraux and Henri Focillon. These unreconciled intellectual influences contribute to a curious mishmash of general aesthetic principles, a vague theory of Islamic aesthetics, and a kind of regional aesthetic, particularly of Egyptian and Iranian art. Furthermore, these aesthetic theories are uncomfortably juxtaposed against a functional classification of monumental types and a selective chronological discussion of famous monuments in the Islamic world.

Despite these objections, there is much to recommend this book, including its beautiful writing, its unbiased coverage of monuments from the entire Islamic world, and its superior black and white photographs, mostly taken by the author himself. As someone who has struggled with art historical writing in Arabic, I can attest to 'Ukasha's excellent writing and vivid descriptions. In fact, I can recommend this book as a manual for anyone interested in correct, or at least acceptable, Arabic terms for artistic and architectural elements and concepts. Indeed, the author's exceptional command of Arabic and of Persian is clearly displayed on pages 300-301, which contain an Arabic translation of a fifteenth-century Persian poem by an anonymous Sufi poet. As for coverage, the book discusses and illustrates architectural monuments from India to Spain, although Egypt, Safavid Iran, and Ottoman Turkey receive special emphasis. Finally, the photographs, particularly for an Arabic publication, are quite astonishing. They are uniformly sharp, well-printed, and shot from interesting angles. Unfortunately, their high quality is not matched by the color illustrations nor especially by the architectural drawings at the end of the book, which are copied from various published sources.

- Yasser Tabbaa

Riyāḍ Dabliz, *Riḥlah Siyāḥīyah bayna Ma'ālim Tarābulus al-*

Athariyah [A Touristic Journey Among the Archaeological Monuments of Tripoli] (Tripoli: the Author, 1997). 207 pages.

This well-printed hard-bound book about the Mamluk and Ottoman monuments in Tripoli, Lebanon, is intended for a non-academic general public. While it has only a brief text, the book is worth knowing about for its over 200 color photographs (most of them full A4 size). The photographs show both general views and details of the major public monuments: the citadel, the various mosques, madrasahs, hammams, and khans, as well as some views of alleyways in the old quarters of the city. The book has only a few line drawings of building elevations, but no plans.

The fact that the photographs are in color is especially valuable, given the glass mosaics in the Mamluk Burtasi Mosque, and the multi-colored stone coursing that characterizes many of the building facades and mihrab niches.

- Robert Schick

Lubnān al-Jawfī [Liban Souterrain] (Nashrat al-Jam'iyah al-Lubnāniyah lil-Abḥāth al-Jawfiyah / Bulletin du Groupe d'Etudes et de Recherches Souterraines du Liban - GERSL. No. 5 March 1998).

It might seem improbable that the publications of the Lebanese spelunking society would be of interest to Middle East Medievalists, but number 5 (1998) of their bulletin is devoted to the study of the caves and rockshelters that the medieval Christians in Lebanon used as monasteries and hermitages.

The issue contains 29 articles, some of them only a couple of pages long, describing a number of the medieval cave monasteries in the Qadisha Valley of northern Lebanon, the heart of Maronite territory. Numerous line drawings and color

REVIEWS

photographs accompany the articles. All of the articles are in Arabic, except for one in French on the Ethiopian monks in the area in the medieval period.

Also in that issue is an Arabic summary of the discoveries in the cave of

'Āṣī l-Ḥadaṭ, published by the society in 1994 as *Momies du Liban*. In that cave were found eleven naturally mummified bodies, with associated well-preserved textiles and other finds, of people who had died while hiding in that inaccessible cave from

the Mamluk conquest of the Crusader territories of northern Lebanon in 1283.

- Robert Schick

MEMBER NEWS FROM PAGE 16.

Deborah Tor (Harvard) won the MEM award for best paper by a graduate student on a medieval topic delivered at the 2000 MESA conference for her "Historical Representations of Ya'qub b. al-Layth." Her article "An Historiographical Re-examination of the Appointment and Death of 'Ali al-Rida" appears in *Der Islam*, vol. 78, no. 1 (2001). Her article "Toward a Revised Understanding of the 'Ayyar Phenomenon" will appear in the *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Iranian Studies*. An attendee of the 1999 ANS summer seminar, she delivered a numismatic talk on the ANS panel at the May 2000 International Medieval Congress at Kalamazoo. She is continuing to work on her dissertation on 'ayyarun/

futuwwa.

William Tucker (University of Arkansas) continues his work on ghulat millenarism and on a catalogue of natural disasters, 600-1500.

D. M. Varisco's (Hofstra) "Islamic Folk Astronomy" appeared in *Astronomy Across Cultures: The History of Non-Western Astronomy*, ed. Melaine Selin, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishing, pp. 615-650.

Rachel Ward (Independent Scholar) recently published "The Baptistère de Saint Louis - a Mamluk basin made for export to Europe," in *Islam and the Italian Renaissance*, edited by N. Mann and A. Contadini, London: Warburg Institute, 1999, pp. 113-32; and "Augustus Wollaston Franks and

the Display of Islamic art at the British Museum," in *History of Islamic Art History: Collectors, Collections, and Scholars 1850-1950*, edited by S. Vernot, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, 2000, pp. 105-16. She is currently at work with Susan La Niece on the Catalogue of Metalwork from the Arab World in the British Museum, and with Anne Farrer on the catalogue and exhibition of the new Asia House in London, opening in November 2002.

Negin Yavari (Columbia) published "Conversion Stories of Shaykh Abu Ishaq al-Shirazi," in *Conversions: Christian and Non-Christian*, ed. Guyda Armstrong, *International Medieval Institute* (7), Brepols, 2000.

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GRAPHICS CREDITS

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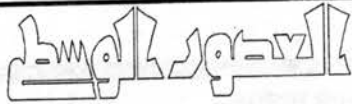
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