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AL-'USUR AL-WUSTA

THE BULLETIN OF MIDDLE EAST MEDIEVALISTS

Manuscripts in the Collection of the Ahqâf Manuscripts Library in Tarim, Hadramawt, Republic of Yemen

by Eng Seng Ho

In the summer of 1991, I visited southern Yemen to explore possibilities for dissertation research, and spent a few pleasant days at the Ahqâf Manuscripts Library in Tarim (*Maktabat al-Ahqâf li'l-Makhtûât bi-Tarim*). Tarim is an old center of learning and one of the major towns in the region of Wadi Hadramawt; the latter enjoys renown in Swahili East Africa, island Southeast Asia and parts of India for its Shâfi'î scholars. As a result of the scholarly proclivities of its urban population and the economic success of its emigré sons, a number of private libraries were established in Hadramawt in the period 1850-1950. Due to a lack of printing presses in the area up till recent times, many books were reproduced manually. This accounts, in part, for the number of manuscripts to be found here today, many of which are of a relatively recent vintage.

The Ahqâf Library was opened in 1972. Its holdings were assembled by the socialist government from private collections in the region and established as a *waqf* institution. The manuscripts were separated from the printed books and deposited in the central mosque (*masjid al-jâmi'*) in 1977. This is where the manuscript library is located today, in an independent wing on the second floor of the southeastern corner of the

mosque. The library of printed books is housed in a separate building in the main square of Tarim. The keeper of the manuscript library (*amin al-maktaba*) is Mr. 'Alî Sâlim Sa'îd Bukayr, a son of the previous qadi, who is a knowledgeable and gracious man.

The Collection

The manuscript library contains some three thousand bound volumes, comprising over four thousand separate works.

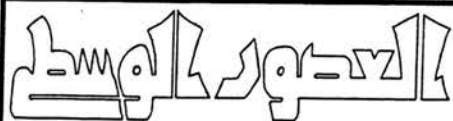
SEE TARIM, PAGE 2.



Mosque in Tarim, 1992

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Middle East Medievalists

Middle East Medievalists (MEM), founded in 1989, is a professional non-profit association of scholars and organizations interested in the Islamic lands of the Middle East during the medieval period (defined roughly as 500-1500 C.E.). MEM's main objectives are to encourage scholarship on the medieval Middle East and to foster lines of communication among its members.

Regular membership in MEM is open to scholars and students of all nationalities interested in any aspect of the history and civilization of the Middle East in the medieval period. Annual membership dues are currently US \$12.50. Those wishing to become members of Middle East Medievalists are invited to send a check for \$12.50, payable in U.S. dollars and made out to "Middle East Medievalists," to Paul E. Chevedden, Secretary-Treasurer of MEM, 31 Washington Square North, Salem, MA 01970, U.S.A.

The Board of Directors of MEM is elected annually at the general business meeting, normally held in the fall at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association. The Board of Directors for 1992 consists of the following members:

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Member: Abbas Hamdani, Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, WI, 53201, U.S.A.

TARIM, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.

The collection is especially rich in works of local interest, such as Hadrami interpretations in *fiqh*, *fatāwā*, genealogies, biographies and poetry (composed by Hadrami authors between 1508 and 1934). To give a general idea of the nature of the collection, a table of the holdings by subject category is given below (Table 1). This is the order in which the books are classified and stored; each manuscript is identified by its number within that category.

The majority of the works in this collection are from the seventeenth century (C.E.) or later, but the collection does contain a number of texts of potential interest to medievalists. Only a few of these can be noted here, to give an example of the library's contents:

(1) 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Ahmad [Muhammad] al-Asadī (d. 415/1025 or 416), *Sharh al-usūl al-khamsa*. (The author is called "al-Hamadhānī al-Astarābādī" in Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* S I/344 [Henceforth GAS]). GAS is not clear on existence of manuscripts of this work.

(2) An early (5th century H.) copy of part 8 of the *Iklīl* of al-Hamdānī (d. 334/945).

(3) A copy dated 741 H. of 'Umar b. 'Alī b. Samura al-Ja'dī's *Tabaqāt fuqahā al-Yaman* (compilation completed in 586/1190; 4 other Mss. known to GAS).

(4) An 8th or 9th century H. copy of the *Mir'āt al-jinān wa 'ibrat al-yaqdān fī ma'rifat hawādith al-zamān...* of 'Afīf al-Dīn 'Abdullāh b. As'ad b. 'Alī al-Yāfi'ī (d. 768/1366). GAS lists many other manuscripts of this work, but their relationship to this early copy needs to be clarified.

(5) A relatively early copy (dated 633/1235) of part II of the *Qānūn* of Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1036).

(6) A copy dated 837/1433 of Nāsir al-Dīn al-Tūsī's *Tahrīr...Uqlīdis*.

(7) Many collections of *fatāwā* or legal opinions by various jurists, which can be valuable sources of historical and social information; most of these date from the 10th/16th century or later, but several are earlier, such as one by a certain al-Habbānī or al-Hibbānī who is said to have died in 834/1430.

Films and Catalogues

A number of missions have visited the library to microfilm manuscripts. The Soviet Academy of Science spent two months in 1974 on a microfilming project. The *Ma'had al-Makhtūtāt al-'Arabiyya* sent a mission in 1976 which filmed 297 rare manuscripts in various fields, and another in 1982 which filmed a further 394 manuscripts. (A list of the latter was published by 'Isām Muhammad al-Shantī in *Majalla ma'had al-makhtūtāt al-'arabiyya*

TABLE 1

Subject	No. of MSS	% of Total
Commentary (<i>al-tafsīr</i>)	183	6
Law (<i>al-fiqh</i>)	725	24
Language and belles-lettres (<i>al-lughā wa'l-adāb</i>)	287	9
Medicine (<i>al-tibb</i>)	34	1
Anthologies (<i>al-mujāmi'</i>)	340	11
Hadīth (<i>al-hadīth</i>)	281	9
Mysticism (<i>al-tasawwuf</i>)	960	31
History and Biography (<i>al-tārīkh w'al-siyar w'al-tarājim</i>)	170	6
General Knowledge (<i>ma'ārif 'amma</i>)	81	3
TOTAL	3061	100

27 [1983], 681-748.) Sets of these microfilms are supposed to exist at the National Library in Aden. There, they also have a handwritten list of their collection of microfilms of Yemeni manuscripts procured from the major Western libraries (Ambrosiana, Berlin, British Museum, etc.). They possess microfilm cameras and readers, but no duplicating equipment and presently no money for film, etc.

Several catalogues of the material in the Ahqâf library exist:

- 1) There is in use within the library a mimeographed set of four volumes. Three volumes constitute a list of holdings categorized under the subjects given in Table 1. Within each category, they are listed alphabetically by title. Each entry provides information on the title, author, date of author's death, date of manuscript copy, identification number and original owner. The fourth volume is an author index.
- 2) A card catalogue of 4325 entries has been prepared, though it does not seem to have been printed yet. On each card is the following information: title, author, date of death, beginning of text, end of text, date of manuscript copy, type of script, name of copyist, number of sheets, physical dimensions of text, number of lines per page, name of original family collection, manuscript number within that collection. The name of the reference used to check the author's date of death is provided. There are plans to organize the cards following the system used by the *Ma'had al-Makhtûât al-'Arabiyya* and to publish them in book form.
- 3) A catalogue of microfilmed manuscripts entitled *Maktabat al-Ahqâf li'l-Makhtûât* has been published by the Yemeni Centre for Cultural Research, Say'un (Hadramawt) Branch. The catalogue contains a brief history and description of the library, a sample list of 77 rare manuscripts dating from the tenth to the twentieth centuries A. D., and a list of 589 manuscripts grouped under the names of the private collections from which they were obtained. Each entry gives reference number, title, author, date of death, and date of manuscript copy.

The unification of Yemen in 1990 has meant that localities long inaccessible to most scholars are now readily visited. This includes Tarîm, and it is to be hoped that medievalists visiting Yemen will make the effort to explore more fully the manuscripts in this collection.

Changes in *Al-'Usur al-Wusta*

Beginning with this issue, *al-'Usur al-Wusta* will include several new regular features. These include: (1) A section devoted to reviews of recent books in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and other Middle Eastern languages dealing with subjects on the medieval Middle East. As these books are not usually reviewed elsewhere, this feature should be of significant value to MEMbers as they strive to keep abreast of recent work in their particular areas of interest. (2) A series of "MEM Scholar Profiles" dedicated to sketching briefly the work and careers of noteworthy scholars in the Middle East. Like the reviews, these should provide a way of familiarizing MEM members with the work of their colleagues in the Middle East. (3) A section entitled "Ideas, Methods, Issues" that will contain a short article dealing with some current debate in our fields of study, designed both to inform and, especially, to get us thinking more actively about the matters raised. (4) Other brief articles, particularly on resources (e.g., manuscript collections) and on localities/archaeological sites of interest. (5) An "MEM Bulletin Board" on which MEMbers can post very brief notices to see if other members might have some specific references of interest to them in their research. (6) Starting with the next issue, *UW* will also include a "Pioneers" section, offering a brief biographical sketch of some key figure in the development of our various fields of study. This should help to create a keener awareness of the intellectual origins of our trade. *'UW* will continue, of course, to provide MEM members with information on recent and upcoming conferences relevant to the interests of MEM, as well as other news items.

Starting with this issue, *Al-'Usur al-Wusta*'s subtitle has been changed to "The Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists" (rather than "The Newsletter of Middle East Medievalists"), because bibliographers in most libraries tend to treat newsletters as ephemera—that is, to discard them. Given *Al-'Usur al-Wusta*'s increased content, however, it no longer deserves to be classified as ephemera, and it is to be hoped that libraries will file it in their permanent collections for future reference (MEMbers are hereby urged to ask their libraries to subscribe to *'UW*!). The enu-

meration of issues has also been adjusted by designating this issue "Volume 4, Number 1" (rather than Volume 3, number 2). This change creates the anomaly of a Volume 3 with only one number (Fall, 1991), but it has the advantage of making volume numbers synchronous with calendar years—that is, Volume 4 is now the volume for 1992, not for 1992-93 as it would have been under the earlier enumeration. This will make citing issues of *'UW* easier; it also makes the volumes of *'UW* synchronous with MEM membership, which runs by calendar years.

Finally, the appearance of *'UW* has been completely overhauled. *'UW* is now being produced on a Macintosh® computer using the Aldus® PageMaker® program, and is set mainly in 10-point Times font. Unfortunately, efforts to utilize a font that accommodated a full range of diacritical marks have not yet been successful, but it is hoped that this problem can be resolved in the near future. The editor wishes to thank The Oriental Institute of The University of Chicago and its Director, Professor William Sumner, for important technical assistance in realizing these changes. Particular thanks are due to Dr. Thomas Holland, head of the Institute's Publications Office; to Tom Urban and Richard Schoen of the Oriental Institute's publications office for their assistance and advice in learning PageMaker; to John Sanders of the Oriental Institute's computer laboratory for a great deal of computer assistance; to Professor Janet H. Johnson and the Oriental Institute's Demotic Dictionary Project for initiation in the use of the optical scanner; and to Charles H. Jones of the Oriental Institute Research Archives for helpful advice.

The only drawback of these extensive changes is that *'UW*'s increased bulk increases significantly the cost of printing it and mailing it out to the membership. **MEM can no longer afford to send *Al-'Usur al-Wusta* to everyone on its mailing list regardless of whether or not they have paid their dues to MEM. If you have not yet paid your dues of \$12.50 for 1992, please do so or you will not receive the next issue of *'UW*.**

Comments and suggestions for change or improvement are welcomed and should be sent directly to the editor.

• IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS •

An Art Historian's Ruminations on Wansbrough's Method

by Estelle Whelan

EDITOR'S NOTE: The works of John Wansbrough on the Qur'ân and the early Islamic religious tradition, particularly his books *Qur'anic Studies* (Oxford, 1977) and *The Sectarian Milieu* (Oxford, 1978), have generated a great deal of controversy since their appearance a decade and a half ago. They have been the subject of a lucid article by Andrew Rippin, "Literary Analysis of *Qur'ân*, *Tafsîr*, and *Sîra*: The Methodologies of John Wansbrough," in Richard C. Martin (ed.), *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies* (University of Arizona Press, 1985), pp. 151-163. Wansbrough's basic theses—that the Qur'ân did not crystallize as a textual canon until the second century A.H., and that early Islamic history is so shrouded in a dogmatic and theological fog that we will never be able to reconstruct it—have been avidly embraced by some, and roundly denounced by others, but no consensus on the viability of his method or conclusions has yet emerged. The following essay offers an unusual perspective on this continuing controversy.

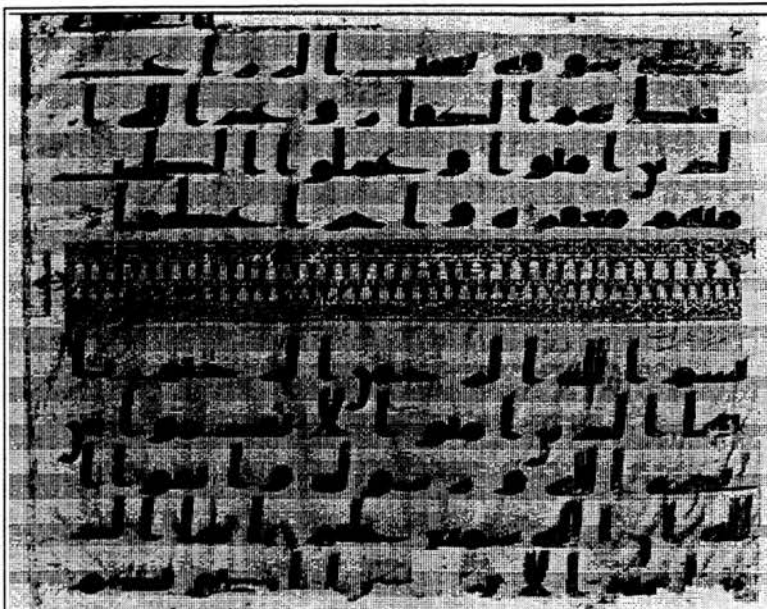
The art historian who reads John Wansbrough's *Qur'anic Studies* and *The Sectarian Milieu*, and the very useful summary and description of the methods and conclusions of those works provided by Andrew Rippin, can hardly escape a feeling of *déjà vu*. In the preface to his work on the Qur'ân text Wansbrough asserts that his aim is "a structural analysis...a systematic study of the formal properties of scriptural authority...."

Art historians are not unfamiliar with analysis of formal properties, a basic tool of their trade and the focus of much of their professional training. The discipline itself was founded in the eighteenth century by German scholars interested in the rich European heritage of classical monuments, particularly sculpture. The basic method developed by them and their successors over the next century and a half consisted of close analysis of visually accessible features, usually divided into two categories, stylistic and iconographic. Stylistic analysis (sometimes called "connoisseurship") is the systematic study of such "signature" details as the rendering of drapery so that it appears to be soaking wet and clinging to the body,

a characteristic of much Hellenistic sculpture. Iconographic analysis is examination of typological features, like the images drawn from the story of Jonah and the whale to symbolize the Resurrection in early Christian art. The obvious usefulness of these forms of analysis in bringing

of European collections of art from the Islamic world, the study of Islamic art developed into a separate, specialized branch of the broader field of art history. It is possible to argue that the subsequent development of the study of Islamic art in the West has consisted of a gradual, and still continuing, process of detaching the basic analytical methods from some of the presuppositions associated with their origins—for example, assumed evolutionary progressions like archaic-classical-Hellenistic or early Renaissance-high Renaissance-mannerist-baroque—as they have proved unhelpful, even misleading, in the Islamic context.

The term "connoisseurship" has frequently led to misunderstanding of what it is that art historians do. Although it is probably fair to say that only people who are particularly attracted to the sensual aspects of objects or buildings choose to study art



Early Qur'ân fragment, attributed to 1st or 2nd century A. H.

a sense of order to a vast quantity of material that had previously not been the object of scholarly attention soon led to their application to artistic and architectural monuments from all periods of history and, eventually, all regions of the globe. In the late nineteenth century, with the growth

history, nevertheless the primary professional concern of art historians is not aesthetics (which is rather a branch of philosophy), but history. Rendering judgments on the quality of particular objects is a professional requirement mainly for museum curators and those responsible for deciding

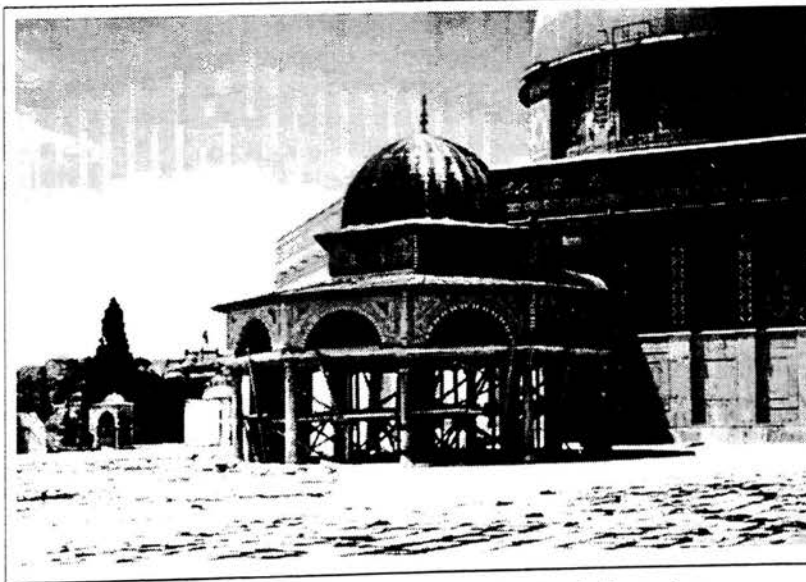
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whether or not the expenditure of large sums of money is justified. The art historian, on the other hand, uses formal analysis as a tool for the systematic study of given bodies of material, some of which may be of very high quality and some not. It is here that a surprising number of parallels with Wansbrough's approach to the Qur'ân emerge.

One witnesses with considerable fascination the emergence in a neighboring discipline, the study of Islam as a religion, of purely formal analysis as an apparently new approach—this time in a literary, rather than a visual, arena, but nevertheless aimed at the identification and interpretation of “signature” details. Although the initial inspiration for Wansbrough's method seems to have come from the field of biblical criticism, the number and kind of parallels that exist between his work and that of historians of Islamic art are striking. Instead of the detailed description of landscape renderings to help localize a particular school of Persian painting, there is a census of rhetorical devices in an attempt to locate the *Sitz im Leben* of the Qur'ân text; instead of typological analysis of representations of political power, there is the identification of schemata of revelation; instead of the “sources” for Islamic monuments, there are the “referential” aspects of the Qur'ân verses that deal with, for example, Old Testament figures. In these and other examples, Wansbrough's formal analysis of the Qur'ân seems akin to the stylistic and iconographic analysis originally developed in Western art history.

There are more amusing parallels, too. Just as the uninitiated must learn to deal with a quite mystifying technical terminology developed by art historians (for example, “in reserve,” “joggled voussoirs,” “reducing kiln,” “squinch,” or “toreutic”), so the nonspecialist reader of Wansbrough is advised to have at hand

dictionaries and reference works (in several languages) for help with the likes of “paraenetic,” “kerygma,” “halakhic,” and “Qohelet 8:1.” Furthermore, although the usefulness of formal analysis cannot be denied, it must also be acknowledged that actually doing it is often extremely tedious work; one can thus raise a smile a sympathy for Wansbrough as one imagines him hunting through the concordance to find every occurrence of locutions like “Qul!”, and then looking up each of them to establish its rhetorical context.



Dome of the Chain (foreground) and Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem

The very existence of such similarities, however, raises questions about other possible parallels. One rather troubling notion, put forward by Rippin, is that formal analysis is a closed system, which can be assessed only in terms of its internal consistency: “The point must always be: Is the presupposition supported by the analysis of the data? To attack the presupposition as invalid is to miss the entire point. To evaluate the work one must participate within its methodological presuppositions and evaluate the final results” (Rippin, pp. 157-58). The implication is that the choice of analytical method, or the limitation to a single method, is not open to criticism. Yet among art historians is has increasingly come to be recognized in the last two decades that formal analysis pure and simple is insufficient, especially as the basic tasks of characterizing Islamic artistic culture have been largely completed

and have given way to refinement of detail and to attempts at broader integration. Such analysis is a useful initial stage of exploration, but to move beyond that stage a broader set of perspectives is required. Minute differentiation of the various “hands” that have contributed to the illustration of a Persian manuscript seems increasingly sterile without attention to the texts, and indeed the episodes within the texts, that have been chosen for illustration; the detailed description of the architecture and ornament of the Dome of the Rock was completed long ago, but only examination of these features in light of the programmatic concerns of ‘Abd al-Malik permits a fuller understanding of the building; the unique facade of the mosque of al-Aqmar can best be explained in terms of the Fatimid ceremonial space in which it was conceived, as Doris Abouseyf has recently demonstrated.

As Islamic art history continues to mature as a field of study, it is coming to be accepted—not without resistance—that formal analysis is only a single critical tool in the arsenal that must be brought to bear on larger questions. By attacking the same body of materials from different methodological vantage points, like aerial photographers who build up photomosaics from many overlapping shots taken from different points of view, it is possible to find confirmation for tentative conclusions and equally to discover anomalies requiring further study to reconcile conflicting results or to modify or reject certain hypotheses.

Looking across the fence at a neighboring field, it will be particularly worth paying attention to the “fallout” from Wansbrough's studies. Will his analytical method prove so useful that it will be widely emulated and eventually absorbed as one more valuable item in a broader array of methodological tools?

MEM BULLETIN BOARD

NOTICE

The Bulletin Board posts short notices by MEM members seeking specific information for research. Notices must be brief enough to fit in one of the boxes. Repetition of notices in subsequent issues will depend upon demand.

-Ed.

NATURAL DISASTERS

I am in the middle of a long-term project on natural (and some unnatural) disasters in the Middle East in the period 600-1600 C.E. I would greatly appreciate any information on or references to such phenomena as earthquakes, epidemics, floods, unusual incidences of snow, rain, hail, or other meteorological phenomena, disastrous fires, etc., particularly references coming from late medieval manuscript sources in the Middle East or from other unpublished or poorly-known sources. I am willing to share information.

-William F. Tucker, History Department, Old Main 416, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AK 72701.

THE TRANSMITTER YAZID B. ASID AL-GHASSANI

The historian Sayf b. 'Umar (fl. late 2nd/8th century), one of al-Tabarī's main informants for the history of the *ridda* and the early Islamic conquests, relates a number of accounts on the authority of a certain Yazīd b. Asīd al-Ghassānī. No other historian that I have seen, however, seems to know anything about him. I would be very grateful to receive (1) references to any accounts related by Yazīd b. Asīd al-Ghassānī conveyed by historians other than Sayf b. 'Umar, (2) references to any biographical information about Yazīd b. Asīd from whatever source.

-Fred M. Donner, The Oriental Institute, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637, U.S.A. Tel. (312) 702-9544; FAX (312) 702-9853.

ARABIC ALMANACS

I am conducting a long-term study of the almanac genre in Arabic. To a certain extent this is a genre without an identity, as there is no specific term in Arabic that consistently defines an "almanac". Earlier texts sometimes refer to almanacs as *azmina* (literally, seasons) or *anwā* (in reference to a seasonal star calendar). In many medieval texts the almanac appears as a series of columns or tables and thus may be styled as a *jadwal* or *taqwīm*. I have also come across tables where the almanac lore is placed under a section called *tawqī'āt*. If anyone has come across an almanac (other than one in the obvious literature), I would be interested in knowing the term used to describe it and the reference to it. If you have worked in libraries in the Middle East and have noticed almanacs in *majmū'a* works, which are often poorly catalogued, I would appreciate hearing from you.

-Daniel Martin Varisco, 43 Mist Lane, Westbury, NY, 11590, U.S.A. Tel. (516) 334-6386.

MEDIEVAL ASTROLABES

I am currently preparing a comprehensive catalogue of medieval Islamic and European astronomical instruments. This will include about 550 astrolabes, as well as 250 quadrants, sundials and other instruments. For the purposes of this project, all instruments between AD 750 and 1900 will be examined. A description of the project has been published in the *Bulletin of the Scientific Instrument Society* No. 31 (December, 1991), pp. 3-7, and in *Yemen Update* No. 30 (1992). If you are aware of any instruments in obscure collections or if you have come across texts on astrolabes in manuscript collections, please contact me.

-David A. King, Institut für Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, 6000 Frankfurt am Main, Germany. FAX 0049-69-596-4286.

CLAUDE CAHEN

Claude Cahen, the *doyen* of medieval Islamic historians and one of the original honorary members of Middle East Medievalists, died on 18 November 1991. A fuller notice surveying his contributions to scholarship will appear in a future issue.

YEHUDA NEVO

(1932-1992)

Yehuda Nevo, head field researcher for the Hebrew University's Negev Archaeological Project for the Study of Ancient Arab Desert Cultures, and the author of *Pagans and Herders: a re-examination of the Negev runoff cultivation systems in the Byzantine and Early Arab periods* (Jerusalem, 1991), died of cancer on February 12, 1992. Nevo's first degree, from the Hebrew University, was in archaeology. After a few years as an archaeologist he left the academic world to start a business, but he retained a vital interest in archaeology, and in 1981 conducted a surface survey of the Central Negev that located about thirty Early Arab sites and hundreds of Kufic inscriptions. This fired his interest in the Early Arab period and caused him to undertake both further studies and the excavation of the largest site uncovered in the survey, Sede Boqer, in 1983-85. He came to the unorthodox conclusion that he was dealing with a pagan cult center, and spent the last decade of his life studying this and other sites and the inscriptions from the region in order to refine his interpretations. He left most of his work of the last decade in publishable form, and it will appear as a series of books, including *Crossroads to Islam* (with J. Koren), *Ancient Arabic Inscriptions in the Negev*, vol. 1 (with Z. Cohen and D. Heftmann), and *Sede Boqer* (with A. Rothenberg).

Yehuda had the gift of inspiring affection and trust in many people, and won the academic support even of some who disagreed categorically with his historical views. For those who worked with him he was a truly charismatic leader who brought out the best in those around him. His leadership and his courage in pursuing his often unorthodox views will be sorely missed.

-Judith Koren

MEM Scholar Profile

Najda Al-Khammash

HISTORIAN, UNIVERSITY OF DAMASCUS

Professor Najda al-Khammâsh, born in Damascus, Syria in 1931, was raised in Jerusalem and received her primary and secondary education in public schools there. In 1948 her family returned to Damascus, where in 1949 she entered the University of Damascus. She received her B.A. degree (History) in 1954;

in the same year she was awarded a Certificate of High Proficiency in English by the British Council in Damascus, and in the following year she received a High Diploma in Education. Shortly thereafter, she began her first career—as a teacher of English in the Damascus secondary schools, an occupation she pursued for over twenty years, during which time she also raised a family. When the University of Damascus initiated its graduate program in history in 1975, she immediately seized the opportunity to pursue her first love, the study of Islamic history. Working under the direction of Professor Nabîh 'Aqil, she produced an M.A. thesis on Umayyad administration (1978), subsequently published as *Al-Idâra fîl-'asr al-Umawî* (Damascus: Dar al-Fîkr, 1400/1980, 374 pp.). For her Ph.D., she continued her research on Umayyad administration. Between 1976 and 1980 she made several visits to England during the summers, in order to pursue research in libraries there and to consult with Professor Walid 'Arafat of the University of Lancaster. Her University of Damascus dissertation on social and administrative conditions in Umayyad Syria, defended in 1984, was the first in Islamic history from the University. It was published as *Al-Shâm fî sadr al-islâm* (Damascus: Dar Atlas, 1985). She was appointed Lecturer in Islamic history at the University of Damascus upon receiving her M.A. in 1978, and promoted to Assistant Professor upon completion of her Ph.D. in 1984. In 1989, she became Associate Professor of Islamic History.

Professor al-Khammash has published on a wide variety of subjects in early Islamic history. Shortly after completing her Ph.D., she and her teacher, Prof. Nabîh 'Aqil, published jointly a university-level introductory textbook on early Islamic history, *Al-Dawla al-'arabiyya al-islâmiyya al-ûlâ* (Damascus: University Press, 1986). She has also continued her researches into early Islamic administration, begun in her M.A. and Ph.D. theses. Several articles (in Arabic) on this theme appeared in the proceedings of the Second, Third, and Fourth Symposiums on the History of Bilad al-Sham, held between 1984 and 1990 in 'Amman, Jordan, in which she has been an active participant. They include "The Junds and their administration up to 40 A.H./640 A.D.," "Administration and the Organization of Taxes in al-Sham during the Period of the Rashidun," "Administrative Organization in al-Sham during the Abbasid Period up to 358 A.H./968 A.D.," and "The Syrian Army during the Umayyad Period." Her article, "Administration in Al-Andalus: A Study of the Administrative Policy of 'Abd al-Rahman I," appeared in the University of Damascus's research journal *Dirâsât târikhiyya* 25-26 (1987), pp. 63-79. "The Arabization of Coinage and its effect on Arab-

Byzantine Economic Relations" appeared in *Dirâsât târikhiyya* 15-16 (1984), pp. 133-146. A study of the *ridda* appeared in *Dirâsât târikhiyya* 5 (1981), and an article on "The Arabs in the Gulf Region and their Participation in Conquests and Trade" will appear in the Proceedings of the Third Ra's al-Khayma Historical Conference, held in March, 1990. She has completed the draft (as yet unpublished) of a general history of the Umayyad period, and has another partly-completed manuscript, undertaken at the invitation of a Syrian publisher, of a study of the Hamdanid ruler Sayf al-Dawla.

Prof. Al-Khammash's wide range of interests and aware-

ness of the importance of other disciplines to the study of history is reflected in her decision to prepare a basic textbook on archaeology and its relevance to the study of Islamic history for use in college teaching. She also has a strong interest in social history. She has published three articles on this theme: "The Conditions of the Peasants in Iraq and al-Sham in the early Islamic period," *Dirâsât târikhiyya* 17-18 (1984), pp. 73-87; "The Population of al-Sham in the early Islamic period: ethnicity, distribution and social status," in the University of



Jordan's journal *Dirâsât*, 14 no. 10 (1987), pp. 69-93; and "Islam and the Arabic Language in the Lands of the Eastern Caliphate," which appeared in the *Festschrift* for Prof. 'Abd al-Karim Mahmud Gharaibeh of the University of Jordan. Recently, she has been studying the Hellenistic and Byzantine background of early Islamic cities in Syria; part of her work on this theme was carried out during a stay at the University of Chicago in November 1991-March 1992, where she was a visiting scholar in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.

Professor Al-Khammash has been asked by the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization to contribute four articles on early Islamic administration to its planned encyclopaedia. She also serves as an expert reviewer of articles for the Arabic Encyclopaedia (*Al-Mawsû'a al-'arabiyya*), published in Damascus.

In addition to her highly fluent command of English, Professor al-Khammash reads French and German and consults works in these languages in her research.

Professor Najda al-Khammash can be contacted by writing her c/o the Department of History, University of Damascus, Damascus, Syria.

Feeding Medieval Siraf and Sohar

by T. J. Wilkinson

It has long been known that the wealthy maritime cities of Siraf in Iran and Sohar in Oman developed primarily as a result of their locations on the immensely profitable trade routes that connected 'Abbâsîd Mesopotamia with India, China, and East Africa. This note is intended to demonstrate that the archaeological study of the hinterlands of these two cities can provide valuable information pertinent to their economic position within the Gulf region. Specifically, the archaeological record provides a wealth of data on agricultural systems and water supply that can supplement the record provided by historical texts.

In the case of Siraf and Sohar, the built-up area of each city during its period of maximum population in the 9th and 10th centuries CE can be compared with the area of fields and/or intensively cultivated land mapped within the immediate hinterlands. This enables us to gauge whether each town was likely to generate an agricultural deficit, surplus, or was approximately self-sufficient. Although only approximate, these studies clearly demonstrate that whereas Siraf was incapable of supplying its needs, Sohar was at least self-sufficient. It even seems that Sohar may have generated a surplus, in which case this could have been used to provision ships involved with the China trade, or

even perhaps to supplement the additional requirements of Siraf. The following conclusions are based on the results of fieldwork conducted by the writer at Siraf in 1972 and 1973, and at Sohar between 1975 and 1981. Archaeological work at Siraf was directed by Dr. David Whitehouse for the British Institute of Persian Studies, and at Sohar by Dr. Paolo Costa, for the Department of Antiquities, Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, Muscat.

At Siraf, the agricultural potential of the land was meagre, and it is clear from the writings of both al-Istakhârî and al-Muqaddasî that fields, gardens and their water supplies were minimal. These observations are supported by archaeological surveys of the distribution of walled fields, intensively cultivated lands and water channels that were distributed within the heavily dissected valleys and bare, rocky hills that formed the hinterland. Of the 700 ha. of cultivated land that was estimated by the field mapping program, some 630

ha. were probably irrigated. The remaining land, being on high terraces and hill-slopes above any obvious irrigation channels was probably dry-farmed, a practice which although possible, is risky in this area of around 200 mm. mean annual rainfall. The city, built partly on

the narrow coastal plain and partly on the rocky escarpment behind, covered some 130-200 ha., or more if occasional suburbs further along the coast are included. Significantly, given the limited agricultural potential of its hinterland, part of the city expanded over valuable cultivable land on the coastal plain. This implies that such land had greater value as an urban living area than for providing food. In other words, the inhabitants could afford to import food from beyond the immediate hinterland, either from inland or from elsewhere in the Gulf region.

At Sohar, in contrast, the city developed upon a broad, fertile coastal plain which, in spite of its low rainfall of around 100-150 mm. per annum, could be rendered fertile by irrigation. This water supply was provided by long open channels, such as the 36.5 km Falaj al-Mutaridh, a number of qanâts, and many wells. Field mapping showed that the immediate hinterland of Sohar comprised some 5400 ha. of cultivated land, even more being available along the adjacent coast. Within the fringes of the mountains, some 30-40 km. inland, dependent mining communities supplied copper for processing and prob-

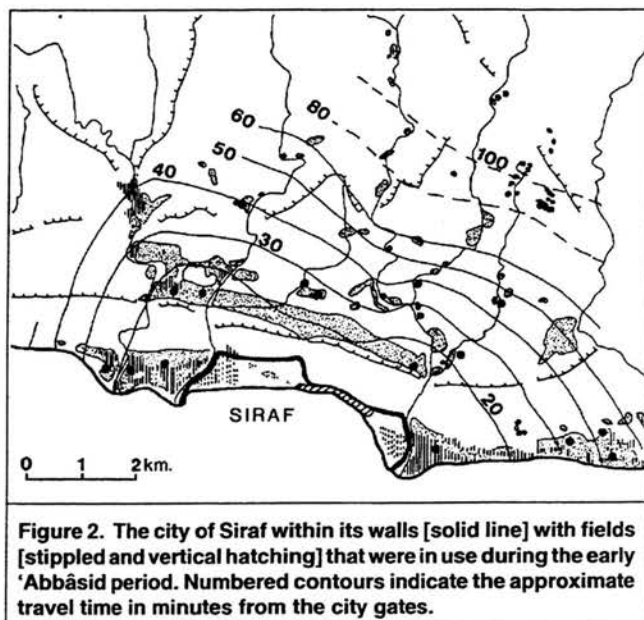


Figure 2. The city of Siraf within its walls [solid line] with fields [stippled and vertical hatching] that were in use during the early 'Abbâsîd period. Numbered contours indicate the approximate travel time in minutes from the city gates.

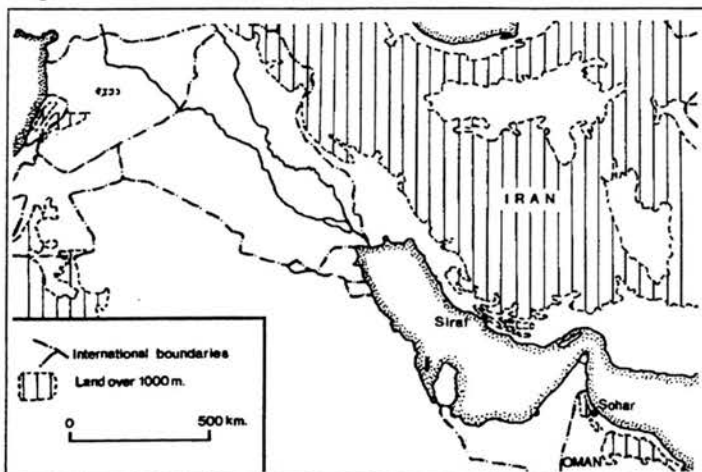


Figure 1. Location of Siraf and Sohar.

ably export from the city. According to detailed surveys conducted around one copper production site at Arja, these communities were apparently self-sufficient, each with its own fields and irrigation systems. In the immediate hinterland of Sohar a significant portion of the terrain was littered with potsherds, slag and other debris, interpreted here as the remains of the application of organic manures gathered from within the city and applied to the fields as fertilizer. Within this zone of inferred intensive cultivation were dotted numerous wells of 8th-10th century CE date. Elsewhere fields had been supplied with water from surface or underground cement-lined channels, one of which (the above-mentioned Falaj al-Mutaridh) was equipped with five underground watermills. It was clear from the field mapping program that the area of intensively cultivated land (as inferred from the sherd scatters) coincided with both the distribution of channel outlets and wells. In general, it was evident that the amount of capital investment especially in water channels, had been considerable, and for the wealthy merchant of Sohar, endowing the society with a life-giving water supply channel must have been one of the most laudable achievements.

In contrast with Siraf, the obvious archaeological mounding covered only some 73 ha. This, of course, only includes the area of substantial buildings of stone, mud-brick or baked-brick which on decay would have left significant mounding. Additional flimsy structures made of palm fronds (invisible to surface survey) would have increased this area by an unknown

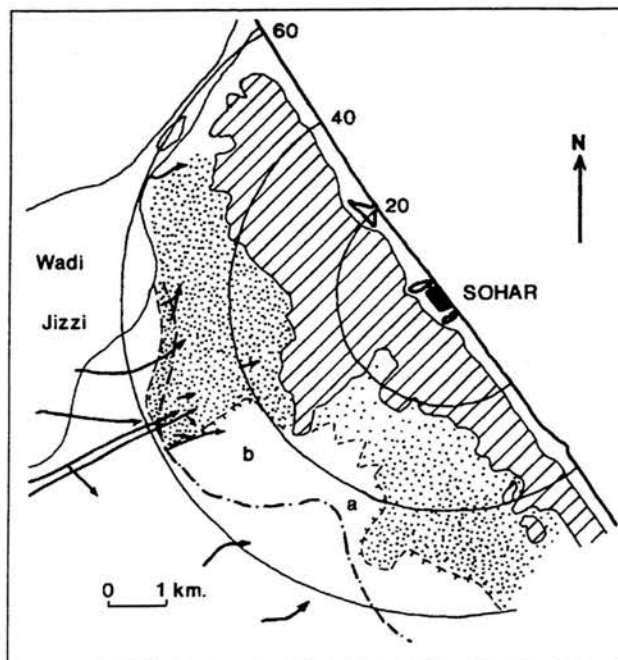


Figure 3. The city of Sohar [solid] with a belt of modern palm gardens immediately inland [oblique hatching] and the approximate area of early 'Abbâsîd fields [stippled] further inland. Water channels are indicated by solid lines with arrows and the inland limit of wells by an intermittent line. Travel time in minutes is indicated by the numbered contours.

amount, but here are estimated at some 27 ha. (i. e., a little over one-third of the mounded area).

Although there were other cities in the Gulf during the early 'Abbâsîd period, we have little direct archaeological evidence of the actual area of cultivation. Consequently, no attempt will be made to suggest a total production/exchange system for the Gulf. Even at the two well-documented sites in question, the archaeological data can only be regarded as approximate, especially when applied to either the number of people that could be supported by a given area of fields, or by the population that could live on a settlement of given area. Nevertheless, the con-

trast between Siraf and Sohar is sufficiently great that even at these levels of imprecision the differences are obvious. Although population densities within urban areas can vary widely, figures of between 100 and 200 persons per occupied hectare seem most typical. For example, in 1947, the old quarter of Baghdad had a mean population density of 137 persons per hectare, with a range of 35 to 330. Regarding the amount of land required to support a given population, consultant's reports for the area around Sohar suggest that each hectare of cultivated garden would support some 5-6 people. In other words, each hectare of occupied archaeological site would require some 17-40 ha. of cultivated garden to support it. Table 1 shows that even allowing for the additional area of palm frond housing at Sohar of 27 ha., the area of cultivated land per occupied hectare was at least sufficient, if not greater, than that required to support the

local population. The amount of agricultural land was clearly much greater than that of Siraf, and if other settlements located along the nearby coasts are included, the total productivity would have been even greater. At Siraf, on the other hand, even the coastal plain would have been much less productive because of its restricted area and the generally rather unproductive soils. Inland areas, although providing extensive areas of moderate fertility, were linked to the coastal city only by steep, winding tracks which crossed the high, anticlinal ridges that form a backdrop to the city.

Although some supplies could have been transported along such routes, it undoubtedly would have been much easier to have supplied the demands of the city by boat. Given the considerable maritime trade that plied between the head of the Gulf, the Persian coast and Oman, it seems likely that Sohar, in addition to having sufficient supplies to provision ships may even have had enough surplus to provide Siraf with some of its needs. The remainder of Siraf's shortfall may have come from inland of the immediate catchment, from other agricultural areas along the coast, and even from

TABLE 1

	Urban Area Hectares	Area of Irrigated Fields	Field Area per Urban Hectare*
SIRAF	100-200	630-700	3.2-7.0
SOHAR	73-100	5400	54.0-74.0

*Self-sufficiency probably fell within the range 17-40; see text.

ANNUAL MEETINGS

Organization	When and Where	Information	Telephone No.
Middle East Studies Association (1992 Meeting)	Oct. 28-31, 1992 Portland, Oregon [Paper Deadline: Past]	MESA Secretariat University of Arizona 1232 N. Cherry Ave. Tucson, AZ 85721	(602)-621-5850
Middle East Studies Association (1993 Meeting)	Nov. 10-13, 1993 Research Triangle Park, N. C. [Paper Deadline: Feb.-Mar. '93?]	see preceding	see preceding
American Oriental Society	March 1993? Chapel Hill, N. C. [Paper Deadline: Oct. 1993?]	American Oriental Society Hatcher Graduate Library University of Michigan Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1205	(313)-747-4760 Jonathan_Rodgers@ ub.cc.umich.edu
American Oriental Society-- Midwest Branch	Feb. 14-16, 1993 Toronto, Ont., Canada [Paper Deadline: Unknown]	Mark W. Chavalas Dept. of History Univ. of Wisconsin-LaCrosse LaCrosse, WI 54061	(606)-785-8530
American Historical Association (1992 Meeting)	Dec. 27-30, 1992 Washington, DC [Paper Deadline: Past]	American Historical Assn. 400 A Street, S. E. Washington, DC 20003	(202)-544-2422
American Historical Association (1993-94 Meeting)	Jan. 6-9, 1994 San Francisco, CA [Paper Deadline: Feb. 15, 1993]	see preceding	see preceding
The Medieval Institute (1992 Meeting)	May 7-10, 1992 Kalamazoo, MI [Paper Deadline: Past]	The Medieval Institute Western Michigan Univ. Kalamazoo, MI 49008-3851	(616)-387-4145
The Medieval Institute (1993 Meeting)	May 6-9, 1993 Kalamazoo, MI [Paper Deadline: Sept. 15, 1993]	see preceding	see preceding
College Art Association	Feb. 3-6, 1993 Seattle, WA [Paper Deadline: May 31, 1992]	Suzanne Schanzer 275 Seventh Ave. New York, NY 10001	(212)-627-2381
American Academy of Religion (1992 Meeting)	Nov. 21-24, 1992 San Francisco, CA [Paper Deadline: Past]	Eugene H. Lovering, Jr. Society of Biblical Literature 1549 Clairmont Rd., Suite 204 Decatur, GA 30033-4635	(404)-636-4744 FAX:(404)-248-0815 BITNET: SBLEEXEC@ EMORYU1
American Academy of Religion (1993 Meeting)	Nov. 20-23, 1993 Washington, DC [Paper Deadline: unknown]	see preceding	see preceding

ANNUAL MEETINGS

Organization	When and Where	Information	Telephone No.
Byzantine Studies Conference (1992 Meeting)	Oct. 8-11, 1992 Champaign-Urbana, IL [Paper Deadline: Past]	Dr. Alice-Mary Talbot c/o Dumbarton Oaks 1703 32nd St., N. W. Washington, DC 20007	(202)-342-3234
Texas Association of Middle East Scholars (TAMES)	Feb., 1993 location unknown [Paper Deadline: Nov. 15, 1992]	M.-R. Ghanoonparvar Ctr. for Middle Eastern Studies Univ. of Texas-Austin Austin, TX 78712	(512)-471-3881 FAX:(512)-471-7834
Dumbarton Oaks Conference: "Law & Society in Byzantium, 9th-12th Century."	May 1-3, 1992 Washington, DC [Paper Deadline: April 10, 1992]	Dumbarton Oaks 1703 32nd St., N. W. Washington, DC 20007	(202)-342-3234

NOTICE: Please send the editor information on planned conferences of interest to MEM, as well as reports on relevant panels at conferences you may have attended whose main focus is not the Middle East. Because of the number of papers of interest to MEM presented at major conferences such as MESA and AOS, we cannot list each panel here.

Forschungsstelle für islamische Numismatik, Tübingen (FINT)

The Forschungsstelle, established in 1990, houses a collection of more than 35,000 Islamic coins, from the beginning of Islam to the nineteenth century. The collection is particularly strong in Iranian dynasties, with secondary strength in Yemeni coins and in the various dynasties of Syria and the Jazira. The Maghreb, especially Spain, is relatively sparsely represented; Egypt is also represented sparingly, because the collection is predominantly silver coinage, whereas most of Egypt's coinage was gold. The collection includes approximately 1300-1400 gold coins, perhaps 7500 copper, with the balance in silver coins.

The aims of the Forschungsstelle are to promote the study of Islamic coinage as an historical source. Because of the tradition of *sikka*, the ruler's right to place his name on the coinage, coins are important documents for political history in Islamic polities, frequently the only surviving truly contemporary documents. In general, Islamic coinage has been studied only superficially. Most older publications are no longer very helpful to the historian, as new finds and new methodologies have rendered them obsolete. The Forschungsstelle plans to publish the col-

lection in sylloge form, as is now commonly done for classical Greek and Roman coins, and to publish monographs on various topics of Islamic numismatics. The first volume of the sylloge, which will cover the coinage of Palestine, is expected by the end of 1992.

FINT will be sponsoring biennial symposia on Islamic numismatics. The first, held in 1991, concerned influences between occidental and Islamic coinage in the medieval and modern eras. The next symposium, scheduled for October 1993, will be devoted to transitional coinages between pre-Islamic and Islamic rule. Public exhibitions of selections from the collection are also planned.

FINT is attached to the Orientalisches Seminar of the University of Tübingen and is under the direction of Dr. Lutz Ilisch. Scholars are welcome to visit the collection, which is available for study Monday through Friday; arrangements for working with the coins should be made in advance. Further information may be obtained from Dr. Ilisch, Forschungsstelle für islamische Numismatik, Wilhelmsstraße 26, W-7400 Tübingen, Germany.

-Stephen Album

WOMEN OF POWER

The Texas Medieval Association has announced a projected series entitled *Women of Power*, whose theme is the exploration of the types of public and private power medieval women exercised. The first volume, to be published this fall, focuses on royal women and medieval theories of queenship. The contributions are drawn from the papers presented at the International Medieval Congress (Kalamazoo) or the Texas Medieval Association (TEMA) Conference. Future volumes are planned on the themes of power exerted by noble, mercantile, or ecclesiastical women. Proposals for papers on the means and types of power such women exercised, including military power, are welcome: the editorial board is considering an entire volume devoted to women and warfare if the response is great enough. Abstracts are now being accepted for the next TEMA conference, to be held in the early fall of 1992, and for a panel at the International Medieval Congress (Kalamazoo) in 1993. Please send abstracts by 1 May 1992 to: Dr. Theresa Vann, Department of History, Fordham University, Bronx, N.Y. 10458. **Dr. Vann is making this appeal through MEM so that studies on Middle Eastern women will be included in this series.**

1993 COLLEGE ART ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

The 80th Annual Conference of the **College Art Association**, held Feb. 12-15, 1992 in Chicago, included the following panels:

Encounters of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian Communities in the Middle Ages.

Chairs: Barbara Abou-El-Haj, State University of New York at Binghamton, and Irene A. Bierman, University of California, Los Angeles.

Speakers: Jerrilyn D. Dodds, School of Architecture, City College, City University of New York, *Hunting, Hegemony, and Identity on the Frontier*; Jill Caskey, American Academy in Rome and Yale University, *Merchant Patronage and Cultural Boundaries in Medieval Amalfi*; David Raizman, Drexel University, *Late 12th- and Early 13th-Century Transformations in the Art of Medieval Spain*; Maria Georgopoulou, University of California, Los Angeles, *Exclusion and Acceptance: Christian and Jewish Communities in Venetian Candia*; Ethel Sara Wolper, University of California, Los Angeles, *Dervish Lodges and the Transformation of Sectarian Space in Tokat*; Daniel H. Weiss, The Johns Hopkins University, *Envisioning a Christian Palestine: Ideology in the Crusader Images of the Arsenal Old Testament*.

Information: Irene A. Bierman, Department of Art History, UCLA, 405 Hilgard Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024-1417.

The Byzantine and Islamic Other: Orientalism in Art History.

Chair: Annabel Jane Wharton, Duke Uni-

versity.

Speakers: Robert S. Nelson, The University of Chicago, *Byzantine Art as Romanitic, Late Romantic, and Modern*; Annabel Jane Wharton, Duke University, *"Orient oder Rom:" Orientalism and the Origins of Christian Art*; Alice Taylor, West Los Angeles College, *Picture Criticism and an Invisible East*; Barbara Zeitler, Courtauld Institute of Art, *"Crusader" Art: Marginalizing Discourses*.

Discussant: Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj, California State University at Long Beach.

Information: Annabel Jane Wharton, Department of Art and Art History, East Duke Building, Duke University, Durham, N.C. 27708.

Methods and Directions in Islamic Art History: Current Research (sponsored by North American Historians of Islamic Art [NAHIA]).

Chair: Catherine B. Asher, University of Minnesota.

Speakers: Lawrence E. Butler, George Mason University, *Justinianic Motifs in Early Islamic Sculpture*; Alexandra Bain, University of Victoria, *Qur'anic Epigraphy in the Delhi Sultanate: The 'Alai Darwaza*; Roya Marefat, independent scholar, Washington, D.C., *Ritual, Music, and Architecture: The Case of Timurid Naqqarakhana*.

Discussant: Yasser Tabbaa, University of Michigan.

Information: Catherine B. Asher, 1776 James Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55403.

MEDIEVAL MATHEMATICS SYMPOSIUM

On March 6 and 7, 1992, the History of Science Department at the University of Oklahoma hosted a symposium, **Tradition, Transmission, Transformation: Ancient Mathematics in Islamic and Occidental Cultures**. The meeting was organized by Steven J. Livesey and F. Jamil Ragep, and was convened in conjunction with the Department's Rockefeller Foundation postdoctoral fellowship program. The following papers were presented: Sonja Brentjes, Universität Leipzig and The University of Oklahoma, *On the Arabic Transmission of Euclid's Elements*; Jan P. Hogendijk, Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht, *Transmission and Transformation: The Case of Greek and Arabic Geometry*; Menso Folkerts, Universität München, *Regiomontanus' Role in the Transmission and Transformation of Greek Mathematics*; Tony Lévy, CNRS, Paris, *Hebrew Mathematics in the Middle Ages*; Warren Van Egmond, Arizona State University, *From East to West: The Sources and Streams of Arabic and European Algebra*; J. L. Berggren, Simon Fraser University, *The Islamic Acquisition of Foreign Sciences: A Cultural Perspective*; A. George Molland, The University of Aberdeen and The University of Oklahoma, *Roger Bacon's Appropriation of Past Mathematics*.

Information: Steven J. Livesey, Department of History of Science, 601 Elm, Room 822, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK 73019-0315.

19TH NEW ENGLAND MEDIEVAL CONFERENCE

The 19th New England Medieval Conference will be held **October 23-25, 1992** at the Peabody Museum of Salem in Salem, Massachusetts. The conference is entitled **"Columbus and the Medieval Maritime Tradition: European and Islamic Perspectives,"** and is sponsored by the Peabody Museum of Salem and Salem State College. For a program and/or further information, please contact: Paul E. Chevedden, 31 Washington Square North, Salem, MA 01070, tel. (508)-740-9358.

NEW ORGANIZATION: The New England Council for Middle Eastern Studies

A new regional organization, the New England Council for Middle Eastern Studies, has recently been formed. NECMES is a non-profit organization established to foster and develop interest in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. For information, contact Eleanor Doumato, 64 Alumni Avenue, Providence, R. I. 02906.

NETWORK FOR EARLY ISLAMIC STUDIES

A network has been formed for those who study the early Islamic period, which aims at facilitating contacts between its members by providing them with mailing lists, etc. Membership appears to be free. For further information, contact The Network for Early Islamic Studies, c/o Daan van Reenen, Vrije Universiteit--Letteren, De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Tel. univ: 31-20-548-4993; home 31-20-618-4412; FAX, univ: 31-20-642-6355; E-mail: sofie@let.vu.nl.

REVIEWS • OF • BOOKS

FROM • THE • MIDDLE • EAST

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 these are generally 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.

Rajab Muhammad 'Abd al-Halīm, *Al-Ridda fī daw' mafhūm jadīd*. [Cairo?]: Dār al-nahda al-'arabiyya, 1985. 142 pp.

This small work offers a careful review and interpretation of the *ridda*, or rebellion against the early Islamic state by various groups in Arabia immediately following the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 11/632. The author argues that the true apostates—i.e., those who withdrew their religious allegiance to the Islamic community—were actually a small minority of the rebels, the majority being simply political opponents or resisters motivated by the usual kinds of factors motivating rebels in many historical situations. However, Muslim historians generalized the epithet "apostate" (*murtadd*) and applied it to all these opponents, even when their only point of opposition was the payment of tax to the regime in Medina. The author argues that the *ridda*, since it consisted of a number of uncoordinated uprisings in different places, was not really a major threat to the early Islamic state; the apparent success of the

rebels is attributable to the vast distances the Muslims had to traverse in order to suppress the various rebellions.

Despite the promise of the title, the interpretation is not entirely a new one, for the main argument—that the groups who participated in the *ridda* were not, in fact, all apostates from Islam—is one that has been presented before, notably by Elias Shoufani in his book *Al-Riddah and the Muslim Conquest of Arabia* (Toronto and Beirut, 1972). The work also seems to embrace certain teleological assumptions, as when the author argues that Abu Bakr strove for centralization because he saw it as necessary for the Arabs to extend their domains and to remain unified. The author apparently was not aware, either, of Western works on the *ridda*, notably Shoufani's book (the fine articles by Ella Landau-Tasseron on aspects of the *ridda* only appeared in print about the time this book was published).

Nevertheless, 'Abd al-Halīm's book makes some important observations on the *ridda*, and offers a more precise analysis than any other work I have seen of the reasons why various groups opposed the Muslim state, and of the nature of Medina's relations with certain tribal groups. This work is, therefore, highly recommended to anyone who is interested in the *ridda*.

—Fred M. Donner

Muhammad Jâsim Hamâdî al-Mashhadânî, *Mawârid al-Balâdhurî 'an al-usra al-umawîya fî 'Ansâb al-ashrâf'*. 2 volumes. Mecca: Maktabat al-tâlib al-jâmî'î, 1407/1986. 946 pp.

If ever there was a text cursed by ill fortune, it must be the *Ansâb al-ashrâf* of al-Balâdhurî. The work itself was never completed, and it has defied the efforts of two major international editorial projects to publish it. Though valuable studies have been produced by Goitein, Duri, and most recently Athamina, it has so far been extremely difficult to undertake the sort of close and broad-ranging reading required for the historiographical assessment of the

text as a whole and its place within the genre of Arabic historical writing.

A major step toward rectifying this situation has now been taken in this massive and carefully researched study. The title would suggest that Dr. al-Mashhadânî has limited himself to those crucially important parts of the *Ansâb* which deal with the Umayyads, but while this is indeed his focus, his book goes far beyond the Umayyad material. In a short review of an important book of such size, all that can be done is to give some idea of the contents and an overall assessment.

In Part One of his book al-Mashhadânî covers the broader context of the *Ansâb*: the life of al-Balâdhurî, his various works and the relationship among them (here there are some useful insights on the *Futūḥ al-buldân*), the interest of early Arab society in genealogies, the genealogical tradition and its development as a historical genre, al-Balâdhurî's handling of genealogical as opposed to other kinds of sources, and the question of oral as opposed to written transmission.

In Part Two the discussion focuses on the *Ansâb* itself, and in particular its sources, with separate chapters devoted to various categories of sources. Here it emerges that al-Balâdhurî's most important source was the renowned *akhbâr* al-Madâ'inî. The role of al-Madâ'inî in the *Ansâb* is of course already well known, but here we see for the first time how overwhelming that role was: fully a third of al-Balâdhurî's *akhbâr* on the Umayyads come from al-Madâ'inî, and his closest competitor (Ibn Sa'd) is cited hardly more than one tenth as frequently. Al-Mashhadânî's book thus becomes, in many places, as much a work about al-Madâ'inî as it is about al-Balâdhurî.

In some places the discussion becomes too schematic (who took how many of what kinds of reports from whom), but this kind of information, though tedious, is nevertheless important. Some of what the author says will be familiar to those who have read the Western scholarship on these subjects (the only Western sources this book cites are the *EP²* article on al-Balâdhurî, Caskel's version of Ibn al-Kalbî's *Gamharat an-nasab*, and Hitti's

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History of the Arabs). But the book contains a great deal that is new, especially on such vexed topics as the genealogical tradition and the roles played by various individuals from whom al-Balâdhurî took material. Al-Mashhadânî's book is a work that any specialist in early Islamic history really must read, and that he will find himself consulting repeatedly thereafter for a very broad range of topics and personalities in the field of early Arabic historiography.

-Lawrence I. Conrad

A. Shams-Eshragh, *Nakhostin sekkehha-ye emparâtori-ye Irân*. Isfahan: Estack Co., 1990. 238 pp. incl. 48 photographic plates.

The present volume is intended as a general guide for collectors and scholars interested in Islamic coinage from its inception just after 650 C.E. to the end of the Umayyad caliphate in 132/750. The book deals with the series known to numismatists as the Arab-Byzantine, Arab-Sasanian, and post-reform coinage. The former is only superficially treated, as Arab-Byzantine types come from North Africa and Syria and are seldom encountered in Iran. The Arab-Sasanian coinage, struck from about 650 to 705, with some later derivative series, is treated in some detail, though with virtually no information not already available in Western publications. The post-reform coinage, struck from 697-750, is given greatest depth, and represents, especially for the silver coinage, a substantial addition to John Walker's 1956 catalog of the British Museum collection. Most of the new mints and dates discovered since 1956 are noted. The list of known mints and dates is quite complete, and constitutes a useful source for early Islamic administrative geography.

The text has been photo-offset from standard typewritten pages. The photographs are generally of good quality, though in many cases they are taken from previous publications and suffer from the usual fuzziness characteristic of rescreened photographs. Many hundreds of previously unpublished specimens, particularly of post-reform Umayyad silver dirhams, make the work essential for any further

study of that coinage. Unfortunately, the source of the photos is not given, but this is understandable in light of the present government's attitude towards collecting and dealing in antique coins.

-Stephen Album

'Abd al-Ghâfir al-Fârisî, *Al-halqa al-ûlâ min ta'rîkh naisâbûr: al-muntakhab min al-siyâq*, ed. Muhammad Kazim al-Mahmûdî, Qumm: Jamâ'a al-mudarrisîn fi al-hawza al-'ilmiyya, 1403.

Whoever has tried to use *The Histories of Nishapur* edited by Richard N. Frye will welcome this excellent edition of one of the manuscripts reproduced in facsimile in that volume. This spaciouly laid out edition has a full complement of indices listing personal names, book references, local place names, sayings and poetry quotations. Thus it makes easily available for the first time this major source for the history of Nishapur in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Regrettably, however, the editor was unaware of the existence of the somewhat different recension of 'Abd al-Ghâfir al-Fârisî's biographical dictionary that constitutes one of the other facsimiles contained in the Frye volume. It is to be hoped that he will now turn his efforts to editing it, too, since there are substantial differences between the two versions, with each containing material not found in the other. In the meantime, scholars wanting to consult 'Abd al-Ghâfir al-Fârisî's work are advised to refer to an index volume compiled by Habib Jaouiche entitled *The Histories of Nishapur: 'Abdalgafr al-Fârisî, Siyâq Ta'rîh Naisâbûr. Register der Personen- und Ortsnamen*. This work, published in Wiesbaden in 1984, provides good indices for the Frye facsimiles but, of course, does not give any references to al-Mahmûdî's edition. Though it is somewhat awkward to work among these three volumes, al-Mahmûdî and Jaouiche have given us much greater access to Nishapur's history. Moreover, al-Mahmûdî's edition is an excellent example of the fine editing work being done in Qumm.

-Richard W. Bulliet

Nicholas Lowick, *Islamic Coins and Trade in the Medieval World*, ed. Joe Cribb. Variorum Collected Studies, Series 318 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1990). xii+300 pages+index. £41.50

Nicholas Lowick, *Coinage and History of the Islamic World*, ed. Joe Cribb. Variorum Collected Studies, Series CS311 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1990). xviii+260 pages+index. £38.

To the numismatist and non-specialist alike these two volumes will be welcome indeed. They are a posthumous selection of articles by Nicholas Lowick, the late Curator of Oriental Coins and Medals at the British Museum (1962-1986). Written over twenty-four years, the thirty-six articles cover a variety of subjects, which can broadly be divided into Lowick's dual interests in coins as a means of elucidating political history and in their circulation as evidence of trade patterns. As well as corroborating the textual sources, his discussions illuminate the rôle of money in mediæval Islamic society. Seen as a whole, Lowick's work shows us the breadth of historical interpretation which can be derived from coins, for example in spreading political and religious propaganda, their use in trade, as indications of prosperity, political stability, conflict or in the paying of troops. These two volumes are most welcome, since the original articles have been pulled together from widely scattered originals.

-Elizabeth Savage

Ali Sevim, *Suriye ve Filistin Selçukluları Tarihi* [The History of the Seljuks of Syria and Palestine] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1983). 293 pages+maps+illustrations.

This is an expanded version of the author's *Suriye Selçukluları* (Ankara: Ankara University Press, 1965), 142 pages. In this work, Sevim describes the invasion of Fatimid-controlled Syria and Palestine by certain Nâwakiyya Turkmen groups in the latter part of the 11th century and their role in the establishment of a Seljuk state in that region. Parallel to the Seljuk invasion of

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Anatolia, a Turkmen *beylik* subject to the Great Seljuks was first established in Palestine. Under the Turkmen leader Atsiz, this state then expanded into what Sevîm calls the independent Seljuk Kingdom of Syria and Palestine. Eventually, it briefly included northern Iraq, eastern Anatolia, and the regions of Rayy and Hamadan. Malik-Shah sent Tutush, the governor of Ganja, against Atsiz in 1078. Tutush killed him the following year, took control of the country and became virtually independent. When he died in 1095, the kingdom was divided between his two sons Ridwan and Dukak, who ruled from Aleppo and Damascus respectively and acknowledged the authority of the Great Seljuks. Sevîm traces the history of the petty kingdom of Aleppo until 1124, when it was captured by the Seljuk governor of Mosul, and that of Damascus until the death of Dukak in 1104. The author concentrates exclusively on political and military history with special emphasis on the relations of the Seljuks of Syria and Palestine with the Great Seljuks, the Fatimids, and Crusaders.

Sevîm's primary sources are the Muslim sources familiar to students of the Crusades, above all Ibn al-Qalânîsî and Ibn al-'Adîm. Many of his secondary Western

sources (books) are quite outdated, such as those of Philip Hitti, De Lacy O'Leary and Gustav Weil. With one or two exceptions, he makes no attempt to incorporate Western periodical literature on anything related to his subject. Curiously, he states that he found no coins belonging to the Seljuk rulers of Syria even when it was an independent Muslim kingdom. The primary value of Sevîm's book is its attempt to discuss the political history of Syria from about 1075 to 1125 within the context of the history of the Seljuks.

-Gary Leiser

Ibn Sallâm al-Ibâdî (3rd/9th cent.), *Kitâb*. Published as R. W. Schwartz and Sâlim b. Ya'qûb (eds.), *Al-Islâm wa ta'rîkhuhu min wujhat nazar ibâdiyya*: Beirut: Dâr Iqra', 1405/1985. 182 pp.

A manuscript of the Ibâdî Kharijite treatise of Ibn Sallâm, known from references to it in the *Kitâb al-siyar* of the 10th/16th century Ibâdî historian Al-Shammâkhî and long believed lost, was discovered by Shaykh Sâlim b. Ya'qûb in a library in Jerba, Tunisia in the 1960s. Knowledge of the manuscript quickly spread among mod-

ern Ibâdî scholars, and a brief description of the manuscript was published by Dr. Shaykh 'Amr Khalîfa Al-Nâmî (Ennami) in an article in the *Journal of Semitic Studies* in 1970.

The present work offers a careful edition of Ibn Sallâm's text and an extensive (sixty-page) introduction, and is valuable on both counts. The text, written shortly after 273/886-7, is one of the oldest extant historical texts of North African Islam and the oldest text of the North African Ibâdiyya. It provides rich information on Ibâdî doctrine, on early Islamic history, and on the spread of Ibâdism in Basra and subsequently in North Africa. The introduction places the text in its historical context, relates what is known of Ibn Sallâm, and includes a meticulous description of the manuscript itself (which, based partly on identification of Genoese watermarks, seems to have been copied in the late 9th/15th or early 10th/16th century).

In sum, this is an indispensable work for anyone working on the early history of Islamic North Africa or on the Ibâdiyya.

-Fred M. Donner

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GRAPHICS CREDITS

Page 1: Mosque in Tarim, Hadramaut. January 1992. Photograph by Gretel Braidwood.

Page 4: Early Qur'ân fragment in Kufic script, attributed to first or second century A.H., showing end of *sûra* 48 and beginning of *sûra* 49. Manuscript in the Khedival Library. From Bernhard Moritz, *Arabic Palaeography* (Cairo: Khedival Library, 1905), Plate 6.

Page 5: The Dome of the Chain (foreground) and Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem. April 1967. Photograph by Fred M. Donner.

Pages 6 and 7: Maps courtesy of T. J. Wilkinson.

SIRAF, CONTINUED FROM P. 9

as far afield as Basra. Given the economic advantage that water transport has over transport over land, it would almost certainly have been much more effective to bring bulk produce in by boat rather than to provide many dozens of pack animals for the arduous trip from inland to the main ridge.

Bibliographical note: The problem of Siraf's agricultural supply-base is discussed by Wilkinson in *PaleOrient* 2 (1974): 123-132, and in *Journal of Field Archaeology* 9 (1982): 323-33. See also D. Whitehouse in *Iran* 12 (1974): 2-5. A detailed presentation of the results from the investigation of Sohar's hinterland is given in: P. M. Costa & T. J. Wilkinson, "The Hinterland of Sohar. Archaeological Surveys and Excavations within the Hinterland of an Omani Seafaring City," *Journal of Oman Studies* 9 (1987): 1-238.

EXHIBITS

The Here and the Hereafter: Images of Paradise in Islamic Art. Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, MA, April 24-June 28, 1992.

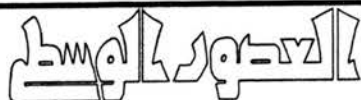
Islamic Art and Patronage: Selections from Kuwait. Over 100 masterpieces from the 8th to 18th centuries from a premier private collection. St. Louis Museum of Art, St. Louis, MO, through April 12, 1992.

The Art of Painting a Story: Narrative Images from Iran. 28 Persian miniature paintings used to illustrate literary texts. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., through May 10, 1992.

Textiles from Egypt, Syria and Spain: Seventh through 15th Centuries. 50 pieces from the museum's collections. Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH, through November 1, 1992.

Conference on**PERSIAN SUFISM FROM ITS ORIGINS TO RUMI**

George Washington University and the Nimatullahi Research Center will sponsor a conference on **Persian Sufism from its Origins to Rumi** in Washington, DC on **May 11-13, 1992**. Panels of leading international specialists are organized around the themes of "History," "Commentaries on the Koran," "Courtesy, Stations, and States," "Early Sufis," "Poetry and Sufism," "Rumi and Persian Sufism," "Persian Mystical Literature," "Metaphysics and Theology," and "Malamati Tradition and Chivalry." The Keynote Address will be delivered by Dr. Javad Nurbakhsh, and Introductory and Concluding Remarks will be given by Prof. S. H. Nasr. Registration fee is \$100 (\$50 for Students). For information and confirmation of space availability contact: Conferences and Institutes, The George Washington University, 2003 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20052. Phone: (202)-994-7238.



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