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The Newsletter of the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah is intended to share the wealth and beauty of Islamic heritage contained within the al-Sabah Collection's extensive and comprehensive collection of Islamic art, ranging from Early Islam to the 18th century, and the variety of scholarly and artistic activities associated with the collection.

The collection itself is organized according to both historical period and geographical region and, the reference library and the publications of the DAR are closely related to the collection.

The DAR has sponsored, in cooperation with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS), archaeological excavations in Bahra, Upper Egypt that date to the Fatimid period. Before the invasion, the art school associated with the DAR promoted skills in the various artistic genres that are represented in the collection. At present, our yearly lecture series has been revived and is a focal point for historians and other specialists, featuring talks by prominent international scholars on various topics of Islamic history, architecture, archaeology and art.

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EXHIBITION

Islamic Art and Patronage

Treasures from Kuwait in Cambridge

“We are often to be reminded by the apologists of the avant-garde that art need not take the form of figurative painting or sculpture. It’s quite true. If support were needed for that contention, one need look no farther than this admirable exhibition of treasures in Cambridge (until June 25), a choice selection from the al-Sabah Collection which used to be housed at the Kuwait National Museum until that building was looted and burnt in 1990.”

—Martin Gayfirth, for the Daily Telegraph

A new milestone for the traveling exhibition of Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah was marked on 10 April, 1995 with the opening of Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait in the Adeane Gallery of the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge University. This was the only British venue for this exhibition, which ran from 11 April to 25 June, 1995, and admission was free.

The opening of the event was well attended. Graced by the presence of distinguished scholars and art experts, it was also an excellent opportunity for admirers of the collection to enjoy a pleasant reunion with a few old friends. The Earl of Gowrie, Chairman of the Arts Council of England, was in attendance, as were the Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Mr. Simon Jervis and the Keeper of the Near Eastern Department, Mr. Robin Crichton. Also in attendance were H.E. Mr. Khaled al-Duwaision, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the UK, and Sheikha Hussah al-Sabah, the Director of Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, who gave a few opening remarks at the happy occasion.

The 107 objects which constitute the exhibition were selected to represent Islamic art in the Kuwait collection, celebrating the development of the artistic traditions of Islam in its numerous regions, techniques, and style, from the early Umayyad empire to the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal dynasties. Its theme derives from the link between art and patronage. Building a collection is an art form in itself since a patron's interest and knowledge is reflected in the worth and importance of the pieces collected. The Muslim patrons who throughout the ages have encouraged the production of the kind of objects found in Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait have been the unsung heroes of an enlightened age. The collection of Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah contains some of the rarest and most important examples of Islamic art in the world.

Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait was received enthusiastically by the British press, which reviewed every aspect of the exhibition in great detail. The Daily Telegraph (“Missing in the Gulf,” 17 April, 1995) mentioned the exhibition within the greater context of the works
of Islamic art looted during the war. In a later article in the same newspaper ("Attraction of abstraction," 17 May, 1995), Martin Gaythorpe linked Islamic art with the great masters of abstract art in the West: "...there are works of art here on which—as with some pieces by the sculptor Carl Andre of Tate bricks fame—the viewer is supposed to walk up and down." But the resemblance to new Western art only goes so far, he points out. "Carpets are indeed one of the great glories of Islamic art, and this show contains a 17th century star-pattern Usak rug from Turkey. This certainly is art you can walk on. But in its richness of pattern and sumptuous saturation of colour it is a vastly more beautiful and compelling object than anything Andre and Co. have come up with."

He goes on further to say that, although much of Islamic art is representational, "the essence of Islamic art perhaps lies in abstract pattern and stylised foliage."

"Saved from the Storm" is the enthusiastic title of an article by Georgina Adam. In a six-page, beautifully illustrated article in *The Antique Collector* (April 1995), she gives background information on the collection and its owners before describing *Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait* in detail. She also discusses other collectors of Islamic art, some reputable, others less so, notably black market collectors, "the dark side of the Islamic art market." Delightfully, she has only praise for such collectors as Sheikh Nasser. "Happily, the al-Sabah Collection remains refreshingly apart from these undercurrents."

In the periodical *Country Life*, considerable mention is given to *Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait* ("Around the Salesrooms" by Huon Mallalieu, 18 May, 1995). Referring to the "small but sumptuous fraction of a collection built up over the past 20 years or so by a most remarkable couple," it described the theft of that collection to Baghdad and the subsequent burning of the museum.

That couple, Sheikh Nasser and Sheikha Hussah, were also discussed in an article by Geraldine Norman in *The Independent* ("How Priceless Treasures Survived the Gulf War" 30 April, 1995). Ms. Norman went into considerable detail in the article, describing the owners of the collection, the fortunate departure of the traveling exhibition "only days before the Iraqis invaded," the removal of the remaining contents of the DAR to Baghdad "by open truck," and the pieces that went missing. She went on to relate the tragedy of the 14th century Moroccan doors that "went up in smoke" for more information about these doors see: *Newsletter of the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah*, Vol. 2, Winter 1994-95, "The Story of My Favourite Object? and the "Enigma of the Three Mughal Emeralds" (see pages 10–14 of this issue) "They are, or were, among the finest emeralds in the world—possibly the finest."

Ms. Norman also speaks about the heroism of people connected with the collection. She relates tales of thwarted attempts by an employee to remove and hide works of art stored at Sheikh Nasser's house, as well as the successful camouflaging of the
entire coin collection behind a hastily constructed false wall, and Usama and Sue Kaoukji's daring concealment of the Curator of the collection, Manuel Keene, an American. "They could have been executed for harbouring a westerner..."

The opening at the Fitzwilliam Museum was preceded by a lecture on the Ruby Dagger in the DAR collection at the Peterhouse Lecture Theatre by the same Manuel Keene (see pages 6-9 for an abridged version of this lecture). Mr. Keene has been associated with the collection since its inception. He remained in Kuwait during the entire occupation—no small matter, considering he was both an American and Curator of the al-Sabah Collection, enduring a close call when he was held in custody by the Iraqis. He managed to successfully fake his identity. Defiantly, he also designed a Kufic inscription that said "May God Protect the State of Kuwait" and arranged to have it smuggled out of Kuwait to Sheikh Nasser Sabah al-Ahmed al-Sabah and Sheikha Hussah Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah, the owners of the collection. Despite the dangers he encountered, he survived and was a witness to the liberation of Kuwait. He then went to Iraq with the UN to retrieve the collection to which he is so dedicated. His lecture, "The Ruby Dagger in the DAR Collection, in the Context of Early Mughal Jewelry," was well-received by the audience and reflected both Mr. Keene’s considerable scholarly expertise and his profound interest and commitment to the collection.

Robert Skelton, former Keeper of the Indian Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum, introduced the lecture. Mr. Skelton has had a long-standing connection with the Kuwait collection, he was also one of the participating experts in the UN supervised return to Kuwait of the collection that had been looted during the Iraqi aggression.

Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait had the good fortune to escape this trauma, as it was already at the State Hermitage Museum in Leningrad at the time of that aggression. Originally, planned to reciprocate an exhibition from the State Hermitage Museum that opened at the DAR in April 1990, Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from
Kuwait was to start an international tour starting in Russia to be followed by a tour in the USA arranged by the Trust for Museum Exhibitions in Washington, Islamic Art and Patronage left Kuwait only a week prior to the Iraqi invasion. It opened, as planned, in St. Petersburg (then Leningrad) on 6 August and then moved to North America, starting in Baltimore, Maryland at the Walters Gallery in December 1990, with successive shows in Fort Worth, Texas at the Campbell Museum for Art, then on to the Emory Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia, the Scottsdale Cultural Centre in Scottsdale, Arizona, the Virginia Museum for Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia, the St. Louis Museum, St. Louis, Missouri, The Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec, and, finally, to the New Orleans Museum of Art in Louisiana.

This tour has been extended indefinitely as a result of the Iraqi aggression on Kuwait. After success in North America, Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait began its new European tour in Paris at l'Institut du Monde Arabe in February 1993, followed by an opening in The Netherlands at the Gemeentemuseum in the Hague in June. The exhibition extended into October, 1993, when it was moved to the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, from March to May, 1994.

The objects in this exhibition have been depicted and discussed by prominent scholars in the field of Islamic art. Studies by Oleg Grabar, Esin Atik, Marilyn Jenkins, Estelle Wheeden, Jonathan M. Bloom, Sheila Blair, Walter Denny and Manuel Keene have been published in a distinctive volume produced to accompany the exhibition and printed in English, French, Dutch and Italian. One of the predominant topics in this work is the impact of patronage on the Islamic arts exemplified in Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah.

Basin, Bronze, raised from sheet, engraved and inlaid with silver, Egypt or Syria, first half 14th c AD, diameter 49 cm, LNS 110M.

Sponsors included: the Ministry of Information, Kuwait; the Ministry of Oil, Kuwait; the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Kuwait; the Ministry of Defence, Kuwait; Kuwait Airways Corporation; Kuwait Banks Committee; Al-Fabo's Investments Co. W.L.L; Kuwait Investment Office; St. Martins Property Corporation Limited; St. Martins Hospitals Ltd.; the National Bank of Kuwait (International) plc and The United Bank of Kuwait plc.

Pair of Earrings, Probably Spain, 12th c AD, height with earwires 4.5 and 4.65 cm, LNS 30 J (a,b)

Left: Dish, earthenware, glazed and lustre painted, 9th c, Iraq, diameter 38.3 cm, LNS 98c
The Ruby Dagger in
the al-Sabah
Collection,
in the Context of Early Mughal Jewelry

An abridgement of the lecture presented by Manuel Keene, Curator of the al-Sabah Collection, at the Cambridge opening of the Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait exhibition.

Mr. Keene's lecture began with an explanation of how he came to work with this collection in 1982. He noted that at the time "...it was one of a handful of the best and most comprehensive collections of Islamic art in the world. Since that time, there has been a continuous augmentation of the Collection, and far and away, the most significant area of strengthening has been that of the jeweled arts such that, at this point, it is unparalleled in the world in the area of Islamic jewelry."

This lecture will attempt to outline some of the characteristics of jewelry work in the highest artistic period of Mughal rule, roughly the reigns of Jahangir (1605-27 AD) and his son Shah Jahan (1627-58), something which has been possible for the first time only in connection with this collection, because "no other collection has the size, breadth, depth, range and quality to offer the opportunity for such an inter-relational survey as this one."

For this lecture, and in his larger series of studies, Mr. Keene has singled out features by which to judge the date of Indian jewelry and art objects, establishing a kind of firm footing in this extremely difficult art-historical problem.

The Ruby Dagger, catalogued as LNS 25 J, is one of the key pieces in the al-Sabah Collection. "This is a dagger and sheath entirely covered with heavy gold and set with a bejeweledness of the finest rubies, emeralds, diamonds, banded agate, ivory and green and blue glass. It has a fine, double-edged, curved blade with gold overlay at the upper center; the baluster-form grip is topped with a gable-profile pommel bar, which was once surmounted by a bulb-like finial; the quillon is terminated by a tiger's head on one side and an elephant's head on the other, whose outsized 'second trunk' undulates upward as the knuckle-guard which is terminated by a tiny horse's head."

Outstanding features abound on this piece, among them: 1) the detailed floral and other engraving of the gold ground in between the stones; 2) the use of a dazzling array of the finest rubies, emeralds and diamonds (it has over two thousand four hundred separately cut, polished and set stones); 3) the ingenious use made of uncut and unpolished octahedral and flat diamond crystals; 4) the way in which stones are specially shaped to form edges or other mouldings of the piece, or are carved and projecting, as the animals' noses, tongues, eyebrows, etc.; 5) the glorious floral, avian and animal decoration, in which emerald-eyed ruby birds, an ivory-tusked elephant and a ruby-tongued tiger vie for attention with ruby and emerald trees and flowers, and emerald vines and tendrils 0.66 millimetres wide, etc. "Despite the dizzying multiplicity of elements, which are individually highly attractive in themselves, all is orchestrat-
Detail of a pendant in the form of a bird (Mughal or Deccan India, ca. 1600-50 AD) showing unique foliate details, and “pricked arcading,” a feature of early Mughal settings (al-Sabah Collection, LNS 28 J). Photomicrograph-M. Keene

Detail of a locket fitting from a dagger scabbard of the court workshops of Mughal India, ca. 1620 AD, showing details similar to those on the Ruby Dagger (al-Sabah Collection, SH XIX). Photomicrograph-M. Keene

Detail of a jeweled box (Mughal or Deccan India, ca. 1650-50 AD), showing fine artistic details and great design excellence in the cutting of the settings around the stones (al-Sabah Collection, SH XXXV). Photomicrograph-M. Keene
ed into an artistically controlled and satisfying, if dazzling, manifestation.

This famous dagger, Mr. Keene asserted, “was produced in the Imperial Mughal workshops sometime between about 1615 and about 1625, in the reign of Jahangir, one of the greatest connoisseurs who ever lived. In fact, there is a miniature painting in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (ca 1615), which shows just such a dagger in Jahangir’s own sash, and indeed it may be a representation of this very piece. However,” he continued, “the type was very popular in the period, as shown in numerous other contemporary paintings.”

A limited number of very close relatives of this dagger are in collections around the world, including those of the Wallace Collection, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and the Hermitage in St. Petersburg.

“The Hermitage, in fact, has a series of objects, taken from the Mughal Royal Treasury in 1739, which relate closely to our dagger group, and which were given to the Czar in 1741 by Nadir Shah of Iran, thus furnishing another, and ironclad, date before which they must have been produced.”

Much more precise dating, is provided by one especially crucial piece among the Hermitage objects, presented as diplomatic gifts by the ambassadors of Nadir Shah to the Czar, a wonderful archer’s ring, for it has the regnal name of Shah Jahan (“Sahib-i Qiran-i Than”/“Second Lord of the Auspicious [Planetary] Conjunction”) worked into the decoration of the piece itself, in the form of linear flat rubies! “No better conjunction could be hoped for than that in the very panel where this inscription occurs! Not only the line-set rubies but, the gold work as well, exhibits very much the same type of work seen on the al-Sabah dagger and others among its relatives. Therefore, at least some of the objects with these features would necessarily have been made in his reign (1627-58). All things considered, it is likely that the archer’s ring belongs to the earlier part of Shah Jahan’s reign, and I feel rather strongly that it is not later than 1635.”

Mr. Keene asserted that the large number of slides, which he showed in the second part of his presentation, of pieces from the al-Sabah Collection, “represent pieces which belong to what Sheikh Nasser likes to call the ‘good part’ of the 17th century, this by virtue of their sharing various of the features of the grand and firmly datable style represented by the Nasser al-Sabah dagger, or of the sharing of features with other pieces which in turn can be shown to be connected with the grand style. In fact, I do not believe that any of the pieces shown can be placed much beyond the end of Shah Jahan’s reign, and that quite a few of them belong to the earlier part of the ‘good part’ of the century.”
Haunted by a violent and mysterious past, three Mughal Emeralds adorned the Mughal Gallery at Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah. Looted from Colombian mines, how did they find their way, more than halfway around the world, into the workshops of the Mughal courts, and what can they tell us about the rulers who had them commissioned? But, where are they now? During the traumatic events in 1990/1991 their mysterious journey began again.
Emeralds were well known in the ancient world. The
historian Pliny the Elder depicted how wealthy
Romans exuberantly clad themselves with emerald
jewelry. Excavations throughout the Roman world testify
to Pliny’s account. Al-Biruni, the prolific scholar of the
10th century describes emeralds as a complex combina-
tion of beryllium-aluminum silicate in the form of colour-
less crystal, but when nature in its mysterious ways adds a
tiny trace of chromium, the crystal becomes green and is
termed emerald. Al-Tifashi (d. mid. 12th C.) in his book,
Flowers of Thought in the Gems of Stone (translated into
Latin in Otricht, Holland in 1784, published in Italian in
Florence in 1818, then in Bologna in 1906), tells us about
the characteristics of emeralds. "When you look at them,
the tension in your eyes will disappear, when you wear
them you will not be attacked by epilepsy. They are also a
good remedy for dysentery." He classified emeralds into
four categories: thubabi (fly), ribani (basil), salghi (cabbage), and sabouni (soap).

Historically, emeralds were mined extensively in Qus,
Egypt. Although the emeralds found there were not of high
quality (they were highly included with white veins and
had a dull luster) they were however, in great demand and
sought after for their greenness. Egypt’s pale green, heav-
ily included emeralds were the main source of emeralds,
until the discovery of South American mines by the
Spanish conquistadors in the early 16th century.

Spanish conquistador Gonzalo Jiménez, upon discov-
ering that the natives were using deep green emeralds for
decoration, used force to make the natives in Columbia
disclose the location of their emerald mines. Thus, the El-
Chivor mine was discovered. In 1567, the Muzo mine was
also discovered, after subjecting the Incans to torture to
reveal its location. The finds were incredibly deep-green
gem emeralds with an extraordinary luster.

The gems mined during the first one hundred years of
production at the El-Chivor and Muzo mines were of a far
greater size, purity, and beauty than the gems that were
mined later. Benjamin Zucker, a renowned gem-stone col-
lector and dealer describes Colombian emeralds: "The lustre
and purity of colour is called in the trade 'Old Mine,'
and it has become a connoisseur's term for the finest and
purest shade of green accompanied by a highly polished
lustre. It is a surprising geological fact that as one digs
deeper, the crystals tend to be smaller, and the colour
tends to be less intense." This fact means that the gems
mined during the first one hundred years of production at
El-Chivor and Muzo mines were of a far greater size, puri-
ty, and beauty, than the gems that were mined later.
Colombian emeralds, even those mined recently, are gen-
erally a far more intense green than those from mines in
Brazil, Africa, or Pakistan.

An example of a fine 'Old Mine' Colombian emerald crystal may be seen in the Topkapi Treasure in Istanbul. The crystal is set in a pendant and is cut as a hexagonal prism. It was originally intended for the Tomb of the Prophet in Medina. Manuel Keene, the Curator of the al-Sabah Collection suspects that one of Dar al-Athar's emeralds must have come from the same crystal, based on its size, colour, and lustre. He still hopes to prove this idea.

The Colombian emeralds were sent everywhere, and like any commodity, they went to the highest bidders. Obviously, at the time, that would have included the Mughal court. Thus, the Mughal rulers in the 17th century were able to acquire the finest emeralds, in colour, size, and purity. The historian Abul-Fazl gives an account of Akbar visiting the royal workshop in his palace, with an ax in his hand, breaking the gems of inferior quality.

Convincing evidence that these Colombian emeralds reached the Mughal court is given by J.B. Tavernier, a famous French gem dealer who visited India during the mid-1600s. He traded a large number of emeralds to pay for the acquisition of diamonds, from Golconda mines, for France. He wrote: "As for emeralds, it is a vulgar error to say they come originally from the East. And therefore, when jewellers and gold-smiths, to prefer a deep-coloured emerald inclining to black, tell ye, it is an oriental emerald, they speak that which is not true. I confess I could never discover in what part of our continent those stones are found. But sure am I, that the Eastern part of the world never produced any of those stones, neither in the continent nor in the islands. True it is that since the discovery of America those stones have been often brought rough from Peru to the Philippine Islands, whence they have been imported into Europe, but this is not enough to make them oriental.'

In India during the 16th and 17th centuries, if an emerald had marked inclusions, or if it was not of uniform colour, it was always cut in cabochon shapes. These gems were shaped by grinding away part of the crystal. To engrave an emerald is a different story. The master craftsmen would work with only the finest material because the process was not only extremely slow and laborious but, it was also quite perilous since emeralds have a tendency to shatter along internal fault lines.

An excellent chronological classification of the small number of surviving engraved Mughal emeralds has been made by Robert Skelton, former Keeper of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. He places them in three categories: the Hexagonal Meditational Emeralds of Royal Pleasure; the Rosette or Poppy Flowerhead Emeralds and; Emeralds with Calligraphy. The Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah collection boasted at least one emerald from each of these three categories before the occupation, and they are considered by some to be the rarest and most beautiful examples of each.

I. The Bibi Emerald

Of the type I category, "Hexagonal Meditational Emeralds of Royal Pleasure," only two Mughal emeralds are known to have been engraved in cameo. One of these is "The Taj Mahal" emerald of 141 carats, dating to about 1630-50, the other is from the DAR collection, "The Bibi Emerald" (LNS 28 HS, 233.45 carats, ca 1575-1595). These stones were meant to be meditated upon and they are both rendered in a highly naturalistic style.
"The Bibi Emerald" is unique, according to most gem experts and art historians for many reasons: purity, intensity of colour, size, engraving, and most of all, beauty. Manuel Keene describes the "Bibi" as "of tabular form, the back being slightly convex." The stone itself is almost certainly from the first group of major emeralds from El-Chivor Colombian mine, plundered from the treasures of the Incas or mined by the Spaniards, before 1565, when the lode seems to have been exhausted.

Stylistically, it has been dated to circa 1575-1585/95 by comparing its carving to the sandstone relief panels in a Turkish Sultan's house at Fathpur Sikri. Both Muslim and Hindu art vocabulary are omnipresent in this piece, advocating what Akbar had wished to achieve in his enormous empire, a Wajdat al-Wujud or, the Unity of Existence.

"The carving on this stone," Momen Latif, an art historian, tells us, "of plant forms within the geometric design of the hexagon, asymmetrically fills the space in the most subtle manner possible, never unbalancing the surface and making one aware, at all times, of the magnificence of the stone itself." The plants are identified as "wind swept palm trees," Ashoka trees, or a stand of bamboo or papyrus. A microcosm of Jannah, paradise, as suggested by the flora on the stone. In purely Islamic terms, this Indian tradition of asymmetry and naturalism is first seen in the "Mihrab Screen," dated 1191, of the Quwwat ul-Islam in Delhi, where Islamic calligraphy juxtaposes free plant forms as it does, much later, at Fathpur Sikri, where this emerald was probably carved.

Momen Latif, describes this Indo-Muslim art form: "This new art is perfectly represented by the carved Mughal emerald LNS 28 HS in the al-Sabah Collection. The selective realism of its foliage, rather than following the off-repeated naturalism of European botanical drawing or the strict geometric infrastructure of Islamic art, has deep roots in India."

II. The Kidney-shaped Emerald

Of the type II category, "Rosette or Poppy Flowerhead Emeralds," the DAR's collection includes "The Kidney-shaped Emerald" (LNS 29 HS). Of 179.6 carats and Tawaii shape, "The Kidney-shaped Emerald" has been dated to the last quarter of the 17th century.

"Rosette or Poppy Flowerhead Emeralds" are intended to be part of bazuband, necklace or other jewelry. They have less complex patterns than type I emeralds and often have only a single flower. Another feature of type II emeralds is that most are engraved in intaglio.

Missing from the DAR collection since the occupation, "The Kidney-shaped Emerald" features a spreading poppy pattern. To understand this emerald with the poppy design, we must first examine the reign of Akbar's son, Jahangir, and that of his grandson, Shah Jahan.

Jahangir inherited a secure kingdom. In March of 1620, Jahangir made his first visit to Kashmir. He wrote in his memoir, "Kashmir is a garden of eternal spring." This first impression of the emperor was reflected in all forms of art in his time. carpets, textiles, jewels, etc. Flower designs gradually departed from the naturalistic representations of Akbar's reign, to an increasingly free-flowing, stylised, interpretation under Jahangir. The poppy, a definite favorite in the decorative patterns of Jahangir's artistic vocabulary, became his religious and political insignia. The kidney-shaped emerald, with its own opening poppy flower, should be viewed in this Kashmiri context.
The delicacy of the engraving sets this gem far above the other surviving calligraphic Mughal emeralds. It is also far superior to the inscription on other gems, such as those in the Iranian Royal collection, among others. The engraver had such control over his medium that it is difficult to believe that such an inscription is engraved into an emerald. This gem gives us a key to understanding the aspirations of Aurangzeb, the son of Shah Jahan, who seized the throne from his father.

Those three emeralds discussed above, far from being esoteric, highly decorative objects are in fact central object lessons that explain the reigns of Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb.

True to their nature, the Mughal emeralds have once again embarked on a mysterious journey. Haunted by their violent and mysterious past, they vanished during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, and have not been seen since. It is hoped that they will resurface and be returned to the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah but, there are those who fear that they may have made their way into the black market or worse, that they may have been cut up into smaller, less valuable, but resellable, gems. That would truly be a tragedy.

The spiritual essence of Mughal India was the remarkable effort to establish Paradise on earth. Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan, the three great, strove to create a mirror of the promised paradise to come. The word ‘Paradise’ itself is a transliteration of the old Persian ‘pairidaeza’—a walled garden. Gardens are green and so are emeralds, the greenness of Paradise.

III. The Throne Verse Emerald

Of the type III category, “Emeralds with Calligraphy,” the third emerald in this study (LNS 36 HS) is a 73.2 carat hexagonal stone, engraved with the al-Kursi verse from the Qur’an and dates from circa 1650. The writing of the Qur’an was a pious act in which not only professional scribes, but also, rulers and the more ordinary devout and literate Muslims engaged. A large measure of contemplative life entered on the written word.
The seasonal rains have been plentiful the last few years in Kuwait. Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah has also enjoyed a similar deluge—in the form of gifts for the library. Our many friends have made these thoughtful gestures, and they are truly appreciated. Their kind consideration for the restoration and improvement of the library will be of benefit to many scholars, now and in future.

Asian Art


Firenze e la sua Immagine
(Venice: Marsilio Editore, 1994)
Gift of Dr. Sanda Bujtes, Sottore Funzionale Cultura, Comune di Firenze, ITALY, 1995.

Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review
Gift of Professor Roy R. Mottahedeh, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University, USA, 1994.

Levante
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National Museum of Ras Al-Khaimah

Oriental and India Office Collections (GIOC) Newsletter, Autumn 1994

The Old Town and the Royal Castle in Warsaw
(Warsaw: Arkady, 1988)

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Qantara
(Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe)
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(Frankfurt am Main: Museum für Kunsthandwerk, 1995)

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(Zurich: Museum Rietberg, 1987)

An Egyptian Bestiary
by Dominca Arnold

The Minor Qur'anic Commentary of Abu 'Abd ar-Rahman Muhammad b. Musaayn as-Sulami (d.412/1021)
by Garenet Bowering
(Beirut: Dar al-Moawja, 1995)
Gift of the author, Gerhard Bowering, Professor of Islamic Studies, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey, USA, 1996.

Ottoman Turkish Carpets
by Ferenc Batari
(Budapest: Kaszthelyi, 1994)

Islamic Art
by Barbara Brend

Persian Painting
by Sheila Carby
(New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993)

The Low Countries: Arts and Society in Flanders and the Netherlands. 6th Yearbook
by Jozef Delau,
(Fromagers: Sichting On Eerdeff, 1993-94)
Gift of H.F. Ambassador Ahmed el-Abirin, the Ambassador of Kuwait to Belgium, 11 October 1993.

A Friendship Two Centuries Old: The United States and the Sultanate of Oman
by Harmaen Frederick Ellis
(Washington, D.C.: The Middle East Institute, Sultan Qaboos Center, 1993)
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On Damascus Steel
by Leo S. Figiel, M.D.
(Atlanta, Fonia: Atlanta Arts Press, 1991)
Gift of the author, Dr. Leo S. Figiel, Atlanta, Florida, 1995.

The Hungarian National Museum
edited by Istvan Fodor and Beatrich Co., Lengyel
(Budapest: Corvina, 1932)

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by Dr. Maria Vittoria Fontana (Naples: Istituto Universitario Oraiente, 1994)

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by Alastair Hamilton
Gift of Dr. Robert Jones, Director - Near and Middle East Department, Bernard Quaich Ltd., London, UK.

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by Ulrich Haarmann
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Gift of the author, Prof. Dr. Ulrich Haarmann, Director, Sarhan für Orientafistik, Christian-Albrechts-Universität, Kiel, GERMANY, 1995.

The Arab Journal for the Humanities, No. 50

Islamic Architecture
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Gift of the author, Prof. Robert Hillenbrand, Professor of Islamic Art at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK, 1994.

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by Derya Johnson-Davies [Illustrated by Sabaha Kheir]

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by Samir al-Khalil
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by Sabaha Khemir
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by Prof. Amjad Bonhur Prochazka

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These four books by the late Prof. Prochazka are the gift of H.E. Khaled Ma'arif, the Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Czech Republic, 1995.

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Suleyman the Magnificent

Arte Islamica a Napoli
by Umberto Scenato
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by Richard Schofield
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by B.J. Slot.

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by K.N. Chaudhuri,

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Gift of Dr. Tom Travas, President & Vice-Chancellor, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, CANADA, 1995.

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The Kimberley: Horizons of Stone
by Alastair McGregor and Quentin Chester
(Adams: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995)

The Muslim World, January-April, 1992
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Iraqi Responses to International Demands
by Center for Research and Studies on Kuwait (Kuwait: Al-Khat, 1994)
Gift of the Center.
Kuwait: The Development of a Historical Identity

Islamic Art & Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, an exhibition from the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah collection, one of the best known cultural assets of modern Kuwait, presented an excellent opportunity to discuss the lesser known topic of the history of the State of Kuwait. Although much of this history is only sketchily known, Kuwait's past has recently become a subject of discussion the world over. A conference, entitled Kuwait: The Development Of An Historic Identity, was held on 19 May, 1995, in the Peterhouse Lecture Theatre in Cambridge and was followed by a reception and special viewing of the exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum.

This conference was the first to cover the history of Kuwait in the period before the oil boom. It brought together speakers who have been in the forefront of research into what is certainly not the best known period in the history of the Gulf region. Its purpose was to provide a platform for a stimulating exchange of knowledge and opinions. It is hoped that this conference has encouraged further research and has contributed to a better general knowledge of the subject.

The conference was divided into three sessions. The first dealt with the early period, the first references to Kuwait, and also some material from the still largely unresearched history of Kuwait during the nineteenth century. The second dealt with the international aspects of the "Kuwait Crisis" at the beginning of the twentieth century. The third session concerned the drawing of Kuwait's borders and the political and social changes in the period before the oil boom.

The sessions were chaired by Sir Roger Tomkys, Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge. The speakers were Dr. B.J. Slot (General State Archives, The Hague), Professor Dr. Ulrich Haarmann (University of Kiel, Germany), Prof. Georgy Bondarevsky (Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow), Dr. Richard Schofield (SCAS, London), and Dr. Suhail Shuaib; (Kuwait).

Kuwait was in existence by late seventeenth century. It featured an active merchant and seafaring community just outside the borders of the Ottoman province of Baghdad. Trade tended to concentrate there because of the unstable situation in the Ottoman territories nearby. Kuwait's central location served as a link in trade both by sea to the East and, overland to the West. In the nineteenth century it was characterized by one foreign observer as the only really Arab trading town in the Gulf. In the course of the nineteenth century Kuwait was confronted with Ottoman political claims which the Ottomans were never able to realize. Kuwait's position in the middle of conflicting interests in the Gulf was termed by the international press in 1902 the "Kuwait Crisis." Kuwait was able to protect and maintain its identity by means of an often uneasy relationship with Britain, however, the British Protectorate provided a stable international environment in which more modern political structures of Kuwait developed.

Presented here, are brief summaries of the papers presented by the speakers at the conference. A more thorough presentation of the proceedings of this conference will be published in England in mid-1997. It will be edited by Dr. B.J. Slot (General State Archives, The Hague).

Laying Out an Historic Identity: Foreign Observations on Kuwait's Position From the Earliest Scribbles on Portuguese Maps to the First World War

by Dr. B.J. Slot

The scope of this paper is a general survey of the principal sources of the history of Kuwait, from seventeenth century notes on maps until the end of the nineteenth century, before it became a focus of world attention in the crisis that erupted in the 1890's when Kuwait was faced with unrealized Ottoman political claims.

Portuguese and other cartographic sources from the seventeenth century onwards show, with increasing clarity, markings on the territory of Kuwait. There are also some early, sketchy, references to the Ubai tribe who would soon become the leading tribe in independent Kuwait.

A report, by the head of the Dutch East India Company on Kharg Island, gives the first summary impressions of a political and economic identity on its way to full political independence. The report mentions a remnant of Kuwait's dependence upon the Banu Khalid, who had conquered the
Ottoman Al-Hasa in the 1660's, but this dependence was largely nominal.

After 1756, a trickle of European sources indicate the existence of a small independent merchant state, a safe haven outside the Ottoman borders. The most interesting aspect of Kuwaiti trade was that it was the monopoly of local merchants and, unlike the trading towns of the Ottoman Empire and the Gulf, its trade was not concentrated in the hands of expatriates.

During the course of the nineteenth century, other powers became increasingly aware of Kuwait's interesting geographic position, and the first threats of foreign intervention became apparent. The first mention of the possibilities of Kuwait as a railway terminal, which appears as early as 1867, led to the realization; then, that plans would be easier to implement if Kuwait lost its independence—a foreshadowing of the later crisis that arose around German plans for the Baghdad Railway. Kuwait was described by some observers as an independent merchant republic much like the Republic of Venice. It was the only trading town in the Gulf with a real Arab identity; in other ports foreign merchants were prominent, while Kuwait's trade was dominated by locals. From 1870 on, Kuwait came under increasing Ottoman pressure. This pressure became most threatening in the last years of the nineteenth century, but Kuwait managed to maintain its identity by prudent maneuvering between the conflicting great powers.

**Early Sources on Kuwait:**

**Murtada b. ‘Ali b.' Alwan and Carsten Niebuhr - An Arab and a German Report from the Eighteenth Century**

**by: Prof. Dr. U. Haarmann**

This study deals with two important early texts on Kuwait, both linked with Germany, and discusses the background of the authors of these texts.

The earliest reference to Kuwait as a considerable town is in the account of Sayyid Murtada, a pilgrim from Damascus, which is kept in the State Library in Berlin. This account shows Kuwait already as a sizable place (comparable to the important oasis town of Al-Hasa ruled by the Banu Khalid) and a point of concentration of trade between Basra and Al-Hasa.

In 1765, the German traveler Carsten Niebuhr, the first scientist to give a detailed account of the Gulf, visited Kharg on the final leg of a scientific expedition commissioned by the King of Denmark. While he was on Kharg, Niebuhr collected information about the area. There, he also obtained information on Kuwait, which he published in his *Beschreibung von Arabien*. Niebuhr was the first European to put the name of Kuwait in print and he gave important information about its growing political and economic identity.

**The Kuwait of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah in Russian and German Policy**

**by: Prof. G. Bondarevsky**

At the end of the nineteenth century, Kuwait became, rather suddenly, the focus of a complex international wrangle. The Ottoman Empire and Britain were the protagonists, but an important part was played by the Russian and German Empires, whose rapidly expanding economies were looking for new opportunities.

Sheikh Mubarak made intelligent use of the multiplicity of international interests in the position of Kuwait. He used Russian and German ambitions to prevent Kuwait from becoming crushed between the conflicting Ottoman and British attempts to expand their spheres of influence.

Russian merchants, consular personnel and warships visited Kuwait. A steamship line was established between Odessa and the Gulf and there were plans for Russian shipping on the Euphrates and the Tigris. German diplomacy had interests in the increasing activities of its ally, the Ottoman Empire. German plans for the Baghdad Railway included plans for a terminal in Kuwait.

The German diplomat Steinrich was sent to Kuwait in 1900 and the position of Kuwait became an important issue in German-British relations. The Amir of Kuwait had a formal correspondence with the Russian Government in 1901, and the position of Kuwait played an important role in the activities of the Russian embassies in London and Berlin.
Britain and Kuwait’s Borders, 1902-1923
by: Richard Schofield

Mr. Schofield’s paper discussed Britain’s interests in the setting of territorial limits for Kuwait during the first decade of the twentieth century, outlining the various proposals for a territorially-defined Kuwait, made both before and during the Anglo-Ottoman negotiations, that resulted in the 1913 Anglo-Ottoman Convention. The zonal territorial arrangements for Kuwait (the so-called red and green lines) were introduced by the July 1913 Anglo-Ottoman Convention. These territorial arrangements form the basis of modern Kuwait’s international land boundaries with both Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Mr. Schofield’s paper enquires how it was that these lines, introduced by the instrument, were arrived at, and how it was that these definitions of the sheikdom’s boundaries continued to be utilized, post World War I, with that unratiﬁed convention now ofﬁcially defunct.

Following the Great War and the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the territorial deﬁnition of Kuwait was no longer a burning issue for Britain. The unratiﬁed July 1913 Anglo-Ottoman Convention was defunct in an ofﬁcial sense, while Britain’s commitments of October 1914, to Sheikh Mubarak al-Sabah of Kuwait, had clouded the issue of where Kuwait’s northern limits lay. Britain would probably have recognized Kuwaiti claims to the modern-day Iraqi localities of Safwan and Umm Qasr had the al-Sabah been aware that the opportunity existed to extend such claims.

By the turn of the 1920’s, the signiﬁcant diminution in the territorial authority of the Kuwaiti ruler, south of Kuwait Bay, was alarming British policy-makers. Had Britain not intervened decisively at the height of the Jahra Crisis, the southern reaches of the sheikdom would probably have been subsumed into Ibn Saud’s expanding Najdi domain. The territorial arrangements for southern Kuwait, introduced by Sir Percy Cox, that gave away two-thirds of the sheikdom with a stroke of a pencil need to be treated with caution, however. His action was only the ratification of an earlier decision made by Britain’s authorities in the Gulf, which had been communicated informally to Ibn Saud.

Ostensibly, the combined effect of the December 1922 Uqair Award and an exchange of letters, the following spring, between Cox in Baghdad and the British Political Agent in Kuwait, had been to recognize the inner zonal limit (red line) of the July 1913 Anglo-Ottoman Convention as constituting Kuwait’s southern boundaries with Najd and the outer zonal limit (green line) of the same instrument as constituting Kuwait’s northern boundaries with Iraq.

Social and Political Development in Kuwait Prior to 1961
by: Dr. Sulaim K. Shuhaiber

Dr. Shuhaiber’s study is primarily concerned with social and political development in Kuwait up to 1961. It first examines the formation of Kuwaiti society (during the period between 1700-1900) and considers how the main social groups within Kuwaiti society functioned within the merchant-city-state which existed prior to the discovery of oil (1900-1950). The study also discusses the impact that oil wealth had upon the government and society (1950-1961) before a constitution was drafted and promulgated in 1962.

The argument of the study is that, in spite of the impact of oil wealth, political behaviour in Kuwait can only be understood in the context of the continuity of development from the earliest days, particularly in the position of the ruling family within Kuwaiti society and the tradition of shura (consultation), both of which were established before 1961, and which have been modiﬁed but not abandoned since then. It has therefore been the intention of this study to avoid the general preoccupations of “political modernization,” and to examine “political development” in Kuwait in terms of the existing relations between the main social groups comprising Kuwaiti society. It is thus an examination of how the merchant-city-state functioned before its transformation into a modern constitutional monarchy, and the way in which its main social groups have evolved during that time.

[The proceedings of this conference will be published in a separate volume.]
Beautifully Written

A word or two on the art of calligraphy.

An abstract of a lecture given by Prof. Sami Makram in Arabic for Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah at Bayt Lothan.

Professor Makram in addition to being the Chairman of the Department of Arab studies and Near Eastern languages at the American University of Beirut, is the author of more than 20 books in Islamic thought, Arabic literature, history and art. He is the son of the great calligrapher Sheikh Nasseeb Makram. He has himself written the Arabic letter. In this abstract of his lecture, he has offered us these thoughts:

The intrinsic property of art is that it establishes a unity; its disparity is restricted by approach, means and instrument.

Arabic calligraphy began as a religious art, glorifying the Qur'an, the Word of God. From this source, early Moslem calligraphers strove to enhance these qualities that delight the senses: developing the Arabic letter, making it the chief art of Islam; the art with which other Islamic arts such as architecture, epigraphy and miniature painting would interact.

Despite its artistic influence, Arabic calligraphy remained fundamentally as a discourse with, and a challenge to the mind. Hence, its adherence to aesthetic rules: seeking harmony and proportion among various letters; maintaining a sophisticated style while expressing human, animal, floral or geometrical figures, even when these figures were not necessarily based on a relationship with the meaning of the text being illuminated.

This artistic beauty achieved by the traditional calligraphers draws the modern artists' attention. The significance of the Arabic letter in contemporary "plastic" art is, at one and the same time, not only an aesthetic phenomenon but also a medium of expression, due to its mobility, flexibility and elasticity. Based on the hands of those artists who took their inspiration from the Arabic letter, the result has been the emergence of new art in a variety of schools: inspirational; expressionistic; textualistic; and abstract.

Finally, there is an approach which he calls "AH-Horoojiah" which has made the Arabic letter its starting point for the purpose of revealing it as an aesthetic end in itself. Concurrent with its expressive nature this transcends it to impressionistic atmospheres where imagination, sensuality and passion float freely and meet with thought and reason. This is the school where the artist is no longer detached from his work of art, in the manner of the traditional calligrapher, but is rather unified with his art and associated with the recipient in passions, sensations and thoughts, by which the recipient may enter the calligrapher's special, imaginative world.
Astonishment in the 1001 Nights

An abstract of a lecture given by
Roy P. Mottahedeh

Dr. Roy P. Mottahedeh, Harney Professor of History at Harvard University and Chairman of the Committee on Islamic Studies at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard, gave a lecture entitled Astonishment in the 1001 Nights on 15 January, 1993 for Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah.

Prof. Mottahedeh came to Kuwait at the personal invitation of H.E. William Fullerton, the former British Ambassador to Kuwait. Ambassador Fullerton was kind enough to suggest that Prof. Mottahedeh give a lecture at the DAR, during his brief stay in Kuwait, and his suggestion was greatly appreciated. The DAR was pleased to be able to present such a distinguished scholar as Prof. Mottahedeh, whose many publications, such as The Mantle of the Prophet, reflect his scholarly concentration in the field of Islamic history.
The title, *Astonishment in the 1001 Nights*, may suggest a fairly straightforward project; namely, to relate that genre of literature called, in Arabic, ṣajāʿīb, to its obvious cognates and possible derivatives in The 1001 Nights. The project here is to describe the place of the emotion of astonishment called ṣajāb or ṭaʿajāb, and the ṣajāʿīb, those objects or events which inspire this astonishment.

Arabic has a rich vocabulary for emotions of astonishment, and this paper will not deal with all of them. Here we are concerned with ṣajāb and its derivatives and to a lesser extent, with gharīb and its derivatives.

Ṣajāb and its derivatives are used several times in the Qurʾan, significantly, of the Abī al-Kaḥlī, the Companions of the Cave, the Qurʾan says: (XVIII:9) “They were wonders (Ṣajāban) among our signs.” The common Qurʾanic theme of the world as replete with signs of God present to make any aware person mindful of God is in this verse further refined, for some of these signs, in distinction from others, are “wonders.” In his justly admired discussion of Qurʾanic vocabulary, as-Raghib al-Isfahani, who lived in the late tenth century A.D., explains that ṣajāb and ṭaʿajāb are states which come to a person at the time of that person’s ignorance of the sabāb or cause of something.” A definition along these lines becomes standard in the scholastic tradition. Al-Jurfani says that ṣajāb is “the change of the nafs (spirit or soul) through something the cause of which is unknown and goes out of the ordinary.” This last element of ṣajāb, the perception that something is out of the ordinary, is, of course, the element that gives ṣajāʿīb their larger career in Arabic and Islamic thought and accounts for the diversity of things that are sometimes considered wondrous and marvellous.

Our second term here, gharīb, often appears paired with ṣajīb in The 1001 Nights and, again, as-Raghib al-Isfahani is one of our shrewdest commentators on its meaning: “One says, of anything separated away, that is gharīb, and of anything which is not similar to its species that it is gharīb.” An important element often present in the gharīb, but not in the ṣajīb, is precisely this sensation of separation and hence loneliness.

The ṣajīb (and, to a lesser extent, the gharīla) are not only the self-description of the Nights in the rubrics of its subsections but they also lie at the very heart of the self-description of the frame tale in which the Nights exists. Ṣajāb plays some role in this strange tale of Schadenfreude between the two brother kings, Shahriyar and Shahzaman, at the very beginning. When the kings find themselves betrayed by their women, they seek suʿawan, consolation for both the hamma, and—a most important word—waswas (to which we will return), which they feel. And, in fact, when the two kings hear the story of the woman captured by the ʿinīt, who nevertheless deceives the ʿinīt about her encounters with men, they [that is, the two kings] were struck with the utmost astonishment (ṭaʿajāb) ṣajāban ʿazimān and rejoiced . . . and sajī, ‘The deceit of women is great.’ Shahriyar decides that his suʿawan is to this degree sufficient that he could bear to return to his kingdom, though only at the cost of killing his consort at the end of each night.

Ṣajāb, however, appears with its full force in the frame tale when Scheherazade assumes her role as story teller to Shahriyar; for, at the end of the very first night, her sister Duniazzaz says to her: “How good your story is and how astonishing” to which Scheherazade answers: “What is this compared to the story I will tell on the next night, if I live and this king spares me; for it is better and more astonishing.” Here the Nights enter into collusion with the reader in the construction of a system of what we might call suspense; if something astonishing is produced and something more astonishing promised, there is interest and, consequently, hope; and they repeat variants of this formula for many nights to come.

This dynamic of astonishment, consolation, temporary reprise, suspense and hope is reinforced by the very first story that Scheherazade tells, namely: *The Merchant and the Genie*. When the three shaikhs see that the Genie is about to kill the merchant, one of them approaches and says “...if I relate to you the story of myself and this gazelle and you find it astonishing and strange (Ṣajāb and gharīb) in comparison, more so than what happened to the merchant, will you give me a third of your claim on the merchant’s life?” The Genie agrees and finds the stories of each successive shaikh, more astonishing and strange than the story preceding, until he was astonished to the utmost limit of astonishment, and shook with ecstasy. Having been adequately paid off in the coin of astonishment, he frees the merchant.

Centrally important as astonishment is to the frame story, it is also extremely important to the internal dynamics of many of the stories enframed such as *The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad*, and, in particular, the story of the
third Qalandari Dervish, which ends with the exclamation "This is one of the most amazing coincidences."

This turn of phrase points to a variety of "astonishing things" which are important in many stories in The 1001 Nights and are particularly important in this cycle of stories. These are events that are "astonishing things," not just objects such as magnetic mountains or locks or self-transforming jinns. Some such events as the involvement of no less than the fabulous Harun Al-Rashid and his Grand Vizir are "strange and astonishing things" because the cause of their appearance in the sequence of events is, at least at first, unknown and out of the ordinary.

The second dervish is somewhat more responsible for his fate: (drunkenness causes him to make an evil spirit aware that he is having an affair with the evil spirit’s wife). The evil spirit transforms the dervish into a monkey but, with all former human abilities except speech. He sheds "astonishingly" human tears and makes "astonishingly" human gestures of supplication. Then the monkey indicates he can write, and he proceeds to write seven different poems in seven styles of handwriting. Naturally, everyone who encounters the monkey is in a high state of astonishment. Eventually, he regains his human form but loses an eye, is banished, and becomes a dervish.

The third dervish, whose name is ‘Ajib, "The Astonishing One," starts by saying "My story is stranger (aghaibah) and more astonishing (‘ajib) because the other two were badly treated by fate (al-qada’ wal-qadar) but I am the one who pulled my fate to me with my hand. ‘Ajib is a curious man, and his curiosity leads him to all sorts of aghaibah. He met ten one-eyed men who live in a palace and welcome ‘Ajib on the condition that he not ask their story, especially the cause of their blindness. "But wicked inner suggestions (waswas) became too much for me and my patience was over burdened (‘ila sabr)."

At first he is transported to an incomparably splendid palace, he is wonderfully entertained by forty incomparably beautiful princesses, who allow him on the condition that he not open one specific door among the forty doors in the palace. But he cannot control his impertinent curiosity: "My inner mind was preoccupied and my soul whispered wicked suggestions to me and Satan passed judgment against me because of my wretchedness, and I did not find the patience (sabr) to control myself from opening it." Of course, as a consequence of opening this door he loses sight in one eye and is expelled from this earthly paradise. On encountering the ten blind men who had once taken him in they tell him that their meddlesomeness (fudul) caused each of them in their turn to suffer the same fate.

The story is by no means peculiar in the features that interest us, namely: the psychological dimensions of the characters within the stories and the psychological dimensions that the Nights suggest should exist between the readers and the text. While medieval Arabic literary criticism gives us an unusually rich analysis of certain formal aspects of language, it has always seemed uninterested in structural analysis of the development of characters and of plot. Do we have really satisfactory discussions of, or even terms for, such elements as suspense and irony, two terms which well apply to the stories discussed above?

Such analysis is not present, at least in part, because two other kinds of analysis took its place: analyses of states of mind and analyses of the moral value of these states of mind and their relation to events.

Suspense implies curiosity, and here the moral dimension of the structural analysis of plot and character comes into play. Curiosity is of more than one kind and the third dervish makes it fully clear that, what this author has translated as "impertinent curiosity" or "meddlesomeness," (fudul) is responsible for his misfortune. But fudul is one of several bad character traits that spring from waswas, "wicked inner suggestions" or "inner disquiet" which, along with hamm, anxiety, is supposed to be stilled by the stories of the astonishing things that have been encountered by others. For we are explicitly told on certain occasions that astonishing things gave consolation, sulwan, for the inner disquiet and anxieties that exist. Some stories drive home the moral need to accept suspense by explicit instructions not to ask the reason for the astonishing things, or else suffer terrible consequences.

The self-control that they are asked to exercise is sabr, "patience" or "patience to control one’s self." Harun ar-Rashid explains his lack of self-control by saying: "My patience was exhausted." And here patience to control oneself emerges as partially cognate in meaning with suspense itself. Sabr is the quality that should sustain us between the appearance of astonishing things and their explanation, or, at least, stop the murderous king or evil spirit until he hears something more astonishing and yet stranger.

Beyond this, astonishment and patience also would
seem to be the relation that the *Nights* wishes to establish between the reader and the text; there are astonishing things to explain, and astonishing things to anticipate, and the reader or listener must have *sabr* until the narrative explains them. This nexus of astonishment and *sabr* is, to our thinking, somehow a cognate of suspense.

Irony presents us with a similar problem. Who can doubt the existence of irony in the *1001 Nights*? But what would we call it, in the vocabulary of medieval Arabic criticism, or in the terms mentioned by *The 1001 Nights* themselves? Certainly, irony is abundant in the *Nights*, particularly in the partial—and we would say—ironical duplication of events, as when the third dervish, *Qajib*, later becomes partly blinded. It is interesting to note that one of the better English-Arabic dictionaries offers, among possible translations for "ironic": *fi-hi tawriyah ta'ajubiyyah*, "containing astonishing concealments."

It has been argued that irony is a close relative of allegory; because, while allegory tells us one story by telling us another, irony often implies that the reader knows parts of the story of which the participants are not aware. Several critics have argued persuasively for allegorical readings of *The 1001 Nights*, in particular András Hamori, and it is important to emphasize that partial replication, so important to allegory, is also important to irony. When we argue that a moral vocabulary is used in *The 1001 Nights* to explain its own mechanics and this vocabulary offers us a useful language for literary criticism of the *Nights*, we do not mean a moralistic or moralizing vocabulary. It is important to remember that Arabic literature has several genres which began as overtly homiletic literature and subsequently became profane. One example is the genre called *al-Faraj b'd as-Shidda*, *Relief After Stress*, which is religious in a writer like Ibn Abi Dunya but profane in Tanukhi. Similarly, the *Maqamat* started as a homiletic genre but are not so in Badi az-Zaman or Hariri. In both these genres, one can argue that a moral though not a moralistic vocabulary is used to describe the dynamics of character and suggest a dynamic between reader and text.

If, as Hamori has so persuasively argued, the story of *The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad* gives us a sense of the "labyrinthine" quality of justice, it and the entire *1001 Nights* convey a sense of a labyrinthine world in which we are carried forward by suspense and curiosity but always with the ironical realization that there will never be any complete squaring of accounts within the world itself. To view things and events as astonishing things is to have this realization. It is to accept with patience the gradually revealed but never fully understood causes of astonishing things that present themselves to us, to greet them with wonderment, and transform them, as *The 1001 Nights* so successfully does, into entertainment.

Illustrations of the Strategist in the Lady Dunya’s Garden, Landofs

Ambassador and Mrs. Fullerton in the audience as Dr. Roy P. Motshedi, Gurney Professor of History, presents his lecture entitled *Astonishment in the 1001 Nights*. 