

The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field

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When we started studying Islamic art some thirty years ago, there were no good introductory textbooks that undergraduates could read. When we started teaching the subject nearly a decade later, there were still none, and we had to make do with stacks of photocopied articles and chapters assigned from one book or another in an attempt to present students with a coherent narrative. So little survey material existed that even graduate students had difficulty getting a grasp on the whole field and had to resort to obscure and uneven publications. For example, K.A.C. Creswell's massive tomes implied that Islamic architecture ended in 900 C.E. except in Egypt, where it suddenly stopped four hundred years later in the middle of the Bahri Mamluk period, although the Mamluk sequence of sultans persisted until 1517 and there was ample evidence for a glorious tradition of Islamic architecture in many lands besides Egypt.¹ The venerable *Survey of Persian Art*, originally published in five massive volumes in the 1930s, continued to define that field although many of the chapters were woefully out of date when the series was reprinted, *faute de mieux*, in the 1970s.² In short, despite the exponential growth of interest in the Islamic lands generated by the oil boom and crisis of the 1970s, Islamic art remained a rather esoteric specialty field taught in a few elite institutions.

Today the situation could not be more different. Courses in Islamic art are regularly offered at dozens of colleges and universities in North America, and many university departments of art history mint doctoral candidates in the specialty. General art history survey books and courses, though still heavily Western and chronological in orientation, often include one or two chapters or lectures on Islamic art, awkwardly inserted somewhere between the periods of late antiquity and early medieval and the geographically defined fields of India, China, and Japan. There are now several introductory texts devoted exclusively to Islamic art, and specialist books and articles proliferate to such a degree that scholars and graduate students cannot possibly keep up with everything published in the field. It is, perhaps, a measure of the popularity of Islamic art that the Pelican History of Art volume on the subject, commissioned in the 1950s and published in 1987, has already been reissued in a new and expanded edition.³ The horrific events of September 11, 2001, have only increased public curiosity for all things connected to Islam, art included.

As the course listings, survey texts, and specialists' articles on Islamic art proliferate, scholars of the subject have put the fundamental definition of their field under close scrutiny. From the vantage point of the early twenty-first century of the Common Era (or the early fifteenth century after Muhammad emigrated with a small company of believers from Mecca to Medina), we may now ask: What exactly is Islamic art? How well does this category serve the understanding of the mate-

rial? Does a religiously based classification serve us better than geographic or linguistic ones, like those used for much of European art? To begin to answer these questions, we must first review how the subject is defined, how it got to be that way, and how it has been studied.⁴

The Definition and Historiography of Islamic Art

Islamic art is generally held to be "the art made by artists or artisans whose religion was Islam, for patrons who lived in predominantly Muslim lands, or for purposes that are restricted or peculiar to a Muslim population or a Muslim setting."⁵ It therefore encompasses much, if not most, of the art produced over fourteen centuries in the "Islamic lands," usually defined as the arid belt covering much of West Asia but stretching from the Atlantic coast of North Africa and Spain on the west to the steppes of Central Asia and the Indian Ocean on the east. These were the lands where Islam spread during the initial conquests in the seventh and eighth centuries C.E. Other regions where Islam flourished in later centuries, such as tropical Africa, eastern Europe, southern Russia, western China, northern India, and southeast Asia, are marginalized by this definition and thereby treated as peripheral to the main story, even though they have huge, and some majority, Muslim populations. Indonesia, for example, now has more Muslims (almost 200 million) than all the traditional Arab countries combined. India, now considered a largely Hindu country, has almost 150 million Muslims, virtually the same number living in the neighboring Muslim country of Pakistan. Yet rarely does the Islamic art of the Indian subcontinent, let alone that of Indonesia, play any role in traditional courses on Islamic art, principally because it takes so long to get there if you have to start at the Kaaba in seventh-century Arabia. As Muslim populations have emigrated in the twentieth century from their traditional homelands to Western Europe and the Americas, one can even begin to investigate the art of an Islamic diaspora.⁶ As an academic discipline, however, the study of Islamic art is normally restricted to the "core" Islamic lands between Egypt and Central Asia from the seventh to the eighteenth century, with occasional forays into Spain, Sicily, and India or later periods.

Despite its name, the academic field of Islamic art has only a tenuous and problematic relationship with the religion of Islam. While some Islamic art may have been made by Muslims for purposes of the faith, much of it was not. A mosque or a copy of the Koran clearly fits everybody's definition of Islamic art, but what about a twelfth-century Syrian bronze canteen inlaid with Arabic inscriptions and Christian scenes? A carpet bearing a design of a niche containing a lamp and laid on the ground in the direction of Mecca is clearly Islamic art, but what about a technically identical but iconographically different carpet used simply to cover and soften the

floor? Some historians have attempted to solve these problems by creating new adjectives such as “Islamicate” to refer to the secular culture of Islamic civilization, but these unwieldy neologisms have not found widespread acceptance.⁷ Rather, most scholars tacitly accept that the convenient if incorrect term “Islamic” refers not just to the religion of Islam but to the larger culture in which Islam was the dominant—but not sole—religion practiced. Although it looks similar, “Islamic art” is therefore not comparable to such concepts as “Christian” or “Buddhist” art, which are normally understood to refer specifically to religious art. Christian art, for example, does not usually include all the art of Europe between the fall of Rome and the Reformation, nor does Buddhist art encompass all the arts of Asia produced between the Kushans and Kyoto. This important, if simple, distinction is often overlooked.

And what about art? Islamic *art* is generally taken to encompass everything from the enormous congregational mosques and luxury manuscripts commissioned by powerful rulers from great architects and calligrapher-painters to the inlaid metalwares and intricate carpets produced by anonymous urban craftsmen and nomad women. However, much of what many historians of Islamic art normally study—inlaid metalwares, luster ceramics, enameled glass, brocaded textiles, and knotted carpets—is not the typical purview of the historian of Western art, who generally considers such handicrafts to be “minor” or “decorative” arts compared with the “nobler” arts of architecture, painting, and sculpture. While architecture is as important in Islamic culture as it was in Western Europe or East Asia, visual representation, which plays such an enormous role in the artistic traditions of Europe and Asia, is a relatively minor and limited component of Islamic culture, and sculpture is virtually unknown.

In sum, then, the term “Islamic art” seems to be a convenient misnomer for everything left over from everywhere else. It is most easily defined by what it is not: neither a region, nor a period, nor a school, nor a movement, nor a dynasty, but the visual culture of a place and time when the people (or at least their leaders) espoused a particular religion.

Compared with other fields of art history, the study of Islamic art and architecture is relatively new. It was invented at the end of the nineteenth century and was of interest primarily to European and later American scholars.⁸ Unlike the study of Chinese art, which Chinese scholars have pursued for centuries, there is no indigenous tradition in any of the Islamic lands of studying Islamic art, with the possible exception of calligraphy, which has enjoyed a special status since the seventh century, and by extension book painting, which was collected since the sixteenth.⁹ There is no evidence that any artist or patron in the fourteen centuries since the revelation of Islam ever thought of his or her art as “Islamic,” and the notion of a distinctly “Islamic” tradition of art and architecture, eventually encompassing the lands between the Atlantic and the Indian oceans, is a product of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western scholarship, as is the terminology used to identify it. Until that time, European scholars used such restrictive geographic or ethnic terms as “Indian” (“Hindu”), “Persian,” “Turkish,” “Arab,” “Saracenic,” and “Moorish” to describe distinct regional styles cur-

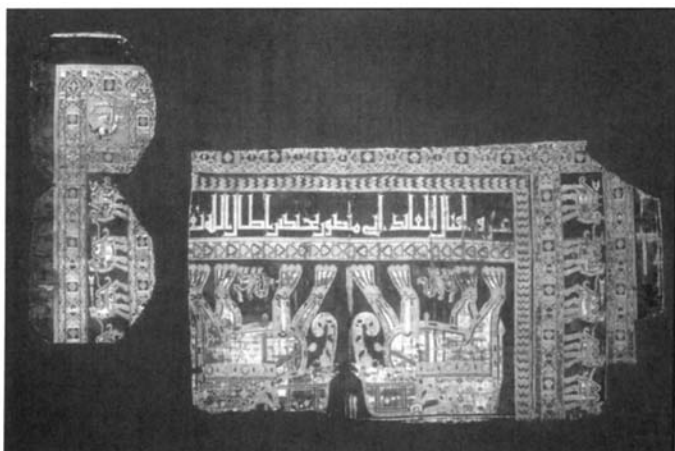
rent in the Indian subcontinent, the Ottoman Empire, Iran, the Levant, and southern Spain. Such all-embracing terms as “Mahommedan” or “Mohammedan,” “Moslem” or “Muslim,” and “Islamic” came into favor only when twentieth-century scholars began to look back to a golden age of Islamic culture that they believe had flourished in the eighth and ninth centuries and project it simplistically onto the kaleidoscopic modern world. In short, Islamic art as it exists in the early twenty-first century is largely a creation of Western culture.¹⁰

This all-embracing view of Islam and Islamic art was a by-product of European interest in delineating the history of religions, in which the multifarious varieties of human spiritual expression were lumped together in a normative notion of a single “Islam,” which could be effectively juxtaposed not only to heterodox “variants” such as “Shiism” and “Sufism” but also, and more importantly in the Western view, to equally normative notions of “Christianity” or “Judaism.” This twentieth-century view, enshrined in countless books, is all the odder considering that there is no central authority that can speak for all Muslims, although many might claim to do so. No matter what newspapers—and many books—say, there never was, nor is, a single Islam, and so any attempt to define the essence of a single Islamic art is doomed to failure.¹¹

To the 1970s

Western views of Islam and its culture were formed in the crucible of colonialism, as foreign powers expanded economically and politically into the region during a period when traditional local powers—notably, the Ottoman Empire in the eastern Mediterranean and the Mughals in northern India—were weakening. Colonialism was not limited to Western European imperialists. In the nineteenth century the Chinese and the Russians absorbed the Muslim khanates of Central Asia. The Chinese province of Xinjiang (literally, “New Territories”) was carved out of Silk Road oases controlled for the last millennium by Muslims. The Russians, who sought warm-water ports, pushed south into Central Asia, Iran, and Afghanistan. Colonial expansion, which was initially motivated by a desire for raw materials and markets for manufactured goods, was enormously complicated in the twentieth century by the discovery of huge deposits of petroleum throughout the region, from the Algerian Sahara through Kurdistan and the Arabian Peninsula to Sumatra, and its consequent development as the world’s major source of energy.

These global events had several ramifications for the study of Islamic art. For at least a millennium, European travelers had brought back souvenirs of Islamic handicraft and given them new meanings. Étienne de Blois, commander of the First Crusade along with his brothers Godefroy de Bouillon and Baudouin, returned to France and became patron of the abbey of St-Josse near Caen. He apparently brought back with him the glorious samite saddlecloth made in northeastern Iran for the commander Abu Mansur Bakhtegin in the late tenth century (Fig. 1), for it was used to wrap the bones of the saint when he was reburied in 1134.¹² The spectacular rock-crystal ewer made in Egypt for the Fatimid caliph al-Aziz (r. 975–96) must have had a similar history before it became a prized relic in the treasury of S. Marco.¹³ During the sack of Córdoba in 1010, Catalan mercenaries probably looted the



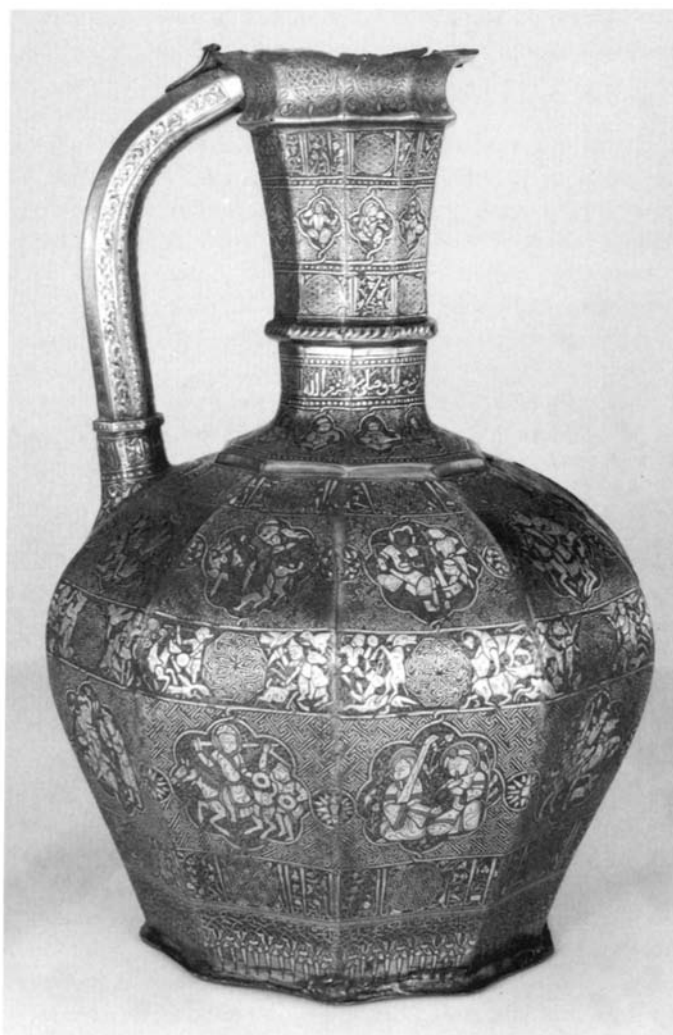
1 Samite cloth known as the Suaire de St-Josse, eastern Iran, before 961. Paris, Musée du Louvre

exquisite ivory box made in 1004–5 for the Andalusian warlord Abd al-Malik ibn al-Mansur and took it to the Benedictine monastery of S. Salvador de Leyre in the Pyrenees, where it was used to store the relics of the virgin sisters Nuniloña and Alódia before it was eventually transferred to the treasury of the cathedral in Pamplona.¹⁴ Europeans prized these exotic objects, but they certainly were not considered *Islamic* art until they became objects collected in European museums.¹⁵

The earliest collections of Arab, Persian, and Turkish art objects in the West were formed in the nineteenth century. One of the first belonged to Pierre-Louis-Jean-Casimir, duc de Blacas d'Aulps (1771–1839), an ultraconservative politician who furthered the restoration of French royal properties following the Revolution and became patron of Jean-Baptiste Greuze, J.-A.-D. Ingres, Eugène Delacroix, and many other artists. Amassing an extraordinary collection of objets d'art, many of which are now in the British Museum (Fig. 2), he hired scholars to research his collection, and the French Orientalist J. T. Reinaud's *Monumens arabes, persans et turcs, du cabinet de M. le duc de Blacas et d'autres cabinets* (Paris, 1828) is the first catalogue of an entire collection of Islamic decorative arts.

European colonialism increased interest in the arts of the Islamic—and formerly Islamic—lands, and many great museum collections of Islamic objects were formed in this period, from Edinburgh to Tblisi.¹⁶ The British Museum and British Library, for example, amassed a superb and encyclopedic collection of Islamic art. The British Museum already owned a few Islamic items when it opened to the public in 1759, and Islamic artifacts entered the museum in increasing numbers from the late nineteenth century, so that the joint collection is now one of the world's most comprehensive, with particular emphasis on manuscripts and manuscript illustrations, metalwork, and ceramics. These include the six hundred ceramics amassed by the collector Frederick Du-cane Godman (1834–1919) and the three hundred manuscripts and printed books acquired by Sidney Churchill (1862–1921), second secretary to the British legation in Tehran.

At the end of the nineteenth century several European intellectual traditions, including the study of ancient Near



2 Inlaid bronze ewer known as the Blacas ewer, Mosul, 1232. London, British Museum (photo: courtesy of the Trustees of The British Museum)

Eastern languages and antiquities, Orientalism, and the history of art, came together in a new field of inquiry. The modern study of Islamic art can be traced to the work of the Swiss scholar Max van Berchem (1863–1921). The scion of a wealthy Genevan family, he was educated as a philologist and historian at several European universities. After traveling to Egypt, Palestine, and Syria in 1889, he returned to Geneva, where he developed the idea of *l'archéologie arabe*. For him this was the historical study of “monuments,” by which he meant architecture, painting, decorative arts, inscriptions, coins, seals, or manuscripts made in the lands where Arabic was spoken. He saw these “monuments” not as isolated examples of art but as historical documents that would reveal the true history of the Islamic lands.¹⁷ His major work, still one of the fundamental reference tools for the study of Islamic art, is his magisterial *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum* (MCIA), a multivolume study that not only catalogued historical inscriptions from various regions but also placed them in their historical and social contexts.¹⁸

The center of European scholarship on Islamic art, however, was Berlin, and the outstanding intellectual personality for the study of Islamic art throughout the first half of the



3 Facade from the palace of Mshatta, before 749, as installed in the Museum für islamische Kunst, Berlin (photo: authors, 1992)

twentieth century was the German archaeologist and historian Ernst Herzfeld (1879–1948). Trained as an architect, he participated in the German excavations at Assur in Mesopotamia before embarking on a long career in which he presented Islamic culture as but one period in the long and brilliant history of civilization in the lands of the Near East. His most important contribution to Islamic studies was his excavation of the Abbasid capital at Samarra, the center of Islamic civilization in the ninth century, in the years before World War I. In his subsequent publications of the excavations, Herzfeld's archaeological and philological preoccupations tended to define the canon for a later generation of scholars.

The period before World War I was a time of great excitement and exponential growth in Islamic studies: van Berchem's *Corpus* and the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* had begun to appear,¹⁹ and a critical mass of information, particularly visual, was now available to central European scholars such as Alois Riegl and Joseph Strzygowski. They were tackling such thorny questions as the nature of ornament and the origins of the arabesque. Islamic art, which they saw as standing between both ancient and medieval and Eastern and Western art, was uniquely positioned to offer a wide range of pertinent examples for their investigations.²⁰ For example, the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum in Berlin acquired the facade of the palace at Mshatta in Transjordan (Fig. 3) to serve as the culmination of its series of great facades beginning with ancient Mesopotamia. It was installed on the second floor as an example of late antique architecture, but the young Herzfeld, in a brilliant article published in the first volume of the journal *Der Islam* (1910), upset the apple cart by proving that the facade was not late antique but Islamic.²¹

The story of the Mshatta facade underscores how central the study of Islamic art was to the theoretical activities of leading European art historians in the first decades of the

twentieth century. In sharp contrast, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the field of Islamic art seems quite peripheral to the central concerns of the majority of art historians, who tend to view it as a curious anomaly because it fits none of the standard categories of art history. It is neither a period nor a style, it is not restricted to one country or region, and it studies things not normally considered art.

In addition to lively debates in scholarly journals, the early twentieth century saw great international exhibitions, which had replaced the universal expositions of the nineteenth century. The 1910 exhibition of Islamic art in Munich is primarily remembered today for its monumental catalogue of "masterpieces," but it also defined a new type of exhibition.²² It brought together scholars and the general public, including European painters who were inspired by what they saw.²³ The London exhibition of Persian art held at Burlington House two decades later was another great landmark in the field.²⁴ Organized by the American entrepreneur Arthur Upham Pope, "the P.T. Barnum of Persian art" in the wry words of Stuart Cary Welch,²⁵ and held under the patronage of King George V and Reza Shah, the newly minted Pahlavi ruler of Iran, it not only gave the new Iranian regime international legitimacy but also spurred publication of the *Survey of Persian Art* at the end of the decade.²⁶

Although some European scholars had already come to the United States in the 1920s, the rise of Fascism and National Socialism in the 1930s forced migrations that reconfigured the intellectual map of Europe. Maurice Dimand (1892–1986), who had studied under Strzygowski in Vienna, arrived at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1923 to catalogue Coptic textiles. Two years later he was put in charge of the newly created subdepartment for Islamic art in the Department of Decorative Arts, and in 1933 he became curator, a position he held until his retirement in 1959. Mehmet Aga-Oğlu, a Turk who had trained in Moscow, Istanbul, and Berlin, immigrated to the United States in 1929 and



4 Islamic galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1975

settled at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where he became the first permanent professor of Islamic art in the United States. He also established the Seminary in Islamic Art at the University of Michigan and founded the journal *Ars Islamica*, which was published until 1951. In 1954 it was succeeded by *Ars Orientalis*, a journal devoted to the arts of all Asia and still being published today.

More scholars came to the United States in the 1930s. Richard Ettinghausen, who had been an assistant to Ernst Kühnel (1882–1964) in Berlin, taught at Michigan from 1938 to 1944 before moving to the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. (where he served until 1967), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1969–79), and the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University (1967–79).²⁷ There he secured an endowment for research in Islamic studies from the legacy of Hagop Kevorkian (1872–1962), one of the many dealers in Islamic art active in New York before and after World War II. Kevorkian, along with Kirkor Minassian and Dickran Garabed Kelekian (1868–1951), had emigrated from the town of Kaiseri in central Turkey. Kelekian was the major supplier to Henry Walters (1848–1931), whose collection of 22,000 works, including many important examples of Islamic art, formed the basis of the Walters Art Museum.²⁸

Following World War II, the United States emerged, as in many other fields, as the leading center of scholarship in Islamic art. The most prominent scholar of Islamic art trained in the United States following World War II is Oleg Grabar (b. 1929). Born in France and educated in Paris and at Harvard and Princeton, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1955, Grabar was initially interested in the early Islamic periods, though in his long career he has published on virtually every aspect of Islamic art from the Alhambra to Persian miniature painting.²⁹ Along with Ettinghausen, Grabar was responsible

for introducing Islamic art to many Americans in the postwar years. Unlike the European-trained scholars of Islamic art, such as Dimand and Ettinghausen, who spent most of their careers working with objects in museums, Grabar has been more interested in architecture, archaeology, and the theoretical issues raised by Islamic art.

From the 1970s

The study of Islamic art changed dramatically in the 1970s, largely because of global events. American interest in the Middle East had been growing steadily in the decades after World War II, as the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948 focused world attention on the region and the world economy came to rely increasingly on petroleum, much of which was produced there. The dramatic rise in world oil prices in the 1970s led to an unprecedented shift in wealth from Europe and North America to the oil-producing countries of the Middle East, and all aspects of Middle East studies seemed to follow the scent of money. Fellowships became readily available for graduate work in virtually any aspect of Middle Eastern or South Asian studies, which in the generous view of the United States Department of Education encompassed virtually all the lands from Morocco to Indonesia.

This increased interest in the Middle East was marked in the United States by the opening of the splendid new Islamic galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in October 1975 (Fig. 4). Under the curatorship of Ettinghausen, the museum introduced the largest permanent exhibition of Islamic art ever seen in the United States.³⁰ It comprises about a dozen galleries arranged chronologically and regionally that present the full panoply of Islamic art, from earliest times in Egypt and Syria to the eighteenth century in India. The culmination of the visitor's experience is the display of the

museum's unsurpassed collection of Persian miniatures and carpets. In many ways, the galleries were—and remain—intellectually conservative, for they essentially re-created the fabled exhibit of Islamic art that had been mounted in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum of Berlin at the beginning of the century. As a result of World War II and the Cold War, the German objects, which had been stored in mines or taken to the Soviet Union during and after the war, were split between museums in East and West Berlin until the city was reunified in 1990, so the Metropolitan's encyclopedic display was unique in its time.³¹ Such a concentrated display of masterpieces naturally privileges the arts of the court, although some sense of context is provided by the small gallery on one side of the entrance, which shows many of the small objects found during the museum's excavations at the Iranian city of Nishapur in the 1930s, and the one facing it, which re-creates a Damascene interior of the eighteenth century.

European interest in Islamic art was equally strong in the 1970s. The Musée du Louvre, Paris, mounted major exhibitions of Islamic art from French public collections in the Tuileries and the Grand Palais,³² but the zenith of this interest came in London in 1976, with the Festival of Islam. This was the most ambitious loan exhibition of Islamic art since the Munich exhibition of 1910. More than six hundred objects from two dozen countries in Europe, North America, and the Middle East were gathered for the show, curated by specialists and arranged by media.³³ In the wake of the festival—and certainly capitalizing on public interest in Islamic art—various publishers issued a range of books on Islamic art and civilization.³⁴ The festival also marked the emergence of London as the central market for Islamic art; by the early 1980s it had replaced New York, as wealthy collectors—many from the Middle East—began to flock to its auction houses and galleries.

World events over the next two decades affected the study and display of Islamic art in some striking and often painful ways. Beginning in the 1970s, conflicts within and between countries turned much of the region into a war zone, and the Iranian revolution of 1979, the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, and the Iran-Iraq War made many parts of the Middle East and Central Asia inaccessible to scholars and inhospitable to research. Dissertation topics shifted dramatically from studies of Iranian architecture and settlement patterns to museum studies, as well as to regions once considered peripheral to the central concerns of Islamic art, such as North Africa and Spain and South and Southeast Asia. As in the nineteenth century, when Westerners had flocked to the Alhambra for a taste of the “exotic Orient,” late twentieth-century scholars began looking with new eyes at the legacy of Islamic culture in Spain, which was now more conducive to intellectual inquiry following the death of Francisco Franco in 1975.

Another sign of the expansion of the field and its globalization was the creation of the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard and MIT in 1979. The program grew out of interest by the Aga Khan, leader of the Ismaili branch of Islam, in improving the quality of modern architecture in Islamic lands, and its emphasis on architecture continues to this day.³⁵ In addition to training Ph.D. students in the history of Islamic architecture and art at both institutions, the pro-

gram brought dozens of visiting architects, planners, designers, and scholars to Cambridge, Massachusetts, from around the world. Perhaps its most enduring contribution to the study of Islamic art has been *Muqarnas*, an annual devoted to the arts of the Muslim world named after the distinctive type of Islamic architectural ornament, and a series of supplemental monographs.³⁶ By virtue of the pioneering efforts of Ettinghausen and Grabar and their students, the study of Islamic art has burgeoned in the United States and Canada over the last three decades. Many, if not most, of the people occupying full-time positions in Islamic art at some thirty universities, colleges, and museums from Massachusetts to British Columbia can trace their intellectual genealogy to either of these great teachers and scholars.

In Europe the study of Islamic art also witnessed a recovery after World War II, and there are now about a dozen full-time academic positions in major cities there. By contrast, there are very few positions teaching “Islamic art” in the Islamic lands themselves, where professors and students largely study the arts of their own countries. Thus, one is far more likely to encounter Egyptians studying and teaching Egyptian art in Egypt, Turks studying and teaching Turkish art in Turkey, or Iranians studying and teaching Iranian art in Iran. In other words, the concept of a universalist “Islamic art” remains specific to the West. Despite what we may read about pan-Islamic and pan-Arab identities in the Muslim world, nationalist sentiments remain strong. Art history is no exception to the general rule, and it is only recently that some new museums in the Gulf region have begun to collect a broad range of “Islamic” art.³⁷

Furthermore, as elsewhere in art history, a division has arisen between the academy and the museum. Ettinghausen was one of the last scholars of Islamic art to have a foot in both, serving simultaneously as professor at the Institute of Fine Arts and consultative chairman at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Such dual roles are rare today, as the concerns of collectors, curators, and professors increasingly diverge. Nevertheless, many museums remain centers of scholarship on Islamic art, particularly through the medium of the scholarly exhibition, and exhibition catalogues will be a major feature of the following discussion, especially since museums collect so much of what constitutes Islamic art. The Metropolitan, the Freer and Arthur M. Sackler Galleries of the Smithsonian Institution, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Harvard University Art Museums are the most prominent in the United States. As in other fields, museum exhibitions of Islamic art have become major vehicles for advancing scholarship, and subjects range from the Islamic arts of Spain to the heritage of the Mongols.³⁸

European museums have not had the acquisition budgets of their American counterparts, and many of the great collections of Islamic art there—such as the British Museum/British Library and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Royal Museums of Scotland in Edinburgh, the Louvre in Paris, the Museum für islamische Kunst in Berlin—were largely formed in earlier times, with acquisitions limited to a few objects that round out particular collections. One major exception is the David Collection in Copenhagen, which has amassed a spectacular group of objects seemingly out of nowhere.³⁹ Other major players on the field include

the Iranian-born private collector Nasser David Khalili in London, Shaykh Nasser and Shaykha Hussah al-Sabah of Kuwait, and Shaykh al-Thani of Qatar. These glamorous new collections may overshadow such venerable collections as Topkapi Palace and the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art in Istanbul or the Islamic museums in Tehran and Cairo, but these institutions, although perennially strapped for cash and somewhat down-at-the-heels, have unparalleled breadth and depth in some very specific areas.

All of this interest means that there are now many approaches to studying and writing about Islamic art, ranging from the universalist to the particular, the deductive to the inductive. Each offers its own advantages and raises its own questions, as it tries to cover a subject of massive geographic and chronological range and to address recent issues of art history and regional studies ranging from context(s) to connoisseurship, multiculturalism to transnationalism.

Universalism

The universalist approach to Islamic art sees all the arts produced by Muslims everywhere as reflecting the universal verities of Islam, just as God's ineffable unity encompasses the infinite diversity of his creation. Such a universal perspective, originating in the classic handbooks on Islamic art,⁴⁰ has been continued recently in several surveys, from the two volumes on Islamic art in the Pelican History of Art to the single-volume primer.⁴¹ The Pelican volumes follow the traditional format used throughout the series, in which architecture is separated from the other arts. This creates some problem areas: wall painting and tile revetment, for example, are usually discussed separately from manuscript painting and ceramics, though they may have been the work of the same artists. The two volumes differ in their approaches, as befits the nature of the material; the first deals more with archaeological evidence and is divided regionally (perhaps with some overemphasis on the western Islamic lands), whereas the second treats more individual masterpieces, usually under dynastic rubrics, and gives special emphasis to the arts of Iran. Both volumes offer useful summaries of the historical settings for each period and provide the latest bibliography on many subjects. Along with the articles on Islamic art in the *Dictionary of Art*, the Pelican volumes provide the best introduction to the field for scholars in other fields, though the coverage ends, in accordance with the traditional definition of Islamic art, with the year 1800.

Four recent handbooks are, naturally, somewhat less sophisticated, as they fit all of the material from this vast area into a single volume and have to introduce readers to often unfamiliar history, techniques, and modes of inquiry. Three of the four handbooks cover Islamic art chronologically, but from different vantage points: Barbara Brend concentrates on works from the British Museum (which commissioned her book); Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair divide the material into three periods and then by media (architecture, arts of the book, textiles, and arts of fire); and Robert Hillenbrand focuses his scope on the region between Spain and the western frontier of India, leaving aside such masterpieces as the Taj Mahal. The fourth work, by Robert Irwin, himself a novelist and historian of the Mamluk period, has a short historical introduction but is arranged mainly by themes and

topics, such as taste, guilds, and literary evidence. Irwin raises many issues that challenge the received wisdom of the Islamic art establishment, but the somewhat quirky approach makes the book difficult to use as an expository text, and it is better read in conjunction with a more traditional survey or after one has absorbed the material in the latter.⁴²

Exhibitions of Islamic art and their catalogues can be similarly all-encompassing, showing everything from Umayyad tablewares to Mughal jade daggers.⁴³ Whether in books or exhibitions, this universal approach to Islamic art has to cover much more ground than is typical for other equivalent fields, such as Western medieval or Chinese art, and it comes at the cost of a certain shallowness. To a greater or lesser degree, this approach implies that there is a commonality between, say, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (begun in 692) and the Taj Mahal in Agra (completed in 1647) that can best be explained through the common religious beliefs of the patrons and builders (who may or may not have been Muslims).

While some authors might strongly challenge any such assumption, pointing out that the notion of a single Islam—or Islamic art—is strictly a twentieth-century concept, others go so far as to make explicit claims about what that common feature is. The Iranian philosopher Seyyed Hossein Nasr, for example, has claimed that it is spirituality: art, in his view, is an external manifestation of the inner reality that is Islam.⁴⁴ Titus Burckhardt, a Swiss scholar and convert to Islam, believed that all the arts produced by Muslim peoples reveal an underlying common language rooted in Islam.⁴⁵ These seductive ideas have been readily taken up by other writers because they set Islamic art apart from other art traditions by maintaining that God's revelation to Muhammad in seventh-century Arabia affected all aspects of human existence. For example, the Iranian architects Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar applied these concepts to architecture, while others have applied them to the geometric patterns so prevalent in Islamic art and architecture or to calligraphy, the art form that most distinctly sets Islamic art apart from all others.⁴⁶ Works of this type, many of which were published in 1976 as offshoots of the Festival of Islam, are almost always by Muslim authors, whether native-born or converts from other faiths. Many, if not all, of these authors are also followers of the mystical approach to Islam known as Sufism. Such universalist ideas are especially attractive to contemporary visual artists, who can freely adopt concepts and motifs detached from their historical contexts, but their value is limited for historians of art who want to understand the dynamic processes of change and development and whose interests and expertise often lie in earlier centuries.⁴⁷

Regions

Scholars who have accepted that one need not—or cannot—deal with the entirety of Islamic art have tried to find more meaningful categories. One common approach is to deal with Islamic art diachronically as the art of one period in a particular region. In this view, the broad spiritual classification "Islamic" art becomes less meaningful than more focused regional terms such as "Iranian," "Turkish," or "Egyptian" art, and Islam is seen as but another thread in a complex tapestry of regional art history. Perhaps the most



5 Mosque of Ibn Tulun, Cairo, courtyard, 868 and later (photo: authors, 1977)

recent—and splendid—example of the genre is N. Pourjavady's deluxe three-volume set of books on the arts of Iran from earliest times to the present, in which volumes two and three cover the architecture and decorative arts of the Islamic period, with brief chapters on individual subjects by a host of scholars, largely Iranian.⁴⁸ This survey is organized typologically, with separate chapters on tombs and minarets, glass and carpets, miniatures and jewelry, but other examples of the type are organized chronologically. The extraordinary splendor of these volumes conceals their restricted geographic scope, which is limited to the modern political entity of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thus, the dazzling Iranian architecture of the Timurid period—now largely in Afghanistan and Uzbekistan—is ignored, as are many works of art in collections outside Iran.

Iranians claim—rightly or wrongly—to have maintained cultural continuity over millennia despite repeated invasions from abroad, and the persistence and development of the Persian language is the strongest evidence in support of this contention. In contrast, the study of the art and architecture of neighboring Turkey reveals some of the pitfalls of regional studies, as some Turks trace the origins of their culture to Central Asia, while others trace them to Catal Hüyük, Ephesus, or the Arabian Peninsula. These different—and often contradictory—views of Turkish identity surface in the myriad of books published on “Turkish” art and architecture. Some present the arts of Turkey as the arts of Anatolia—the landmass now occupied by the Republic of Turkey—with chapters on the Islamic periods following chapters on the prehistoric, Roman, and Byzantine eras.⁴⁹ Others take a comparatively racial view, following the arts of the Turkish peoples as they wandered from the Asian steppes to India, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and eventually Turkey itself, thereby including many buildings that one might never expect to find as examples of Turkish art, such as Cairo's mosque of Ibn Tulun (Fig. 5).⁵⁰ A nationalist approach has the potential to reveal unexpected continuities, but it can also result in some

strange arguments: an otherwise reliable scholar such as Aptullah Kuran barely acknowledges that Ottoman architects were profoundly inspired by the Byzantine church of Hagia Sophia, although most other scholars are far more generous.⁵¹

The larger issue is important to define: To what extent does the Islamic art and architecture of a particular region owe its distinct qualities to religion, ethnicity, or geography? In other words, should Ottoman architecture be seen as an *Islamic* and *Turkish* architecture or as an *Anatolian* and *Mediterranean* one? Is the great Ottoman court architect Sinan more like the Timurid architect Qivam al-Din Shirazi or the Italian Filippo Brunelleschi? There is no one answer to such questions, for the answers depend on what we want to find out.

Similar problems of geographic definition pertain to many if not all of the countries in the region, as the political boundaries created by imperialism and colonialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries scarcely conform to historical circumstances. Historically, Syria can be as small as today's Syrian Arab Republic⁵² or as large as the ancient Roman province of that name, which encompassed present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel, as well as parts of Turkey and Iraq. Political historians of medieval Islam now refer to the region gingerly as Bilād al-Shām, which is historically correct but meaningless to most students and the general public. At the opposite end of the Mediterranean, the Strait of Gibraltar divides Spain from Morocco, although during much of the medieval Islamic period the two regions shared a common culture. Books and exhibitions that treat the art of only one of them, as wonderful as they may be, leave out half the story.⁵³ Is there a discrete art of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, or Pakistan, as some recent books imply?⁵⁴ Does India include the entire subcontinent (including Bangladesh and Pakistan) or just the Republic of India? Does Yemen include all of South Arabia?⁵⁵ At the other end of the scale, what didactic or polemic purpose is served by bringing to-



6 Tomb of Sultan Sanjar, Merv, Turkmenistan, ca. 1157 (photo: authors, 1995)

gether all the arts (Islamic included) of a continent such as Africa?⁵⁶

Such regional exhibitions can show scholars and the public things they have never seen before, but they can also vindicate nationalist ideologies for chauvinists. They also reinforce ignorance or neglect of work outside modern borders. For example, one of the major cities of Iran in the medieval period was Merv, now in southern Turkmenistan, but the tomb of Sultan Sanjar there (Fig. 6), one of the glories of medieval architecture, has been largely unknown to Iranians of the last century because it lies across a border that was virtually impossible to cross until the fall of the Soviet Union. While some scholars in Iran and Central Asia are working to erase these artificial boundaries to scholarship, it often falls to those based outside the region, whether individual scholars or institutions such as the British Institute of Persian Studies (which is conducting multidisciplinary research at Merv),⁵⁷ to bridge these gaps.

Dynasties

Another way of dividing Islamic art is dynastically, and exhibitions and books on the arts of particular dynasties have been popular in recent years. They avoid many of the pitfalls of nationalism, since medieval Muslim dynasties had no need to respect the niceties of modern political boundaries. Sometimes scholars write about the art of a dynasty without the benefit of an accompanying exhibition.⁵⁸ For dynastic exhibitions, loans have to come from diverse sources, so such shows are more difficult to assemble and prepare, but they rest on firmer intellectual foundations than those organized along modern geographic boundaries.

One of the first such dynastic exhibitions, mounted in the early 1980s, treated the art of the Mamluks, military rulers of Egypt and Syria from 1250 to 1517. The show included everything from glorious manuscripts of the Koran commissioned for mosques to mundane ceramic tablewares used by soldiers. As wonderful as the exhibition was, its catchy but

implausible title, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks*, suggested, or at least implied, that the Mamluk period marked either a rebirth of Islamic art or something comparable to what was happening in contemporary Italy.⁵⁹ This type of exhibition continues to be popular; a few years ago the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris mounted an exhibition on the arts of the Fatimids, Shii rulers of parts of North Africa, Egypt, and Syria from 909 to 1171, to commemorate the bicentennial of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798, and important works were lent by a variety of sources.⁶⁰ It is far simpler to mount an exhibition of works chosen from a single collection, but few collections are sufficiently encyclopedic to encompass a dynastic exhibition. One exception was the peripatetic exhibition on Ottoman art from the extensive Khalili collection, which traveled to nine venues in the United States alone.⁶¹ Despite the Egyptian and Turkish subjects of the three exhibitions just mentioned and the persistent political difficulties American museums have in dealing with the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iranian art has dominated the dynastic scene, and exhibitions on the arts of the Timurids in fifteenth-century Iran and Central Asia and on the Qajars in nineteenth-century Iran have been followed by one on the art of the Ilkhanids, rulers of Iran and Iraq from 1250 to 1350.⁶²

As in other fields of art history, exhibitions of the arts of Islamic dynasties mounted during the last two decades took on a life beyond their venues through their massive catalogues. As the catalogues got bigger, so did the list of authors, and at the beginning of the twenty-first century, most catalogues have become cooperative ventures, with joint editors and a half dozen essays by different scholars. While this is certainly a trend across art history, the marginal position of Islamic art exacerbates the problem: market pressures demand that every catalogue be both introductory and comprehensive, for no audience can be expected to have prior knowledge of the subject. Some of these catalogues are organized by media; others chronologically; still others thematically, with sections on the arts of the court, religion, and other such categories. Many of these exhibitions were accompanied by scholarly meetings whose papers were published, either as a special issue of a journal, a special monograph in a series, or a separate publication.⁶³

Dynastic exhibitions easily present the decorative or "portable" arts that characterize so much of the Islamic art in museums, but like all museum exhibitions they have difficulty incorporating architecture, arguably the major form of artistic patronage by most dynasties. Some have tried to deal with the problem by including architectural fragments or decorating the walls with photomurals, while others commission essays by architectural historians for the accompanying catalogue. Neither solution seems particularly felicitous, but occasionally—whether by choice or by accident—parallel monographs covering the architecture of a particular dynasty have appeared at roughly the same time as the exhibition and provide a nice companion to the catalogue.⁶⁴

Together, these catalogues of splendid exhibitions, proceedings of international conferences, and monographs reinforce one another and can provide a reasonably comprehensive and nuanced picture of the artistic production during the reign of particular dynasties. This focus on dynas-

ties, however, posits that artistic (and social and political) change was generated from the top, as indicated by the recurrent use of such words as “princely,” “courtly,” “empire,” and “sultans” in the titles of these exhibitions and books. They tend to focus on masterpieces, treasures, and jewels, which often outweigh examples of purely religious art (almost exclusively manuscripts of the Koran) and assimilate examples of more popular and common types of Islamic art, such as metalwork, pottery, or glass, thereby linking them subtly, if inaccurately, to the rulers and their courts. Only two fragmentary dishes, for example, out of the thousands and thousands of Fatimid luster shards known (Fig. 7), can actually be connected to the patronage of the court, yet these lusterwares are routinely exhibited as masterpieces of Fatimid (not “Fatimid-period”) art. Furthermore, the emphasis on dynasties with glorious artistic legacies leaves other, perhaps equally important, dynasties out in the cold. The arts of the Umayyads (r. 661–750), the first Islamic dynasty, or the Abbasids (r. 749–1258), the longest-lived, have never received the same level of scholarly attention, because fewer of their masterpieces have come down to us.

Rulers, Patrons, and Artists

Exhibitions and publications, whether related or independent, often focus even more narrowly on the arts produced under a specific Muslim princely patron. Rulers, especially charismatic ones who had splendid capitals, are particularly popular. Major exhibitions over the past several decades have been devoted to the Safavid shah Abbas (r. 1587–1629) and the arts of his capital city at Isfahan; the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605), who founded the short-lived city of Fatehpur Sikri (Fig. 8); and the Ottoman sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–66), who reigned from his capital at Istanbul.⁶⁵ Another is planned around the patronage of the Safavid shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76), although the fate of this long-awaited exhibition is in limbo in the current international climate, as it is impossible to secure government insurance for loans from states that our government has designated as lying on the “axis of evil.”⁶⁶

Not surprisingly, these great figures of later Islamic history are all roughly contemporary, and many splendid (and not so splendid) objects survive from their reigns. As with the dynasties, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to write books or mount comparable exhibitions on the art of earlier—and arguably greater—figures, whether the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik, patron of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (692), or the Abbasid caliph al-Mamun, founder of the House of Wisdom in ninth-century Baghdad, because so little survives.⁶⁷ That is not to say that little or nothing was made for such rulers, for contemporary texts enumerate the fabulous baubles owned by medieval Muslim potentates.⁶⁸ Such exhibitions have their appeal for wealthy private collectors.⁶⁹ Even more specialized are exhibitions devoted to a particular medium under a particular dynasty, such as the fabulous carpets made under the Mughals, or a particular medium under a particular patron, such as the manuscripts produced for the Safavid shah Tahmasp.⁷⁰

In Western art the individual artist is a key figure, and books and exhibitions are regularly devoted to examining artists’ careers. This is not the case in Islamic art. Very little is



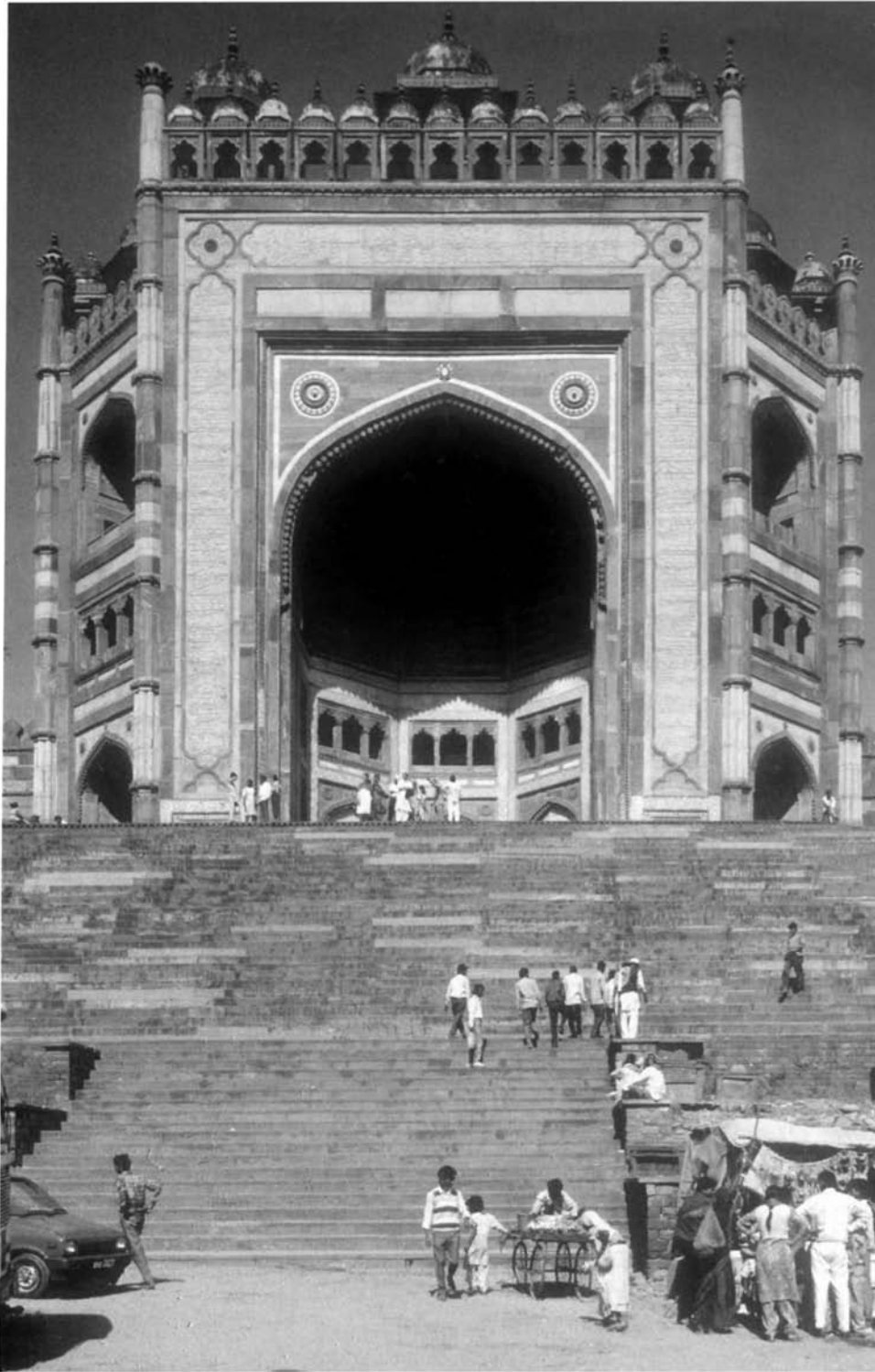
7 Fragment of lusterware bowl attributed to the Fatimid period, Egypt, 11th century. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art (photo: authors)

known about individual artists in the Islamic lands, but lack of knowledge does not mean that individuals did not create works of art. Historians of Islamic art have dealt with the role of the individual in several ways. Some have simply ignored it, whether to emphasize God’s all-encompassing role as Creator or to highlight general trends in society. Some have tried to trace the role of artists through signatures, which occur not only in paintings but also in many other media from architecture to metalwork, in part because of the great significance writing has played in Islamic culture.⁷¹ Other scholars have focused on the few personalities that emerge from the shadows of history, whether the fifteenth-century Persian painter Kamal al-Din Bihzad (Fig. 9), the seventeenth-century painter Reza, or the sixteenth-century Ottoman court architect Sinan.⁷² Few of these figures, however, have left written sources in sufficient quantity or quality to allow scholars to write authoritative biographies, and much of what has been written about these artists is based on stylistic analysis and more or less informed guesswork. For example, Stuart Cary Welch has relied exclusively on meticulous stylistic analysis to identify the hands of more than a dozen named or unnamed “masters” who worked on Shah Tahmasp’s copy of the *Shah-nama*.⁷³ His identifications are not universally accepted, however, in part because our knowledge of workshop practice and the role of the individual in producing the larger work of art—whether a painting or a manuscript—is still rudimentary.

Surprisingly, there has never been a major exhibition devoted to any individual artist from the Muslim world. Yet such an exhibition could have great impact: by amassing under one roof all the works attributed to Bihzad or Reza, viewers could begin to judge for themselves how meaningful such attributions really are.

The Individual Monument

Some monuments or works of Islamic art deserve—and sometimes receive—monographic treatment. Most deal with im-



8 Portal known as the Buland Darvaza to the congregational mosque in Fatehpur Sikri, India, 1573–74 (photo: authors, 1992)

portant buildings, such as the Dome of the Rock, the first work of Islamic architecture,⁷⁴ or fine manuscripts, especially those made for the Safavids or Mughals.⁷⁵ Despite the pivotal role of the “decorative” arts in Islam, only a few books deal with works of art in other media, such as the extraordinary minbar made in Córdoba in 1137 for the Almoravid mosque in Marrakesh.⁷⁶ A book on a single example of Islamic wood- or metalwork is unfortunately now the exception rather than the rule.⁷⁷

Most monographs zero in on the individual work of art at

one particular time or on one particular aspect of it. Hence, many of the greatest masterpieces of Islamic art, whether major buildings such as the Dome of the Rock, the Alhambra, or the Taj Mahal, or major manuscripts such as the *Cairo Bustan* (which has several paintings actually *signed* by Bihzad), have not been the subject of full monographs. Despite all the glossy publications and interpretative articles, we still do not have a single serious work containing plans, sections, inscriptions, and interpretations of the Dome of the Rock from its construction in 692 to its emergence as the symbol of Pales-



9 Kamal al-Din Bihzad, *The Seduction of Yusuf*, from a manuscript of Saadi's *Bustan*, Herat (Afghanistan), 1488. Cairo, National Library (photo: Los Angeles County Museum of Art)

tinian nationhood in the twenty-first century. Likewise, the Alhambra, perhaps the most popular tourist attraction in Spain, lacks a solid interpretative monograph.⁷⁸ Often, the most basic information, such as materials and dimensions, is unavailable. For example, a sourcebook about the Taj Mahal and an exhibition catalogue about its legacy exist,⁷⁹ but when one of us recently wanted to know exactly what type of stone was used for the beautiful (and lengthy) calligraphic inscriptions on the building—extensively analyzed in a celebrated article published in this very journal⁸⁰—it required several appeals to colleagues and e-mails to India to find out that it was black marble!

Many of the most useful and provocative monographs deal neither with the most important nor even the most beautiful

examples of the type, whether buildings or manuscripts, but rather with the best-documented ones that, it is hoped, can serve to represent the whole. This is the case with several studies of modest architectural complexes erected around the graves of Sufi saints (Fig. 10)⁸¹ and with a group of small copies of the *Shahnama*, the Iranian national epic, produced about 1300.⁸² Almost all of these publications grew out of the authors' dissertations, and perhaps as a legacy of the process, authors treat the monument at only one moment in time rather than as an enduring entity. This is true of major monuments as well. We have recent and detailed studies of Topkapi Palace, the Ottoman royal seat, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; the Cairo citadel in the Mamluk period; and the Great Mosque in Damascus in the Umayyad period.⁸³



10 Shrine complex at Gazur Gah, Afghanistan, west portal, 1425 (photo: authors, 1977)

Quite understandably, these works concentrate on the glorious moments when these buildings flourished and mention present conditions only as unwelcome interventions that obscure the historical record.⁸⁴ Yet the impact of such a focus on the glorious historical moment is cumulative, for it serves to relegate Islamic art to the distant past and minimize any relevance these enduring historic monuments might have to the people who live around them today.⁸⁵

We ourselves have been guilty of such sins. Twenty years ago one of us co-authored a monograph on the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, which discussed the creation of the manuscript in fourteenth-century Iran and its dismemberment in twentieth-century Paris.⁸⁶ It did not even occur to the authors to think about what had happened to the manuscript in the intervening six centuries, although subsequent research has revealed several important stages in the manuscript's history that shed light not only on the work itself but also on its reception in the nineteenth century.⁸⁷ In other words, scholars of Islamic art, like those in other disciplines of art history, are (belatedly) taking up the question of what happened to works of art after they were made.⁸⁸

As in all fields, cost is one of the problems in producing monographs on single works of art. Sometimes private patrons will pay to have their own works published or to publish an important work of art associated with their favorite museum, as was the case of the minbar from Marrakesh.⁸⁹ Museums will sometimes raise funds to pay for an unusually splendid book on an uncommonly splendid work of art from their collection, such as the Freer's *Haft Awrang*. But mostly it is difficult to get such specialized works in print, primarily because publishers believe they cannot sell enough copies to recoup their costs. Only a few of these specialized monographs deal with such important subjects or treat the material

in such an innovative way that the nonspecialist is encouraged to dip in.

Authors are thus caught in a double bind: while their colleagues and deans demand increasingly specialized studies that will earn them the respect and approbation of their peers, publishers want general works that will sell to a broader audience. This leaves unplowed a wide swathe of middle ground, which could be fruitfully planted with something between the general surveys and the specialized monographs just mentioned. Topics might include a comprehensive history of the Great Mosque of Damascus, from Roman temple to modern Syrian monument, or the manuscript of Nizami's *Khamsa* (Quintet) made for Shah Tahmasp, possibly illustrated with paintings taken from other manuscripts, extensively refurbished in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, and now in the British Library (Or. 2265). So far, scholarly articles haven't really filled the gap; although they can earn one great respect from colleagues, they often leave the larger public unimpressed or mystified. If they are in a specialized journal like *Muqarnas*, they are ignored by readers outside the field. If they are in a prestigious journal like the *Art Bulletin*, they are usually ignored by specialist colleagues abroad, and authors must devote much of their efforts to introduction and exposition of basics to satisfy the needs of the audience.

Museums and Private Collections

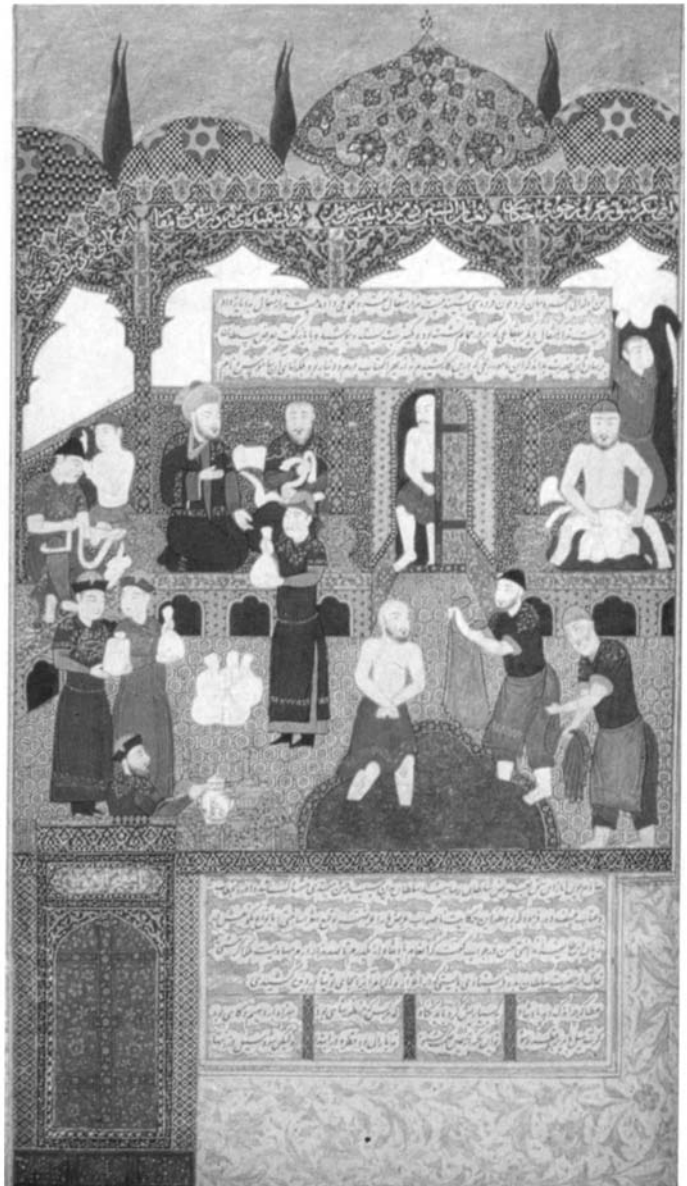
Another way of looking at Islamic art is through catalogues and publications by museums and private collections. Since so much of what historians of Islamic art study consists of collectable works of "decorative" art, some of the most important recent work on Islamic art is to be found in catalogues. But if the publishers of specialized monographs find

it difficult to attract a clientele, the publishers of catalogues find it impossible, and scholars are often at a loss to know what museums actually have without spending weeks going through the collections piece by piece. Faced with financial constraints, museums have tried a variety of novel approaches. Twenty years ago, the Museum für islamische Kunst in Berlin began an ambitious program of publishing loose-leaf catalogues of their unpublished examples of glass and metal,⁹⁰ but the future of such time-consuming and expensive efforts, which seemed so promising at the time, has already been rendered moot by the potential—if not the realization—of on-line catalogues. Compared with the pressures museums face to put their other collections, such as Impressionist paintings, on-line, there has been little drive to do the same for Islamic art. Furthermore, Islamic art can be more difficult to catalogue because objects of different scales and materials may be stored in different places.

Continuing a venerable British tradition pioneered by the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Museum has produced a series of readable handbooks on Islamic metalwork, Persian and Mughal painting, Islamic tiles, and Ottoman ceramics.⁹¹ These inexpensive volumes offer good introductions to the various media, with solid historical background and numerous illustrations, many in color, although such guides cannot provide detailed analysis of individual works of art.

The collections of Islamic art in major American museums have not fared nearly as well. Despite the venerability and prestige of the Islamic collection at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, it is still difficult to find out what the museum actually owns. To do so, one has to consult a wide variety of sources, including special issues of the museum's bulletin; catalogues of single media, such as Oriental carpets, jewelry, and tiles; books designed to accompany loan exhibitions; and a volume in the museum's series on world cultures.⁹² Despite this apparent wealth of information, major parts of the museum's enormous Islamic holdings remain inaccessible, notably, its superb collection of works on paper, for which there is still no general publication apart from a slim volume on Persian and Indian drawings.⁹³ The problem may soon be ameliorated, as plans are afoot to put the entire collection on-line.⁹⁴

The smaller but still extensive collections of the Freer and Sackler Galleries of the Smithsonian Institution, including some of the finest examples of metalwares and ceramics, are more readily accessible through exhibition catalogues.⁹⁵ In 1986, the Smithsonian acquired the Vever collection, an extraordinary group of Persian and Mughal works on paper amassed in the early twentieth century by a Parisian jeweler that had disappeared after his death in 1942. This coup was soon followed by the publication of a two-volume introduction and checklist.⁹⁶ The publication is remarkable in containing not only discussion and illustration of the nearly five hundred objects, with color reproductions of the finest, but also an all-too-rare technical analysis of some Islamic works on paper. One hopes that there will someday be a complete catalogue for the remaining manuscript leaves and paintings in the two galleries. Small museums rarely have the opportunity or funds to publish their smaller collections; one notable



11 *Firdausi in the Bathhouse*, painting added to the Spencer *Shahnama* in the 19th or 20th century. New York Public Library Pers. ms 2, fol. 5

exception is the catalogue of Arab and Persian painting at Harvard, whose annotated checklist is a model of clarity.⁹⁷

One reason for the dearth of museum catalogues is financial, for museums have a mandate to serve the general public as well as the scholarly world. They also find it easier to sell fancy exhibition catalogues of masterpieces than dull descriptions of entire classes of objects, many of which are of lesser quality and interest. Some private collectors have commissioned glossy catalogues of their holdings. Edmund de Unger was one of the first to assemble a constellation of scholars to catalogue and publish his comprehensive Keir collection in London. Volumes on the individual media written in the 1970s were followed by a multi-author volume with entries on the objects added to the collection in the subsequent decade.⁹⁸ They provide useful surveys of the field at that particular time, though the value of the individual volume rests on the abilities of the individual scholar and the depth of the



12 Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii, Shah-i Zinda cemetery, Samarkand, ca. 1910 (photo: Washington, D.C., Library of Congress, Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii collection, album: Section IV, Samarkand, Lot 10338, no. 72; modern digital color rendering made by WalterStudio, 2000–2001)

individual collection. Such productions, however, invariably raise questions about their reliability, given collectors' interest in enhancing the value of their objects.

The most stunning publications of recent times are the splendid catalogues underwritten by Nasser David Khalili of the vast collection in his Nour Foundation.⁹⁹ The volumes are written by experts, and some, such as François Déroche's volumes on early manuscripts of the Koran, contain the distillation of years of research, while others, such as the volumes on later manuscripts of the Koran, are the first surveys of their particular fields. The series is not without its shortcomings, however. No technical analysis or provenance is given for any of the works, some of which are unusual, to say the least, and the collection, following the origins of the owner, is heavily weighted toward Iranian material. Furthermore, as with the catalogues of most private collections, the

authors tend to be more enthusiastic than critical.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, these volumes provide the finest illustrations of the finest objects of Islamic art that have been on the market in recent decades. One could do far worse.

The publication of manuscripts in library collections is more even. The venerable B. W. Robinson, who decided to study Persian art after the redoubtable scholar, traveler, and historian Brigadier-General Sir Percy Sykes took him to the Burlington House exhibition in 1931, has been the pioneer in the field, writing invaluable catalogues of the major collections in Britain as well as of countless individual manuscripts.¹⁰¹ Although officially associated with the department of metalwork at London's Victoria and Albert Museum, Robinson worked doggedly over the last half century to map the history of Persian manuscript painting and define its historical periods and the characteristics of each style. His method

has been mainly taxonomic, but his material provides the foundation for many interpretative studies and analyses.¹⁰²

Writing such catalogues is a labor of love, because all museums and libraries have as much dross as gold, and the cataloguer has to include both. This does not usually make scintillating reading, and few publishers are willing to commit funds and energy to such projects. Nevertheless, the results can be unexpectedly revealing. One of the most famous Persian manuscripts in the New York Public Library, the Spencer *Shahnama*, for example, is a 1614 copy of the Persian national epic illustrated with scenes that earlier scholars had characterized as a conscious revival of fifteenth-century styles (Fig. 11). Barbara Schmitz's meticulous research with library conservators showed, however, that the illustrations had to have been fakes added to the manuscript in the nineteenth or twentieth century, and that the supposed "revival" of earlier styles was merely a figment of the art historical imagination!¹⁰³ Schmitz's work shows the crucial importance of technical examination to supplement stylistic analysis, yet since technical analysis is rarely done, it remains difficult to establish how much a particular object varies from the norm.

Media

Another popular way of looking at Islamic art is by medium. The hierarchy of media in Islamic art differs from that of other artistic traditions: architecture and manuscript illustration play roles comparable to those in other traditions, but the "minor," "decorative," or "portable" arts—all these terms seem somewhat pejorative but no substitute springs readily to mind—play a more important role in Islamic art, whereas sculpture is virtually nonexistent, and painting on canvas or panel is a relatively late and restricted phenomenon. In this sense, Islamic art provides a useful corrective to the categories developed to study Western art. For example, Muhammad ibn al-Zayn was so proud of his work on the splendid inlaid bronze basin in the Louvre known as the "Baptistère de Saint-Louis" that he signed it in many different places.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, the pair of matched "Ardabil" carpets in London and Los Angeles, covered with intricate scrolling vines and flowers, were designed by the master Maqsum of Kashan and comprise millions of knots tied by teams of weavers.¹⁰⁵ Why should the basin, probably made for catching water after washing hands, or the rugs, designed to fit the floor of a shrine, be considered any less of a work of art than a painting or sculpture? Just because it was useful?

Most examples of Islamic art are now in museums, libraries, and private collections, so catalogues of the type already discussed provide a natural point of access to them. In addition, scholars are investigating a range of other avenues to present the individual media.

Architecture is undeniably the most important medium of Islamic art, and the most important recent book on Islamic architecture is Robert Hillenbrand's magisterial survey.¹⁰⁶ Arranged typologically, it treats each category—mosque, minaret, mausoleum, to name a few—chronologically and regionally, although it omits such "peripheral" regions as tropical Africa, India, and Southeast Asia. The book not only replaces earlier warhorses and picture books, it also moves the subject to a far higher intellectual plane, because the author succeeds in combining judicious and often incisive

formal analysis with a deep and subtle understanding of Islamic history and culture.¹⁰⁷

Despite the popularity of Islamic architecture, few authors since Creswell, Pope, and Georges Marçais have attempted to write architectural surveys of a particular region.¹⁰⁸ There are a few partial exceptions. Two volumes in the *New Cambridge History of India*, for example, cover aspects of Indian Islamic architecture (and art).¹⁰⁹ Catherine Asher's book on the architecture of the Mughal period is especially noteworthy as she includes buildings erected by non-Muslims during the period of Mughal rule, thereby expanding the definition of "Islamic art." One problem with the book—and the series—is the small and dim photographs. Ebba Koch's slim but useful survey of Mughal architecture is graced by illustrations more likely to engender some enthusiasm for the subject.¹¹⁰

Most authors have concentrated on specific provinces or cities, usually within a limited period. For example, in addition to Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber's study of Timurid architecture, there is a fine examination of Timurid architecture in the Iranian part of the province of Khurasan and a two-part analysis of the contemporary city of Herat, once part of the same province but now in Afghanistan.¹¹¹ These studies, with their concentration on cataloguing, provide important documentation, which can be used, especially when combined with the work of literary and cultural historians, to develop broader theories about regional styles and cultural developments. Although scholars such as Max van Berchem and Ernst Herzfeld had underscored the crucial role of physical evidence for the writing of history, few contemporary historians incorporate this kind of information into their work. Some notable exceptions are Maria Subtelny, who has plumbed the written and visual sources to write cultural histories of Central Asia, and Anne-Marie Eddé, who has exhaustively studied the Syrian city of Aleppo during the period of Ayyubid rule.¹¹²

Some authors focus on individual types of buildings, following the path charted by Hillenbrand in his survey of Islamic architecture. The mosque, surely the most important type of Islamic religious building, is naturally the subject of many studies. These range in approach and coverage; some are global and typological, discussing the variety of mosque types from Africa to China.¹¹³ Others are limited to specific regions or periods.¹¹⁴ Some deal with particular parts of mosques, such as minarets and mihrabs; others deal with related buildings, such as the theological college, or madrasa, and the tomb.¹¹⁵ Quite naturally, religious buildings would tend to define the history of Islamic architecture, but as religious structures they are, as a group, remarkably conservative, and one must remember that Islamic culture and religion are not necessarily coextensive. These studies, therefore, tend to emphasize continuity over change, tradition over experiment. Secular architecture potentially offers much more variety, but it was far less likely to be preserved, so it is more difficult to write global histories of building types such as the palace, the market, or the caravanserai, which tend to fall into regional or temporal groupings.¹¹⁶

Space restricts us to discussing briefly two unusually interesting aspects of Islamic architecture's setting: urbanism and the garden. Contrary to stereotypes, Islam is not a culture of desert nomads but the product of cities, and the question of

the Islamic city or, more specifically, its nature, has been the subject of numerous conferences and studies.¹¹⁷ Some approach the subject from a theoretical perspective, such as the long and dense book by the late Paul Wheatley, which deals with the Islamic city from the perspective of historical geography and has little to do with the actual physical remains.¹¹⁸ Most scholars, however, fall back on regional categories. The Arab Islamic city, notably from the sixteenth century, has long been the focus of research by the French scholar André Raymond, whereas others limit their work to the Iranian city.¹¹⁹ By focusing on a narrower scope, scholars can move beyond platitudes, such as an Islamic city is distinct because it has a congregational mosque, to consider broader economic and ecological factors, such as water supply, agricultural hinterland, trade routes, and the like.

The Islamic garden has also been the subject of much work from a variety of approaches, ranging from sober regional or temporal studies to glorious picture books.¹²⁰ Since a garden is quintessentially ephemeral, changing through the times of day, seasons, and years, it is extremely difficult to study historically, and many works, especially exhibition catalogues, fall back on the cliché that the Islamic garden was always an earthly paradise.¹²¹ Recently, scholars of garden history have begun to question this rather vapid idea and develop more concrete and specific notions about the agricultural uses of the garden and its role as a signifier of political power, particularly by applying techniques of archaeology and technological history, as well as by reading agricultural treatises and contemporary poetry.¹²²

As architecture cannot travel easily (the Mshatta facade in Berlin is the clear exception), researchers must travel to examine it, and the vicissitudes of world events often make the study of Islamic architecture exceptionally difficult, whether for locals, who cannot travel to adjacent countries, or for foreigners, who cannot get to the region. These travel restrictions can lead to insularity and encourage nationalist views that obscure the larger picture of architectural development. They can also change overnight: Central Asia, for years an inaccessible backwater of the old Soviet Union, is again in the mainstream as the Silk Road has become "hot." Yet as scholarly interest in Central Asia grows, as it undoubtedly will in the coming years, following the scent of money and politics, the major task of scholars will be to distinguish the real from the restored, for Soviet-style megalomaniacal restoration continues unchecked. The nationalist regimes of the new Central Asian republics have created hero cults around the memory and monuments of such figures as Tamerlane, and archives of old photographs (Fig. 12) and plans are consequently taking on great importance in helping to sift the wheat from the chaff. Their publication on Websites is a welcome new tool for scholarship.¹²³

Manuscripts and book illustration comprise the second most important medium of Islamic art, as the central role of the Koran in Islam led in early times to a universal appreciation of the word, writing, and books. It is also the medium about which the views of Muslims and non-Muslims are most divergent: Muslims accord the highest rank to calligraphy, the art of writing God's word, and have collected and studied the work of the finest calligraphers for centuries. When it comes to calligraphy, Westerners begin with the double dis-

advantages of unfamiliarity with the script, if not the language, and coming from a culture that confers greater importance on the representation of human form or nature than on that of the word. Even for those Westerners who come to appreciate the formal and abstract values of Islamic calligraphy, such a one-sided appreciation trivializes the semantic content of the message.

For many, particularly Westerners, the Persian tradition of book illustration epitomizes Islamic art, opening a window into a magical, bejeweled world of choreographed combats and enchanted gardens in which languid youths and maidens stroll, heedless of the monsters lurking behind the rocks. Pious Muslims would question whether this art had anything to do with Islam, as would Iranian chauvinists, who would say exactly the same thing for totally different reasons! Apart from the ninety-page section in the *Dictionary of Art* (section 3 of "Islamic art"), there is still no comprehensive survey of the Islamic arts of the book. Several recent works, many collaborative, make reasonable stabs at the subject from different directions, although they sometimes fail to discern the forest for the trees.¹²⁴

Some scholars have begun studying the physical aspects of the Islamic book. Considering that the Islamic lands were responsible for the transfer of paper and papermaking from China, where it was invented, to Europe, paper is a very important subject, but until very recently, it went unstudied. Helen Loveday has examined Islamic papers from a technical perspective, and several French scholars have begun the arduous task of dating and identifying Islamic papers (which, unlike Western ones, are never watermarked) by their physical characteristics.¹²⁵ Bloom has ventured from the world of Islamic art into intellectual history to show how paper played a seminal part in the development of classical Islamic civilization, arguing specifically that the introduction of paper had a crucial role on the making of art, as drawing replaced memory as a repository for visual ideas.¹²⁶ Other scholars have examined book bindings, which are quite different from Western examples.¹²⁷ Some scholars have mined the literary sources about books and bookmaking, although they date mainly from later Persian and Indian milieus.¹²⁸ One particularly fruitful approach is codicology, in effect, the archaeological examination of the book. Codicological techniques have been used to localize and reconstruct many types of manuscripts, ranging from the many unsigned and undated folios from early parchment manuscripts of the Koran to albums and illustrated manuscripts of the later period.¹²⁹

As we have said, calligraphy is the only form of visual art universally admired by Muslims, and its ubiquity is the one feature that distinguishes Islamic art from other artistic traditions, yet there is still no comprehensive survey of the subject, and glossy picture books do not adequately fill the gap.¹³⁰ Much confusion has arisen because many names for scripts have been used over long periods in many places, but the same names do not always designate the same scripts. Several recent works have tried to connect the development of Arabic calligraphy and epigraphy with religious and political developments, but such polemical explanations, based on idiosyncratic selection of the relevant evidence, are not widely accepted.¹³¹

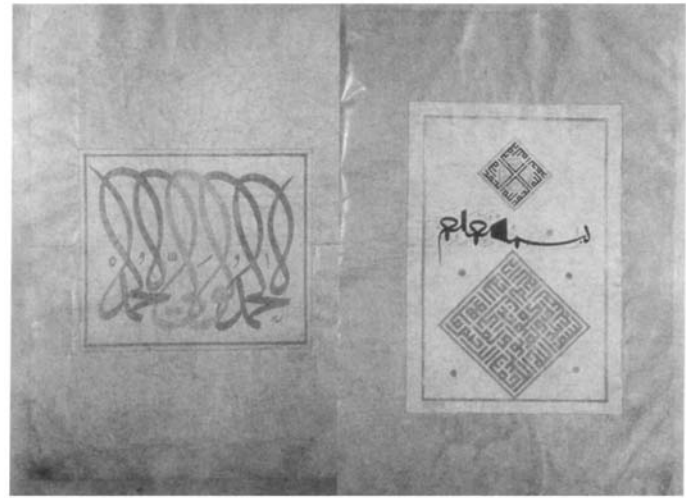
A more nuanced—and art historical—approach to under-

standing the origins of Arabic calligraphy was initiated by the late Estelle Whelan, who started with a very close study of the visual characteristics of the surviving manuscripts, through which she discovered much about their history and meaning.¹³² In contrast to the approach of other scholars, who often used art to illustrate history or politics, Whelan began with the works of art themselves and then drew revolutionary conclusions about their dating, localization, and attribution. For example, she was the first to point out that the study of individual letter forms, a methodology inherited from Classical paleography, was insufficient to explain the development of Arabic script, in which individual letters change their form and shape depending on their position in a word. Moreover, she demonstrated that analyzing the changing spaces between unconnected letters and individual words could shed light on developments over time.

The study of Arabic calligraphy is vital to understanding the visual world of Islamic art and how it differs from other traditions. For example, Arabic script reads from right to left, so it seems logical to imagine that people regularly “read” images in the same direction. In addition, utterances usually begin with the invocation to God (*basmala*), so that is where the sequence of images probably starts. Yet many scholars ignore this basic rule. Virtually every publication of the Córdoba ivories, such as the pyxis made for al-Mughira in 968, presents the sequence of images from left to right, beginning in the middle. Moreover, most current books on Islamic calligraphy simply assume that the willing reader will appreciate its beauties and do not explain why or how to do so. Ahmad Karahisari’s frontispiece (Fig. 13) juxtaposes two extremes of the calligrapher’s art: the two examples of “chain” script show how a master could exert total control over the flowing line, while the two diamonds of square script show how he could ingeniously fit a complicated text into a rigid grid without leaving any extraneous spaces.

In contrast to calligraphy, there is a long Western tradition of writing about book illustration, especially that of Iran. The first monograph on the subject was published nearly a century ago, and interest in the subject remains strong, even to the senior scholar in our field.¹³³ In the intervening years, many scholars have approached the subject historically, as with the classic works by Basil Gray, Ettinghausen, and Norah Titley, all unfortunately out of print.¹³⁴ Some scholars have tried different approaches. Basil Gray edited a volume that combines historical and media-centered essays on the book arts of Central Asia, although the chapters are somewhat uneven in content. Oleg Grabar studied the various illustrations of a single literary work, al-Hariri’s *Maqamat* (Assemblies), but the publisher’s experiment with putting the hundreds of illustrations on microfiche made the pictures quite unusable. Eleanor Sims adopted a novel thematic approach, treating battles and combats, demons and dragons, landscapes and lovers in her new book on Persian painting across the centuries.¹³⁵

Most authors of books about painting have been forced to select only one or two pages from each manuscript for illustration, for few publishers are willing to produce facsimiles of either manuscripts or albums.¹³⁶ Furthermore, the illustrations in most books about painting are usually cropped to remove “extraneous” text and margins. Even publications



13 Ahmad Karahisari, double frontispiece to a calligraphic album, Istanbul, ca. 1550. Istanbul, Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art (photo: authors)

that show all the paintings, such as the one of the fifteenth-century *Mirajnama*, usually give no idea how the painted pages fit into the entire manuscript.¹³⁷ Few authors have attempted—or been able—to deal with the book as a complete work of art comprising binding, paper, calligraphy, illumination, and illustration, as well as studying the relation of text to image and frame to subject.¹³⁸ From the scholar’s point of view, this surely is the way to go, although publishers might think otherwise.

Other media important in the Islamic lands include metalwork, ceramics, glass, textiles, wood, ivory, and rock crystal. Metalwork is the best served, as there are several recent books about it, ranging from general surveys to studies of technology, from the quotidian objects found during excavation to expensive silverwares.¹³⁹ With a few exceptions, most of these works relate to the early period.¹⁴⁰ Used in conjunction with catalogues of public and private collections, these works give a reasonably good technical and historical overview of the subject, despite a tendency to concentrate on luxury wares from the Iranian world.¹⁴¹

Ceramics, although more prominent in museum and private collections, are less well covered. Nothing has yet been written to update the classic handbooks by Arthur Lane, once keeper of ceramics at the Victoria and Albert.¹⁴² As with metalwares, the most expensive types of ceramics, notably lusterware, have received the most scrutiny,¹⁴³ and most books concentrate on Iranian or Egyptian wares with figural decoration. One exception is a multidisciplinary, multi-author study of Iranian ceramics of the Timurid period, which deals with a range of types by presenting both stylistic and technical analyses and giving a broad picture of multiple ceramic centers.¹⁴⁴ The book shows the advantages of combining different expertises, though the different voices do not always add up to a harmonious choir. One of the authors, Robert Mason, has also written a series of provocative articles based on his microscopic analysis of the constituent materials (“petrofabric”) of various types of Islamic ceramics. His work may revolutionize the traditional study of Islamic ceramics, as it casts doubt on many of the stylistic criteria used rather



14 Riser from the minbar formerly in the Kutubiyya Mosque, Marrakesh, Morocco, 1137. Marrakesh, Badia Palace Museum (photo: authors, 1997)

cavalierly by earlier generations of scholars, although the jury is not yet in on his work.

For whatever reason, Islamic glass has received much attention lately. The whole history of Islamic glass from its origins to its imitators has been the subject of a recent exhibition and a catalogue of a private collection.¹⁴⁵ As with the other arts, scholars lean toward the fanciest type of Islamic glass, such as relief-carved ware or glass with gilded and enameled decoration,¹⁴⁶ but—as with ceramics—new means of technical analysis, especially of glass found in archaeological contexts, promise to shed new light on an old subject.

Textiles were the mainstay of the medieval Islamic economy, yet relatively little has been written about them, probably because they were literally worn to shreds. Maurice Lombard's magisterial survey, written posthumously from his lecture notes at the Collège de France, remains an essential historical overview, though it relies entirely on literary sources and illustrates no surviving examples.¹⁴⁷ Patricia Baker's attractive and readable introduction combines history and technique with glorious color pictures.¹⁴⁸ Few individual scholars can amass the technical, linguistic, historical, and art historical skills that a thorough understanding of textiles calls for, so a team approach often works well, if slowly. The long-awaited book on Ottoman brocades and velvets shows not only how beautiful they are but how important they were in Islamic societies, though it, too, concentrates on the fanciest—and most photogenic—types.¹⁴⁹

One of the more challenging problems bedeviling scholars of Islamic textiles concerns the splendid silks woven with gold thread that have emerged on the market in recent years, perhaps as a consequence of the opening (or looting) of Buddhist monasteries in Tibet, where many of them are said to have been preserved for centuries. Debates about the textiles' original provenance are heated, and attributions have ranged from Anatolia to Central Asia. A variety of techniques, ranging from stylistic analysis of the addorsed animals in roundels to technical analysis of how and with what the gold thread was made, has yet to lead to consensus, but it bespeaks a vigorous debate.¹⁵⁰

Most people who come to Islamic art are attracted by Persian miniatures or Oriental carpets, the latter probably because they have been so collectible in the West. To put it

very simply, there are two types of carpets: those one puts on the floor (of a house) and those one puts on the wall (of a museum). Similarly, the literature on rugs falls into two types, most of it written by dealers anxious to promote their wares; only a little is written by scholars, and much of that is incomprehensible to those uninitiated in the language of twists, knots, and depressed warps. A useful guide to help the novice bridge the gap is Walter Denny's handbook,¹⁵¹ which is both amusing and sensible. In this field, as in others, new means of technical analysis, particularly dating by radiocarbon analysis, promise to revolutionize the study, though it is still necessary to establish a standard against which these technical studies can be gauged.¹⁵²

From these various sources one can put together reasonable overviews of the history of metalwork, ceramics, and textiles in the Islamic lands, but other media fare poorly. For example, there is still no survey of Islamic woodwork, although the medium's scarcity in the Islamic lands gave it unusually high prestige, and woodworkers developed some of the most innovative techniques to exploit it. Analysis of the Kutubiyya minbar (Fig. 14) showed, for example, that the fretsaw, previously thought to have been invented by Italian woodworkers in the Renaissance, was already used by Muslim craftsmen in Spain several centuries earlier. To study Islamic ivory, one must return to Kühnel's massive corpus,¹⁵³ whose scarcity puts it out of the reach of most scholars and libraries. A corpus of Islamic rock crystals has been long awaited.

Altogether then, a tremendous amount of work has been done on the individual media of Islamic art, but it is widely scattered and often difficult to access. Only in recent years has a thorough grounding in Islamic history, culture, and languages become an essential skill for all scholars in the field, and much older work is more descriptive than analytic or interpretative. In addition, new techniques of analysis—including radiocarbon dating, thermoluminescence, PIXE, and petrography—may revolutionize the study of Islamic art as they revolutionize the study of other artistic traditions, but many scholars have yet to integrate successfully new scientific discoveries with the products of traditional visual analysis to situate works of art in their broader historical and cultural contexts.

Islamic Art in the Cross-Cultural Perspective

Another way of looking at Islamic art—or one facet of it—is by placing it in a larger regional, continental, global, or chronological context. This was the premise of an international exhibition in Berlin, which focused on the long relation between Europe and the “Orient,” from the ancient Near East and Egypt to the modern Islamic lands. Oddly enough, however, few, if any, Islamicists were involved in its organization.¹⁵⁴ It was also the premise of an international exhibition in Washington, D.C., celebrating the five-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's “discovery” of America. *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration* presented a “snapshot” of the world's art at the end of the fifteenth century, including the Islamic lands, just at the moment when the Islamic lands would lose their central position in intercontinental trade.¹⁵⁵ The Washington exhibition, in contrast to the Berlin one, had the benefit of informed input from several prominent scholars of Islamic art.

There are several natural points of intersection between the study of the arts of Islam and those of the West; both, for one thing, share common roots in the world of late antiquity. Yet this intriguing topic, explored in many works by such scholars as Peter Brown, Glen Bowersock, and Oleg Grabar,¹⁵⁶ has never been the focus of a major exhibition. Studies of the "Classical Revival" in Islamic art also remain relatively obscure.¹⁵⁷ By contrast, several exhibitions and books have been devoted to cultural interactions at the time of the Crusades, although only a few give sufficient weight to the Islamic perspective. The exhibition at the University of Michigan in 1981 and the associated symposium showed the benefit of using a team of scholars specializing in both East and West.¹⁵⁸ Carole Hillenbrand's book on the Crusades from the Islamic perspective, although not strictly a book about art, uses art as a historical source and is copiously illustrated.¹⁵⁹

Contacts between the Islamic lands and neighboring cultures in Europe and Asia again proved strong from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries. The late Spiro Kostoff was one of the first mainstream architectural historians to juxtapose contemporary Istanbul and Venice in his introductory survey of architectural history.¹⁶⁰ In the last two decades a host of other scholars has pursued the varied and complex relations in a variety of media, whether paintings, portrait medals, crowns, architecture, textiles and decorative arts, or court dress.¹⁶¹

The number and splendor of these recent publications shows the enthusiasm of publishers and their audiences for such cross-cultural treatments. As Islamicists, we are not in a position to judge the sophistication and accuracy of our Islamicist colleagues' interpretation of European materials, although it appears sound to us. We are, however, in a better position to judge how well non-Islamicists deal with the Islamic material, and we often find troubling weaknesses in research and interpretation that we—and other Islamicists—are often reluctant to criticize because we are so pleased to have been invited to the table at all. Given the vast amounts of material to cover, the collaborative approach seems the best path, as it is increasingly impossible for a single scholar to control all the pertinent information in a field, let alone one that crosses the traditional boundaries of scholarship. It also seems to us that we historians of Islamic art have a duty to make our specialized work more, rather than less, accessible so that it can be understood and assimilated by an audience beyond specialists in our own field.

Sources

Historians of Islamic art, like those in many other fields of art history, eagerly participate in the current fashion to privilege the text over the work of art itself. Art historians, perhaps in appropriate reaction to the wilder speculations of former generations of aficionados and connoisseurs, have turned to the written word to solve all their problems. This trend has had several ramifications. The emphasis of research has shifted to the later periods, principally because more documentary evidence is available for them. It is far easier, for example, to use texts when writing about Ottoman art of the eighteenth century than it is about Abbasid art of the eighth. Conversely, archaeology, which is more important for understanding the earlier periods, has become less important in

the eyes of many art historians, a somewhat disturbing trend, since our field developed in part out of the study of Islamic archaeology. Perhaps as a result, Islamic archaeology is becoming a more specialized field increasingly distinct from Islamic art history. As long as the field of Islamic art encompasses both the early and late periods, there must be a healthy middle ground that can utilize any approach that helps us better understand the past.

More positively, interest in the written sources has propelled scholars to translate and publish a variety of texts. There is still no comprehensive sourcebook for the study of Islamic art comparable to those available in many other fields, perhaps because Islamic art covers not just one period and one country but fourteen centuries in nearly forty countries. It might be possible to compile such a book by carefully culling published works; indeed, one publisher recently proposed such a project, although the funding failed to materialize.

Naturally, translations often fall into categories based on the source language. Most sources are translated by linguists. The star in this field is undoubtedly Wheeler M. Thackston, who has translated an astonishing range of Persian sources having particular relevance to art, ranging from an eleventh-century traveler and spy to seventeenth-century Mughal chroniclers, and virtually everything in between.¹⁶² By contrast, far fewer of the earlier Arabic sources on art have been collected, much less translated.¹⁶³ Most of the works translated from Arabic, Persian, or Turkish are chronicles, histories, and travelogues, from which the art historian can cull bits of information, and there are only a few treatises related directly to art, most of which date from the later periods. Good models are the two Ottoman treatises on architecture ably translated by Howard Crane.¹⁶⁴ Only a few scholars have the linguistic expertise, time, and willingness to translate entire texts, but several recent works on Islamic art also make extensive use of written sources, such as Yves Porter's study of the materials and methods of Persian painters, Gülru Necipoğlu's monograph on the geometric ornament used in the Topkapi Scroll, and D. Fairchild Ruggles's work on Spanish Islamic gardens.¹⁶⁵ These works show both the advantages and limitations of this approach, as the written sources do not always correspond to the visual record, and the historian has to do some fancy footwork to bring them together. There is no reason to believe that the literate milieus that produced texts were identical to those that produced works of art; indeed, in many cases it seems that works of Islamic art can provide glimpses into aspects of society—women, illiterates, or popular piety—otherwise ignored by the scribbling classes.¹⁶⁶

Larger Issues

The final method of studying Islamic art that we will discuss in this essay is a problem-oriented approach to larger issues, in which authors transcend the boundaries of geography, chronology, dynasty, personality, and medium. Many of the monographs we have already discussed deal with larger issues, but these studies are by definition confined to a specific example or type, whether a scroll with geometric designs in Istanbul or the architecture of Iran and Turan. In the follow-

ing section we will discuss works that do not easily fit in any of our other categories.

A convenient starting point for recent work is Oleg Grabar's seminal study of the development of Islamic art, in which he tried to answer the question of how Islamic art—if it exists at all—emerged.¹⁶⁷ He explored the historical, intellectual, functional, aesthetic, theoretical, and formal concerns at work in the creation of new art forms associated with the emergence of the religion of Islam and their relations to the arts of Byzantium and Sasanian Iran. Given as a series of lectures at Oberlin College in 1969, his answer consists of a group of essays on such topics as the land and its symbolic appropriation, Islamic attitudes toward the arts, religious versus secular art, and decoration, all limited to the period before the thirteenth century, and particularly to the years before 1000 C.E. Although extraordinarily provocative to an entire generation of students and scholars who had never read anything quite like it, Grabar's essay was nevertheless criticized by some as cavalier and selective in its use of sources and examples. Indeed, the author's enthusiasm for his subject and the lecture form in which it originated sometimes obscure the coherence of the argument.¹⁶⁸

Grabar's prose style is characterized by a liberal use of rhetorical questions, and one of his former students, Terry Allen, audaciously attempted to answer some of them in a book of essays examining the characteristic features of Islamic art in the period before 1300. In this provocative work, Allen discusses what is distinctive about Islamic art, how it came into being, and what mechanisms lay behind its apparent unity.¹⁶⁹ Perhaps most engaging is Allen's elegant discussion of aniconism, the avoidance of figural imagery that is so characteristic of much Islamic art. Rather than link it simply to iconoclasm, the conscious destruction of images that preoccupied the Christian world at the time when Islam emerged, Allen drew a careful distinction between religious and secular art, showing that a vibrant tradition of representation continued until the eleventh century. Basically self-published, this challenging if quirky work never received the widespread attention it deserved.

Grabar's book also inspired Yasser Tabbaa to investigate specific characteristics of Arab-Islamic art in the two centuries after 1000, and he linked the emergence of specific forms, such as the use of cursive writing, geometric ornament, and the *muqarnas*, to the reaction by Arab Sunnis against the perceived onslaught of Shiis, who ruled in Egypt and occasionally elsewhere.¹⁷⁰ In contrast to Allen, whose point of departure is rigorously formal and deductive, Tabbaa follows a more inductive approach. His focus on the Arab lands in this tumultuous period, in which invasions by Turkish tribes were followed by European Crusaders, tends to skew the larger picture, for the arts of the traditional heartlands of Arab Islam were being molded by tastes developing in Iran and Central Asia. As we write, the new and exciting archaeological discoveries being made in remotest Central Asia promise to reshape our understanding of the emergence and development of Islamic art in this period.

As current opinion finds it increasingly difficult to identify a single concept of Islamic art in later periods and regions farther from the early centers of Islamic culture, it seems unlikely that scholars will attempt similar studies for the arts

of later periods and other regions. Outside the confines of the survey textbook, it seems an insuperable task to try to identify any group of ideas that would apply equally to the art of India during the period of Mughal rule and the art of Morocco under its contemporary Saadian rulers.

Many others approached the large questions of Islamic art in different ways from Grabar and his students. Despite the widespread prevalence of aniconism in Islamic religious art, many scholars, especially those treating the decorative arts, have been attracted to the area of iconography. This methodology, initially developed for the study of Christian art, seems particularly applicable to the field of Islamic decorative art, for many ceramics and metalwares are decorated with lively figural scenes and single figures, most of which have escaped explanation. The dean of this approach was Ettinghausen, who wrote a pioneering work on the unicorn in 1950 and cast his net far wider in many later works.¹⁷¹ Ettinghausen's work has been followed by many scholars in an enormous number of books and articles, ranging from studies of sphinxes and harpies in many media to animal symbolism in a single manuscript, from studies of Bahram Gur, the semi-mythical Persian hunter-king, to representations of the family of the Prophet.¹⁷² Iconographic studies are often popular with a general audience because they can provide pat answers to complex questions.

In our view, however, iconographic studies in Islamic art have met with a degree of success in inverse proportion to their scope. Some artistic traditions have developed from religious or political institutions that were able to maintain meanings and interpretations over long periods and great distances, but the Islamic world was not one of them. It is all but impossible to prove that any form or motif had the same meaning in Abbasid Baghdad and Ottoman Istanbul, let alone in nineteenth-century Java, and so iconographic arguments often end up as tautologies.

Part of the problem lies in the broad and unwieldy definition of Islamic art, which encompasses the arts produced over a millennium halfway round the globe. In the hands of masters like Ettinghausen, iconographic studies can be wonderfully illuminating, if open-ended, but in lesser hands they can resemble the unchallengeable universalist approaches discussed earlier. Abbas Daneshvari's meticulous study of animal symbolism in a single manuscript is a case in point. The author convincingly demonstrates that rabbits mean this and crows mean that in Persian culture, but as this manuscript—probably copied in mid-thirteenth-century Anatolia—is unique, how does one move beyond the individual case to the larger picture? Does every representation of a rabbit or a mouse mean the same thing? More successfully, scholars have shown that the many pictures of the Prophet and his family that have survived from early fourteenth-century Iranian manuscripts can be linked to the increased veneration of the Prophet, particularly by the Shia, in this period.¹⁷³

The absence of figural representation in much Islamic art and the development of sophisticated modes of ornament have intrigued scholars since the time of Riegl and Strzygowski. Sir Ernst Gombrich, who studied in Vienna and once prepared a seminar report on Riegl's *Stilfragen*, touched on Islamic ornament in his Wrightsman Lectures on decorative

art. Islamic ornament was the focus of Oleg Grabar's Mellon Lectures of 1989, in which he tried to use the example of Islamic ornament to meditate on larger issues of the perception, utilization, and fabrication of visual forms.¹⁷⁴ Ornament, he argued, is a subset of decoration that does not appear to have any other purpose than to enhance its carrier. Ornament is found in every artistic tradition, but it is particularly prevalent in Islamic art, and he hypothesized that an explanation of the phenomenon within the Muslim context would be of intellectual and hermeneutic value for understanding decoration everywhere. The examples he chose were drawn from writing, geometry, architecture, and nature. As with his earlier book on the development of Islamic art, Grabar's performance was universally praised as dazzling, pyrotechnic, and stimulating, but he was also criticized for being somewhat inconsistent and careless in his approach to sources. The more one knows about any single subject treated in this far-reaching and provocative book, the more questions it raises in one's mind, and it is no surprise that it was reviewed more often by scholars outside than inside the field of Islamic art.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, with this book Grabar single-handedly put Islamic art back, if briefly, stage center, where it had stood nearly a century before.

Grabar had criticized earlier studies of Islamic ornament, including Gombrich's, for being taxonomic. Taxonomy, however, has its uses, particularly in helping to place undated and largely anonymous works of art—which make up the bulk of what historians of Islamic art actually encounter—in historical contexts. The taxonomic treatment of Islamic ornament was taken by Eva Baer, a scholar deeply involved in the study of the individual object and its decoration. In her own monograph on the subject, she serially discussed motifs and their transformation, the formation of order and the creation of repeat patterns, the meaning of ornament, and the principles and concepts that lay behind it.¹⁷⁶ Together, these two studies reveal how two senior scholars of Islamic art could approach the same subject at the same time from diametrically opposite positions with entirely different methodologies. Apart from everything else, they underscore the enormous variety of scholarship encountered in the field of Islamic art.

Postmodern analysis would suggest that the act of looking reveals the concerns of the investigator more than those of the investigated, and so some studies of larger issues in Islamic art can be, quite frankly, ideologically driven. Some obvious examples of nationalist ideologies have already been discussed in relation to regional studies of Islamic art in Egypt, Turkey, Iran, or India. While it may be perfectly appropriate to see the spread of Chinoiserie and Persian motifs after the Mongol conquests of much of West Asia through Iranian-tinted glasses, it is quite farfetched in the case of something like the Pisa Griffin, the large bronze statue that used to stand on the roof of the Pisa duomo. Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, an Iranophile scholar, would like to see it as Persian, but most others say it was made somewhere in the Mediterranean lands, although an exact localization to Spain, North Africa, or Egypt has not yet been established.¹⁷⁷

Scholars, particularly those with a mystical or Sufi bent, can also find mystical meanings in everything they examine. This approach has become popular with scholars based or inter-

ested in Iran, perhaps as a legacy of Henri Corbin, the historian of Iranian mysticism, and his disciple Seyyed Hossein Nasr.¹⁷⁸ Melikian-Chirvani has often followed this path in a series of very learned books and articles in which he finds mysticism in most forms of Iranian art, from ceramics and tilework to manuscripts. He reveals mystical significance especially in the seemingly random combination of letters and strokes that often fill out inscription bands on inscribed metalwares.¹⁷⁹ While no one would deny the great role played by mystics in Iran, not all Iranians followed the mystic path, and Melikian-Chirvani's erudite scholarship is not universally accepted by those with a more earthbound bent.¹⁸⁰

In a welcome desire to find meaning in art, but perhaps in reaction to the popularity of the mystical approach, other scholars have developed sectarian interpretations of Islamic art, hoping to see reflections of the many varieties of Islam in the many varieties of Islamic art. One of the first articles in this vein was Grabar's study of early commemorative structures, in which he suggested that tombs, which were prohibited by the Prophet and frowned on by many early Muslims, may have become increasingly popular in conjunction with the growing importance of the Shia. Other scholars have explored the role of Shii Islam in the architecture of Fatimid Egypt and the development of funerary architecture there, though their interpretations have been sharply criticized by Christopher Taylor, who himself ignored the physical remains while relying on texts to interpret the veneration of the dead as a Sunni phenomenon.¹⁸¹

Such controversies show that many if not most political and social historians do not yet accept visual evidence when it conflicts with written texts. One exception is Richard Bulliet, who followed up his historical study of sectarianism in the medieval Iranian city of Nishapur with an essay suggesting that the different types of ceramics excavated there (notably, bowls decorated with sophisticated calligraphic designs and others with rather crude figural representations or sgraffito decoration) could be associated with the adherents of the different schools of Sunni law that played such an important role in the history of this city.¹⁸² Although this rather simplistic hypothesis has enjoyed some renown among historians of Islam, it is quite unconvincing to historians of Islamic art, who might have begun any such study by first examining these ceramics for differences in body and manufacturing technique.

The Fatimids were the only major Shii dynasty to rule in medieval Islamic times, and as such they have exerted a fascination on modern historians in excess of their actual sway. It is quite unclear what role their particular type of Shiism played in their art, though some scholars have tried—unconvincingly, in our opinion—to reveal a Shii component in many of their arts, from ritual processions to monumental calligraphy.¹⁸³ In reaction to this emphasis on Shiis, who tend to dominate the art and politics of the eleventh century, other scholars have looked for an artistic equivalent to the Sunni political reaction in everything from calligraphy and geometric designs to architecture.¹⁸⁴

Sectarian ideas were clearly important in premodern Islamic times, when the ulema (religious scholars and theologians) devoted much time and energy to debating them, but modern sectarian studies presuppose that the people who

made art were the same as the ulema and were inspired to do so by their sectarian ideas. Sectarian studies, like those by modern Sufis, often tell us more about the investigator than the investigated. As we have already noted with regard to the interpretation of texts, there is little evidence to help determine the social and educational level of artisans in medieval society. Despite the great quantities of Islamic art that fill museums and galleries around the world, medieval Muslim audiences had surprisingly little to say about the visual arts. The "scribbling classes" in medieval society seem to have been far more concerned with writing about religion, literature, and the responsible acts of individuals, producing copious accounts on these subjects. For example, the Princeton historian Michael Cook has recently trawled through an extraordinary range of medieval sources to produce an acclaimed eight-hundred-page scholarly tome on the subject of right and wrong in Islamic thought.¹⁸⁵ Comparable sources simply do not exist for the visual arts. Nevertheless, scholars ranging from the great Ettinghausen to Doris Behrens-Abouseif and Valérie Gonzalez have not hesitated to mine these meager sources in an attempt to establish and define an overarching aesthetic of Arab and Islamic art.¹⁸⁶

Recently, some historians of Islamic art have been attracted by the theoretical approaches popular in other fields of art history. Irene Bierman, for example, has suggested that the Fatimid rulers of Egypt (969–1171) were the first to use writing on buildings and textiles ("the public text") to present their own distinct ideology to the diverse members of Cairene society. Her semiotic approach is audacious and novel, but it is based on a selective use of the facts. Eva Hoffman has explored the nature of the frame and framing in her article on a well-known set of ivory plaques with remarkable figural imagery attributed to the Fatimid period. She ingeniously concludes that they must have served as a book cover but neglects to identify any known type of text for which such a cover might have been used. Similarly, Gonzalez has taken up the idea of the word as sign and object, dealing specifically with the type of word picture in which artists assemble words to form pictures of objects, animals, and the like. Her argument is weakened, however, by the absence of primary data: she provides only a rough sketch of the object under consideration, the calligraphic representation of a minbar, and she admits that the number of stairs, squares, and dimensions in her sketch do not necessarily correspond to the original.¹⁸⁷ We do not suggest that it is inappropriate to apply theoretical methods to the study of Islamic art; indeed, we think they are a promising and much-needed supplement to traditional methods. We do believe, however, that theoretical approaches, like all others, must begin with a thorough knowledge of the works of art themselves and the circumstances in which they were produced.

The Challenges of the Field

At the dawn of the twenty-first century of the Common Era, the field of Islamic art faces several challenges. In conclusion, we would like to discuss four. The first is that of definition. It will have become quite evident from the preceding pages that we think that "Islamic art" is a poor name for an ill-defined subject. The definition works better at certain times and places, particularly in the centuries before the Mongol inva-

sions, for which one can honestly speak of an Islamic civilization and art. This was a world, as the saying goes, in which a check written in Córdoba could be cashed in Samarkand. Despite significant regional variations, there is enough similarity between the art and architecture of one region and another in the early period that one can best understand, for example, the development of the mosque of Córdoba in tenth-century Spain or the mosque of Isfahan in eleventh-century Iran with reference to what happened in Damascus in the early eighth century.¹⁸⁸ Similarly, one can best understand the development of pottery in tenth- and eleventh-century Egypt by studying what had happened in ninth- and tenth-century Iraq.

For the period after the Mongol invasions in the thirteenth century, however, it becomes more difficult to speak of any single Islamic art, and the arts of the Maghrib and Spain, Egypt and Syria, Turkey, Iran and Central Asia, and India are often as different as they are alike, or even more so. The tradition of book painting that developed in Iran from the fourteenth century was eventually carried to Mughal India and Ottoman Turkey, so it would be foolish to study the development of the Mughal or Ottoman arts of the book without recourse to what had happened earlier in Iran. But Ottoman architecture has very little, if anything, to do with Iranian architecture, and much more to do with local building traditions. Similarly, it really is very difficult to find any meaningful similarities between the Alhambra and the Taj Mahal. They are as much alike as Versailles and Varanasi.

The suitability of the term "Islamic art" for encompassing the earlier, but not the later, periods in the central Islamic lands is really no surprise, since the field developed around the study of these places and times, only gradually expanding to include later periods and peripheral regions. Many historians of Islamic art, particularly those trained before the 1990s, were trained initially as medievalists in the broadest sense, and many feel intellectual kinship with their colleagues who study Chartres or *The Book of Kells*. As scholars of Islamic art have expanded their field of vision, they see their intellectual affinities with the arts of Renaissance or even Baroque Europe, with which artists and patrons of the great Muslim empires of the period after 1500 interacted fruitfully. Few scholars, however, would see themselves as having much in common with those who study the art of Auguste Rodin or Vincent van Gogh, let alone Ludwig Mies van der Rohe or Jackson Pollock, because few of the tools and methods used in the study of "modern" art are appropriate to the earlier periods, for which written documents are rarely available.

Recent developments, ranging from economic and political changes in the Islamic lands to immigration patterns to Europe and the United States, have encouraged historians of Islamic art to broaden their scope even further and tackle subjects on the boundaries of the traditional canon, such as twentieth-century art and architecture in the Islamic lands, the gendering of space, or contemporary art by Muslims in Europe and America. Interest is moving away from the remote early periods in the central Arab lands that once were the staple of courses on Islamic art toward more recent periods and regions from which newly assimilated and immigrant students trace their roots.

Yet this attitude engages a paradox. There is no reason why

anyone trained to study the “Islamic” art of eighth-century Syria or even fourteenth-century Iran or seventeenth-century India should be any more interested or able—apart perhaps from knowledge of a relevant language—to expound on the art of contemporary Kuwaiti women or Iranian filmmakers than a specialist in the work of Georgia O’Keeffe or Orson Welles. Such notions of the unchanging East smack of Orientalism and unwittingly imply that through Islam, artists in contemporary Kuwait or Iran should have more in common with seventh-century Syrians than they do with twenty-first-century Americans. Our point again is not that these subjects should not be studied, but rather that they need not be relegated to Islamic art. Let us guard against unwary assumptions about what is appropriate to whom.

One solution to the problem would be to dismantle the field of Islamic art entirely and give over its bits and pieces to the adjacent historical and geographic fields, such as medieval Mediterranean art or the arts of the Indian subcontinent. This would mean that all medievalists would have to be responsible not only for the Gothic in France and Germany but also for the mosque of Córdoba and Mamluk architecture in Egypt and Syria. Experts in Indian art would have to be as well versed in mosques as they are in temple sculpture. Although someone with an interest in “Islamic” art might choose to specialize in the art of a particular city, region, or period—say, Egypt or Delhi in the thirteenth century—one would then be expected to be professionally competent in the “medieval” or “Indian” canon. This solution, however, would radically minimize not only the role of Islam in art, but also the presence of “Islamic” works of art in the larger story. It would also, quite naturally, foster nationalist and ethnic attitudes.

Another solution would be to subdivide the field of Islamic art into a group of principalities, where the kingdom of Early Islamic Art was bordered by the duchies of Mamluk Egypt, Later Iranian Art, Turkish Art, and Indian Art of the Mughal Period. This solution, however, would tend to marginalize many regions, such as North Africa, Syria and Mesopotamia, and Arabia, that were not large or strong enough to exist on their own. Where would the Alhambra fit in? Repeatedly cited as our best surviving example of an “Islamic” palace, this splendid structure, built by a minor dynasty holding out in southern Spain, would fall outside the new canon. Furthermore, it is difficult enough to generate sufficient support at colleges, universities, and museums for one position in Islamic art, let alone three or four. Both of these solutions seem worse than the disease, for they promise to kill the patient in the search for a cure.

In the absence of a complete reassessment of how we in the West see the multifaceted worlds of Islam and its histories, not to mention other “foreign” cultures, there seems to be little that we can do about redefining or replacing the term “Islamic art.” As long as our society persists in seeing Islam and Islamic civilization as a monolith, there is simply no way that art historians alone will be able to stem the tide and convince the world that the category has little meaning. We can do our part and help our students learn that the Alhambra has little if anything to do with the Taj Mahal or that the eighth century in Syria was very different indeed from the eighteenth century in Iran. It is still far better for our students

to learn something about all the worlds of Islamic art than to learn nothing at all.

The unwieldy definition of Islamic art contributes to the significant gap between what colleagues expect scholars of Islamic art to study and what they themselves want to study. Historians of Islamic art are expected to have a thorough grounding in art history and be equally conversant with everything from pre-Islamic Arabian ceramics to mosque architecture in twenty-first-century Europe and America, speak several unfamiliar languages, and maintain subspecialties in Orientalism, terrorism, and the role of women, in addition to being able to appraise Aunt Millie’s threadbare Persian carpet! Few departments would expect their specialist in the New York School, apart from teaching the survey, to teach classes in the decorative arts of the American colonies, let alone be able to appraise a Shaker chair. Yet—apart from a few research institutions—any historian of Islamic art is expected to be reasonably well versed in all the visual arts produced in one-quarter of the world over fourteen centuries.

Specialists in Islamic art want to study limited subjects, like Egyptian art of the period between the tenth and twelfth centuries or the Persian painting tradition in West Asia between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, and to have enough time to read deeply in contemporary religion, history, and literature. They will find it difficult to convince colleagues that they really have nothing profound to say about the Alhambra or the Taj Mahal, let alone the proverbial Persian carpet. Yet the decision to study a subject like Islamic art, however it may be defined, seems to bring along a responsibility to both specialize and generalize. In the Western world, where any knowledge of Islamic civilization is better than our current state of abysmal ignorance, historians of Islamic art must pitch in.

For the moment, then, it is essential that all students of Islamic art, at whatever level and from whatever background, have a basic familiarity with the full range of the visual arts encompassed by our field, from the glorious mosaics of the Dome of the Rock to the exquisite painted and varnished pen boxes of Qajar Iran. This is not to say that students should not be allowed to cut their teeth on a single topic in their dissertation research, be it a particular building, patron, manuscript, or group of pots, but we do ourselves a great disservice when we fail to understand and articulate the place of our individual work in the larger picture. It was only as a result of working for the *Dictionary of Art* about ten years after receiving our doctoral degrees that we began to realize how little we actually knew about the larger field of Islamic art and how great were the gaps between the little bits we did know. We should have learned that much earlier.

A second set of challenges is created by the uneasy relationship between the study of Islamic art and the religion of Islam. As we stated at the beginning of this essay, the problem might not exist if the subject were called something else, yet it isn’t, and most students and readers will expect the historian of Islamic art to be able to present and explain Islam as well as the historical setting in which the art was produced. Complications arise not only because Islam is a living and vibrant religious tradition—unlike, say, Greek paganism—but also because Islam figures so prominently in many of



15 Muhammad Receives the Revelation through the Angel Gabriel, from Rashid al-Din's *Compendium of Chronicles*, Tabriz (Iran), 1314–15. Edinburgh, University Library Arab. ms 20

today's major news stories. Students and readers look to scholars of all aspects of Islamic civilization to help them understand not only what happened in the past but also what is going on today.

When we began studying Islamic art in the 1970s, we and our fellow students were virtually all white, non-Muslim Americans who had caught the Middle East “bug” from roaming, a roommate, or a romance. A few of our fellow students had come to the United States as visitors from the Islamic lands, intending to get an education and return home to work. This is not the case today. White non-Muslims are becoming less dominant in the field, and many students are either Americanized descendants of Middle Eastern and Muslim immigrants who are searching out their parents’ roots or Middle Eastern and Muslim students from abroad whose plans for the future are uncertain, given the frequent political storms that sweep through this troubled region. This new diversity of experience and expectation is welcome indeed, but it also raises complicated issues about who is doing what for whom. The interests and opinions of those seeking to understand their own heritage can be very different from those who are seeking to understand and explain something they consider somewhat distant in time and space. It is one thing, for instance, to study the Dome of the Rock because it is the superb example of late antique architectural ideas transformed to suit the needs of new Muslim patrons and another to study it because it is the most prominent visual symbol of a thwarted Palestinian nation.

While we admire students’ eagerness to understand what they identify as their own heritage and appreciate their willingness to use linguistic skills they may already have, we are concerned that this approach transforms the study of Islamic art, once a branch of the humanistic study of art history open to all, into one of many fields of area and ethnic studies, sometimes organized along national or ethnic lines. It is, in our view, a sorry commentary on our field that at the graduate level most students from Iranian backgrounds study Persian art and students from Turkish backgrounds study Turkish art. Can one imagine thinking that only French students

should study Degas? Or that you have to be Japanese to appreciate Hiroshige?

That said, we who are not Muslims have a responsibility to be sensitive to the beliefs of others. To take an extreme example, a few years ago we read some signage in a major American museum displaying its superb collection of Koran manuscripts and folios. The otherwise informative text said that when Muhammad wrote the Koran he incorporated many Jewish and Christian beliefs current in seventh-century Arabia. To a twentieth-century atheist or non-Muslim, this may well make sense, but such an apparently innocuous statement, written from the best of motives, runs counter to one of the most deeply held tenets of Islam—namely, that the Koran is God’s word miraculously revealed in Arabic to his prophet Muhammad. How does the nonbeliever honestly deal with such issues? Do we say, “Muslims believe that the Koran was revealed. . . .” to show our good faith? But in that case how do we know that what some Muslims believe today is the same as what people believed in seventh-century Arabia?

Such problems are not merely hypothetical. In several of our recent books and films we have included images taken from a fourteenth-century world history made in northwestern Iran. A few of the illustrations, which scholars rank among the most important and finest examples of fourteenth-century book painting, depict scenes from the life of the prophet Muhammad (Fig. 15), a subject some Muslims today deem sacrilege. While we respect the right of those Muslims to consider making images of the Prophet blasphemous, these paintings show that Muslims in other times and places did not feel the same way. In several instances our publishers and producers have chosen to remove these images from books and movies for fear of reprisal from particularly zealous individuals and organizations that might be offended by seeing them.¹⁸⁹ Following the fatwa issued in 1989 by Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran against the Bombay-born British novelist Salman Rushdie for writing *The Satanic Verses*, we are all aware of the potential consequences of perceived blasphemy. What should one do? As historians, should we say that such images were not made or refuse to illustrate them in our books? To remove these images from the canon of Islamic art is to rewrite history, validate certain sectarian interpretations of Islam, and reaffirm popular misconceptions about Islamic culture and the role of images in it.

It is a truism of postmodernism that everything the historian studies has as much, if not more, to do with the present than the past, yet the intrusion of contemporary religious and political issues into the study of Islamic art seems more difficult to ignore than in other fields of art history. How can one write or talk about the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem without discussing why it was built or what it means? Yet virtually every interpretation can be taken to validate or deny the conflicting claims of present-day Israelis and Palestinians to its sacred site.¹⁹⁰ The Taj Mahal is surely a landmark of world art and perhaps the most famous Islamic building in India, if not the world. Built by a Muslim patron as a tomb for himself and his wife, the building is objectionable to Hindu nationalists, who see it as a symbol of centuries of Mughal oppression. They want to erase history and remake India as an exclusively Hindu country where the dead are cremated

and their ashes scattered in the Ganges. To do so, they are even willing to argue that it is not a Muslim building at all. Oddly enough, the Taj Mahal is also objectionable to some Muslim fundamentalists, who view the construction of tombs and the commemoration of the dead as an intolerable impious innovation.¹⁹¹

A third set of challenges involves access. Much of what historians of Islamic art study is in European and American libraries and museums, but much more of it, notably architecture, remains in situ. The current political situation in many of the Islamic countries from North Africa to Central and South Asia can make securing research permission and access to monuments especially difficult, particularly for Americans. Few Americans would, for example, choose research topics taking them to rural Algeria or Afghanistan because of reasonable concerns about personal safety. Sometimes the obstacles are less physically dangerous but no less frustrating. Non-Muslim European and American scholars do very little work on North African architecture, not because they are uninterested in the subject or because there isn't much to study, but simply because it is virtually impossible for non-Muslims to enter mosques in Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. How can one write about something one cannot see? It remains difficult to get research permits allowing one to enter, let alone work in, Egyptian, Turkish, or Iranian libraries, so most European and American scholars find it easier to work on manuscripts and objects already in European and American collections. Yet any synthesis of a subject like fifteenth-century Persian painting has to remain tentative until we have a far better grasp on what manuscripts actually survive. Unfortunately, these challenges serve to reinforce Orientalist stereotypes, as many scholars are forced to concentrate on what they can see in Western collections. We cannot see any easy solution, apart from joint publication, though the results are often an uneasy compromise.¹⁹²

The mutilation and destruction of monuments poses another problem of access, for once they are destroyed, access is impossible. No one can do anything about the truly accidental shattering of a priceless Fatimid rock-crystal ewer in the Palazzo Pitti, recently dropped by a careless curator, but we can protest when manuscripts are cut up so that the illustrated pages can be auctioned off separately to the highest bidder (Fig. 16). For example, Shah Tahmasp's splendid copy of the *Shahnama*, commissioned in the early sixteenth century, survived as a two-volume book until the 1960s, when Arthur A. Houghton Jr., its owner, decided to have it cut up. He eventually gave 78 of its 258 paintings to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he served as chairman of the board of trustees, and offered the remaining manuscript to the shah of Iran for \$28 million. The deal fizzled and Houghton began selling the remaining paintings at Christie's London. During the first sale, on November 17, 1976, one page fetched the then-staggering sum of \$464,800, not only filling the owner's pockets but also establishing a value for the remaining pages in his collection. In 1994, after Houghton's death and the Iranian revolution, his heirs swapped the remains of the manuscript—501 text pages, 118 paintings, and the binding—with the Islamic Republic of Iran for Willem de Koon-

ing's *Woman III*, a painting of a nude woman acquired by the shah's wife but deemed offensive by the new government.¹⁹³

Virtually every week we also read about the willful destruction of historical monuments in India, the former Yugoslavia, and elsewhere. In December 1992, Hindu extremists razed the sixteenth-century Babri Masjid in Ayodhya because they claimed that the Mughal emperor Babur had built it on the site of a temple dedicated to Rama; in November 1993, Bosnian Croat forces blew up the sixteenth-century bridge at Mostar because this Ottoman structure symbolized the Muslim presence in the region. How will it be possible to write an accurate account of provincial Mughal or Ottoman architecture when so much of it is being destroyed?¹⁹⁴

Another problem of access is created by the nature of many of the things that comprise Islamic art—small bowls, jugs, manuscripts, small paintings, carpets, and other immensely collectible items easily displayed in a domestic setting. They are highly portable, they were made in multiples and are largely generic, and they often appear on the art market seemingly out of nowhere, whether from unknown private collections or clandestine excavations in war-torn countries such as Afghanistan or Iraq. As in all fields of art history where it is possible for individuals and institutions to buy and sell works of art, cozy relationships sometimes develop between dealers and collectors and art historians, the latter routinely asked to provide expertise; some art historians cross a line by becoming collectors themselves. This seems to be a greater problem in Britain than anywhere else, perhaps because the major sales of Islamic art are held in London, and auctioneers there regularly seek advice from underpaid academics. One of the great scandals of Islamic art in the early 1990s involved the respected scholar and keeper of manuscripts at a Dublin library, who merrily sold uncatalogued folios from the library reserves to a host of eager buyers until he was caught trying to peddle folios to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He was unmasked by an American researcher who had meticulously studied—and recorded—some of the uncatalogued manuscripts in the library reserves.¹⁹⁵ Such extreme cases are gratifyingly rare, but we need to remain vigilant that glittering temptations do not lead us astray.

Our fourth and final challenge is to make our work accessible. As we have said, thanks to the many introductory books now available, it is far easier to grasp the shape of Islamic art—whatever it may be—than it was when we were students three decades ago. These new introductory surveys reflect a variety of approaches and levels of interest and can be used effectively alone or juxtaposed. We now need books and articles people can read *after* they have read a survey but long before they decide to write dissertations. These works need to be synthetic and addressed to a broad audience, not sermons preached to the choir. They can be monographs, but they have to place the subject—whether a manuscript or a mausoleum—in a larger context that a broader audience can appreciate.

That context need not be limited to "Islamic" art. Since their makers did not think of their creations as examples of "Islamic" art, there is no reason why we should look only to "Islamic" art for comparative material. The famous copy of the Koran penned and illuminated by Ibn al-Bawwab at Baghdad in 1000–1001, for example, is routinely compared with



16 *Afrasiyab and Siyavush Embrace*, from the copy of the *Shahnameh* made for Shah Tahmasp, Tabriz (Iran), ca. 1535. Cambridge, Mass., Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, the Norma Jean Calderwood Collection of Islamic Art, inv. no. 2002.50.13 (photo: HUAM)

earlier and later manuscripts of the Koran, but it is never compared with contemporary European manuscripts of the Bible. Why not? Are we not thereby putting our subject in a ghetto?

In addition, our language and thought have to be made accessible. This challenge is not unique to Islamic art, but it is particularly important because many of the languages used to study it. Arabic, Persian, and Turkish have sounds without exact equivalents, and they all have large specialized vocabularies. Not only can transcription systems and terminology seem arcane to the nonspecialist reader, but they can also privilege one language or culture over another. Does it really aid understanding to call a type of Persian ceramic *mina'i* or a Turkish design motif *hatayi* when there are perfectly good English-language equivalents?

Such challenges reflect the continuing ambiguity of our position as historians of Islamic art, standing like a centipede with many feet in many fields, including art and architectural

history, history, religion, medieval studies, transnational studies, gender studies, and the like. Such diversity surely adds great richness to our field, but the multiplicity of purposes and audiences also threatens to pull our field apart so that there will be nothing left at all. Given the increasing interest in Islamic art, whatever it may actually be (or not be), and the many approaches and methodologies it can offer to art historians in other fields, that would be a great pity indeed.

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Notes

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1. K.A.C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932; 2d ed., 1969); and vol. 2 (1940); and idem, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952–59).

2. A. U. Pope and P. Ackerman, eds., *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938–39; reprint, Tehran: Soroush Press, 1977).

3. Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam: 650–1250* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987); and Ettinghausen, Grabar, and Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, *Islamic Art and Architecture 650–1250* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001). The title was changed by the publisher, which wanted to put the keyword “Islamic” up front.

4. The massive bibliography in the enormous field of Islamic art has forced us to focus our discussion on books and catalogues, since the periodical literature has grown to unmanageable proportions. To give some graphic idea of its present size, the standard bibliography of Islamic art, K.A.C. Creswell, *A Bibliography of the Architecture, Arts and Crafts of Islam to 1st Jan. 1960* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1961; reprint, 1978) contains some 15,850 entries. The first supplement, by Creswell, *Supplement Jan. 1960 to Jan. 1972* (1973), contains an additional 4,000 entries to the end of 1971, while the second supplement, by J. D. Pearson, Michael Meinecke, and George T. Scanlon, *Second Supplement Jan. 1972 to Dec. 1980 (with Omissions from Previous Years)* (1984), which covers only eight years, contains an additional 11,000 entries. The changes demonstrate the phenomenal growth of interest in Islamic art in the 1970s. Boston College Library is preparing a Web-based third supplement covering the years 1981 to the present. Even in its current very incomplete state, the third supplement contains well over 12,000 electronic records, at <http://ecs100.bc.edu:4545/ALEPH/-/start/bc104>.

5. This definition is taken from the introduction to the multi-author article “Islamic Art,” in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner (London: Macmillan, 1996), vol. 16, 94ff. There are many discussions about what Islamic art is and isn’t. For a convenient start and bibliography, see Oleg Grabar’s thoughtful introduction to the *Dictionary of Art* article on Islamic art, vol. 16, 99–102.

6. Jerrilynn D. Dodds, *New York Masjid: The Mosques of New York City* (New York: PowerKids Press, 2002).

7. Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). For one notable, and important, exception, see Phillip B. Wagoner, “‘Sultan among Hindu Kings’: Dress, Titles, and the Islamization of Hindu Culture at Vijayanagara,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 55 (Nov. 1996): 851–80.

8. Stephen Vernoit, ed., *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collectors and Collections, 1850–1950* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2000).

9. Some recent scholarship is even calling into question the notion of a single “Chinese” art. See Craig Clunas, *Art in China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). On the early collecting of calligraphy, see Joseph Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 253–55. For the later collecting of calligraphy and painting in albums, see David J. Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image: The Writing of Art History in Sixteenth-Century Iran*, Supplements to *Muqarnas*, no. 9 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001).

10. For the development of European attitudes to studying Islam, see Edward W. Said’s classic *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978); for a more nuanced view of the subject with particular reference to the arts, see John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

11. For a convenient introduction to Islamic civilization in its first thousand years, with a distinct emphasis on the arts, see Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, *Islam: A Thousand Years of Faith and Power*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002). The concept of various coexisting forms of Islam, long acknowledged by scholars, has not made it into modern political consciousness. See most recently Edward W. Said, “Impossible Histories,” *Harper’s* 305 (July 2002): 69–74.

12. M. Bernus, H. Marchal, and G. Vial, “Le suaire de Saint-Josse,” *Bulletin de Liaison du Centre International d’Études des Textiles Anciens* 33 (1971): 1–57.

13. Giovanni Curatola, *Eredità dell’Islam* ([Venice]: Silvana, 1993), no. 62.

14. J. A. Harris, “Muslim Ivories in Christian Hands: The Leire Casket in Context,” *Art History* 18, no. 2 (1995): 213–21; and Sophie Makariou, “Quelques réflexions sur les objets au nom de ‘Abd al-Malik ibn al-Mansūr,” *Archéologie Islamique* 11 (2001): 47–60.

15. On the process and meaning of collecting Islamic artifacts in medieval Europe, see Avinoam Shalem, *Islam Christianized: Islamic Portable Objects in the*

Medieval Church Treasuries of the Latin West, Ars Faciendi: Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1997).

16. Stephen Vernoit, “Islamic Art and Architecture: An Overview of Scholarship and Collecting, c. 1850–c. 1950,” in Vernoit (as in n. 8), 1–61.

17. Max van Berchem, “Notes d’archéologie arabe: Monuments et inscriptions fatimides,” *Journal Asiatique*, 8th ser., 18 (1891): 46–86, English trans. in Jonathan M. Bloom, ed., *Early Islamic Art and Architecture*, the Formation of the Classical Islamic World (Aldershot: Ashgate/Variation, 2002), 1–6.

18. Van Berchem completed only parts of the *MCIA* before his death, those dealing with Egypt (Max van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum I: Égypte*, vol. 1, Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique Française au Caire, 19 [Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1894–1903]), Asia Minor (Max van Berchem and Halil Edhem, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum III: Asie Mineure*, vol. 1, Mémoires de l’Institut Français Archéologique du Caire, 29 [Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1910–17]), and Jerusalem (Max van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum II: Syrie du Sud*, Mémoires de l’Institut Français Archéologique du Caire, 43–45 [Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1920–22]), but the series was continued by such scholars as Gaston Wiet and Ernst Herzfeld. For an introduction to the *MCIA* and its complex workings, see Sheila S. Blair, *Islamic Inscriptions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 207–13.

19. E. J. Brill’s *First Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1913–1936*, ed. M. Th. Houtsma et al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987).

20. Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*, trans. Evelyn Kain (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). Later scholars were less interested in such general questions, as they increasingly dealt with the minutiae of particular periods, sites, or objects. For one notable exception, see Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), discussed below.

21. Ernst Herzfeld, “The Genesis of Islamic Art and the Mshatta Problem” (Die Genesis der Islamischen Kunst und das Mshatta-Probleme), trans. Fritz Hillenbrand and Jonathan M. Bloom, in Bloom (as in n. 17).

22. See Friedrich Sarre and F. R. Martin, *Die Ausstellung von Meisterwerken muhammedanischer Kunst in München 1910* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1912); and David J. Roxburgh, “Au Bonheur des Amateurs: Collecting and Exhibiting Islamic Art, ca. 1880–1910,” *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000): 9–38.

23. Henri Matisse and his friend Albert Marquet visited the exhibition in October 1910 just before it closed. Matisse’s *The Painter’s Family* (the Hermitage, St. Petersburg), painted the following spring, was surely inspired by Persian miniatures and carpets. See Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam, 1250–1800*, the Pelican History of Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 308.

24. B. W. Robinson, “The Burlington House Exhibition of 1931: A Milestone in Islamic Art History,” in Vernoit (as in n. 8), 147–55; and Barry D. Wood, “‘A Great Symphony of Pure Form’: The 1931 International Exhibition of Persian Art and Its Significance,” *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000): 113–30.

25. Stuart Cary Welch, “Private Collectors and Islamic Arts of the Book,” in *Treasures of Islam*, ed. Toby Falk (London: Sotheby’s/Philip Wilson, 1985), 26–31.

26. Pope and Ackerman (as in n. 2). Pope’s charismatic career is thoroughly limned in the hagiographic *Surveyors of Persian Art: A Documentary Biography of Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman*, ed. Jay Gluck and Noël Siver (Ashiya: SoPA; Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda, 1996). The loans to the Burlington House exhibition were extraordinary, to judge from the monumental catalogue of paintings: Laurence Binyon, J.V.S. Wilkinson, and Basil Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting* (1933; reprint, New York: Dover, 1971). Reprinted as an inexpensive paperback in the 1970s, this book served until recently as the standard handbook for Persian painting. Reza Shah “encouraged” the library of the great Shii shrine at Mashhad to lend many manuscripts, virtually all of them never before seen in the West, according to Robinson (as in n. 24). It may not have been entirely coincidental that there soon emerged a bustling international bazaar in objects of Persian art, some genuine and others not so genuine, as, for example, the “Buyid” silks discussed in Sheila S. Blair, Jonathan M. Bloom, and Anne E. Wardwell, “Re-evaluating the Date of the ‘Buyid’ Silks by Epigraphic and Radiocarbon Analysis,” *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 1–42.

27. Robert Hillenbrand, “Richard Ettinghausen and the Iconography of Islamic Art,” in Vernoit (as in n. 8), 171–81.

28. Marianna Shreve Simpson, “‘A Gallant Era’: Henry Walters, Islamic Art, and the Kelekian Connection,” *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000): 91–112.

29. Grabar’s extensive publications before 1993 are listed in his Festschrift, published in *Muqarnas* 10 (1993). For a recent update, see Oleg Grabar, “From the Museum to the University and Back,” in *Eleventh Presentation of the Charles Lang Freer Medal* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2001), 9–30.

30. See Oleg Grabar, “An Art of the Object,” *Artforum* 14 (1976): 36–43; and Amy Goldin, “Islamic Art: The Met’s Generous Embrace,” *Artforum* 14 (1976): 44–50. Readers may be interested to know that the Islamic galleries will close in the spring of 2003 for two to three years while the surrounding galleries and offices are remodeled. A small Islamic “presence” will be maintained in one section of the balcony of the Great Hall.

31. The Berlin galleries were reunited in the 1990s, and the Louvre galleries, previously inaccessible most days of the week, were prominently reinstalled as part of the Grand Louvre project. Other museums in the United

States have mounted similar, if somewhat smaller, chronological displays; a good example is the extensive one in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. For a brief introduction to the collection, see Linda Komaroff, *Islamic Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1998).

32. *Arts de l'Islam des origines à 1700 dans les collections publiques françaises*, exh. cat., the Tuileries, 1971 (Paris: Ministère des Affaires Culturelles; Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1971); and *L'Islam dans les collections nationales*, exh. cat., Grand Palais, Paris, 1977.

33. The handy catalogue of the exhibition, *The Arts of Islam* ([London]: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1976), which would be considered extraordinarily modest by current museum standards, remains an essential reference tool for scholars. Not only did every possible institution lend its best works, but the catalogue provides reasonable—if only black-and-white—illustrations, dimensions, accession numbers, transcribed and translated inscriptions, bibliography, and brief descriptions of virtually every object in the show.

34. These range from the splendid multidisciplinary volume on the Yemeni city of Ṣan'ā', R. B. Serjeant and Ronald Lewcock, eds., *Ṣan'ā': An Arabian Islamic City* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1983) to modest picture books on Iranian and North African architecture, such as Antony Hutt, *North Africa* (London: Scorpion, 1977).

35. The Aga Khan Program was initially directed by Oleg Grabar and William Porter, dean of the architecture school at MIT, both of whom had served on the board of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

36. The first two issues of *Muqarnas* (1983, 1984) were published by Yale University Press; subsequent volumes have been published by E. J. Brill. All the articles in a score of volumes and all the monographs were edited by the late Margaret Bentley Ševčenko, who tried to teach an entire generation of art historians how to write.

37. The most notable are the al-Sabah Collection/Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyya, formerly housed in the Kuwait National Museum complex in Kuwait City, and the new collection being amassed by Shaykh al-Thani of Qatar for a new museum of Islamic art in Doha.

38. Jerrilynn D. Dodds, ed., *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992); and Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni, eds., *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353* (New Haven: Yale University Press in association with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002).

39. Kjeld von Folsach, *Islamic Art: The David Collection* (Copenhagen: David Collection, 1990); and idem, *Art from the World of Islam: The David Collection* (Copenhagen: David Collection, 2001).

40. Classic handbooks were published by such scholars as M. S. Dimand, *A Handbook of Mohammedan Decorative Arts* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1930); and Ernst Kühnel, *The Minor Arts of Islam*, trans. Katherine Watson (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971).

41. The two volumes in the Pelican History of Art are Ettinghausen and Grabar (as in n. 3) and its updating, Ettinghausen et al. (as in n. 3); and Blair and Bloom (as in n. 23). Single-volume primers include Barbara Brend, *Islamic Art* (London: British Museum Press; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991); Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, *Islamic Arts* (London: Phaidon, 1997); Robert Irwin, *Islamic Art in Context: Art, Architecture, and the Literary World* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997); and Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999).

42. In a paper presented at the symposium "Surveying Islamic Art and Architecture," sponsored by the Aga Khan Program at Harvard and MIT and held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences on May 17–18, 2002, Irwin explained that many of the peculiar features of his book, as it finally appeared, were the product of the publisher's intervention in an attempt to make it a more useful—and salable—"textbook."

43. A fine example of the genre is the catalogue to the 1976 Hayward Gallery exhibition, *The Arts of Islam* (as in n. 33), where the universal claims to a unity of Islamic art are implicit in the fact of the exhibition itself.

44. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987).

45. Titus Burckhardt, *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning* (London: World of Islam Festival, 1976).

46. Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar, *The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973); Keith Critchlow, *Islamic Patterns* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976); Issam El-Said and Ayse Parman, *Geometric Concepts in Islamic Art* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust and Scorpion, 1976); and Abdelkebir Khatibi and Mohammed Sijelmassi, *The Splendour of Islamic Calligraphy*, trans. J. Hughes and E. J. Emory, rev. ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995).

47. See also the criticisms of the universalist approach by Oleg Grabar, "Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art," *Muqarnas* 1 (1983): 1–14.

48. N. Pourjavady, ed., *The Splendour of Iran* (London: Booth-Clibborn, 2001).

49. Ekrem Akurgal, Cyril Mango, and Richard Ettinghausen, *Les trésors de Turquie: L'Anatolie des premiers empires, Byzance, les siècles de l'Islam* (Geneva: Skira, 1966); Ekrem Akurgal, ed., *The Art and Architecture of Turkey* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980).

50. Oktay Aslanapa, *Turkish Art and Architecture* (New York: Praeger, 1971).

51. Aptullah Kuran, *The Mosque in Early Ottoman Architecture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); and Robert Mark and Ahmet S. Çakmak, eds.,

Hagia Sophia: From the Age of Justinian to the Present (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

52. As in, for example, Johannes Kalter, Margareta Pavaloi, and Maria Zernnickel, *Syrien: Mosaik eines Kulturraumes* (Stuttgart: Hansjörg Mayer in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Linden-Museum Stuttgart, 1991).

53. For example, the arts of Islamic Spain, Dodds (as in n. 38), or the exhibition of six thousand years of Moroccan art planned for, but never actually held at, the Petit Palais, *De l'Empire romain aux villes impériales: 6000 ans d'art au Maroc* (Paris: Musée du Petit Palais, 1990).

54. The catalogue *Usbekistan: Erben der Seidenstrasse*, ed. Johannes Kalter and Margareta Pavaloi (Stuttgart: Hansjörg Mayer in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Linden-Museum Stuttgart, 1995) suggests that there is, as does Kamil Khan Mumtaz, *Architecture in Pakistan* (Singapore: Concept Media, 1985).

55. Werner Daum, ed., *Yemen: 3000 Years of Art and Civilisation in Arabia Felix* (Innsbruck: Pinguin; Frankfurt: Umschau, 1988).

56. Tom Phillips, ed., *Africa: The Art of a Continent* (London: Prestel, 1995).

57. Georgina Hermann et al., *Monuments of Merv* (London: British Institute of Persian Studies, 2002).

58. Anna Contadini wrote *Fatimid Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1998) when she was a research fellow at the museum. Although the book appeared simultaneously with the exhibition in Paris, it was conceived quite independently. Jonathan Bloom is completing another monograph on Fatimid art, which will be published in 2003 by the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London.

59. Esin Atil, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981). Bringing together an extraordinary collection of masterpieces in many media from Egypt, Syria, Europe, and North America, the exhibition traveled extensively throughout the United States.

60. *Trésors fatimides du Caire* (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1998).

61. J. M. Rogers, *Empire of the Sultans: Ottoman Art from the Khalili Collection*, 4th ed. (Alexandria, Va.: Art Services International; London: Nour Foundation, 2000).

62. Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989). This show on the arts of the Timurids, mounted in 1989, was particularly glamorous, not only because of the unsurpassed beauty and technical quality of the objects but also because of the organizers' uncanny ability to secure difficult loans. Layla S. Diba, ed., *Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch 1785–1925*, with Maryam Ekhtiar (New York: Brooklyn Museum of Art, 1998). This lively exhibition revealed how the traditional pictorial language of Persian painting was transformed under the Qajars. Komaroff and Carboni (as in n. 38); the exhibition, which ran in New York in the winter of 2002–3 and will run in Los Angeles in the spring of 2003, covers the arts produced in Iran under the descendants of the great Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan from 1250 to 1350.

63. Selected papers from a conference on the Mamluks, "Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks," and sponsored by the National Gallery of Art, Center for Advanced Study of the Visual Arts, and Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., in 1981, were published as volume 2 (1984) of *Muqarnas*, while selected papers from a conference on the Timurids held in Toronto in 1989, for example, were published as a supplement to *Muqarnas*. See Lisa Golombek and Maria Subtelny, eds., *Timurid Art and Culture: Iran and Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century*, Supplements to *Muqarnas*, no. 6 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992). Marianne Barrucand, ed., *L'Égypte fatimide: Son art et son histoire* (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1999), appeared independently.

64. The late Michael Meinecke's magisterial work on Mamluk architecture in Egypt and Syria, *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien* (Güldenstadt: J. J. Augustin, 1992), appeared a decade after the Mamluk exhibition, while Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber's invaluable book on Timurid architecture, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988)—envisioned as a sequel to Wilber's monograph on the architecture of the Ilkhanids, *The Architecture of Islamic Iran: The Il Khānīd Period* (New York: Greenwood, 1969)—came out when the Timurid exhibition was mounted.

65. Anthony Welch, *Shah 'Abbas and the Arts of Isfahan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum; New York: Asia Society, 1973). Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1985). The exhibition was accompanied by a sourcebook, Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, eds., *Fatehpur-Sikri: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1985), and a volume of collected essays from an accompanying conference, Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, eds., *Fatehpur-Sikri* (Bombay: Marg, 1987). Esin Atil, *The Age of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1987). The catalogue was rewritten for the London venue, J. M. Rogers and R. M. Ward, *Süleyman the Magnificent* (London: British Museum, 1988), and the exhibition was accompanied by the publication of the sultan's illustrated chronicle, Esin Atil, *Süleymanname: The Illustrated History of Süleyman the Magnificent* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1986).

66. The exhibition "Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Safavid Iran, 1501–76," had been planned by Sheila Canby of the British Museum for Milan, London, and New York, but the British Museum has had to cancel its showing because of its deficit. It is still scheduled to appear at the Asia Society (October 2003–January 2004) and the Poldi Pezzoli Museum (February–May 2004).

Sheila Canby and Jon Thompson are still writing the catalogue, to be published by the British Museum Press in the fall of 2003, and Sheila Canby also wrote a preliminary study on the arts of the Safavids, *The Golden Age of Persian Art 1501–1722* (London: British Museum Press, 1999).

67. The value of a hero's name is particularly important; when the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris recently put together a show on the arts of the period of Saladin, the Muslim hero who repulsed the Crusaders in the 12th century, barely a single object in the exhibition had a demonstrable connection to the central figure himself. *L'Orient de Saladin: L'art des Ayyoubides* (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe/Gallimard, 2001).

68. See, for example, the unique surviving example of a medieval book of gifts by Ibn al-Zubayr, now available in a workmanlike translation by Ghāda al-Hijjawi al-Qaddūmi, *Book of Gifts and Rarities: Kitāb al-Hadāya wa'l-Tuhaf* (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University, 1996).

69. It doesn't take a great leap of imagination to connect the traveling exhibition commemorated in Esin Atıl, *Islamic Art and Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), with the munificent Kuwaiti collectors who assembled the objects shown. World events intervened, as they often do: that exhibition was held in Leningrad during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990; its subsequent peregrinations throughout the United States during the Gulf War were orchestrated to maximum political advantage by a Washington, D.C., public relations firm.

70. Daniel Walker, *Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997); and Stuart Cary Welch, *Wonders of the Age: Masterpieces of Early Safavid Painting, 1501–1576* (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum, 1979).

71. Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, "Signatures on Works of Islamic Art and Architecture," *Damascener Mitteilungen* 11 (1999): 49–66.

72. Ebadollah Bahari, *Bihzad, Master of Persian Painting* (London: I. B. Taurus, 1996); Sheila R. Canby, *The Rebellious Reformer: The Drawings and Paintings of Riza-yi 'Abbasi of Isfahan* (London: Azimuth, 1997); and Aptullah Kuran, *Sinan: The Grand Old Master of Ottoman Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Turkish Studies; Istanbul: Ada Press, 1987).

73. Martin Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

74. The Dome of the Rock was the subject of one of the first major works by Oleg Grabar ("The Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem," *Ars Orientalis* 3 [1959]: 33–62), in which he set the building in its late antique and early Islamic contexts. The building still draws attention; it has been discussed in at least two recent books, Oleg Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy: Early Islamic Jerusalem* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), and Saïd Nuseibeh, *The Dome of the Rock* (New York: Rizzoli, 1996), and many articles, including Amikam Elad, "Why Did 'Abd al-Malik Build the Dome of the Rock? A Re-Examination of the Muslim Sources," 33–58, Sheila S. Blair, "What Is the Date of the Dome of the Rock?" 59–88, and Josef van Ess, "'Abd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock: An Examination of Some Texts," 89–104, all three in *Bayt al-Maqdis: 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem, Part One*, ed. Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Board of Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, 1992); Nasser Rabbat, "The Dome of the Rock Revisited: Some Remarks on al-Wasiti's Accounts," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 67–75; and idem, "The Meaning of the Umayyad Dome of the Rock," *Muqarnas* 6 (1989): 12–21.

75. The finest manuscript of the 16th century, the two-volume copy of the *Shahnama* made for the Safavid Tahmasp, was the subject of a massive two-volume publication by Dickson and Welch (as in n. 73), but its astronomical price put it out of reach of all but a few. The rest of us made do with a handsome, if light, book illustrating some of the manuscript's pages, Stuart Cary Welch, *A King's Book of Kings* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972). A luxurious illustrated manuscript commissioned by Prince Ibrahim Mirza, Tahmasp's nephew, is the subject of a recent monograph, Marianna Shreve Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang, a Princely Manuscript from Sixteenth-Century Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press in association with the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1997), produced at a much more affordable price and with a spinoff picture book of all the paintings, designed for the general public, Marianna Shreve Simpson, *Persian Poetry, Painting and Patronage: Illustrations in a Sixteenth-Century Masterpiece* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1998). The publication and exhibition of a spectacular imperial Mughal manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle (Milo Cleveland Beach and Ebba Koch, *King of the World: The Padshahnama, an Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle* [Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution/Azimuth, 1997]) was made possible by the need to unbind it for conservation. Perhaps the most recent example of the genre is the 2002 exhibition and catalogue devoted to reassembling some of the pages from a dispersed Mughal manuscript, John Seyller, *The Adventures of Hamza, Painting and Storytelling in Mughal India* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, in association with Azimuth, 2002).

76. Jonathan M. Bloom et al., *The Minbar from the Kutubiyya Mosque* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998).

77. This was not always the case, as D. S. Rice published two splendid monographs on masterpieces of metalwork: *The Baptistère de Saint-Louis* (Paris: Chêne, 1953); *The Wade Cup in the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Paris: Chêne, 1955).

78. It has been the subject of a short and popular book by a scholar (Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978]) and a lavish one illustrated with reprints of Owen Jones's 19th-century plates (Antonio Fernandez-Puertas, *The Alhambra* [London: Saqi Books, 1997]).

79. W. E. Begley and Z. A. Desai, *Taj Mahal: The Illumined Tomb* (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1989); and Pratapaditya Pal et al., *Romance of the Taj Mahal* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; London: Thames and Hudson, 1989).

80. Wayne E. Begley, "The Myth of the Taj Mahal and a New Theory of Its Symbolic Meaning," *Art Bulletin* 61 (1979): 7–37.

81. Lisa Golombek, *The Timurid Shrine at Gazur Gah* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1969); idem, "The Cult of Saints and Shrine Architecture in the Fourteenth Century," in *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History: Studies in Honor of George C. Miles*, ed. Dickran Kouymjian (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1974); and Sheila S. Blair, *The Ilkhanid Shrine Complex at Natanz, Iran* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 1986).

82. Marianna Shreve Simpson, *The Illustration of an Epic: The Earliest Shahnama Manuscripts* (New York: Garland, 1979). In a similar vein, John Seyller, *Workshop and Patron in Mughal India: The Freer Rāmāyana and Other Illustrated Manuscripts of 'Abd al-Rahim* (Zurich: Museum Rietberg, 1999) investigated a Persian copy of the *Ramayana* produced not for the emperor himself but for a high-ranking noble at the Mughal court.

83. Gülrü Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991); Nasser O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995); and Finbarr B. Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies on the Makings of an Umayyad Visual Culture* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001).

84. See Oleg Grabar's thoughtful review of *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies in the Makings of an Umayyad Visual Culture*, by Finbarr Barry Flood, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 60, no. 4 (Dec. 2001): 506–8.

85. R. Stephen Humphreys, "2001 Presidential Address: The Destruction of Cultural Memory," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 36, no. 1 (summer 2002): 1–8.

86. Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

87. Abolala Soudavar, "The Saga of Abu-Sa'id Bahador Khan: The Abu-Sa'idnama," in *The Court of the Il-Khans 1290–1340*, ed. Julian Raby and Teresa Fitzherbert, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, vol. 12 (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Board of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, 1996), 95–218; Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, "Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Legacy of the Great Mongol Shahnama," *Islamic Art* 5 (2001): 41–52; Sheila S. Blair, "Rewriting the History of the Great Mongol Shahnama," and Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Great Mongol Shahnama in the Qajar Period," both in *Shahnama: The Visual Language of the Persian Book of Kings*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand (Edinburgh: Varie, in press).

88. See also the series of papers presented at a conference in Bamberg in 1992 and published as Barbara Finster, Christa Fragner, and Herta Hafner-richter, eds., *Rezeption in der islamischen Kunst* (Beirut: Franz Steiner, 1999).

89. Sheila S. Blair, *A Compendium of Chronicles: Rashid al-Din's Illustrated History of the World* (London: Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1995); and Bloom et al. (as in n. 76).

90. Jens Kröger, *Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für islamische Kunst: Glas* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1984); and Almut Hauptmann von Gladiss and Jens Kröger, *Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für islamische Kunst: Metall, Stein, Stuck, Holz, Elfenbein, Stoffe* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1985).

91. Rachel Ward, *Islamic Metalwork* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993); Sheila R. Canby, *Persian Painting* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993); J. M. Rogers, *Mughal Miniatures* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993); Venetia Porter, *Islamic Tiles* (New York: Interlink Books, 1995); and John Carswell, *Iznik Pottery* (London: British Museum Press, 1998).

92. Richard Ettinghausen and Marie Lukens Swietochowski, *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 36, no. 2 (1978); Marilyn Jenkins, "Islamic Pottery: A Brief History," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 40, no. 4 (spring 1983); idem, "Islamic Glass: A Brief History," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 44, no. 2 (1986); M. S. Dimand and Jean Mailey, *Oriental Rugs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1973); Marilyn Jenkins and Manuel Keene, *Islamic Jewelry in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982); Stefano Carboni and Tomoko Masuya, *Persian Tiles* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993); Stuart Cary Welch, *Islamische Kunst: Meisterwerke aus dem Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York/The Arts of Islam: Masterpieces from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 1981); *Arte Islámico del Museo Metropolitano de Arte de Nueva York* ([Mexico]: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1994); Metropolitan Museum of Art, *The Islamic World* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989).

93. Marie Lukens Swietochowski and Susan Babaie, *Persian Drawings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989).

94. As we write this, fifty masterpieces with excellent details are viewable at <http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/departments.asp?dep=14>.

95. These include books by Esin Atıl on Islamic ceramics, *Ceramics from the*

World of Islam (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1973); on Arab art, *Art of the Arab World* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1975); and metalwork, Esin Atıl, W. T. Chase, and Paul Jett, *Islamic Metalwork in the Freer Gallery of Art* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985).

96. Glenn D. Lowry and Milo Cleveland Beach, *An Annotated and Illustrated Checklist of the Vever Collection* (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1988); Glenn D. Lowry, *A Jeweler's Eye: Islamic Arts of the Book from the Vever Collection* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1988).

97. Marianna Shreve Simpson, *Arab and Persian Painting in the Fogg Art Museum* (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, 1980).

98. Geza Fehérvári, *Islamic Metalwork of the Eighth to the Fifteenth Century in the Keir Collection* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976); Ernst J. Grube, *Islamic Pottery of the Eighth to the Fifteenth Century in the Keir Collection* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976); B. W. Robinson, *Islamic Painting and the Arts of the Book* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976); Friedrich Spuhler, *Islamic Carpets and Textiles in the Keir Collection* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978); B. W. Robinson et al., *Islamic Art in the Keir Collection* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988).

99. Julian Raby, ed., *The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art* (London: Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1992). The series is slated to encompass well over two dozen folio-sized volumes with extraordinary illustrations—and prices to match.

100. See also the review of the early volumes in the series by Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art," *Persica* 15 (1993–95): 77–90.

101. B. W. Robinson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958); idem, *Persian Paintings in the India Office Library: A Descriptive Catalogue* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1976); idem, *Persian Paintings in the John Rylands Library: A Descriptive Catalogue* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1980); and idem, *Persian Paintings in the Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society, London* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1998).

102. Robinson's central importance to the field can be assessed through the lavish Festschrift recently published in his honor: Robert Hillenbrand, ed., *Persian Painting from the Mongols to the Qajar: Studies in Honour of Basil W. Robinson* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000). Robinson's major disciple in Britain has been Norah Titley, who has continued his tradition of practical catalogues with a subject index of illustrations in Persian manuscripts in the British Library: *Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts: Catalogue and Subject Index of Paintings from Persia, India and Turkey in the British Library and the British Museum* (London: British Library, 1977). In the United States Robinson's intellectual heir is Barbara Schmitz, who has carved out a career cataloguing Islamic manuscripts and their paintings in such collections as the New York Public Library and the Pierpont Morgan Library: *Islamic Manuscripts in the New York Public Library* (New York: New York Public Library; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and *Islamic and Indian Manuscripts and Paintings in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1997).

103. Schmitz, 1992 (as in n. 102), 105–11.

104. Rice, 1953 (as in n. 77).

105. Donald King, "The Ardabil Puzzle Unravelled," *Hali*, no. 88 (1996): 88–92.

106. Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994).

107. For more traditional approaches, see John D. Hoag, *Islamic Architecture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1975); George Michell, ed., *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning* (London: Thames and Hudson; New York: William Morrow, 1978); Henri Stierlin, *Architecture de l'Islam de l'Atlantique au Gange* (Fribourg: Office du Livre, 1979); and Richard Yeomans, *The Story of Islamic Architecture* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

108. Georges Marçais, *Architecture musulmane d'occident* (Paris: Arts et Métiers Graphiques, 1954); Creswell, 1952–59 (as in n. 1); and Arthur Upham Pope, *Persian Architecture: The Triumph of Form and Color* (New York: George Braziller, 1965).

109. Catherine B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and George Michell and Mark Zebrowski, *Architecture and Art of the Deccan Sultanates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

110. Ebba Koch, *Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Development (1526–1858)* (Munich: Prestel, 1991). At the other end of the Muslim world, Marianne Barrucand has written a convenient introduction to the Islamic architecture of Spain, with gorgeous pictures (Marianne Barrucand and Achim Bednorz, *Moorish Architecture in Andalusia* [Cologne: Taschen, 1992]). The relatively unfamiliar architecture of South Arabia has been the focus of a host of books, beginning with Paolo Costa and Ennio Vicario, *Arabia Felix: A Land of Builders* (Milan: Electa, 1977); and Fernando Varanda, *Art of Building in Yemen* (London: AARP, 1981).

111. Golombek and Wilber (as in n. 64); Bernard O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Undena, 1987); Terry Allen, *Timurid Herat* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, 1983); and idem, *A Catalogue of Toponyms and Monuments of Timurid Herat* (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1981).

112. Maria Eva Subtelny, "The Poetic Circle at the Court of the Timurid Sultan Husain Baiqara, and Its Political Significance," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1979; idem, "Mirak-i Sayyid Ghiyās and the Timurid Tradition of

Landscape Architecture," *Studia Iranica* 24 (1995): 19–60; and idem, "Agriculture and the Timurid *Chahārbağ*: The Evidence from a Medieval Persian Agricultural Manual," in *Gardens in the Time of the Great Muslim Empires: Theory and Design*, ed. Attilio Petruccioli, Supplements to *Muqarnas*, 7 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 110–28. Anne-Marie Eddé, *La principauté ayyoubide d'Alep (579/1183–658/1260)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1999), uses Persian, Syriac, Armenian, Latin, and Hebrew texts and architectural, epigraphic, numismatic, and artistic evidence as well as secondary literature to create a nuanced portrait of a period. See also Yasser Tabbaa, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

113. Martin Frishman and Hasan-Uddin Khan, *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development and Regional Diversity* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994).

114. Barbara Finster, *Frühe iranische Moscheen, vom Beginn des Islam bis zur Zeit salgüger Herrschaft*, Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran: Ergänzungsband, 19 (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1994) covers the early Iranian mosque; G.R.D. King, *The Historical Mosques of Saudi Arabia* (London: Longman, 1986), the historical mosques of Arabia; and Renata Holod and Hasan-Uddin Khan, *The Contemporary Mosque: Architects, Clients and Designs since the 1950s*, assisted by Kimberly Mims (New York: Rizzoli, 1997), the mosque in modern times.

115. Jonathan Bloom, *Minaret: Symbol of Islam*, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Alexandre Papadopoulos, *Le mihrab dans l'architecture et la religion musulmane: Actes du colloque international tenu à Paris en mai 1980 publiés et pourvus d'une étude d'introduction générale* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988); Lucien Golvin, *La madrasa médiévale* (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1995); and Thomas Leisten, *Architektur für Tote: Bestattung in architektonischem Kontext in den Kernländern der islamischen Welt zwischen 3./9. und 6./12. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1998).

116. See the various essays on the Islamic palace in Gülru Necipoğlu, ed., *Pre-Modern Islamic Palaces, Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993), a type that comprises vastly different sizes and types of structures. Kurt Erdmann, *Das anatolische Karavansaray des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1961–76), treats only caravanserais in Anatolia, whereas Wolfram Kleiss and M. Y. Kiani, *Kārāvānsarāy-hā-yi Irān* (Iranian caravanserais) (Tehran: Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization, 1983–89), deals only with those in Iran.

117. Some idea of the extent of this literature can be gleaned from the voluminous bibliography prepared by Michael E. Bonine et al., *The Middle Eastern City and Islamic Urbanism: An Annotated Bibliography of Western Literature*, Bonner Geographische Abhandlungen (Bonn: Ferd. Dümmlers, 1994).

118. Paul Wheatley, *The Places Where Men Pray Together: Cities in the Islamic Lands, Seventh through the Tenth Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

119. André Raymond's work is summarized in *The Great Arab Cities in the 16th–18th Centuries, an Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 1984). Heinz Gaube, *Iranian Cities* (New York: New York University Press, 1979); and Masoud Kheirabadi, *Iranian Cities: Formation and Development* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991).

120. Classic works on the subject include Richard Ettinghausen, ed., *The Islamic Garden* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1976); Donald Newton Wilber, *Persian Gardens and Garden Pavilions* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1979); and E. B. Moynihan, *Paradise as a Garden in Persia and Mughal India* (New York: George Braziller, 1980). A more recent symposium on the gardens in the time of the great empires is Petruccioli (as in n. 112). A pretty picture book on the Persian garden tradition is Mehdi Khansari, M. Reza Moghtader, and Minouch Yavari, *The Persian Garden: Echoes of Paradise* (Washington, D.C.: Mage, 1998).

121. Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, eds., *Images of Paradise in Islamic Art* (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College, 1991); and Hermann Forkl et al., *Die Gärten des Islam* (Stuttgart: Hansjörg Mayer in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Linden-Museum Stuttgart, 1993).

122. Terry Allen, *Imagining Paradise in Islamic Art* (Sebastopol, Calif.: Solipist Press, 1993), has offered trenchant criticisms of the idea of the garden as Paradise. D. Fairchild Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), uses a wide variety of contemporary sources to explore the development of Spanish gardens in the greater Islamic context.

123. We took our illustration by Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii (1863–1944) from his spectacular early color photographs of Central Asia at <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/empire/gorskii.html>.

124. Johannes Pedersen's useful handbook *The Arabic Book*, trans. Geoffrey French (1946; reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), is out of print and somewhat outdated. Several conferences have addressed various aspects of the subject, including François Déroche, ed., *Les manuscrits du moyen-orient: Essais de codicologie et paléographie* (Istanbul: Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes d'Istanbul; Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1989); George N. Atiyeh, ed., *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); Yasin Dutton, ed., *The Codicology of Islamic Manuscripts, Proceedings of the Second Conference of al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 4–5 December 1993* (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1995); François Déroche and Francis Richard, eds., *Scribes et manuscrits du Moyen-Orient* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1997); and David J. Roxburgh, ed., *The Making and Reception of Painting in the Pre-Modern Islamic World, Muqarnas* 17 (2000).

125. Helen Loveday, *Islamic Paper: A Study of the Ancient Craft* ([London]: Don Baker Memorial Fund, 2001); and Geneviève Humbert, "Papiers non

filigranés utilisés au Proche-Orient jusqu'en 1450, essai de typologie," *Journal Asiatique* 286, no. 1 (1998): 1–54.

126. Jonathan M. Bloom, *Paper before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

127. Gulnar Bosch, John Carswell, and Guy Petherbridge, *Islamic Bindings and Bookmaking*, exh. cat., Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, 1981; Duncan Haldane, *Islamic Bookbindings in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1983); and Julian Raby and Zeren Tanındı, *Turkish Bookbinding of the 15th Century: The Foundations of an Ottoman Court Style*, ed. T. Stanley (London: Azimuth Editions on behalf of l'Association Internationale de Bibliophilie, 1993).

128. Yves Porter, *Painters, Paintings and Books: An Essay on Indo-Persian Technical Literature, 12th–19th Centuries*, trans. Mrs. S. Butani (New Delhi: Manohar, Centre for Human Sciences, 1994); and Roxburgh (as in n. 9).

129. See, most recently, François Déroche, *Manuel de codicologie des manuscrits en écriture arabe* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 2000), with extensive bibliography.

130. Khatibi and Sijelmassi (as in n. 46). Sheila Blair is at work on a new survey, intended as a companion to her survey of Islamic inscriptions (Blair [as in n. 18]), which is intended to fill this gap.

131. Yasser Tabbaa, "The Transformation of Arabic Writing, Part 1: Qur'anic Calligraphy," *Ars Orientalis* 21 (1991): 119–48; idem, "The Transformation of Arabic Writing, Part 2: The Public Text," *Ars Orientalis* 24 (1994): 119–47; and Irene A. Bierman, *Writing Signs: The Fatimid Public Text* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

132. Estelle Whelan, "Writing the Word of God: Some Early Qur'an Manuscripts and Their Milieux, Part 1," *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 113–48.

133. F. R. Martin, *The Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey from the 8th to the 18th Century* (London: Quaritch, 1912); and Oleg Grabar, *Mostly Miniatures: An Introduction to Persian Painting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

134. Basil Gray, *Persian Painting* (Geneva: Skira, 1961); Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* (Geneva: Skira, 1962); and Norah M. Titley, *Persian Miniature Painting and Its Influence on the Art of Turkey and India: The British Library Collections* (1983; reprint, Austin: University of Texas Press in cooperation with the British Library, 1984). Aboulala Soudavar used the same approach for the catalogue of his stupendous family collection, now on long-term loan to the Smithsonian (Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection* [New York: Rizzoli, 1992]), and so do the various authors of the catalogue of an exhibition from the Library of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences (Yuri A. Petrosyan et al., *Pages of Perfection: Islamic Paintings and Calligraphy from the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg* [Lugano: ARCH Foundation/Electa, 1995]).

135. Basil Gray, ed., *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia: 14th–16th Centuries* (Boulder, Colo.: Shambhala/UNESCO, 1979); Oleg Grabar, *The Illustrations of the Maqamat* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); and Eleanor Sims, *Peerless Images: Persian Painting and Its Sources*, with Boris I. Marshak and Ernst J. Grube (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

136. Exceptions include the Khalili portion of Rashid al-Din's *Compendium of Chronicles* (Blair [as in n. 89]) and the St. Petersburg Album (Francesca von Habsburg, *The St. Petersburg Muraqqa': Album of Indian and Persian Miniatures from the 16th through the 18th Century and Specimens of Persian Calligraphy by 'Imād al-Hasanī* [Milan: Leonardo Arte, 1996]). We have recently heard of a wonderful project to reconstruct on CD-ROM the manuscript of the *Shahnama* made for Shah Tahmasp.

137. Marie-Rose Séguy, *The Miraculous Journey of Mahomet/Mirāj Nameh* (New York: George Braziller, 1977).

138. Simpson (as in n. 75).

139. The best place to begin is the survey by Eva Baer, *Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983). James Allan has written about Persian metal technology and the metal objects excavated by the Metropolitan Museum at the site of Nishapur in northeastern Iran: James W. Allan, *Persian Metal Technology: 700–1300 AD* (London: Ithaca Press for the Faculty of Oriental Studies and the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, 1979); and idem, *Nishapur: Metalwork of the Early Islamic Period* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982). Boris Marshak deals with the curious silver objects, often called post-Sasanian, from neighboring Central Asia: Marshak [Marshak], *Silberschätze des Orients: Metallkunst des 3.–13. Jahrhunderts und ihre Kontinuität*, trans. L. Schirmer (Leipzig: VEB E. A. Seemann, 1986).

140. Among the exceptions are Linda Komaroff's study of Timurid metalwork, *The Golden Disk of Heaven: Metalwork of Timurid Iran* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda, 1992); and James Allan and Brian Gilmour's survey of Persian steel, *Persian Steel, the Tanavoli Collection*, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, 15 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

141. Assadullah Sourén Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World 8–18th Centuries* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1982); Atıl et al. (as in n. 95); James W. Allan, *Islamic Metalwork: The Nuhad Es-Said Collection* (London: Sotheby's, 1982); and idem, *Metalwork of the Islamic World: The Aron Collection* (London: Sotheby's, 1986).

142. Arthur Lane, *Early Islamic Pottery* (London: Faber and Faber, 1947); and idem, *Later Islamic Pottery* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957). Jean Soustiel's handsome, indeed, luxurious survey in French reflects the some-

what idiosyncratic views of a collector and dealer: *La céramique islamique: Le guide du connaisseur* (Fribourg: Office du Livre, 1985).

143. Oliver Watson's book *Persian Lustre Ware* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985) gives an excellent chronological overview and can be supplemented by Alan Caiger-Smith's book on the lustre technique, *Lustre Pottery: Technique, Tradition and Innovation in Islam and the Western World* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985). Earlier lustrewares, especially Iraqi and Egyptian types, are presented in Helen Philon, *Early Islamic Ceramics: Ninth to Late Twelfth Centuries*, Catalogue of Islamic Art/Benaki Museum Athens, 1 (London: Islamic Art Publications, 1980).

144. Lisa Golombek, Robert B. Mason, and Gauvin A. Bailey, *Tamerlane's Tableware: A New Approach to the Chinoiserie Ceramics of Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Iran* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda in association with the Royal Ontario Museum, 1996).

145. Stefano Carboni and David Whitehouse, *Glass of the Sultans* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001); and Stefano Carboni, *Glass from Islamic Lands* (New York: Thames and Hudson in association with the al-Sabah collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyya, Kuwait National Museum, 2001).

146. Rachel Ward, ed., *Gilded and Enamelled Glass from the Middle East: Origins, Innovations* (London: British Museum Press, 1998).

147. Maurice Lombard, *Les textiles dans le monde musulman VIIe–XIIe siècle* (Paris: Mouton, 1978).

148. Patricia L. Baker, *Islamic Textiles* (London: British Museum Press, 1995).

149. Nurhan Atasoy et al., *Ipek: The Crescent and the Rose: Imperial Ottoman Silks and Velvets* (London: Azimuth Editions on behalf of TEB A. S., 2002).

150. The historical setting has been presented by Thomas T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), again without illustrations. Most of the technical work has been done by Anne Wardwell; see, for example, Anne E. Wardwell, "Panni Tartarici: Eastern Islamic Silks Woven with Gold and Silver (13th and 14th Centuries)," *Islamic Art* 3 (1988–89): 95–173; and James C. Y. Watt and Anne E. Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art with the Cleveland Museum of Art, 1997).

151. Walter B. Denny, *The Sotheby's Guide to Oriental Carpets* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994).

152. For example, in 1990 the Metropolitan Museum acquired a rare example of an "animal" carpet, one of the earliest types known. A similar rug is depicted in an early 15th-century Sieneese painting, *The Marriage of the Virgin* (National Gallery, London, inv. no. 1317), but radiocarbon analysis initially suggested an implausible date in the 12th century, and the carpet is now attributed to the early 14th century. See "An Early Animal Rug at the Metropolitan Museum," *Hali* 53 (Oct. 1990): 154–55; and <http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/view1.asp?dep=14&full=0&item=1990%2E61>.

153. Ernst Kühnel, *Die Islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen, VIII.–XIII. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1971).

154. Gereon Sieverich and Hendrik Budde, eds., *Europa und der Orient* (Berlin: Bertelsmann Lexikon, 1989).

155. Jay A. Levenson, ed., *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1991).

156. The most recent is G. W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, and Oleg Grabar, *Interpreting Late Antiquity, Essays on the Post-Classical World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

157. Terry Allen, *A Classical Revival in Islamic Architecture* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, 1986).

158. Christine Verzár Bornstein and Priscilla Parsons Soucek, *The Meeting of Two Worlds: The Crusades and the Mediterranean Context* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1981); and Vladimir P. Goss and Christine Verzár Bornstein, eds., *The Meeting of Two Worlds: Cultural Exchange between East and West during the Period of the Crusades* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1986).

159. Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

160. Spiro Kostoff, *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

161. Julian Raby, *Venice, Dürer and the Oriental Mode* (London: Islamic Art Publications, 1982); idem, "Pride and Prejudice: Mehmed the Conqueror and the Italian Portrait Medal," in *Italian Medals*, ed. Graham Pollard (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1987), 171–94; Gülru Necipoğlu, "Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of Ottoman-Hapsburg-Papal Rivalry," *Art Bulletin* 71 (1989): 401–27; Deborah Howard, *Venice and the East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); and Rosamond E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). Interactions in India are discussed by Wagoner (as in n. 7).

162. These include W. M. Thackston Jr., trans., *Naser-e Khosrow's Book of Travels (Safarnama)* (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1986); Wheeler M. Thackston, "Treatise on Calligraphic Arts: A Disquisition on Paper, Colors, Inks and Pens by Simi of Nishapur," in *Intellectual Studies on Islam: Essays Written in Honor of Martin B. Dickson, Professor of Persian Studies, Princeton University*, ed. Michel M. Mazzaoui and Vera B. Moreen (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 219–28; Khwandamir, *Habibu's-Siyar Tome Three*, trans. and ed. W. M.

Thackston, *Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures* (Cambridge, Mass.: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, Harvard University, 1994); Wheeler M. Thackston, trans., ed., and annot., *The Babur-nama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); idem, trans. and ed., *The Jahangirnāma: Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India* (New York: Oxford University Press in association with the Freer Gallery of Art and the Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1999); idem, *Album Prefaces and Other Documents on the History of Calligraphers and Painters*, Supplements to *Muqarnas*, 10 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001); and idem, *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1989).

163. Sharbil Dāghir, *Al-Fann al-Islāmī fī'l-musādīr al-'arabiyya: Šinā' at al-zayna wa'l-jamāl* (Islamic art in Arabic sources) (Kuwait: Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, 1999).

164. Howard Crane, *Risāle-i mi'mārīyye: An Early Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, Supplements to *Muqarnas*, 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987); and idem, trans. and ed., *The Garden of the Mosques: Hafız Hüseyin al-Ayvan-sarāyī's Guide to the Muslim Monuments of Ottoman Istanbul*, Supplements to *Muqarnas*, 8 (Leiden: Brill, 2000). A few sources on Islamic art and spirituality are also translated in John Renard, ed., *Windows on the House of Islam: Muslim Sources on Spirituality and Religious Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

165. Porter (as in n. 128); Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Topkapı Scroll—Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Getty Center and Oxford University Press, 1995); D. Fairchild Ruggles, "Gardens and Landscaping: Traditional Forms," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), vol. 2, 45–49. George Saliba's trenchant review of Necipoğlu's book, "Artisans and Mathematicians in Medieval Islam," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119 (1999): 637–45, shows why art historians should work as a team with scholars in other fields rather than trying to go it alone.

166. See, for example, the evidence for the popular piety of women provided by a corpus of medieval Egyptian tombstones in Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Mosque of the Qarafa in Cairo," *Muqarnas* 4 (1987): 7–20.

167. Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

168. See the vituperative—and not completely fair—review by J. M. Rogers, "Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*," *Kunst des Orients* 9 (1973–74): 153–66.

169. Terry Allen, *Five Essays on Islamic Art* ([Sebastopol, Calif.]: Solipist Press, 1988).

170. Yasser Tabbaa, *The Transformation of Islamic Art during the Sunni Revival* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

171. Richard Ettinghausen, *Studies in Muslim Iconography*, vol. 1, *The Unicorn*, Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1950). Many of his later essays on iconography as well as many other topics are included in a volume of his collected works, *Richard Ettinghausen, Islamic Art and Archaeology, Collected Papers*, ed. Myriam Rosen-Ayalon (Berlin: Gröndler Mann, 1984).

172. Eva Baer, *Sphinxes and Harpies in Medieval Islamic Art* (Jerusalem: Israel Oriental Society, 1965); Abbas Daneshvari, *Animal Symbolism in Warqa wa Gulshah*, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Maria Vittoria Fontana, *La leggenda di Bahrām Gūr e Āzāda: Materiale per la storia di una tipologia figurativa dalle origini al XIV secolo*, Series Minor (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici, 1986); and idem, *Iconografia dell'Ahl al-Bayt: Immagini di arte persiana dal XII al XX secolo*, Supplement no. 78 agli *Annali* 54 (1994), Fasc. 1 (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici, 1994). Robert Hillenbrand has continued to pursue aspects of iconography in numerous articles, many of which have also been collected in a single volume. In recognition of Hillenbrand's interest in the subject, Bernard O'Kane is assembling a volume of iconographic studies in Hillenbrand's honor.

173. Daneshvari (as in n. 172). Fontana, 1994 (as in n. 172); Priscilla P. Soucek, "The Life of the Prophet: Illustrated Versions," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 193–218; and Robert Hillenbrand, "Images of Muhammad in al-Biruni's *Chronology of Ancient Nations*," in Hillenbrand (as in n. 102), 129–46.

174. E. H. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1979); and Grabar (as in n. 20).

175. See, for example, the thoughtful and long reviews by Margaret Olin in the *Art Bulletin* 75 (1993): 728–31; and Jane Jakeman in *Ars Orientalis* 24 (1994): 151–52.

176. Eva Baer's *Islamic Ornament* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998) was expanded from an article she wrote on the subject for *The Dictionary of Art* at the same time Grabar was preparing his Mellon Lectures, so that neither was able to consult the other's work.

177. A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, "Le griffon iranien de Pise: Matériaux pour un corpus de l'argenterie et du bronze iraniens, III," *Kunst des Orients* 5 (1968): 68–86. For a summary of alternative views, see Dodds (as in n. 38), no. 15.

178. Nasr (as in n. 44).

179. See, for example, the following by Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani: "The Sufi Strain in the Art of Kashan," *Oriental Art*, n.s., 12 (1966): 251–58; "Le *Shāh-nāme*, la gnose soufie et le pouvoir mongol," *Journal Asiatique* 222 (1984): 249–338; "Le livre des rois, miroir du destin, I," *Studia Iranica* 17, no. 1 (1988): 7–46; and Melikian-Chirvani (as in n. 141).

180. See, for example, the trenchant criticisms of his approach to metalwork by Terry Allen, "Review of Books on Islamic Metalwork, Architecture, and Archaeology," *Ars Orientalis* 15 (1985): 149–54.

181. Oleg Grabar, "The Earliest Islamic Commemorative Structures," *Ars Orientalis* 6 (1966): 7–46; Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Mosque of al-Hakim in Cairo," *Muqarnas* 1 (1983): 15–36; idem (as in n. 166); Caroline Williams, "The Cult of 'Alid Saints in the Fatimid Monuments of Cairo, Part 1: The Mosque of al-Aqmar," *Muqarnas* 1 (1983): 37–52; idem, "The Cult of 'Alid Saints in the Fatimid Monuments of Cairo, Part 2: The Mausolea," *Muqarnas* 3 (1985): 39–60; and Christopher S. Taylor, "Reevaluating the Shi'i Role in the Development of Monumental Funerary Architecture: The Case of Egypt," *Muqarnas* 9 (1992): 1–10.

182. Richard W. Bulliet, "Pottery Styles and Social Status in Medieval Khurasan," in *Archaeology, Annales, and Ethnohistory*, ed. A. Bernard Knapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 75–82.

183. Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); and Bierman (as in n. 131).

184. Tabbaa, 1991, 1994 (as in n. 131); Necipoğlu (as in n. 165); Tabbaa (as in n. 170).

185. Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

186. Richard Ettinghausen, "Al-Ghazzālī on Beauty," in *Art and Thought, Issued in Honor of Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, ed. K. Bharatna Iyer (London: Luzac, 1947), 160–65; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Beauty in Arabic Culture* (Princeton: Marcus Wiener, 1999); and Valérie Gonzalez, *Beauty and Islam: Aesthetics in Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: I. B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2001).

187. Bierman (as in n. 131); Eva F. Hoffman, "A Fatimid Book Cover: Framing and Re-Framing, Cultural Identity in the Medieval Mediterranean World," in Barrucand (as in n. 63), 403–19; and Valérie Gonzalez, "The Double Ontology of Islamic Calligraphy: A World-Image on a Folio from the Museum of Raqqada (Tunisia)," in *M. Uğur Derman Festschrift*, ed. Irvin Schick (Istanbul: Sabanci University, 2000), 313–40.

188. Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Revival of Early Islamic Architecture by the Umayyads of Spain," in *The Medieval Mediterranean: Cross-Cultural Contacts*, ed. Marilyn J. Chiat and Kathryn L. Reyerson (St. Cloud, Minn.: North Star Press of St. Cloud, 1988); and Sheila S. Blair, *The Monumental Inscriptions from Early Islamic Iran and Transoxiana*, Supplements to *Muqarnas*, 5 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 160–63.

189. The edition of Blair and Bloom (as in n. 23) published by Mapin, New Delhi, for distribution in India and Pakistan, is missing several images. For a similar case on American television, see John Maynard, "After Request, PBS Edits 'Islam,'" *Washington Post*, May 8, 2001, C7.

190. See, for example, the controversy surrounding Kanan Makiya, *The Rock, a Tale of Seventh-Century Jerusalem* (New York: Pantheon, 2001), a novel that some considered traitorous for suggesting that Jews played an important role in the design of the Dome of the Rock. See the review by Turi Munthe, "Muslim Jerusalem: A Story," *Nation*, Apr. 1, 2002.

191. For the Hindu nationalist view, see Purushottam Nagesh Oak, *Taj Mahal, the True Story: The Tale of a Temple Vandalized* (Houston: A. Ghosh, 1989) or <http://www.flex.com/~jai/satyamevayajate/tejo.htm>. Followers of the 18th-century Muslim reformer Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, in particular, consider tombs anathema, and virtually all Muslim tombs in Arabia, with the exception of that over Muhammad's grave, were destroyed when they came to power there. In a brief list of the ten masterpieces of classical Islamic art in the January–February 2002 issue of *Saudi Aramco World* magazine, for example, the Taj Mahal (p. 38) is tactfully described not as a "tomb" but as a "white marble monument."

192. See, for example, the joint publication by Şule Aksoy and Rachel Milstein, "A Collection of Thirteenth-Century Illustrated Hajj Certificates," in Schick (as in n. 187), 101–34.

193. For the later history of this manuscript, in addition to the official account cited in n. 73, see Eleanor Munro, "How to Mangle a Masterpiece: The Sad Story of the Houghton Shahnameh," *Saturday Review*, Oct. 27, 1979, 21–26; Chahriyar Adle, "Wonders of the Age," review of *Wonders of the Age: Masterpieces of Early Safavid Painting, 1501–1576* by Stuart Cary Welch, *Abstracta Iranica* 2 (1979): 172; Robert Hillenbrand, "The Iconography of the *Shah-nama-yi Shāhi*," *Pembroke Papers* 4 (1996): 53–78; and Souren Melikian, "Destroying a Treasure: The Sad Story of a Manuscript," *International Herald Tribune*, Apr. 27, 1996.

194. Lawrence Nees has also drawn our attention to the new study by Daniel Bertrand Monk, *An Aesthetic Occupation: The Immediacy of Architecture and the Palestine Conflict* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002).

195. Aidan Dunne, "The Curator Did It," *Artnews* 95 (May 1993): 56.