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NUMBER ONE

PERSIA

EDITED BY

ARTHUR UPHAM POPE

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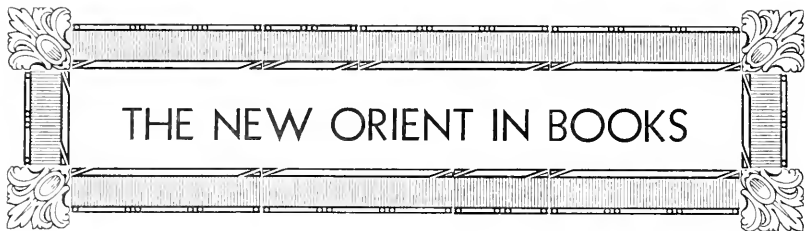
THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING COMPANY
ANNOUNCES

That, during 1933, the following numbers of
THE OPEN COURT
magazine will be combined:

February-March, May-June, July-August, and
October-November. The January, April, September
and December will remain single issues.

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THE NEW ORIENT IN BOOKS

The Keys to Power, A study of Indian Ritual and Belief. By J. Abbott, B. A. (Oxon) Dutton and Co. New York, 1932. Pp xi+560 (\$6.00)

The "Keys to Power" are the rules of conduct by which man tries to control the forces of nature for his own purposes. There are also negative factors which can destroy power and which lead to restrictions of conduct.

Under the stress of modernism and contact with the west, there are in India many customs and rituals in regard to conduct which, if not protected by the priestly class or by communal sentiment, or preserved in some other way, will soon be gone. This is especially true of the rites which have to do with agriculture. The author has made a monumental collection of these to preserve them and "to show how far the concept of a supernatural cosmic power dominates popular practice." He has taken only first-hand explanation of these practices and has tried to represent local belief faithfully.

Researches in Manichaeism, with Special Reference to the Turfan Fragments. By A. V. Williams Jackson. Columbia University Press, New York, 1932. xxxviii+393. (\$5.00)

In this book the author has collected much out-of-the-way material on the religion of Mani. After the general, introductory sketch, are translations from original Manichaean documents in Turfan Pahlavi, or Middle Persian, with full philological and critical notes. Two translations from Book Pahlavi are from anti-Manichaean texts by Zoroastrian believers who sought to refute Mani, and another translated from the Syriac of Theodore bar Khoni, the Nestorian Bishop of Kashkar (800 A.D.) Only such parts of these latter are given which throw light on the religion of Mani. Several short monographs on the subject complete the volume. This book is an important contribution to literature of Manichaeism.

Treasure-House of the Living Religions. Compiled and edited by Robert Ernest Hume. Charles Scribners' Sons, New York, 1932. Pp. xx+493. (\$3.00).

Here is a veritable "treasure-house" of the religious wisdom of the world, arranged in systematic plan and classified according to phases of religious thought and life—Man's relation to the Supreme, Man's relation to man—so that one can grasp at a glance those aspects of the various living religions which are universal. Eleven religious systems have been chosen, each of which has survived more than 100 years and has maintained an art and a literature of its own. They include Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism and Christianity, Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism. All of these have been able "to maintain the continuity of their religious teachings as well as adapt themselves to changing conditions, because of their reverence to sacred scriptures in whose ancient formulas each succeeding generation may perceive fresh applications to eternal truths." At the close of the book Dr. Hume has arranged a Program of Joint Worship—arranged as a responsive reading.

In the preparation of the book, Dr. Hume has used great care in the selection of passages and translations; and he has produced both an anthology of the sacred scriptures and a source book for the comparative study of religion.

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THE NEW ORIENT SOCIETY OF AMERICA

THE NEW ORIENT SOCIETY OF AMERICA is now completing its first year, and and it can look back upon a successful time during a difficult economic period. At the annual meeting of November 18, the following Officers and Directors were elected:

PROFESSOR JAMES H. BREASTED.....Honorary President
Director Oriental Institute, University of Chicago
DR. BERTHOLD LAUFER.....Honorary Vice-President
Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois
PROFESSOR WILLIAM R. SHEPHERD.....President
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Six monographs, listed below, have been published. During 1933 we will publish the second series of six monographs as special numbers of *The Open Court*. These monographs will deal with various cultural aspects of the New Orient, and will be edited by leading American scholars.

FIRST MONOGRAPH SERIES PUBLISHED BY THE OPEN COURT

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| January, 1932. The Heritage of Western Asia.
Edited by Professor Martin Sprengling, University of Chicago. | July, 1932. Syria-Palestine.
Edited by Professor A. T. Olmstead, University of Chicago. |
| March, 1932. The Heritage of Eastern Asia.
Edited by Professor A. E. Haydon, Department of Comparative Religion, University of Chicago. | September, 1932. Egypt.
Edited by Professor Halford L. Hoskins, Department of History, Tufts College, Massachusetts. |
| May, 1932. Modern Turkey.
Edited by Professor A. H. Lybyer, University of Illinois. | December, 1932. Arabia.
Edited by Professor Martin Sprengling, University of Chicago. |

SECOND MONOGRAPH SERIES TO BE PUBLISHED DURING 1933

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| January, 1933. Persia.
Edited by Professor Arthur Upham Pope, Director of the Persian Institute. | September, 1933. India.
Edited by Professor Walter E. Clark, Department of Sanskrit, Harvard University. |
| March, 1933. Russian and Central Asia.
Edited by Dr. Berthold Laufer, Curator, Department of Anthropology, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago. | October, 1933. China.
Edited by Dr. Berthold Laufer, Field Museum of Natural History. |
| May, 1933. Japan.
Edited by Professor Quincy Wright, Department of Political Science, University of Chicago. | December, 1933. Northern Africa. |

Those who are desirous of becoming members of the New Orient Society of America are invited to apply for particulars of purposes and privileges of membership to the SECRETARY, CATHERINE E. COOK.

The New Orient Society of America
337 E. CHICAGO AVE. CHICAGO



THE CLOTH MERCHANT

Attributed to Riza Abbasi, Seventeenth Century
(Collection of Fran. M. Sarre Humann, Berlin)

Frontispiece to The Open Court

THE OPEN COURT

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NEW ORIENT SOCIETY MONOGRAPH: SECOND SERIES

NUMBER ONE

THE ARTS OF IRAN

BY ARTHUR UPHAM POPE

OUR CULTURE is doomed to remain parochial and even be menaced with a certain triviality so long as we continue to believe that the destinies of mankind are to be determined solely by European ideas and experiences. The calamities and disasters of the last few years have demonstrated that our whole grasp on realities has been insecure; that our vision of highest values has been obscured by passion and darkened by ignorance. If, then, we are to save ourselves and build again a world in which specifically human values shall have their rightful place and in which the enterprise of life shall be determined by the widest and richest experience, we must again take counsel of those sources of civilization which are to be found in the Orient, where man first lifted himself out of chaos and established a rational order. They nourished us at the beginning; without them we cannot sustain the ardors of racial manhood nor entertain sound hopes of attaining any reasonable goal.

The civilization of Asia has found its most intelligible and eloquent expression in its art. Barred as are most of us from that insight into the living reality of Oriental life which can be provided only by the mastery of many languages, we may all of us nevertheless, through the arts of the various Asiatic nations, participate in their culture, seeing as by a great light what experiences they found most precious and most enduring, and what were their standards of perfection, ideas which we today need to apprehend, appreciate, and in part at least, to employ.

The art which issued from the Iranian plateau, though it rarely touched the spiritual depths common in India or the poetic exaltation of the greatest Chinese art, nonetheless brought new values, new techniques, and new ideas to the envisagement of perfection.

Persian art is primarily an abstract art. Western art has, since the days of Greece, looked to the natural object as the supreme source of authority, but the art of Persia always stands a little apart from the actual physical fact in a somewhat contemplative mood, giving priority to the demands of the mind, the wealth of its fancy, and its principles of order and symmetry. To be sure, in all art of excellence the subjective contribution is real and important. But in the West this contribution has often been highly personal, peculiar to the individual and his special experiences, expressive of his private emotions. In the Orient, on the other hand, and especially in Persia, the emphasis is upon the universal form and the communal feeling. In short, western art tends to be more a perceptive art; Persian art, a conceptualized art. The one turns to the specific, highly individualized presentation, the other gives us by natural preference the generalized image.

The distinction proposed some years ago that the art of the Orient was primarily one of color, while the art of the West was essentially an art of form, has almost nothing to commend it. It would indeed be difficult to formulate a more misleading generalization; for the art of the Orient has from its beginning been primarily an art of form. It is an art of form not in the somewhat superficial sense of having merely a special interest in plasticity, but rather in the sense that it finds beauty and expressiveness in the composition and varied relations of abstract or non-representative elements. But these contrasts always over-simplify the problem, and even the insistence that the distinction is really between the generalizing art of the Orient, of which Persian art is perhaps the most notable example, and the particularizing art of the West, in which Greece was supreme, immediately calls to mind many exceptions. For certainly Oriental art has no monopoly of form. As a matter of fact, no production is entitled to rank as a work of art which does not respect and in some degree employ abstract form, and the art of the West, from Phidias to Bach, reaches its greatest height when it embodies just those universalizing tendencies so characteristic of Persian art. But the distinction, although sometimes difficult, is real. It is primarily one of interest, of intention, of emphasis. Thus interpreted, it is correct to say that in contrast to the trend of European art, the art of Persia is an art of form, seeking to see the in-

dividual *sub specie aeternitatis*, finding perfection only in the universalized particular.

This abstract or generalizing tendency in Iranian art has endowed it with a certain intellectuality. In Islamic times Persian art has often attained a lyrical and imaginative quality only possible to a nation of poets, but before that and through it all, there has been a dominant rationality which, if less perfect and serene than that of Greek art, has a certain kinship with it and like the Greek, reflects a passion for lucidity. The obscure and eccentric have always been offensive to the Persian mind; its nimble imagination is always definite so that if it has strayed beyond the actual world, it has been into well-ordered realms of invention.

To the European, heir to the Greek tradition and its habits of seeing and thinking, an art that is primarily intellectual and abstract, careless of the individual, which seems to us the measure of all things, might be thought cold and deliberate, a fabricated, impersonal art without color, spontaneity, or passion. Yet our own arts of architecture and music ought to show us that there can be more substance and more feeling in a non-representative art than in one confined to the superfluous reproduction of objects. Indeed, Persian art has a real kinship with music and might be called "visible music," for it is in the tonality, melody, harmony, and the subtleties of musical structure that we find the most revealing analogies to much of Persian art and one of the surest keys to its peculiar excellencies.

Moreover, an abstract art is not necessarily an art removed from sensibility or indifferent to the lust of the eye, but rather one that has a more serious aim than invitation. If Persian art has something in common with the Platonic ideas, it has more in common with poetry which makes a continuous and vivid appeal to sense impression. It is often severely logical, but it always is logic, made not only visible but also manifest to every other sense that can be awakened through sight. An abstract art like that of Persia may turn away from the world of natural fact to take counsel of perfection and obey the dictates of the legislative mind, but thereafter it returns to the world of sense to clothe its report in a palpable glory.

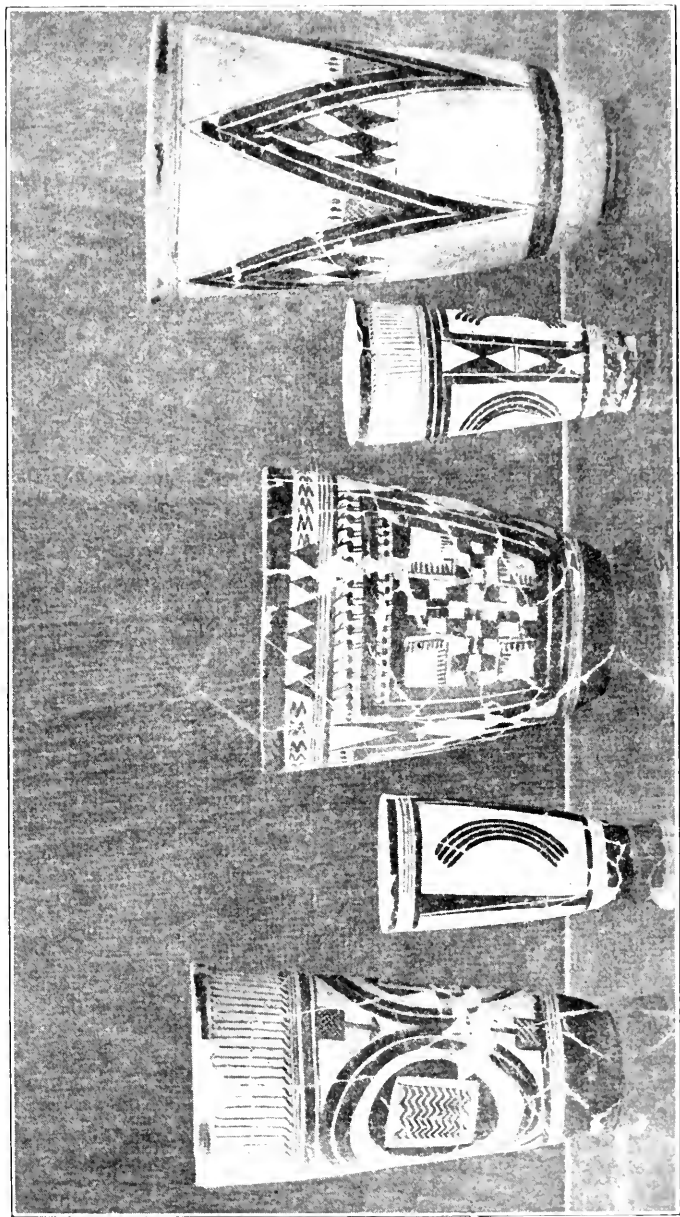
Persian art is very ancient, probably the most ancient the world has known, and in its long career it has created a great variety of

styles. Thus the history of Persian culture has often been thought to consist of a series of sharply contrasting epochs. There is the pre-historic and pre-Aryan period, beginning well before 4000 B.C. The Achaemenid period is the first of which we have ample documentary record. This was the time of the great kings, Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes, lasting from 550 B.C. until they were overthrown by Alexander in 334. The Greek domination which Alexander imposed was in turn succeeded by the semi-Iranian dynasty of the Parthians, of whose art we know so very little. We commonly think that a wholly new epoch was initiated with the Persian revival under the Sasanids, who created a mighty empire at the beginning of the third century, rivaled by no contemporary civilization except that of its competitor, Byzantium. We all know that in the middle of the seventh century there burst out of the desert sands of Arabia a swift and furious storm that swept this mighty dynasty down to utter ruin and brought the Persian people a new religion and a new type of social and political organization. An entirely new epoch was presumably begun, that of the Islamic period. This in turn was followed by a succession of sharply contrasting cultures, the Seljuk in the eleventh century, the Moguls in the thirteenth, the Timurid in the fourteenth, the Safavid in the sixteenth.

But the history of Persian art when understood is no mosaic. These periods merged one into another, each borrowed from the preceding, and all remained true to the dominant conceptions that were formulated in the beginning. We find not merely the same themes extending over centuries and bridging the scattered epochs, the same decorative motives recurring, but also the same point of view persisting throughout, the respect for pure and abstract beauty, the distaste for vulgar naturalism, a constant and passionate preference for the music of the spheres.

The first period of Iranian art is exemplified in pottery of great beauty and distinction, the earliest artistic pottery known, and in many respects not yet equaled.¹ It is hand-made, very thin, decorated with abstract designs of extraordinary force and distinction, in a style so thoroughly matured that it must have been the culmination of many centuries of artistic experience (Page 5). The ibex,

¹This pottery goes by the awkward name of *Susa I*, meaning that it was found at the lowest level in the excavations conducted by the French archaeological mission at Susa.



PREHISTORIC POTTERY FROM SUSA

About 4500 B.C.

(The Louvre, Paris)

the flamingo, the running hound have been, by the aesthetic perception of these early Iranian potters, transmuted so that they are no longer naturalistic objects but are conventionalized and interpreted, the essence of their character concentrated in a single abstract form, thus attaining to a new quality of beauty in contour, in movement, and in the mind-imposed harmony of their relations.

This Elamitic civilization, perhaps engendered as early as 4500 B.C., centered in the city of Susa, but this was not necessarily its first abode, and it was widely extended over Asiatic soil, so that pottery of this general character and probably in some way connected with it has been found in Afghanistan, in Eastern Mongolia, and as far west as the Nile. In every case, however, saving the extensions of the Iranian plateau and its cultural relations into the upper Mesopotamian valley, the quality, the variety, and the artistic and technical competence of this type of pottery rapidly diminish in proportion to the distance from the Iranian center, until contemporary editions in the Nile Valley are comparatively small, thick, clumsy, and monotonous compared with their Persian originals, and we find the same, only in less degree, as we go east or north.

Just how the arts developed in Persia between the early civilizations like that of Elam on the one hand and the historical period on the other, we do not yet know, but expeditions now at work in Persia are making almost daily discoveries, often of sensational importance, which are helping to fill the gap in our knowledge. At Damghan, in northern Persia, American expeditions working under the direction of Dr. Erich Schmidt, have proven the existence of elaborate civilizations with admirable technical resources in building and in the industrial arts, that vary in date from at least 3500 to about 2000 B.C. Beautiful copper weapons with silver handles have been found, pottery of handsome shapes, and terra cotta figurines which seem to have some connection with those of the early civilizations of the Indus Valley at Harapa and Mohenjodaro, which Sir John Marshall has disclosed. In addition, there are splendid copper vessels, fine jewelry, and especially delightful animal figures carved in semi-precious stones, to say nothing of various handsome gold ornaments.

At Asterabad Dr. Wulsin discovered the solid remains of a vast brick platform two meters thick, covering several acres and yet

datable about 2000 B.C. The huge platforms which the Hittites and Assyrians constructed and on which they placed their colossal palaces were, until last year, thought to be of their own devising. Now it is more than possible that these prodigious structures originated in Persia. While the potters of Susa demonstrated their mastery of abstract, those of Damghan and Asterabad developed an amazing repertoire of robust and sensitive forms which were perhaps all the more effective because in a plain gray or black ware, polished but either without any ornament at all or with only simple, almost invisible, burnished designs.

Again the dramatic discovery of the magnificent Luristan bronzes only three years ago revealed an animal art of superlative force and vitality which extends over a period from at least 2000 years B.C. to the beginning of Achaemenid times.² Here also in these bits, horse trappings, repoussé cups, and other vessels, effigies, ornaments, and weapons, we find the Persian sense for decoration, the verve which has caught and reproduced the quality of animals or has transferred them to some symbolic intent without damaging their essential character and without losing sight of their beauty of pattern.

The designation Persian for the early civilizations of Susa, Damghan, and Asterabad must be used with circumspection, for these first civilized inhabitants of the country were not identical in race with the Aryan Persians, who have possessed the country since about 2000 to 1500 B.C. Nonetheless, we are justified in speaking of them all as Iranians, for the best scientific opinion of the day is inclined to find the cultural unit less in the bond of blood or even language than in continuity of tradition, techniques, habits, and ideas.

The first historical and adequately documented period of Persian art begins with the Achaemenid kings—Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, Artaxerxes—covering a period roughly from 550 to 330 B.C. With these mighty monarchs Persian art entered on its first period of

²Certain scholars were so taken aback at this shock to their theories of the pre-Achaemenian vacuum that they hastily tried to explain the Luristan bronzes away as a subsequent development, two or three attempting to put them as late even as the Christian era. But the discovery of dated pieces beginning as early as 2600 B.C., the analysis of the relations between early Luristan bronzes and Elamitic bronzes, and other finds at Susa, and certain similarities with some Sumerian arts, have left no further room for doubt, so that judgment is now unanimous on this dating.



IBEX IN BRONZE
Achaemenian. About 400 B.C.
(Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin)

grandeur. Colossal palaces rivaling the temples of Egypt in size, but surpassing them in elegance and rationality, were built at Susa, Ecbatana, (Hamadan), Persepolis, and other places. The minor arts, especially animal sculpture in gold and bronze (Page 8), reached a combination of opulence, dignity, and artistic force which has certainly never been surpassed, as the Oxus Treasury in the British Museum, the pieces in the Hermitage, and a single bronze ibex in the collection of Oscar Raphael of London, amply prove.

Until a few years ago it was thought that Achaemenian art had suddenly burst upon the world in full splendor without any previous preparation or tradition, that it was only a court art, created for the enjoyment and the greater glory of a few mighty kings who, having little at home with which to work, gathered ideas and subservient artists from the four quarters of the earth. This was a superficial view. Thoughtful consideration of the qualities of Achaemenian art shows that it was not pieced together from haphazard borrowings forced into a mechanical assemblage, not a mere artificial eclecticism. There are features both in construction and decoration which the art of the great Achaemenian kings borrowed from the Hittites, from Assyria, and from Egypt, but when fitted to Persian purposes they were endowed with a new and highly individual quality.

Achaemenian art might be said to differ from Assyrian art, which it most closely resembles, quite as much as Greek art differs from Roman art and in somewhat the same way. Assyrian animal sculpture at its best is based on superbly competent observation. It often achieves an intense realization of its subject. But in general Assyrian sculpture is overintent on detail which it renders with an incoherent particularism that contrasts sharply with the simplified and generalized Achaemenian sculpture in which a tranquil unity reigns supreme, exhibiting that magical combination of energy and repose, which is at the same time both decorative and poetic.

The Achaemenian kingdom, which with a combination of energy, courage, and wisdom had created the first great empire, crashed in ruins before the superior technique of Alexander and his Greeks, and Greek culture swept across the Eastern world. The Persians surveyed the Greek contributions warily, choosing some, but with quiet disdain setting aside the rest. For the Persians could never

have found the perfect naturalism of Greek sculpture, however technically supreme, other than artistically a little immature, something altogether lovely, incomprehensibly perfect, but something, from the Iranian point of view, too much a re-duplication, however idealized, of the present world, with some, but too little comprehension of the transcendental world. Greek art did reinforce the native disposition to elegance and lucidity. It supplied certain patterns and themes which were employed in Persian art and literature for more than a thousand years. But Persian art remained true to its original character.

Of the Parthian period, which came close on the heels of Alexander and his successors, we know almost nothing. Greek motives were being assimilated and as the decorative art of Hellenism entered upon a slow death, sterile, perfunctory, unimaginative, it was the Parthian designers and their greater successors, the Sasanians, who seized upon the inheritance and by fresh imagination, taste, energy, and a robust sense for gorgeous rhythms, transferred these brittle patterns into new and powerful and fluent schemes. In early Sasanian times under the great Iranian revival, which definitely turned its back on Hellenic contributions and sought to drive along the path of its own national genius, was forged a new repertory of ornament which slowly made its way across Asia and became the basis of much of the ornamentation of Romanesque and Gothic times.

Sasanian silver vessels are magnificent (Page 16), and Sasanian silks set the standard and the dominant style in the textile arts for centuries, but despite the impressive nobility of these decorative arts, the Sasanians were perhaps greatest in the field of architecture. The Sasanian kings constructed a series of colossal palaces, roofing huge spaces with mighty vaults and clothing the walls with majestic ornament. Many of the essential problems of vault and dome construction were first comprehended by the builders of Sasanian times, and it was upon their achievements that much of the architecture of the Romanesque, Gothic, and even the Renaissance periods was based. The transverse vault and the squinch, the finest solution of the problem of setting a hemispherical dome upon a cube, a problem that wholly thwarted the Romans, were first formulated by Persian architects of the Sasanian period. Brick architecture was developed with a boldness and used on a scale that has not

since been approached, and a new chapter in the incrustation movement was gloriously written in ornamental brick lays and magnificent polychrome stucco, such as has recently been found at Damghan, Kish, and Ctesiphon.

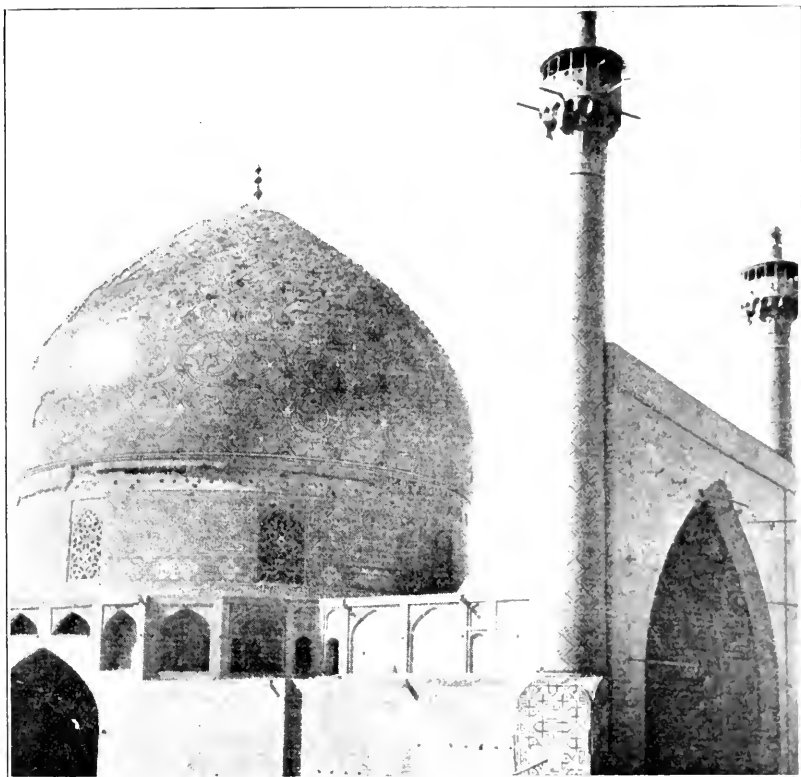
Almost at the height of its glory this rich and powerful Sasanian culture was shattered by a storm that swept out of the deserts of Arabia. Islam burst upon a proud and self-satisfied world with a new faith and a new inspiration, which caught men's imaginations and carried them, more voluntarily than we suppose, into the fold of a new belief and a new devotion. The uncouth Arabs brought with them nothing of architecture and less of art, a simple desert poetry, a noble religion, a magnificent language, and burning zeal. These qualities, united to the ancient traditions of the conquered countries, capitalized for new tasks the skill, taste, and experience of sophisticated races and so created a new epoch in world art. It is well within the fact to say that on the whole the new art of Islam owes more to Persia than to any other single source. As the Islamic empire waxed mighty and complex, it could be held together only by the transference of the seat of power eastward from Damascus to Baghdad, and the Caliphate, made famous by Haroun ar Rashid and the Thousand and One Nights, was in idea, technique, and personnel almost wholly Persian. It was here, in the eighth and ninth centuries, that the characteristic forms of Muhammadan art were shaped, primarily under the tutelage of Persian masters.

During the late Abbasid and early Seljuk periods some of the basic elements of Persian architecture found their first adequate formulation. The pointed arch, which had been taken over from India, was made the unit of construction in Persia, and in the early mosques, like the Masjid-i Jami in Isfahan, or the Masjid-i Jumeh in Shiraz, we find the beginning of a beautiful vaulting system, with ribbed domes, buttresses and elementary tracery, all very much in the Gothic manner though centuries earlier.

The growing luxury and waning faith, the slackening powers at the beginning of the eleventh century, were forcibly revived by the incursion of the Seljuk Turks, who in 1055 seized power but at the same time yielded to the potent dominion of both the religion and the culture of Persia. They became zealous in the faith and equally enthusiastic for the newly discovered literature and art. Mighty monuments were now created, mighty in conception. The

great dome chamber of the Masjid-i Jami in Isfahan, built about 1078, rivals the outstanding Romanesque churches of western Europe for sheer power. For beauty and severity of logic, for transparent consistency, for concentration and fulfilment of a single theme and the ingenious and harmonious blending of every element, the little dome chamber of Malek Shah is nowhere surpassed (Page 13). Structurally it is the most perfect example of the fully developed squinch, that ingenious series of arches and panels by means of which the corners of a square chamber are brought inwards to support the ring of the dome, and aesthetically there is no dome chamber anywhere in which the hemispherical dome is so perfectly united with the square chamber below. The dome itself seems to grow out of the substructure with that easy inevitability that marks only the work of masters. It is more complex in elevation than any preceding Persian structure, and yet transparently simple, consisting of variations and development of the single theme of the pointed arch. Panels balance panels, or are included within larger panels of the same contour, which are again included within others still larger that stretch up above the zone of transition, are crowned there with a circle of little panels again repeating the same outline and thus merge into the dome, the supreme and final expression of the original theme, an achievement worthy to rank with Hagia Sophia.

After the ghastly Mongol invasion, almost before the dust had settled from a thousand tragic ruins, building was recommenced with that startling vitality and creative energy which has made the Persians something of a mystery. Other nations have succumbed before disaster but the Persians, suffering calamities unprecedented and unapproached for wanton destruction, have stubbornly refused to be annihilated, resolutely taking, instead, each holocaust as an occasion for initiating a new epoch. And so we find the fourteenth century, which should have been one of desolation and resignation, actually proving to be one of the greatest building periods in western Asia. Mosques, colleges, shrines, palaces, and mausoleums rose on every hand. New elements from China and Central Asia appeared in the decoration. There was a rich development of relief patterns in brick, and colored inlays of enameled brick grew more common, but the scale, which in such buildings as the mausoleum of Uljaitu (1307-17) is colossal, remains Persian, and the



MASJID-I SHAH, ISFAHAN
The Small dome chamber of Malek Shah
(Photograph by Pope)

fundamental simplicity and consistency of the new forms repeat numerous preceding triumphs of Persian builders.

Even in the seventeenth century, under the vigorous reign of Shah Abbas, architectural masterpieces were still being constructed, especially in Isfahan. There are thoughtful architects who would rank the Masjid-i Shah among the first dozen of extant structures (Page 13), and it would be hard to find an interior to match the crystal perfection of the interior of the Mosque of Sheikh Lutf Ullah. It is a superficial view that has seen in the ornamentation of these Persian mosques merely a *tour de force* of lavish color and intricate patterns. Such a mastery of ceramic technique, such ability to handle a brilliant polychromy on so huge a scale might easily have led to displays of virtuosity that ignored the fundamental rights of the architecture thus embellished, but whoever looks closely will see that the grandeur and simplicity characteristic of Persian monumental architecture are not compromised or tormented by meaningless complications. Even at midday the ornament is so adroitly arranged in panels, the main structural lines are so carefully emphasized, that the simple bulk of these splendid buildings is never really broken by the gorgeous raiment they bear so easily, and watched toward the close of day, as the light falls and the colors flee, we see remaining, forms majestic and serene, moulded of shadows, large and quiet, of matchless proportion and of perfect architectural integrity.

While architecture was rapidly degenerating in the rest of the Islamic world, it maintained its quality in Persia well into the eighteenth century. The college and mosque built by Shah Sultan Hussein in honor of his mother is comparable to the Masjid-i Shah, and the bridge Kajoo, which he built or rather rebuilt, exploits the beauties of a river site more intelligently and thoroughly than any public bridge in Europe.

For all that Persian art is abstract, seeking always to impose upon its material a highly imaginative poetry and an equally universalized logic, nonetheless the Persian artists never lost their hold on concrete realities. Never have the Persians been contemptuous of the humble and earthly material. They have never known the disdain for common substance with which an egotistical Europe has flattered its conceits. Inherent in Zoroastrianism, reaffirmed in cer-

tain aspects of Islam, deeply grounded in their poetry, literature, and natural point of view is the sense of the oneness of man with his environment. This has dictated in the arts a respect and a sensitiveness for the character of the material to which they have always, save in moments of self-conscious virtuosity, held true. The artist's task, in continuation of the work of his forebears and in coöperation with his contemporary colleagues, is so to develop the material with which he works that its own character be made plain and its own inherent possibilities be carried to their destined perfection. His duty and his privilege is to make clear and manifest what was hidden in the substance.

It is this point of view that sustained the achievements of Persia in the ceramic arts. For this art reached its perfection, not in the stately vases of Greece, where decoration and shape are scarcely ever united, nor even in the beautiful and much praised Chinese porcelain, so hard and glittering, so often incongruously pictorial, but rather under the hands of the Persian potters. Here all the elements blend confederate to the golden end of beauty. The vessel is of clay, nor does it seek in shame to hide its humble origin. It proclaims in its thin and fragile shape a shy and tentative quality wholly becoming to the character of the material of which it is composed, revealing unsuspectedly lovely qualities that we scarce dreamed the simple earth held enclosed within it. The decorations, too, fit the shape. They reënforce and emphasize it, and their character, so gay, so easy, with poetic grace, suit the light and fragile material (Page 32). This sense of perfect propriety between all the elements of an art has been typical of Persian art throughout its long life.

Persia's achievements in metal were scarcely inferior to her accomplishments in faience. Fewer examples remain. They were slower and more expensive to make, especially if decorated with inlays of gold and silver. They disintegrated more easily, under the soil, and man's cupidity above could too often transmute them into more practical property. The precious metals are not far removed from cash, and a broken bronze basin, although an artistic masterpiece, may in time of stress be of less worth than a weapon of the same material.

The spirited Luristan animal bronzes, the more magnificent gold and bronze ornaments of Achaemenid times, the bronze vessels of the Sasanids, colossal in scale, if not in measure, their gold and sil-



SILVER PLATE

The relief design is of a royal lion hunt.
Sasanian, Fourth Century A.D.
(Hermitage Museum, Leningrad)

ver plates with the massive figural reliefs (Page 16), all of these so different, all so alike in their force and spirit and in their masterly use of generalized forms, together constitute a series that cannot be equaled. The relation of Persian medieval bronze work to that of northern Mesopotamia, particularly Mosul, is hard to determine, but it seems probable that an ancient metal industry in that region was spurred to its remarkable artistic productivity by the influx of Persian workmen in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The metal workers of Herat, Rayy, Isfahan, and Shiraz were famous in medieval times, but it is not yet possible to characterize these various schools.

On Persian carpets volumes of rhapsody and speculation have been composed, and indeed, of the finest of them it is difficult to speak temperately. Carpet weaving was a very ancient art. We know from the Kozlov finds, as well as from those of Sir Aurel Stein, that pile carpets, rich and deep in color and texture, were in use at the beginning of the Christian era, while by the tenth century at least, as many documentary references show, carpets were numerous, beautiful, and highly prized. Although the oldest extant Persian carpet can scarcely date from before 1500, yet from the miniatures of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we can reconstruct in detail the carpets of that period. The great court carpets of the sixteenth century were thus heirs to a long and notable tradition: they are, strictly speaking, modern, although in them the craft reached an incomparable and unchallenged perfection.

The artistic greatness of Persian carpets is founded on a variety of qualities. In the first place, the wealth of pattern, which if rendered on paper or even in thin silk would be trivial and ineffective in such a large size, assumes substance and importance when embedded in their dense, substantial texture. In the second place, the material itself contributes important values, the sheen of the silk, the living luster of the wool, flatter and delightfully excite the sense of touch. Again, even more is contributed by the color. The dyes, which in depth and purity are incomparable, are combined with an art known only to the Orient and carried to utmost perfection only by Persia. Scattered color chords are held in perfect harmony in the Eastern Persian weavings by an adroit use of color contrasts, or in the early medallion carpets of the northwest, by a carefully

planned balance of tones, or in some of the seventeenth-century carpets like the so-called *Polonaise*, by an almost evanescent chromation, or in the more intricate of the vase carpets, by the union of different colors through gradual, almost invisible transitions.

Finally, and perhaps most important, is the pattern designing itself. Into this has been crowded the accumulated experience of centuries, an original talent for abstract design, refined taste, clear thinking, a lively imagination, and the easy mastery of all the elements that come only from long and strict discipline. Few will trouble to make the analysis of these patterns without which their real character can be only vaguely apprehended; but those who do are rewarded by the sudden revelation of an artistic invention of unsuspected depth, beauty, and power, whose analogies with music, especially the fugue and the sonata, are genuine and revealing. In the finest carpets we find united most of the peculiar excellencies of Persian art, so that if one art must stand for the whole Iranian achievement, it might perhaps best be the art of carpets, provided that only the supreme examples are considered.

The Persians themselves might be more inclined to select calligraphy as their most typical art, a severity of judgment a little puzzling to most western minds. But only a few in the West have given thoughtful attention to the aesthetic possibilities of the world's finest script. Masters whose whole tradition trained them to see the quality and expressiveness of abstract forms, could compose pages that the initiate find of almost hysterical beauty. Indeed, no sensitive observer can be indifferent to the lordly Kufic inscriptions of the early centuries or the powerful yet flexible marching rhythms of the later, more fluent Nashki, rendered in dazzling white on deepest blue, to form the friezes and string courses of so many monuments, a welcome variation from our hammock-like swags and other monotonous and perfunctory ornament.

In the realm of painting Persia served a long apprenticeship. The great palaces of the Sasanians were covered with frescoes on a huge scale, of which, however, but a few glowing shadows remain. It was in this long discipline of decorating the vast walls of the enormous hall in suitable array that the Persians learned their grand style and developed canons and principles of painting which, despite the prohibition of theologians, continued to mould taste and prac-

tice for many generations. Finally, with Persia's love of exquisite craftsmanship, this school of painting found perfect flowering in the jewel-like miniatures, there to set a world standard unapproached by all other effort. The best of the miniatures are masterpieces of decoration. Richly, multiple colors are applied in intricate and harmonious patterns, gratefully varied, with open spaces of azure sky or golden desert, concentrated clusters of brilliant clear pigments, gracious lines, and lively movement, yet stately and decorous, as becomes the Persian tradition at all times.

If this art sometimes smacks too much of secular luxury, of unemotional intensity, nonetheless when inspired by some great theme, the Persian painter often bursts the common bounds, and equipped with the wide resources of his craft and its great traditions, projects a masterpiece, blazing with feeling and emotion. Religious ecstasy, with all its gorgeous and historic excitement, has scarcely ever been more effectively expressed than by an early sixteenth century artist, Aga Mirek, when he made bold to portray the Prophet's ascent to Paradise (Page 23). Carried with even and steady flight through the ether by his faithful mythical horse, Buraq, the Prophet, in undeviating upward flight, breaks through the vast blue dome, sweeping onward, guided by the Archangel himself, surrounded by a swirling wreath of angels bearing gifts. He passes on into the Infinite. The flame-like halo has burst into a quivering mass of flame that mounts to the zenith. The stars glow brightly, while below the ceiling of bright clouds, far down the receding abyss, spins the diminished earth.

The Persian instinct for beauty expressed itself in many other ways and arts. It was limited only by the materials available and the opportunities they presented for use or enjoyment. But through all the arts of Iran ran the same theme, beauty of form for its own sake. They were almost all distinguished by the lucidity and precision that were as much a mark of the Persian as of the Greek mind, and which were never submerged however riotous the color or emotional the appeal. They were throughout guided by the most mature traditions, fashioned always with exemplary and conscientious skill, and strictly controlled by an exacting taste that imposed a characteristic integrity and decorum. Persian art had its experiments, extravagances, pretensions, and failures, but perhaps in some-

what less than the usual proportion, thanks to the simplicity of its ideals and their relevance to the culture which they so authoritatively expressed. It was indeed this highly distinctive culture that sustained Persian art through fifty centuries and gave it its special quality, for the greatness of Persian art comes largely from the fact that it has given permanent and living expression to a racial tradition of universal significance which has been an essential factor in world civilization, and whose validity and creative power are indispensable for the future.

PERSIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE

BY SIR E. DENISON ROSS

THE PURELY literary output of Persia, in the pre-Islamic period between the sixth century B.C. and the seventh century A.D., consisted primarily of the sacred books of the Zoroastrians, to which were added a few secular works. The sacred books included the Zend Avesta, the Gathas, and the later translations and commentaries on the Avesta. The secular literature was, first, narratives, of which the most famous was the lost translation from the Sanskrit of the Fables of Bidpai; and histories dealing with the exploits and adventures of the Sasanian kings, of which only a few examples have come down to us. All these were in the old Persian as written in the Pahlavi script, which is so difficult that it is little more than a code. The sacred books naturally had no influence on Islamic literature; the historical, however, were mainly responsible for Ferdawsi's great epic of the kings.

With the arrival of the conquering and proselytizing Arabs in Persia, Zoroastrian literature was supplanted by the Qur'an; and for a century or more the illiterate masses of Persia, to whom the clumsy Pahlavi script had been quite unintelligible, were brought face to face with a sacred book written not only in a practical alphabet, but also in a language actually spoken by those who taught it, so that the people as a whole were rapidly becoming literate. Not all the Persians accepted Islam, but the vast majority did, and thus, while Persian in its various dialects continued to be spoken throughout the country, the intelligentsia were learning Arabic. Indeed, many of the finest works in the Arabic language were written by Persians, so that in estimating the literature of Persia we must not consider only works in the Persian language. The great Avicenna, for example, who wrote in Arabic was Persian by birth. No evidence is forthcoming as to the first attempts made to write the Persian language with Arabic letters, but there are indications that this was done in the eighth century very shortly after the establishment of the Abbasid Caliphate at Baghdad.

The Persians originally took their verse forms and meters from the Arabs, but later added new forms and meters of their own. The Arabs had written mainly in the style known as the *Qasīda*, invented

by the desert people in pre-Islamic times, an ode or panegyric composed of a large number of couplets on one single rhyme. From this the Persians derived the *ghazal* or lyric, which does not usually run to more than ten or a dozen couplets. They also introduced for long narrative poems the *mathnavi* form, composed of rhyming couplets varying with each verse.

The earliest examples of Persian poetry which have come down to us are isolated poems of the lyrical type, and we do not reach really well-authenticated composition until the rule of the Sasanids in Bukhara, which was the center of a real nationalist revival in the tenth century, and saw the full development of the new Persian language, written in the Arabic alphabet and containing an enormous quantity of Arabic loan words.

The blind poet Rudāki, in addition to panegyric and odes which had for their model the *qasīda*, also produced the first poem in the *mathnavi* or epic style, setting a model which was later followed by many of the greatest poets of Persia. Rudāki's *mathnavi* was a rendering in rhymed couplets of the Arabic translation by Ibn Muqaffa' of the *Kalīla and Dimna* book of fables. Unfortunately only isolated verses of this work have come down to us by quotations in dictionaries and elsewhere, for the book itself has unaccountably disappeared.

The next poet of importance to compose in this style was Daqīqī (tenth century), a professed Zoroastrian, who had begun to write an Epic of the Kings of Persia, when his life was brought to an untimely end by the hand of an assassin. This Epic was next taken up by the greatest poet of the court of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna (eleventh century), Firdawsi, who lived to complete in sixty thousand verses his famous *Shahnama* or Book of Kings, which is one of the most valuable documents in the modern Persian language. It was possibly due to the fame of this work, which was so essentially nationalistic in character, that the *Kalīla and Dimna* of Rudāki, which was non-Persian in origin, sank into comparative oblivion. Since Firdawsi, as it were, exhausted the materials of the heroic age, only a few writers after him attempted to treat of the early kings. He himself turned to the romantic epic in *mathnavi* form in his *Yusuf and Zalaykha*, and set a model which was to be copied and surpassed by later poets like Nizāmi and Jāmi. It was this style



THE ASCENT OF MUHAMMAD TO HEAVEN
 Sixteenth Century
 (British Museum, London)

of composition which proved most attractive to the great painters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The range of topics dealt with by the *mathnavi* writers is strictly limited. It was no part of a poet's ambition to discover new subjects. His business was to give a perfect setting to a familiar story, very much as the religious artists of Europe seldom went outside a limited number of stereotyped subjects, to which they gave the impress of their style without any attempt to treat their subject in an original way. The favorite themes were the story of Joseph as told in the Qur'an, the story of the Loves of Layla and Majnun, and of Khusrau and Shirin as told in the *Shahnama*, and the fabulous adventures of Alexander the Great.

It is not, however, in the *mathnavi* that we must look for the chief beauties of Persian poetry, but in the *ghazal* or love-lyric, in which the great Hafiz of Shiraz (fourteenth-fifteenth centuries) reigns supreme. Persia is the land of poetry, and the number of poets who have left behind them large volumes of *qāsidās*, *ghazals*, and *rubāiyat* is very great. These volumes of collected poems are known as *dīvāns*, and in them each type of verse-form is arranged alphabetically according to the rhyme.

Persian prose is mainly confined to history, though there are one or two works of *belles lettres* which are of outstanding excellence, notably the *Chahār Maqāla* or the Four Discourses, of Nizami Aruzi (twelfth century), which contains anecdotes regarding poets, astronomers, doctors, and state officials; and the *Siyāsat-nāma* or Book of Government by Nizām ul-Mulk (twelfth century), the great prime minister of the Seljuks. Both these are models of simple style and clear thinking. For works on theology, philosophy, and science the Persians employed the Arabic language, but many Persian writers, including Sa'di, the poet, wrote in both.

The histories are of two kinds, those in which the author's sole object is the recording of events in the form of uncritical chronicles, and those in which the author regards the recording of events as of secondary importance to the display of his own gifts of rhetoric. The truth is that the Persian language, which owing to the simplicity of its grammar and syntax, lends itself to the most lucid and concise treatment, was at an early stage in its history converted into an instrument of mental torture for the

reader by prose writers whose whole aim was to exhibit their knowledge of the Qur'ān and of the Arabic language. Thus, for example, one of the most important histories of the Mongols, known after its author's name as the *History of Vassāf*, while it contains the most valuable and accurate information regarding the history of Persia during the thirteenth century, is so over-charged with rhetorical phraseology and irrelevant passages in Arabic as to render it almost unserviceable. This style commanded such admiration and respect among the intelligentsia that it came to be the model both for histories and for correspondence, especially among the Indian Muslims. The great history of the Emperor Akbar by his trusted minister, Abul Fazl, is written throughout in this fantastic manner. In Persia this style is no longer admired and modern authors aim at simplicity of form, while there is a tendency to replace Arabic loan words by old Persian words which had fallen into disuse. Nevertheless, the influence of the high-flown style has survived in the conventional phraseology of private letters, which usually begin with meaningless expressions by way of introduction, acknowledgment of letters received and inquiries after health.

The influence of Persian literature on that of the other Muslim languages, except on Arabic, from which, as we have seen, the Persians themselves derived their verse forms, meter and rhymes, has been overwhelming. It is most noticeable in the case of the Ottoman Turks, who imitated the Persian poets and prose writers with slavish fidelity, in spite of the utter dissimilarity of the Persian and the Turkish languages. It never occurred to any Turkish poet to break away from this self-imposed tutelage till the middle of the nineteenth century, when a first step was taken by writers who attempted to compromise between French and Persian models. As is well known, the last few years have seen a wholesale break-away from all the old traditions, so that there is rapidly being formed a Turkish style, freed from all the old bonds of exotic Arabo-Persian culture.

A similar influence was exercised by Persia on the poetry and prose of the Urdu language, but in this case there is less excuse for any radical change, since this language would never have existed in upper India except for Persian, and it owes its entire literature to purely Persian models. On the other hand, Persia's contribution to the literature of the West has been slight compared to that in

the fine arts. Only three of her poets have attained to anything like world fame,—Omar Khayyām (twelfth century), Sa'di (thirteenth century), and Hafiz (fourteenth century). Of the great European poets, Goethe and Rückert were the first to appreciate the beauties of Persian poetry, which in England found its interpreters in Thomas Moore, Matthew Arnold, and Edward FitzGerald. The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyām, which in Persia itself was more or less ignored for centuries, has by the inspired renderings of FitzGerald done more to make Persian literature known to the West than any other work. The reason is not far to seek, for the whole essence of the Persian lyric lies in its harmonious choice of words and its musical meters, neither of which can be reproduced in any Western language, while the subject matter is so conventional and its metaphors so highly stylized that they can appeal only to one versed in the traditions of the country. The Rubayi differs from all other Persian verse not only in form but also in contents, so that it is universal in its appeal. It concentrates on one particular thought, and is bound by no conventions other than those of meter and rhyme, and thus it is readily translatable into other languages, though it required the genius of a FitzGerald to make so faithful a rendering into an English classic.

Many attempts have been made to render some of the lyrics of Hafiz into English, and the complete *divān* was admirably rendered into German verse by Rosenzweig-Schwannau. Of the English renderings the most successful in conveying the meaning of the originals are those of Miss Gertrude Bell, although she made no attempt to imitate the Persian meters or rhymes.

Of Sa'di's *Gulistan* several translations have appeared in English, but this most delightful collection of anecdotes in mixed prose and verse by one of the most gifted sons of Persia has never received that measure of appreciation in the West which it certainly deserves.

The following translation of a lyric by the poet Jami (fifteenth century) offers a typical example of the Persian *ghazal*. It also illustrates a form of rhyme much favored by the Persian poets, in which the actual rhyming words are followed throughout by a repeated phrase. It was the rule for the poet to introduce his own name at the conclusion of a *ghazal*.

AN ODE OF JAMI

Translated in the Persian Form and Measure
by Sir William Jones (d. 1794)

How sweet the gale of morning breathes!
Sweet news of my delight he brings;
Now that the rose will soon approach
The tuneful bird of night he brings.
Soon will a thousand parted souls
Be led his captives through the sky,
Since tidings, which in every heart
Must ardent flames excite, he brings.
Late near my charmer's flowing robe
He pass'd, and kissed the fragrant hem;
Thence, odour to the rose-bud's veil,
And jasmine's mantle white, he brings.
Painful is absence and that pain,
To some base rival oft is owed;
Thou knowest, dear maid! when to thine ear
False tales contrived in spite, he brings.
Why should I trace love's mazy path,
Since destiny my bliss forbids?
Black destiny! my lot is woe,
To me no ray of light he brings.
In vain a friend his mind disturbs,
In vain a childish trouble gives,
When sage physician to the couch,
Of heartsick love-lorn wight, he brings.
A roving stranger in thy town
No guidance can sad Jami find,
Till this his name, and rambling lay
To thine all-piercing sight he brings.

PERSIAN PAINTING

BY LAURENCE BINYON

PERSIAN painting is unlike any other pictorial art in the world, and the pleasure it gives is unique in its kind. It is still very little known. The splendid exhibition in London in 1931 was an opportunity that rarely comes; it was to many a revelation. The reason why it is so little known is that the great majority of the finest paintings are in manuscripts, hidden away in libraries; and their small scale gives them a great disadvantage compared with paintings on the walls of a gallery, which attract even the casual gaze.¹ If some of the Persian miniatures were enlarged to fresco size they would be famous throughout the world for their great qualities of color and design. As it is, even students of art are prone to judge the Persian painter by average specimens, which are indeed distinguished for their decorative virtues but reveal nothing of the scope and splendor of the masters.

The first impression received from a superficial acquaintance with the miniatures is of an art exquisitely sensuous, refined in color, delicate in line, with an inclination to the softly voluptuous. This is true perhaps of Persian painting after it has passed its meridian in the sixteenth century. It is always sensuous, certainly always supremely decorative. But even where, at first blush, it seems to be nothing more, it often conceals a deep and rare emotion. A large part of Persian poetry is saturated with mysticism, using the language of the lover or the symbol of the wine-cup to shadow forth the inexpressible joys of the soul's desire for the divine and its union with God. A like ecstasy will inspire paintings

¹There is, however, a collection of facsimiles of mural paintings, made with conscientious accuracy and exquisite sympathy by a Persian painter, Sarkis Katchadourian, now touring American museums under the auspices of the American Institute for Persian Art and Archaeology. The originals are largely from the reign of Shah Abbas and principally from his palace of the Ali Kapu in Isfahan, a period which, Mr. Binyon says, represented a stage in the art's decline. And to be sure they do not show the purity, intensity, and rarefied elevation of the great miniatures of two or three centuries before. Nor, indeed, would these qualities be relevant to their purpose and their themes, for these were the decorations of a pleasure palace, and in keeping with that end they convey a happy, if somewhat languid charm, an accomplished sophistication, and a sensuous attraction, embodied in exquisitely evanescent colors and palpable rhythms, which make them unique in the history of painting.—Ed.

where lovers commune or sages meditate in gardens where the scented blossoms of spring hang radiant against a sky of profound blue, and streams ripple through verdure to water the roots of iris and narcissus, scenes of magical beauty in which the miracle of the spring's unfolding seems to be shared by the human mind. No other art has the secret of quite the same ecstasy of the senses, attuned to a consciousness of the oneness of the universe.

Then, again, if we turn to the paintings of the fifteenth century, the era of the greatest masterpieces, as yet so little known, we find other and very different elements from the luxurious refinement of later time. Here there is a splendid energy and an extraordinary gift of dramatic design. True, the drama is expressed by other means than those familiar in western art. Emotion is rarely expressed in the faces of the personages; these are impassive; but in the relation of the figures to one another, and of the figures to the background, nay, even in the juxtaposition of the colors, there is a dramatic element which thrills. This sense for drama runs through the whole tradition from early times, combined with the incomparable sense for color-design which is in the very genius of Iran. In a Persian painting the color has an almost intoxicating effect: not only are the pigments choice and pure, a delight in themselves, but the elimination of shadow gives them a clearness unparalleled in European art. The notes of color are not, as in Chinese painting, foiled by spaces of low-toned silk or paper, but the whole field is covered, the brightest colors used, yet never is there garishness or extravagance. We seem to be in a world where every object seen has become precious to the sight.

The imagination of the Persians is romantic. They delight in the superlative beauty of their heroines, in the fabulous exploits of their heroes; they eagerly accept the incredible. A large proportion of the miniatures consists of illustrations to the *Shah Namah*, the Book of the Kings, Firdausi's enormous national epic; and here we have endless combats against backgrounds of strange rocks or forests, castles on insuperable precipices, the slaying of dragons or ogres on flame-colored crags or in fantastic caverns. Another inexhaustible source of pictorial motive is the *Five Poems of Nizami*: the loves of Majnun and Layla in deserts of burning gold, the loves of Khusrau and Shirin, Bahram the Hunter pursuing the

lion and the wild ass. In scenes of the chase the animal painting is superb.

Persian painting grows from no simple continuous tradition. Mesopotamian art, the work of men of various races working for Arab patrons, is one of its roots; the Mongol invasions brought Persia into contact with Chinese art, but scant as the documents are, owing to unheard-of destruction, we cannot believe that the old traditions of the Persian race were wholly submerged by the domination of Islam. At any rate, before the end of the fourteenth century, the Persian style, in all essentials, and with its own unique character, was fully formed. Then with the fifteenth century comes a growing refinement of execution, a greater range and deeper glow of color, a subtler complexity of design, especially at the Court of Herat, but also in other centers. Bihzad, the most famous of the Persian painters, is the chief glory of the later part of the century, but there were others who nearly rivaled him. With the Safavid dynasty, in the sixteenth century, pupils of Bihzad and his successors produced at Tabriz pages of a sumptuousness of splendor that is simply dazzling, yet full of energy in all their grace. Now, and later, line drawings become more frequent, and the Persian line is as unique as is the Persian color. Calligraphic, in the sense that it communicates the artist's joy in the beautiful line for its own sake, the drawings nevertheless in the hands of the masters are equally expressive of the form within the line. Without the vehemence of the brush-stroke of the Chinese and Japanese, their line in its even purity and sensitiveness yields a peculiar thrill.

The independent small painting now becomes more common. These naturally are better known than the miniatures in the manuscripts. But let no one suppose that in the animated and graceful drawings of Riza Abbasi and his school, or even in the earlier sixteenth century paintings of lovers, pages, falconers, and similar groups or single figures, ravishing in color though they may be, the real power of the Persian genius is revealed. Envious are those for whom that revelation still waits: they will enter a world of strange enchantment.

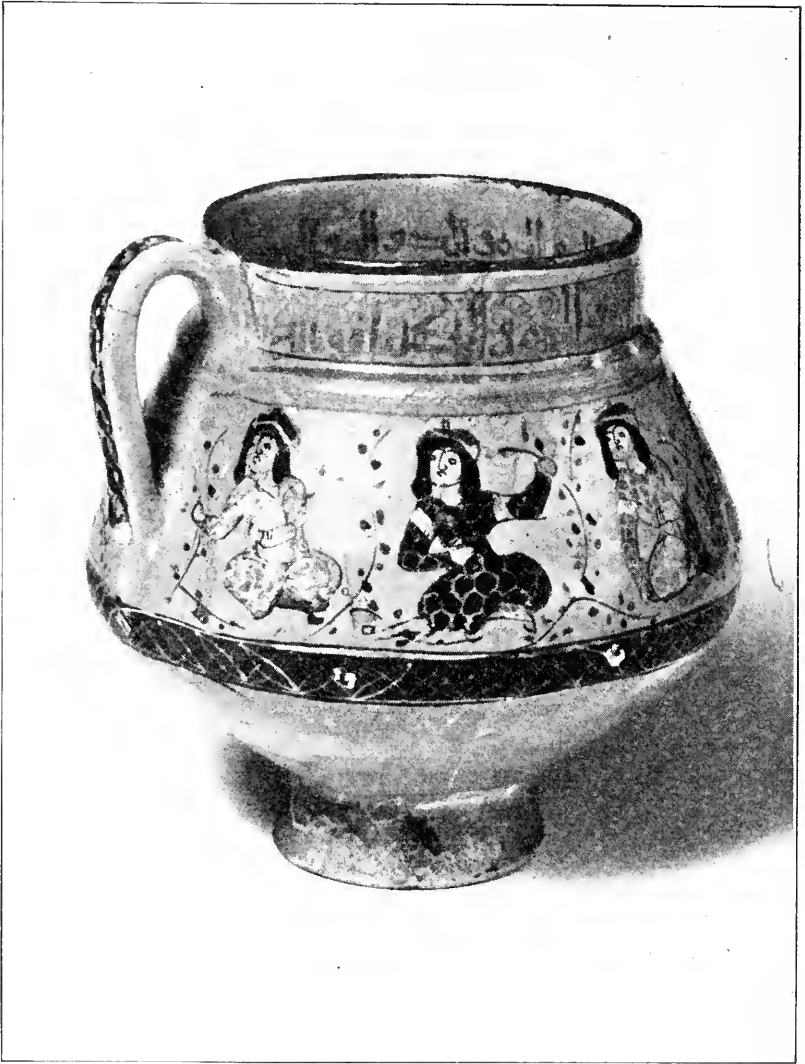
THE POTTER'S ART IN PERSIA

BY ARTHUR UPHAM POPE

ONE SOURCE of the richness and soundness of Persian art is the numerous, varied, and continued contacts with other and contrasting cultures. On all sides Persia exchanged artistic ideas and methods. Assyria, Egypt, Greece, Byzantium, India, and China all both contributed to and profited by the achievements of Persia, including the accomplishments of her potters. With China there was mutual sympathy and admiration, so that the exchange was particularly cordial and advantageous, especially in painting and faience. In Parthian times Persia instructed China in the use of green and blue glazes, and later received back the gift with interest in the beautiful T'ang splash glazes. Probably powder blue and certainly the reticulated technique, that marvel of craftsmanship whereby an elaborate pierced outer shell is closed over a plain under body, were borrowed by the Ming potters from Persian masters of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The grains of rice pattern, as Hobson has shown¹ was another much appreciated gift of Persia, as well as a series of animal-headed ewers. On the other hand, the Chinese had already in the ninth century taught the Persians the beauty of simple shapes and monochromes in the T'ing style, and again in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Chinese ceramic fashions enriched Persian faience with a number of important elements, while in the seventeenth century a crowd of Chinese potters were brought to Persia to expound to adept pupils the art of blue and white. But all that Persia borrowed, even in these fields, was promptly and thoroughly fused with the national style, so that it became a true expression of her own artistic individuality. In general, foreign elements did not linger on in Persian art, but were speedily absorbed or rejected. It could not be otherwise with an art of such dominant personality, in which consistency and integrity counted for so much.

There were at work in Persia none of the sacerdotal and ceremonial motives that played such an important part in the creation of fine vessels in Greece, China, and in medieval Europe. But art

¹In his article on the relation between Chinese and Persian ceramics, in the forthcoming *Survey of Persian Art*, Oxford University Press.



CUP OF PAINTED EARTHENWARE
Rayy, Twelfth Century
(Collection of Mrs. John D. McIlhenny, Philadelphia)

and life were never separated in Persia; there was no distinction between fine and applied, major and minor arts, so that the variety of purposes for which the vessels were created and their intimate dependence on the every-day life may have been a source of artistic integrity. Moreover, the Persian potters succeeded to an ancient heritage of dignified and expressive contours which dated back at least to the polished gray earthenware of the second millenium B.C. Thus the Asterabad finds, which Dr. Wulsin dates around 2000 B.C., yielded many flasks, ewers, and goblets of this kind, some of surprisingly powerful shapes, others of extraordinary elegance, all decisive and robust. And finally, since fine taste, a passion for perfection, and a belief in the naturalness and importance of beauty were taken for granted, artistic achievement of a high order was inevitable.

The glazes were numerous both in color and nuance, although there was no such play for variety, meticulous finish, or technical stunts that surprise and delight us in Chinese porcelains. Whether the Persian potters were aware or not of such possibilities, their less pretentious finishes certainly fit the easy, unassuming contours and decoration more perfectly than would any distracting display of virtuosity.

With characteristic Persian reticence, some of the tenth century bowls are quite plain in color and decorated only with shallow incised designs, but these are so finely wrought, so ingeniously varied, with static and moving patterns so perfectly balanced, that it would seem almost impossible to have created such a delightful fantasy out of a mere web of shadows. Other medieval wares, on the contrary, were painted by the leading artists of the day. Here gay cavaliers, enthroned princes, scenes from the *Shah Nameh*, are scattered with an adroit hand in such an easy and casual style that they seem almost by happy chance to have fallen into exactly the correct position and the most engaging rhythms (Page 32). This type was produced especially at Rayy and Saveh. Luster, too, was carried to its highest perfection by the artist potters of Persia, especially of Kashan and Rayy, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the well-preserved pieces a richly textured pattern of figures is lit up by a flickering fire of elusive reflections, one of the marvels of the potter's art.

Persian faience is by no means limited to the delicate and evanescent, however. In early Islamic times, particularly in western Persia, we find a series of vessels, mostly bowls and pitchers, in glowing emerald green, or unctuous brown glazes, of robust and sometimes bizarre designs (Page 35). The patterns, which are bold almost to coarseness, are usually reserved against a dark ground. The gleam of the rich glazes, the sheer force and sincerity of the drawing, the dignity and beauty of the ornamental inscriptions, have commended these wares to a large group of connoisseurs who prefer virility to prettiness and who find solid satisfaction in their forthright affirmative character. These and certain other contemporary provincial products of the ninth to the eighteenth centuries, from Garous and Yazkand, in the west, to Amul and Sari in the northwest, for a long while were known by the name "*Guebre*," which means *Fire Worshipper*, on the mistaken theory that since these vessels were ornamented with men and animals, often quite close to the Sasanian tradition, they must be the work of Zoroastrian communities, surviving despite the dominion of Islam. The theory was only a bad guess, as Koranic inscriptions prove.

Still another important ceramic production are the jars big enough to hide one of Ali Baba's thieves, used for wine, oil, water, or millet, but decorated with as much care and affection as if meant only for contemplation and enjoyment. Of lapis, cobalt, or turquoise glaze, or clive or golden luster, or more rarely, in the early periods, covered with delicately streaked glazes of brown and green, these jars were always of dignified, often monumental, form, sometimes with a perfectly smooth surface and quite plain, sometimes with a lightly indicated network of compartments filled with cunningly drawn men, beasts, or birds, or more often with subtly contrasted horizontal zones in which geometric ornaments, a wealth of arabesque or plant motives, running animals or polo games, all in relief, alternate rhythmically. Usually the top is encircled by bands of majestic Kufic inscriptions.

Meanwhile the potter's skill had also been put to the service of the architects. The same brilliant but subtle lusters that were applied to plates and jars were being used also on tiles to surface both exterior and interior walls. In the more massive style part of the design, usually boldly rendered inscriptions in handsome



POTTERY BOWL.

Probably from Amul, Tenth Eleventh Century
(Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Sam A. Lewisohn, New York)

calligraphy, is modeled in relief, and this often is glazed with lapis or turquoise, the luster enriching the background in an intricate pattern of foliate scrolls which functions less as a linear ornament than as a device for giving modulation to the shimmering gold. In a more intimate style the tiles are shaped alternately in stars and crosses that fit together in a firm but varied reticulation, the crosses more simply decorated with conventional motives, the stars usually carrying more elaborate illustrations of animals or birds or even personages. Sometimes in these the gold is suddenly splashed with a thin bright turquoise.

A little later the most remarkable and characteristically Persian adaptation of ceramics to architecture appears, the mosaic faience, each color of tile fired separately at the temperature that assures the utmost vividness, then all cut with unfaltering dexterity into the intricate shapes required by an elaborate floral design. Of all the buildings in Persia covered in this magnificent type of revetment, the Mosque of Gauhar Shad at Mashad must, for beauty of color, be given supreme rank. Built in 1418 at a time when the art of the book was approaching its zenith, it reflects in its ornament the skill and taste of the great illuminators, but in no mincing way. The Persians' love of grandeur, their skill in handling large forms, served them well here, so that although each panel seems inexhaustible in richness, the patterns are all bold and strong. Those of the vaults, which are in green and white or red and white, are colossal in scale, while mouldings, parapets, and all defining lines are broadly emphasized, giving this vision glory, substance, permanence, authority.

In the seventeenth century the repertoire of architectural faience was still further expanded with a kind of polychrome painted tile, illustrative designs with rather large scale figures or, in the mosques, semi-realistic floral inventions, in several colors in a ground usually of yellow, or less often of blue or *café au lait*, or sometimes white. The palaces of Shah Abbas were liberally embellished with these, so that many examples remain. A few, the work of miniaturists of the school of Riza Abbasi, have an elegantly graceful, if somewhat languid charm.

But delightful as these tiles may sometimes be, the great period of the potter's art was definitely passed. Blue and white and cela-

don adapted to the current fashion for things Chinese were produced in quantities and with considerable skill, though even at their best they cannot rival the originals. More successful are the purely national developments, especially a type of polychrome painted wares with figures or flowers easily brushed in with a characteristic nonchalance. This ware, incidentally, has had an odd historical fate, for it was discovered by European connoisseurs in the nineteenth century in quantities in a remote village of the Caucasus so that for some years it was supposed to have been made there and was called Kubachi faience. Now, however, it is known that it reached there merely in the course of trade but was truly Persian, made in large part in the vicinity of Isfahan.

In the eighteenth century Persia was so distracted by war, internal disorder, and poverty that all of her finer arts deteriorated. Yet the skill of the potter is still there, his deftness, his certainty, his traditional knowledge of the medium. With a recovery of her native sense for spirited design, Persia may again take the lead in the ceramic arts.

THE FINE FABRICS OF PERSIA

BY PHYLLIS ACKERMAN

WHEN self-consciousness reaches the level of self-esteem, in children or in savages, and indeed even before they are specifically aware of pride, they must dress up. Shiny new shoes for the one, daubs of colored mud on naked flesh for the other, and they feel themselves enhanced and exhilarated. But the time comes when these no longer suffice to titillate vanity, and then fine weaving begins, a stage reached by the ancient Orientals long before the dawn of history, so that in the earliest matured civilization that has yet been found, that of Sumer, clothes were already very elaborate. Those ladies in waiting who went so pitifully to their death in attendance on Queen Shubab, put on their most ceremonial costumes for the hoped-for trip to a better world beyond, bright red dresses of fine wool trimmed with blue beads.

Fine feathers were perhaps not sufficient to make fine birds, but fine birds had to have fine feathers, a principle that never lapsed in the East until modern times. Wealth, honor, authority, any special distinction, were signalized in handsome raiment, and especially the king and his court were marked as a class apart by the beauty of their clothes. Usually in the earlier states, including Sumer, important looms were a temple prerogative, but later, as the bonds of theocracy began to relax so that ruler and priest were less closely related, they became rather a service of the court and so they remained, in spite of growing competition from private enterprise, well down into our era. Thus the most prized silks of Byzantium were those from the government gynecæa and legal restrictions not only assured to them the sole right to produce certain types, but also prohibited the wearing of the most sumptuous purple patterns by any but those of the emperor's personal entourage.

For centuries fine clothes depended for their gorgeousness on color and encrusted ornament. Bright, clear, persistent dyes, extracted with cunning and patience from plants, minerals, and occasionally animal bodies, notably the red of cochineal and the violet of various species of *Murex*, were devised one after another and never forgotten by the color-loving East, until the shoddy fa-

cility of western chemistry, in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, all but obliterated tradition. The brilliance thus won was, also from a very early date, made more dazzling still by the application of beads, like those on the dresses of the court ladies of Ur, of faience or of semi-precious stones, or of plaques or other motives of wrought metal, in the most elegant examples of gold. The jeweler was a subsidiary of the textile art. Later, with developing craftsmanship these plaques or bracteates were filigreed, enameled and jeweled, exquisite and precious things that put to shame their modern descendants, the beaded or spangled evening gowns that reappear, every so often, in the mode.

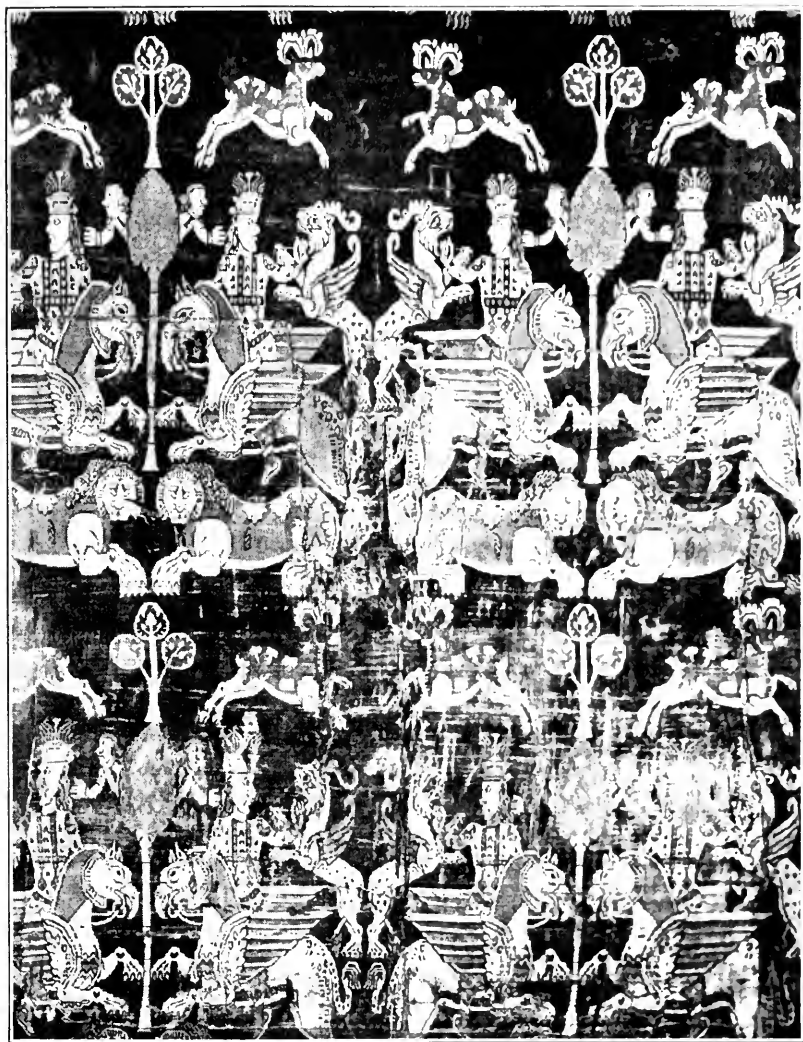
From applying patterns in beads and bits of colored stone, to applying them only with colored thread, which is embroidery, is but a short logical step, but when and how it happened is lost in pre-history. Nor are we better informed on the next logical advance after that, the rendering of the designs directly into the stuff itself while it was still in process on the loom. The fashionable ladies of Crete of the second millenium in some of the Minoan frescoes uncovered by Sir Arthur Evans had handsome patterns on their gowns, birds, griffons, and other elaborate motives, but whether they were embroidered or actually woven, or if so, how, we cannot even surmise. Homer's Helen, however, was already weaving illustrative designs in two colors in a "double web," and another type of pattern weaving, tapestry, appears at about the same time in costume fabrics from Egyptian graves.

Just what Persia was doing in textiles through these remote ages we do not know, though perhaps we still shall, for expeditions now working there to fill the great gap in our archaeological knowledge of Iran, notably that at Damghan, are making such numerous and varied discoveries that we may yet have clues to the early textile art. Traces of fabrics at Susa have been only plain cloth and from these to Achaemenian times there is a total blank. Nor indeed do we come to much more satisfactory evidence even at this period, for we have only a few representations of patterned costumes, the most important, the white robes of the guard at Susa as rendered in enameled bricks, with two colored rosettes or square jewel motives in even rows that suggest, but by no means prove, a woven rendition.

But when fine weaving does definitely emerge in Persia, it is

marked with great prestige. The Sasanian textiles in both silk and wool were prized by their contemporaries and their fame endured, to be revived with enthusiasm and the tribute of high prices in our own day; and this, in spite of the fact that it is difficult almost to the point of impossibility to prove that any existing silk is actually Sasanian and not a foreign or subsequent adaptation of the much imitated style. At the best there are but a scant dozen examples for which the claim can be reasonably well supported, but these and representatives of other, related designs in other media in the contemporary Persian arts, especially in the rock reliefs of Taq-i-Bustan show an impressive style of really imperial authority in which dignity takes precedence over grace, but decorative richness is achieved by the embellishment in abstract form of the details. It is a style directly derivative from the Achaemenian tradition, repeating, with a perfect command of technique though in a very limited color range, the very forms even to details that the Achaemenians also had worn on their costumes, but rendered then by the jeweler's art, for the typical Sasanian patterns, most often rondels enclosing rosettes, or more characteristically an animal in hieratic pose, are but the earlier bracteates embedded now in the weave.

Almost half a millenium lapses again before there is further actual evidence of Persia's textile skill, though in the interval many travelers bear witness to the reputation of various cities for different fabrics whose character we cannot even guess. But the next silks that we have fully support in their elegance of design and finesse of technique the most laudatory accounts. Thus in the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia, which has by far the largest and most important group of these silks, there is a complete tomb cover in lavender and white, with a composition of lozenges framed by bands of running animals and enclosing in alternate horizontal stripes floriated scrolls that resolve into four trefoils, and finer floriated scrolls against which are displayed confronted ibex bearing honoric inscriptions. An interesting, all-white piece in the collection of Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss has an illustration of the ancient Eastern myth of Ectana who, anticipating aviation, attempted to reach the Heavens borne by an eagle. The eagle, heraldically displayed, enfolds a prince who is protected by a guardian griffon set on either wing and below lions rampant, while underneath



SILK TISSUE

Sixth Seventh Century

In each design, two kings are represented riding winged griffins,
between them a sacred tree.

(Schlossmuseum, Berlin)

runs a line of stately Kufic. This intricate repeat is rendered in a weave, a double cloth in two qualities of texture, which while technically quite unlike damask, achieves essentially the same aesthetic effect. Again, in the collection of Mrs. William H. Moore there is a lead-blue satin with double-headed eagles against scrolling vines, drawn with an austerity which is yet tempered with grace, which makes the double-headed eagle textiles of Byzantium seem clumsy and obvious. All these silks are probably of the eleventh century.

One tapestry also has survived from this time, a striking and handsome presentation in red and yellow on a blue-green ground of the ancient Eastern theme of struggle between the forces of good, a human-headed lion, crowned, and evil, in the vivid personification of a hissing, flaming, horned snake.

Again there follows another persistent vacuum with only tantalizing references in the geographical and travel literature to the richness and productivity of Persian looms, until in the sixteenth century examples again begin to appear, forming from now on a continuous series, increasing in quantity and variety until in the eighteenth century economic and political decadence entail the industry's ruin. The supreme products of the sixteenth century are velvets and one tapestry. The velvets, almost incredible miracles of digital skill, which is quite matched by the vigorous but finished draftsmanship of the design, show either conventional floral motives or, in the still more complex patterns, of which the finest example is in the Boston Museum of Art, illustrative scenes, in this case active episodes of the hunt. The tapestry, which is in the collection of Mrs. William H. Moore (Page 48), likewise is dedicated to the hunt, a splendid miniature translated into silk, creating the ideal tapestry design, a broad mosaic of expressive silhouettes in well-adjusted contrasts of fresh and beautiful tones, whereby the maximum decorative effect is achieved without sacrifice of verisimilitude.

It is in this century too that the one great name associated with Persian textile art appears, that of Ghyath, whose contemporary fame is attested in a document discovered by Sir Denison Ross, and who has left his signature on several existing examples, including a velvet in the Kelekian Collection, a satin illustrating the popular story of Laila, pieces of which are in a number of museums, and, technically the outstanding piece, a compartment design also in the

collection of Mrs. William H. Moore, in rose, white, and green, with every possible permutation in the weave, and a beautifully drawn design of figures and animals.

With the succession of the great Shah Abbas, the textile art reached its peak of magnificence and such an enormous scale of productivity that many examples are left to us. Of these, the handsomest are the gold and silver ground fabrics, a solid surface of metal in which are embedded patterns of flowering bushes flanked by graceful deer and brilliant birds. But there are less ostentatious accomplishments of subtler merits: a dark blue, soft taffeta, for example, in the Textile Museum of the District of Columbia, with a group of running deer in white and yellow worked in long floats in a flossy silk, bound in varied patterns, with much of the quality of embroidery. Indeed, the repertory is endless, in technique, in designs, and above all, in color which ranges from vivid lacquer red, through every value of the spectrum tones, to almost impalpable variations of elusive neutrals, compounds of violet, gray, and beige.

Within the last few years the present Shah, Riza Pahlevi, with the praiseworthy intent of complementing his great administrative accomplishments with a contribution to Persia's long history in the arts, has attempted to revive the ancient practice of supporting court looms. To this end, and also to further more general aspects of the textile industry, a search was made, first for dyers versed in the old art, and second for weavers. A patient search, especially among remoter groups, has yielded the recipes for many dyes, but still some of the fine tones, notably some of the turquoise and cerulean, that are especially beautiful in the Moore tapestry, are unobtainable. The canvas for weavers was even less successful. The ablest that could be found falls far short of even the simpler accomplishments of his predecessors, and the splendid personage designs are quite beyond the possibility of reproduction. The ingenuity of engineers in this as in so many things has given us quantity and cheap production. But the final price is high, the destruction of an art.

THE ROLE OF IRAN IN THE HISTORY OF ASIA

BY RÉNÉ GROUSSET

ASIA is divided both historically and geographically into two distinct areas, the Near East and, on the other hand, India and the Far East. Separating them is a formidable barrier of deserts and mountains. India and the Far East are connected by their common orientation toward the Southern Ocean, the ports of Indo-China and the oasis of Serindia, the continental Indo-China, avenues of communication which have helped to maintain constant relations between the two, of which the most striking evidence is the spread of Buddhism. The Near East, on the contrary, with the Mesopotamian hinterland, looks to the West, toward the Mediterranean, as is clear from the diffusion of Alexandrianism and, later, of Islam, not to mention the earlier, Aegean-Asiatic connections.

The link between these two contrasted Orients is Iran, a bridge thrown by nature, in the Myocene period, across the ancient sea of Central Asia or Thētis, joining providentially the Mediterranean countries, the Mesopotamian region and Asia Minor, on the one hand, to the compact area of Turania, India, and Yellow Asia Major, on the other. Thus Iran, the true Middle Kingdom of the Ancient World, is an historical pivot.

This fact becomes evident even in pre-historic times. The latest archaeological discoveries have revealed a series of Eneolithic centers all around the periphery of Iran, distinguished by an admirable painted pottery at Harappa, and Mohenjo Daro in the Indus Valley in the pre-Aryan period: at Nal in Beluchistan; at Anau on the frontier of Russian Turkestan and Khorassan, not to mention the sites found earlier at Susa and in the Transcaucasus region (Page 5). Seals from pre-Aryan India that can be dated accurately between 2500-2200 B.C. found in Chaldea by the Watelin Expedition show that even then continuous cultural relations were maintained between India and Sumer by way of Iran. It was a question whether the Iranian plateau also had had a part in the Mesopotamian-Susa culture, the influence of which was felt even into pre-Aryan India, as the style of cutting in the Mohenjo Daro seals shows; but the excavations of Dr. Contenau at Nihavand in 1932 provided the answer, for an important style of pottery was found which had

relations to both Susa I and Susa II.¹ The pre-Aryan Iran must have been a kind of *Susiana Major* with Susa itself, Anau, Harappa, and Mohenjo Daro perhaps only outlying extensions, and its influence must have been felt even in China, judging from the painted pottery recently found in Ho-nan and Kan-suh by the Swedish expedition directed by Professor Andersson and Professor Arne.

When the Indo-Iranians migrated from the Russian steppes, first into Iran, between 2000 and 1500 B.C., and then into India, between 1500 and 1000 B.C., the "focal" rôle of Iran became both more specific and of wider import.

The Iranians made their first historical appearance in Asia in the Mitanni Empire, about 1500 B.C., Iranian in the names of its aristocracy, and in religion as well, the Mithra cult. This empire was connected with the great Pharaohs of Egypt of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and these two, the Mitanni and the Pharaohs, were responsible for keeping the Orient on an even keel. About this same time (1760-1185) Babylon had been conquered by the Kassites, who had come down from the mountains of Luristan, another people under the rule of an Iranian aristocracy.

This is the racial group who seem to have been responsible for the admirable "Luristan bronzes" recently discovered. These show a style in which new vigor is infused into animal motives that had already been heraldically conventionalized in Susa and Chaldea, a bolder, freer rendition which is both realistic and synthetic and is strikingly individual. This animal art of Luristan, the first Iranian art known, was evidently carried by the Kassites of Luristan to their near neighbors, the Medes of Ecbatana (Hamadan) and Rayy, and still further, beyond these Iranians who had become sedentary population, to the Iranians who were still barbarian and nomadic, up in the Great North, the "Scyths" of the Russian and Turkestan steppes. The Scyth domination of Medea dates from 633 to 615 B.C. Indeed, the animal art of the Scythian bronzes borrows its basic motives from Luristan, adapting them to a more barbaric conception. Thus the Luristan ibex, and all the other members of the goat tribe, to which is now added also the horse of the plains, are contorted in a dramatic struggle with the great cats, which also

¹Susa I being the earlier, Susa II, the subsequent, but related, style of pottery found by the French Expedition at Susa. The question has been even more strikingly and conclusively answered by discoveries of the American expedition at Damghan, soon to be published.—Ed.

came from Luristan, but were endowed by the Scyths with a more violent ferocity. In place of the symmetrical confrontation of Luristan, which becomes rather meager, these northern nomads invent a complex interplay of muscles which are encrusted, indeed smothered, with a flamboyant elaboration of minor details wrought like jewelry.

Thus at the dawn of history, the "Scythic" world, nomadic populations of Scyths, Sarmathians, and Sacians who covered the whole of the area that is today Southern Russia, Russian Turkestan, and part of Chinese Turkestan, was like a vast Outer Iran, producing a variant of the Iranian style, which was carried still further east to determine the art of Siberia and of the Huns, thereby exerting a great influence on the Chinese art of the Han dynasty.

While the first great wave of Iranian influence was spreading out in this way to the northeast through the nomadic Iranians of the steppes, the settled Iranian populations to the west, in Iran proper, under the Persian dynasty of the Achaemenids, were subjugating the whole of Hither Asia and reaching beyond this to Africa, on the one hand, and the Balkan Peninsula, on the other, creating the first really organized empire of the ancient world (550-330). It was, indeed, so remarkably organized that it took on a special ethical character, very tolerant, the conscious protector of the subject peoples, until, thanks to the *missi dominici* of the successive rulers, a Darius or an Artaxerxes, and to the Royal Roads and the unflinching, watchful guardianship of the court at Susa, there gradually grew up, in place of race hatred and conflict, an *Achaemenian Peace*, the prototype of the Pax Romana. The advantages of this peace were not only political, but, as we are just beginning to realize, also cultural. It was the Achaemenian state that first gave the Orient the idea of a Universal Empire from which the Buddhists, as M. Przyluski has just shown, derived the notion, reinterpreted to their ends in spiritual terms, of King Chakravartin, the Universal Monarch. In the same way it was the hypostyle halls of the Achaemenids, adapted from the colonnades of Egypt, and the palace of Persepolis fashioned on the model of a Pharaonic temple, which gave the Indians, influenced by the long Achaemenian domination in the Punjab, the idea of the Maurya palace of Pataliputra (about 300 B.C.) Thus Achaemenian Persia served as intermediary between Egypt and India. Later she served

as intermediary between Ionia and India, as is evident in the first Indian reliefs, those of the capitals of Asoka (274-237), and those of Sanchi (first century, B.C.), where the Greco-Achaemenian influence is very marked.

After the maelstrom of Alexander, in the Parthian period (250 B.C. to 224 A.D.), Iranian influence continues without diminution. The rôle of the Parthian dynasty of the Arsakids is usually dismissed with the generalization that it was profoundly influenced by the Hellenic culture to the west, without taking account of the fact that while the Parthian culture was being Hellenized from the Mesopotamian side, it was also, in the opposite, eastern direction, carrying an Iranian influence into India. Too little recognition is made of the fact that, at the beginning of the Christian era, Parthian dynasties were ruling on the lower Indus, one of the best known being that of Gondopharès, who was reigning when Saint Thomas went to preach in India. Or, again, there is Indian evidence of the importance of the Parthians in their land in the tradition that Pahlava families, that is, Pehlevies or Parthians, imposed their rule even to the Dekhan. It is even more interesting to note that a number of these Parthians who were in close touch with the civilization of India were converted to Buddhism, some becoming so devout even that they entered Buddhist religious orders and went as missionaries to China. The Chinese texts tell of a number of Parthian princes who were among the first Buddhist apostles to proselytize in China during the Han period. They are always called Anshe, which is the Chinese version of Ar-sak or Arsakides. Thus Anshe-kao, who went to China about 150 A.D., did more than any other person to convert the country to Buddhism, and according to M. Sylvain Lévi and M. Masson-Oursel, it was apparently the influence of the Mazdean angelology which gave rise in Buddhism at about this time to the so-called Amida cults, which were Anshe-kao's special interest. The cults of the Maitreya Bodhisattvas, which were derived from Mithra, and of Amitâbha, are other contributions from Iran to the Mahâyâna Buddhism. Finally, in the arts, it seems probable² that the only explanation for the character of the first Indian school, that of Mathurâ, which took shape in the Indo-Scythian period, is the importance in its formation of Parthian art.

²This is the writer's own theory.



SILK TAPESTRY
Sixteenth Century
(Collection of Mrs. William H. Moore)

There is noteworthy evidence of the Parthian indebtedness in the peculiar conventions of the drapery folds.

In the Sasanian period the influence of Iran on the rest of Asia became tremendously important. The true Iranian culture, freed from the superficial Hellenistic veneer imposed by the Parthians, was deliberately reestablished, not only in politics, where the Sapurs and the Chosroes resumed the direct succession of the Darius and the Artaxerxes, but also in the arts where, in the third century A.D., the monuments of Naksh-i Rosten and Naksh-i Rostam carry on the great traditions of Persepolis and Susa, and it was this resuscitated Iranian spirit which began again a wide expansion. On the west the Byzantine culture, which does not really begin until the time of Diocletian, was really just Greece and Rome Iranized. The last Roman emperors and the first Basileis of Byzantium simply copied the Persian conception of monarchy, even to imitating the court of the great Sasanian king, and the fashion was followed, even to such details as nomenclature. How significant it is that the "Roman" general who, under Justinian, reconquered Rome from the German bore the typically Sasanian name Nerses!

To the east and the northeast the civilization of Afghanistan and all Chinese Turkestan was in all material aspects Sasanian, though oddly enough, despite the fact that in Persia itself the Sasanian culture was profoundly Mazdean, it was here closely associated with Buddhism. M. Hackin, Director of the Musée Guimet, has discovered at Bamian, west of Kabul, great Buddhist frescoes in which, beside the Buddha and Buddhist monks, Sasanian princes are shown, typical Sapurs and Chosroes, bearded and crowned as they appear in the standard representations on the bas-reliefs and coins, and also elegant Iranian "knights." These figures show that these Buddhist frescoes, which date from the fifth century A.D., are really the earliest Persian paintings known. Moreover, this school of Irano-Buddhist painting was not limited to Afghanistan, but in the seventh and eighth centuries it spread to the oases of Chinese Turkestan, where it appears especially around Khotan, in the paintings of Dandan-Uilik, at Kutsha in the frescoes of Kizil, and at Karashar, that is to say, both north and south of the Tarim basin. Especially at Kizil in the Buddhist paintings that date between 550 and 750 A.D., which Von Le Coq brought back to Berlin, there is a whole repertoire of elegant knights, pages, and lovely ladies, so unmistakably

Iranian that they are the immediate link between the Sasanian paintings of Bamian and the first Persian Islamic miniatures. The Oasis of Kutsha, right in the Gobi Desert, was at this time a kind of Persian Sasanian colony, differing from Persia only in that these Iranians in Chinese territory, instead of being Mazdean, were fervent Buddhists. Thus Iranian culture persisted after the Sasanian Empire was overwhelmed by Islam. Moreover, the Iranization of this region was continued from the seventh to the ninth century by the Manicheans, who were driven out of Persia by the persecution, first of the Sasanians, and then of the Muhammadans, and went, about 750, to convert the kingdom of Uigur in the Turfan district, where their priests produced decorated books in the first half of the ninth century, fragments of which have come down to us to represent the first known Persian illuminations.

The very individual Iranian spirit had such vitality that, instead of being crushed by Islam, as might be expected, it was really fortified thereby. For really, from the ninth century on, Islam put its incomparable expansive power at the service of Persian culture. Everywhere to the east, where the Koranic faith took root, whether in Turkestan or India, it carried with it the triumph of Persian culture. The two were as closely connected as, in the classical world, Buddhist proselytizing had been with the Hellenistic Gandhâra style. Especially the Samanids, an Iranian dynasty that reigned over Khorassan and Transoxiana in the tenth century (874-999), accomplished a great deal in this respect. Crusaders of Islam, the great Samanid Emirs, forcibly converted the Turkish tribes beyond Tashkent and the Aral region, and in imposing the Muhammadan faith, they also imposed upon them, as a cultural model, the ideal of Iran. This made such an impression that a century later, about 1000 A.D., when the Turks took their revenge and, first under the Ghaznavids and then under the Seljuks, conquered in their turn East and West Iran, their domination made no break in Persian history, for they were already, in spirit, three-quarters Iranian. It was at the court of the first Turkish Sultan, Mahmud of Ghazna (998-1030), that Firdausi composed the *Shah-nâmeh*, and eighty years later the great Seljuk monarch, Malek Shah (1072-1092), was, as his name indicates, a great Paniranian ruler, restoring the ancient empire of the Darius and the Chosroes. And what is more, these Iranized Turks undertook on their own account to recom-

mence the Islamic campaign of conquest which had been allowed to lapse for several centuries. Thus, about 1000, Mahmud of Ghazna conquered northwest India, the Indus basin, and opened up the way for his successors, the Afghans, pure Iranians these, under Muhammad of Ghor (1187-1206) to conquer even the Ganges Valley (1200). In four centuries of unbroken progress from Muhammad of Ghor in the thirteenth century to Akbar in the sixteenth, the Turco-Afghan sultans who came down from the Khyber Pass subjugated almost the whole of India, creating an immense Indo-Muhammadan empire which is called, thanks to goodness knows what historical romanticism, Moghul, but which was really purely and simply an Indo-Iranian empire. What are the Taj Mahal or the Mosques of Bijapur and Golkonda, what are the Moghul miniatures, but a new chapter in the art of Isfahan?

Meanwhile in Iran proper the dynasties of Iranized Turks who followed the Seljuks had in the thirteenth century been swept out by the Mongol conquest of Genghis Khan and his followers. Surely the Iranian culture would be wiped out by such a devastating catastrophe? But once more Iran's destiny reversed all expectations, for from the day when the dynasty of the Ilkhans (1256-1349), a branch of the Genghis-Khans, was established on the throne in the person of Hulagu, Persia became, along with China, the chief beneficiary of the Mongolian unification of Asia and the Mongolian peace which prevailed from Tabriz to Peking. It is most significant that, as M. Pelliot has just pointed out, Marco Polo and his uncles in all their travels across Central Asia and China (1260-1295) depended entirely on the Persian language to make themselves understood. Marco Polo never knew Chinese, yet even in China itself he could get along with Persian, for Persian had at that time become a kind of *lingua franca* or *hindustani* all across Central Asia to the chief commercial cities of the Celestial Empire, the common language of business and trade. By 1300 it was as if the Mongol conquest in Central Asia had been intended only to advance the spread of Persian culture.

The Timurid conquest checked, to a certain extent, the progress of Iranian prestige, for while the Timurid Emirs (1369-1500) were always faithful disciples of Persian literature, they did undertake to create an independent Jaghatai—Turkish literature, based on Persian models. In spite of this, however, the prodigious develop-

ment of Persian miniature painting under the last Timurids (1500) and under their successors, the Shaibanides (1500-1599) at Bukhara, Samarkand, and Herat, shows how faithful these Turko-Mongul dynasties of the sixteenth century still were to the great tradition of the Iranian aristocratic art patrons.

Finally, with the Safavids (1502-1736) and the current Pahlevi dynasty, purely Persian rulers came to the throne, so that Iran once more returned to its own native tradition, undeflected. Isfahan under Shah Abbas I (1587-1629) was to the rest of Asia what the Versailles of Louis XIV was to Germany, Italy, or Moscow, the ideal city of dreams, the model of ambitious imitation. From the frontier of Godāvārī to the Golden Horn, in the *yourte* of the Kashgar chiefs, as in the palace of the Uzbek Khans, Isfahan was copied. For the Persia of Shah Abbas was the great Asiatic power, and the first Asiatic state which undertook to combine, with a perfect classicism in literature and the arts, an adaptation in politics to European forms, an adjustment which was again attempted in the eighteenth century by the Moscow of Peter the Great, and in the nineteenth by the Japan of Meiji-tennô. Everyone who has travelled in the East knows that the Persia of today, under His Majesty, Pahlevi Shah, holds the same place as the great cultural power of Middle Asia.

PERSIA'S INFLUENCE ON THE ARTS OF OTHER LANDS

BY ARTHUR UPHAM POPE

THE IRANIAN plateau, both because of its location and its emphatic, almost magisterial character, not only imposed a common character on all those, however varied their racial origins, who lived under the dominion of its high mountains, lush valleys, and shining deserts, but also, even in the earliest days, it apparently radiated artistic ideas in various directions, enriching, deflecting, sometimes actually determining the arts of other cultures. As yet we can only guess at the larger outlines of this movement. Sir Arthur Keith has argued that the critical passage from nomadism to settled city life, one of the first and almost the greatest upward step the race has taken since it left its home in the trees, stood erect, and grasped a club, took place in Persia. Here, he thinks, men first learned to dwell together on a large scale, to divide labor, organize production, and commence to write laws, to direct and control by ideas, in short, to live the distinctive life of a planned economy. With this sudden enlargement of man's capacities came the birth of modern civilization as we know it, with its attendant art, law, and religion, as well as material invention, so that we are perhaps nearer in all essentials to these first city dwellers than they were to the primitive human groups which preceded them. Their solution of highly organized social life gave them irresistible superiority over neighboring lands, which they seem to have invaded and dominated and to whom they imparted their culture.

There is good reason to think that we may also find in Persia the proximate, if not the ultimate, origins of Sumerian civilization, the oldest and most sophisticated of the early cultures that has yet been studied. For by their own witness the Sumerians came into Mesopotamia from a mountainous land to the east, where all their inventions including the art of writing, had already developed. "Since that time," runs the tablet discovered by Mr. Woolley, "no new inventions have been added."

Sir Flinders Petrie believes that the evidence now available points clearly to an Iranian invasion of Egypt in the 63rd sequence

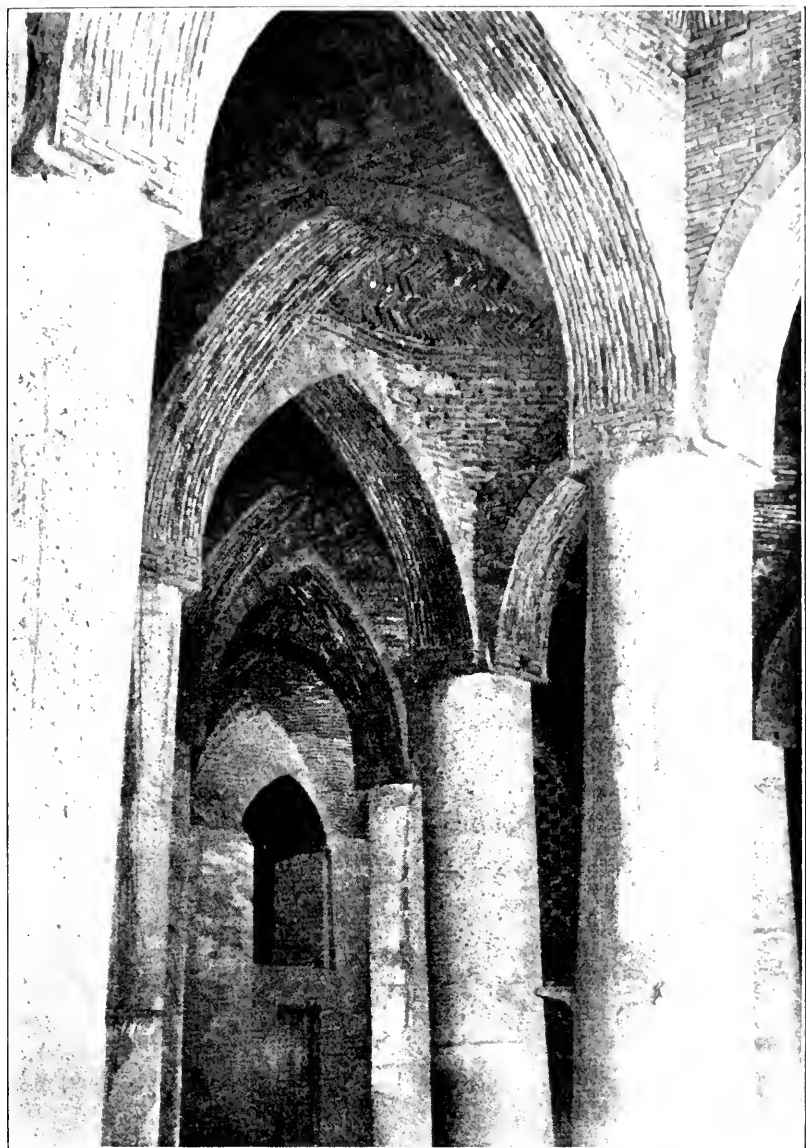
before the First Dynasty,¹ while Egypt was still in a primitive, stone-age culture, living in an artistic vacuum, and that it was this Iranian invasion which gave Egypt the vital impulsion that initiated her great career in the arts. Crete, in Sir Flinders' opinion, owed a like debt to Iran, while the sudden and almost mysterious efflorescence of Greek sculpture in the few years immediately following the Greco-Persian wars can only be explained on the basis of a direct and effective contribution from the several hundred thousand Persians left on Greek soil, representatives of a race which already had notable achievements in the plastic arts to their credit.

Superior energy, geographical advantages, initiative and the fortunes of war thus sustained the influence of Iran through many centuries and in numerous expansions. But later contributions, almost equally important and quite as varied, cannot be wholly accounted for by these more general attributes of the Iranian culture. For, as Sir John Marshall has said, "The art of Iran has exerted a wider and more continuous influence over the arts of the rest of the world than that which has issued from any land, not excepting Greece." There must have been some force or some appeal inherent in the art itself, intrinsic to its essential character, to carry it to far lands and make it effective in so many places in such varied and remote civilizations.

No art that so perfectly unites reason and sense could fail of emotional power, for Persian art at its best combines, on the one hand, universal principles on which every consciousness is built and by which it functions, and, on the other, an exciting appeal to sensibility, images that achieve their effect not only through recollection and association, but even more because the form itself is appropriate to the emotion, is the product of that emotion, and can of its own power evoke a tense response. It must have been this embodiment of reason in art, this simultaneous appeal to logic, sense, and emotion, carried through in Persian art a little more naturally and completely than in any other, which endowed it with its expansive capacities, the universal attraction that has given it currency across more barriers and into more distant lands than the art of any other people.

The influence of the Sasanian period was especially clear and

¹The evidence and supporting arguments will be set forth in detail in Sir Flinders Petrie's chapter in the forthcoming *Survey of Persian Art*, Oxford University Press.



DOME OF THE MASJID-I JAMI, ISFAHAN

1685

(Photograph by Pope)

enduring over a wide area. The superb metal vessels of the time, usually enriched with decoratively rendered illustrations in high relief (Page 16), were copied in India and prized in Scandinavia, where some early baptismal founts show startling Sasanian similarities. But it was above all the splendid fabrics that were triumphant at the time. Hiouen-tsang, a Chinese traveler who reached the borders of Persia just at the end of the period, speaks of the prestige that not only the silks, but also the wools and carpets of Persia enjoyed in the adjacent lands, and there is conclusive confirmation of this report in the many copies and adaptations of Sasanian textile designs on all sides still in existence. Thus among the frescoes found in Central Asia within recent years, there are a number of accurate copies of Sasanian silks or tapestries, and similarly in Afghanistan a Persian fabric pattern recurs, almost identical with one also used at Ton Houang, the powerfully simplified head of a boar fitted into a rondel, while actual silks of Chinese weave following the Sasanian style have survived both in the Nara treasury and in the oases of Chinese Turkestan. Or, to follow the opposite expansion, there are many copies clumsily rendered in tapestry by Egyptian hands, and for centuries there were lingering traces of the style in most of the fine silks of the western world.

How much Sasanian architecture contributed to the west is still to be adjudged. Quite possibly it saw the tentative beginnings of the structural use of the pointed arch which determined the great building of Europe in the Middle Ages; or, again, there are specific western forms that seem to have been anticipated in Iran, like the row of rondel panels above a round arcade, found, for example, at San'Apollinare in Classe near Ravenna. But these are still moot points. There is, however, no remaining question that to Persia goes the credit for basically important contributions to vault structure, inventions and innovations achieved in Persia in two periods, first, the Sasanian, and then that of the Abbasids and the Seljuks, in the centuries just before Europe's medieval flowering (Page 55). Sasanian vaulted architecture slowly worked its way across Mesopotamia and Syria, as Professor Monneret de Villard has shown, while the brick vaults, domes, and arches of Abbasid and Seljuk Persia were transmitted even to distant Spain. Indeed, the artistic relations between Persia and Spain at this time were very close. Idrisi tells us that even in the tenth century there were as many as

a thousand looms in Almeria weaving textiles in the style of Isfahan, a judgment confirmed by other documents. The merchants from Isfahan, using Egypt as a base of operations, supplied much to Spain. It was at this time that the knowledge of these brick vaults was transmitted, so that in Cordova and Toledo we find ribbed vaults like those of Isfahan, though a century later. From Spain the ribbed and domed vaults apparently passed to Lombardy. Near Milan Professor Monneret de Villard found a dome so much like one of these in the Masjid-i Jami that in photograph they might be mistaken one for the other. From Lombardy the style moved into France, and the great Abbot Suger, who was always looking, as he said himself, to those who had been in the East, always eager to appropriate new ideas, seized upon these elements, and forged them into a new ensemble, out of which emerged the supreme architecture of the Ile de France.

The detailed account of the expansion of Persian art is still to be told. Motives, conceptions, techniques, are still to be not only identified, but, far more difficult, traced. That, however, Iran was one of the great formative cultures in human history is already clear. As India was the mother of religions, so Persia was, if not the mother, at least the nurse and teacher of many arts.

PERSIA TODAY

A REVIEW OF *PERSIA*,¹ BY SIR ARNOLD WILSON

A COUNTRY as ancient as Persia, with so long and interesting a history, filled with so many picturesque, dramatic, and significant events, is in serious danger of being overshadowed by its own past. The Westerner is more apt to know Persia as the land of Cyrus and Xerxes, or Bahram Gur, the Mighty Hunter, or Hafiz, or Omar Khayyam, according to his tastes and knowledge, than as an actual country of twelve million people, endowed with great possibilities, but facing equally great perplexities and dangers. Yet Persia, the actual political and economic entity, is not only interesting but important, first because in our closeknit world no unit of twelve million people can be disregarded, and second, and more important, because some of the problems with which Persia is confronted are essentially our own problems, seen more vividly, partly because they are a smaller and more concentrated scale, but even more because they are in a stage of rapid and very clearly defined transition. It is especially this phase of Persia which is so graphically and competently presented by Sir Arnold Wilson in his new book, *Persia*.

For Persia is now hesitating at the confluence of three possible courses, and because she is hesitating, she is assessing basic values. In this position she is, indeed, but perpetuating an ancient rôle, for her geographical location has made her in many previous epochs, probably even in some of the major prehistoric migrations, a crossroads. The massive hosts from the Russian and Central Asian plains have time and again been a physical determinant in her affairs; from another side the strained other-worldliness of India has repeatedly infiltrated, but most notably when Buddhism passed on its way to transformation by other cultures; while from the west, Greeks, Romans, and Byzantines delivered blow after blow. The crossroads at which Persia now is indecisive is less spatial than it is temporal, but the conflicting influences are the same: Russia, changed now from a physical factor to an economic and social theory of materialism; India, still trying to deny the facts of this world; or the West, still overrunning itself in an unaimed activity. Shall she follow Lenin, or Ghandi, or be pulled along by

¹New York, Scribners 1933: London, Ernest Benn, 1932.

the third force for which no individual can be the figure, because it happens without intent?

Of the brief moment when the Russian social form might have been at least the experimental choice, Sir Arnold Wilson gives a succinct but specific account (pp. 144 ff.). Allowing for an evident strong bias against this point of view, it still seems clear that the difficulties which have so tried Russia in making a transition from an agricultural and partially even pastoral stage, directly to a state which presupposes highly organized industrialism, might have been disastrous in Persia, where feudalism and nomadism are far larger proportionate factors, and where, moreover, as Sir Arnold shows (p. 65), the agriculture is not readily subject to industrialized exploitation and the nomadism is a basic value in the national economy. It does not, therefore, look as if Persia would or perhaps even could refashion her national life by a leap to the future.

But, on the other hand, it seems even less probable that she will try the solution by evasion of attempting to withdraw into her own past. For despite the strain of mysticism in the Persian tradition, which found one exquisite expression in the Sufi lyricism of Hafiz, the Persian mind is too acutely intellectual to ignore actual facts. The Asiatic way out would almost certainly mean, moreover, the acceptance of an Islamic bloc (p. 169), but the intellectual Persian on whom devolves the responsibility of the decision is too much a man of his time to be a man of faith.

Persia then seems doomed to be engulfed in the current Western process, in spite of the overwhelming demonstration of its failure from which the world is already suffering. It remains only to see what phase of it will prevail, what ameliorations she can devise, to what extent, if any, she can escape from the penalties involved.

The Persians of the ruling class, thanks to the keen intelligence of the race, are very clearly aware of the alternatives. Will their country find a happier fate following a French model or have they more to gain from taking Nordic lessons? Each has its adherents, but the two camps seem, according to the interesting quotations which Sir Arnold gives (pp. 163 ff.), to be quite agreed on one prior point. The Persian mind is essentially Latin in its structure and functioning. It is only, then, a question of whether the salutary course is to flatter the native equipment and leave it to its easier sympathies or, on the contrary, to try to right the balance by the

stern discipline of a more alien but complementary training.

The dispute as to the relative values for Persians of the French versus the Germano-English culture is quite old and appears in the most unexpected places, but it has now, especially since the War, been further complicated by the interjection of America into the possibilities. The European countries, having all long since attained to an age of natural imperialism, have, through their nationals engaged in various services in Persia, sought each to further his own party in this contest, so that an American involved in any way in Persian interests, though typically absorbed in the most naïve altruism, is at once suspected of being another emissary of national proselytism. It seems impossible for the older peoples, whether European or Asiatic, to realise that the occasional American who is sophisticated enough to be aware of his country having a specific culture, is by virtue of that same degree of sophistication far from desirous of imposing it elsewhere.

It is doubtful whether the Persians will really be free to make even their Hobson's choice. Now that they are caught on the relentless, revolving belt of the economics of the current Western world, their fate will probably be subject to but little deflection. For a time it seemed certain that Persia would be absorbed by the British octopus, but this crisis, too, passed immediately after the War, in an episode which provoked, as a reaction, the present Persian régime, and of which Sir Arnold, despite his sympathies, gives a revealing account (pp. 135 ff.). Those once long and powerful tentacles are now withering fast, so that they cannot hold that which they already have, much less reach out to grab elsewhere. Kultur is even more crippled, for at least a generation. There remain France, which in proportion as she has been less ostentatious in her expansionism may prove to be more enduring, and America, whose grossly overgrown productive system will certainly in the future (unless in the meantime it modifies distribution sufficiently to permit proportionate consumption, which is improbable) have to stretch wherever there is a chance.

At the moment Persia is trying to protect herself with strict control of her international trade. This she could have done if she had been able to remain within the old limits of her standard of living, for in those terms she was almost or wholly self-sustained. But oil and world-war and perhaps, even apart from these, the in-

escapable processes of existence have caught her on the wheel. She is already suffering in stringency and currency depression. It is only a question of how much she can be spared.

A major special circumstance complicating her problem is the importance of opium in her total budget. It is, according to the useful summary given in this book (p. 56 ff.), second only to petroleum as an export, providing (still excluding petroleum), more than half the export total value. The substitution of other products to compensate for the loss that would be involved in restricting the opium output proportionate to the world's medical needs (and this is the only way of dealing effectively with illicit traffic) is conditioned primarily on the development of internal transport and involves the outlay of considerable capital. This has not been available from local sources, and Persia, too intelligent to ignore the fate of certain neighbors, has mistrusted international loans. Sir Arnold cuts the knot with the aristocrat's sword, the conclusion that the human being who has to be saved from drugs (or indeed from anything else) is thereby proven to be not worth the saving. The demonstration is as unshakable as the conversion of a proposition, but like conversion, is not of much help in advancing the case, for while it would be final in a monadic world, even atoms impinge on each other, and are held together in a system of mutual relations. The drug addict does prove himself not worth saving ethically and quite probably biologically, but this means of destroying him represents a terrific waste, both economically and in derivative human misery. Persia has officially expressed its intention of withdrawing, as conditions permit, from complicity, but certainly she cannot be expected to be the only or even the first country to make a great monetary sacrifice for the sake of human good. The world looks, though thus far in vain, to a greater power to take the lead.

The question of transport which conditions the opium solution is another major feature in suspension in the transformation of Persia into a modern state, and here again Sir Arnold has an excellent if somewhat confusingly complicated account (pp. 101 ff.) with a delightful glimpse of the whole fascinating story of roads, traffic, and transient shelter, confusing only because of the one serious defect of the book, the most unfortunate failure to supply

a map. Persia is like the (old-fashioned) child telling its shoe buttons, but chanting "railway, camel, aeroplane, bus," and just now the bus, and its freight concomitant, the truck, distinctly have it. There are bits of railways here and there, and a new section was inaugurated just a year or two ago, but trains to be really useful have to go, not only somewhere, but also somewhere else, so that bits hardly suffice, and it will take money, time, and much travail of various sorts to hitch those bits into a continuity. The aeroplane service, which has been such a blessing to travelers, has been temporarily halted by the world paralysis of credit. Roads, on the other hand, are reasonably good for most of the major transits, and a Ford, however battered, can carry an amazing cargo, human and otherwise. To be sure, even a Ford may resent too many extra straws, for while its back is not apt to break, it may very likely tip over at a mountain turn, often with fatal results. But the Persian mental agility gives them a taste for novelty, so that even a series of bloody wrecks does not deter them from moving about, and moving about by preference in automobiles, still new enough to be interesting. Indeed, the motor car has been so popular that shipments of goods were commonly made by truck which could go quite as well and much cheaper by pack, an error that was very trying to the ancient and still useful profession of camel drivers. These latter, however, undertook to meet the mistakes of modernity with one of its own devices, advertising. Mr. Pope tells of being awakened one morning in Isfahan by the most tremendous and multiple clamor. All the bells of Persia of every size and tone seemed to be clashing and clanging. And so they were, everything from a locomotive bell down to strings of tiny silver bells, and all hung on camels who were, besides, decorated beyond the utmost circus dreams with carpets, old draperies, strips of vivid cloth, and multiple odds and ends, parading through the city to demonstrate on huge signs their economic value in freight carriage.

The average Persian, of course, would be hard put to it to recognize his country or himself in this conceptualized account of economic problems. To him, as to the normal human the world over, life is a process of satisfying the basic instincts in the conditions as he finds them, taking advantage of these when they are favorable, escaping or enduring them when they are not. And this Persian, too, Sir Arnold Wilson takes into account, in vivid, brief

descriptions of individuals and episodes recalled from his own long personal experience in Persia, as well as in more general accounts of the universal phases of daily life, the family and its domicile, health and education, maintenance and its labors, the cult or its intellectual substitutes, relaxations and rewards. These Sir Arnold presents, not at great length, but with a richness of both information and acquaintance which makes the descriptions specific and actual, the more so since there is implicit throughout a realization of qualities which are revealed only to the more penetrating vision that is the fulfilment of a wide and reflective wisdom of life. This detached and critical estimate of larger purposes renders him especially appreciative of the Persians' regard for and enjoyment of the intrinsic in a humane life, beauty and the satisfaction of deft and meticulous craftsmanship, a flower, the shade of rustling trees, and above all, leisure with good talk, ideas expressed in felicitous phrases or, a feature of Persian conversation, with an apt and unexpected turn of wit.

The Persian mind and its culture, as he discloses it, is one of the fine intrinsic values in human history, a value still very real but very imminently menaced by the tide of Western confusions, accomplishments, errors, and elaboration which is about to sweep the country. But five thousand years and more of vicissitudes are not apt to terminate in defeat by mere mechanization, so that future generations may still know unimpaired this especially gifted and delightful human family, highly composite but still essentially of the Aryan race, and that Persian charm so intimately conveyed in dozens of little touches by Sir Arnold, "the magic of Persia" which, "as was said four thousand years ago of her law, . . . altereth not."

P. A.

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