

# *Museum*

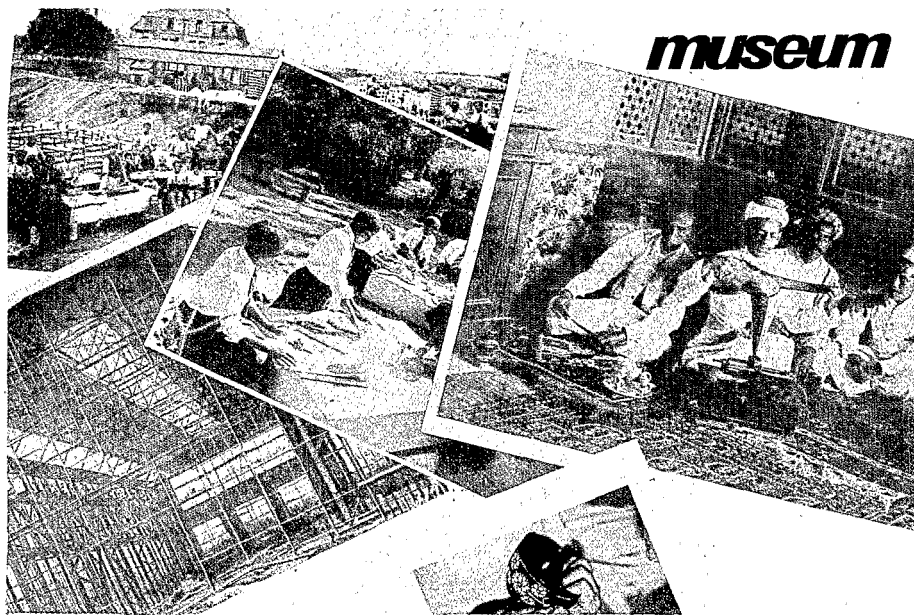
No 158 (Vol XL, n° 2, 1988)

## **General Survey**

# **museum**

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No. 158, 1988



# **museum**

Workers at a pumice-brick factory in Germany around 1900; Roof construction with reinforced pumice slabs; Harare schoolgirls at a clay workshop at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe.

'The recording of Sayyid Mohammed' — a historic photograph from the collections of the Oriental Institute, Leiden, that launched 'phono-archaeology'; a Pakistani craftsman at work.

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#### CORRESPONDENCE

*Questions concerning editorial matters:*  
The Editor, *Museum*,  
Unesco, 7 place de Fontenoy,  
75700 Paris, France

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# General survey

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# *The earliest voices from the East: phono-archaeological explorations and tomorrow's museums*

## Carney E. S. Gavin

A priest from Boston (United States) who is Curator and Associate Director of the Harvard Semitic Museum. Trained at Oxford (classics and archaeology); in Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany (philosophy and theology); Ph.D. in Near Eastern languages and civilizations, Harvard, 1973. Director of the King Fahd Archives. Has taken part in archaeological excavations and field surveys in many countries of Europe and the Middle East.

*In Museum, No. 145 (Vol. XXXVII, No. 1, 1985, pp. 2-12), the Harvard Semitic Museum (HSM) focused attention on 'phono-archaeology and tomorrow's museums', particularly in regard to the virtually untapped cultural and scientific usefulness of photo-documentation as well as to the dangerously vulnerable delicacy of these 'messages-in-light', which will vanish for ever if not properly preserved.*

*In this article, the author describes how, through the King Fahd Archives (KFA), 'phono-archaeological' preservation efforts have now begun to link scholars, technicians and artists around the world, in an effort to find, preserve, share and appreciate freshly recovered sounds from long ago.*

### *Introduction*

The Harvard Semitic Museum (HSM) which was founded 'to promote sound knowledge of Semitic languages and history', will celebrate its centenary in 1989.

Redefining immediate goals, and thereby reassessing practical priorities, provides a healthy periodic exercise for any museum. For an older archaeological institute, such salutary 'examinations of conscience' have become morally necessary, at the very least because of the increasing number of just antiquities laws formulated in conjunction with Unesco and because of the principles regularly discussed in the pages of *Museum*.

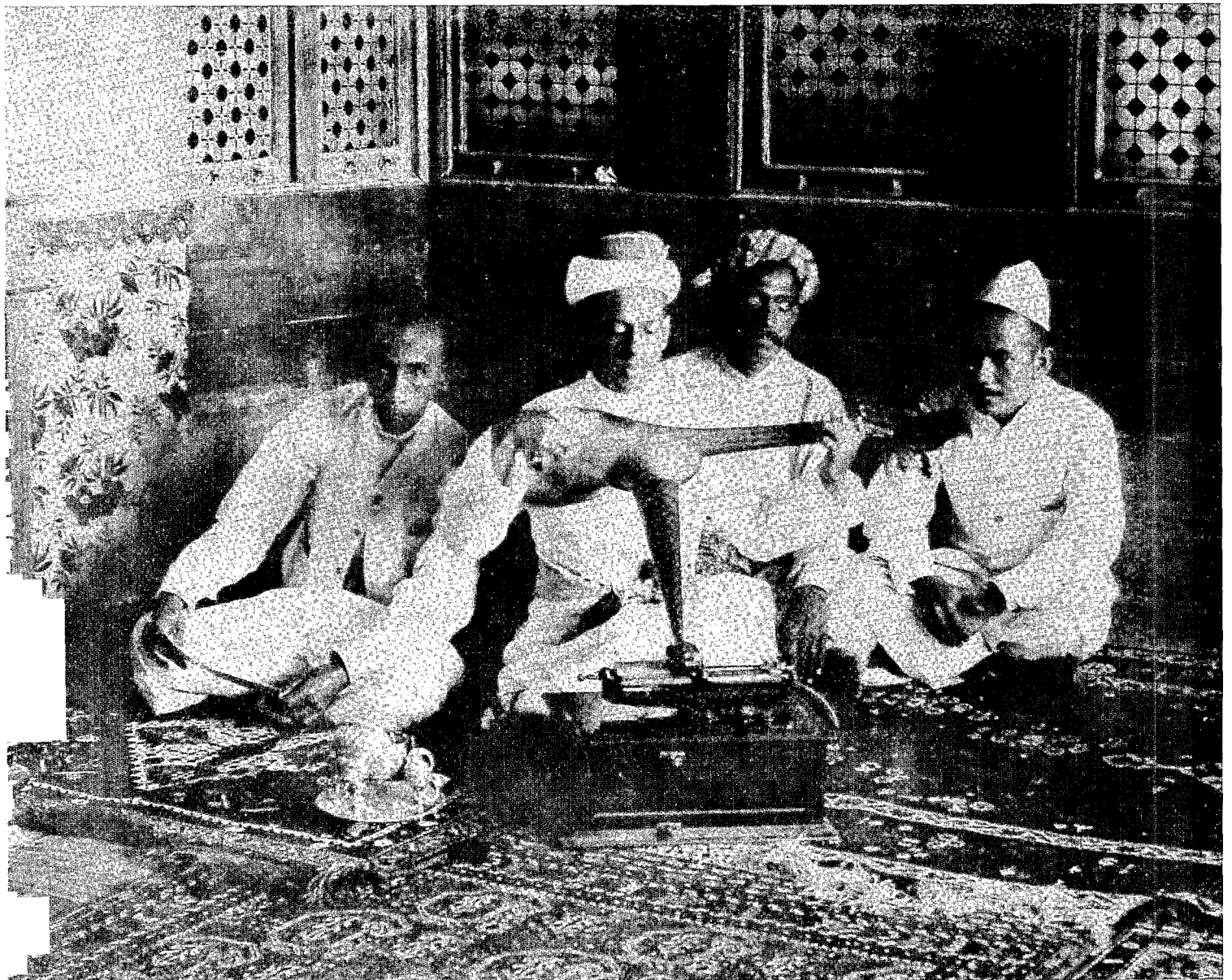
In approaching its second century of explorations, the HSM has much reason to walk humbly. As we investigate mankind's oldest ongoing detective story, we are following in the footsteps of centuries of truly great sleuths, savants and synthesizers.

Some of our ancient needs have

today become much more urgent, as fragile traces of humanity's heritage rapidly vanish amid tumultuous environmental changes. At the same time some of our research tools have become much more effective for finding, preserving, understanding and sharing treasures from the past. The HSM has not only anticipated the recovering of historical clues from uncharted dimensions of light-beams, but, now, from sound-waves!

### *A concert from the distant past*

On 8 December 1985, a distinguished and extraordinarily diverse assembly gathered at Harvard University in an elegant upper gallery, which had been designed for the HSM by the poet Longfellow's nephew at the beginning of this century. Few of the scholars and diplomats present realized that this room was the very spot where a bomb, hidden there by anti-war protesters, had exploded in October 1971, to



uncover above the skylight, some 27,000 of the oldest visual documents of the Middle East: the HSM's long-forgotten historic photographic collections dating back to the 1850s.

Ra'ad Siraj, a brilliant young computer scientist from Jedda, briefly explained his translations of the monologues about to be heard in the old spoken dialects of the Red Sea coasts. Dr Dietrich Schueller, Director of the Phonogrammarchiv, then introduced the audience to technologies which had been used eighty years ago in Jedda (to record sound-waves onto wax cylinders) and again in 1985 in his Vienna laboratories, to transfer these precious sounds from the mouldy and brittle wax cylinders onto modern electronic tape, to preserve them and filter out as much extraneous noise as possible.

We then heard a welcoming message and historical orientation (tape-recorded only a few weeks before in Rome) from the distinguished Editor of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, whose duties had kept him overseas, Professor Emery Van Donzel, President of the Oriental Institute, Leiden, where the wax cylinders had been preserved for six decades.

Having listened to these recordings from eighty years ago, let me say how moved I was to hear — for the first time in my life — recordings which had been sitting there at the Institute for all those years. These recordings were apparently collected for the benefit of Professor Snouck Hurgronje. They were sent to him and probably kept in his personal archives. Later, when the Oriental Institute was started in 1927 with funds collected on the

1  
The photo-clue that launched 'phono-archaeology': a historic photograph from the collections of the Oriental Institute, Leiden (L/OI:D/2) entitled 'Jedda - 20/2/09: The Recording of Sayyid Mohammed'.

2  
The first scientific 'recording' of Arabian music, transcriptions of songs heard by Ali Bey Al-Abbasi in 1806 during his pilgrimage to Mecca.



occasion of his seventieth birthday in 1926, the recordings came into the possession of the Institute and have been kept there ever since.

In 1870 the Netherlands East Indian Government in Batavia (today Jakarta) realized how important Jedda was as the gateway to Mecca for Indonesian pilgrims who were among the most numerous. It is estimated that between 1870 and 1950, when the Netherlands handed over the Consulate in Jedda to Indonesia, about a million pilgrims had passed through it on their way to the Holy City. Therewith began the ancient music, with effects that are still echoing today.

The Ambassador of Jordan, His Excellency Mohammed Kamal, long-time Director-General of Jordanian Television (with its regular news broadcasts in five languages) heard

with delight the recorded account of the 1907 grand opening of the Hijaz railway station at Ma'an (today in Jordan) where the great overland pilgrim caravans from Cairo and Damascus had traditionally come together for their joint journey into the Holy Land of Islam. The narrator, a member of the official delegation from the Holy City of Mecca, describes their journey down to the Red Sea, for embarkation at Jedda onto a steamer which took them up the Suez Canal to Beirut, and their railway trip across Lebanon to the great railway station of Damascus where the official train for Ma'an was waiting. Besides thanking all the officials and ordinary people who showed great kindness during his journey, the narrator expresses the sincere hope that 'next year' he might be privileged to share in the festivities on the

completion of the Hijaz railway at its Medina terminus (in 1908) — an internal clue to dating these remarkable sound documents.

Although we have not been able to identify the narrator by name, consultations in Jeddah with both Sudanese and Meccawi scholars have now determined that he must have been originally from Sudan, though he had almost certainly been educated in the Holy City and had lived there for a long time.

Their Excellencies the Ambassadors of the Yemen Arab Republic to the United States and the United Nations proved expert at similar aural detective work — as did later the Foreign Minister in San'ā', the distinguished geneticist Dr al-Iriani. He found that he could correctly pinpoint the places of origin of various *oud*-playing techniques (such as those from the town of Kawkaban) and of several individual poets each reciting a plaintive Yemeni *Qasida*.

Memories can race back with the sounds of early music. One ambassador suddenly remembered that his grandmother from the district of Zo'an in Hadramawt (where the best and most expensive honey is produced) had told him that their family's pure beeswax was regularly chosen for sending down to Aden at the beginning of this century, so that it could

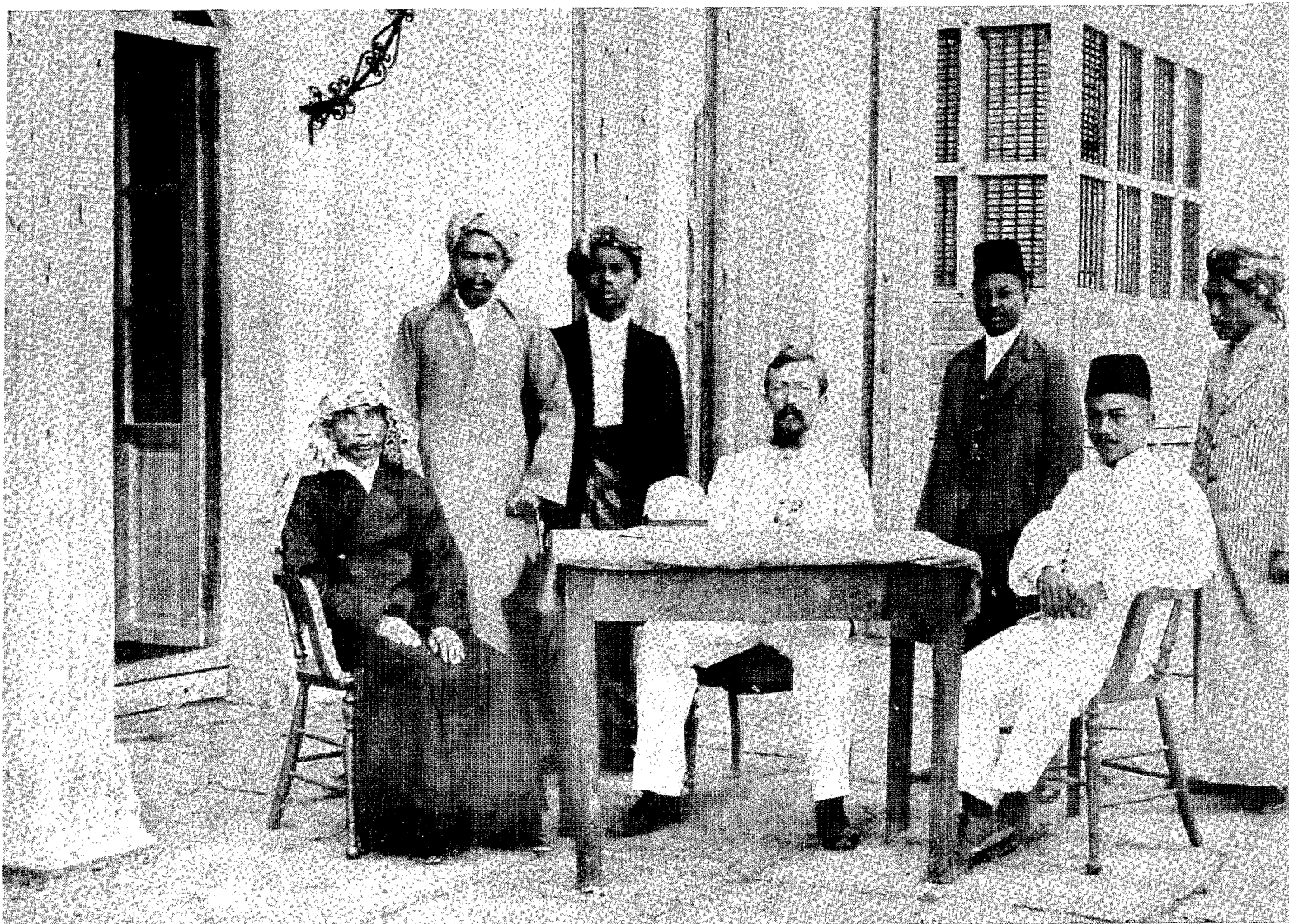
serve in somehow capturing the melodies of great musicians! Intriguingly, the normal Arabic word for a gramophone record '*ustuwāna*' means 'cylinder'. Many old families from throughout the region have begun to half-remember phonographs being used long ago. Indeed, the daughter of Mr Matson (who had been the photographer at the American Colony in Jerusalem and whose collections are preserved in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress) has recalled that when her father went out onto the Transjordanian steppes to photograph T. E. Lawrence and Emir Faisal, later to be proclaimed King of the Arabs, a friend brought along a wax-cylinder phonograph which recorded the expressed hopes of the leaders of the Arab revolt.

On that chilly December day in 1985, scholars began to reflect on the sounds they heard. Professor Nicholas England (former Dean of the School of Music, California Institute of the Arts) commented, 'This is amazingly preserved sound from the past which we had rather given up hope of ever capturing . . . a simply stunning discovery.' Professor Wolfhart Heinrichs, Chairman of Harvard's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations said, 'I should like to stress the importance of material that does not exist any more today. . . . If maybe we



3  
Jeddah historians guiding the author's photo-archaeological quest for the scene of the 1909 recording session (shown in Fig. 2).





really have Zanzibarian Arabic, that really does not exist any more on any large scale today ... this is a very important discovery which definitely should be pursued and will yield very valuable results.'

Perhaps the most eminent expert in the history of early Arabic-language musical recordings, Professor Ali Jihad Racy, of the Department of Music at the University of California at Los Angeles, is also a virtuoso concert performer on traditional Arabic instruments. Accordingly, Professor Racy's personal reflections on these discoveries, their place of origin and their usefulness are particularly stimulating.

Most important is not only the antiquity of this music, but also the strategic location of Jeddah (where these recordings were made) with all the cross-cultural influences of a place where the peoples of three continents

(as well as from far distant island chains) came together. Those cross-cultural, cross-continental influences — as well as influences from many far more remote lands — combine with the great importance of that part of the world itself, to provide us now with an invaluable and pivotal cultural source. I think of music as an on-going process by which musicians link the past to the present, and musical tradition is absolutely basic to any culture. If this discovery contributes to enriching that tradition by providing fresh (and otherwise forgotten) links to the past for artists as well as for scholars, this would be a tremendous prospect.

*The clue —  
a single photograph*

During the summer of 1983, many thousands of Leiden's historic photographs were carefully rephotographed

<sup>4</sup> The Netherlands legation in Jeddah, where the first Arabian recordings were made.



for permanency by HSM/KFA teams under the direction of curators Elizabeth Carella and William Corsetti. Months later, while preparing wintertime photo-inventories with the HSM archivist and registrar, Mary Ellen Taylor, the author first began to ponder over one Oriental Institute photograph (Fig. 1) because of the startlingly early date of its Dutch caption: 'Jedda — 20/2/09: The Recording of Sayyid Mohammed.'

Photo-archaeology requires a genuinely Socratic approach to inquiry: the HSM might know as much as can be known about certain technical aspects of photographs it has found or about those who took them, but for the actual contents of such documents, we often depend almost totally on local experts, regardless of their social status or formal education. It is they who can teach us what has really been captured by the camera's lens and why it is significant, if in fact it is. In such hunts, excitement mounts as our on-the-spot advisers realize that they truly

are the world's leading specialists in this visual detective work. Individuals still survive who lived in the period when early photographs were taken, and such elders represent human treasures who must be quizzed for information before, with their memories, parts of our past disappear for ever. HSM photo-archaeological inquiries have found that even portraits taken a century ago can still be identified by elders whose memories, reaching back through seven or eight decades, can recall the appearance then of individuals who had been photographed twenty or thirty years earlier.

Realizing that 1909 was a very early date even for a sound-recording session in Boston, the author consulted several Jiddawi historians, especially His Excellency Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, a connoisseur and patron of traditional music with particular interest in *oud* performers from Western Arabia and Hadramawt. The earliest sound recording of Hijazi music which could be remembered was a rare (faint



5  
Medina historians analysing the earliest photograph of their city, taken in 1880 by the Egyptian military geographer, Colonel Mohammed Sadiq Bey.

and scratchy) composition performed in Cairo in the late 1920s by the then aged singer Sherif Hussein, a cousin of the ruler whose son had been proclaimed King of the Arabs. With that sole exception, the earliest known recordings of local music dated from the time of the Second World War.

When asked whether it would be worth while to attempt to search for any surviving wax cylinders cut in Jedda, on the machine shown in Figure 1, all our learned informants insisted that, far beyond their personal curiosity, such a rediscovery would be invaluable for understanding musical modes (*magāmāt*) no longer in use.

During the summer of 1984, working with Professor van Donzel, our search proved so successful that 211 wax cylinders were discovered in Leiden. They were in cardboard cases with sparse annotations in Dutch, Arabic and Malay, together with a sadly disappointing tape-recording which had been made by Philips-Netherlands in 1957 (on the occasion of Snouck

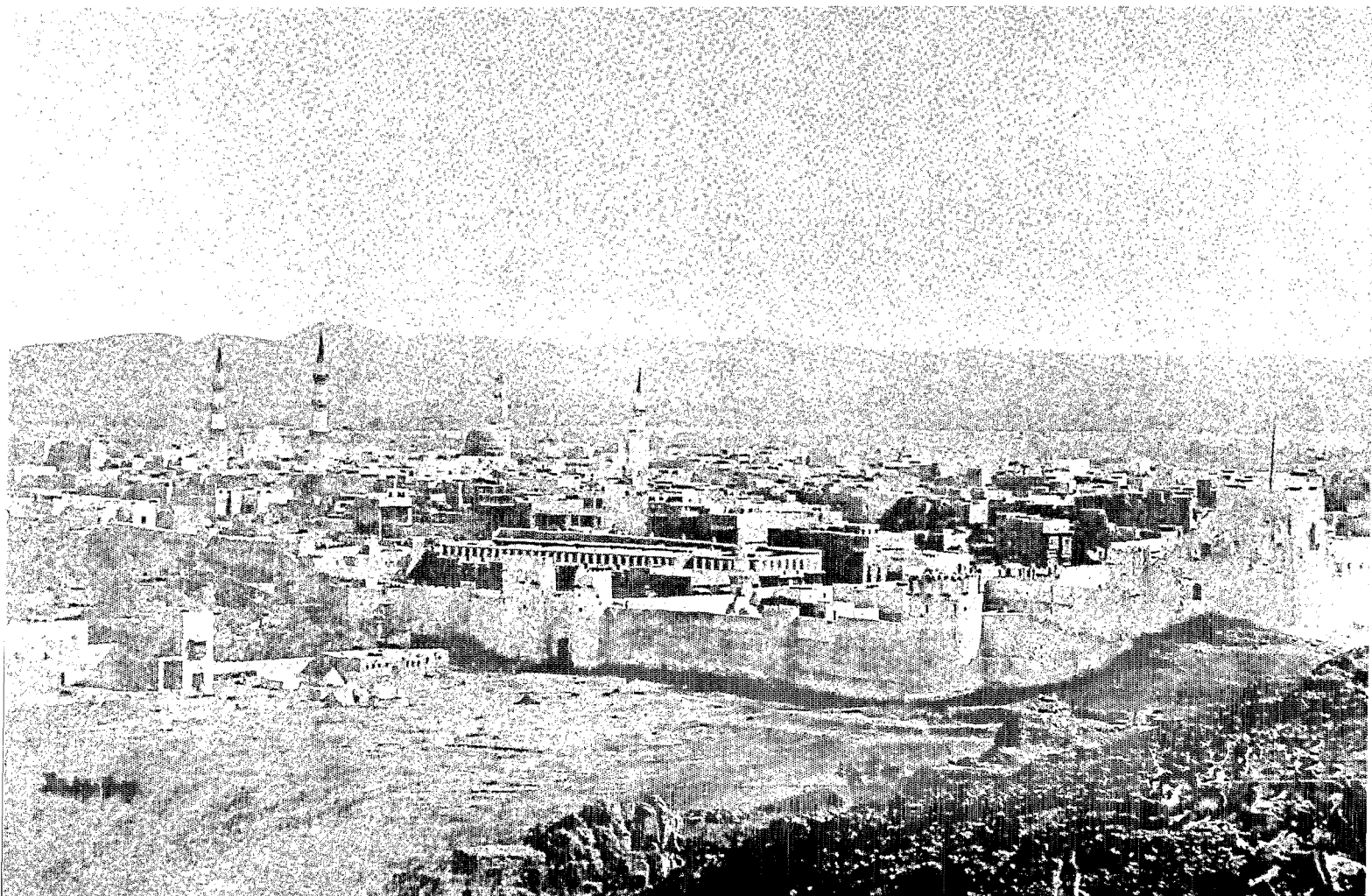
Hurgronje's 100th birthday) of 'what can still be heard on the cylinders', which was in fact very little at that time.

Once the cylinders were found, the HSM began to explore how best to listen to and preserve their sounds. Fortunately, through KFA photo-preservation efforts in Vienna, the HSM had begun to work very closely with the Austrian Academy of Sciences, especially its senior Near Eastern expert, Professor Walther Dostal, Director of the Ethnographic Institute of the University of Vienna and a renowned specialist in Red Sea cultural history. Although the HSM had preserved photographic reports by Glaser, Langer, Hein and other Austrians involved in the Imperial South Arabian Expedition, we had not realized that sound recordings had been made in conjunction with that expedition by the Phonogrammarchiv, established by the Emperor Franz Josef as part of the Academy in 1901 and still flourishing!

To our delight, we found that Dr Schueller and his associates, notably Engineer Franz Lechleitner, had long experience in solving countless problems in electronically re-recording and enhancing the sound on wax cylinders. Thanks to our Viennese colleagues' expertise, the sounds captured in Jedda eighty years ago can today be heard more clearly than ever before, in spite of some mould which has sadly eaten into the grooves cut in the wax by the phonograph's stylus. In some cases, further digital enhancement, though expensive, will be considered.

Before reviewing results of very preliminary analyses of the Leiden cylinder collection, a brief historical overview will help us understand their significance.

It appears that the oldest known writing systems originated in Mesopotamia and along the Nile and were well adapted by 2500 B.C. to recording the longest extant unbroken chain of human speech. Words uttered today in



modern Amharic, Arabic or Hebrew can be linked to related sounds thus noted over 4,500 years ago. It is also here that we find mankind's earliest surviving chronicles and poems (which we know were sung even if we have lost their tunes).

The earliest Sumerian cuneiform symbols were gradually used more and more systematically to express syllabic sounds, and specific pre-Pharaonic hieroglyphs were readable as heraldic designations for places and rank. But long before these, an ancient token system was used to designate numerical quantity. It can be traced in the Middle East back to the beginnings of sedentary agriculture, about 10,000 years ago, in ways which must have been connected with phonetic sounds for numbers, even if with such tokens, tallying could be conducted in a variety of languages simultaneously. By deciphering Sumerian script we can trace back the sounds of a few modern words to those uttered 5,000 years ago: thus 'sackcloth' (as penitential clothing) seems to have first been pronounced 'sag-gu' and 'kohl' (as a cosmetic for adorning the eyes) probably originated as 'gu-la'.

Musical annotations in various forms, and usually long-forgotten or of highly doubtful significance, can be found to have survived in many ancient texts — notably, the psalms. Over a decade ago, a serious, multi-disciplinary effort was made by Anne Kilmer to reconstruct the melody of a fourteenth-century-B.C. Hurrian hymn written with both known and puzzling cuneiform signs on a clay tablet. The material had been reconstituted from three fragments found at the ancient site of Ugarit on the Lebanese coast between 1950 and 1958. On the basis of likely scales for instruments found or depicted at ancient Mesopotamian sites, and of possible mathematical interpretations for otherwise mysterious terms and symbols used as notes and intervals to guide singers of the text, musicians and archaeologists have proposed a haunting tune. The exciting results of this imaginative project — very pleasing to the ear — cannot of course be easily verified. Until convincingly disproved however, the 1974 performance of a score some 3,400 years old must surely stand as some kind of world record!

Among various recording techniques which can be considered to

have chronicled some aspects of Eastern musical heritage throughout history, pictorial representations provide the most dependable data on melody-making in antiquity. Egyptian tomb paintings sometimes show singers and instrumental performers brought to the Nile 'out of Asia'. Mesopotamian seal designs, decorative inlays playfully adorning parts of excavated lyres, as well as court scenes with flautists and harpists cut in low relief on the walls enclosing Assyrian audience chambers, all too silently but in great detail reveal many kinds of musical instruments as well as how, where, when, and by whom they were played. Even today varieties of complex symbols continue to guide choir-directors and soloists as they perform traditional Eastern religious music in several Semitic languages as well as Greek. Basically, in the Semitic world itself, melodies and techniques seem to have been handed down in living chains from parent to child within musical families, and from master to pupil in performers' guilds and religious schools.

In more recent centuries, Baroque composers produced several 'Turkish marches' for kettledrums and glockenspiels borrowed from the Sultans' armies. An early Western effort to record phonetically the sounds made by Arabian voices can be dated precisely to 1503 when di Varthema attempted to transcribe the actual pronunciations of scores of place-names, chants, prayers and scraps of conversation that he heard during his journey from Damascus to Medinathalnabi (which means Medina, the burial place of the Prophet), Mecca, Zida (Jedda) and on to Yemen through Gezan (Jizan).<sup>1</sup>

Three centuries later, the first Western scientific effort to record accurately genuine Arabian melodies, noted with careful regard to their real-life context, can be traced to a mysterious pilgrim who set out from Cairo on 18 December 1806. He travelled as Ali Bey Al-Abbassi and was bound for the Holy City of Mecca, claiming to be the last surviving prince of the Abbassid dynasty. In fact he was a Catalanian, born in Barcelona in 1766 as Domingo Badia y Leblich, but by 1801 he seems to have returned from scientific studies in Paris and London as a convert to Islam. He produced an extraordinary corpus of scientific and cultural observations in

1. J. W. Jones (trans.), *The Itinerary of Ludovico di Varthema of Bologna from 1502 to 1508*, pp. 16-36, London, The Argonaut Press, 1928.





7  
The leader of a traditional tournament-dance troupe, sent by the Sultan to the 1893 Chicago World Fair: Haj Ahmed Agha Al-Khudari. Musicians belonging to this Ottoman Imperial Delegation (as well as to the Javanese performers) were recorded by Professor Gilman of Harvard. Thus the first recordings of Arabic and Indonesian voices were probably made in Chicago.



8  
Research at Harvard: the great-nephew of the leader of the Damascene sword-dancers (shown in Fig. 7), Omar S. Khudari of Cambridge, shows family photographs and relics to the author and Dr Awkati of Baghdad.

مانده میدان مازده لوده المی طلیح عامی نامه شریف المی و امر تقاضای نمودن نمودن  
 تکیستی برده غلبت بیکنه نه امر بقا مکتوبی طرفه نه انباز مرالیه سلالمی لبر القدره و بر لسته  
*Atchmae Uqa Nucaary the Sweroman Amerique*



9  
 The Ottoman delegation to the 1893 Chicago World Fair – where it appears that Arabic and Indonesian music was first recorded.

the Holy Land of Islam, including the first effort to establish latitude and longitude for the Holy City of Mecca and, not least, the notes for five melodies he had heard in the course of his travels early in 1807: two Red Sea sailors' songs, two melodies sung by women in and near Mecca and a tune sung by a group of men in the city of Jeddah. This was fully a century before the earliest wax cylinder can be proved to have been cut in that historic port! (see Figs. 2-6).

*The earliest 'phonography' of Semitic languages*

Just as 1839 as the starting date for photography (with the announcement of the daguerreotype system) can be challenged because of Nicéphore Niepce's 1826 photograph of his garden and Fox Talbot's 1835 negative record of his windowpanes, so too we can argue about the year when sound waves were first captured mechanically. 1877 is normally considered the starting date, because, on 8 December of that year, Edison's phonograph proved capable of repeating his recita-





cordings was issued by Columbia in 1891. Jesse Walter Fewkes in 1890 was reportedly the first person to have recorded songs (of the Passamaquoddy Indians of Maine) for scientific analysis and to preserve a threatened cultural heritage. This work was carried out under the patronage of Mary Hemenway who in that same year had asked Fewkes to record the language and folklore of the Pueblo Indians for study by Harvard Psychology Professor Benjamin Ives Gilman. On the occasion of the 1893 Chicago World Fair, which celebrated the 400th anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America, Professor Gilman was commissioned by Hemenway to record 'exotic music', including that of the Ottoman Empire's delegation and performers from Java (Figs. 7-10).

Thus, the very first acoustical recordings of Arabic (and of Indonesian languages) appear to be those wax cylinders cut in 1893 by Gilman for Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology — directly across the street from today's Harvard Semitic Museum.

Incorporated since 1970 with the Library of Congress collections, Gilman's 'Turkish music' recordings consist of nine wax cylinders cut at the Turkish Theatre on the morning of 25 September 1893. Sadly, the original sounds are poorly or, at best, fairly preserved. Only two (4.368 and 4.369/AFS No. 14.741: B1 and B2) seem to reproduce Arabic, in a love song performed by a quartet from Beirut. Otherwise, the performances of the Ottoman delegation that were acoustically recorded were instrumental pieces, a Turkish song and the Imperial anthem.

In studying the context of those Columbian Exposition cylinders, the HSM has been guided by a Cambridge businessman, Omar S. Khudari whose great-uncle had headed the Ottoman delegation's performers in their presentations of the traditional 'sword-and-shield' tournament-dance of Damascus (for which the Sultan Abdul-Hamid II had conferred on him the title *Agha*). Similarly, HSM research, in conjunction with the British Library and the Library of Congress, has inventoried magnificent parallel sets of sixty-six photographic albums. These were presented by the Sultan, also in 1893, so that London and Washington might possess visual demonstrations of

educational institutes, military units and daily life throughout the Empire. With Professor Sinasi Tekin, later this year, the HSM plans to share its indices for these extraordinary photo-documents in a special issue of the *Journal of Turkish Studies*.

Although the earliest-known acoustical recordings of Arabic are from Chicago in 1893, many tantalizing clues tempt us to search further.

For instance in 1890, President Bliss had demonstrated an Edison phonograph at the American University of Beirut. Surely, he would have recorded Lebanese voices at that time. HSM research has uncovered such unsuspected photo-documentation in Beirut (as shared in Fouad Debbas's moving *Beyrouth — Notre Mémoire*) that surviving wax cylinders must be sought there as well as in Istanbul among the Sultan's various collections being catalogued by Madame Nurhan Atasoy. Again, in 1900 at the Paris Exposition, speakers and singers from North and East Africa (specifically, Berber, Zanzibari and Senegalese musicians) were recorded on fifty-five wax cylinders now in the Musée de l'Homme, Paris. It would be surprising if some Arabic texts had not been recorded from the repertoire of artists from those lands.

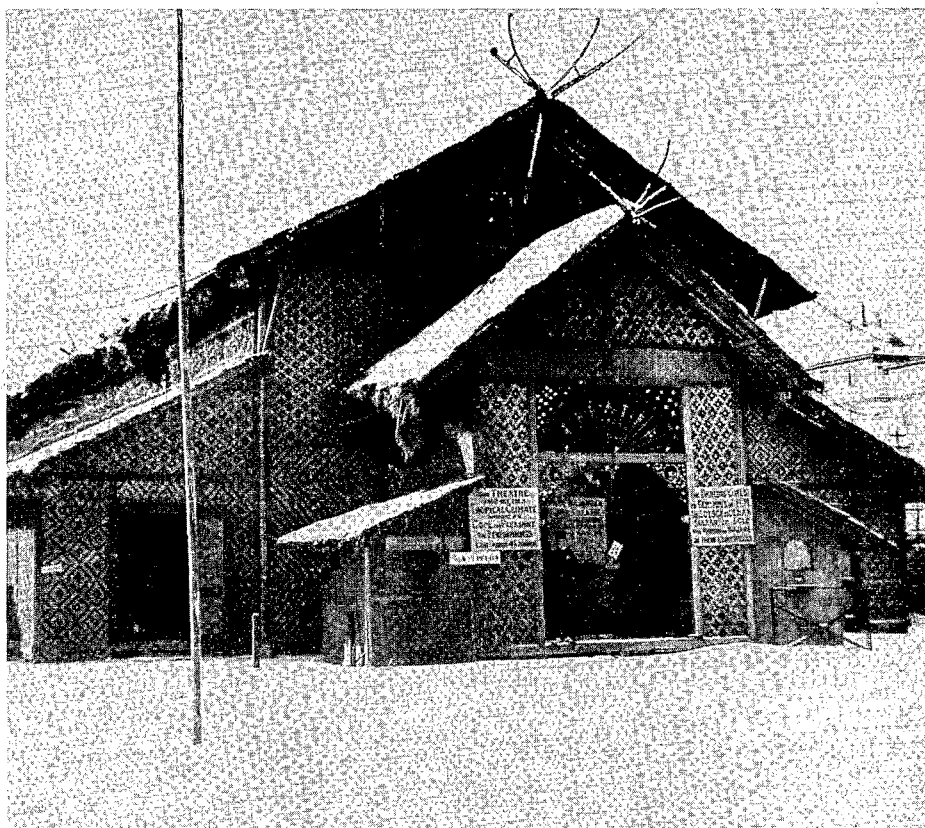
Then Professor Racy's studies of the early Egyptian and Lebanese commercial recording industries have shown the following: one famous Cairene singer, 'Abdu al-Hamuli, had been recorded before his death in 1901; newspapers had advertised wax cylinders of 'the best singers' up to 1904 and 'new type' recordings (flat discs) from 1905; Baidaphone's 1926 catalogue announced the availability of Armenian songs, Turkish instrumental pieces, Greek Orthodox hymns, as well as Egyptian singers (including 'Abd al-Hayy Hilmi who died in 1912) and 'the most wonderful melodies' selected in Syria, Palestine and Iraq. Notably, no artists from Arabia or recordings of music in Arabia are mentioned; sadly, the extensive early *phonothèque* of the National Library of Cairo seems to have vanished, but we hope this report will stimulate further searching — even in Berlin where Baidaphone discs were manufactured.

The earliest coherently scientific efforts to capture and preserve the sounds of Semitic languages began in 1902 in Vienna when Sigmund Exner, Founder of the Phonogrammarchiv

tion of 'Mary Had a Little Lamb'. Fully twenty years before, however, the French physicist Léon Scott had developed his 'phonograph' which visibly etched the patterns of sound waves onto solid materials which, though extremely thin, may yet be made to reproduce some sound.

Some tinfoil cylinders were sold in 1878. The wax-cylinder phonograph was developed between 1881 and 1885 and then manufactured (by both Columbia and Edison) in 1888 — the first year in which a concert was recorded apparently with such success that a catalogue of commercial cylinder re-

10  
The scene of the earliest sound-recording of Indonesian music, the Javanese Theatre – under snow! – at the 1892 World Fair, Chicago.



cut twelve gramophone records of Socotrian poems and songs using the Wiener Archivphonograph (Nos. 129, 130 and 138-47). In 1907 another Socotrian recording (No. 894) was added. In 1904, Fritz Hauser recorded an Arabic singer from Dhofar in Oman on seven discs (Nos. 109, 124 and 153-7). In both cases the singers had been brought to Vienna as part of the extensive multidimensional South Arabian expedition of the Imperial Academy of Sciences. Because Socotrian represents a rare survival of the important old South Arabian branch (historically associable with the Queen of Sheba) of the Semitic language family, linguistic specialists should analyse these sounds again, perhaps comparing them with recent tapes on Socotra made by the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

The most thoroughly analysed early sound recordings of a variety of Semitic dialects and musical performances resulted from A. Z. Idelsohn's phonographic expedition to Jerusalem from 1911 to 1913. Idelsohn was a Moravian cantor who was able to capture Hebrew sung and spoken by Jews from Yemen, Anatolia, North Africa, Persia and Baghdad (where the community considered its texts and melodies to have come down without

change from the period of the Babylonian captivity). He also recorded Samaritan, Aramaic, Ladino and even Jewish songs in Arabic and Persian, as well as some Palestinian folk melodies. Idelsohn's careful transcriptions were fully published, but today's technology could enhance the original recordings.

#### *The significance of Leiden's Arabic recordings*

We are only at the first step on a long, exciting journey. Specialists of the Hajj Research Centre are beginning to consult older musicians and religious leaders to learn from their reactions and use them to guide our selections for the Phonogrammarchiv's forthcoming archival record (Fig. 11). Yemeni historians at the University of San'a', especially Qadi Ismail Al-Akwaa, Director-General of Antiquities and Director of the National Library, are arranging for poets and musicians to comment on and explicate the oldest surviving Yemeni sounds when the HSM is able to bring them home later this year. Consequently, the following observations may soon be superseded. Meanwhile, however, we can make the following claims for the Arabic-language wax cylinders, of

which there are about 150, cut in Jeddah between 1907 and 1920 (the earliest and latest provable dates).

First, they are the first sound-recordings made in Arabia or of Arabian voices, if one excludes the Dhofari singer recorded in Vienna in 1904, on the grounds that it belongs to the cultural sphere of Oman, and is therefore somewhat separate from the main part of the peninsula.

Second, they are the first comprehensive corpus of Arabic speech and music with sufficient variety to permit some valid comparisons. The earliest surviving Arabic cylinders (from Chicago, 1893) are sadly only of curiosity value and indeed scarcely audible.

Third, they represent a very broad geographical spread, with Yemeni, Hadrami, Zanzibari and even Indonesian and Sudanese speakers of Arabic, as well as Hijazis.

Fourth, they contain particularly rare — and beautiful — musical performances of every sort: calls to prayer (*adhan*), cantillations of the Koran, wedding songs, traditional poems and individual fresh compositions. There is also a wide variety of instrumental pieces for reeds and stringed instruments, including some such as the Yemeni *oud* (see Fig. 2) no longer played.

Fifth, they contain, possibly, the first environmental recordings. In any case, the town crier who was recorded announcing the departure of ships from the port of Jedda (even if he had been persuaded to cry his traditional proclamations indoors) documents both age-old public communication conventions and the cosmopolitan character of Jedda. Both Lord Mayor Al-Farsi and the Director-General of the Islamic port are today eagerly awaiting the homeward return of those sounds from long ago.

Sixth, they contain, possibly, the first public health announcements. For instance, a proclamation refers to the disposal of refuse, to be 'picked up before dawn by the municipality's employees from the entrance of each building where pilgrims were housed'. These practices are being studied by the Saudi Arabian Minister of Health, Sheikh Faisal Al-Hegelan, and the Director of the Hajj Research Centre, Dr Sami Engawi. Meanwhile, the HSM is assembling other documentation from the archives of the Khedival Corps de Sanitation which successfully supervised the control of infectious diseases for the great pilgrimage to Mecca, despite the enormous challenges of heat, congestion and vastly diverse customs.

Seventh, they contain the first seafarers' travel reports including descriptions of journeys from Jedda via Aden to Bombay, Calcutta and on to Rangoon. Recently, the Technical Adviser to the National Museum in Yemen was seeking information at the India Office on such sea travel. She was trying to trace the origin of some huge wooden beams, probably from the Malabar coast of India, which she had found in reconstructing traditional multi-storey houses at Mocha, and was astonished to actually hear the most useful report from the lips of a sea captain speaking eighty years ago in Jedda!

Finally, from far beyond the Red Sea, the Leiden cylinders have recorded the songs and speech of several languages of Indonesia.

Despite the enormous spatial distance, the Islamic communities of the East Asian island chains were closely linked spiritually, and even by blood, to Jedda and the Holy Land of Islam. This is due to the piety of the East Asian faithful, who frequently constituted the most numerous of the pilgrims each year, and to the fact that

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Laboratory work (re-recording, speed analyses and sound-preservation) at the Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Summer 1985.



many of their teachers came from families such as the Al-Atas who have ancient roots in Hijaz and the Hadramawt.

Professor van Donzel, in collaboration with Dr van Koningsveld, who is editing the correspondence of Professor Snouck Hurgronje, has uncovered evidence that seems to indicate that Snouck Hurgronje had been recording Indonesian languages on Java up to 1906, perhaps even since the late 1890s, using an Edison phonograph. Indeed in one letter, Professor Goldziher of Budapest is requested to consult Vienna's Phonogrammarchiv on the best ways to preserve the delicate wax from decay.

So far, Leiden's thirty-odd Indonesian-language cylinders seem to have been made after 1907 in Jedda, judging by internal evidence, but a search for earlier recordings has begun both in the Netherlands and in Indonesia (where the Assistant Curator of the National Museum in Jakarta dimly recalled noticing wax cylinders in the storage areas). Meanwhile, Dr Philip Yampolsky, who has just returned from five years of ethnomusicological field research in Indonesia, has reviewed the Leiden corpus, noting the extraordinary significance of the cylinders as some of the very earliest

documentation of music in Malay (Indonesian) as well as Achehnese, Gayonese and Sundanese.

Professor John Bowen of Washington University in St Louis is currently exploring, with scholars in Leiden, the potential importance of these recordings. After three years of field research and among the Gayo of Highland Acheh in northern Sumatra (1979/80), Professor Bowen has been able to point to the unique linguistic value of the cylinders for a language which has only very recently been written, though Snouck Hurgronje had collected texts in 1900 which made it possible to publish a dictionary of Gayo in 1907. Aesthetically and socially, the types of Gayo music found in the Leiden cylinders are providing intriguing clues. Most important are the *didong*, celebrations of historical events, and the *sebuku*, ceremonial laments expressing a woman's feeling of loss. The Leiden cylinders may document some radical differences in style and content from what can be recorded today. S. C. De Vale, in his introduction to Lee's study of Gilman's Chicago recordings, reports on recent analyses of the Javanese performances, with regard to Indonesian melodies in the von Hornbostel Demonstration Collection (from Berlin's

Phonogrammarchiv). None the less, we see that much analysis and comparison with living traditions lie ahead of us.

### *And tomorrow?*

In a recent review of museums in the Near East, Dr Suhail Bisharat, the Director of Jordan's National Gallery, has described his extraordinarily successful mission to link creative artists throughout the Islamic world, both with one another and with other artists, even Western Orientalists, who have attempted in various ways to capture cultural data and traditions which are disappearing with incredible speed.

Echoing H.R.H. Princess Wijdan Ali (Founder of Jordan's National Gallery, President of the Royal Society for the Fine Arts, a brilliant painter herself

and a consultant to the HSM in the analyses of early music from Western Arabia), Dr Bisharat has epitomized the hopes of the National Gallery of Jordan in the phrase 'to create a heritage for the future'.

Humbly, the HSM has come to realize that vitally important as preservation is, especially of early photo- and phono-documentation, so too is the very process of trying to understand what we have found, which must itself be recorded. Indeed, HSM photo- and phono-archaeological inquiries began with written note-taking. Now we find that we must ourselves tape-record and chronicle photographically those memories as they are stimulated by early documentation among our older informants in ways too swift to record (without taping) and too precious and rich to allow to disappear.

Finally, much as the HSM/KFA

would gladly be seen as discoverers, we have even more humbly come to realize that we are not. We can at most be considered as sensitive receivers: we have been fortunate to 'tune in to' and receive messages deliberately sent forth into time and space by pioneer photographers and phonographers. They and their subjects were very conscious of the importance of their records, and would have been astonished to learn that their recordings, whether of light-beams or sound-waves, had been forgotten by intervening generations.

The HSM appeals through *Museum* to custodians of heritage throughout the world to search for songs trapped in beeswax — as well as sunbeams caught in silver — before it is too late. ■

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## *Lok Virsa Folk Arts Museum*

### Uxi Mufti

Born in 1941 in Kasur, Punjab. Ph.D. 1967-69 at the University of 17th November, Prague, Czechoslovakia, under Professor Cvckle of the Institute of Philosophy. M.A. in Psychology, Government College, Lahore, 1964-65. Extensive field research and field surveys of cultural anthropology and folklore of Pakistani society and culture. Chief editor of twenty books on Pakistani folklore and culture. Author of *Documentation of Performing Arts in Asia and Computer Retrieval Systems and Documentation on Oral Traditions — Training Manual* (Lok Virsa publications). Long professional experience in audio-visual fields. Executive Director, National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage, Pakistan.

### *Antiquity and continuity*

The arts in Pakistan have evolved over centuries of communal living and wisdom. Though living today, they are linked to the ancient Indus Valley civilizations of Harappa and Moenjodaro (2500 B.C.), enriched by Gandhara (250 B.C.), and influenced by the Silk Route and the Islamic cultures of Central Asia and the Middle East. Thus our traditional arts are deeply rooted.

It is important to document our cultural traditions not merely as things of the past which must be salvaged from the ravages of transition and preserved for posterity, but primarily as a dominant and living culture of present times, which still has an important role to play in the social advancement of our people.

Our ancient civilizations, for instance, of Moenjodaro, Harappa, the Gandhara Silk Route and the upper Indus Valley have not altogether perished. They survive, not merely as archaeological ruins but also in the folkways of the people of Pakistan today. These traditions are a potent tool of communication, and a repository of our history. They are the trustees of our heritage.

To give just a few examples, the *borendo*, a musical instrument as excavated from the ruins of Moenjodaro, is still played by many a shepherd of the Dadu district; the famous Moenjodaro bullock-cart is still used by the farmers of the valley; the beautiful Gandhara jewellery is still a living tradition.

Continuity of cultural traditions is a remarkable aspect of Asian life, endowing it with unbelievable richness.

Colonial rule could not break it and the modern technological onslaught has not succeeded in erasing it.

### *Diversity*

Pakistan is a land of great diversity. Our artistic traditions are as varied as our geography, culture, languages and people.

In the north we have the most extensive glaciers in the world and the highest snow-clad mountain ranges. In the centre stretch out fertile plains and green fields traversed by broad, moody rivers. In the south lie parched deserts and vast stretches of arid land. Farther south are the mild and temperate zones of coastal Makran while in the south-west are the rugged mountains, with their equally rugged inhabitants: the tribal Pathans and Baluchi. Pakistani cultural traditions are likewise extremely diverse: folk arts, crafts, songs, dances, rituals, ceremonies, costumes, languages, dialects and musical instruments vary from region to region and from community to community within the same region. To the cultural documentalist, this poses equally varied problems, as no single format can effectively cover this baffling variety of traditions.

### *Oral character*

One of the important features of Asian indigenous traditions is their oral character. Our culture is transmitted from one generation to another orally and therefore often referred to as a 'verbal art'. The oral character of Asian culture is one of the major reasons for its failure to project itself to the



outside world. Even within Asian countries it is difficult to obtain a document, for instance, on 'How to play the Sarinda' or 'How to practise Sufism'.

The skills of making jewellery, weaving, dancing, carving wood are all to this day transmitted orally, and cannot be acquired from printed sources or formal academic training. Even the great heritage of classical music is largely undocumented. There are hardly any schools except for the practising families of musicians known as '*gharana*', who learnt the art from their forefathers.

With the advent of modern mass communication and an age of widespread cultural diffusion and cultural invasion from the advanced countries of the West, our indigenous traditions are in great danger. The process is like a hurricane sweeping down on us. It is therefore a paramount necessity to document, record, preserve and adopt adequate protective measures against the disruption caused. But we must evolve our own system of documentation if it is to be suited to the genius of our land and the artistic expressions of our people. There is no reason for us to imitate Western concepts in cultural documentation. We must beware of imitative tendencies which are a detrimental consequence of foreign cultural invasions.

One might tend to believe that what is not written is soon likely to die out or that the unwritten is inferior to the written, therefore unworthy of serious consideration. This must be rejected emphatically as nothing but urban snobbery. On the contrary, the fact that Pakistan's folk culture is not something inscribed in books and preserved in cold print, but is actually lived, talked of, believed in, felt and transmitted, ensures its continuity as well as longevity in relation to written cultures.

Also, one might wonder how Pakistan, being so diverse, comprising so many ethnic groups and cultures, can hold together as one people. Here again it is Pakistan's folklore, popular beliefs, popular religion and attitudes, its common values and ideals which make it one nation. This unity within diversity is very difficult for foreigners to comprehend. How could a diverse folklore comprising so many languages, races, communities and cultures be a unity?

The essential unity of Pakistan's diverse folklore is the contribution of the great mystics and Sufis, of whom there are many, and they have a tremendous impact on the rural life of Pakistanis. There are hundreds and thousands of shrines as well as living mystics who continue the tradition of their masters.

Many of these Sufis were scholars, musicians, poets of the highest order and devoted their lives to the good of the common people amongst whom they are still revered. In fact the Sufis were the only ones who actively used indigenous folklore to communicate their message.

Indeed the bulk of Pakistan's folklore is the contribution of the Sufis. A large number of folk-songs, devotional songs, dances and musical instruments which now comprise our popular heritage are the innovations of these mystics. Almost all folk festivals held in Pakistan are related to their shrines. These festivals are known as '*urs*', or anniversary celebrations, and are accompanied by spontaneous singing, dancing, acrobatics and other expressions of folk art (Figs 12-14). Though the language and the form of their message may vary from region to region, yet the content of their message, or its underlying values, remains the same. The festivals around the shrines of the mystics are not religious in character, neither is their music. They are folk festivals and appeal to all people of the land equally, regardless of race, creed or religion. The mystical folklore imbibes the message of oneness, synthesis and completeness for all.

Most of the museums in Pakistan are historical or archaeological in orientation. There are several good museums in these fields, especially those at Taxila, and the Swat Museum of Pakistan. Some of them house small ethnological collections. The Lahore Museum houses a gallery on Punjab, the Peshawar Museum on tribal crafts of the north and the Karachi Museum houses a display of the crafts of the Sind. The museums are controlled by the Department of Archaeology of Pakistan and plans to expand ethnological collections are in progress.

Collections of rare and high-quality folk art and traditional craft objects are still largely retained by private individuals or affluent families. Almost every landlord, former Raja or Nawab of an

area has a personal collection of such objects of value and beauty. This is particularly true of precious jewellery, stone craft, hand-crafted weapons and embroidered fabrics. However, perhaps the bulk of the existing artefacts, jewellery and wood-carvings of the rich northern areas of the Ghandhara civilization and the upper Indus valleys are being smuggled out of Pakistan to foreign markets, particularly in Kabul, Afghanistan, which has built up a thriving market.

None of the existing archaeological museums have workshops or training courses for craftsmen. Such activities fall within the domain of the National College of Arts in Lahore. The Export Promotion Bureau of the Small Industries Corporation of Pakistan organizes



some regional workshops within the craft areas. There are a number of women's organizations in Pakistan, such as the All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) and the regional Social Welfare Associations, some of which have successfully organized workshops along commercial lines for community crafts. In such workshops, however, quality control is of little concern, and most of them, in fact, produce depersonalized crafts as a consequence of their attempts to modernize the field.

Consequently there has been a rapid decline in traditional arts and crafts. In response to this alarming situation, Lok Virsa, also known as the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage, was established in 1974.

### What is Lok Virsa?

The preservation and promotion of the traditional culture, folk arts and folklore are instrumental in strengthening a nation's identity. Pakistan, like most other developing countries of Asia and Africa, is in a transitional phase. Along with the challenge of preserving its cultural heritage, Pakistan also has to meet the needs of a nation in the modern industrial world.

Tradition and change go together. They are like the two wheels of a carriage that must move in unison for advancement. No nation can afford to progress in industry, science and technology at the expense of its cultural awareness.

Lok Virsa works towards creating

awareness of our cultural legacy by collecting, documenting and projecting it.

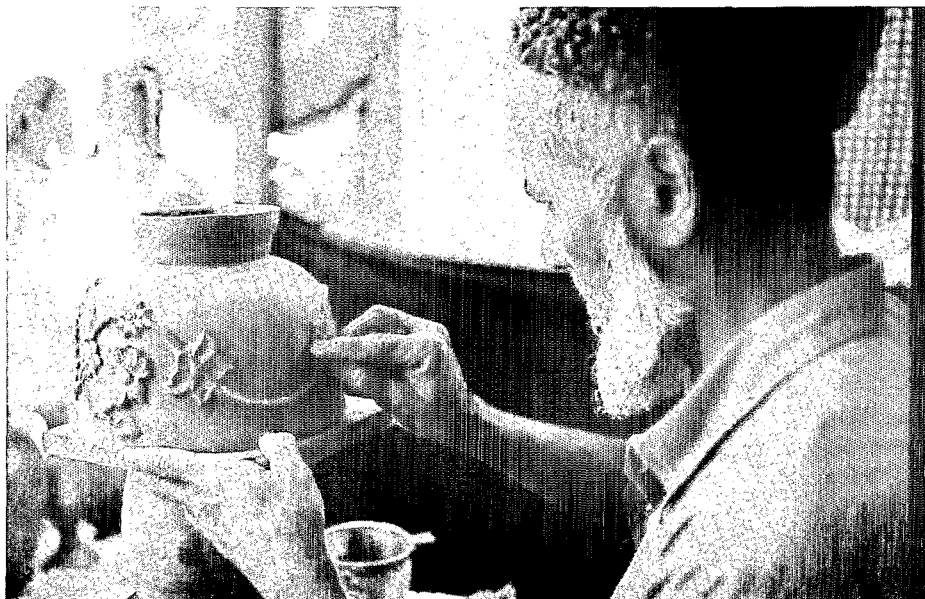
This work is concerned particularly with Pakistan's folklore, oral traditions and regional culture.

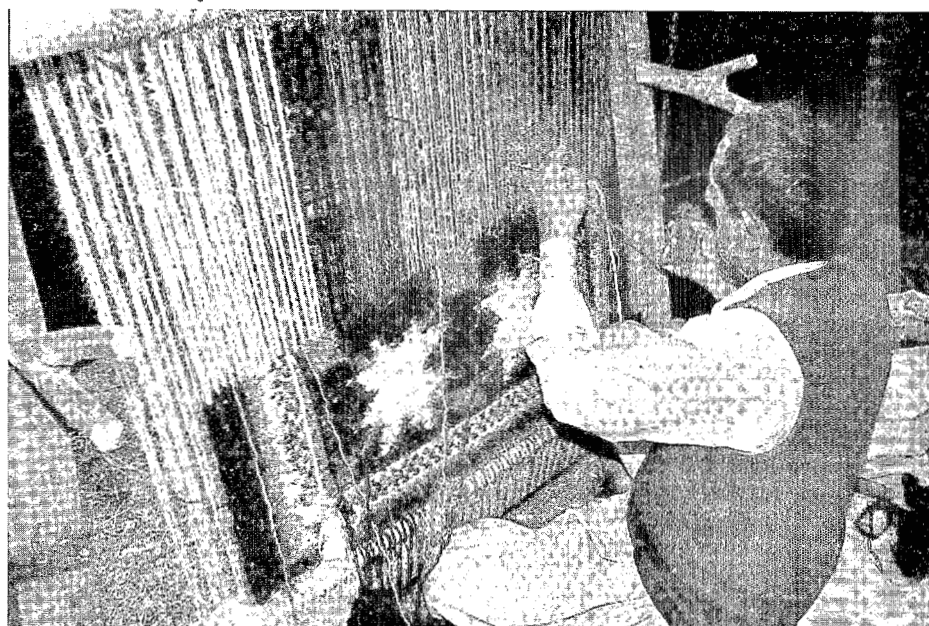
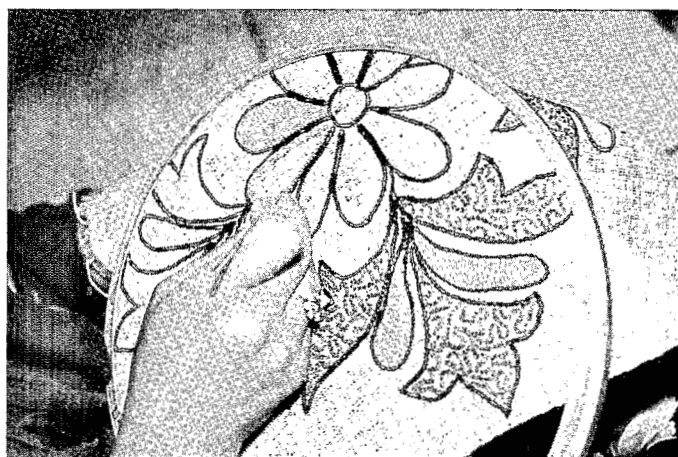
Within a decade, Lok Virsa has grown from a fledgling endeavour to a complex whose projects and activities span the roots of the entire nation.

Over the past century an urban monopolization of art and culture has increasingly overshadowed the regional and rural tradition, while a great cultural influx from the West has led to a gradual process of severance from the roots of indigenous culture. Lok Virsa was established as a systematic way of preserving and strengthening a fading identity. This is not an attempt to hold back progress or turn back the clock, but merely to institute measures of protection against disruption. We must develop from the depth of our own being and step forward to meet the modern world. With the advent of modern mass communication bringing cultural diffusion, and indeed invasion, from the technologically advanced nations, the traditional customs, beliefs, arts and crafts are being rapidly obliterated. The process is almost like a hurricane sweeping over us. In the absence of adequate protection it is likely to erase our cultural heritage completely. The rediscovery of Pakistan's historical tradition and its reintegration with modern elements require extensive knowledge of the roots of this heterogeneous culture. Scientific research and the collection of material is necessary for every project Lok Virsa undertakes. Film



12, 13, 14  
Artisans' Festival, Lok Virsa, 1984 and  
1985.





15-19  
Craftsmen at work.



footage, field surveys, tape and disc recordings, dissertations, original monographs, ethnological artefacts, rare manuscripts and microfiche documentation are all stored in Lok Virsa's central archives for reference and research.

This material consists of legends, songs, folk romances and tales, children's games and rhymes, beliefs, rituals, traditional festivals and celebrations, the sayings of sages, and the age-old customs which express the true genius of the people of Pakistan. This folklore, acquired simply through inheritance, has great significance because our own self-awareness and national consciousness must precede everything else.

### *Rediscovery and research*

Lok Virsa conducts a village-to-village, town-to-town, district-to-district cultural survey of Pakistan. Mobile recording and film units have been set up for field research, documentation and collection of the material and intellectual components of our indigenous traditions. These cultural materials are preserved for posterity and for the use of researchers, scholars, schools, colleges and universities. Perhaps even more importantly, they are made available to professionals in radio, television and the print media.

The work is not carried out in the spirit of museum storage of antiquities with no attempt to preserve what is still vital in the culture. Lok Virsa does not see itself as a storehouse for archaeological remains but as a house of living heritage which has a role to play in the life of present-day Pakistan. In it measures are taken to identify and categorize individuals, groups or classes of notable masters and practitioners in each of the traditional arts and skills, and to ensure their continuance by providing suitable incentives and support.

Many of the arts are becoming industrialized and no longer remain individual. Here unfortunately a developing country like Pakistan is at the consumer end of the process. We are compelled to import such industrial art products as films, books, magazines, video and audio tapes, and television programmes. The result is a rapid transplantation of alien art-forms to the detriment of our own cultural traditions. Lok Virsa therefore aims to

strengthen national art industries for the propagation of Pakistani art forms.<sup>1</sup>

The Virsa Research Centre conducts field surveys and records folk traditions with mobile recording units travelling from village to village. It also has field collectors based in remote areas of the country.

Legends and tales, romances and songs, games and rhymes, festivals and celebrations, beliefs and rituals, pronouncements of saints and Sufis, are collected and preserved systematically in a national archive. Over 10,000 tape-recordings are stored in the library, which is open to all. The Research Centre reference library is the only library in the country with such a large collection of books and journals pertaining to Pakistani folklore, ethnology, cultural anthropology, art history and crafts. The numerous manuscripts, original reports, field surveys and research monographs on Pakistani culture are all available to the public.

The research centre encourages and sponsors research in regional languages, folk literature, cultural history, arts, crafts and aspects of folklore, which include: (a) folk-songs, seasonal songs, work-songs, folk romances and folk-tales; (b) children's games, legends, nursery rhymes and tales; (c) animal fables and legends attached to mountains, lakes, rivers, ruined castles, etc.; (d) traditional festivals, superstitions and beliefs, customs and rituals, celebrations at birth, weddings and funerals, good and bad omens, apparitions and dreams, jokes and anecdotes, proverbs and idioms; and (e) arts, crafts, ethnotechnology, ethnomusicology, ethnological data and history, folk literature and oral traditions.

### *Virsa Museum*

Between 1974 and 1981 the museum grew from a small subsection into an integral division of Lok Virsa. The museum galleries house a rare collection of folk arts and ethnological artefacts, each of which has been chosen by an expert as a prime example of the unique craftsmanship or tradition it features. The displays are imaginatively arranged and frequently changed during a year, to accommodate new collections.

Since the museum has the unique task of documenting living art (Figs. 15-19), it calls upon all artisans to

1. Lok Virsa is recognized by Unesco, the World Craft Council, the International Council of Music, the Asian Cultural Centre for Unesco, the International Council of Museums and other similar world organizations for the dissemination of art products abroad.



bring their crafts annually to the people at the Artisans' Festival. This festival is held each spring at the museum complex in Islamabad. It attracts over 100,000 participants and lasts for five days. Lok Virsa supports the craftsmen, awarding cash prizes and gaining recognition for their work as part of a living national treasure. The festival also features folk entertainments, puppet shows, folk-dances, concerts and exotic craft bazaars.

A national crafts council was born under the auspices of Lok Virsa Museum in 1983 as a non-governmental organization for the promotion of traditional skills. Today it is endeavouring to become a federal institution in its own right but remains closely affiliated to the Virsa Museum.

Lok Virsa publishes books, pre-recorded audio and video cassettes, transparencies, view cards, multimedia kits and other cultural materials on Pakistan. It would not be unjust to call Lok Virsa the cultural storehouse of literature pertaining to Pakistani traditions. Original research works in all regional languages of Pakistan, along with Urdu renderings of the regional texts, are published. Patronage has expanded from scholars to the general public, and the Centre now publishes two books a month.

Over 100 books have been produced by the Centre in several series which include Folk-Songs, Folk-Tales, Folk Romances, Epics, Folk Entertainments, Folk Poetry, Sufi Poetry, Cultural Information, Cultural Gazeteers and Surveys, and Folk Classics.

The publishing house aims to make regional folk literature available in the national language, so as to promote greater understanding and closer fraternity between Pakistanis and to make cultural literature available to schools, colleges, universities and individual social scientists. Many Lok Virsa publications are prescribed reading in major universities at home and abroad, and a number of them have won national awards.

The Centre also publishes professionally made video- and audio-cassette recordings, for storage and reference as well as for the dissemination of authentic musical heritage, which are also used in education and the promotion of traditional culture. The Centre is already the largest folk-music publisher in Pakistan. The Media Centre endeavours to make a

permanent video record of the living colourful images of Pakistan's folk culture. The professional U-Matic and the convenient VHS formats are perfect for creating visual records of rituals, customs, festivals and traditions that are dying out.

A professional video recording studio has been established by the Centre at Islamabad, with mobile units that can quickly reach any part of the country to capture an event. Colour prints, transparencies, super-8 and 16 mm film, as well as the professional U-Matic video formats, are used by the Centre to produce high-quality broadcasting material which is compatible with international norms.

Whether providing a musical journey through Pakistan via the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union prize-winning *Circarama Box* or a fascinating study of the ancient civilization of Moenjodaro, the sound-slide kits produced by the Centre are a pleasure to experience. These inexpensive and creative educational kits consist of slides synchronized with a soundtrack, along with a booklet as background material. Schools and educational institutions are offered free viewings. The Centre also offers professional documentaries and video programmes to television networks, universities and other institutions, on a rental or sales basis. It plans to market its productions on VHS cassettes for home consumption as well.

#### *Virsa Promotional Centre*

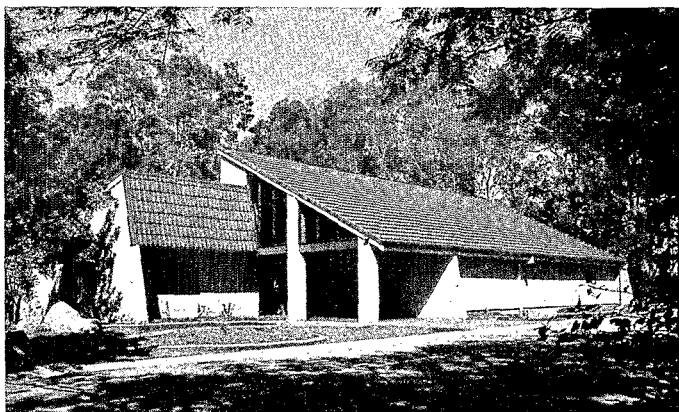
The Promotional Centre is the sales outlet and public shop window for Lok Virsa products. Located in the heart of Islamabad Supermarket, with a network of dealers all over the country, the centre sells all Lok Virsa products, with reduced rates for students and educational institutions. It also serves as an information centre on cultural programmes, projects, recent productions, festivals and art publications on Pakistan.

It is the policy of Lok Virsa to spend two-thirds of its total annual grants from the Federal Government of Pakistan on productive programming rather than house-keeping. It generates additional resources through nationwide sale of books and products. It tries to involve all talented Pakistanis in the implementation of its policies and programmes. Although it has no

branches elsewhere in Pakistan, its commissions work and offers participation to regional poets, writers, researchers, artisans, artists, social scientists, scholars, educationists, folklorists, musicians and students in remote regions of the country. Lok Virsa is the only institution offering grants for cultural research to scholars and students, particularly those from remote regions of the country. It offers incentives and support to all talented Pakistanis. ■



## *A museum reborn: the Abbey Museum in Australia*



20  
Exterior of the new Abbey  
Museum, Caboolture.  
The main gallery occupies  
the section to the right.

### Neville Agnew

Born in 1938, he was for many years a research chemist and university lecturer in chemistry. He joined the Queensland Museum in 1980 as head of its conservation section and works on a variety of projects associated with the activities of a general museum whose main fields are natural history, technology, anthropology and archaeology. These projects include preservation of palaeontological field sites, maritime conservation and archaeological sites. He has advised and assisted the Abbey Museum since 1981, and in 1984 became chairman of its board of management.

### Michael Strong

Born into the Confraternity of the Kingdom of Christ in Cyprus in 1950. Between 1974 and 1979 he studied using the library research facilities of the University of Queensland. He has been responsible for co-ordinating and planning the re-establishment programme of the Abbey Museum since his appointment as Director in 1979. Activities include fieldwork with the University of Queensland at several aboriginal sites and lecturing on a variety of subjects, including history and art.

### *Introduction*

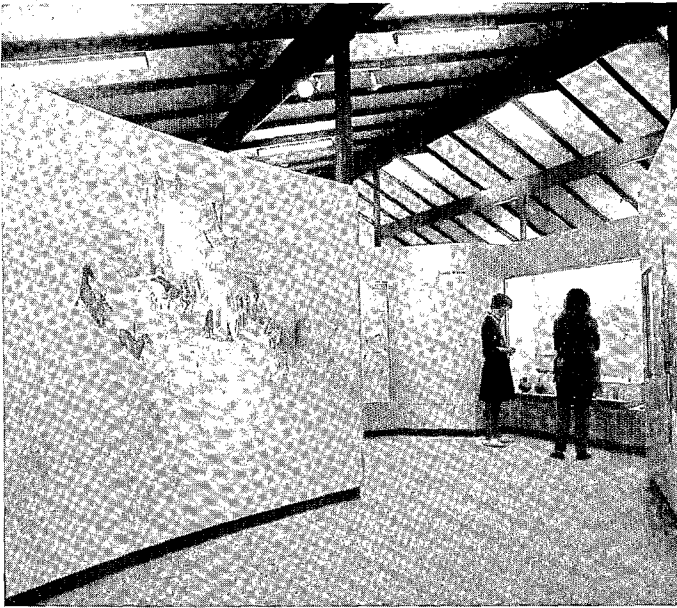
Fifty-three years ago the Abbey Folk Park at New Barnet, London, opened to the public. It was one of the first folk parks in the world, and the first in the United Kingdom,<sup>1</sup> and was an immediate success. Its growth was extraordinarily rapid. Within three years its collections had tripled in size to no less than 35,000 objects displayed in forty buildings. Under the driving force of its founder John Sebastian Marlow Ward (1885-1949) the folk park continued to flourish until the Second World War, throughout which it remained closed. Up till then it had displayed significant collections of antiquities from some thirty-five cultures spanning 250,000 years of history. The present owners of these collections are the Confraternity of the Kingdom of Christ, a religious community founded by Ward at the same time as the folk park. After the war, lack of funds forced the Confraternity to sell the bulk of the collections and emigrate, first to Cyprus, then to Egypt, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and finally Australia, taking with them the residue of the collections of artefacts and works of art. Here, after a hiatus of nearly forty years, the Abbey Museum, as it is now called, has been re-established — not as a folk park, but as a small museum with modern displays based on the original collec-

tions. Few museums, if any, can have suffered eclipse for so long to re-emerge on the other side of the world.

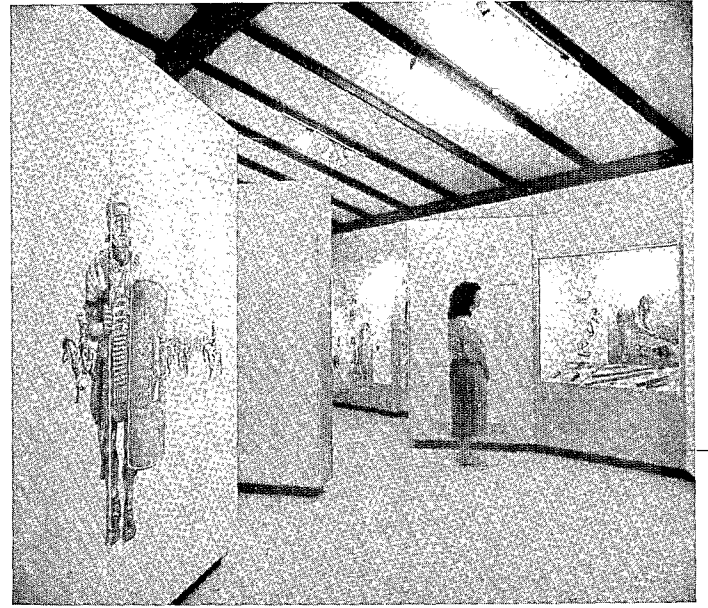
The Abbey Museum is situated in pleasant countryside near Caboolture, north of Brisbane, on the east coast of Australia, where the community settled in 1965. This antipodean setting is far removed geographically, and in time, from the London of the 1920s where its progenitor had achieved such success. However, Ward's ethos of secular display — that of seeking to relate mankind and his cultures and artefacts — has survived in the displays of the newly reopened museum. The reopening in 1986 of the Abbey Museum was the culmination of seven years' work. When the project began in 1979, the collection was badly housed and in dire need of conservation. There were no funds available to be used for a building, and there was no plan or policy for the future of the collection.

This article shows how orchestration of local resources, motivation and encouragement of private individuals with essential and necessary skills, and a carefully designed approach to suitable philanthropic foundations and the business sector worked to generate the funds needed for a firm museological framework for the reascent Abbey Museum and a secure foundation for the future. It is hoped that this may provide encouragement and parallels

1. The idea of folk parks originated in Scandinavian countries. See J. S. M. Ward, 'The Abbey Folk Park, New Barnet', *The Museums Journal*, Vol. 36, September 1936, p. 239, for an account of the collections and displays at this time.



21



22

for other small museums which, like the Abbey Museum, hold culturally valuable material in need of cataloguing, study, conservation and good display.

### *A beginning*

In 1979, when Michael Strong was appointed Director of the Abbey Museum by the Confraternity, a beginning had to be made simultaneously on several fronts. Of prime importance was the compilation of a detailed catalogue to determine what had survived the peregrinations of the community. Much of what remained of the original collections — some 4,500 items — had been damaged in transit and had been in storage for nearly thirty years. Secondly, it was necessary to decide on conservation priorities, as the material had been deteriorating in the sub-tropical climate of Queensland.

The third imperative at this time was to raise funds to rehabilitate the museum and its collection and provide adequate housing and display facilities for it. The collection was examined by various knowledgeable people. It attracted interest in Australia and gradually word spread that it contained valuable material in need of research, conservation and display to the public. The cultural value of the collection thus provided the springboard for submissions to Australian philanthropic organizations for development funds. The cost of a small building was estimated in 1980 at A\$100,000. The

submissions, prepared carefully, with precise aims clearly stated, were successful, and substantial amounts were granted by the Utah Foundation, the Ian Potter Foundation, the Myer Foundation and the George Alexander Foundation for a building to house and display the collection.

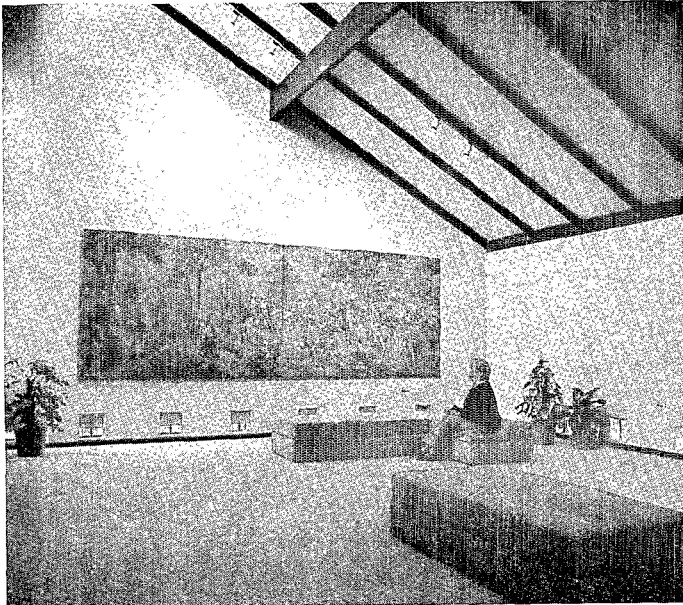
Early in the project, the Board<sup>2</sup> had decided not to wait for all the required funds to become available but to build as money came in. This proved to be a sound decision, as increases in the cost of materials and labour would have added many thousands of dollars to the overall costs.

The community mustered support through its church activity group and a Friends of the Abbey Museum was formed. A local supermarket chain became interested and provided several grants. However, while finance was sought at every opportunity, it was the comprehensive submissions that had the best success. Another important aspect of the funding campaign was the value of maintaining a high profile through the media and sponsors. During the three years that construction was under way sponsor funds totalled A\$250,000; the financial value of contributions, if materials, free expertise and labour are included, would be over A\$750,000.

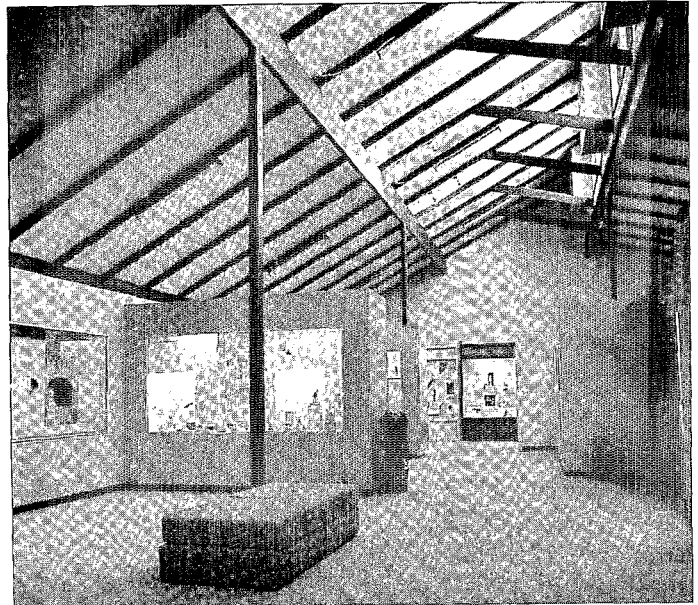
Meanwhile contact had been established by the Director with the Queensland Museum, the state museum, which allowed its facilities to be used for photographing, documenting, and conserving the Abbey collection. For several years, one day a week was

spent by the Director on these tasks at the Queensland Museum, using its facilities and discussing the developing project with curators, designers and artists. This proved to be of immense value in deciding the direction and scope of the developing museum. The Queensland Museum also assists small and regional museums with annual grants from government funds for specific purposes and projects. These grants made it possible to purchase storage cabinets.

Ever since the idea of a new building to house and display the collection of the Abbey Museum had taken root, the Director had been evaluating various plans to create as modern a building as funds would allow. The idea was that the building should both harmonize with the artefacts and blend with the environment. The building which finally emerged was a single-storey, high-ceilinged structure comprising a foyer, a display gallery, a rest area and a combined administrative and storage area (Fig. 20). Air-conditioning was rejected as it was too expensive to operate; instead four large draught-extractor fans, mounted high on the east wall with filtered air intakes at floor level, were installed to provide air circulation and cooling in the summer, when ambient conditions often exceed 35 °C (80 per cent relative humidity). Reflective insulation was also used throughout the construction. The floor space is 363 m<sup>2</sup> (length 26 m, width 15 m). The roof rises steeply to a height of 7 m in the centre. This work, with the exterior facilities of



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driveway and car park, was completed by mid-1984. A further two years of intensive work on the displays still lay ahead.

Again, in mounting the display programme every avenue of outside assistance was sought. In every centre of population, talented people, such as architects, designers and printers are to be found, who can contribute their abilities. It is a measure of the success of the Abbey Museum that by opening day some 300 people had been involved in the work on a voluntary basis.

The Director endeavoured to follow John Ward's approach, though allowing for the obvious differences between a large open-air folk museum and a small modern gallery. He designed the framework of the displays and formulated a detailed brief in collaboration with artists and designers who volunteered their services, working in the evenings or during their spare time.

It was fortunate that during this two-year period the Australian Government initiated a programme for unemployed people, mainly young, to work for up to twelve months, to gain experience which would help them find permanent employment. The Abbey Museum was thus able to employ two trained artists to design the case layouts and produce the required graphics and murals. Later, a second project under the same scheme provided the services of a keyboard operator and a screenprinter. The production of the labels was one of the most

successful components of the display programme. For this aspect of the display another organization, the Queensland College of Art, made its computerized typesetting service available, which was integrated with the Apple 2 computer terminal at the Abbey Museum. Typesetting commands were programmed and labels were typed onto discs which then produced a high-quality bromide text suitable for screenprinting and photocopying.

### Displays

The museum is approached through an entrance where slate contrasts with the grey of split-brick concrete walls. Over the entrance is a German stained-glass panel, 'The Donor King', circa A.D. 1650, set in a mullioned window. Inside, the lighting is subdued, floors are carpeted and the exposed roof beams create something of a Tudor atmosphere. The floor plan was designed to allow maximum use of the display area and to beckon the visitor in by allowing glimpses of the displays that lie ahead. Care was taken to achieve a smooth flow-pattern and avoid reflections from opposing panels of glass. Each case, through its colour schemes, photographs and line drawings, attempts to create a harmonious association with the objects displayed, while the labels, silk-screened in an old-style typeface, provide information on the artefacts and the social conditions of their period, together with relevant historical detail.

21 Looking down the time-passage on Western Europe. Colour mural of a Celtic village links the bronze age case to the Roman Britain display. (Mural by Brisbane artist Robert Allen.)

22 View from the Roman Britain display encompasses the bronze and neolithic sections. The illustrations were painted by artists employed under the Community Employment Programme.

23 The rest area is used to separate the time-passage from the non-thematic displays. On the wall is a late-seventeenth century tapestry.

24 Long view down the non-thematic display gallery: the Cyprus display is to the left, Asian displays at the far end. Above can be seen two of the large forced-air fan units.

2. At the beginning of 1983 the Confraternity had appointed a Board of Management and made it responsible for finance and policy.

A time-passage occupies the first half of the building. This covers 250,000 years in Western Europe, particularly the British Isles. It traces the growth of culture from the first hunters at Swanscombe through the neolithic, bronze and iron ages to Roman Britain (Figs. 21, 22). The time-passage continues on through medieval to modern times. The end of the time-passage opens onto a rest area with seating, where a floor-to-ceiling window looks out onto a natural forest of eucalyptus and casuarinas (Fig. 23). The remainder of the museum is given over to non-thematic displays illustrating the scope of the collection, objects from the Etruscan, pre-Roman Cypriot, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Asian and Islamic worlds (Fig. 24).

### *Visitors to the museum*

In south-east Queensland, which is the main catchment area for visitors to the Abbey Museum, there are few displays of antiquities and archaeological material, and very few from Europe. At present there are some small displays in the Classics Department of the University of Queensland and a very limited amount at the Queensland Museum. The Abbey Museum thus offers a useful addition to the spectrum of museum material available in the region. Indeed, apart from the state galleries and museums in the capital cities there is no regional museum in Australia displaying such a substantial collection of overseas material.

Visitors arrive in school groups, by coach or car. The electrification of the rail link between Caboolture and Brisbane this year has placed the museum within easy reach of many people. It will undoubtedly become increasingly involved with higher educational institutions (universities, tertiary education colleges and adult education centres) which seek to make use of its resources.

### *Cataloguing the collection*

Ward's inventories of the Abbey Folk Park collections at New Barnet were brief and entries usually consist only of the item, its provenance and the date. Many items were listed in bulk. The second inventory lists some 40,000 items. When the Confraternity left the United Kingdom in 1946

many items were sold to raise money to defray costs incurred in a protracted legal dispute in which it had become embroiled, and to pay for the journey to Cyprus. In 1979 when work started again on the residue of the collections, now depleted to about 4,500 items, it immediately became apparent that the cataloguing and identification would need to start virtually from scratch. Help was sought from scholars in Australia and abroad and many responded generously, and continue to do so, by identifying artefacts from photographic prints and other information sent to them. Among these specialists and scholars have been curatorial staff in various departments of the British Museum, the Museum of London, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Leeds City Museum, the Ashmolean Museum, the Corning Museum of Glass, University College London and the University of Sydney.

Recently, scholars have been able to visit the Abbey Museum to examine relevant parts of the collection, and the first publication, which is on the Cypriot material, has recently appeared.<sup>3</sup> Work on other parts of the collection — the British Upper Palaeolithic, Etruscan, Islamic and Mesopotamian — is proceeding. Eventually it is hoped that a complete catalogue of the collection can be produced from publications in learned journals.

### *Conservation needs of the collection*

The coastal Queensland climate, with its seasonal and daily fluctuations in both humidity and temperature, is extremely harmful to museum collections displayed or stored in an uncontrolled environment. During the summer rainy season, when humidity soars, mould spreads rapidly on the surface of leather, wood and other organic materials, while iron objects rust and bronze antiquities may undergo accelerated corrosion. During the winter, when humidity drops to a lower level, other harmful processes take over. Wooden objects, panels and paintings which have stabilized at higher moisture content lose water vapour to the atmosphere and begin to crack and warp. These were some of the problems noted in the Abbey Museum collections when Neville Agnew first saw the material in February 1981. As a result of discussions, the

Director undertook a detailed examination of the entire collection to ascertain which items were most urgently in need of treatment. This survey was completed later in 1981 and items were categorized according to conservation priority.

Cleaning, checking, conservation and restoration of artefacts and art works of the age, quality and value of those in the Abbey Museum presented major problems. Such work is, of course, very costly. The only possibility, given the shortage of funds, was to approach the Conservation of Cultural Materials Section of the Canberra College of Advanced Education, which as it turned out, welcomed the opportunity for students to undertake, under supervision, the restoration and conservation of items which would not usually be available to trainee students in Australia. Since 1982 metalwork and paintings have been accepted for treatment. In 1983 the range of materials was extended to pottery, glass and lacquer. Several works of art and many artefacts have been splendidly restored or conserved.

The conservation task in terms both of treatment and accommodation, seemed insuperable at the beginning of 1981. Now, some seven years later, it is encouraging to see how much has been achieved. The most urgent conservation work on some of the artefacts has been done and the others are well stored in steel cabinets in the new building. The safety of the collection now seems assured.

### *The future*

After the long years of uncertainty, the Abbey Museum now appears to be stable, with a vigorous policy of scholarship and conservation taking shape. The lesson from the last seven years of the museum's renaissance has been that people are willing to support a cause with skill and expertise if a visible and continuing dedication is apparent.

Philanthropic and business institutions likewise will give money and assistance if a tactful approach is made. That funding is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain seems to be a universal problem. The need for museums to exercise a higher public profile with emphasis on education, and their use as a teaching resource, is essential.<sup>4</sup>

Identification of what aspect of the



museum's holdings can be 'marketed' is a key part of garnering financial support. In the re-establishment of the Abbey Museum, its wealth of European material and the scarcity of this elsewhere in Australia was the obvious line to take.

Plans for the future of the Abbey Museum encompass growth of both facilities and collections. Of importance is a gallery to house the collection of manuscripts, prints and old masters. Involvement with the aboriginal heritage is also necessary. One of the oldest aboriginal sites in the area was discovered recently by Michael Strong, working with the University of Queensland, and the museum has been approved to hold and store material from this site. Expansion of the collection, also in Oceanic ethnography, will balance the predominantly European bias which reflects Ward's interests and material available to him in the 1930s. Loan agreements with other institutions have been arranged: the Queensland Museum and the University of Sydney have lent material to fill gaps in the displays. It is hoped that this arrangement can be widened eventually to other institutions.

The Abbey Museum is dedicated to high standards of museology and display, and it will endeavour to enhance its collections, conserve them, study them and publish the results. ■

3. Jennifer M. Webb, 'Corpus of Cypriote Antiquities. Cypriote Antiquities in the Abbey Museum, Queensland, Australia', *Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology*, Vol. XX, No. 12, 1986 (published by Paul Aströms Förlag, Gothenburg).

4. K. Hudson, 'A Consumer Crusade. The First Seven Years of the European Museum of the Year Award', *Museum*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2 (142), 1984, p. 111.



25

## A pumice-brick playhouse

### Dorothee Dennert

Born in 1943 in Siegen, Federal Republic of Germany. Teacher-training studies in Bonn and West Berlin. Educationist at the Koblenz Museum since 1977. Previously worked in school and at university. Has contributed to guide leaflets and Koblenz museum exhibition catalogues and written work reports for specialist periodicals.

### Ulrich Löber

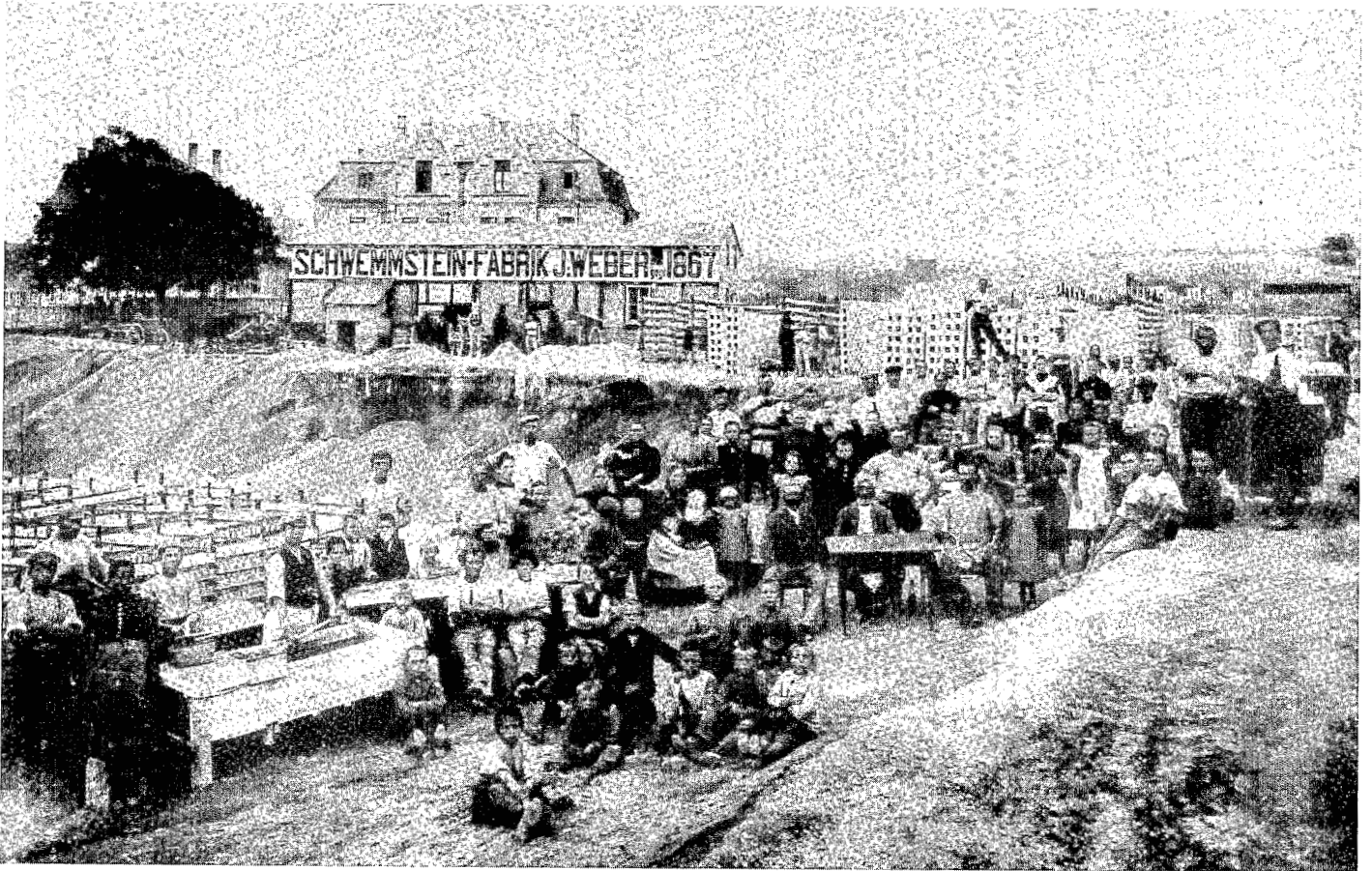
Born in the Federal Republic of Germany. Studies cultural anthropology, Germanistics and prehistory at Marburg University. He holds a Doctor's degree. Scientific adviser for cultural history museums and deputy director of the Rhine Museum Office. Principal director of the Koblenz Landsmuseum since 1976 and national representative for staff of local history and culture museums in the Koblenz administrative area. Many publications on German folklore and museology.

In 1969 the Koblenz Museum put into storage the exhibits that had up to then been displayed in its folklore, prehistory and early history departments to make room for a public exhibition on *Technical Antiquities*. The resources already available were considerable, and included items that had previously been assigned to the folklore department, such as the heavy wine-making equipment used in the Rhine and Moselle vineyards, and other machinery that had been stripped down during the preceding months and moved to the museum.

Heading the list was the production equipment of the Middle Rhine pumice industry, which is still in operation in the area of the Neuwied Basin (Figs. 25-33). This extended the coverage of our documentation to a branch of industry which, together with wine and pottery, had largely determined the economic structure of the greater Koblenz area. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the pumice industry regained its importance, as it was needed for the task of rebuilding the towns and villages.

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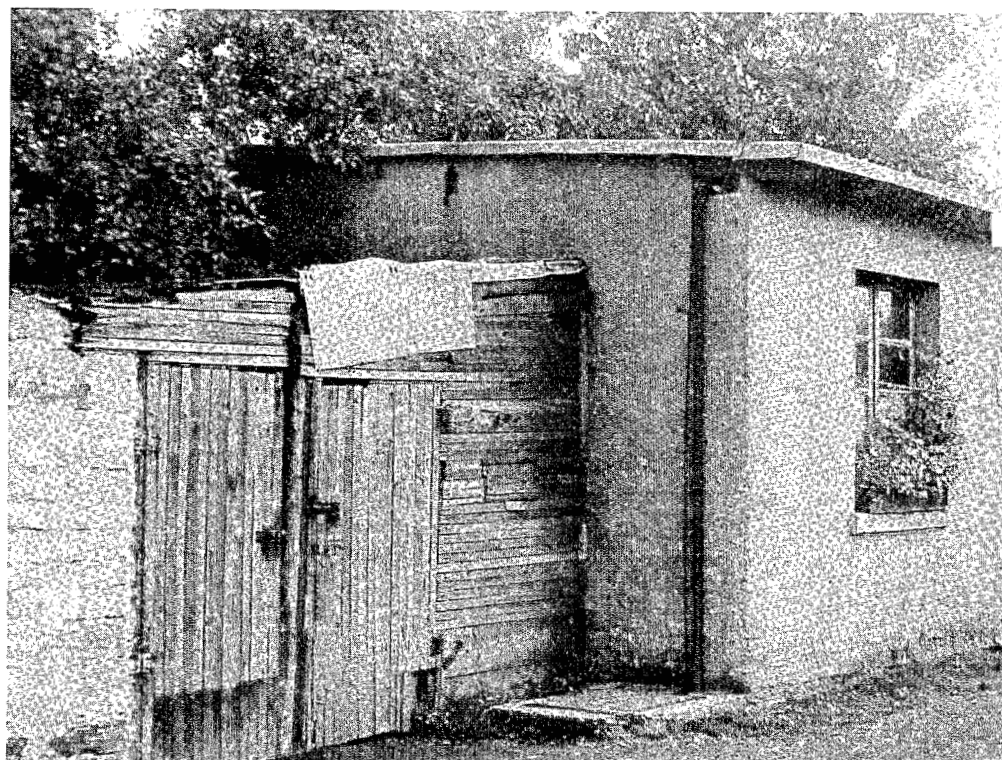
Pumice workers, horse-drawn carts and drying stands, around 1900.



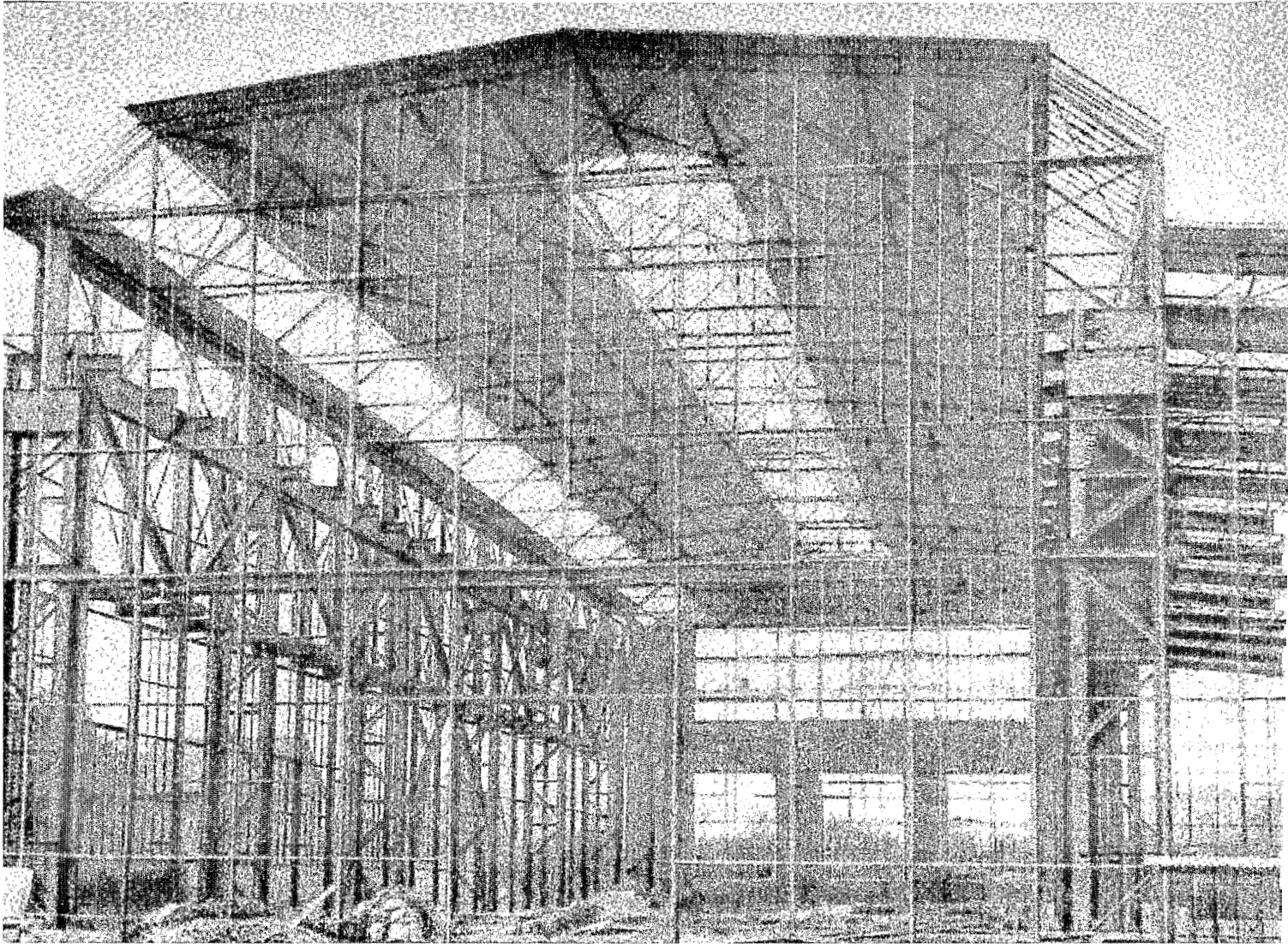
26  
Staff of the Jakob Weber pumice-brick  
factory, Weissenthurm, around 1900.

28  
Roof construction with reinforced  
pumice slabs.

27  
Migrant worker's houses built out of  
pumice brick, around 1900.







Only a few years after it was first opened, the Koblenz Museum was attracting large numbers of visitors because of its unusual collections and its prominent location in the Ehrenbreitstein Fortress, perched on a cliff dropping straight down into the Rhine where it meets the Moselle. There were 20,000 visitors in 1960, 50,000 in 1970, consisting of both German and foreign tourists, and nearly 300,000 in 1980. The current forecast is that about 400,000 people will visit the museum over the nine months that it is open each year. This will make it one of the busiest museums in the Federal Republic of Germany.

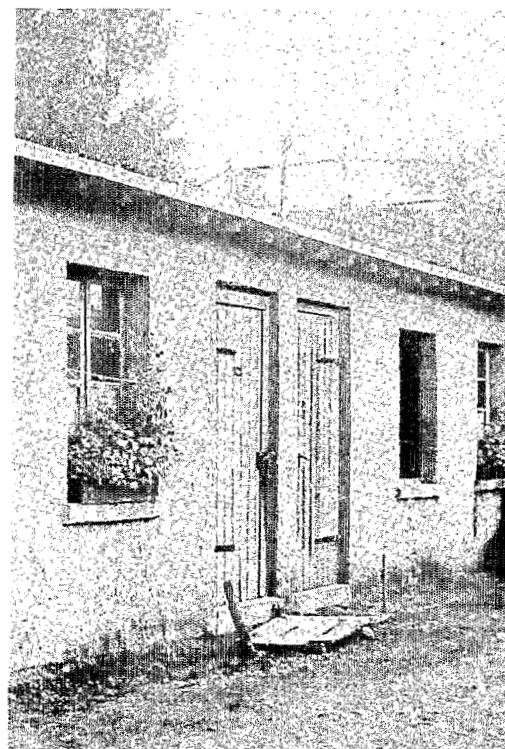
#### *How the idea arose*

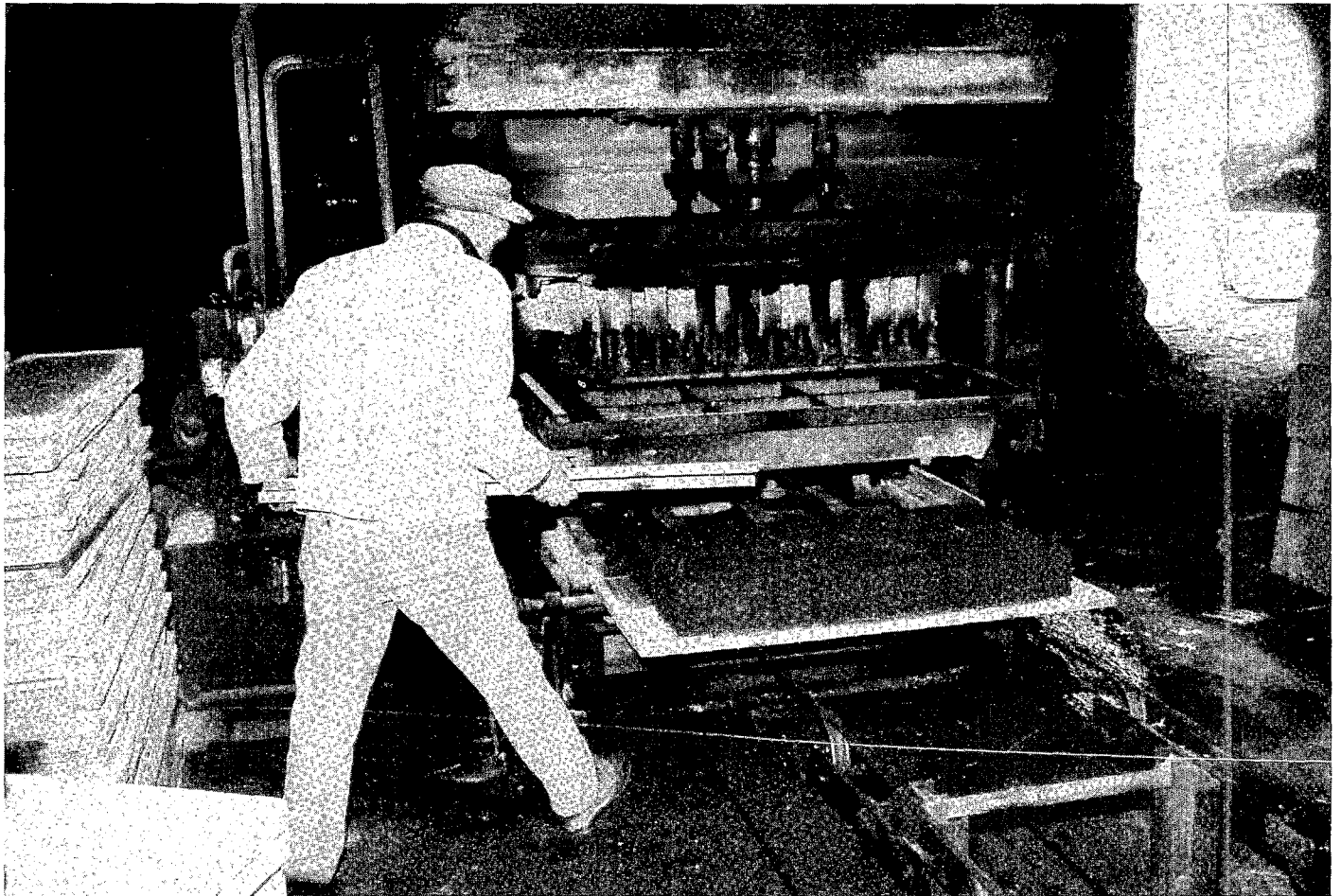
In 1986 it was decided that the pumice department of the Koblenz Museum would be the focal point of a study holiday for 8- to 10-year-olds. We

sought advice on what we could teach children of this age-group in this department, and how.

The historical sense of 8- to 10-year-olds is limited to very simple periods. 'In the old days' means during their parents' and grandparents' time before they were born. 'Long, long ago' there were Romans and Stone Age people. The difference between 80 and 300 years ago is not something that children of this age can readily grasp.<sup>1</sup> Children from the Neuwied Basin, the only area in the Federal Republic of Germany with pumice resources suitable for brick-making, know what a pumice brick looks like, they know that it is used for building and they know that there are large pumice-brick storage sites in their neighbourhood from which the bricks are conveyed to the building sites by lorry.

The museum is a place where





29  
Semi-automatic hydraulic pumice-brick  
press.

knowledge of past ages is communicated. Through the way they are presented, in functional correlation or in diorama form, exhibits, photographs and explanatory texts give the adult visitor an insight into the past. Children, however, need different ways of assimilating knowledge. 'The most typical form of assimilation for the child, in which learning and experiencing occur through doing, is playing, an often underrated category of teaching.'<sup>2</sup> We agree with Weschenfelder and Zacharias that 'many variants of play activity are imaginable in the museum. Leisure guidance, the voluntary aspect and target group orientation all suggest that play must be rated an important method of museum-based education.'<sup>3</sup>

The exhibits in the pumice department of the Koblenz Museum are suitable for picking up and handling, under supervision, without any danger of damage. They are therefore suitable for the idea we had in mind.

We decided to study the area of the early, manual pumice industry because this can be actively reproduced. The

idea was that the children should learn how and by whom the pumice bricks were manually produced, how long the production process lasted, and how the workers and their families lived at that time.

We looked for 'methods of learning which would be organized not in an isolated, abstract, analytical and reflective manner but actively, practically and situationally, involving the whole social and emotional person and situation.'<sup>4</sup> Manual brick-making is an activity that can be reproduced. This form of physical play can be supplemented with information on the work children really did in the early pumice industry. The history of life and labour and stories about them told in the pumice industry department, use the original exhibits and photographs as stimuli for role-playing. 'In this case the museum serves as a kind of magazine designed to suggest and inform: it provides content, intensifies and materializes fantasies and imagination and can, in parts, be an area for special activities which lead on to the play environment.'<sup>5</sup> Another bridge be-

2. Klaus Weschenfelder and Wolfgang Zacharias, *Handbuch Museumspädagogik*, p. 161, Düsseldorf, 1981.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

6. Hans Mayrhofer and Wolfgang Zacharias, *Projektbuch ästhetisches Lernen*, p. 172, Reinbek, 1977.



tween play and reality was planned in the form of an interview with a 75-year-old former pumice worker. The idea was to bring history to life as something that 'really happened', its truth authenticated by the word of the 'expert'.

'In this, the educational interest is not in the assimilation of history as a complex of data but in the ability to visualize different structures, features and developments and thus broaden the repertoire of one's own behaviour and approaches. Playing at history can then be defined as experimental identification with the past.'<sup>6</sup>

### *Holiday studies organized by the Koblenz Museum*

Koblenz Museum has been running regular holiday courses for younger and older children since 1978. The age-group has depended on the subject matter. Previously the children and young people visiting the museum came from Koblenz and the surrounding area, usually with their parents who brought them by car because there is no direct bus service. They registered for the courses on the basis of the information given in the local newspapers.

The practical course for social science student-teachers in the summer of 1986 provided an opportunity to take a greater interest in children able to come to the museum without the help of their parents, either on foot or by bicycle. We contacted the primary school in the Niederberg district which is the one closest to the museum. The collaboration only produced results at the second attempt, however, when the Third Form took the project into its curriculum, six months later.

The children who registered for the holiday course, on the usual basis of the notices published in the local press, came from the most varied parts of the town. An unusual feature was the participation of a grandmother and grandfather, who brought their grandchildren regularly and, after some initial hesitation, joined in the course themselves. Both had actually worked in the industry and thus contributed useful and authoritative knowledge.

The museum is housed in the rooms of the 160-year-old Ehrenbreitstein fortress. The ceilings are vaulted, some of the walls are more than two metres

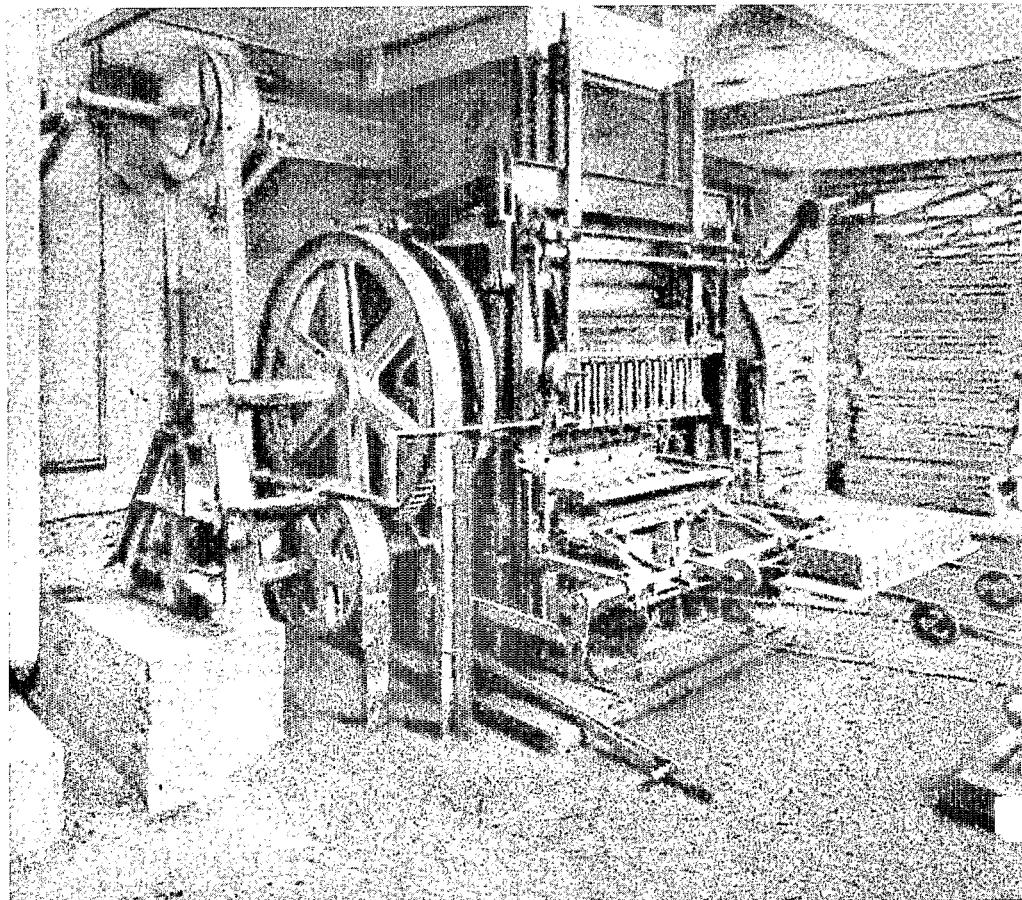
thick and all the rooms are connected by a corridor two metres wide. There is no special room for work with young or older children. In the ten years during which we have had educational activities in the museum we have very rarely found that the other visitors perceived them as a disturbance. On the contrary, many were particularly interested in the points where work was going on with the children. In our view, if the museum is to bring historical contexts to life, this should be made possible in the areas where the relevant collections are housed — not elsewhere. Children, particularly, should be enabled to feel the atmosphere that emanates from the artefacts and the photographs.

### *Implementation of the project*

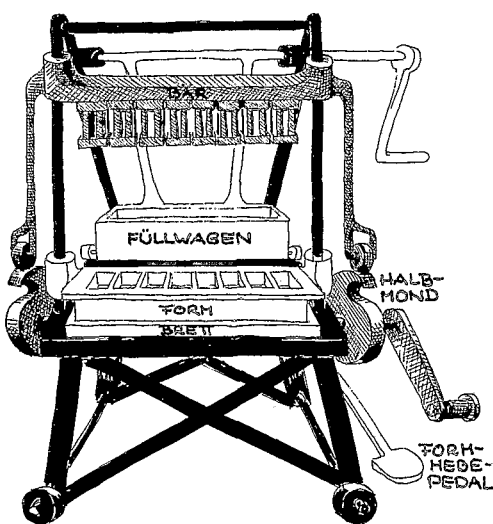
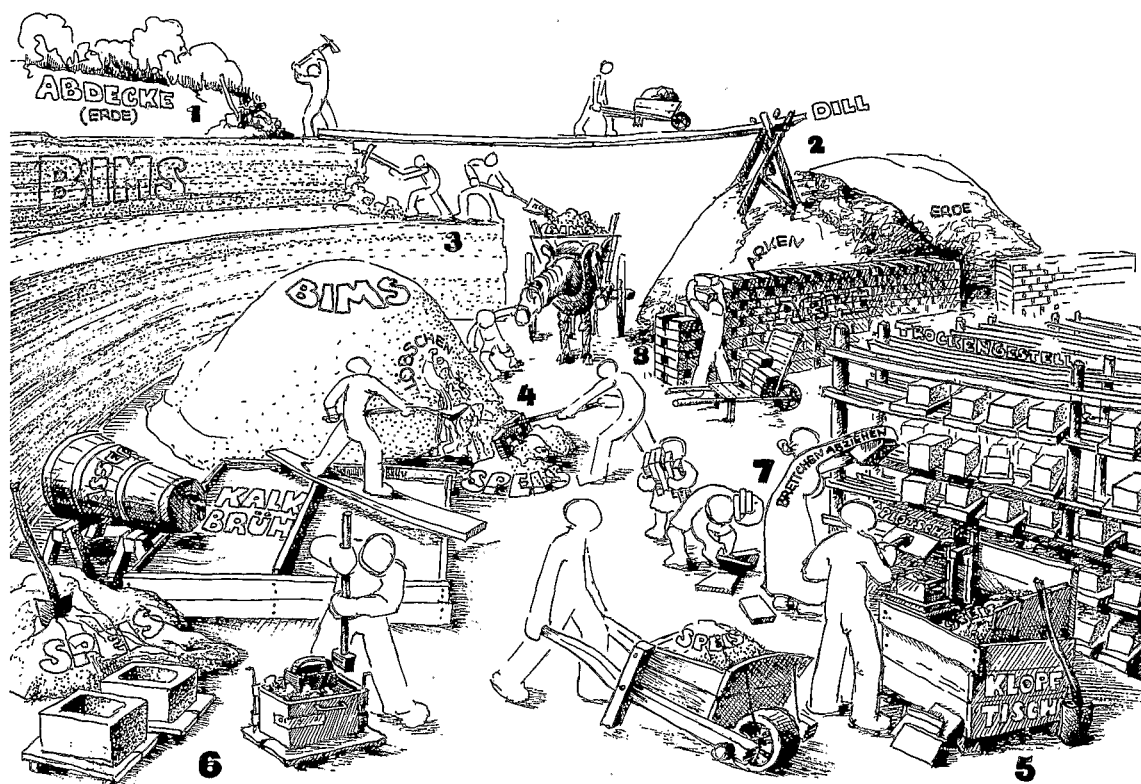
The 'Pumice-brick Playhouse' project ran from 4 to 11 July 1986, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon daily. It was organized by the Education Department of Koblenz Museum under the direction of the author. At the time, three students from the social science

30

Wholly automatic, power-driven pumice-brick press.



31  
The sequence of operations in manual pumice-brick-making.



32  
The 'half-moon', a manually-operated pumice-brick-making machine.

teacher-training college in Koblenz were doing practical training at the museum.

A total of eleven children and two adults took part in the holiday course. The children were Thilo and Sabrina aged 5, Timo, Christina and Sebastian aged 6, Nils and Manuel aged 7, Stefan, André and Katja aged 9 and Holger aged 10.

The programme consisted of the following (Figs. 34, 35): making pumice bricks manually as in the old days; designing and building a playhouse together; narrating and play-acting 'How Pumice Workers Used to Live and Work'; interviewing a former pumice worker; celebrating the completion of the building.

First we made the bricks, manually as they used to be made up to 1920, but using wooden rather than iron moulds and in a size equivalent to roughly one-third that of a normal brick. The material — fine pumice and quick-setting cement — was provided free of charge by the Rhine pumice industry association. While the bricks were drying and acquiring their strength, the house was designed with the children. Its floor area, 60 × 60 cm, was predetermined but the number and size of the windows and doors and the height of the gable were the children's decision. Using cardboard bricks true to scale, each

child stuck together one side of the house. Finally the decision on which solution was to be adopted was taken with everyone's agreement. After the museum carpenters had made a base and produced a pattern exactly reproducing the dimensions and layout of the children's design, it was possible to begin building. In protective aprons and rubber gloves, the children mixed mortar and laid the bricks like real professionals. The carpenters then completed the construction with door and window frames and the roof timbers.

While the building work was going on in the courtyard in front of the museum, to the great interest of the visitors (only four children could be occupied on this at a time), we were busy in the permanent pumice industry department going into the subject of 'How Pumice Workers Used to Live and Work'. Having done it themselves, it was easy for the children to picture the brick-making process. To help them visualize the other stages of production, from the mining of the pumice to the finished brick, there were the exhibits of the actual tools and the large coloured graphic display and historical photographs. The 'stories of the pumice industry' were written in such a way as to prompt ideas for subsequent role-playing.

For costumes, there were white

muslin aprons for the girls' and women's roles, and paper hats for the men's. The children were allowed to make use of the exhibits in the department. With the help of the student-teachers, the older children prepared the questions they wanted to put to the 75-year-old former pumice worker at the ceremony to mark the completion of the building on the last day of the course.

The children decorated the roof timbers with a tree, played at being 'house-builder' and 'house-owner', congratulated each other and celebrated the completion of the building. The former pumice worker was invited and patiently answered all the questions the children asked him. Later, with a keen professional eye, he watched the children playing their roles as they acted out the history of the pumice industry.

*Results*

Attendance by the children and the grandparents at this voluntary course was regular. They all worked on making the bricks and building the house with great enthusiasm. The manual production techniques in the old pumice industry were definitely better understood and described by the participants than by children of the same school-year who had not made pumice bricks. In the way they handled and used the museum exhibits, the children on the course showed skill and imagination. The idea of women and

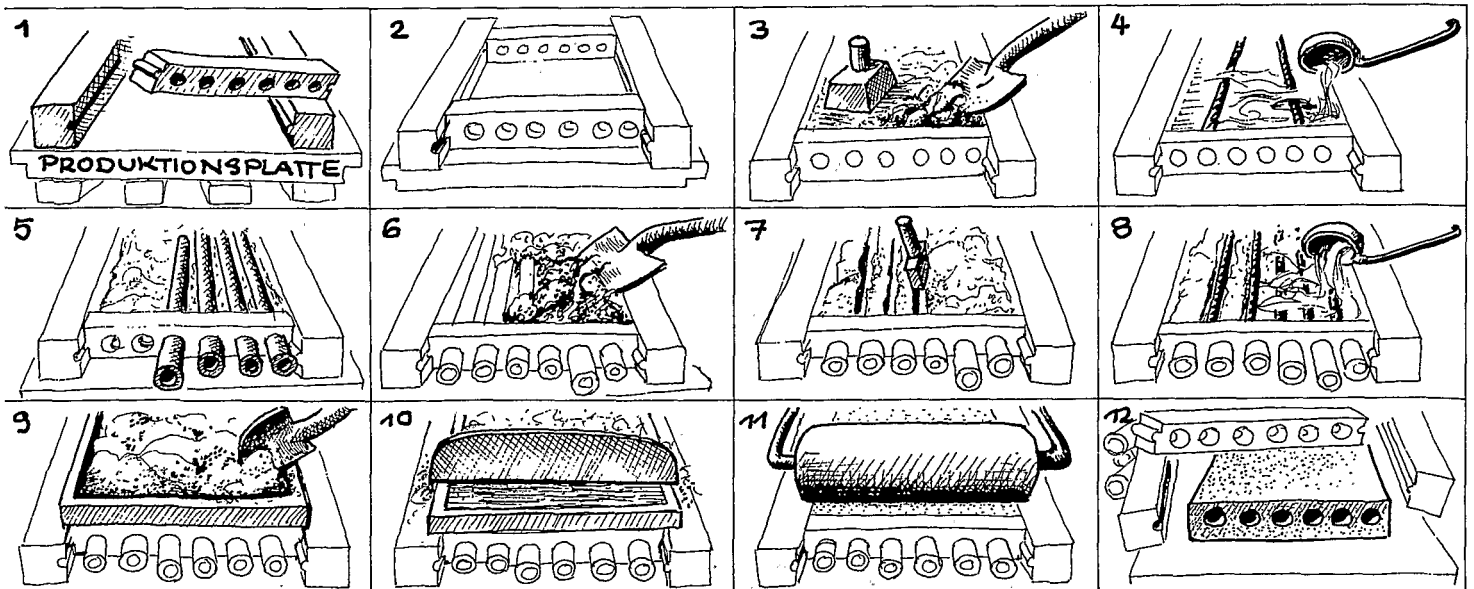
children working in the pumice industry was difficult for children to absorb, which may explain why the role-playing took some time before it really caught on and came comically and realistically to life.

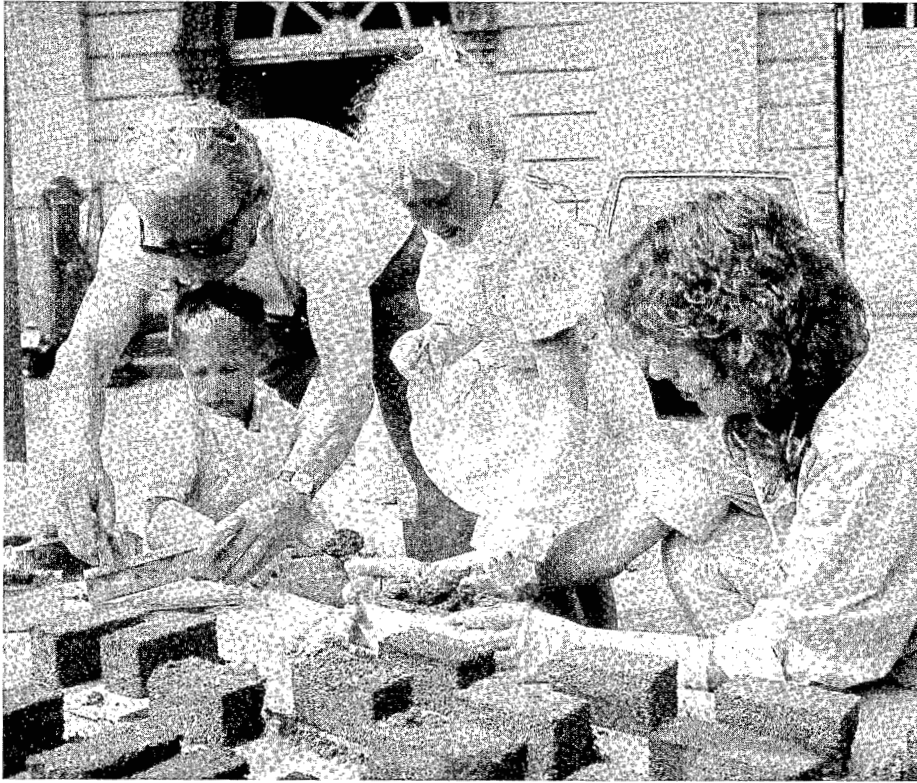
It was mainly the 10-year-olds who were interested in the interview with the 75-year-old pumice worker. Examples of the questions they had prepared in advance with the help of the social science student teachers were: How many hours a day did you have to work? How far did you have to come to work? What did the women and children have to do?

The children benefited in the following ways from the experience: they felt they were being taken seriously in the museum because they were allowed to behave in a manner that was natural for their age; they learned about the living and working conditions of the pre-industrial age through the hard physical work that even children had to do; they understood history by acting it out themselves; they understood the message conveyed by photographs and graphics through role-playing; and they experienced history as real events when questioning the former pumice worker.

The museum also benefited. The finished product was kept on display for several weeks as part of a small exhibition in the pumice industry department, and visitors were very interested. The production resources prepared for the holiday course, to-

33  
Sequence of operations in the making of roof slabs.





34  
Children making pumice bricks.

35  
The mould being carefully filled with the brick-making mix.

gether with original production tools, historical photographs and documents, now belong to a 'pumice box' available to schools as a teaching aid.

Schools and museums are both places for learning but the school has compulsory educational targets whereas the museum has collections under different headings for voluntary, heterogeneous groups to learn about and assimilate.<sup>7</sup> The project can be transposed to schools, as it meets the requirements of the curriculum for technical education in primary school and can be incorporated in the regular lessons. However, this applies mainly to the manual making of individual bricks. The building of a complete house could only be done in the form of a week-long project or by voluntary afternoon work. Even so, a visit to the 'Manual pumice industry' department would be necessary, the museum's task being to provide crossings and bridges between sensory and cognitive learning for consolidation in the classroom.<sup>8</sup> ■

[Translated from German]

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7. 'Assimilation or assimilation theory ... highlights how things look to the dynamic learner who actively and energetically "assimilates" his environment, out of interest in learning something.' — Ibid., p. 156.

8. Sylvia Heinje, 'Museumpädagogik und städtische Kulturarbeit', *Museumpädagogik*, p. 89, Cologne, Rheinland-Verlag, 1985.





## *A mini-museum in the Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture*

Edwina Pio

Born in Bombay in 1955. Doctorate in Ancient Indian Culture for thesis on 'Buddhist Psychology: An Eastern Theory of Personality'. Graduated from St Xavier's College, Bombay in Psychology and Pali. B.A. at University of Bombay, Duke of Edinburgh Fellowship and other awards. Teaches psychology at St Xavier's College. Writes occasionally for the press, besides being professionally involved in the activities of the Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture.

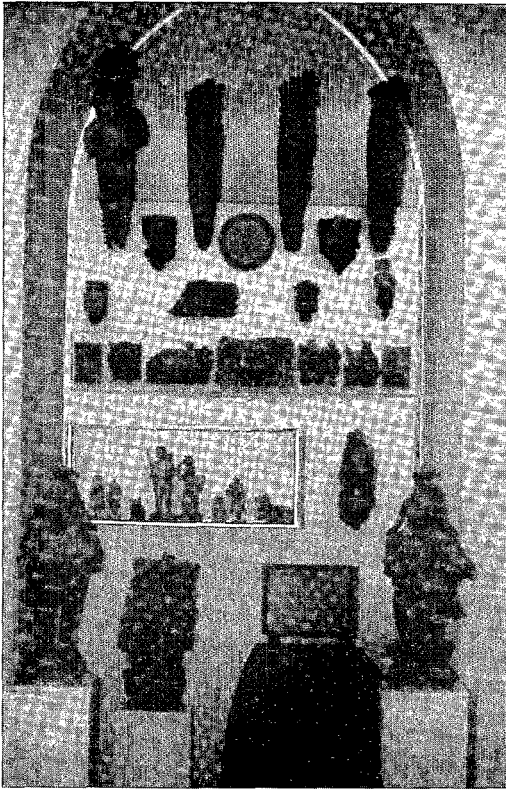
There is a warm ambience in the recently renovated museum of the Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture in Bombay. Easily the largest single category on show in this compact space are the Graeco-Buddhist pieces which were acquired by Fr Henry Heras during a visit to excavated sites at Quetta (now in Pakistan). The exhibit also displays panels depicting episodes from Buddhist literature, including the courtesan Amrapali donating a mango grove to the Buddha, the miracle of Sravasti, and a bas-relief inspired by the Sambula Jātaka.

Designed on simple lines, the museum has incorporated thematic material from the Indus Valley and Mesopotamian civilizations till fairly recent times, from its abundant wealth of approximately 4,000 antiquities, representing one man's acquisitions over half a life-time. This long pilgrimage through civilization, displaying a tremendous flowering of the arts, leaves visitors enthralled but not exhausted. They imbibe a breath of the imperishable strength of the spirit and beauty before them. The Gandhara section, most of which is not behind glass, merges with other Buddhist artefacts, like the Nalanda stupa of the ninth century A.D. with its small carved niches, depicting major events in the life of the Buddha. The stupa of a hundred Buddhas has a deodar wood backdrop of vertical slats providing tangential light from the window behind.

The imagination is held by the objects of deep veneration in metal, selections from the vast pantheon of gods and goddesses. A thirteenth-

century bronze Pārvaṭī from South India, stands in *dvibhaṅga*, adorned with a beautiful tiara, armlets and other jewellery. One of the beautiful early metal images from Gujarat is a brass Ambikā dating from A.D. 1154. She stands under a mango tree, her left arm holding a child perched on her hip, and her right hand grasping a branch with mangoes. Flanking her are two nude *tīrthāṅkaras*, fixed on the *pañcatīrthī parikara* around her; the other three *tīrthāṅkaras* seated in *dhyāna mudrā* are set on the *toranas* and are much smaller. Another image of Ambikā shows her seated in *lalitāsana* on a lotus supported by a crouching lion. From sixteenth-century Nepal comes a copper *maṇḍala* of Mahisāsūramardīnī who is at the centre, with the *aṣṭamātrakās* on their mounts on the eight petals of a lotus. Other metal icons depict Sarasvatī, Mahāmānasī, Veṅugopala, Sūrya, Viṣṇu, Viḡhneśvarī and Lakṣmīnṛśimha.

The clever use of space expresses isolation from one moment to the next, and from one sequential treatment to the next. Wooden figures from nineteenth-century Gujarat attached to a closed door, reflect their original use, providing both realism and utility (Fig. 36). The high wooden door also serves as a support for a glass and aluminium shelf displaying painted wood carvings from Patan dating from the seventeenth century. These wood carvings, though different from the other pieces described so far, do not interrupt the general thematic flow of the artefacts, situated as they are to one side. In a similar manner, the modular display cases, positioned



36  
Nineteenth-century wooden bracketed figures from Gujarat, and painted wood carvings from Patan dating from the seventeenth century.

almost in the centre of the room, serve as a sort of partition between the Gandhara section and the Vaishnavite and Shavite icons.

Ideally, the objects contained in this central screen would have separate rooms. On one side of the screen there are seals and terracottas from some of the oldest civilizations known to man. One of Heras' main fields of study was the Indus civilization and in pursuit of his comparative study of scripts he went to Mesopotamia. He brought back seals made of limestone, flint, marble, haematite and bone from the Urum, Jamdett, Nast and Akkadian periods. One of the practical uses to which seals were put in Mesopotamia is illustrated in the exhibition by the sealing of an empty earthen pot beside the display. A neighbouring vase shows to advantage handmade terracottas from the Indus valley, depicting simplified human and animal forms as well as deities.

Rather a different style and mood are evident on the other side of the screen, which has two main themes: the folk-art of Maharashtra and Indian Christian art, which is dominated by wood and ivory images from Goa and Bassein. The Christian art section is resplendent with maroon and gold raw silk, the wooden backdrop arched to suggest a church, providing a bold and richly coloured contrast to the subdued shades of the other sections. Although much of the pigment has faded or flaked, one can still feel the pathos of the crucified Christ, and the emotional bond between the Virgin Mother and her babe, and recognize Christian saints like St Paul and St Sebastian.

Heras was known as the Father of Indian Christian Art, because he encouraged artistic expression which was in keeping with the cultural context of the land. With great vision he inspired and helped several promising young artists to interpret Christian themes through Indian symbols and styles of art. Angelo da Fonseca was one of the first of these, and Heras commissioned him to do a series of historical scenes of the Jesuit mission in India. *Mogor* — the Portuguese term for both the great Mughal and his dominions — was a very desirable goal for the early Jesuits, and da Fonseca's brush depicts the first Jesuit mission there, led by Rudolf Acquaviva, with Francis Henriques and Anthony Monserrate as his

companions. Other mission scenes show Dona Juliana Dias da Costa visiting the Jesuits in Agra to give them compensation for the loss of their Parel property, Fr A. Criminali being martyred at Vedalai on the Coromandel coast, Fr R. de Nobili instructing a brahmin in Madurai, and Frs J. Grueber and A. d'Orville from China presenting a telescope to Raja Pratap Malla of Nepal. Interestingly enough, the Heras Institute possesses the tombstone of Fr d'Orville, in red sandstone with a Latin epitaph and Chinese characters. D'Orville met his death at Agra, succumbing to the hardships of an eleven-month journey from Beijing through Tibet and the Himalayas to the capital of the Mughal empire. Paintings by other artists depict biblical themes from the Old and New Testament, in varying styles yet all possessing a peculiar beauty which is strongly suggestive of the inner life. The interested visitor may leaf through a collection of sixty modern Indian Christian watercolour paintings. Owing to lack of display space, they have been accommodated in a single glass-topped case with wooden drawers beneath, each containing the work of a different artist.

Near the central screen is placed an elegant *dipalaksbmi* on a tall wooden stand, the little bowl in the figure's outstretched hands filled with oil and containing a cotton wick, which is lit on festive occasions. Another artefact situated at floor level near the entrance door is the granite seated statue of Buddha in *dhyāna mudrā*, 79 cm high, discovered in Mushirvado (Colvale, Bardez), dated to the sixth century A.D. This was the earliest Buddhist find in Goa, where Buddhism flourished before the beginning of the Christian era up to the tenth or eleventh century A.D.

A product of spare-time activity, the credit for the museum's present face-lift goes to Sadashiv Gorakshkar, Director of the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India. He has shown that with economy and ingenuity, even smaller institutions can have their own museums where the memory and imagination of the viewer can be stimulated. In fact, sophistication need not be the only criterion for museum excellence. Gorakshkar's main concern was to create a feeling of openness, so he chose unobtrusive and soft-hued furnishings — pale green for the walls and cream for the display

cases and mounts — except for two showcases in brown, and the Indian Christian art section. From one window, situated where it cannot distract the viewer's eye, natural light is allowed to fall directly into the room. Concealed fluorescent tubes and occasional spotlights are used to throw into relief a Graeco-Buddhist frieze or a *Yakshi* in sandstone. The large rough flagstones on the floor are covered by brown coir matting, which helps to prevent dampness from seeping through, and gives the room a finished look. Kalpana Desai, curator of the Prince of Wales Museum, who worked in a similar capacity at the Heras museum, also provided expert advice on redesigning the present museum, besides initially classifying and cataloguing the antiquities in the Heras collection. Philips India Ltd contributed 50,000 rupees plus assistance in kind, though both Gorakshkar and Desai point out that they managed well within the allotted budget by stringently economizing on things like the display cases which were adapted from the bulky teak showcases already possessed by the Institute.

The amazing array of historical antiquities is not confined to the museum-room but spills out into the two long corridors, on either side of the museum. Students can be seen gazing at the musical deity, huge stone *viragals* depicting battle scenes, Maratha guns, a granite Nandi, Muslim calligraphy, as well as glass-fronted cupboards containing row upon row of neatly stacked brass and bronze icons from various religious sects. A room farther along the corridor houses the reserve collection, besides containing an excellent selection of rare books and manuscripts (Fig. 37).

Henry Heras, the man behind this stupendous collection, was a Catalan Jesuit. Born in Spain in 1888, he came to India in 1922 to teach history at St Xavier's College, Bombay. His love of India and its people led to the formation of the Indian Historical Research Institute (today's Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture) in 1926, in the college premises. A guru with an *antar dṛṣṭi* (inner vision), Heras drew students to his modern *asrama* from all over India. He himself was a man of learning, with a blotting-paper memory, and the subject of his study included European and Indian philosophy, epigraphy, numismatics,

art and architecture, European classical languages and religion. He was a prolific and indefatigable writer, and published scholarly works on the Manchu dynasty of China, the Guptas, the Aravidu dynasty, the spread of Buddhism in Afghanistan and lastly on proto-Indo-Mediterranean studies. He proudly described himself as a Dravidian from Spain, and in academic circles was known as the High Priest of Moenjodaro. In order to have a real feel for the subject, Heras travelled extensively, visiting towns and villages, meeting scholars, searching for documents and icons and digging at archaeological sites. By the time he died, in 1955, he had nurtured over 300 post-graduate students — among them B. A. Saletore and H. D. Sankalia — while he himself had written 17 books and nearly 300 learned articles. A quarter of a century later, Heras' *karma bhumi* (land of adoption) India, commemorated his unique contribution with the release of a special postage stamp to mark the anniversary of his death.

The Institute was conceived as a research laboratory with two vital constituents, the library and the museum. The library is rich in source books on art, archaeology, architecture, classical languages, epigraphy, history, religion and travel narratives. Today it contains 32,000 volumes along with a fairly good journal section which houses publications from the four corners of the globe. The microfilm section contains material from the National Archives (New Delhi), the British Museum, the Vatican Archives, the Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid) and some other repositories. These are mostly copies of Jesuit and other early European documents on Indian history from the Marsden and Egerton collections, as well as Persian manuscripts like the *Tarikh-e-Dilgusha* and *Akbar-e-Delhi*. More recently documents on microfiche have been added to the library. The printed page and the museum piece are meant specifically for the research worker, and in fact the entire atmosphere fosters a spirit of inquiry and creativity. The Institute prides itself on the individuals it has trained through the years, and its main thrust, still, is the training of 'scholars'.

An unpublished manuscript by Fr Heras, written in 1952 and now in the Institute archives, reads:

The incalculable treasures of the civilization of India which lie hidden in the Pandora's box of her millenary history were for me as it were an enormous weight that oppressed me, as soon as I began to discover and appreciate them. Because the history of India is not the history of a nation, it is the history of a continent in which many peoples have been fused together, it is the history of many migrations, all of which have left gold dust in their train. . . . Finally it is the history of a constant desire to seek truth through the centuries, a desire that impelled sages to withdraw into the forests, that invited kings to renounce their thrones, that dictated to the philosophers such metaphysical ideas as are not to be found in the most renowned civilizations of the ancient world.

Such was Fr Heras' vision of Indian history and culture. That vision is still before the Institute. And in the hands of its meticulous and well organized director, Fr John Correia-Afonso, the Institute has many new ventures to its credit. Among these are the international seminar on Indo-Portuguese museum exhibitions at the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, and the birth of the Xavier Centre of Historical Research at Porvorim, Goa.

Since 1960 the Institute has held an annual series of Heras Memorial Lectures, delivered by renowned scholars such as A. L. Basham, C. R. Boxer, Ravinder Kumar and R. C. Majumdar. In 1964, it launched its review, *Indica*, a biannual journal on Indological research. An annual seminar on local history was established in 1977, as well as a yearly historian's workshop for the training of young research workers. The Institute encourages the interpretation of its holdings by inviting students to study its collections and offering a limited number of research scholarships sponsored by the Heras Society, the Mahindra Trust and the Kilachand Research Trust.

In order to bring home the fact that our history and culture should not be regarded as symbols of luxury on a par with champagne and caviare, to be visited only by sunshine people and the idle rich, the Institute has succeeded in whetting the appetite of the general public through exhibitions like *Footsteps through India*, *Old Bombay in Books*, *The Art of Angelo da Fonseca*, and *Modern Christian Art*. It has also collaborated in several exhibitions organized by the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India. The Institute's

director has through the years sought out citizens who possess not only wealth but also talents related to the Institute's programmes. This partly accounts for the success of its varied activities. However, it must be said that its rapport with the general public needs much more emphasis, for its activities still reach mainly the intelligentsia in academic circles. In a Third World country, it is of vital importance to reach out to the majority for whom a museum is *terra incognita*, and make these excursions into the living past meaningful for them.

Owing to budget constraints and high maintenance costs, the Heras Museum has not been able to employ full-time professional expertise. Thus, even though it has managed to organize several supplementary services for the public, as by-products of an institute on Indian culture, it still needs to be less academic. Browsing through its library stacks is not allowed because of unhappy experiences in the past. Though entrance is free, it maintains a low profile as far as the school, undergraduate-level and non-specialized public are concerned. Yet it must be remembered that non-specialists,

whether novelists, social scientists or administrators, need history to sharpen their tools, for in the end it is our own memories of what we were that will shape what we will be.

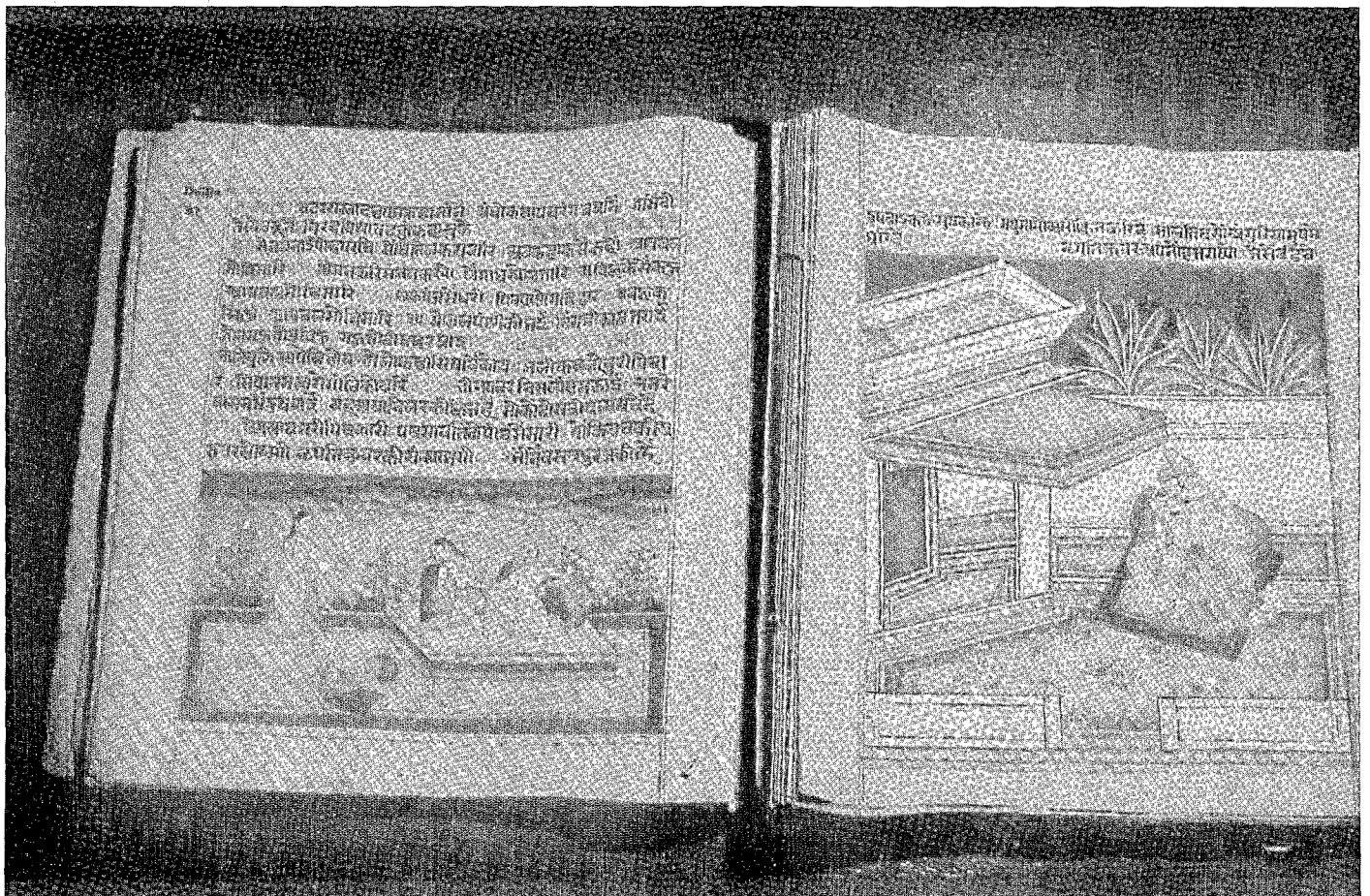
The few hand-picked Institute staff serve as resource personnel, and additional information on subjects dealt with in the exhibits is provided by printed leaflets, a museum catalogue and an up-to-date bibliography. It also has on sale published work by Institute students, and a limited selection of museum postcards.

Despite the lack of a relative-humidity module, called for because the humidity is extremely high during the monsoon months (July–September), which leads to fungus and warping, the Heras Institute has managed to ensure that its vast collection remains intact by insisting on good housekeeping — cleanliness, occasional fumigation and regular dusting. The use of various preservatives and hygroscopic chemicals is minimal and this leads occasionally to the presence of cockroaches, white ants and silverfish. However, part of the reserve collection is stored in deodar packing cases which have insect-repelling proper-

ties. Vast improvements in security are necessary, for the Institute lacks a burglar- or fire-alarm system and has had to pay dearly for this in the past. Security presently consists of grilles, a few locks and a single watchman!

Yet, despite certain drawbacks, the Heras Institute, in its efforts to interpret the past for present and future generations, strives to be like a banyan tree which stands in the plain and is surrounded by hundreds of little trees which have sprung from it and will become strong and broad like itself. For as J. Krishnamurti wrote: 'Can you live so completely that there is only the active present now? And you cannot live that way if you haven't understood and thereby cut yourself off completely from the past, because you yourself are the past.'<sup>7</sup> ■

37  
Illustrated manuscript of Madhumalati — an exquisite piece of Kotah art (1770).





# *The education programme of the National Gallery of Zimbabwe*

**Doreen J. Sibanda**

Born in Derby, United Kingdom. Obtained a Certificate of Education and Art and Design from the University of Birmingham in 1975. Taught art in a secondary school in West Bromwich for two years, then graduated from the University of Zimbabwe with a B.Ed. degree. In 1981 she joined the National Gallery of Zimbabwe as an Education Officer, and now heads the education department, with responsibility for cultural animation, interpretative service and outreach programmes. Has exhibited her own art works in several local and international galleries. She is currently the Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Association of Visual Artists, Craftsmen and Designers; the Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Crafts Council and a member of the Specialist Standing Committee on Culture for the Zimbabwe National Commission of Unesco.

In a post-independence developing country such as Zimbabwe it is apparent that among community needs which museums are particularly well suited to meet are those concerning cultural or sub-cultural identities.

The museums in Zimbabwe play a very significant role in fostering a sense of cultural identity and reconciliation, as they contain a wide representation of natural and material culture with which people can identify and feel a sense of national pride.

Since independence, as part of overall government policy, it has been incumbent on the museums and other cultural institutions to present a more balanced story and facilitate greater access to the cultural manifestations and artistic expressions in the country. Museum staff and cultural administrators have been ethically challenged to transform completely the image and use of cultural institutions, but often without a significant increase in financial support. This resulted in the exercise of innovative choices and decisions by museum and cultural administrators in relation to conventional programmes. New projects such as oral history documentation, mobile library and film services, the construction of district culture houses, the revival of old manual skills, the introduction of new manual skills, training programmes and the adoption of better marketing strategies for rural handicrafts have been introduced in Zimbabwe. These activities are aimed at increasing popular participation in cultural pursuits, and recovering a sense of pride in the culture of the country. It is against this backdrop that the educational programmes of the

National Gallery of Zimbabwe have been devised.<sup>1</sup>

The National Gallery first opened its education department in 1981 in order to enable the public to gain more insight into its works. Up until that time very few teachers had received any exposure to art during their training, and the few colonial schools that included an art programme were entirely under the influence of the art trends in Europe.

The National Gallery of Zimbabwe's educational programmes had to take into account the distribution of teachers in the community with little or no previous knowledge of Western art and those with experience in African art forms and expressions. The geographical distribution of rural and urban dwellers also had to be considered. A visit by the Education Officer to the United Kingdom and the United States in late 1981 to study museums and their community contacts greatly assisted in the identification of possible forms and structures that educational programmes could take. From the outset, it was decided that programmes should cater for four kinds of people: occasional visitors to the gallery, practising artists, students and teachers around Harare, and students and teachers in the outlying areas.

### *General visitors*

For the general visitor, literature relating to both permanent and temporary exhibitions is provided. It takes the form of information and quiz leaflets on various aspects of the exhibitions and their historical background, and

1. The National Gallery of Zimbabwe was opened in 1957. Situated in the capital, Harare, it is a modern two-storey building with an art collection covering selected European old masters, contemporary European graphics, and traditional and contemporary African arts.

an aesthetic analysis of the formal qualities of selected items.

Guided tours are also available for adults to explain aspects of the exhibitions, most of which are fully supported with appropriate films which are screened during lunch time and in the early evening. From time to time presentations that highlight aspects of the exhibitions are arranged. These are particularly interesting, especially when visiting artists agree to participate either in practical demonstrations of their skills or through the organization of workshops in which the public can participate. Other highlights within this category include the staging of fashion shows, drama productions and dance performances inside the gallery.

#### *Practising artists*

Being in a country where no formal art school so far exists, the National Gallery has always felt it had a responsibility to nurture art skills wherever possible. In 1981 an art workshop was established for young talented Zimbabweans under the auspices of the gallery and with the financial backing of a tobacco company. About twenty students now enrol each year, most of them with little or no previous training in art. There are no fees required for tuition and materials, though the stu-

dents are expected to support themselves for the duration of the course.

All the students undertake a 'foundation' year in which they receive an introduction to various disciplines. Upon successful completion, a second year is available with provision for specialization. Work produced by the students is strongly experimental, and shows a marked variation from previous art by self-taught artists in Zimbabwe. The students concentrate on the local environment and much of their work makes sensitive and direct social and political comments on Zimbabwe.

The students from the workshop increasingly exhibit in the National Gallery and several have won awards for their promising contributions. The workshop has received many commissions for posters, murals and illustrations and has held exhibitions in Australia, the United Kingdom and Zimbabwe. Although no formal certificate is given at the end of the course, most students pass the General Certificate of Education Ordinary and Advanced level examinations each year. The lack of special certification, however, limits the employment prospects of the students. To date, several students have gone on to work as assistants in artists' studios, as museum assistants or as temporary unqualified teachers in schools. Others work on their own, producing and selling what

38  
THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ZIMBABWE.  
Artists participate in a design and print evening course staged by the gallery during February and March 1984.



39  
A group of secondary-school girls from the Girls' High School, Harare, attend a clay workshop in the gallery's sculpture garden, 1986.

they can. There are plans to establish a formal art training facility which might cater not only for Zimbabweans, but for students from other parts of the southern African region as well.

The gallery sometimes arranges short art courses for the benefit of artists and the general public. They take place in the workshop and cover such areas as life-drawing or print-making skills. These are often attended by school art teachers who take the opportunity to renew their skills in certain areas or acquire a new skill to pass on to their pupils.

From time to time artists, art societies and art patrons are invited to participate in seminars and discussions organized by the education department of the National Gallery on pertinent issues relating to the arts (Fig. 38). In recent years seminars such as 'Zimbabwe in the World of Sculpture' and 'Producers and Consumers: Their Role in the Arts of Zimbabwe' have been held, which have enabled the public, artists and policy-makers to discuss how artists can contribute to the development of society.

#### *Pupils and teachers in Harare*

Each term, schools receive visual and written information about forthcoming exhibitions, events and available

educational services. The gallery offers the following services: guided tours, self-guided workshops, practical participatory workshops and visits to schools (Fig. 39). Appropriate gallery staff are provided as well as colour slides and artefacts on loan. Every year an exhibition of children's art from schools throughout the country is held in the gallery. Since 1982 the exhibition has included performing arts, to arouse interest in art in schools which previously had no visual art in their curricula.

An increasing number of trainee teachers from colleges of education are introduced to the gallery during their courses, and those specializing in arts and crafts often make use of the library facilities as well as the articles in the gallery's in-house journal, *Zimbabwe Insight*. The trainee teachers specializing in arts and crafts are now leading the way in research on different aspects of the arts, particularly as they operate in a learning situation. Research conducted by students during their teaching practice is often very useful to the gallery's educational programmes. This is especially so when conducted in the rural sector.

At present, no area of the trainee teachers' curriculum involves work on the imaginative display of cultural artefacts, and there is therefore a scarcity of teachers with these skills. It is

hoped that in future a teaching module will be designed in this area for use with trainee teachers and in in-service courses for practising teachers.

#### *Pupils and teachers in outlying areas*

Through its outreach programme the gallery is able to take some of its activities to teachers and pupils residing in outlying areas. Education programmes developed in the gallery are adapted for distribution in rural schools. Illustrated booklets are created on a particular aspect of art, providing background information for the teacher as well as suggested activities for pupils. The emphasis is on locally accessible applied art forms and local materials such as clay, natural fibres, stone and wood. Topics covered so far include the following:

*African Useful Objects:* traditional utilitarian objects such as pots, stools, mats, and musical instruments, considered from an aesthetic point of view, drawing attention to form and design.

*Traditional African Art:* artefacts such as masks from the whole of Africa. The aesthetic qualities and the function of the objects within the society that created them are considered.

*Zimbabwe Stone Sculpture:* historical background of the contemporary art



form, together with the folklore and beliefs that produced it.

*The Living Crafts of Zimbabwe:* essentially a study of traditional craft techniques still practised in Zimbabwe. Regional differences and specializations are explored and highlighted.

*Selected Traditional Musical Instruments of Zimbabwe:* their creation and their appropriate usage.

The distribution of these booklets was initially undertaken by cultural officials of the government in the administrative provinces and districts of the country. An evaluation questionnaire accompanied the booklets, and teachers were asked to comment on them. An analysis of one set of completed questionnaires indicated that there was a need for closer working experience with the artefacts mentioned in the booklets.

In response to this observation, a set of 'travelling boxes' (*zvionesco zvino-famba/umbikiso obam bayo*) were produced for circulation to as many schools as possible in the provinces. Each box was organized around a specific theme (Fig. 40) and consisted of mounted photographs and posters, as well as some representative artefacts and related support literature. The circulation of the travelling boxes was entrusted to government cultural officers but it often proved to be too much of an added responsibility for them. Increasingly, it became apparent to us that if we wished our programmes 'to branch out into surrounding communities — perhaps even expanded on a national or international scale'<sup>2</sup> — we would have to take full responsibility for the items from the time they left the gallery until they arrived in a rural classroom. This objective encouraged

us to look for the funds with which to launch our mobile art service. The Norwegian Agency for International Development Fund has provided us with a generous grant to acquire a vehicle and equip it to meet these requirements (Fig. 41).

The education department is working in collaboration with relevant government ministries and departments to determine appropriate institutions and groups to visit. It is hoped that, to start with, a pilot programme will be conducted in one of the nearby provinces in order to identify possible problems. For this, the truck will be furnished with artefacts based on a single theme and an exhibition will be staged with the support of films and literature. Selected pupils, women or young people will be invited to engage in a practical workshop which will be conducted by an artist.

It is hoped that a rapport with the community will be established so that part of the second visit will be spent making audio-visual recordings of the artistic forms and expressions that are characteristic of the region. These recordings will then be presented inside the gallery so that urban dwellers and visitors will gain a deeper knowledge of the creative expressions operating in the rural sector.

The tasks set for the education department in the National Gallery of Zimbabwe are very similar to the educational objectives of most museums. The fundamental aim is to provide an interdisciplinary learning environment which touches on various aspects of life with which Zimbabweans can identify. There is still a long way to go in the establishment of more formal collaboration with appropriate bodies such as curriculum developers, teacher trainers and teachers themselves, in order to increase their awareness and knowledge of how to present cultural artefacts. It is an important task, as these are the people who will influence and determine the way in which the adults of tomorrow will view their heritage and celebrate their artistic expressions. ■



40

A 'travelling box' modelled on the concept of travelling exhibitions produced by Riksstakningar in Sweden (see Stella Westerlund 'Twenty Years of Travelling Exhibitions', *Museum*, No. 152). The theme of this box is Zimbabwean stone sculpture.

41

The National Gallery's art department's mobile truck, which takes temporary exhibitions and other audio-visual services to rural areas in Zimbabwe.



2. A. F. Chadwick, *The Role of the Museum and Art Gallery in Community Education*, p. 96, University of Nottingham, Department of Adult Education, 1980.



## *Museum of the Imperial Palace of Jilin Province*



42

MUSEUM OF THE IMPERIAL PALACE. View of the Tong De Palace.

### Wang Yingjie

A researcher who graduated from the University of Jilin, China, in 1968. He has worked at the Museum of the Imperial Palace for the last five years as supervisor of a section of the exhibition. He writes and translates for several museological journals and is a member of the Museum Institute of China.

A row of brightly coloured roofs may be seen through the green canopy of trees along Guangfu Avenue in the north-eastern district of the town of Changchun. They belong to the Museum of the Imperial Palace of Jilin Province (Fig. 42). The museum was created on the archaeological site of the palace of Pu Yi, the puppet emperor of Manchukuo. Following the events of 18 September 1931, which had worldwide repercussions, the Japanese occupied north-east China and, in a move designed to reinforce their control, persuaded Aisin Giro Pu Yi, the deposed emperor of the Qing dynasty to set up the puppet state of Manchukuo. The buildings of the transport office of Jilin and Heilongjiang were converted to serve as the 'imperial' palace. When the extension and reconstruction work was completed, the palace occupied an area of 120,000 square metres. It was divided into two courts: the east court and the west court. The west court, consisting largely of the former buildings of the transport office of Jilin and Heilongjiang, was itself divided into an inner and an outer part. The inner part contained the living quarters of Pu Yi and his family. In the outer area he gave audience to his subjects and dealt with public affairs. The main building of the east court, the Tong De Palace, was built in 1938. In August 1945 when the Japanese surrendered, Pu Yi

and his retinue took flight in great haste and all the goods of the palace were plundered. Having taken possession of the palace, the Guomindang forces shamelessly vandalized it and the monuments in the palace precinct were seriously damaged.

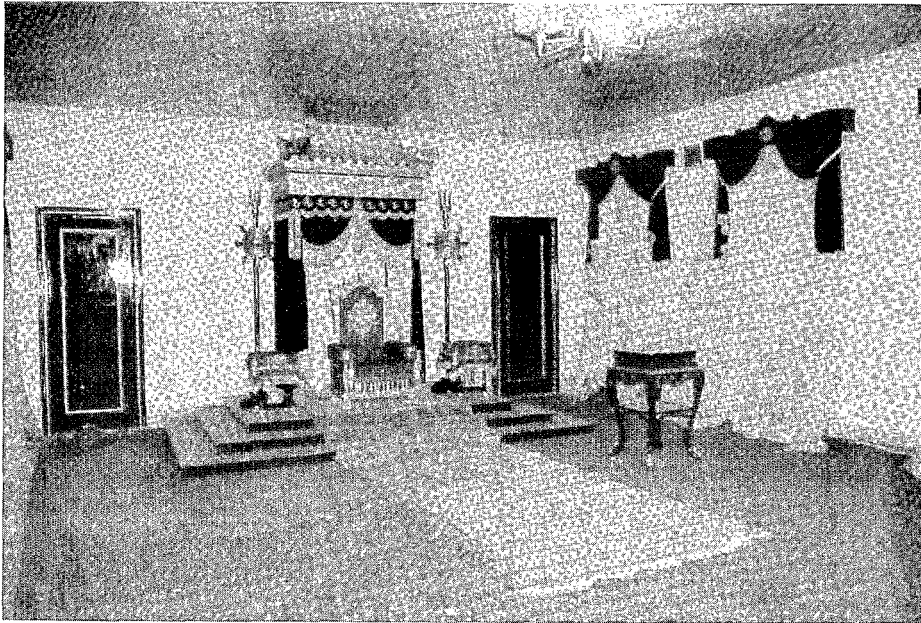
When the People's Republic of China came into being, the country's economic capacity was still very limited and the problem of protecting and using sites which had been occupied by the Japanese was not yet on the agenda. Most of the remains of the palace were taken up by workshops, various kinds of organizations, educational establishments or turned into homes. Dwellings were even built in the palace precinct and some of the monuments were demolished or reconstructed. In 1962, the authorities of Jilin Province decided to protect and use the site of the former Imperial Palace, to organize the manpower needed to prepare an exhibition on the Japanese invasion of north-east China and to restore Tong De Palace. During the Cultural Revolution, the country's museum services were interrupted and conversion work on the new museum suspended. Following the third plenary session of the 11th Congress of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, science, education and culture were held in increasingly high esteem. Museum services, a key element in the process

of building a civilization based on spiritual values, were soon resumed and rapidly developed. By 1978, the Imperial Palace exhibition had been completed and conversion work continued. In October 1982 the Museum of the Imperial Palace was officially opened.

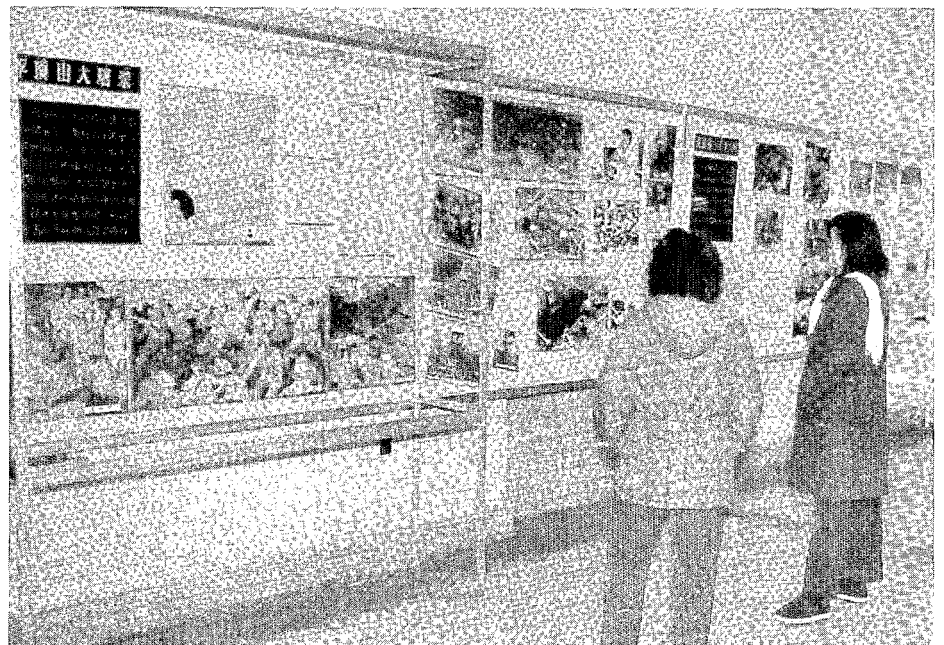
After a further five years' work, the museum has taken over, one by one, most of the monuments in the west court of the former Imperial Palace. These include the Huaiyuan Pavilion, the Qinmin Pavilion, the Zhonghe Gate, the Jixi Pavilion, and others. To begin with, the Huaiyuan and Qinmin Pavilions were renovated in 1983. The Qinmin Pavilion was used to house the exhibition entitled *Historical*

*Records of the Invasion of North-east China by the Japanese*, which displayed a selection of valuable cultural records. The exhibition was opened to the public in late November 1984. Scarcely a year after its opening, the number of visitors had already totalled 157,000, including over 4,000 from abroad. All the visitors, both foreign and Chinese, displayed a keen interest in the exhibition.

The Qinmin Pavilion display is our museum's star attraction. Upstairs, the informal west room, the Jianxing room and the main hall have been renovated. A red carpet has been laid in the main hall. Daylight streams in through the large east and west windows, all of which are hung with double curtains: one set of light-yellow fine transparent silk and the other of medium-length purple and gold velvet. The latter are hung in the form of a palm leaf, revealing the yellow curtains behind. The overall effect is sumptuous and impressive. Over the red throne in the centre of the north side is a decoration in the form of a Buddha's niche (Fig. 43). The throne rests on a carpet of yellow dragon and phoenix motifs against a blue background. This carpet runs as far as the foot of the three steps leading to the throne. On 1 March 1934, in this setting and seated on this throne, Pu Yi, dressed in his uniform of General-in-Chief, received the congratulations of the subjects of the puppet empire of Manchukuo. The desk on which the Protocol between Japan and Manchu-



43 The throne room of the Imperial Palace.



44 Display of photographs evoking the sufferings of the people during the Japanese occupation.

kuo was signed is exhibited in the hall and the articles on the desk are displayed in their original state. Visitors are particularly drawn to this room, where they can see objects dating from the Manchukuo period and re-create the atmosphere of former times, while the guide's eloquent commentary brings the past alive.

The five ground-floor rooms contain the exhibition *Historical Records of the Invasion of North-east China by the Japanese*. It consists of nine sections covering, in turn, the origins of the events of 18 September, the overall political, economic, cultural and ideological control exerted by the Japanese in north-east China, the fierce struggle of the population of north-east China and the Chinese people as a whole against the aggressors, the ultimate victory of the Chinese people and the restoration of friendly relations between the Chinese and Japanese peoples. Hundreds of photographs and dozens of historical objects illustrate this difficult period in north-east China. These photographs and exhibits are very valuable living records of historical events.

The exhibition has a great effect on visitors. Schoolchildren and students learn more about the history of the Chinese people and the difficulties they had to surmount to achieve autonomy and independence. This awakens in them a sense of national pride and increases their self-confidence. Many visitors record their reactions in the museum's visitors' book. Some

Japanese visitors and scholars have written to the museum on returning home, offering advice and suggesting exchanges and the joint study of certain scientific problems. On 11 January 1985, the Japanese daily newspaper *Yomiuri* published an article on the museum.

Following the restoration of the east and west pavilions, two exhibitions were organized: one entitled *From Emperor to Common Citizen* and the other *Display of Selected Records of Life at Court*. The *From Emperor to Common Citizen* exhibition, mounted in the west pavilion, documents the life of Pu Yi from his ascent to the throne at the age of 3 to his reintegration as an ordinary citizen through the re-education policy of the Chinese Government.

Many of the photographs displayed — historical pictures and portraits of the imperial family — had never been seen before. They showed visitors how the last emperor of feudal China was 'raised' to the throne, how he connived with the Japanese authorities after being deposed and how he became an ordinary citizen through re-education, earning his own livelihood and making himself useful to society and the people. He was certainly one of the few emperors to die in his declining years. The *Display of Selected Records of Life at Court* in the east pavilion consists of the objects with which Pu Yi surrounded himself in the Imperial Palace: bearskin, collections of books, a screen decorated with mythical birds

donated by the Mikado of Japan and a mink cloak. All these exhibits, as well as satisfying to some extent the visitors' curiosity about imperial life, demonstrate the cruel contrast between the luxuries enjoyed by the rulers and the miserable lot of the toiling masses under the Japanese yoke. The Palace of Tranquillity, which, as Pu Yi's residence, is under repair, will be opened to the public within the next few years. The restoration work is designed to re-create the atmosphere of Pu Yi's daily life: his bedroom and that of the Empress Wan-Rong, the large drawing-room and the reading room. This cannot fail to arouse the interest of the general public and further satisfy its curiosity.

Among Chinese museums, the Imperial Palace museum is one with good development prospects, since it provides favourable conditions for tourism, study trips, entertainment, etc. In the long term (1986-90), it is planned to renovate the Tong De Palace and the east court, currently occupied by the Jilin Provincial Museum, to organize new exhibitions and to carry out restoration work on the rockeries and the imperial garden, planting rare species so as to give visitors an idea of how the court looked in its original state. It is also proposed to convert the former racecourse into a car park and green space. During the period 1991 to 2000, it is planned to restore all the buildings of the former Imperial Palace and to build hotels and restaurants serving imperial dishes, cinemas and theatres,



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Display of objects used at the court of Pu Yi.

sports grounds and other installations. Our plan is to turn the remains of the court of the Manchu dynasty into a tourist centre, with amusement parks and gardens. To meet the expectations of visitors to a modern museum, we hope to offer them a place of recreation, relaxation and study, where instruction and amusement can be combined. People visiting museums today certainly hope to learn something new but they also want to enjoy themselves; these elements must therefore be taken into account in museum development.

Since the museum's establishment, the process of collecting cultural records has been intensive and diversified. Some 7,000 objects, falling into three categories, have been assembled. The first category consists of objects such as decrees promulgated by Japan after the seizure of Changchun, insignia from the Japanese occupation and telegrams to Pu Yi from the Emperor of Japan, documenting the invasion of north-east China by Japanese troops (Fig. 44). Other objects recall the 'dreadful living conditions of the people of north-east China at this time, workers' identity cards, ration cards for basic necessities, etc.

The second category consists of records of Manchukuo: official reports and documents initialled by Pu Yi, a badge commemorating Pu Yi's visit to Japan, Manchurian coins and postage stamps, etc.; objects used in Pu Yi's court: the white bearskin coat worn by Pu Yi for his coronation, a large wardrobe, the screen presented to the Empress by the Emperor of Japan, sofas, sets of chinaware (Fig. 45). It is clear that the tiny Manchurian court, indifferent to the lot of the people, led a life of self-indulgence while the poverty-stricken masses were doubly oppressed by the occupying power and by the Manchu authorities.

The third category consists of records of the resistance movement of the people of north-east China against the Japanese; for example the bonds issued by the National Security Committee of the people of Liaoning Province to raise money for the army. There are also the invitations sent to Pu Yi, after his pardon, to attend the third and fourth national sessions of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the national holiday ceremonies in 1964 and 1966. Among the many dynasties recorded

in the history of China and in other countries, there is no instance of a deposed monarch being allowed to live in peace for the rest of his days. In the case of Pu Yi, China's re-education policy bore fruit: proclaimed Emperor at the age of 3, he lived through prosperity and adversity, ending up as an ordinary citizen, enjoying the goodwill of the Party and the government, recovering the people's esteem and being treated as an honourable member of society.

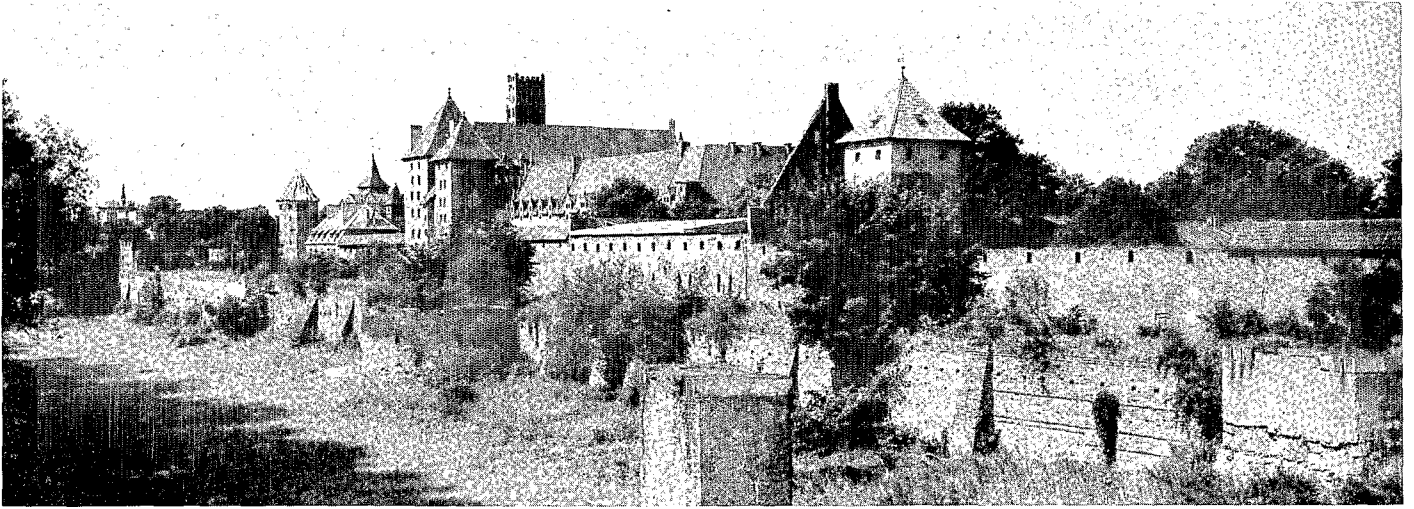
In view of its recent establishment, the museum is as yet not very well endowed, but as collection work intensifies it will have more to offer and improvements will be made in both conservation and display. Our museum attaches considerable importance to research. It encourages its staff to engage in studies and research and offers facilities for the publication of their findings and of the lessons to be drawn from their experience. Since the opening of the museum, about thirty articles on museology and the history of Manchuria have been published in national or provincial journals.

Since 1984, annual symposiums have been organized at which specialists may present up to three papers. The papers are evaluated and a selection is published in an annual collection. Three collections have been published so far, with a total of 120 titles. The museum sets a high value on contacts and co-operation with other museums, universities and research institutes, and seeks to turn their research findings to account. When preparing exhibitions, we have wide-ranging consultations with museums all over the country. Professors and experts from different social backgrounds are invited to present their views. Nationwide study trips are organized to gather the best available experience and advice on methods. This is why the exhibitions are so successful and appeal to visitors from such varying backgrounds. ■

*[Translated from Chinese]*



## *Ivory Works of Art in Polish Collections*



46  
Panorama of Malbork Castle, from the east.

Antoni Romuald Chodyński

Director of the Malbork Castle Museum.

The Malbork ivory exhibition *Ivory Works of Art in Polish Collections* brings together for the first time the majority of ivory carvings that have remained in Poland (Figs. 46, 47).

Polish museums, churches and convents, as well as private collectors, are in possession of various ivory masterpieces which, except for a few items, have never been put on display for the public.<sup>1</sup>

Several years of preparation have revealed a number of interesting historical objects, which have not yet been scientifically studied. In most cases it was not easy to classify these objects according to their form, workshop of origin or period of creation.<sup>2</sup>

Having no previous experience of such exhibitions, we had to solve many unfamiliar problems. Much consideration was given to the choice of a suitable exhibition hall which could meet strict preservation requirements. We eventually decided on a room in the High Castle of Malbork. It is a suitable size (190 m<sup>2</sup>), and has top lighting in three rows, and a phase heating system under a marble floor. It is thus possible to adjust its parameters by selective use of phases according to humidity levels and to dehumidify the interior to 50-60 per cent relative humidity, which is close to the natural condition of exhibits. The exhibits borrowed from other museums where humidity was under 40 per cent, or those lent by churches with humidity over 80 per cent, had to go through a quarantine period in a specially prepared room before being trans-

ferred to the exhibition hall. Similar action will be taken before these exhibits go back to their owners.

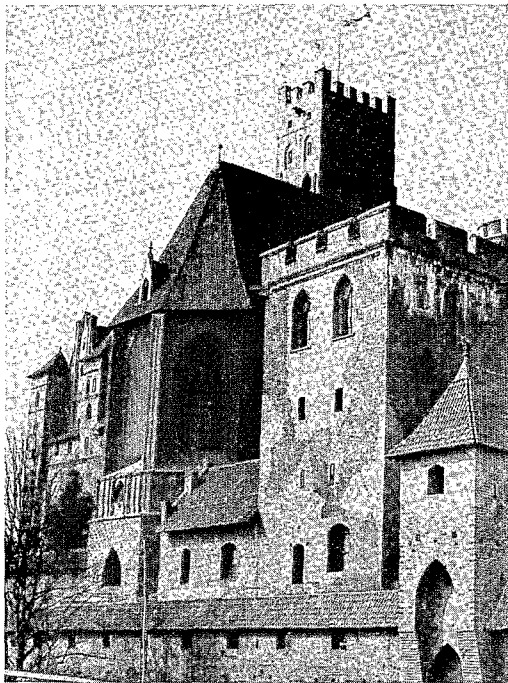
We found that light of only 15 lux (measured close to exhibits) was adequate even for small objects made with micro-techniques. This is because light reaching the object on display is doubly diffused, and reflected by the inner surfaces of the glass panels.

Special display techniques were needed for sculptures, bas-reliefs, small utility objects (except for occasional Roman ones made of walrus tusk, which had turned dark brown through mineralization and larger objects such as mugs and elephants). We decided to use dustproof glass cubical containers of different sizes. Such arrangements were necessary because of the large numbers of daily visitors and the very moist climate of Malbork. This town is situated beside the delta formed by the Vistula and Nogat rivers, on low-lying ground. It also should be added that the Gothic Castle of Malbork is built entirely of brick.

The glass showcases diffuse artificial light coming from outside and eliminate the contrast of light and shadow which can occur when exhibits are spotlighted. For the background we chose natural fabric (worsted cloth and delicate woollen cloth) in strong, rich colours: dark cherry, warm red, emerald green and brown. In some cases we used coloured paper with a velvet texture. We achieved the impression of cleanness and naturalness by making the walls bright white and using thin glass for the showcases. The ivory

1. The organizers of this exhibition were Mr Antoni Romuald Chodyński, Mr Janusz Ciechanowski and the consultant Mr Wojciech Kowalski, who were greatly helped in their task by the keepers of the national galleries of Warsaw, Kraków, Poznań and other cities.

2. Some errors were unavoidable in spite of the kind help by correspondence of such experts as Mrs Danielle Gaborit-Chopin of the Louvre Museum, Mrs Margarita M. Estella of the Diego Velasquez History of Art Institute in Madrid, and Mr Christian Theuerkauff of the State Museum of Berlin. We would like to express here our sincere gratitude to these experts.



47  
View of the High Castle of Malbork,  
from the east.

exhibits, with their subtle incrustations and discreet polychromy, set in modest silver, gold or copper against a coloured background, are distinctly visible and readable. We tried to avoid placing objects of different sizes in the same exhibition case. The hierarchy of exhibits was shown by having a separate location for those of unique value. The rest were placed in formal groups according to their time of creation, function and provenance.

The proper selection of exhibits was of great importance for those who designed the exhibition. We wished to present the biggest possible array of highly valuable exhibits, but for this we had to overcome the difficulties of gaining access to objects that were the property of various institutions or private collectors.

We also wanted to show the great variety of forms and types that exist, not only of European origin but also of colonial, African and oriental provenance. Thus some ivories of medium value but typical of a fashion or a period of time are also displayed (Fig. 48).

We opened our exhibition with modest works from the late Roman and Gothic periods. These include a figurine of the Madonna and Child from the third quarter of the fourteenth century made in a Paris workshop (property of the Greyfriars Order in Kraków), French diptyches (Fig. 49) presenting scenes in the lives of Christ and the Holy Virgin, and a pastoral fragment of the Annunciation, with traces of decoration in gold and distemper (property of the Bishops of Czestochowa); all of these pieces are exceptional in Polish collections.

Art historians will be interested in the previously unknown home-altar made of ebony, decorated with jewels and bas-reliefs of ivory, which had been ordered in the seventeenth century by the parish priest of St Mary's Church in Kraków from one of the good German workshops. The effigies of the Crucified Christ of which quite a number are preserved in Polish convents (especially those of the Visitation Order introduced to Poland by Queen Mary Louisa Gonzaga in 1654), have a special place in our exhibition. We also exhibit one of the oldest extant effigies in Poland of the Crucified Christ, made of ivory in the second half of the sixteenth century (property of the National Museum of

Kraków) and a dozen or so sculptures borrowed from the Sisters of the Visitation in Warsaw. Although the majority of these sculptures are of French origin, distinct features of provincial Polish folk art can be observed. The portrait sculptures — of which we should mention the male busts by Lücke, characteristic of the Troger circle — are much more limited in number. More numerous is the collection of bas-reliefs; here should be noted images of King Augustus II and his son Augustus III, Count Thomas Czapski and his wife Maria, and other historical personages.

There are few extant examples of ivory utensils in Polish collections, but the collapsible sun-dials, generally of Nuremberg origin from between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries (most of which belong to the famous Przypkowski Clock Museum in Jedrzejów), are of great interest.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were characterized by utility objects and souvenirs. The Poles, deprived of their independence, have always been apt to refer in their artisan production to deeds of national heroes and moments of historical glory. Among such patriotic decorations are the images of great Polish kings which can be observed on large carved elephant tusks and commemorative sceptres of this kind have been displayed at Malbork. They belong mainly to the National Museums of Kraków and Warsaw and to the Jagiellonian University Museum of Kraków. Also exhibited was a sceptre made of narwhal tusk, property of the Kórnik Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences. To finish up the review of European Art, we presented several examples of forgeries imitating works of Ottoman and Byzantine origin or French Gothic diptyches.

Colonial works form a separate group of exhibits. These include a Madonna and Child of Portuguese-Filipino provenance, an Immaculata from Goa and several Afro-Portuguese goblets. The Madonna statue, from the late seventeenth century, has been used as the graphic symbol of the exhibition and for the album of ivories in Polish collections, which is now being prepared (Fig. 50).

Chinese and Japanese art is represented by a large collection of sculptures, bas-reliefs, and *okimono* and *netsuke* figurines and vessels, which are

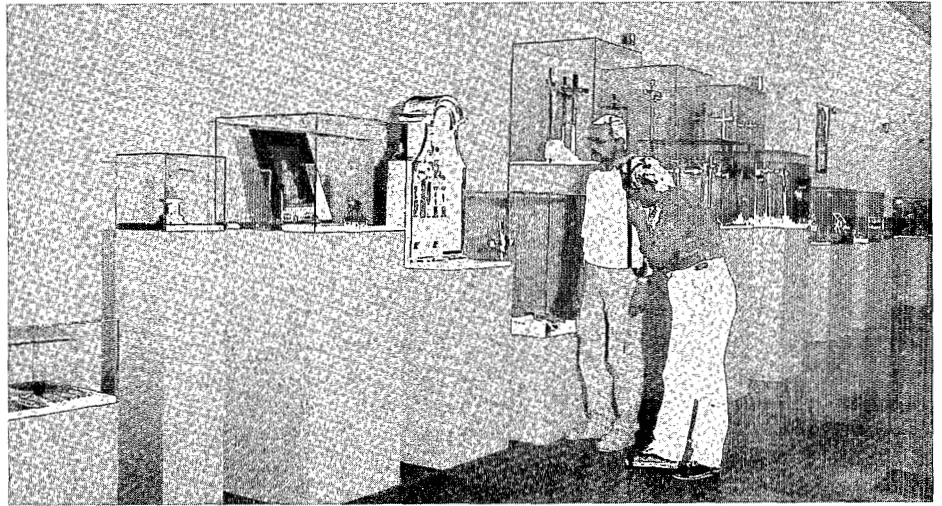
the property of the National Museums of Kraków and Warsaw, or belong to private collections. They are decorated mostly with images of gods and heroes of Buddhist mythology, mythical animals and protective spirits. There is also the tendency towards realism in Far-Eastern art, as seen in the figurines of artisans at work.

The element of naturalism can be observed in the splendid collection of miniature tragic and comic actors' masks from Japanese theatre. A significant feature of Japanese art is also visible in these ivories: its great respect for and poetic attitude towards nature. It is expressed not only in the traditional ornamentation technique of sprinkling gold powder on lacquer, but also the perfect use of ornamentation in the form of written poems.

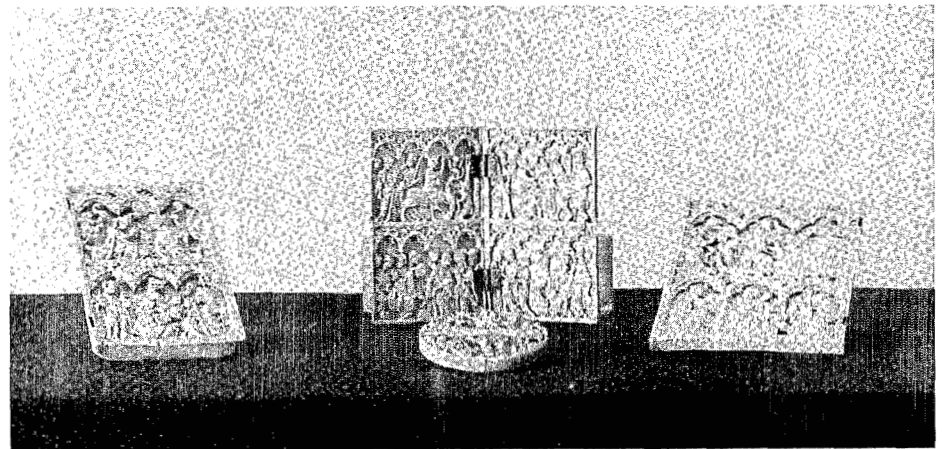
The exhibition ends with a collection of Eastern arms: Persian daggers with carved ivory hilts, Japanese swords with engraved and tinted ivory sheaths, and the relic knife with its ivory pommel.

There are all together 350 items in the Malbork exhibition, divided into 275 catalogue positions. This represents about 80 per cent of the ivory works of art preserved in Polish collections, which had been very much depleted as the result of dramatic historical events, particularly the Second World War.

Finally, it should be also noted that neither the trade nor the tradition of ivory carving existed in Poland. The ivories that exist were either connected with religious ceremonies or brought to Poland as souvenirs, or obtained through foreign antique dealers. ■



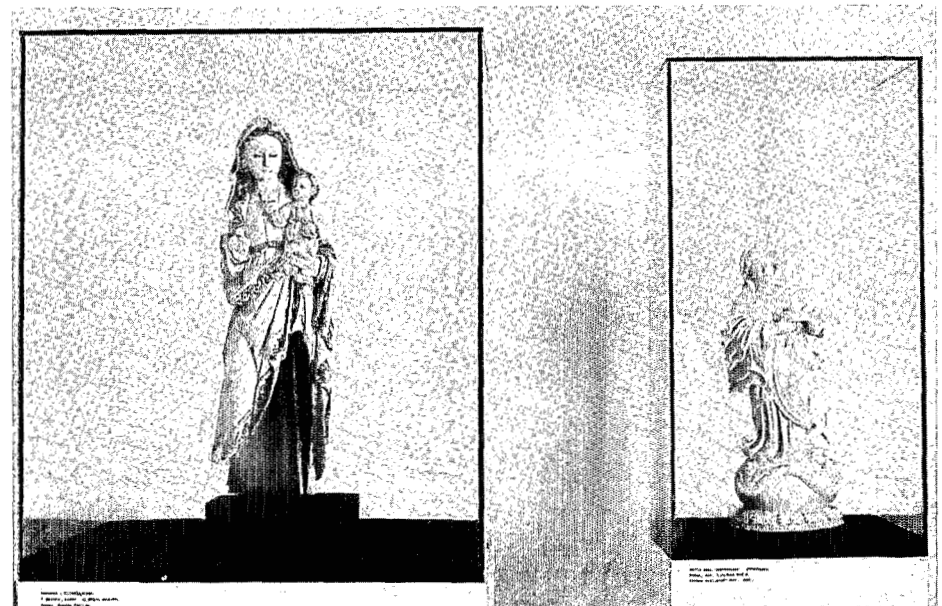
48  
Display of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century ivory objects in the exhibition *Ivory Works of Art in Polish Collections*.



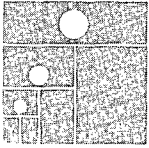
49  
Gothic diptyches.



50  
Art deco exhibit from the exhibition, *Ivory Works of Art in Polish Collections*.



51  
Left: Seventeenth-century Portuguese-Filipino Madonna and Child.  
Right: Early nineteenth-century Immaculata from Goa, India.



*WFFM newsbrief* WFFM: The Seventh International Congress

The Spanish Federation of Friends of Museums has gladly accepted the task of organizing the Seventh International Congress of the World Federation, and the preparatory work for it is already under way.

Córdoba is a city of universal destiny, according to the historian Arnold Toynbee, and in 1990 it will welcome the participants of the Congress with its proverbial charm, simplicity and wisdom.

A museum city as well as a city of museums, Córdoba also has the advantage of being close to Grenada, another monumental city, and Seville, which will be in the midst of preparing the celebrations for 1992. The latter will probably receive the participants for one day of the Congress.

The agenda for the Congress is in the process of being drawn up. Naturally, it will focus on current concerns, some of which were designated during the Toronto conference as needing further study and reflection. An example of these is reflection on the uses of the new communication technologies, and the role Friends could play in their promotion and development.

Córdoba also has one of the federations with the broadest horizons, since it is based not on one museum but on all the museums in the city and province of Córdoba, whose activities are of considerable interest. The members of these museums, who are friends of the Friends, will certainly make excellent speakers, guides and companions for the participants.

*From time to time, as the opportunity occurs, the WFFM will report on some of the new museums built for the collections of generous private donors — people who are truly Friends of Museums.*

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## *The Burrell Collection in Glasgow*

visited by a Manchester Friend

Sometime in the 1970s I went with a party of Manchester Friends of Museums to see, among other things, a touring exhibition at the City Art Gallery in Sheffield entitled *Treasures from the Burrell Collection*. There were certainly pictures — French Impressionists, an early Rembrandt self-portrait, probably ceramics and other *objets d'art*, but I only really remember those marvellous tapestries, vibrant with colour and life. They were a revelation to me. In my limited experience, except for *La dame à la licorne* in the Cluny Museum in Paris, tapestries were usually faded, often threadbare, and portrayed obscure biblical and mythological subjects. The Burrell tapestries were quite different; they

looked as though they had come straight from the workshop in spite of being centuries old, and there was so much in them to look at — peasants and princes, lovers and gypsies, exotic animals as well as rabbits, horses and dogs, birds and flowers, splendid costumes, extraordinary hats. And who was Burrell? Where was his collection housed and how had he amassed such marvels? When they all found a home at last in Pollok Park near Glasgow in the autumn of 1983, these questions could be answered.

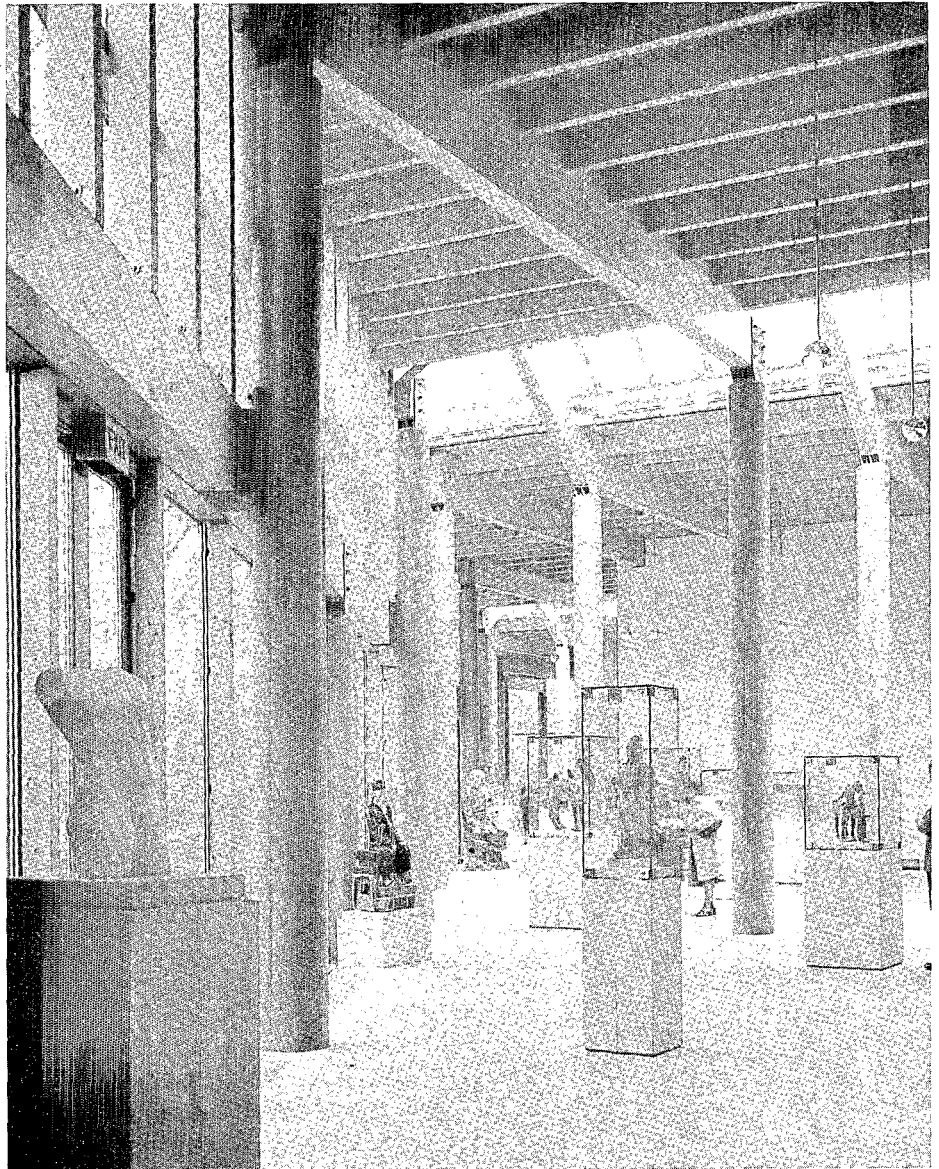
### *The collector*

Sir William Burrell was a Glasgow ship-owner. He was born in 1861, and



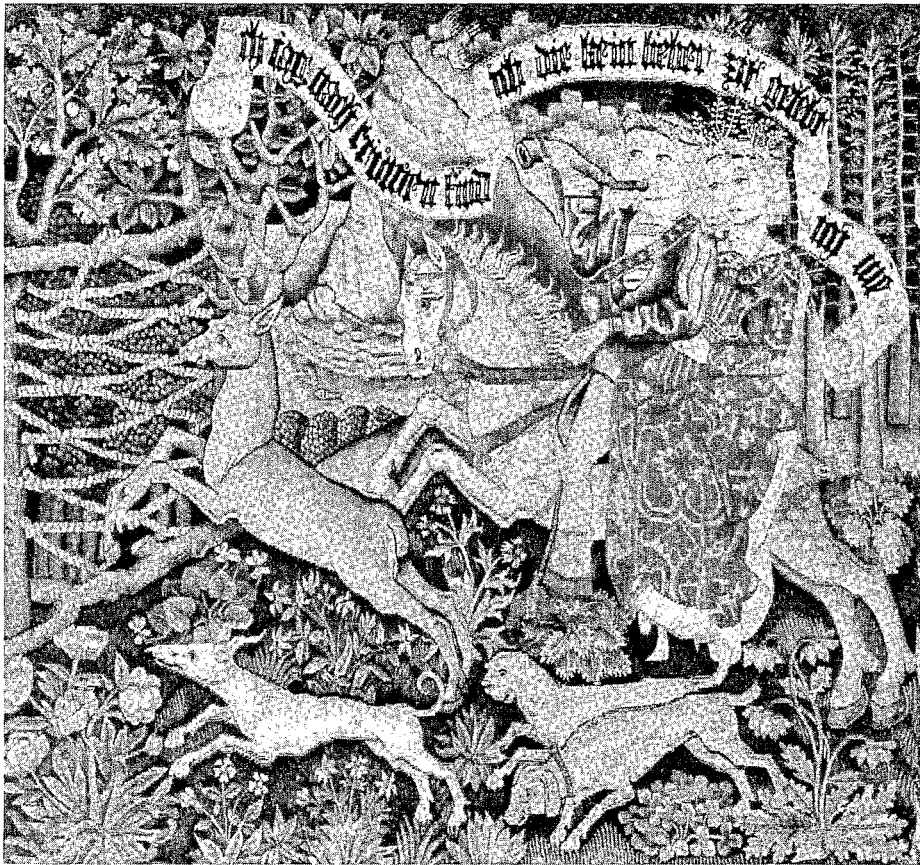
at the age of 25 he took over the management of the family firm with his brother George. Thirty years later in 1916 Sir William was able to retire and devote the rest of his long life to his passion for art, in particular northern European Art from 1300 to 1500, and especially tapestries and stained glass. No one knows, and Sir William left no record, exactly what or who aroused his interest in Late Gothic and Early Renaissance art. In the Border country south of Glasgow, and the county of Fife, which he knew well since his school days, there are many ruins of medieval castles. St Andrews, besides its famous golf course, boasts an ancient ruined cathedral and archbishop's palace, and just over the border lies Northumbria where the Burrell family originated and where Sir William eventually made his home at Hutton Castle near Berwick-on-Tweed.

He began collecting pictures early in his career and by 1900 he owned a number of tapestries and ecclesiastical objects, sculptures in wood, ivory and alabaster. When Glasgow held an international exhibition in 1901, more than 200 items were lent from Burrell's collection, among them pictures by Couture, Géricault, Daumier, Manet, Jongkind and Whistler. There were quite a lot of wealthy industrialists in late-nineteenth-century Glasgow who collected pictures with the help of local dealers, of whom Alexander Reid was the best known. Sir William had a great respect for Reid's expertise and continued to patronize him when he moved his gallery from Glasgow to London. There were also contacts with dealers in Paris. Sir William was a shrewd businessman — he loved a bargain. His attitude was quite different to that of his contemporary, the sugar king, Henry Havemeyer, whose collection of pictures and oriental art is now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Henry Havemeyer enjoyed auctions so much that he would bid for the sheer excitement of it and sometimes go on far beyond the worth of the object he coveted. Sir William liked to 'circle round' whatever he had his eye on, to avoid alerting a rival bidder or dealer. In this way he sometimes missed an important piece, but his own expert knowledge, good memory and keen eye often brought him bargains too. His most expensive purchase was of a



52  
The North Gallery of the Burrell  
Collection.

portrait by Frans Hals for which he paid £14,500. From 1911 until a year before his death in 1958, he kept meticulous records of all his purchases in school exercise books. In 1944, when the collection contained some 6,000 items, he and his wife decided to give it to Glasgow, the city of his birth, together with a sum of money for a building in which to house it. The terms of the Deed of Gift, however, created difficulties. They stipulated that, to avoid pollution, a rural setting must be found not less than 25 kilometres from the city's Royal Exchange. In spite of efforts to make him change his mind, the issue was still undecided when he died and it was another nine years before a site was



53  
*The Pursuit of Fidelity*, German tapestry,  
 c. 1475-1500, 76.2 × 86.4 cm (30 × 34  
 in).

54  
 Stained glass in the South Gallery of the  
 Burrell Collection.

found on the estate surrounding Pollok House, donated to the city in 1967 by Mrs Anne Maxwell Macdonald and her family. Meanwhile, another 2,000 pieces had been added to the collection, most of them by Sir William, a few by his trustees.

### *The building*

The 146 hectares of tree-studded parkland and farmland which make up the Pollok Estate lie about 5 kilometres to the south-west of Glasgow city centre. The building took twelve years to design and construct. The young architect, Barry Gasson, has described the difficulty of designing a home for so many diverse objects, so numerous that only a portion of them can be displayed at one time. Storage and some way of rotating the collection were therefore an important consideration. Also, at Sir William's request, three of the rooms at Hutton Castle, with their contents, were to be included in the design, as were some of the medieval portals and other architectural features which he had bought. A large doorway from Hornby Castle in North Yorkshire and a smaller entrance which Sir William had acquired when the vast collection of the

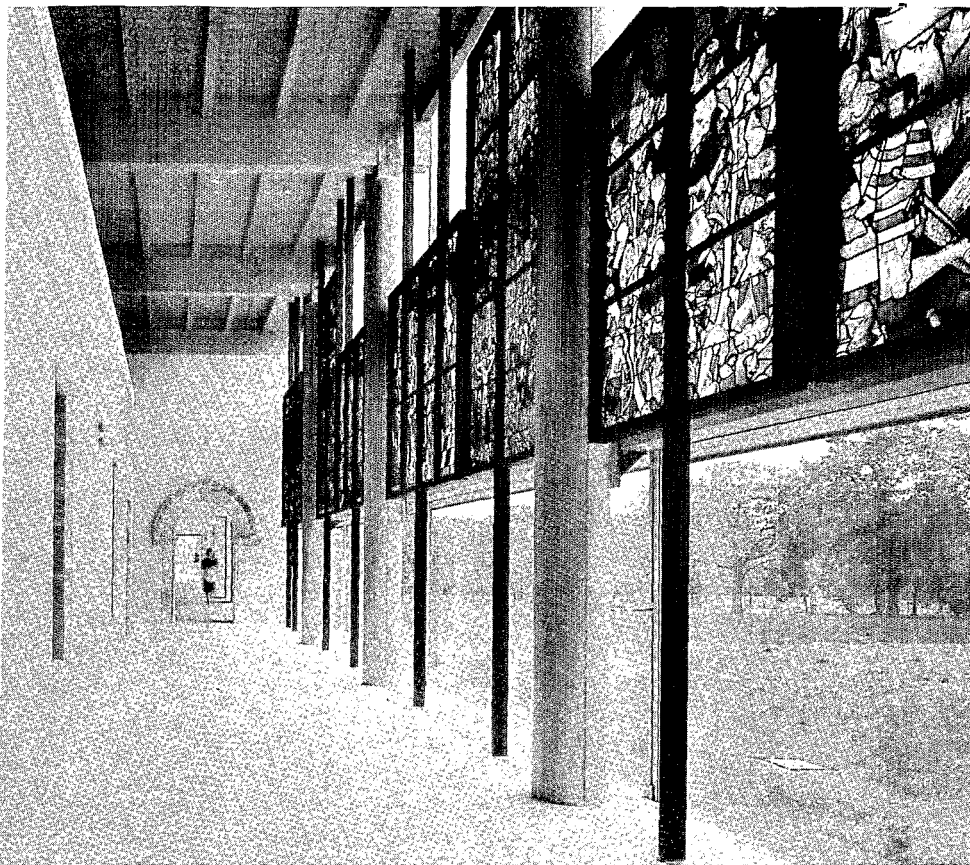
American newspaper magnate, William Randolph Hearst, was put up for auction in the 1950s, were carved in multicoloured sandstone and this dictated the choice of pink sandstone for the walls in which they are set. Besides stone there is much glass and stainless steel, while the floors inside are mainly of stone, with some timber and carpeting. The most imaginative aspect of the building is its positioning, not in the centre of the park, but with its long north-west glass wall right up against the woodland outside, so that the light shimmers through the trees onto the treasures within, while the big south-facing windows at the other side of the building are set with some of the brilliantly coloured stained glass in the collection.

As Barry Gasson describes it, the building is a synthesis of many elements — a collection of cultural objects spanning 4,000 years, a building of components capable of being assembled in five years, and a complex set of devices monitored by computer to preserve the works of art for posterity. The making of this building has been an enthralling experience, not likely to be encountered again. A problem that involves such dimensions of time and craft, and requires

the reconciliation of such diverse elements, is unique.

### *The collection*

As you enter the building through the Gothic archway of Yorkshire sandstone, you find yourself in a high, nave-like space with pay-desk, shops, displays, and cloakrooms on either side. It leads through the impressive Hornby Castle portal into a light, greenery-filled court with just one object in it — the enormous Warwick Vase, pieced together in 1775 from fragments found at Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli. This was not bought by Sir William but quite recently, in 1979, by his trustees. We can go straight from here into the airy gallery ahead, with the glass wall looking out onto the woodland. Here there are treasures from ancient civilizations, Etruscan, Mesopotamian, Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman. If, like me, you know very little about such artefacts, you would be well advised to join one of the excellent volunteer guides who will point out the interesting pieces (in French or German if necessary) and answer your questions. The largest section is the Egyptian one, which includes some splendid reliefs, statu-



ettes and heads. The simple perfection of a head of Sekmet, the lioness-goddess, in dark polished granite, dating from about 1560 B.C. catches the eye at once. Here too is the head of a delicately smiling queen of the 26th Dynasty (c. 664-525 B.C.), wearing an elaborate head-dress; a bronze statuette of Osiris, god of the underworld, in even fancier headgear; and a tiny glass perfume bottle decorated with wavy lines of yellow, blue and green.

The next gallery on the north side is devoted to oriental art, which accounts for a quarter of the whole collection (Fig. 52). Again, no one knows what made Burrell take an interest in this field, nor quite when he began to acquire these objects, but we do know that between 1911 and 1957 he bought Chinese ceramics nearly every year, especially early examples, as well as bronzes. Cases on either side contain celadon bowls from the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and blue and white Ming porcelains. I particularly relish the glorious undecorated dishes with glazes of sulphur-yellow, cobalt blue and copper red.

### *The tapestries*

It is impossible to choose a favourite

from such varied examples, so we can begin at random with a late fifteenth-century hanging, *Hercules Initiating the Olympic Games*. It shows the court of Burgundy in mythological guise. A smaller hanging of the same period celebrates *The Pursuit of Fidelity* (Fig. 53). A young couple on a dapple grey horse are hunting a stag (symbol of fidelity) towards a solid-looking net hung between two oak-trees. The subject of another Franco-Burgundian tapestry, perhaps from Tournai, shows peasants making preparations for a rabbit hunt with nets, ferrets and a dog, the rabbits at the bottom of the canvas looking particularly unconcerned. Many of the early tapestries were woven for wealthy aristocratic patrons of the arts. Two fragments in the collection may have belonged to the famous Apocalypse set made for the Duc de Berri in the late fourteenth century, now in the château at Angers. From the same period, armorial hangings displayed in the Hutton Castle drawing room and hall were part of a series commissioned by William II of Beaufort, his wife and son, Raymond, Comte de Turenne.

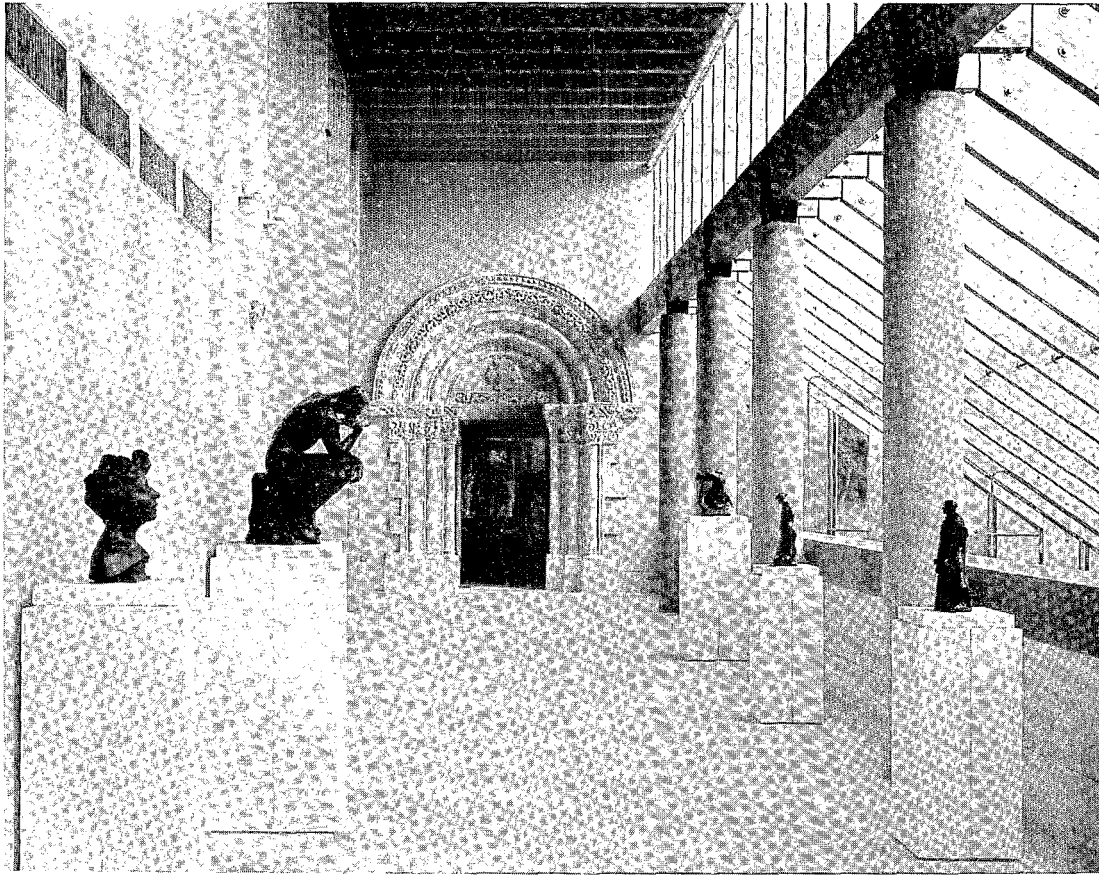
There are three early sixteenth-century Franco-Dutch tapestries on display. In the first, two camels with

necks like swans are ridden by Indians and accompanied by lions and monkeys. This scene may be based on an actual event: the Portuguese organized a procession of exotic beasts through the streets of Antwerp in 1502, following Vasco da Gama's voyages to the East Indies. In *The Camp of Gypsies* the life of the period is vividly depicted. The huntsman in *The Flight of the Heron*, another elegant gentleman, may be François I. This is a most realistic scene: there are ducks on the pond in the foreground, small birds winging in fright from the encounter of hawk and heron up above them and, as a backdrop, woods, farmhouse, castle and distant hills reminiscent of the illustrated manuscripts in the Book of Hours at Chantilly. Finally, there are the examples of *millefleurs* tapestries, especially the one entitled *Charity Overcoming Envy* which used to hang in the drawing room at Hutton Castle. Then there are some of Sir William's collection of carpets from the Near East to be seen in the rooms, three German fifteenth-century altar frontals in the dining room, and late Gothic sculptures and candlesticks and stained glass, especially in the drawing room. Turning left out of the hall on your way to the restaurant, if the sun is shining you will get the full benefit of the colourful stained glass panels which are incorporated into the south facing windows (Fig. 54).

Much of the earliest painted glass was made for use in churches. An example here is a fragment showing the Prophet Jeremiah in a white gown with blue overmantle against a dark red background. It is one of the many pieces, now scattered, commissioned by the famous Abbé Suger for the Abbey of St Denis near Paris (c. 1140-45). The most important windows from a former Carmelite church at Boppard on the Rhine, glazed about 1440, are now divided between the Cloisters in New York and the Burrell Collection.

Continuing down this corridor, we come to some of Sir William's small bronzes, each on its plinth (Fig. 55). They are by nineteenth- and twentieth-century sculptors, and fourteen of them are by Rodin. The wide windows of the restaurant, with heraldic glass from Cheshire and Northamptonshire set into them, face south over the park. Pollok House cannot be seen from here, but on a fine day it is a pleasant





55  
The Montron Arch in the Sculpture Gallery of the Burrell Collection. Late twelfth century, limestone portal from Montron, France. 4.72 × 3.81 m (15 1/2 × 12 1/2 ft.).

ten-minute walk after lunch to go and see the house, built in about 1750.

Sir William Burrell was not interested in the eighteenth century. The pictures he liked to collect were rather low-key, and his taste was conservative. The Hague School attracted him, as well as the Scottish artist, Joseph Crawhall (now once again fashionable). But through his friendship with Alexander Reid, who had lived in Paris and once shared lodgings with Van Gogh, he bought French paintings as early as 1900 by Courbet, Bonvin, Boudin, and later, in the 1920s and 1930s, he acquired some by Manet, Sisley, Cézanne and some splendid works by Degas, including the portrait of Edmond Duranty (novelist and critic), the well known *Ballet Class* and *Jockeys in the Rain*. There are some earlier paintings in the collection as well — a *Virgin and Child* by Bellini, a beautiful *Annunciation* by Memling, Dutch artists of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, including the Rembrandt *Self-portrait* (1632), bought in 1942 for £12,500, and the *Portrait of a Gentle-*

*man* by Frans Hals, purchased two years later. It is the French paintings, however, that are most memorable, especially a Chardin still life, and *The White Horse* by Géricault. Among the prints and drawings, there are four Rembrandt etchings, cartoons and sketches by the *Punch* cartoonist, Phil May, and 132 examples of work by Crawhall. There is also a fine collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Japanese prints.

Right to the end of his life, Sir William Burrell went on buying items of medieval sculpture. Anything earlier than A.D. 1300 did not interest him, though his dealer friends in Paris did manage to persuade him to buy some valuable Romanesque objects such as the glass from St Denis, and a twelfth-century bronze pyx (a small box used to hold the Host) which may have come from the Temple Church in London. The collection is an extraordinary example of one man's involvement with art, and the building is worthy of it. Of course it needs more than one visit to appreciate it properly,

whether you are an average museum Friend or expert with a special interest in, say, treen (objects made of wood), the domestic or decorative arts, pottery, glass, silver, needlework, or arms and armour. And while you are in Glasgow, there are other galleries and museums well worth visiting. The City Art Gallery and Museum at Kelvingrove has wonderful French paintings, a dramatically hung Crucifixion by Salvador Dali, and Glasgow art nouveau.

There is also the Charles Rennie Mackintosh house rebuilt beside the Hunterian Art Gallery where you will also find the world's best collection of drawings, prints and pastels by Whistler given to Glasgow by his sister-in-law, Miss Birnie Philip. Glasgow has much to offer the visitor and you will be given a warm welcome by the Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum Association (GAGMA), which provides volunteer guides who work regular rotas at Kelvingrove and Pollok House, as well as the Burrell Collection. ■



# *On display: A Design Grammar for Museum Exhibitions*

by Margaret Hall

In his Foreword to this reference manual, Sir David Wilson, Director of the British Museum, observes that the author's experience of more than twenty years' work in the museum world is distilled in this book 'which will become essential reading for all who work in museums — whether they be curators, designers or administrators'.

Museums might be regarded as a growth industry, but museums large and small are facing the need for more sophisticated shows subject to strict budgetary control. In the process, designs of individual exhibitions have to be matched closely with the ideas of the subject experts, the museum curators. Margaret Hall's experience as Head of Design at the British Museum has convinced her that interpretation and design are twin facets of a single process.

In the introduction to this book she considers the history, philosophy and strategy of exhibition design for museums but the core of the volume is a grammar of exhibition design for

use by the museum professional and all those engaged in mounting cultural displays and exhibitions. It offers a topic by topic examination of over thirty types of material that might need to be exhibited — ranging from armour and jewellery to paintings and sculpture.

A mixture of narrative, tabular and check-list information, diagrams and illustrations presents the salient facts about each type of display — principles, materials, lighting, labelling, conservation considerations, practical advice, what to avoid, etc. Architects, designers and their students are confronted by the same materials and problems in conference centres, shops, libraries and hotels. Designing displays in museums is not a separate discipline.

In preparation for this book the author has created an exhibition design archive at the British Museum, based on material gathered on visits to Finland, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States of America.

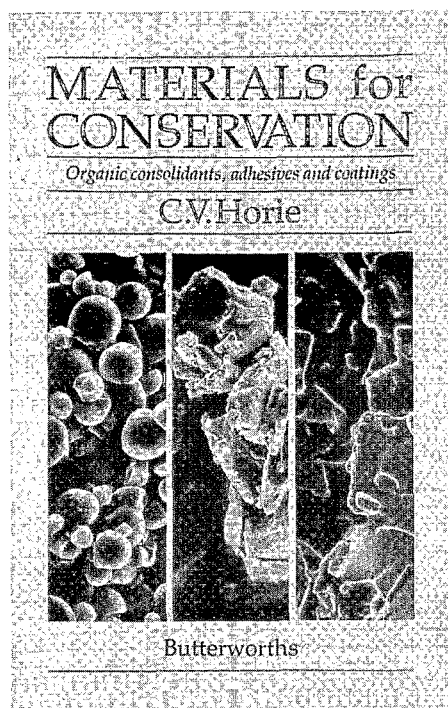
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56  
Memory and the label. The load on the visitor is discussed in Margaret Hall's book, *On Display: A Design Grammar for Museum Exhibitions*. *Captain Cook in the South Seas*, London, Museum of Mankind, 1979.

57  
The problems of designing exhibitions for the visually disabled are discussed in Margaret Hall's book, *On Display: A Design Grammar for Museum Exhibitions*. *Human Touch*, London, British Museum, 1986.





## *Materials for Conservation*

*Organic consolidants, adhesives and coatings*

By C.V. Horie

The continual struggle of conservators to check the deterioration of objects has led to increasing use of synthetic polymers. These materials are part of the sophisticated technology that has been developed to augment and often replace traditional materials and methods. Conservators therefore have a wider range of techniques available. However, they must be able to appreciate the potentials and pitfalls of any proposed technique. This book provides, in a convenient form, a summary of necessary information.

The first section explains physical and chemical properties which are important in the conservation process, i.e. application, ageing, reversal. The topics covered include molecular weight, glass transition temperature, solubility and solvents,

polymerization and degradation reactions. The second section provides detailed consideration of the individual materials, current and obsolete, used in conservation, drawing out the factors relevant to their effects on objects. The conservation uses of each material are summarized and referenced to allow further study. In five appendices, the properties of the polymers, solvents and their interactions are tabulated, with a list of suppliers and conversion table of physical units. IUPAC and SI nomenclature is used throughout the book.

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