

Islam in the Balkans

Persian Art and Culture of the 18th and 19th Centuries

Papers arising from a symposium held to
celebrate the World of Islam Festival at the
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Island
in the
Balkans

Person
and
Culture

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PREFACE

The World of Islam Festival was celebrated in 1976 with a wealth of exhibitions, lectures and conferences. As the Royal Scottish Museum has a rich collection of Islamic material it was considered appropriate that, apart from lending objects to the major exhibitions, it should offer its own contribution. This took the form of a symposium held at the Museum from 29-30 July 1976 in which two themes, as yet little explored in the field of Islamic studies, were discussed.

The Ottoman Turks occupied south-east Europe for five centuries which has inevitably been influenced by their culture, and the group of papers "Islam in the Balkans" was chosen to draw attention to this unjustifiably neglected aspect of the Ottoman heritage.

The Royal Scottish Museum's connections with Persia are strong, because from 1885-1900 its Director was Sir Robert Murdoch Smith, formerly Head of the Persian Telegraph Department, and the Museum owes much of its Persian collections to his outstanding efforts. Smith was one of the first Europeans to write a handbook of Persian art, in which he viewed its later developments with a sympathetic, though objective, eye, and the symposium papers "Persian art and culture of the 18th-19th Centuries" are intended to propagate his interest and to stimulate inquiry into a field which has received little attention from scholars. The publication of these papers aims to provide a permanent record of these two themes and, we hope, a stimulus for future research.

I should like to thank the contributors who both presented papers and organised them for publication and to the World of Islam Festival for valuable support.

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