Gothic Revival
A PUIGIN MASTERPIECE REBORN

History on Ice
PRESEVING ANTARCTICA’S PAST

Imperial Wonder
AN EMPEROR’S PRIVATE WORLD

Born of the Earth
ART OF AFRICAN ARCHITECTURE
What time and neglect are ruining, the World Monuments Fund is fighting to preserve.

The World Monuments Fund and founding sponsor American Express created the World Monuments Watch in 1996 to raise public awareness of the plight of the world’s most endangered sites and attract the funding needed to help save them. American Express has committed $10 million over ten years to the Watch. For the past six years, American Express Publishing’s Travel + Leisure magazine has devoted a special section to the Watch, contributing ten percent of all net advertising revenue to the cause. We are proud to be associated with the World Monuments Watch initiative and the vital work of the World Monuments Fund.
10
Reversal of Fortune
A Victorian wonder may once again take center stage

16
Frozen in Time
Remains from Antarctica's Heroic Age of Exploration pose new challenges for the field of preservation

24
Portrait of an Emperor
Qianlong, one of China's most illustrious rulers, was renowned for his scholarship and patronage

34
Butabu
West Africa's extraordinary earthen legacy

40
Isle of the Ancient Mariner
Malta, a Mediterranean seafarers' haven for 6,000 years

DEPARTMENTS
2
From the President
5
From the Editor
6
News
46
Ex Libris
48
Expedition: Australia

ON THE COVER
A suite of statues, which had been stolen from Manchester's eighteenth-century Monastery of St. Francis and Gorton, awaits reinstallation in the High Gothic cathedral. Photograph by Dan Dubowitz
Into the Fray

Losing cultural heritage is one of the heartbreaking consequences of war; picking up the pieces in its wake is one of the greatest challenges for our field. Well before the invasion of Iraq last April, experts around the world began working intensively in an attempt to avert a cultural heritage catastrophe. Unfortunately, we did not succeed in preventing the disaster, and have been forced to stand by powerlessly, watching destruction and looting accelerate over the course of nearly a year.

But we have not been idle. Last summer, WMF joined forces with a key international partner—the Getty, through its Conservation Institute in Los Angeles—to develop and deploy a conservation initiative as soon as conditions on the ground would permit. It is our first formal collaboration, and it will multiply both organizations' capacity to address problems wrought by war. With seed funding in hand to launch our Iraq Initiative, we are now putting the program in place. Although we have yet to take to the field, we have already directed funding to protect the exposed archaeological sites in the center of the country, and to replace the lost roofing shelter over the remains of the ancient Assyrian capital of Nineveh.

A major component of this initiative will be the building of a national monuments and archaeological sites inventory, based on a similar cultural heritage database now in use in Jordan. Working with the Iraqi authorities and scholars, and institutions dedicated to research in the cradle of civilization, we are in the process of gathering historical data on Iraq's thousands of monuments and sites. To this will be added information on current site conditions and needs as they become known. The capacity to access and manage such information will enable a future Iraqi administration to prioritize their conservation needs, and thus make the best possible use of available funds and expertise. One of the outcomes of the war may be an extension and sharing of information between institutions on both a regional and international basis. This would be a first.

Through UNESCO, governmental donors are making pledges for post-war assistance: the Getty/WMF initiative is intended to complement these commitments by providing expertise, technical support, training, and quick, flexible seed funding from the private sector to plan the projects that will be governmentally financed over a longer term. If the war has produced destruction, our post-war assistance on an intimate scale will seek to build confidence among peers working in concert to reestablish shared values. It is this collegiality, trust, and shared experience that will be our reward for the intrepid investment we are making.

Bonnie Burnham
PRESIDENT, WORLD MONUMENTS FUND

Timothy P. Whalen
DIRECTOR, GETTY CONSERVATION INSTITUTE
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From the Editor

Fall the challenges facing the field of preservation, among the greatest has been the replication of ancient techniques or methods of manufacture that are no longer practiced. This issue we highlight two projects that have required a revitalization of lost, or vanishing, arts. At Qianlong's Retirement Lodge, an eighteenth-century imperial jewelbox in the far northeast corner of China's Forbidden City opulent interiors were appointed with silken panels executed in double-sided embroidery. The technique, mastered during the Qin period, allowed for intricately sewn panels to be appreciated from both sides, with nary a knot in sight. Over the centuries since the emperor's reign, however, the delicate panels had deteriorated considerably, suffering from age and exposure to high humidity. Textile specialists from Suzhou Embroidery Research Institute are confident they will be able to replicate the imperial stitching. However, they warn, fabric and thread of comparable quality may be difficult—if not impossible—to find.

In West Africa, buildings once built of earth are—one by one—being replaced with concrete structures. And, in recent years, cement has become the material of choice for replastering structures and patching collapsed sections of traditional mudbrick buildings, some of considerable antiquity. Cement, which does not allow an earthen building to breathe, has caused a host of conservation problems, particularly at sites such as the seventeenth-century Larabanga mosque in northern Ghana, where high humidity had caused woodrot in structural supports and invited insect infestation.

We are happy to report, however, that with a renewed appreciation for ways of the past, both of these sites are being granted new life.

Ghana's Seventeenth-Century Larabanga Mosque, which had been covered in damaging cement, has been recently restored using traditional mudplaster techniques.

Contributors

Gus Roxburgh, a New Zealand-based freelance writer and filmmaker, has written extensively on issues relating to the environment, heritage, and adventure travel. He is the director of the television program Eco Trekker.

Elaine Griffiths is the project director for The Monastery of St. Francis & Gorton Trust, founded in 1996.

Andrew L. Slayman is a Maine-based photographer and writer. His photographs can be seen at www.slayman.com, and will be on exhibit this summer at the NTWH Gallery in Belfast, Maine.

Jonathan Spence, Sterling Professor of History at Yale University and a renowned authority on modern Chinese history, is the author of numerous books on China, including The Search for Modern China, The Gate of Heavenly Peace, and The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci.

Suzanne Preston Blier, the Allen Whitehill Clowes Professor of Fine Arts and of African and African American Studies at Harvard University, is the author of The Anatomy of Architecture: Ontology and Metaphor in Batammallaba Architecture and the recently released Butabu: Adobe Architecture of West Africa.
2,000-YEAR-OLD BAM CITADEL, EARTHQUAKE CASUALTY

On December 26, 2003, a devastating earthquake struck the desert city of Bam, 1,000 kilometers south of Tehran, Iran, leaving a landscape of devastation and killing over 40,000 of the 90,000 people living in the oasis. An estimated 85 percent of the city’s buildings were heavily damaged, if not completely destroyed, including the Arg-e-Bam, Bam’s 2,500-year-old mudbrick citadel.

Founded as a Parthian military outpost in the Dasht’e Kavir Desert sometime in the third to second centuries B.C., the walled city was destroyed and rebuilt several times during its turbulent history, particularly during the Sassanian (A.D. 224–637) and Safavid (A.D. 1501–1722) periods and subsequent Afghan invasions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Aside from its attraction as a desert oasis, Bam prospered as a Zoroastrian pilgrimage site, Silk Road entrepôt, and important textile center in the Middle Age. In recent times, Bam has profited from its numerous date palm or citrus plantations, sustained by an ancient network of wells and underground irrigation canals—the qanats. These plantations have contributed to the city’s overall importance as a cultural landscape. The citadel, itself, remained in use well into the twentieth century, most recently functioning as a military base. In 1932, the site was abandoned and declared a national monument; in 1953, it became the subject of a major archaeological and conservation campaign.

Most of the citadel’s 28 towers were felled while the earthen ramparts surrounding the city walls lost a major portion of their crenelations. The dome of the so-called ice house partially collapsed as did the main gate and some of the recently reconstructed domed stables of the inner citadel. Much of what has been damaged may need to be completely demolished for safety reasons.

Among those killed in the earthquake were two site guards and some 15 architecture students and professors who had been staying in the citadel to carry out a site documentation project. Although seriously injured, the site director was found and sent to Shiraz’ hospital.

The epicenter of the earthquake, which measured 6.5 on the Richter scale, is located some ten kilometers from the city. According to seismologists from the Tehran-based Iranian Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology, the earthquake was fairly shallow, occurring eight to ten kilometers below the Earth’s surface, which may explain the tremendous destruction. Although Iranian seismologists identified a fault near Bam in the 1990s, there are no known historical records indicating it had been active in recent centuries.

Within hours of the earthquake, the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization (ICHO) dispatched a team to the citadel to carry out...
A search-and-rescue operation as well as to retrieve whatever records could be salvaged from the site office. These have been brought to the provincial capital of Kerman for storage and conservation. ICHO has also set up a taskforce to document the post-earthquake condition of the citadel and its response to seismic stress. The site also had to be secured to prevent vandalism and looting and further loss of lives from unstable architecture in aftershocks.

Although the date and citrus trees were relatively unaffected by the quake, plantations are sure to suffer from the death of so many of the farmers who cared for them. The qanats, which irrigated the plantations and which were badly damaged in the quake, are receiving special attention from Iranian and international organizations, particularly the French Antiquities Office, the FAO, which has launched a special appeal to help with the recovery of the agricultural life.

In addition to humanitarian aid, the international community has offered its support to Iran with regard to cultural heritage. Within 48 hours of the quake, ICOMOS and UNESCO established contact with the ICHO. On January 7, an ICOMOS team visited the site at the invitation of the ICHO to assess the situation and, with UNESCO, to develop conservation priorities for the site. It is hoped that lessons learned from the ancient city may aid in preventing similar cultural heritage disasters in the future.

—DINU BUMBARU, ICOMOS Montréal
Two of the recently discovered relief panels, left, depict the Storm God boarding a bull-drawn chariot, center, and sparring lions, right.

Hittite Temple Unearthed at Aleppo

A team of archaeologists working to unravel the early history of Syria’s ancient Citadel of Aleppo have found the remains of a 3,000-year-old temple dedicated to the Hittite Storm God, according to project director Kay Kohlmeyer. Along the north wall of the Middle Bronze Age temple, a rectangular structure that measures 26.65 x 16.85 meters, is a series of extraordinary and well-preserved reliefs carved between 1100 and 900 B.C. that depict the Storm God, club in hand, boarding a bull-drawn chariot; sparring lions; bullmen; at least one king, and a host of geometric designs. To date, 34 relief panels have come to light—clearly the work of several different artists and in various states of completion. Inscriptions rendered in Luwian hieroglyphs have been found on several panels, one of which mentions Taitas, king of Padasatini; another a deity, Kurunti (ya), the protector of wild animals.

The joint Syrian-German team began excavating within the citadel in 1996 in an effort to elucidate the occupation history of the site. Considered among the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world, Aleppo may have been settled as early as the sixth to fifth millennium B.C., when Neolithic peoples took up residence on a 40-meter-high natural mesa near the river Quwaiq. Remains from this period are scant at best, however, having been obliterated by more recent construction. Aleppo first appears in the epigraphic record during the Early Syrian period, at which time it is already associated with worship of the Storm God. Mid-third-millennium B.C. tablets recovered from the archives at Ebla mention Aleppo (Haleb) and its sanctuary dedicated to the deity, first-known by his Eblaitic name, Hadda, and later as Addu, Teshup, and Tarhunza, respectively.

Following completion of the temple excavation in 2005, WMF will be working with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture to consolidate the site and prepare it for exhibition, an effort made possible in part by a grant from the New York-based J.M. Kaplan Fund. —AMHS

The Spherical Photographs of Tito Dupret

WMF Gallery exhibition features panoramic prints and interactive photographs of heritage sites by Belgian photojournalist Tito Dupret. Distressed by the destruction of Afghanistan’s Bamyan Buddhas in 2001, Dupret founded a nonprofit organization to document more than 700 of the world’s greatest historic sites and natural wonders. Prints are available for purchase; proceeds benefit Dupret’s work and that of WMF. For more information call 646 424 9594 x20.

January 23-May 28, 2004 • Monday-Friday, 10:00 AM-5:00 PM.

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CAMBODIA'S KHMER SITES UNDER SIEGE

The governments of Cambodia and the United States have stepped up efforts to protect Cambodia's ancient Khmer sites—Angkor in particular—from rampant pillage, which has increased dramatically over the past several years. Many attribute the recent surge in organized looting to mine-clearing in archaeologically rich areas once littered with ordnance planted by the Khmer Rouge and South Vietnamese Communists.

On September 19, 2003, U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia, Charles A. Ray, representing the U.S. Government, and Minister of Culture and Fine Arts, Her Royal Highness Princess Norodom Bopha Devi, representing the Royal Government of Cambodia, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning the imposition of import restrictions on Khmer archaeological material entering the United States. This agreement replaces emergency restrictions on the importation of Khmer stone sculpture imposed by the United States in December 1999. It also extends protection to metal and ceramic objects made between the sixth and sixteenth centuries A.D.

Both governments are seeking to encourage academic institutions, nongovernmental institutions, and other private organizations to enhance the exchange of knowledge and information about Cambodia's cultural patrimony, and to collaborate in the preservation and protection of art and architecture through the providing of appropriate technical assistance, training, and resources. For more information: http://exchanges.state.gov/culprop/

SPOTLIGHT ON PRESERVATION

To address a variety of problems facing sites of similar type or function, WMF is hosting three upcoming conferences:

Meeting of Experts for the Recuperation of American Fortifications
Campeche, México
March 12–15, 2004
Sponsored by WMF and UNESCO's World Heritage Center, in collaboration with the U.S. National Park Service, the Fundación Cisneros, UNESCO's Regional Office for Culture for Latin America and the Caribbean, U.S.-ICOMOS, and INAH Campeche, the meeting seeks to identify conservation challenges and develop solutions for the protection, preservation, management, reuse, and interpretation of forts in the Americas.

The Future of Jewish Heritage in Europe
Prague, Czech Republic
April 24–27, 2004
The conference, which will focus on the present and future of Jewish material culture in Europe, specifically in relation to the protection, preservation, and use of historic and religious sites, museums, and archives, is sponsored by WMF, the Hanadiv Charitable Foundation, the Cahnman Foundation, the Rich Foundation, the Charles and Andrea Bronfman Philanthropies, and the European Association for Jewish Culture and hosted by the Jewish Museum in Prague. www.mittelpunkt.biz/jewishheritageconference

New Alliances for Past, Present, and Future: A Shared Responsibility
Colombo, Sri Lanka
July 28–30, 2004
Sponsored by WMF in cooperation with ICOMOS Sri Lanka and The Asia Society, New York, the conference will address key issues of heritage conservation in South and Southeast Asia, including the need to stimulate, facilitate, and strengthen the degree, depth, and reach of innovative private/public sector partnerships in site preservation.

For information, contact Norma Barbacci, Director of Programs (nbarbacci@wmf.org).
Even in fragments, the monastery church of St. Francis and Gorton commands our attention. Built in the mid 1860s at the height of Manchester's industrial prosperity, St. Francis and Gorton was in its day the largest parish church built in England since the time of the Reformation. Yet within a century of its completion, it stood in ruin—its once magnificent interiors fallen prey to vandalism and decay. How, one wonders, could such a masterpiece of ecclesiastical architecture, designed by Edward Welby Pugin (1834–1875), one of Britain's leading exponents of the high Gothic style, come and go in a blink of the eye?

Located in Gorton, just four kilometers east of Manchester city center, the church looms over an area that a century ago lay at the heart of seemingly endless prosperity. By 1845, a railway linking Manchester to Sheffield had been completed, its railhead at Gorton—an economical town, yet an accessible distance from the city center. In 1846, the Great Central Railway established its main manufacturing plant in Gorton, and within a decade, Manchester became Britain's leading producer of locomotives, carriages, and wagons. Complementing these industries, Manchester was known as a textile center specializing in items made of cotton. As production increased, so did the city's workforce—and within a few years, small neighboring villages, including Gorton, witnessed unprecedented development as they absorbed a burgeoning population. The new arrivals were predominantly Irish emigrants lured to the area by the prospect of employment.
In 1861, four Franciscan friars from Douai in northern France arrived in Manchester to minister a growing Catholic population. The following year, the friars acquired a site for a new friary: Bankfield Cottage, a four-acre plot of land between Gorton Lane and the Corn Brook that cost £2,200. In May 1863, Canon Benoit laid the first stone of the friary, which was to have three separate wings. In June 1866, Bishop Turner laid the first stone of the church. The friary was completed in 1867; the church some four years later. Financial necessity meant the construction of the friary and church had to be carried out by the brothers and a team of enthusiastic volunteers from within the community. The brothers enterprisingly set up a special stone-carving workshop on the grounds of the friary, while Brother Patrick Dalton scoured every corner of the city in search of precious bricks.

It is interesting to note that the friars had engaged Pugin, 24, to design the new friary and church in 1858, some three years before coming to Manchester and four years prior to acquiring the site. The Pugins were a remarkable architectural dynasty going back to A. C. Pugin (1762-1832), an antiquarian and draftsman who produced faithful measured drawings of medieval monuments that gave authority to the Gothic Revival. His son, August Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-1852), best known for his work on the Houses of Parliament, was a passionate and brilliant advocate of Gothic architecture and the faith that inspired it. He wrote influential books and designed a prodigious number of buildings—some 65 churches in the United Kingdom alone. Some claim his extraordinary output may have contributed to his early death at the age of forty. Two sons followed him into the family practice. Edward Welby Pugin and his younger brother, Peter Paul Pugin, both of whom were involved with the buildings at Gorton, Edward with the overall design and Peter the interior details, including the high altar.

On Thursday morning, the 25th of September, 1871, the church officially opened amid great fanfare. Built of red brick, with blue brick and stone dressings and slate roofs, the church was a soaring structure 56 meters long, nearly 30 meters wide, and just over 30 meters high—with side chapels, a nave, and aisles divided by six arches. Numerous pointed, arched windows and rose windows, a particular feature of Gothic architecture, allowed natural light to cascade throughout the church. The high altar—one of the largest in England—was carved out of Bath stone. The unveiling of Pugin's masterpiece was, according to the Catholic Times of 1872, nothing less than "a triumph of Catholic architecture."

Why an order historically dedicated to a life of poverty should have envisioned such grandeur for their congregation as St. Francis and Gorton might seem puzzling. Yet the history of the Franciscans in England may provide an explanation.

St. Francis of Assisi was inspired in 1209 to gather a group of "brothers," or friars, to work and preach in towns and cities, particularly among the poor and the sick, in contrast to the existing monastic orders, which tended to be isolated and remote.

The Franciscan Order was approved by the church in 1223 and by 1224 the first friars arrived in England. By the middle of the thirteenth century, virtually every town or city had its own friary, which had a significant influence on the religious life and urban development of the country—an influence that persisted until the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in the 1530s. Some 50 friars died for their faith; another 200 were imprisoned.

As it was no longer possible to practice their faith at home, some of the surviving English Catholics gathered at Douai, in what was then the Catholic Netherlands. In the centuries that followed, they continued to train priests who, at great personal risk, would return to England in secret to minister to their flock.

By the 1790s anti-papist sympathies began to wane, and by the mid-nineteenth century it became possible for Catholics to openly practice their faith in England and begin to build again. It is easy to imagine, then, that after years of oppression, the Franciscans would want their first new church to be a magnificent testament to the power of their faith.

Upon completion, the friary became the focus for Catholic community life with its schools, clubs, and church activities. Generations of families grew up in the terraced houses surrounding the church, which was a great source of pride and inspiration in both good times and bad.

Always at the mercy of economic forces, Gorton suffered its most severe blow during the 1960s. At that time, the region's economy was already in decline due to the contraction of the cotton industry when its engineering base, largely located in East Manchester, collapsed due to a worldwide structural shift in manufacturing. Thousands of jobs were lost and the population dwindled.

Although a last fundraising campaign in the 1980s yielded enough money to repair the roof and exterior walls, it was far too little to sustain the church. The Franciscans said a final mass in the sanctuary in 1989.
The buildings were deconsecrated and sold to a property developer to convert into flats, but the scheme failed and the developer went bankrupt. Left empty and unprotected, the buildings fell victim to vandals and thieves. Twelve large statues, which originally lined the nave, turned up for auction as garden ornaments at Sotheby's.

Despite its condition, the church had not lost its place in the memory of the community, now scattered far and wide, who recalled it with great affection and warmth.

In 1996, Paul Griffiths, a former altar boy determined to rescue St. Francis and Gorton, founded a trust to purchase the buildings from the receivers and raise funds for their restoration. The following year, the plight of the monastery gained international recognition when St. Francis and Gorton was placed on WMF's 1998 list of the 100 Most Endangered Sites, based on its architectural significance. Within months of Watch listing, WMF was able to provide more than $350,000 toward the preservation of the monastery through the generosity of American Express, the Kress Foundation, and the organization's Robert W. Wilson Challenge, monies that were complemented by matching funds from English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery, and a number of European donors. To date, some £6 million has been raised to begin the restoration.

For the supporters and volunteers in Gorton, it has been a slow and frustrating journey at times, taking more than seven and a half years to pull together the necessary money and expertise. But it has been more than worthwhile. Today, the monastery stands poised for rebirth as the centerpiece of a major redevelopment and urban-revitalization scheme. It is the kind of boost that cannot come quickly enough for Gorton, an area with a notoriously low skill base and high unemployment.

If all goes according to plan, church buildings will become an exciting multi-use venue for conferences, exhibitions, and events—and a training facility for architects, engineers, and those in the building arts and conservation. Further down the line a clinic will be added to the facility to address the healthcare needs of the community, which has some of the worst health statistics in Manchester.

The trust's art and education director, Lima Scantlebury, is convinced that news of the monastery's multi-million-pound salvation is already breathing new life into the Gorton area. “We are using the regeneration of a building as a toll for the regeneration of a community,” says Scantlebury. “During its heyday, this building was at the center of this community. We aim to put it back there—but in a modern setting. The world has moved on—Gorton has certainly moved on—but people's needs remain the same. In many ways, we're not really deviating from the Franciscans' mission to bring education, spirituality, and social cohesion to the people here, to enrich their lives. It's just that now it's in a multi-ethnic, multi-faith setting. It has the potential to become the center of pride again in the locality. If we can use existing spaces, but look at them in a fresh way, there is a huge potential to make them work; Gorton Monastery is a wonderful example of that.”

For a century, St. Francis was an anchor in the Gorton communities. When it closed, it came as a blow to people who had tried everything to keep it going, leaving a void just as the loss of industry had. Yet it remains a special place. In the coming years it will be transformed from a redundant relic into a valuable place for the benefit of those who live nearby. It is one of the most innovative ways of ensuring that future generations can truly benefit from the legacy of the past.

For more information: The Monastery of St. Francis & Gorton Trust, 3 Assisi Gardens, Gorton, Manchester M12 6AS; Tel: 0161 223 3211, Fax: 0161 230 8741, E-mail: elaine@theangelsmanchester.com
That this congress record its opinion that the exploration of the Antarctic regions is the greatest piece of geographical exploration still to be undertaken. That in view of the additions to knowledge in almost every branch of science, which would result from such a scientific exploration, the Congress recommends that the scientific societies throughout the world should urge in whatever way seems to them most effective, that this work should be undertaken before the close of the century.

—SIXTH INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL CONGRESS, 1895

At the close of the nineteenth century, Antarctica remained the only continent on Earth that had yet to feel the imprint of humankind. Until that time, only the heartiest of men had even spied her frozen wastes at a distance as they combed Antarctica's ice-choaked waters in pursuit of whale and seal. That all changed in July 1895, when, at the Sixth International Geographical Congress in London, Antarctica was declared the greatest unclaimed geographical prize of the day.

Their proclamation ushered in what would come to be known as the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration. Over the course of two decades, dozens of expeditions set off for the land at the bottom of the world, hoping to be the first to set foot not only on Antarctica, but at the South Pole, one of the last great "undones." In pursuit of a dream, men such as Robert Falcon Scott, Ernest Shackleton, and Roald Amundsen endured almost inconceivable hardships to one day become luminaries in the annals of exploration.

Beyond some of the greatest stories of discovery and survival ever told, these explorers left physical reminders of their feats. Some 4,800 kilometers due south of New Zealand, four expedition huts built by these intrepid adventurers still stand, each a repository of hopes and dreams, heroism and tragedy. Dotted around the shores of the Ross Sea,
the huts are doubly significant in that they make Antarctica the only continent on Earth where humankind's first dwellings still exist. Each is a poignant monument to the human passion for discovery; each faces destruction wrought by the most hostile climate on the planet.

The Ross Sea was an ideal launch point for an Antarctic expedition, being the southernmost place a ship could reach during the short Austral summer in January or February—when the sea ice that embraces the continent each year breaks up. On arrival the men would erect prefabricated huts, retreating into them in March as temperatures plummeted and the days grew short. Six months later, with the arrival of spring, they would emerge from the huts to head south on their quests for glory.

There were six great expeditions to this side of the continent during that Heroic Age. The first was the British Antarctic Expedition (1898–1900) led by the ex-patriot Norwegian, Carsten Borchgrevink. Although Borchgrevink's expedition was riven with personality problems and failed to achieve any major geographical conquests, it was the first to spend the long, dark winter in Antarctica—ten men with a continent to themselves, living in a tiny, cramped hut with another hut for their supplies, both clinging to a windswept spit of land at remote Cape Adare in the northern reaches of the Ross Sea. Today, those weather-beaten huts still stand sentinel at Cape Adare. Surrounded by a lingering ambience of futility and loneliness, they are a timeless memorial to that first Antarctic winter.

The second expedition to the Ross Sea was the National Antarctic Expedition (1901–1904) led by the British naval
officer Captain Robert Falcon Scott. Scott ventured further south into the Ross Sea, establishing his base on Ross Island, on the edge of the Ross Ice Shelf. Here his team erected the Discovery Hut on a rocky promontory they named Hut Point, which overlooked a small harbor. The hut was beautifully sited with the smoking volcano Mt. Erebus behind and the Trans Antarctic Mountains shimmering like a mirage across McMurdo Sound in front. Although Scott’s men failed to reach the South Pole, they made a record journey south, penetrating the barrier of the Trans Antarctic Mountains and reaching the Polar Plateau for the first time, thus blazing a path to the Pole for those who dared to follow.

Today, the Discovery Hut looks somewhat incongruous and forlorn against the backdrop of Antarctica’s unofficial “capital,” the American base at McMurdo Station. A sprawling cluster of barracks, oil tanks, laboratories, and vehicles just 300 meters from Scott’s hut, McMurdo is home to some 1,200 scientists, soldiers, and support staff. Although easy access has made the Discovery the most visited of the Heroic Age huts, the structure itself is still in reasonably good condition. Inventories taken of its contents, however, reveal that many of the now-valuable artifacts left by the explorers have gone missing over the years.

One of the men on Scott’s expedition, Ernest Shackleton, led a third expedition to the Ross Sea, the British Antarctic Expedition of 1907-1909. Shackleton’s ship was prevented from reaching Hut Point due to thick sea ice, and they established a base some 48 kilometers north along the coast of Ross Island at Cape Royds. Here they built a hut on a picturesque headland looking north over the sea ice, and surrounded by a raucous colony of Adelie penguins. From Cape Royds, Shackleton led a desperate push south but eventually turned his team back just 156 kilometers from the Pole, when dwindling supplies and bad weather threatened their safe return. It was a decision that has subsequently been called the finest ever made in the history of Antarctic exploration and typified a man his comrades called “the Boss.”

The hut at Cape Royds is still surrounded by thousands of Adelie penguins, yet it retains a sense of dignity befitting the remarkable efforts of Shackleton and his men. Inside, one senses that members of the expedition have just stepped outside. Supplies are stacked neatly on shelves and pots still stand on the stove. Portraits of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra hang on the wall. Touches of humanity reveal the humor of the men who lived there. Painted on the wall are the words “Wild and Joyce, painters, bookbinders, etc. Gentlemen only”—a reference to the “Rogues Retreat,” where expedition members Ernest Joyce and Frank Wild printed *Aurora Australis*, the first book to be published in Antarctica.
Outside, however, the harsh Antarctic environment has taken its toll on the structure. The weather-beaten hut is surrounded by abandoned packing cases—their contents strewn about the snow-covered site alongside the smashed remains of stables, kennels, and a garage built for Antarctica's first car, an Arrol Johnson bought by Shackleton's team, who hoped it might help ferry them to the Pole.

Scott also led the fourth expedition to the Ross Sea, the Terra Nova Expedition of 1910–1913, the goal of which was to reach the South Pole. On January 4, 1911, the Terra Nova reached McMurdo Sound. However, pack ice prevented the expedition from reaching Hut Point, where the Discovery expedition stayed ten years earlier. Scott chose Cape Evans, also on Ross Island, as his winter quarters, nearly halfway between Hut Point and Cape Royds. Here, against the stunning blue-white cliffs of the Barnes Glacier, Scott built the hut he later declared to be "the finest residence that has been erected in the polar regions."

Unfortunately for Scott, a fifth expedition also set off from the Ross Sea that summer, led by the Norwegian Arctic explorer, Roald Amundsen. The race for the Pole was on.

Man-hauling sleds full of gear, Scott's five-man party slogged their way toward the Pole. As they neared the seemingly elusive target on January 16, 1912, they noticed tracks in the snow made by sledges and skis, and numerous fresh paw prints. In the distance, they spotted what appeared to be a waving flag. Upon their arrival, their hearts sank. There, at the Geographical South Pole was a small green tent containing a note. The famed Norseman and his party had reached the Pole some 35 days earlier with a team of Greenland sled dogs. The tragic tale of Scott's expedition remains one of the most haunting in exploration. Having found themselves second to the Pole, Scott and his men set off on their return journey in the face of incredible cold, relentless blizzards, and starvation, only to perish on the 20th of March, just 18 kilometers short of a supply depot.

Today, Scott's hut at Cape Evans is surrounded by drifts of snow. Inside, the explorer's desk stands in the corner, an old London Illustrated News casually laid upon it. The dining table, where Scott celebrated his last birthday, commands the center of the hut; a barricade of packing cases separates the officers' area from that reserved for enlisted men. Supplies are stacked in the kitchen area and expedition photographer Herbert Ponting's darkroom still contains his chemicals and plates. Outside, abandoned sleds lean against the hut walls; the skeleton of one of their dogs lies like a ghostly reminder of the fate of its masters.

Though Shackleton failed to be the first to attain the South Pole, he returned to Antarctica to lead the Imperial Trans Antarctic Expedition of 1914–1917, which planned to cross the continent from the Weddell Sea to Ross Island via the Pole. Yet, the Pole would elude him once again. Within weeks of the expedition's arrival in the Weddell Sea, their ship, Endurance, became trapped in pack ice, where she remained for nearly a year before being crushed by ice. After camping for months on ice floes, Shackleton and his men made a perilous 160-kilometer journey in open boats to Elephant Island. From there, Shackleton and five others set out in an eight-meter-long whaler, the James Caird, which
Who Speaks for Antarctic Heritage?

The modest wooden huts, built on the brink of the forbidding Antarctic continent to lodge the expedition parties of the "heroic age" explorers who first set foot there a century ago, have a commanding presence today that their builders could not have foreseen. Each of the four huts tells the story of the dramatic attempts to vanquish a hostile environment and establish a beachhead on Earth's last terra incognita. What the explorers left behind speaks to us compellingly today as a reminder of what they wrote and did. The huts evoke the spirits of the men who lived for as much as two years in these self-contained time capsules and then left them behind forever.

Since 1987 the New Zealand-based Antarctic Heritage Trust (AHT) has acted as a nongovernmental steward for the future of the huts. When this effort began, the remote wooden buildings were desolate, unprotected and exposed to the elements, with their doors swinging open in the wind, and ice formed from windblown snow filling their interiors. Today, the huts are on the brink not of total loss, but of rebirth. The listing of Sir Ernest Shackleton's hut on the World Monuments Watch list this year signals the beginning of a campaign to restore them and create greater awareness that these fortuitous survivors are treasures that commemorate the great deeds of a past era.

As tourists begin to visit Antarctica and their numbers increase, intriguing questions arise as to how the huts should be preserved for the future. Until now, efforts to save the huts have been anchored in research, with the New Zealand government providing the necessary logistic support. Now, the invitation for wider international support may enhance the close bonds between these cultural treasures and the country that has protected them.

Antarctica belongs to no one and no country can claim its territory. The Antarctic Treaty, signed in 1961, calls for the protection of the huts but provides no means to do so. The World Heritage Convention, the key international instrument for heritage protection, requires that listed sites be nominated by a national state that owns or claims responsibility for them. The World Heritage Convention has no mechanism for listing sites that fall under no one's sovereignty or for sites that a sovereign government does not wish to nominate.

New Zealand has declined to nominate the huts to the World Heritage list, on the grounds that the gesture could be illegal under the Antarctic Treaty. The huts, indisputably part of a global legacy, fall through a giant loophole in the international framework meant to give the highest level of protection and recognition to just such sites. So do the continent's majestic landscape features, which some conservationists fear could fall prey to mineral exploitation.

With AHT's publication of conservation plans for the huts last year, debate has begun to swirl among Antarctic buffs about how best to protect and present these shrines to human endeavour. The plans, calling for substantial restoration of the interiors to reflect specific periods of exploration, rather than the accidental arrangements that we find today, would be justified by an expected increase in tourism to the continent. Visitors to the huts deserve the opportunity to experience, in all its authenticity, the unique environment that has been "congealed" from destruction by the continent's unique atmosphere. But the parties to the Antarctic Treaty are opposed in principle to Antarctic tourism, which is presently unregulated and informal. Conservation organizations working there, increasingly in need of tourism strategies for sensitive sites like the huts, must follow the treaty's policies in this area, even if tourism is clearly inevitable.

After 30 years as the world's highest level of heritage protection, the World Heritage Convention could be the regulator of situations like this. The time may have come for its drafters to sharpen their pencils and rework its language on the question of how sites may be selected for the list. In recent years we have seen great examples of the world's cultural legacy damaged in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, which had no access to the system of World Heritage protection because the owner-state had no capacity or desire to participate. Should the future of human legacy be in the hands of partisan local governments, or should a mechanism exist that overrides conscious or unwitting neglect of internationally significant sites? This is a question that bears on the future of much of the world's heritage. Antarctica, which has been so successfully shielded from territorial claims and disputes, could be the test case.

—Bonnie Burnham
Scott Base, Antarctica
the expedition's carpenter, Chippy McNeish, had transformed into a sailboat. Their destination: South Georgia Island, a tiny speck of land 1,300 kilometers across the stormy seas of the Southern Ocean. After 17 days in heavy seas and near-zero visibility, the party reached South Georgia, from which Shackleton was able to mount an expedition to rescue those left behind on Elephant Island. The tale of the journey—the subject of the recent book, *Endurance*, by Caroline Alexander, and the movies that it spawned—has often been called “the greatest story of survival ever told.” Far less-known, however, is the story of the men Shackleton dispatched to the far side of the continent to lay supply depots in preparation for the explorer’s arrival at the end of what was to be a successful journey. Over the course of two summers, the party was stranded on Ross Island when their ship, the *Aurora*, blew out to sea in a blizzard, unable to return. Despite being low on supplies themselves the men continued laying supply caches, not realizing Shackleton would never arrive overland. Their tale has been called “the greatest story of survival never told.”

Although the Ross Sea party never built a hut, they used Scott’s huts at Cape Evans and Hut Point for two years, leaving many artifacts in those huts as evidence of their passing. When Shackleton finally rescued them in January 1917, the Heroic Age of Antarctic exploration drew to a close as world attention turned to the war raging in Europe. They would not see another visitor for 40 years.

In 1947, during the American-led “Operation High Jump,” the crew of the icebreaker USS *Burton Island* visited the huts, finding them largely filled with drifting snow. In the 1950s, the huts were again visited by members of the American campaign “Operation Deep Freeze.” During the British Trans Antarctic Expedition of 1957–1958, the crew of the New Zealand support ship *Endeavour* and expedition personnel removed ice and carried out essential maintenance on the huts at Cape Royds, Cape Evans, and Hut Point.

Following the establishment of the Antarctic Treaty in 1961, the government of New Zealand embarked on a program to care for the huts as part of their research efforts, documenting their condition and cataloguing the artifacts they contained.

In 1979, an action committee was brought together to develop a plan for the long-term preservation of the huts and, in 1987, a charitable trust was established to carry it out. The Antarctic Heritage Trust is based in Christchurch, a city used as a gateway to Antarctica not only by explorers of the past, but by today’s American, Italian, and New Zealand Antarctic programs. The trust’s vision is to “inspire the future by conserving the legacy of discovery, adventure, and endurance.”

Despite its small budget, the trust has undertaken an ambitious program of maintenance and conservation, bringing international experts in to work in one of the most challenging environments on Earth. Compounding the natural
The decay of the buildings has been destruction wrought by humans. All of the huts have suffered the predations of souvenir hunters. As Sir Edmund Hillary, patron of the Antarctic Heritage Trust, has noted: “These historic huts are the relics of some of the greatest adventures and expeditions of the twentieth century, and we owe it to future generations to ensure they are preserved.”

On the advice of the trust, limits have been placed on the number of visitors the huts can receive, and strict protocols have been established for visitation. At present, visitors from the nearby American and New Zealand bases outnumber the relatively few tourists that venture south to the Ross Sea on cruise ships each summer; the vast majority of tourists visiting Antarctica go to the far more accessible Antarctic Peninsula on the other side of the continent.

But limiting visitors alone is not enough. “The huts are beginning to deteriorate rapidly,” says Antarctic historian and consultant to the Antarctic Heritage Trust, David Harrowfield, adding that, “humidity in the buildings is attacking the textiles, metal, and paper, and unless something is done soon, the buildings will be lost forever.”

In response the trust has launched a major global campaign to raise money to conserve and restore all four huts, ensuring their survival in perpetuity. Based on a comprehensive conservation assessment, the trust’s first priority is to address Shackleton’s hut at Cape Royds.

The challenge facing the trust is how to slow the processes of decay and conserve the site while retaining its historical integrity. Drawing on the expertise of historians, conservators, architects, and project managers, all with extensive Antarctic experience, the trust developed the Cape Royds Conservation Plan, released several months ago, which calls for the treatment of some 90 percent of the more than 2000 artifacts in and around the hut. The exterior cladding of the building will be repaired in keeping with the original style, and fire protection work will be carried out.

Over time, the trust envisions the development of online multimedia programs and materials so that a wider global audience will be able to learn about and experience the magic of the huts, yet with zero impact on the site. To carry out the work, however, poses a number of financial and logistical problems. The cost of comprehensively restoring and conserving the hut at Cape Royds has been put at US$4 million. To complicate matters, the trust has limited opportunities for funders to witness the work firsthand. The governments of New Zealand and the United Kingdom, as well as the United States-based Getty Trust, have all contributed to the project but more funding is urgently required. For many, the cost of preserving the hut may seem considerable, yet the price of doing nothing will be far greater. As Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, who personally launched the Cape Royds Heritage Restoration Project in Antarctica, has noted, “These huts are the legacy of the extraordinary stories of triumph and tragedy, and must be preserved for future generations. Without the support of the international community, they will be lost forever.” For more information visit www.heritage-antarctica.org.
Perhaps no emperor in all of China's history was more conscious of his own image than Qianlong. Suitably enough, he loved to have his portrait painted, and scores of those renderings have survived: we can see him as a prince, taking over control of the country from his shrewd and hard-nosed father Yongzheng; we can see him as an alert yet decorous young ruler, shortly after succeeding to the throne in 1736; we can see him in the company of his beloved horses, either receiving them as tributary gifts from the nomadic peoples of the steppe or out riding in the full panoply of embroidered robes and gleaming armor. In somewhat less-public images, he appears in a lakeside pavilion escorted by his entourage of beautiful palace women, the erotic possibilities of the moment underlined by the horned stag and the shy Doe, at which the emperor is thoughtfully gazing; or shown from different vantage points in a trompe l'oeil montage of screens and portraits in his imperial study. And we can see him in the grandest contexts of empire, reviewing the serried masses of his troops while out on maneuvers, traveling with a mighty retinue to inspect the cities in the center of China, or enshrining as a self-reflective Buddhist saint in the midst of a holy mountain.

It is suitable that Qianlong has left us such a plethora of images, since he did in truth play a multiplicity of roles in his long reign between 1736 and 1796. By dint of ten protracted military campaigns, fought at enormous cost in treasure and in casualties, he almost doubled the size of the already vast Chinese empire. To make manifest his power over the recently conquered Muslim peoples of Altishahr, he relocated many of their leaders to spacious dwellings in Beijing, near to the imperial palace, and selected one of their young women to join his cohort of high-ranking consorts. Recent documentary finds show that Qianlong honored her Muslim dietary restrictions, that she bore him a daughter, and that after her death he had her buried in a stone casket, inscribed with passages from the Koran in Arabic. To strengthen alliances between his court and the Lamaist Buddhist Mongols on China's northern frontiers, the emperor gave them special trading privileges.
A JESUIT MISSIONARY, THE ITALIAN PAINTER GIUSEPPE CASTIGLIONE (1688–1766) CARRIED OUT NUMEROUS COMMISSIONS FOR THE QING COURT, INCLUDING AN EXTRAORDINARY RENDERING ON SILK, SCENES FROM WHICH APPEAR ON THESE AND FOLLOWING PAGES. ABOVE, TARTAR ENVOYS PRESENT THEIR HORSES TO QIANLONG AND, FACING PAGE, THE EMPEROR DEPARTS FOR HIS SUMMER RESIDENCE.

A CELADON-GLAZED VASE IS ONE OF MANY EXQUISITE CERAMICS PRODUCED DURING THE REIGN OF QIANLONG.

A legislator married his daughters to their princely leaders, and built a replica of the Potala palace in the hills north of Beijing; so they would know the sacred center of Lhasa was ever in his thoughts. Since his elderly mother had loved the delicate architecture and winding canals of the prosperous trading cities of the Yangzi delta region when she accompanied him on some of his early royal progresses to the region, Qianlong had some of her favorite sites re-created for her enjoyment in her own palace gardens after age and illness prevented her from traveling anymore. In a different vein, but equally grandiose in conception, was Qianlong's co-opting of several Jesuit missionaries residing in Beijing—especially those skilled in architecture and painting—to design and help in the construction of an exquisite array of Baroque palaces, fountains, and gardens in the northern corner of his Beijing summer palace complex.

In these and many similar actions, Qianlong was emphasizing his role not just as the emperor of China, but as a Central Asian monarch presiding over a multiethnic empire. Some of this complex role-playing came from his own volition, but other facets were imposed on him by birth and by history. Qianlong was always conscious of his family's Manchu ancestry and of the fact that he was the fourth emperor in direct line of descent since the Manchu warriors had swept from their northern base areas into the city of Beijing in the early summer of 1644, destroying the Ming dynasty which had reigned since 1368. Thus we can also trace how diligently Qianlong labored to underline his Manchu traits and heritage, ensuring that Manchu language was maintained by the descendants of the original conquering families, that the original tribal shamanic practices keep their vitality, that Manchu dress and hairstyle be kept as distinguishing markers, and that their military heritage be celebrated in the practices of mounted archery and in hunting. China, especially to the north, around the capital, and along the east coast, was dominated by garrison forces of Manchu troops, their ranks supplemented by selected numbers of Chinese and Mongols who had joined the conquerors in the 1640s or before, and had thus been incorporated into the Manchu military organization known as the Eight Banners. Putting all of these elements together, some historians have recently begun to describe the Qing dynasty that the Manchus founded as a kind of colonial empire: expansionist, self-protective, militaristic, fiscally exploitative, and determined to prevent ethnic self-determination. Certainly it was also multilingual. Colophons, steles, inscriptions, and even the coinage issued in Qianlong's and other Manchu reigns have been found in five languages: Manchu, Chinese, Mongol, Arabic, and Tibetan. Yet such undeniable facts should not be allowed to hide the fact that Qianlong also saw himself as very much a Chinese emperor, tied to past Confucian traditions by the richness of received texts on ethics and government that he had learned by heart from his tutors steeped in the sonorities of Chinese poetry, the defender and maintainer of the competitive examination system that provided the main route for ambitious Chinese into the bureaucracy, and an able exponent of a broad spectrum of Chinese concepts ranging from the norms of filial piety and mourning practices to the techniques of fiscal management by means of grain price controls and state-managed monopolies. It is not surprising that one of Qianlong's grandest projects was to assemble a team of China's finest scholars for the purpose of assembling, editing, and printing the largest collection ever made of Chinese philosophy, history, and literature. Known as the Four Treasuries project, this mammoth undertaking spanned the years 1773 to 1784 and required the careful examining of private libraries to assemble a list of around eleven thousand works from the past, of...
which about a third were chosen for publication. The works not included were either summarized or—in a good many cases—scheduled for destruction on the grounds that they contained scurrilous material, revealed important geographical information that might be of use to China's enemies, or else insulted the Manchus in some way. The Four Treasuries was thus a true symbol for Qianlong's reign: carefully planned, historically grounded, culturally sophisticated, but at the same time massive, intrusive, and coercive.

It was not until 1778, when he was already 67 years-old, that Emperor Qianlong let the Chinese people know what his retirement plans were. Even then, he had to be goaded into the announcement by a provincial examination student, who accosted the emperor on one of his imperial progresses in the north and petitioned him to name an heir apparent from among his sons. In a written response to the student's question, issued at the court, Qianlong stated that he had not publicly named an heir, because such advance statements only encouraged factionalism and jostling for power, but he reassured the Chinese people that he had secretly chosen his heir, and that the choice was safely written down. In a more extended passage, Qianlong announced that if fate would allow him to live so long, he would abdicate the throne at the age of 85 by Chinese reckoning, which would be in 1796. This decision to "withdraw into leisure" in that particular year had been made for a specific
purpose, for by 1796 Qianlong would have been on the throne for 60 years. By abdicating then, he would leave his famous grandfather Kang'xi, who had reigned for 61 years, from 1661 to 1722, secure in his record as the longest-reigning monarch in all China's history. We know from various records that as a child Qianlong had been affectionately treated by Kang'xi, and there is no reason to doubt Qianlong's assertion that he had in fact come to this decision at the very beginning of his reign and had only withheld the announcement for fear of causing confusion among the people. Now that the news was out, it was time to start planning for his future retirement home: the selected site would be in the northeast corner of the Forbidden City, a comparatively quiet and uncluttered area that had often been used to house the dowager or elderly consorts of previously deceased emperors. Now it would, for the first time, house a retired but living emperor, in his palace of peaceful old age, his "Ningshou gung." Qianlong, of course, had plenty of other places to live: there was the expansive palace complex a few days' ride north of Beijing in the rolling hills of Rehe, offering easy access to the finest hunting grounds and convenient for the visits of Mongol and other bearers of so-called tributary gifts. It was to be here, in 1793, just three years before his retirement that Qianlong would receive King George III's ambassador Lord Macartney, and courteously but firmly turn down all the British envoy's requests for expanded trade between their countries. There was also the summer palace in the northwest suburbs of Beijing, with its engaging mixture of Chinese and Western architecture, its spacious gardens, and its fine views of the mountains to the west. But the Forbidden City remained the center of the center, should the emperor in his retirement still seek to keep abreast of political developments in China. Built in its current form mainly in the early fifteenth century and extensively restored after the damage from fire, looting, and neglect in the years after the Manchu conquest, the Forbidden City with its massive walls was also the safest place to be, surrounded as it was by the garrison forces of close to fifty thousand of the imperial Eight Banner troops. The Forbidden City contained not just the residences of the emperor and his family, but also the shamanic temple with its priests and priestesses, the key offices at the apex of the state bureaucracy, the historiographical bureau that kept the records of each incumbent ruler on a daily basis for the edification of his successors, and 42 palace workshops: In these workshops around 3,000 highly skilled Chinese craftsmen—along with a sprinkling of Manchus and Jesuit missionaries—were busy painting, mounting scrolls, printing, and boxing rare books and manuscripts, making clocks and cloisonne, and overseeing the immense stores of silk fabrics, porcelain,
and other luxuries, without which the imperial world was unthinkable. Here too were actors and musicians, experts in both ritual and recreational music and dance, which formed such a major part of court life.

The great walls of the Forbidden City provided one more central service for a man contemplating retirement: they protected the vast and ever-growing collection of imperial artistic treasures on which Qianlong had lavished so much energy and attention since he came to the throne. The imperial collection had its origins in the first century B.C., and had gone through many vicissitudes of fire, civil wars and foreign invasions in the centuries that followed. But it was Qianlong who lavished the greatest attention on it, certainly of any of the Manchu rulers. It was Qianlong who ordered the compilation and printing of the meticulous multi-volume catalogues of the collection, in which were described every painting, scroll of calligraphy, rare book, bronze, jade, porcelain, and religious and other images that made up the extraordinary collection. One of the many roles played by Qianlong, with his customary diligence, was that of the emperor as collector and curator. Evidence from those same catalogues and from other documents such as scholarly memoirs, provenance lists, and court diaries, shows how carefully Qianlong followed the art market in rare paintings and antiquities, using a team of cultural advisers, from elderly Chinese literati to newly fledged Manchu connoisseurs. These men would help the emperor spot which great private collections might be coming up for sale, either because the fortunes of some previously rich merchant family were unraveling or because the precious objects acquired by Manchu or Chinese grandees during the chaos of the conquest period were no longer valued by those families' surviving heirs. Sometimes, too, Qianlong would pressure or even force wealthy courtiers into yielding up choice art objects: he did this by pointing out failings in their work, which might be
excused if they made a certain "gift," or, in a couple of celebrated cases, by persuading the current owners that only the secure walls of the Forbidden City and its guardians could save some precious painting from theft or from fire.

As part of his image-building, Qianlong loved to make a show of his Chinese connoisseurship. It is known that while he was still a prince, in the early 1730s, Qianlong took painting lessons from a talented Manchu landscape painter named Tangdai. And on some of those princely paintings, leading Chinese scholars wrote colophons, perhaps as instructional models for the future emperor. By the mid 1740s Qianlong was confident enough of his own eye to stage an elaborate scenario in his palace, at which he displayed two versions of the same painting, a long landscape scroll by the revered Yuan fourteenth-century painter Huang Gongwang. Laying the two scrolls side by side on long tables, Qianlong challenged his advisers to tell him which was the genuine painting and which was a later copy. To his own satisfaction, at least, he felt that he alone had made the correct identification of the genuine article and wrote a triumphant colophon to that effect. One of his court scholars was instructed to write a colophon on the other painting, stating that it was clearly not the original. (Current art experts believe Qianlong got it wrong.)

A different and spectacular exercise in power and connoisseurship was put into play by Qianlong later in his reign. It was in 1777 that the emperor was informed by courier that the largest undamaged block of jade ever seen had just been located in Khotan, far to the west but now a part of Manchu China's expanded empire. The flawless white and green jade stood two meters tall, and weighed more than 5,000 kilos. Normally such an enormous stone would have been cut into sections to facilitate transport and carving, but Qianlong ordered that it be brought to Beijing in one piece for him to see. The process of moving the jade, which had to be slid on a wooden framework for more than 4,000 kilometers, took three years and hundreds of laborers and draft animals.

Once Qianlong had examined the jade, he worked with his craftsmen to shape a succession of wax replicas until they had the best possible design. The emperor decided that the best design was one which created on the jade the image of China's great early culture hero Yu the Great, as he supervised hundreds of workers in drilling through the mountains and replanting the forests so as to make the rivers flow more peaceably and the fields yield more fertile crops. Thereupon the jade block was shipped by water to Yangzhou, where the greatest concentration of skilled jade cutters was to be found. The work was completed in 1787, having absorbed an estimated 150,000 working days from scores of Yangzhou's finest craftsmen. When the carved jade came back to Beijing, it was placed in the location that the emperor had chosen, in front of the Hall of Joyful Old Age, which stood at the center of the emperor's retirement site in the Ningshou gong. What better way to spend part of one's retirement leisure than in inspired contemplation of yourself as supreme artificer, benevolently supervising the toil of your obedient subjects! Qianlong did stay alive, as he had hoped, and he did abdicate in 1796 as he had promised. He had three years to keep his stone company, until death claimed him in 1799, when he was 88 years old. His reign is listed as the second-longest in China's history.
Qianlong's Private World

All But Forgotten, an Eighteenth-Century Imperial Jewelbox in the Forbidden City Is Finding New Life Through Restoration

By Henry Tzu Ng

Side from the Great Wall, the Forbidden City in Beijing is no doubt China's most famous landmark. From the thousands of tourists who visit the ancient city each day, it is hard to imagine that the imperial precinct was completely off-limits to the general public until 1925, relatively recently considering the city's 500-year history. Even after its gates were opened to the public following the reign of Pu Yi, the country's last emperor, the Forbidden City remained largely unknown to the outside world as a result of China's political isolation. It shouldn't be surprising then that vast areas of the site, which covers some three-quarters of a square kilometer, remain hidden from view, with more than 1,000 buildings—many untouched since imperial times—awaiting discovery.

Such was the case with Qianlong's Lodge of Retirement, an eighteenth-century jewelbox tucked away in the northeast quadrant of the Forbidden City. Today, the lodge is the subject of a multimillion-dollar conservation initiative, undertaken by WMF in partnership with the Palace Museum, Beijing.

Commissioned by Qianlong in 1771, the two-story lodge was built for the Qing Dynasty emperor's anticipated retirement in 1796. Qianlong vowed that "if the Heavens blessed him to be on the throne for 60 years," he would retire out of respect so as not to outreign his beloved grandfather Kangxi, China's longest-reigning emperor.
The Lodge of Retirement, or Juan'qin'zhai ("being tired of diligent life when aged"), and its associated gardens and pavilions are located in the Qianlong District, a microcosm of the Forbidden City itself, being laid out along a central north-south axis with spaces dedicated to ritual, living, and leisure. Within the lodge, walls and screens are adorned with fine bamboo marquetry and white jade cartouches; trompe l'oeil paintings grace walls and ceilings; and imperial sitting areas are upholstered in embroidered silk. The murals, which exhibit a clear Western influence and use of perspective that is unique in the Forbidden City and in China, are largely the work of Wang Youxue, a student of the Italian painter and Jesuit missionary Guiseppe Castiglione, who carried out commissions for the Qing court. It has been suggested that some of the figures in the murals such as the cranes actually may have been part of an earlier work painted by Castiglione himself.

Interior partitions are mainly made of precious woods as Pterocarpus indicus (red sandalwood) and Dalbergia hainanensis (Huanghuali wood) imported from Hainan Island. Jade and double-embroidery details are an integral part of the elaborate screens and panels that frame the lodge's main reception hall and the emperor's private leisure quarters. They are responsible for making the interior appear to glow like a silk lantern at night.

Qinglong reigned at a time when China was one of the richest and largest nations in the world, and, like today, engaged with the West in trade, politics, aesthetics, and ideas. His status as a great emperor rests on his scholarship and patronage of the arts, which included the publication of The Four Treasures, an extraordinary compilation of classics, history, philosophy, and belles lettres collected by more than 300 scholars, and hand copied by some 15,000 scribes. His connoisseurship also extended to building programs within Forbidden City, where he employed the best artists and craftsmen to build new palaces and temples. It is no surprise then that the Qing interiors of the Lodge of Retirement represent the epitome of Chinese interiors of their day. Yet for all their opulence, they were clearly meant for private use. In contrast to the grand ceremonial spaces that mark the main axial way through the Forbidden City—built to accommodate the emperor and his entourage of court officials—the lodge and gardens of the Qianlong District are of singular scale designed for one man, never mind an emperor, whose flowing robes surely would have brushed against walls and pathways.

Abandoned for nearly a century, the lodge had deteriorated considerably over the years. In particular, the beautifully rendered silk paintings, allowing dust to settle on ancient surfaces; inadequate ventilation posed a range of risks to conservators and works of art alike. With a grant from the Freeman Foundation, WMF and the Palace Museum were able to build a new onsite conservation studio equipped with large, flexible workspaces, proper lighting and ventilation systems, and specially constructed multilayered wall surfaces, upon which mural panels could be attached and worked on. Among the greatest conservation challenges we have faced in the restoration of the lodge has been the recovery of artisanal skills such as fine bamboo marquetry (1), double embroidery (3), and zhu'huang, or inner bamboo carving (4), which have not been practiced in China for decades, if not for centuries, and the
wallpaper, and other fragile finishes have suffered from high humidity and lack of heating during winter months. But beneath the layers of dust and crumbling finishwork is a veritable time capsule, a window on the life and taste of one of China's most illustrious emperors (see page 24).

That the lodge and gardens have survived at all is the result of an edict issued by Qianlong himself, who declared that this area of the Forbidden City was to be preserved in future years as part of a palace for "super sovereigns." Were it not for the edict this complex likely would have been altered by subsequent emperors as was the custom throughout the imperial period. The lodge—like the Forbidden City itself—survived the ravages of the Cultural Revolution because of the protection afforded by Chou En-lai. For much of the twentieth century, the lack of available financial resources protected the site from alteration. Thus, patronage and poverty have secured this site for history. If all goes according to plan, a restored and interpreted Lodge of Retirement will open to the public for the first time in its 225-year history, just in time for the 2008 Olympics.

Conservation of the Lodge of Retirement is being made possible through the generosity of The Brown Foundation, The Freeman Foundation, Mr. & Mrs. Peter Kimmelman, and The Tiffany & Co. Foundation.

ABANDONED FOR NEARLY A CENTURY, THE LODGE OF RETIREMENT, TOP, HAD DETERIORATED OVER THE YEARS. INTERIOR DETAILS HAVE SUFFERED FROM HIGH HUMIDITY AND PLUMMETING WINTER TEMPERATURES. A NEW CONSERVATION LABORATORY, ABOVE, WAS BUILT TO ACCOMMODATE THE LARGE MURAL PANELS, WHICH HAD TO BE DETACHED FOR CONSERVATION, LEFT.

The front and reverse sides of double embroidery panels that make up the room dividers are identical with no visible knots. In soft light, the panels, made of Ping Mian Shuan Kang Sha (horizontal thread and square-holed silk), look like luminous lanterns.

Restoration of the embroidery screens includes repairs to the surrounding wood inlay frames that house the embroidery. The art of inner bamboo carving is among the rarest techniques found in the lodge. The process involves cutting and peeling the bamboo, boiling it, and then drying it in the sun.

Flattened sheets are then attached to an ornament and carved. The resulting texture is smooth as ivory, yet the distinct pattern of the bamboo is retained. The intricacy of their manufacture and the sheer number of them in the lodge attest the emperor's wealth and connoisseurship. Jade used in the numerous medallions and plaques came from the Qiemo area of Xinjiang Province. After hundreds of years of mining, however, there are limited jade resources of the same type left in that region of northwest China. While nothing today can compare to the consistent quality in color and texture of the originals, suitable new sources of jade have been located in Beijing and Suzhou. Restoration of the jade and embroidery is being underwritten by The Tiffany & Co. Foundation.

—HN
Among the Batammaliba of Togo, the word butabu describes a process of moistening earth with water in preparation for building—the prefix and suffix bu referencing the earth and all that is associated with it. Wet-earth construction is a complex art based on a sound knowledge of structure and the inherent properties of various kinds of earth. If the earth is not of the correct texture, if its kneading is rushed, if walls are not perpendicular to the ground, if structural design is uneven, or if a final layer of plaster is not properly applied, a building may very well collapse.

Whether modeled by hand or built of mud-brick, the variety of architectural forms found throughout West Africa illustrates the myriad ways in which the simple properties of earth and water have come together to create works of striking artistic sophistication and interest.

Not only do the sun's rays bathe the earthen core of a building, making it hard and resilient, but they also continually redefine the structure's surface and interior features with patterns of light and shade as they pass overhead through the course of each day. Many of these edifices, especially the tall ones, boast rows of timbers bristling from their exteriors, on which the sun's shadows play off particularly dramatically. These spikey elements serve both

by Suzanne Preston Blier
photographs by James Morris
ARCHED WINDOWS PUNCTUATE
A GRAY EARTHEN MOSQUE IN
THE VILLAGE OF SAN, MALI.
WHILE AUSTERE ON THE EXTERIOR, THE
HAUSA MOSQUE AT KOSSA, NIGER,
ABOVE, HAS A VIBRANT DOMED
INTERIOR. CARVED DETAILS WITHIN
THE HOUSE OF SIDI KA IN AGADEZ,
NIGER, LEFT, ILLUSTRATE THE MANNER
IN WHICH WEST AFRICAN ADOBE
ARCHITECTURE TAKES ON THE QUALITY
OF SCULPTURE.

to solidify the structure, and to help alleviate moisture, but also to offer supportive scaffolding during yearly
replastering. Building roofs, which boast wooden or pottery drainspouts to channel seasonal rains, are made of
thatch or earth, the latter either domed or flat.

West African earthen architecture collectively challenges the inherent boundaries between built form and
sculpture in their visual power and unique play of texture, geometry, light, and shade. These buildings incorporate
the vital attributes of geometric primacy and boldness that pervade so many of the continent’s figural traditions
and invite tactility, an element critical to appreciation. Important too is the manner in which dynamic aspects of
silhouette shape a structure, promoting a sense of geometric rhythm and a point-counterpoint of concave and
convex volumes.

On the interior, multiple levels of space often are articulated through a combination of pole and beam flooring/
terrace articulation supported by the adjacent earthen joining walls. Upper levels, which are reached by earthen
steps or ladders, serve a variety of functions as both open-air spaces and enclosed chambers. Beyond their sheer
architectural value, West African buildings of earth are often imbued with potent symbolism. Cones of the same
material, which historically have served as shrines in this area dedicated to deities, ancestors, and spirit powers,
often punctuate a portal, either at ground level or along the roofline. These conical forms feature prominently in local mosques and some modern post-colonial building forms as well.

Centuries of upheaval, which led to the massive uprooting of local populations through war, migration, and
slavery, also have left a mark on the region’s architecture, and in part, as a result, this architecture also expresses
vital social and political concerns. For example, the famous Djenne mosque in Mali. This structure was literally
melted at one point in its history when an opposing Moslem leader had the structure’s vital drainage system
blocked. Other important works—for example Bosso men’s houses—were designed by former slaves, whose free-
dom found expression in bold new architectural idioms.
Founded in the mid-seventeenth century, Larabanga is the oldest and most revered of eight ancient mosques in Ghana, serving as an important place of pilgrimage for the region's Muslim community. Built in the Sudanese style on a quatrefoil plan, the diminutive earthen structure is ringed by conical buttresses bolstered by rows of horizontal timbers. A minaret rises from the northwest corner; a mihrab, or niche pointing toward Mecca, graces the building's east facade.

Although Larabanga had retained much of its architectural integrity over the centuries, a coating of waterproof sand-cement applied to its exterior in the 1970s resulted in substantial damage to the building. In time, moisture trapped within the earthen walls began to weaken them, while termites, attracted by the sanctuary's high humidity, took up residence in wooden beams and support timbers. Collectively, the moisture and infestation caused portions of the building to collapse. Although the mosque's congregation worked to stem the damage, the shape of the towers and buttresses was significantly altered with each repair. In September 2002, the minaret and mihrab were felled by a violent rainstorm. Given the dire condition of the building, it was placed on WMF's 2002 list of the 100 Most Endangered Sites.

Today, this jewel of Sudanese-style architecture stands reborn, thanks to the efforts of the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board and CRA-Terre EAG, an international research center that specializes in earthen buildings at the School of Architecture in Grenoble, France. Funded by WMF through a generous grant from American Express, conservators, working in concert with the local community, carefully removed the cement plaster from the mosque, replaced damaged timbers, reconstructed the collapsed minaret and mihrab, restored the portal, and refaced the structure in traditional mud plaster. The project has served as an important catalyst for the rebirth of mud-plaster construction, an art that has waned over the decades as more and more buildings in the area are built of iron and concrete. Compared to concrete, earthen architecture requires substantial maintenance, needing to be refreshed each year following the rainy season. However, it is far more sympathetic to the environment and better suited to the extreme heat of West Africa, providing cool interior spaces throughout the year.

Since its restoration, the mosque has resumed its vital role in the spiritual life of northern Ghana. On Fridays, canopies are erected around the structure to accommodate Larabanga's growing congregation. The local community is now working to build a nearby visitors' center to share with the world the ways of a vanishing art.
Who are the creators of these earthen wonders? Among many West African peoples, such as the Boso, who figured prominently in the architectural development of Mali’s Niger River Delta, architects hold a unique place in society, possessing special knowledge of the occult and properties of the earth. In the Djenne and Mande areas of Mali, architects are traditionally members of a ton, or caste-like association, whose knowledge of structures is passed from father to son. In the Hausa states of what are today northern Nigeria and southern Niger, guilds of builders are organized under a master, or majini, chosen for his technical prowess and creativity. Among the most famous of these Hausa masters was the nineteenth-century architect, Mallam Mikhaila of Sokoto, Nigeria, who was hailed as a Babban Gwani (supreme expert) and Kakan Majini (grandfather of the builders). According to legend, he built the Sokoto Mosque over the course of a single night. Architects in the rural Batammaliba communities of northern Togo and Benin, in contrast to their Hausa and Mande counterparts, practice independently, learning their art through apprenticeship with a master. Each signs his structures with markings where wall foundations join. Whether or not individually identified as the work of a particular builder, the creativity and uniqueness of each work of African earthen architecture is evident.

The local environment from which this architecture largely has been shaped has had an impact too. While earth is omnipresent, water and timber are becoming ever rarer commodities. So too is the expertise of skilled designers and builders of earthen structures. All of this makes the need for endeavors to preserve this extraordinary architectural legacy all the more critical.

THE MOSQUE AT YEBE, MALI, RIGHT, IS ONE OF A NUMBER OF RECENT BUILDINGS MODELED ON THE GREAT MOSQUE AT DJENNE. DESIGNS PAINTED ON A COMPOUND IN SIRIGU, GHANA, ARE BASED ON MOTIFS OFTEN SEEN IN TEXTILES, KNOWN LOCALLY AS THE "RED HOUSE," FACING PAGE, THE HOUSE OF A MARABOUT IN SEGOU, MALI, CELEBRATES THE RICHNESS OF THE EARTH.
BUILT MORE THAN 5,500 YEARS AGO,
THE MEgalithic TEMPLE OF MNAjdra
IS AMONG THE OLDEST FREE-STANDING
BUILDINGS IN THE WORLD.

Isle of the Ancient Mariner

MALTA, A MEDITERRANEAN SEAFARERS’ HAVEN FOR 6,000 YEARS

text and photographs by ANDREW L. SLAYMAN
Hermès flew
until the distant island lay ahead,
then rising shoreward from the violet ocean
he stepped up to the cave. Divine Kalypso,
the mistress of the isle, was now at home.

A deep wood grew outside, with summer leaves
of alder and black poplar, pungent cypress.

Ornate birds here rested their stretched wings—
horned owls, falcons, cormorants—long-tongued
beachcombing birds, and followers of the sea.

Around the smoothwalled cave a crooked vine
held purple clusters under ply of green;
and four springs, bubbling up near one another
shallow and clear, took channels here and there...

But he saw nothing of the great Odysseus,
who sat apart, as a thousand times before:
and racked his own heart groaning, with eyes wet
scanning the bare horizon of the sea.

—Homer, Odyssey V.54–89
Robert Fitzgerald, trans.
Long before the Yankees, before Napoleon and the knights, before St. Paul, Phoenicians, Romans, and Odysseus—before Britain's Stonehenge (ca. 2800–1800 B.C.) and Egypt's Great Pyramid at Giza (ca. 2680 B.C.), Malta was home to a mysterious people, known to archaeologists only after the places where their remains have been found—names like Zebbug, Ggantija, and Tarxien. Because few of their villages have survived, little is known of the island's Neolithic inhabitants, but it is probably safe to say that, like the latter-day Maltese, they tilled its thin soil and harvested fish from the surrounding waters. Certainly they were mariners: There are hints of communication with nearby Sicily, and the brightly painted fishing boats, or luzzus, that still sail from the harbor of Marsaxlokk resemble nothing so much as scaled-down versions of ancient galleys.

If the villages of these people are largely a blank, their temples have survived in abundance, and it is from these great megalithic structures—the oldest free-standing stone structures in the world—that most of our knowledge derives. Among all of the temples on Malta and Gozo, two stand preeminent: Mnajdra and Hagar Qim (3600–2500 B.C.), situated a half kilometer apart on a sloping hillside overlooking the sea on the southern coast of Malta. Both temples have been designated as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and, from 1998 through 2002, Mnajdra appeared on the World Monuments Fund's list of the 100 Most Endangered Sites. Gazing out over the stones of Mnajdra to the silvery Mediterranean and the uninhabited islet of Filfla, one can imagine its ancient priests marking the progress of the seasons, making sacrifices to their deities, and praying for the sick, much as they did on Salisbury Plain or the Nile. The southernmost of Mnajdra's three sanctuaries faces due east, and at sunrise on the equinoxes a shaft of light penetrates the inner sanctuary and illuminates the altar on the rear wall, making the site among the earliest solar observatories in the world. Statues of a "fat lady" found at the other Maltese temples suggest that their primary deity was a goddess of fertility, and anatomical votives would seem to indicate a role in healing.

Today Mnajdra and Hagar Qim are among Malta's premier tourist attractions, attracting thousands of visitors every year. This popularity has its price. Like cultural monuments in high-traffic areas the world over, Mnajdra and Hagar Qim face threats from many directions—from vandals, the elements, and now garbage. As more people have come to the megaliths seeking cultural education, spiritual enlightenment, or just a pretty outing on a sunny day, their importance to the country's national identity, image abroad, and economy has grown. The government has set aside about four square kilometers around the sites as a heritage park, banning development and angering local residents who have used the land freely for generations. Vandals attacked Mnajdra in 1996 and again in April 2001, when they cut through the surrounding fence, toppled more than 60 of the temples' giant stones, and scratched what were described as "satanic" symbols on the rocks.

The ensuing investigation focused on bird hunters who for generations have wielded their weapons from rough stone blinds on the hillsides nearby. It soon emerged that less than a week before the van-
Dalism occurred, the Malta Planning Authority had served eviction notices to about twenty hunters, ordering them to demolish illegal blinds they had built within the bounds of the park. Rumors also circulated about a possible connection to the operators of two limestone quarries some 250 meters northwest of Mnajdra, which had been shut down by the police in 1997 after they refused to comply with a government order to cease operation, but no connection was ever proved or disproved. Yet while the police interviewed a number of people, including an expert in cults brought in to examine the so-called satanic etchings, no one was ever arrested or prosecuted for the crime.

At the time, the government was roundly castigated for poor security at the site, which was embraced only by a cheap fence of plastic netting and lacked any 24-hour guard presence. In the year following the attack, a sturdy metal fence was built around Mnajdra, along with several additional guard shelters there and at Hagar Qim; floodlights were installed to illuminate the sites at night; and a round-the-clock guard was posted. With a $20,000 grant from WMF and American Express, restorers were able to repair the extensive damage, so that today, to all but the trained eye, it looks exactly as it did before. But the bird hunters and their blinds remain, and walking between Hagar Qim and Mnajdra early in the morning, it is not unusual to encounter a hunter or two smoking a cigarette, shotgun across his knee as he waits for the flapping of wings overhead.

If there was a positive side to the tragedy, it was that it served as a catalyst for a long-mooted reorganization of Malta's government cultural institutions and an updating of its Antiquities Act of 1925. In the new Cultural Heritage Act of 2002, administration of archaeological sites was consolidated in two organizations within the Ministry for Youth and the Arts: Heritage Malta, responsible for public education, facilities, and day-to-day administration of museums and archaeological sites; and the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, responsible for scientific investigation, land-use issues, and policy development. In November 2003, Minister for Youth and the Arts Jesmond Mugliett
announced an international design competition to address one of the other great threats to Mgaj Qim and Mnajdra, water damage. Originally roofed, the temples were never meant to stand exposed to the elements. During rainstorms, water washes the fill from between the limestone megaliths, causing them to collapse. It also penetrates the limestone, thereby weakening it; then as the rock dries in the parching sun, surface layers begin to flake away. "The future of the structures depends on their being shielded from the elements," says Eneix of the Old Temple Study Foundation, which is working to preserve the temples and educate the public on their importance.

The design competition will, according to the official brief, encompass planning for the entire heritage park, including a visitors’ center and construction of a “temporary covering” over each temple site. The government has earmarked 200,000 in European Union funds to begin work and has set an aggressive timetable for the project, with submissions due and the jury scheduled to meet in April 2004, and construction to begin by the end of the year. Proposals will be evaluated by a jury of architects and conservation experts from Malta, Germany, Egypt, Jordan, and Italy.

But in an ironic twist of fate, while Heritage Malta works to preserve the two sites, the Ministry of Resources and Infrastructure is trying to convert the two nearby quarries, known as Tal-Maghlaq and Qasam il-Kbir, into landfills. Seeking to comply with a European Union directive to close another landfill at Maghtab in 2004, the government came up with a plan to open a new one at the adjacent site of Ghallis. But because Ghallis is not expected to be ready by the time Maghtab closes this coming June, resources minister Ninu Zammit commissioned a study to identify a temporary solution.

A committee comprising representatives from the Malta Resources Authority, the Malta...
Environment and Planning Authority, and the landfill contractor WasteServ Malta evaluated sixteen possible quarries, including ten operational and six disused ones, and selected Tal-Maglaq and Qasam il-Kbir as the only suitable options based on their size and the proximity of other potential sites to public water supplies. The committee's analysis noted that Tal-Maglaq and Qasam il-Kbir are "in very close proximity to two world heritage sites," but did not address the basic geology of the area or the implications of burying up to two million cubic meters of garbage within 250 meters of those two sites. The committee's report has been widely criticized as flawed, with various parties suggesting that Maghtab could continue to be used until Ghallis is ready, or that Ghallis could in fact be ready in time. Malta's Green Party, local governments and members of parliament, Greenpeace, and UNESCO have all expressed opposition to the plan, but no resolution has yet been reached.

Standing hushed in Mnajdra's inner sanctuary, beneath the cool blue sky before the equinoctial sunrise, it is easy to forget the bird hunters, quarries, and destructive elements, and feel the presence of the people who built these great temples and the priests who celebrated their mysterious rites within. As the sun rises over the hillside to the east—a sliver of bright orange light, growing inexorably into a great golden disc—shade is transformed into the light of day, and the shadows of the ancient Maltese vanish into the corners to be supplanted by school groups, archaeologists, and tourists. Vandalism can reach any site and neglect can unseat the best-laid plans. But, with vigilance and help, these great stones will still stand—archaeological treasures, national symbols, and tourist attractions—in another thousand years.
Adobe Architecture of West Africa

Photos by James Morris, Text by Suzanne Preston Blier • Princeton Architectural Press • 216 pp. • $50

Earthen buildings across West Africa are spiked like pincushions with beam tips. These wooden protrusions at once reinforce the dirt walls, wick out moisture, and provide footholds during annual replastering sessions. And the buildings need recoating every year or so, lest they wash away—"they come and go with uncommon regularity," writes photographer James Morris. He traveled along the river Niger and its tributaries, by Land Rover or gondola or on foot, to document homes and mosques made of butabu (a Togo tribe's word for moistened earth). To supplement his hauntingly beautiful photo essay, historian Suzanne Preston Blier provides a decoding of the structures' swoops and crenellations: they sometimes signify the owner's age, profession, and marital status.

Architect, Designer, 1867–1942

By Georges Vigne, Photos by Felipe Ferré • Delano Greenidge • 396 pp. • $85

If not for designing Paris' Metro entrances, Hector Guimard would likely be little remembered. His dozen signature buildings resulted from an 1895–1910 burst of creativity, during which he declared he'd invented "Le Style Guimard." He brought scribbly contours to architectural features from foyer mosaics to dormer peaks. When the public taste shifted to Art Deco, he uncomfortably tried to adapt, ending his career building townhouses in zigzagging quasi-Cubist mode. Little has been published about him in English (research in any language is hampered by a lack of documents—his widow, an American banking heiress, inexplicably burned almost all his papers). French art historian Georges Vigne explores Guimard's life and oeuvre year by year, juxtaposing archival images with recent shots by Felipe Ferré (a Guimard documenter for three decades). Guimard would no doubt be delighted by the number of his works that have become laced with vines, echoing his botanical forms.

The One-Room Schoolhouse

By Paul Rocheleau • Universe • 208 pp. • $35

Is there a lonelier building genre than the one-room schoolhouse? Serving rural populations, it ends up isolated, against backdrops of desert rocks, oceanfront cliffs, or prairie seas. Paul Rocheleau shows some 90 structures nationwide, clad in every American vernacular material: clapboard, brick, log, adobe, fieldstone, pressed tin. In form they are usually rectangular and gabled, but sometimes round or octagonal (which causes troubles for staff teaching in the round, their backs to potential student troublemakers). Half a dozen of Rocheleau's selections are abandoned husks. The rest are either struggling schools or museums, crammed with antique desks, inkwells, chalkboards, and graduation pictures.

Photography, Architecture, and the Politics of Representation, 1850–1900

Ed. Maria Antonella Pelizzari • Yale University Press • 344 pp. • $50

While colonizing India, the British fanatically documented it. Painters and photographers roamed the Subcontinent from the 1780s onward, returning home to publish ambitious image collections with titles like "Oriental Scenery" and "The Architecture of Ancient Delhi, Especially the Buildings around the Kutb Minar." Their mindsets somewhat colored by patriotism, and eager to please their home audiences, they rarely depicted exactly what they'd seen. They concentrated on landmarks like Akbar's tomb that Britons had restored (sometimes inaccurately). And they left out sites of British massacres, while detailing damage caused by Indian "mutineers." Some pictures border on sacrilege or desecration: a British soldier lounges sullenly in a carved Buddha's lap, Indian sepoys' bones can be seen scattered in a palace's yard. The albums could also be lovingly thorough, however, with panoramas of cityscapes and temple inscriptions. British, North American, and Indian scholars dissect the paradoxical phenomena in this handsome catalog of an eponymous traveling show, at UCLA's Fowler Museum from March 7 to July 3.
BYZANTIUM REDISCOVERED
By J.B. Bullen • Phaidon • 240 pp. • $75
Long considered a forgettable afterthought of ancient classical design, Byzantine architecture was rediscovered in the 1820s by German Romantics. Inspired as well by the era's restoration of blindingly gilded churches-turned-mosques in Turkey, Prussian and Bavarian royals, including Mad Ludwig, commissioned striped-brick domed spires slathered in often bombastic mosaic. French architectural patrons, convinced their own Gothic cathedral tradition had sprung from Byzantium, reinterpret basilicas throughout the country, Paris' Sacré-Cœur being the best-known fantastical result. Literati of the time, from Goethe to Yeats, became equally infatuated with the movement. It sowed the seeds, explains British historian J.B. Bullen, of Austrian Art Nouveau, English Arts & Crafts, Pre-Raphaelite and Post-Impressionist painting, and American Romanesque capitols, campuses, and places of worship. While eloquently dissecting Byzantine structures, Bullen weaves in entertaining anecdotes of aristocrats' misguided love affairs and philosophers' fulminations.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LIBRARIES IN THE WORLD
Photos by Guillaume de Laubier, Text by Jacques Bosser • Harry N. Abrams • 248 pp. • $50
Within the basic parameters of historical library design—long desks in a shelving-lined vaulted box, overlooked by busts of scholars—this volume's 23 examples range from impressively soaring to intriguingly cloistered. Pictured on sumptuous foldouts, some are tucked into monasteries or chateaux, others—like the Library of Congress and the National Library of Russia—meant as freestanding in-your-streetscape boasts of governments' high-minded generosity. The book's thorough texts chronicle who fresco which allegorical murals, how the book holdings and classification systems developed, and which glitterati, like Goethe or Anatole France, once staffed the place.

CASTLES OF THE SAMURAI: POWER AND BEAUTY
By Jennifer Mitchellhill, Photos by David Green • Kodansha • 112 pp. • $35
Warlords of sixteenth-century Japan flaunted their might by posting steep-walled fortresses on hilltops, resistant to then-new weapons like muskets and cannons. If intruders managed to leap the moats and penetrate the perimeters, street layouts and hallways were winding, narrow, and intentionally confusing. Structures were designed to fend off lightning and earthquake damage, too: their lacquered or seaweed-coated walls were relatively fireproof, and their cypress beams could bend with the Earth's tremors. Of an estimated 3,000 such redoubts built, only 45 survive—the Meiji era had no taste for such feudal relics. Many of the survivors have been topped with newly replicated towers, including a concrete version at Hiroshima. This slim but data-packed study provides both a historical overview and explanations of design details, as fine as petaled nail coverings and downward-facing windows—handy for dropping stones on the enemy.

MYTHOLOGY: TALES AND LEGENDS OF THE GODS
By Kathryn & Ross Petras • Workman Publishing • $9.95
Although their altars have been abandoned and their temples lay in ruins, the legendary gods and heroes of the Greco-Roman world burst forth from the colorful die-cut pages of this "Fandex" field guide. Arranged alphabetically from Achilles to Zeus, each folio tells the story of a god—his/her genealogy, divine attributes, and place in the pantheon of deities thought to control the forces of nature and the fate of humanity. Illustrated with great works of art—frescoes, statuary, mosaics, and polychromed pottery—the book's elegant design and ease of usage make it a fine addition to any classical library.

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A rock yard larger than Manhattan with temperatures in excess of 40°C awaited me when I visited the Dampier archipelago this past January. A desolate site on the western coast of Australia, Dampier is believed to be the largest ensemble of rock art in the world with an estimated 10,000 stones bearing engravings, although no one has ever counted them for sure. Among the engravings, carved some 15,000 years ago, are records of fishing and hunting expeditions, images of animals, and enigmatic renderings of chevrons, zigzags, and curves made by incising lines through the rocks' patinated rust-colored surfaces to reveal naturally cool blue-gray stone beneath. The spiky rock piles were born of solid granite outcroppings that, splintered by extreme heat, broke down into shafts over geological time. With recorded temperatures of 54°C, Dampier is one of the hottest places on Earth.

In the years since Dampier's last original aboriginal inhabitants were slaughtered in the Flying Foam Massacre of 1868, the archipelago had been the almost exclusive domain of kangaroos and lizards; that was until the 1960s when three large factory complexes—processing iron, natural gas, and salt—were erected with the endorsement of the Western Australian government. Though they have clearly ruined the pristine qualities of the archipelago, government officials and industrialists say they have respected the rock art to the greatest degree possible in the development of their enterprises. Others, however, contend that emissions from these industries are adversely affecting the rock art.

Now, the government of Western Australia is campaigning for further industrial development of this ancient land, hoping to attract methane, fertilizer, and petroleum industries to the area. It is a very short-range vision indeed and a bad idea. Australians concerned about compromising this unique site are objecting to the plans; the International Federation of Rock Art nominated the site to WMF's 2004 Watch list. My visit provoked discussion of an alternative scheme—relocation of new industry to another site a fair distance away from the rock art area—but the state government remains committed to its plans. A high-level committee of Australian scientists has been appointed to study the impact of industrial emissions on the site. We can only hope this work and outside interest will draw more of a response from the Australian federal government, which actually owns the land and has had a good record for protecting aboriginal sites and traditions. It would be tragic to see the only remaining evidence of an ancient culture wiped away in a second disastrous sweep.

—BONNIE BURNHAM
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