

Exhibit sheds light on world's cultural development

By CORINNE ABATT

While the word Arab is synonymous with oil these days, there are literally hundreds of other contributions from the Arab culture which have had a direct impact on modern life.

Considering that the metropolitan Detroit area has one of the largest concentrations of Arab speaking people in the United States, it's appropriate that a major exhibition of Arab history and culture be presented.

The International Institute in Detroit will host "The Arab World in Perspective" Feb. 12 to April 26.

Exhibit chairman Suheila Ajluni of Birmingham, who has been working on the project with some 20 committee women for more than a month, said, "We are emphasizing that this is to acquaint our fellow Americans with our rich heritage and culture. We want them to know what the Arabs have contributed to world civilization."

OIL ASIDE, these contributions go far beyond the popular foods such as stuffed grape leaves, kibbe, baklava, rugs and the familiar artifacts. They reach into the major sciences beginning with arithmetic and going on through astronomy, medicine, law, language and architecture.

Mrs. Ajluni said the comprehensive exhibit is divided into five sections: history and origin of the Arab people; major contributions to civilization; commonalities and characteristics of the Arab world; Arab-Americans; and a pictorial essay of the modern Arab world.

Visitors not familiar with the background of the Arab speaking people are in for surprises.

The first alphabets, the beginnings of algebra, advances in math, astronomy and medicine, as well as Hammurabi's code of law, all came out of the Middle East. Hammurabi was king of Babylon from 1792-1750 B.C. The Arab coun-

tries were the cradle for monotheism as well as three of the world's great religions—Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

Pictures, artifacts and pottery shards were loaned by the Detroit Institute of Arts to enrich the section on the history and origins. There will be samples of hieroglyphics and cuneiform, a written language of wedge shaped strokes which developed in the Tigris-Euphrates valley, generally attributed to the Sumerians. It paralleled the development of hieroglyphics in Egypt.

One subsection is devoted to Arab women, dress and fashion, as well as

those in leadership roles like Queen Nefertiti of ancient Egypt. The art of making oneself appealing through the use of perfume, make-up, particularly mascara and eye shadow, was highly developed in the ancient Arab world.

MANY OF THE WORDS used by English speaking people every day had their beginnings in the Middle East—alcohol, algebra, alchemy, coffee for starters.

Mrs. Ajluni is concerned that the emphasis on this exhibition be properly placed on its educational aspects.

An opening reception will be held at the International Institute 3-6 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 11. The \$5 ticket includes re-

freshments and entertainment. Ambassadors and embassy personnel from many of the countries represented will be guests at the reception. Judge George Bashara Jr., of the Court of Appeals, is honorary chairman of the event. Michelle Shamait is chairman of the education committee which has planned many programs during the weeks the exhibition is running. Ed Deeb is chairman of the opening reception.

The exhibit will be open Monday-Thursday, 1-8:30 p.m. and Fridays 1-4:30 p.m. Group tours are available by reservation. The institute is at 111 East Kirby, Detroit.



Treasures of the Near East not only include beautiful women, but finely made gowns as well. This hostess dress is a copy of an original made of velvet with rich gold and silver trim. (Photo by Randy Borst)

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