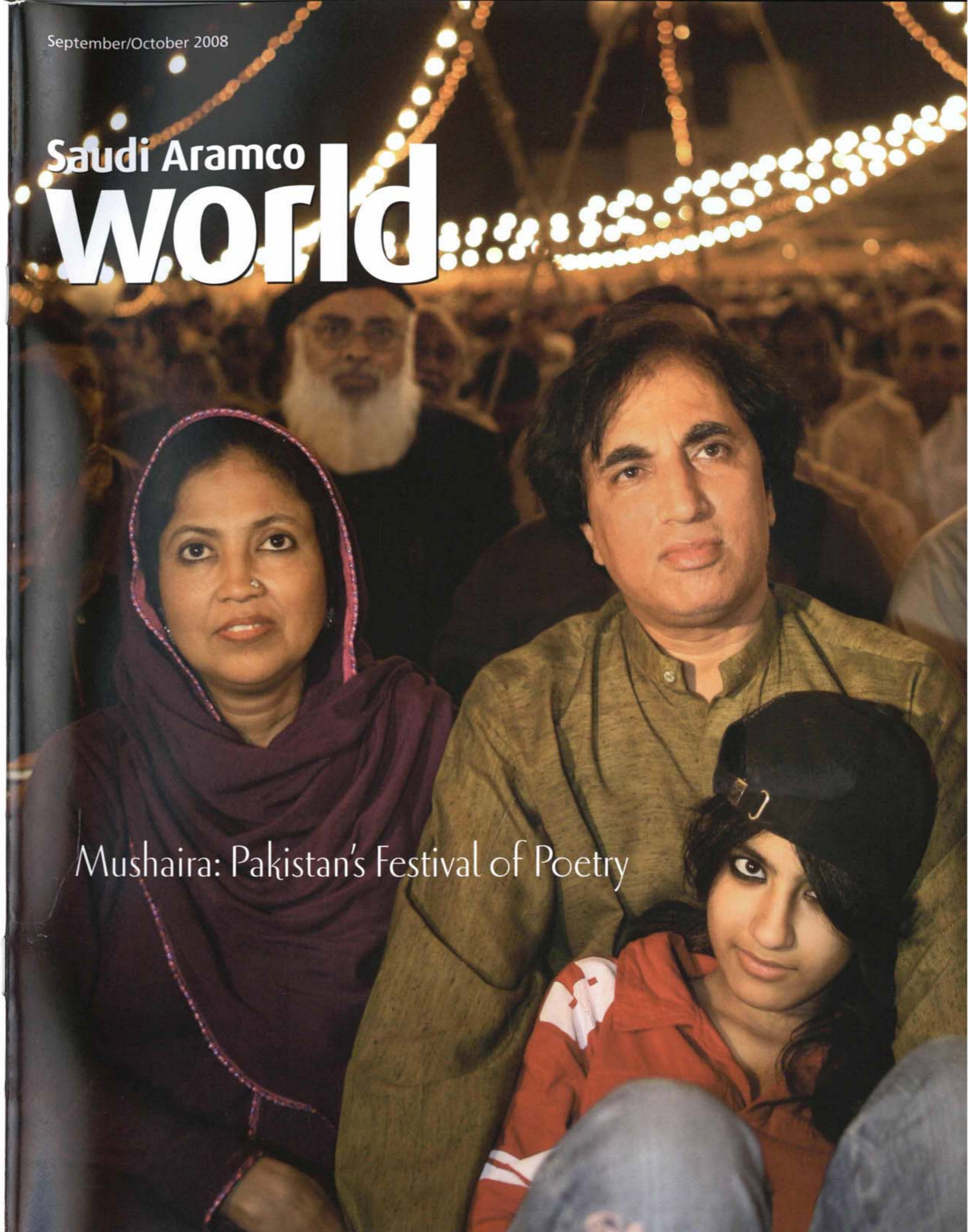




Saudi Aramco **World**

Mushaira: Pakistan's Festival of Poetry



2 Following Washington Irving

Written by Louis Werner
Photographed by Tor Eigeland

In May 1829, the American author saddled up a mule in Seville and set out eastward for Granada, where he spent the summer lodged in the Alhambra. Writing there, he recounted the journey in a book that introduced "Moorish Spain" to the budding American romantic imagination. A modern traveler driving the A-92 autopista finds a few traces still left of the Spain that Irving described.



10

Suitable Luxury

Written by Stewart Gordon

From the times of Alexander the Great to the modern era, throughout Europe, North Africa and Asia, a ruler conferred honor and protection, and received allegiance in return, through a ceremonial gift of an elegant robe. In Arabic, these robing ceremonies had a name—*khil'a*—and today, vestiges of them endure around the world.



18 Mayfair to Makkah

Written by William Facey
Photographs courtesy of Angus Sladen

Aristocrat, grandmother, deer hunter, Muslim and fluent speaker of Arabic, Lady Evelyn Cobbold in 1933 became the first British woman to perform the *Hajj*. Her journal, titled *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, has been newly republished, and it includes her observations on daily life among women in what was then the new nation of Saudi Arabia.



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24

Mushaira: Pakistan's Festival of Poetry

Written by Louis Werner
Photographed by Kevin Bubriski

Drawing on a classical tradition that dates back at least 500 years to the Mughal court's sharp-witted *ghazal* competitions, the world's largest festival of contemporary Urdu poetry, the *Aalami Mushaira*, draws thousands to Karachi each year for passionately expressive—and passionately applauded—recitations by dozens of poets, from beloved celebrities to dazzling new stars.



34

We, the Syndicate of Troy

Written by Frank L. Holt
Illustrated by Norman MacDonald

We were about a thousand years old when we heard the brazen clash of the Trojan War—muffled by meters of earth above us—but when the Boss pulled us out of the ground in 1873, he made us say we'd been on the battleground. What a joker! The Boss was chasing fame, not truth, and we've been locked up ever since. So here we are to set the record straight, all 9000 of us, in your court of public opinion.

40 Suggestions for Reading

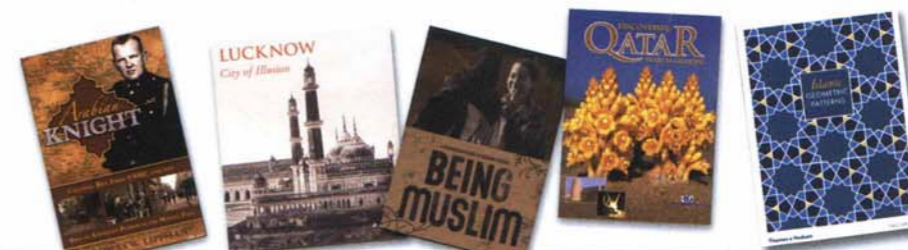
43 Suggestions for Viewing

Reviewed by Char Simons

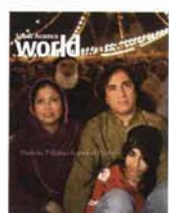
44 Classroom Guide

Written by Julie Weiss

46 Events & Exhibitions



Cover:



At the *Aalami Mushaira* in Karachi, during a program that features more than two dozen acclaimed poets and an audience in the thousands, a family listens raptly to a recitation. Year-round, wherever aficionados of Urdu literature are to be found, there are countless smaller mushairas in homes, clubs and community centers throughout Pakistan and India, in Europe and the Americas—and even on the World Wide Web. Photo by Kevin Bubriski.

Back Cover:



Having traveled through the mountains, plains and picturesque towns along the road from Seville, Irving was thrilled by the generous gift of the governor of Granada: use of a room with this view, along the north side of the Alhambra, for the summer, with the freedom to wander at will in the fabled courts and gardens. Photo by Tor Eigeland.

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Saudi Aramco, the oil company born as an international enterprise seventy-five years ago, distributes *Saudi Aramco World* to increase cross-cultural understanding. The magazine's goal is to broaden knowledge of the cultures, history and geography of the Arab and Muslim worlds and their connections with the West. *Saudi Aramco World* is distributed without charge, upon request, to a limited number of interested readers.



Following Washington Irving

Written by Louis Werner
Photographed by Tor Eigeland

When visitors to southern Spain remark upon the painterly sunshine playing across the Giralda tower in Seville, or on the music of the splashing water in the Alhambra's Court of the Lions in Granada, they should also acknowledge the eye and ear of the 19th-century American writer Washington Irving. Without Irving to blaze the trail, the way we today encounter the Moorish legacy in Andalusia—the romance of its history, the beauty of its monuments—would not be the same.

In his retelling of Moorish legends and traditions in *The Conquest of Granada* (published in 1829) and *The Alhambra* (1832)—both instant best-sellers and widely reprinted—Irving singlehandedly invented “maurophilia,” the western infatuation with al-Andalus—that part of the Iberian Peninsula ruled for nearly 800 years by Arabs—and with all things Arab in Spain. Without Irving's eye, we might not have had David Roberts's watercolors (his *Spanish Series*) nor Owen Jones's patternbooks (*Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Details of the Alhambra*); without his ear, we might not have had Claude Debussy's suite *La Soirée dans Grenade* nor even, more recently, Salman Rushdie's novel *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Without Irving, British painter John Frederick Lewis and French poet Théophile Gautier might never have been tempted to visit Moorish Spain, from where they traveled to Egypt and the Levant to do their best work.

According to Holly Edwards, an author and the curator of a 2000–2001 traveling exhibition on American orientalism, Irving was the first 19th-century writer “to pry the Islamic Orient from a harping negativism and to present it as very positive.... Moorish Spain is classicized, and together with the logical, rational, progress-oriented and time-oriented Anglo world of Irving, forms the jaws of a vise between which contemporary Spain and Spanishness are squeezed.”

To test that theory, this clock-watching, lead-footed American traveler recently set off in Irving's footsteps, following the 250-kilometer (155 mi) route he took in May 1829 from Seville eastward to Granada, to seek out the same memories and monuments of al-Andalus that he had come upon 180 years before.

Irving rode a mule and spent six days on the road; I chose as my mount a subcompact Citroën, capable of making the Seville-to-Granada run along the A-92 *autopista* in three hours. But I elected to slow down, to drive the back roads and to take along four books of particular value.

One was the 1851 edition of Irving's *The Alhambra*, which expands on the first edition of 1832, including an introductory chapter entitled “The Journey” and describing—“with the keen relish of antiquarian research”—his adventures along the way with innkeepers, peasants and smugglers, with stops in and between Alcalá de Guadaira, Osuna, Antequera, Loja and the Vega of Granada.

The second was Richard Ford's *Handbook for Travellers in Spain* (1845), based on that Englishman's two years and 3200-plus kilometers (2000 mi) of Spanish travels, during which he struggled to find decent

meals and clean beds along the same route three years after Irving. Ford called it “the lair of wolf and robber... on what can scarcely be called a road” and strongly recommended alternate itineraries, one via Córdoba by coach (“best for the ladies”) and another down the Guadalquivir River and along the coast by ship.

The third book was the *Diccionario de Arabismos* by Federico Corriente (1999), an indispensable guide to the Arabic origins of Spanish words, from *abalgar* (a purgative, from the Arabic *habb al-ghar*, or seed of the laurel tree) to *zanahoria* (carrot, from the Andalusian Arabic *al-safannaryah*, a corruption of the ancient Greek *staphyline agria*) and naturally passing through all the “al-” Spanish words known even in English, like *albacore*, *alcatraz* and *alfalfa*, concluding with an intriguing section on “false arabismos”—all in all, an amusing way to pass the time at rest stops.

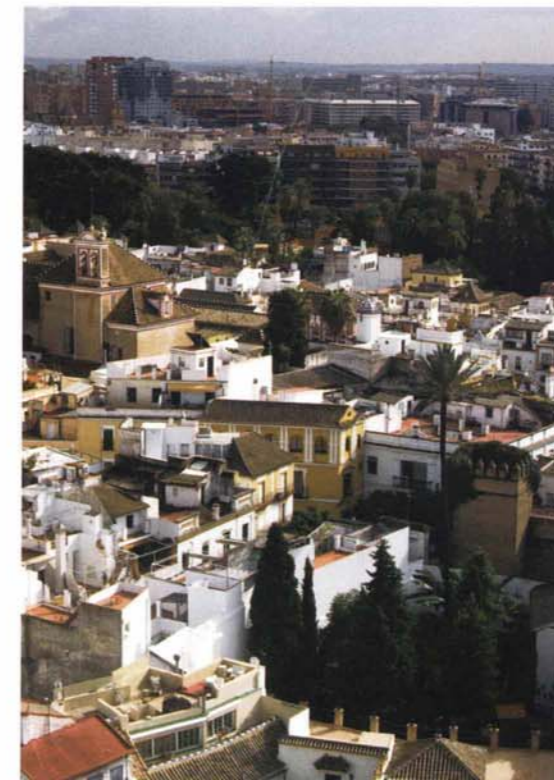
My final choice was a modern guidebook, *The Route of Washington Irving*, published by El Legado Andalusi, a Granada-based cultural organization, which describes the Arab character of the small towns en route and their history, gastronomy and architecture, capped by descriptions of Seville and Granada themselves as Irving himself would have encountered them.

Irving felt himself almost more in Arabia than in Spain on this trip. Describing the lonely views of herdsmen and mule trains crossing a distant plain, he wrote, “thus the country, the habits, the very looks of the people, have something of the Arabian character.... The dangers of the road produce a mode of travelling resembling, on a diminutive scale, the caravans of the East.” And he found the past very much alive. “Every mountain summit in this country spreads before you a mass of history,” he wrote to a friend, “filled with places renowned for some wild and heroic achievement.”

Irving had been in Seville for some months reading and documenting Spanish history. The author of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* had earlier accepted a position as attaché at the United States legation in Madrid, where he produced a biography of Christopher Columbus. Now he was working on his book about Granada, as well as a follow-up volume on the travels of Columbus's companions, and living at No. 2 Callejón del Agua, just across a wall from the lush Alcázar Real gardens, enjoying an enclosed patio with lemon and orange trees that can still be glimpsed through the wrought-iron door. He does not say so, but given his interest in the region's Moorish heritage he would surely have visited the Aljarafe (the



Sunlight casts a painterly light on Callejón del Agua in Seville, opposite, where Washington Irving lived at No. 2 for several months before setting out for Granada. Right: Visitors to Seville still regard Irving's neighborhood, Barrio Santa Cruz, as the city's most charming.





Once known for its bread (see lower right, "Baker's Convoy Avenue"), Alcalá de Guadaíra, opposite, is now a suburb of Seville. The crenellated tower of an abandoned flour mill, right, recalls the Arabic word for "castle" from which the Alcalá part of the town's name derives, while (opposite, lower) gypsies take up residence at another old mill.



belongs to a *marquesa* who, according to a surly stableboy, "only comes on Sunday, so, no, because she is not here, I cannot let you in." Thus I could infer what day it was not, just as Irving had known that it was not two o'clock. I contented myself with visiting the farm's Almohad-era watchtower, now used as a sheep stall.

It was nearing midday, so I hurried along to Arahal, whose name is appropriately derived from *al-rihal*, a "stopping place." Irving had arrived after sunset in the rain, and found the town "of the kind easily put in a state of gossip and wonderment" by the appearance of foreigners. His passport perplexed the townsmen, while "an *Alguazil* [a minor Spanish official, from *al-wazir*] took notes by the dim light of

a lamp." Irving described an impromptu concert organized by the innkeeper as "a study for a painter: the picturesque group of dancers,... the peasantry wrapped in their brown cloaks, nor must I omit to mention the old meagre Alguazil, in a short black cloak... diligently writing by the dim light of a huge copper lamp that may have figured in the days of Don Quixote."

I could find no restaurant willing to serve me lunch on the sand-covered main plaza, which looked more like a bull ring than the town's Constitution Square. "The cook comes later," said a pensioner sunning himself on a nearby bench. "You should go back out to the truck stop on the A-92." I persisted, and was finally directed to the downstairs inn of the Peña Betis, a club for fans of one of the Spanish *primera liga*'s two Seville-based soccer teams. No guitars were strummed in the peña café at lunch hour; instead, a Hollywood western played on the overhead TV. But I did eat well.

As did Irving, I too arrived at five o'clock in Osuna, the next town on, which, according to his tally then and my reading of the census now, has gained exactly 2306 inhabitants in the intervening 180 years. "Everyone eyed us askance as we entered," Irving wrote, "as Spaniards are apt to regard strangers." He quickly made friends by passing cigars all round, which Richard Ford's *Handbook* also recommended to break the ice in sullen Spanish towns: "Whether at the bullfight or theater, lay or clerical, wet or dry, the Spaniard during the day, sleeping excepted, solaces himself when he can with a cigar."

Irving mentioned "a church and a ruined castle" atop the town hill—the Collegiate Church housing the Duke of Osuna's family crypt and the 12th-century Almohad keep, called the Torre del Agua for the spring flowing from its basement—but he failed to note the six lovely marble columns dating to the Nasrid period (1238–1492) in the crypt or the Torre's elegantly vaulted upper rooms. But for

one weary motorist who had just parked his Citroën, a plate of oxtail cooked four

name comes from *al-sharaf*, meaning "elevated land"), a farming region west of the city, and the town of Aznalfarache (from *hisn al-farsh*, "castle of the carpet"), the favorite retreat of the Almohad caliph Yaqub al Mansour, builder of the Giralda in the late 12th century.

Irving's first stop was the town of Alcalá de Guadaíra (from *al-qala'a*, "citadel," and *wadi* elided with *al-shari'a*, "water supply"), just across the Guadalquivir (*wadi al-kabir*, "big river"). "Here we halted for a time," he wrote, "at the ruins of the old Moorish castle, a favorite resort for picnic parties from Seville.... The walls are of great extent, pierced with loopholes, inclosing a huge square tower or keep, with the remains of *masmoras* or subterranean granaries."

I myself got caught in morning traffic and lost in Seville's industrial sprawl, which now spills across the Guadalquivir, but I finally parked my Citroën along the Avenida Tren de los Panaderos on the banks of the Guadaíra, now a tame little stream dotted with the water-powered flour mills, often painted by the Spanish baroque artist Bartolomé Murillo, that still bring breadmaking fame to Alcalá.

"Here live the bakers who furnish Seville with that delicious bread," Irving wrote, "known by the well merited appellation of *pan de Dios*." And here he may have tasted two breads with Arabic etymologies—*acemites*, unleavened rolls (from *samid*, "semolina"), and *albardas*, or "packsaddles," from the Arabic word *al-barda'ab*, of the same meaning.

Irving also noted here the great tanks or reservoirs of Moorish construction that supplied Seville its water by aqueduct. The importance of Arab hydrology was great enough to be recognized in the Capitulations of 28 November 1491, which dictated the terms of surrender of the king of Granada, Muhammad XII Abu 'Abd Allah (known to the Spanish as Boabdil or El Rey Chico, "the Little King") to King Ferdinand. Clause 44 states that no changes would be made in the existing water-supply and irrigation systems, and that anyone who disturbed them after the handover would be severely prosecuted.

Irving left Alcalá, following the Guadaíra upstream to what was then the hamlet of Gandul, a Spanish word for "slacker" or "idler" derived from the Arabic *ghundur*, meaning "chubby." The Spanish meaning was not misplaced, for Irving noted that the town clock "only struck at two in the afternoon, and between those hours one had to guess the time. We guessed it was time to eat, so, alighting, we ordered a repast... and the millers sat down and smoked with us, for the Andalusians are always ready for a gossip." Gandul's hacienda now





Seville
 Alcalá de Guadaíra
 Washington Irving's Journey from Seville to Granada,
 May 1829
 Gandul Arahal Osuna
 Archidona Loja Chauchina Granada

ways at the *mesón de la consolación* and the stout welcome offered to a newly converted Betis fan did more to break the ice than even two boxes of the best *habanos* would have done.

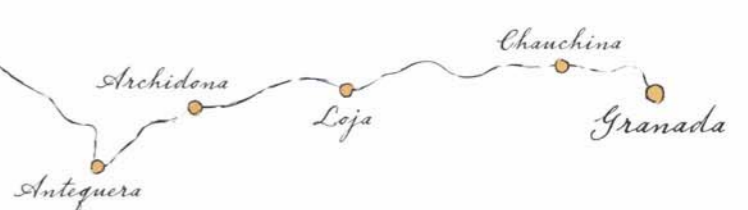
Leaving town at an early hour, Irving wrote that he “entered the sierra, the road wound through picturesque scenery, but lonely... a wild and intricate country with its silent plains and valleys intersected by mountains.” This was the home territory of the infamous ninth-century brigand Omar ibn Hassan, who disputed dominion even with the caliphs of Córdoba. Six hundred years later, this same upland stretch fell into the hands of Ali Attar, *alcayde* (from *al-qa'id*, meaning “leader”) of Loja and father-in-law of Boabdil, and thus, according to Irving, was still known as “Ali Attar’s garden.”

After the mountains of Sierra de los Caballos and past the Fuente la Piedra’s salt lake, the next town along the way is Antequera, which Irving called “that old city of warlike reputation, lying in the lap of a great sierra which runs through Andalusia....” Men here still wore the *montero*, an ancient hunting cap, he wrote, and “the women too were all in *mantillas* [lace shawls] and *basquiñas* [long skirts]. The fashions of Paris hadn’t reached Antequera.”

Irving took a dawn stroll up Antequera’s hilltop to the Alcazaba (from *al-qasabah*, “fortresses”). “Below me,” he wrote, “in its lap of hills, lay the old warrior city so often mentioned in chronicle and ballad.... To the right the Rock of the Lovers (Peñon de los Enamorados) stretched like a cragged promontory into the plain, whence the daughter of the Moorish alcaide and her lover, when closely pursued, threw themselves in despair.” Even Christopher Columbus, in his ship’s log, compared a New World headland to this widely known landmark, and the legend keeps Antequera on the tourist map today. Richard Ford, meanwhile, made it something British, writing that it “rises like a Gibraltar out of the sea of the plain.” For me it was shrouded in morning fog.

Where in Ford’s time the local governor could be found dismantling the mosque to resell its bricks

Crossing the mountains from the west, Irving passed through the picturesque hill towns of Antequera (opposite, lower) and Archidona (opposite, top). Today, the A-92 gives clear directions, right.



and pocket the cash—“*Cosas de España!*” (“Things in Spain!”), he wrote—today the Andalusian regional government, with help from the European Union, is painstakingly restoring the citadel’s two Almohad towers, the Torre Blanca and the Torre de Homenaje, whose clock timed the irrigation rights to the canals fed by the Guadalhorce River (from either *wadi al-faras*, “river of the horse,” or *wadi al-haras*, “river of the guard”).

Ten minutes on the A-92 got me to Irving’s next stop, Archidona, “situated in the breast of a high hill with a three-pointed mountain towering above it and the ruins of a Moorish fortress,” wrote Irving. “It was a great toil to ascend a steep stony street leading up into the city, although it bore the encouraging name of Calle Real del Llano [Royal Street of the Plain].” The fortress now has a paved road to the top, a full 300 meters (1000’) above the town, and a former Almohad mosque retains its original three horseshoe-arched bays supported by Roman columns, some elegantly fluted on the spiral.

Irving cannot refrain from retelling apocryphal legends, and here he wrote of a besieged Moorish king who looked down upon the invading forces of Queen Isabella and laughed at her in scorn because he thought his citadel to be invincible. But Isabella had been shown a secret path, and “when the

Moor saw her coming, he was astonished, and springing with his horse from a precipice, was dashed to pieces. The marks of his horse’s hoofs are to be seen in the margin of the rock to this day.”

After much fruitless searching, I could only assume that the fatal hoofmarks are now buried under the concrete foundations of three cell-phone towers that rise nearby. Yet some *cosas de España* never seem to change: As I searched, an aged shepherd wearing an odd-looking cloth cap—could it be a *montero*?—moved his flock up the hill to graze among the flowering almond trees just as the Peñon de los Enamorados finally cleared of mist.

Crossing over the Puerto del Rey—in the words of Irving, “one of the great passes into the territories





of Granada, and the one by which King Ferdinand conducted his army”—the autopista takes the high route, leaving the town of Loja spread below along-

side the River Genil, which flows the length of Granada's famous Vega, or plain. Loja was called Granada's "gate and key" by its great native-born polymath Ibn al-Khatib (1313–1374). He described Loja as having "a cheerful face, a fascinating aspect, a river with a copious current, fruitful trees, gardens, fountains, and true delicacies,... women who cure broken hearts... and hares that seem awake when they are sleeping. To get there, one must pass through narrow defiles." Ibn al-Khatib clearly prefers his hometown over its rival Archidona, which he dismisses as having "no water, little agriculture, broken homes, lazy inhabitants, scant meat served at table, and shaykhs like goats wearing the skin of men."

Loja's high walls repulsed King Ferdinand and his English archers for 34 days in a siege in 1488. Irving called it "wildly picturesque.... The ruins of a Moorish alcazar crown a rocky mound which rises out of the center of the town. The river Xenil [Genil in modern spelling] washes its base, winding among rocks and groves and gardens and meadows, and crossed by a Moorish bridge," as it still is.

In this "wild mountain place, full of contrabandistas, enchanters, and *infiernos*," Irving the storyteller found the perfect setting for another infernal tale, in an inn with "swaggering

men with long mustaches, who carry sabres as a child does her doll.... A blunderbuss stood in the corner beside the guitar." Richard Ford wrote a bit less fearsomely on the matter of Spanish guitarists—"the traveller will happily find in most villages some crack performer.... A *función* will soon be *armada*, or a party got up of all ages, who are attracted to the tinkling like swarming bees."

Pilar, owner of Loja's Posada Rincón, told me that her establishment opened its doors to travelers in 1810, and she recalled when its outer patio had not yet been roofed and was used to stable mules. Loja's museum has mid-19th-century photos of the town square showing men in gallant dress just as Irving described them, with wide-brimmed hats, tight-fitting riding breeches and short jackets. An engraving dating from 1585 shows the castle walls fully intact, and even David Roberts tried his hand at capturing the citadel's tower in his *Spanish Series*.

On television, the nightly half-hour live broadcast of flamenco direct from Seville is followed by a "friendly" soccer match between England and Spain. It attracts most of the Posada Rincón's guests—some pensioners, some transients. One in particular, who holds the remote control, has an eye-to-chin scar that surely would have scared off Irving's most ferocious contrabandista.

Yet this was not likely Irving's inn, "the inhabitants of which seem still to retain the bold fiery spirit of the olden time," whose name he reported as the Corona. No trace of that posada can be found today even on the *barrio alto*'s tiny Calle Washington Irving. And at the Rincón, when the final

In Granada, Irving found lodging in this room in the Alhambra palace, opposite, where he wrote much of *The Alhambra*. Right: A fountain commemorates the centennial of Irving's death.

whistle blew with Spain ahead 1–0, my fellow soccer fans were gently snoring and the entire town pretty much shuttered—not quite the fiery spirit Irving had reported.

Some things in the town remain unchanged, however. In the Alfaguara quarter ("bountiful spring" in Spanish, from *al-fawwarah*, meaning "jet of water"), Loja's most famous fountain, with 25 spouts, continues to fill its stock trough, plenty for both Irving's long-eared mule and the Citroën's 75 horses, confirming Ibn al-Khatib's praise for his town's "copious currents" more than a half millennium ago.

The next day, Irving entered onto the Rio Genil's table-flat plain. He called it the "far famed" Vega de Granada and stopped at midday in the Soto de Roma, "a classical neighborhood..., a rural resort of the Moorish kings, in modern times granted to the Duke of Wellington." His muleteer and majordomo Sancho set out one last picnic beside a stream, and seen "in the distance was romantic Granada surmounted by the ruddy towers of the Alhambra, while far above it the snowy summits of the Sierra Nevada shone like silver."

I was caught in the rain here, so no summits shone like silver for me, yet I determined to find the Almohad watchtower known as the Torre de Romillo, the only one still standing on the Vega, now alongside an asparagus farm. Workmen were busy securing its cracked walls, but they told me with some excitement that an archeologist from Granada had just discovered a ceramic-tiled well under a meter (39") of earth in its basement. The tower would have been newly built and its well still full in the year 1319, when, according to Ford, 50,000 soldiers died in a battle here between Muslims and Christians.

In the nearby town of Chauchina, outside the parish church, stands a broken column from a local quarry. Destined for the Alhambra's Palace of Carlos V, it tumbled off a transport wagon in the mid-16th century and was left behind. Its 32 perfectly matched sister columns, one of which no doubt is Chauchina's hurriedly cut replacement, still support the palace's second-floor arcade.

Approaching the fabled city of Granada, Irving was steered by a wily tout to what he promised was the city's best inn, with *chocolate con leche* (hot chocolate made with milk), *camas de lujo* (soft beds) and *colchones de pluma* (feather pillows). "Ay, señores," he told Irving and Sancho, "you will fare like King Chico in the Alhambra." But this proved another cosa de España. "We found before morning," Irving wrote, that "the



little varlet, who was no doubt a good friend of the landlord, had decoyed us into one of the shabbiest posadas in Granada."

Yet Irving's diary entry for May 31, 1829 recounts the happiest of endings to this story. "You will I am sure congratulate me upon my good luck—Behold me, a resident of the Alhambra, even in the old Moorish palace of Boabdil!" He goes on to explain how the governor of Granada had invited him to lodge in some unused rooms of the palace itself. "We gladly occupied it and here I am, as much a sovereign of the Palace as Rey Chico."

Irving stayed through the summer and wrote much of *The Alhambra* there, inspired by midnight walks through "these great halls and courts and gardens" and conversations with a fellow guest, a certain "Moor of Tetuan," who translated for him the "aroma of

the poetry" inscribed on its walls. A modern traveler, though he may have the best connections, is rarely invited to overnight in the Nasrid Palace—not even in the two side rooms that Carlos V redecorated in Spanish style in the 16th century and where Irving slept 200 years later.


On the route from Seville, I had found Irving accurate about many things, but in this day of 120-kilometer-per-hour (75-mph) autopistas and cell phone reception all along the A-92, it is no longer true, as he wrote, that the route makes for "tedious travelling through a lonely and dreary country." But he was right on target in his next observation: "Granada, however, repays one for every fatigue." It certainly did for mine. ☉



Louis Werner (wernerworks@msn.com) is a writer and filmmaker living in New York. He recommends that all travelers to Spain read *Don Quixote* before setting out.

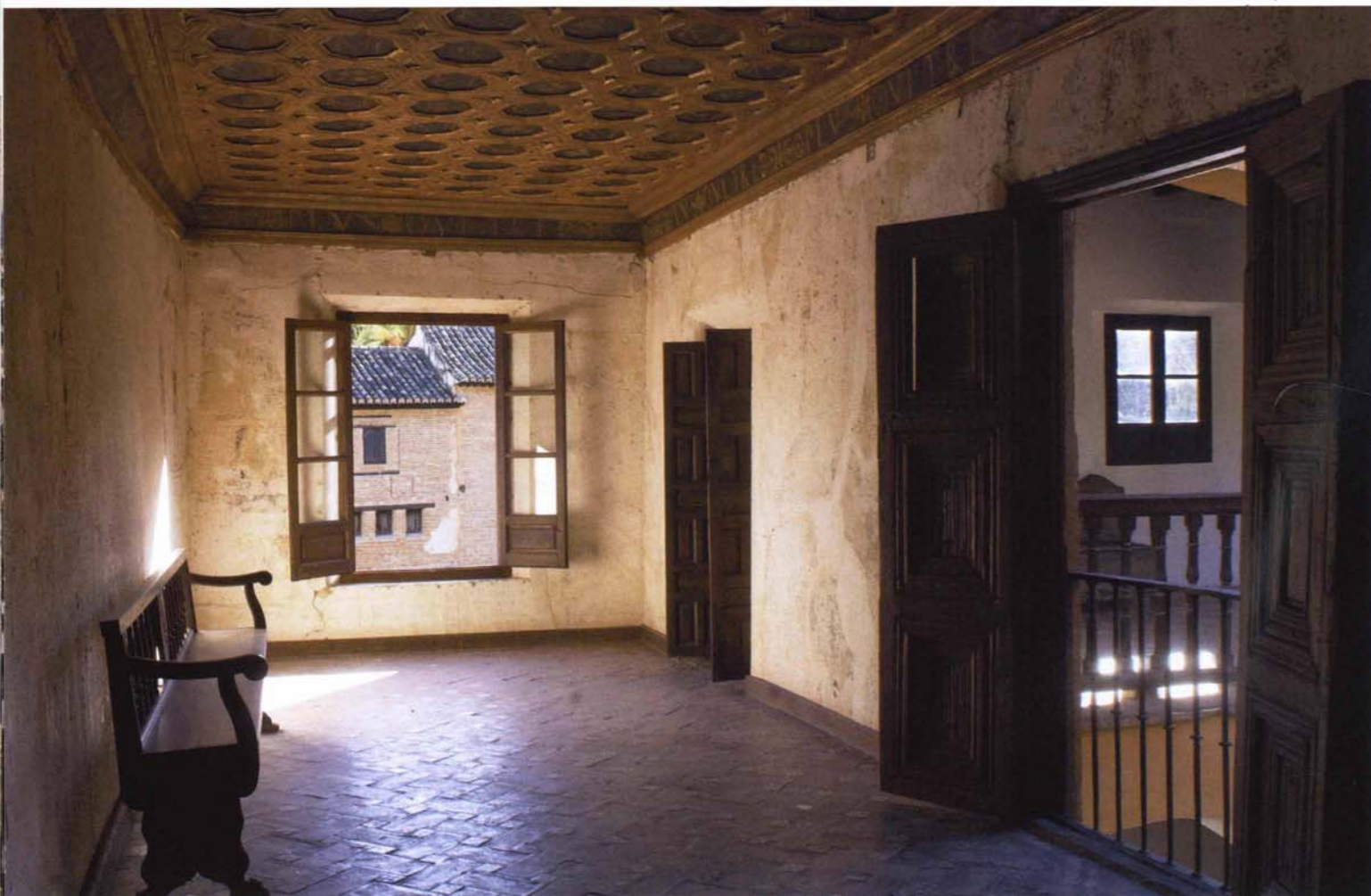


Tor Eigeland (www.toreigeland.com) has photographed for *Saudi Aramco World* for more than 40 years. Though he has traveled the world, al-Andalus remains one of his favorite subjects.

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Patios of al-Andalus: S/O 90	Boabdil: J/F 93
Arab words in Spanish: M/A 07	Ibn al-Khatib: S/O 03

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SUITABLE LUXURY

Written by Stewart Gordon

In 1332, that most famous of medieval travelers, Ibn Battuta, stood before the Sultan of Delhi in a vast hall called Hazar Ustun (Thousand Pillars). It was an imposing scene. "The pillars are of painted wood and support a wooden roof, most exquisitely carved. The sultan sits on a raised seat standing on a dais carpeted in white, with a large cushion behind him and two others as arm-rests." A hundred guards flanked the sultan. Facing him were his highest officials and nobles, each in an elegant silk robe. On each side was a row of judges and teachers, and farther back in the hall were distant relatives of the sultan, lower-ranking nobles and military leaders—all of them also dressed in luxurious silk robes.

The sultan honored Ibn Battuta and his companions in a ceremony familiar to every member of the court: They were conducted to an adjacent robing hall, where each donned a new shirt, sash, pants, turban, shoes and outer robe. They emerged to the acclaim of the assembled nobles, and were then deemed "suitable" to take their places in court. It was a good day for both Ibn Battuta and his companions: The sultan also offered all of them employment.

More than six centuries later, in 1973, my wife, Sara, and I ventured overland from Istanbul to Delhi, following some of the same roads traveled by Ibn Battuta. At Herat, in western Afghanistan, Sara met a group of women and, although they shared no common language, accompanied them

over several days while they bought and sold in the markets. They liked Sara, and on the day we left the city, they insisted that she accept an antique, fully embroidered black cloak. They showed her how to wear it and with gestures suggested that she do so always. And so the cloak became her outer garment all across Afghanistan, with the unex-

pected result that Sara was treated with the greatest respect in bazaars, shops and all public spaces. Weeks later, in Kabul, someone explained to us that the cloak's embroidered patterns signaled that the wearer was under the protection of one of the most powerful border tribes of western Afghanistan, and thus anything less than courtesy



Above: Depicting a ceremony that already lay three centuries in the past, an illustration from Rashid al-Din's 14th-century *Jami' al-Tawarikh (Universal History)* shows Mahmud ibn Sebuktekin, the first independent Ghaznavid ruler, receiving a richly decorated robe of honor from the caliph. Right: This fragment of a robe of honor dates to about the year 1000 in Baghdad. Sewn into it is a certificate of office: "For the use of Abu Said Zandanfarruk ibn Azamard, the Treasurer."



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TEXTILE MUSEUM

might provoke retaliation. I have been fascinated by the power of ceremonial robing ever since.

Ibn Battuta grew up in Morocco, and the sultan was from Delhi, more than 6400 kilometers (4000 mi) away by the caravan routes of the time. Yet both knew the details and significance of the system of honor and service that centered on the giving and receiving of elegant robes. The ceremony had an Arabic name: *khil'a*; in Persian, it was called *sar-o-pah*, "from head to foot." Ibn Battuta learned about it and participated in it during eight years of travel by caravan, ship, horse and oxcart, all across the Middle East, Persia, the Caucasus and the area that is today Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

In Egypt, he wrote, "I stayed with the Shaykh Qutb al-Din in his hospice for 14 days, and what I saw of his zeal for the poor brethren and the distressed, and his humility toward them, filled me with admiration. He went to great lengths in honoring me, showed me generous hospitality, and presented me with a fine set of garments."

In Tabriz, in western Iran, "This amir told the sultan [Abu Sa'id] about me and introduced me into his presence. He asked me about my country and gave me a robe and a horse."

In Mogadishu, East Africa, "one of the shaykhs came to me, bringing me a set of robes.... They also brought me robes for my companions suitable to their position."

In Constantinople, "the Christian Emperor was pleased with my replies and said to his sons, 'Honor this man and ensure his safety.' He then bestowed on me a robe of honor and ordered for me a horse with saddle and bridle, and a parasol of the kind that the ruler has carried above his head, that being a sign of protection.... It is one of the customs among them that anyone who wears the ruler's robe of honor and rides on his horse is paraded through the city

bazaars with trumpets, fifes and drums, so that people may see him."

And what textiles these robes of honor were! Ibn Battuta paid attention to the type of cloth and origin of the robes he received. For example, in Mogadishu, honorific robes consisted of "a silk wrapper which one ties around his waist in place of drawers (for they have no acquaintance with these), a tunic of Egyptian linen with an embroidered border, a furred mantle of Jerusalem stuff, and an Egyptian turban with an embroidered edge." Clearly, this was purely court dress, a sign of one's standing.

At Izmir, on the Aegean coast of present-day Turkey, the sultan sent Ibn Battuta "a Greek slave, a dwarf named Niquila, and two robes of *kamkha*, which are silken fabrics manufactured at Baghdad, Tabriz, Nishapur and in China." The warp of these robes from China could have been silk or cotton, but the weft thread was gold: The first syllable of *kamkha* is derived from *chin*, the Chinese word for "gold." By the time Ibn Battuta reached Delhi, he had chests full of robes.

In the same years that Ibn Battuta received robes during his travels, the Sultan of Delhi lavishly and regularly bestowed them in *khil'a* ceremonies. He gave out close to 200,000 robes annually to his family and nobles, to generals, ambassadors and bureaucrats. The silks came from China, the Middle East, Egypt and his own workshops. In addition to regular festivals, the sultan also bestowed robes on various special days, such as his return from a journey, the return of a son from a military campaign,



at the birth of a son, at marriages or on birthdays. These regular robing occasions created solidarity among the courtly elite, an inclusive, visible "suitability" for presence at court.

Some robes, fabricated in royal workshops for a single occasion, were so fabulous that they constituted a significant transfer of wealth. Such was the robe Ibn Battuta saw the Sultan of Delhi give his future brother-in-law before his wedding. It was "...a ceremonial robe of blue silk embroidered and encrusted with jewels; the jewels covered it so completely that its color was not visible because of the quantity of them, and it was the same with his turban. I never saw a more beautiful robe than this one."

To add to the significance of the royal gift, robes were often brushed against the shoulder of the sultan before being bestowed, investing them with the *baraka*—literally, "blessing"—and thus the essence of the king. Whether silk or velvet, with or without gold or jewels,

The embroidery patterns on this robe, given as a gift in 1973 to Sara Gordon, the author's wife, indicated that the wearer was under the protection of one of the most powerful tribes of western Afghanistan.

around the first century BC. In the story, King Ahashuerus rhetorically asks what a suitable ceremony of honor would be. Haman, his chief minister, replies: "Have them bring a royal robe that the king has worn and a horse that the king has ridden, one with a royal crown on its head. Then have them hand the robe and the horse over to one of the king's most noble princes and have him robe the man...and have the prince lead him on horseback through the city square."

This ceremony is strikingly similar to what Ibn Battuta experienced in Constantinople more than a thousand years later.

The ceremony also appears in Chinese literary sources of the first centuries of our era. Only recently has the historian Xinru Liu figured out that China needed horses and cattle from the nomads of the eastern steppe, and the nomads needed food and iron from China. War, in which each side seized what it needed, was frequent, but in periods of peace, there was trade and diplomacy in which silk robes played a crucial role. Only China produced silk, and political leaders in China gave this valuable cloth to nomad chiefs on cessation of hostilities, for protection and as dowry. The chiefs, in turn, bestowed the robes on their leaders to demonstrate their own power and to build loyalty: These elegant robes came only from the hands of the chiefs; they differentiated the chosen leaders from common

robes given in the *khil'a* ceremony connected the ruler and the physical body of the recipient in this most intimate way.

Both Ibn Battuta and the Sultan of Delhi knew how important the ceremony was to their world, but neither probably knew its origins. Nor do we. With silk, horses, ideas and much more moving up and down the Silk Roads for centuries, it is probably futile to look for a single "origin" for the *khil'a* ceremony. Still, some possibilities have emerged from research over the past decade.

In Persia, luxurious silk robes were in use quite early. Alexander found thousands of them when he conquered Persepolis around 333 BC. Unfortunately no sources describe who wore the robes or how they were used or whether they were bestowed on nobles.

More substantive is an incident in the Book of Ruth, one of the last books of the Old Testament. Scholars generally agree that this book is a work of historical fiction, set in Persia, and written

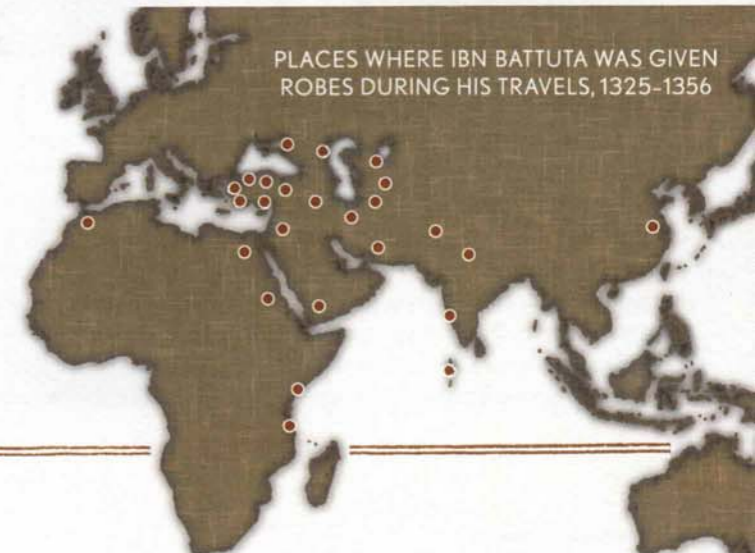
soldiers and, with every wearing, the robes reminded the leaders whom they served.

This explanation of the origin of *khil'a* is attractive. Robing in these early nomadic steppe bands has the essential features of the *khil'a* ceremony wherever it was found over the next 15 centuries. Presentation was highly personal, either from the hand of the king or brushed against his body; the ceremony took place before an assembled group of nobles, who were dressed in luxurious robes themselves; and the honored one then took his place among them. Robes were bestowed in conjunction with other specific gifts—horses, decorated horse trappings, gold, slaves and weapons (especially jeweled swords). These items were foundations of wealth in the culture of steppe nomads, whether gained through trade or war.

Finally, the robe of the *khil'a* ceremony was always a sewn garment, and it generally had slits in the back or sides to make it wearable while riding. The significance of this comes in contrast to the wrapped garments typical of India, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, such as the *dhoti*, *lungi* and *sari*, all of which require frequent adjustment, and none of which can be worn while riding a horse.

Even though the evidence of the *khil'a* ceremony is much clearer in the period after 600, research on the ceremony remains limited to snapshots of *khil'a* at particular times and places. Honorific robing became standard courtly practice in China when nomads became rulers inside the Great Wall, and various colors became associated with

THESE REGULAR ROBINING OCCASIONS CREATED SOLIDARITY AMONG THE COURTLY ELITE.



Although the main focus of this gouache miniature, dated circa 1615, is the weighing of the prince against gold and silver to be distributed to the poor, it also shows, in the foreground, several dozen robes of honor, folded and arranged on trays. The painting appears in the now-dispersed *Tuzuk-i Jahangir* (*The Memoirs of Jahangir*).

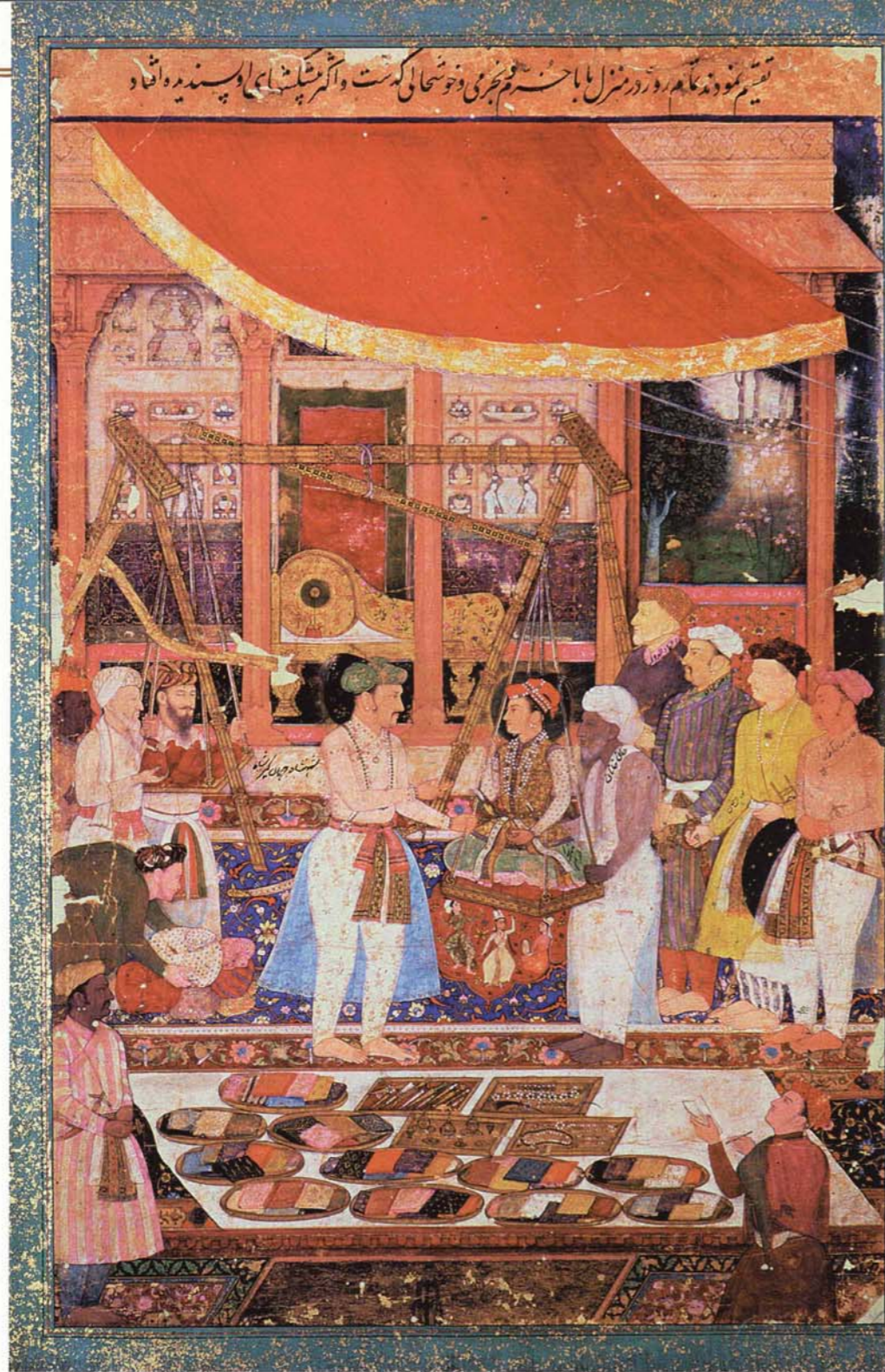
ranks within the nobility. Similar ceremonies spread to Korea, Japan and Sinitized Vietnam.

There is good evidence for khil'a-style investiture in Persia during the Sassanian period, in the fourth to seventh centuries. In a yearly cycle, the king bestowed on his nobles robes he had worn, together with weapons, gold, silver, jewels and horses.

In the Byzantine Empire, complex robing replaced simpler Roman ceremonies for accession to church office, ambassadorial exchanges, bureaucratic promotion and personal recognition by the emperor. Traders brought a ready supply of luxurious and expensive textiles both from China and from looms in such caravan cities as Bukhara and Tashkent. Scholars Elizabeth Jeffreys and Roger Scott noted that in 520, Emperor Justinian won over the queen of the Sabir Huns with a presentation of imperial robes, along with "a variety of silver vessels, and not a little money." As the Byzantine Empire expanded, the ceremony spread to the entire Black Sea region, present-day Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Greece, Egypt and some of the North African coast.

By the late seventh century, the khil'a ceremony was everywhere in the cultural world into which Islam spread. Early Muslim leaders used robes to reward successful generals. With the rapid political and military spread of Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries, formal honorific robing reached the coast of North Africa and Spain.

As had been the practice in Southwest Asia for centuries, the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad, who ruled from about 750 to 1238, used robes to promote administrators, honor successful commanders and reward the nobility. Like the Byzantines, the Abbasids also used robes on ambassadorial missions



to establish alliances. In mid-June 921, a courtier named Ibn Fadlan led one such mission, departing Baghdad with gifts that included elegant silk robes. He struggled through cold, negotiated with hostile nomads and finally reached his destination on the banks of the Volga River in what is today Russia. There, too, both sides understood the implications when the Bulgar king

Almish put on the caliph's robe, which he did with great ceremony before his nobles: The robe placed Almish in the sphere of the caliph's authority, and it triggered expectations of alliance and fealty.

At this historical distance, it is impossible to know whether khil'a became a common system of honor through the coalescing of local customs or because

rulers made conscious choices to adopt the ceremony. The truth probably lies somewhere in between, but certainly kings were always on the lookout for customs and ceremonies that would aid their rule. For example, in 1275, during Marco Polo's first audience with Kublai Khan, the first subject that the khan wanted to discuss was how, in Polo's lands, kings "maintained their dignity." He was looking for customs or ceremonies that might strengthen his position. Equally clear is that part of the value kings placed on travelers like Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo was that they brought knowledge of royal ceremony from faraway places.

Khil'a thus became a network of ceremony that crossed boundaries of religion, region and ethnicities. Just as it was practiced in Christian Constantinople and Confucian China, so was it practiced in animist Central Asia. Following the extraordinary success of Genghis Khan and his successors a few decades before Ibn Battuta's travels, lavish robes became de rigueur at the Mongol court. For state occasions, nobles were required to wear a cloth-of-gold robe received from the khan. In the succession wars following Genghis Khan's death, observed historian Thomas Allsen, these robes were so important that claimants to the throne sometimes seized the artisans capable of crafting them.

Muslims of the 12th and 13th centuries brought the custom to India, which had long produced silk fabrics, and there Hindu rulers readily adopted it. Yet acceptance of the khil'a ceremony into the courts of India had to overcome two problems: Hindu kings were, by and large, of middling or lower caste, and their clothes, by caste rules, should have been polluting to higher castes. This first problem was apparently not too difficult to solve: At the practical level, there seems to have been a widespread belief that it was not useful to look too closely into the family origins

of kings—and, in any case, newly ascended kings often created myths of their dynasty's divine origin to bolster their ritual position; descendants of gods could hardly be questioned. The second problem regarded how the king should be clothed. There was also a long tradition that the proper presentation of the kingly body was unclothed from the waist up or at most lightly draped with sheer fabric. Within the sphere of Muslim conquest, however, and within a relatively short time, local rulers took up robes that fully covered the body.

By the time Ibn Battuta stood before the sultan of Delhi, the khil'a ceremony was in use from China to Spain. As Mughal accounts richly document, rulers invested at their pleasure any individual they wished to honor, perhaps a poet for a witty couplet, a wrestler for a good match, a guide who successfully led the royal entourage through a forest or a particularly brave soldier on the

battlefield. Stores of luxurious robes were kept at the ready for the ruler's spontaneous presentation.

Robes were also used diplomatically between rulers. Ibn Battuta names the seven great rulers of his time: the sultan of Morocco, the Mamluk sultan of Egypt and Syria, the Mongol Il-Khan of Iraq and Iran, the khan of the Golden Horde, Chaghatai Khan, the sultan of Delhi and the ruler of China. It was honorable and expected that these rulers exchange gifts that demonstrated their wealth and their access to rare and beautiful things—a "circulation of fabulous objects," as the historian Oleg Grabar called it. Embassies carrying such objects crisscrossed Egypt, Persia, Turkey, Central Asia and India.

Thus the khil'a ceremony was a system of honor and service that pervaded the upper reaches of societies and established relationships among people who might differ in other ways.

In Central Asia, noblewomen also bestowed khil'a. When Ibn Battuta left the Golden Horde to accompany a *khatun* (wife of a khan) to Constantinople,

"each of the khatuns gave me ingots of silver.... The sultan's daughter gave me more than they did, along with a robe and a horse, and altogether I had a large collection of horses, robes, and furs of miniver and sable." Highly placed women in the courts of Delhi also both gave and received robes: Ibn Battuta noted that he also received a robe from the sultan's mother.

The closer one looks at the system, the more givers there seem to be. For example, the Geniza documents of the Jewish community in Egypt record that the merchant elders gave



Above: This robe was presented in 1869 by Yakub Beg, ruler of Kashgar (now in Xinjiang, China) to British emissary Robert Shaw. Left: To the east, China was a source of both robes and material for them. This Chinese robe is on display at the Nanjing Museum.

IN THE 19TH CENTURY, EUROPEAN RULERS REJECTED ROBES IN FAVOR OF PANTS, SUIT COATS AND HATS, AND THEY INTRODUCED THEIR OWN SYMBOLS OF HONOR, SUCH AS BANNERS AND MEDALS.

out robes of honor to certain non-Jewish merchants.

Muslim Sufi orders ascetically inverted the practice, favoring “robes of simplicity”—the more worn, patched and tattered, the better—to show the wearer’s disdain for earthly pleasures

and his focus on the holy life, yet a robe nonetheless carried the baraka of its former possessor, and it was believed to influence the behavior of the recipient. Within the Sufi tradition, therefore, followers expected the robe of a great teacher to deepen the piety and practice of a student. In some orders, presentation of the robe literally passed the mantle of authority to a successor.

Even Ibn Battuta himself bestowed ceremonial robes, at least once giving them to a guide whom he temporarily employed. Unfortunately, on the Malabar Coast of India, Ibn Battuta encountered pirates who stole his entire collection. “They took everything I had preserved for emergencies; they took the pearls and rubies that the king of [Sri Lanka] had given me, they took my clothes and the supplies given me by pious people and saints. They left me no covering except my trousers. They took everything everybody had and set us down on the shore.”

In 1348, Ibn Battuta returned to the Middle East. Later, at Fez, the sultan listened to the stories of his travels and commissioned the memoir that would ensure Ibn Battuta’s place in history. He also honored the traveler with robes.

A little more than 100 years after Ibn Battuta passed through Cairo on his way back to Morocco, the Egyptian Mamluk state used luxury robes for every appointment and promotion. High-ranking military officers received a particularly luxurious robe of velvet with a sable lining. Both viceroys of provinces and less vaunted civilian officials—the superintendent of the harem, the chief treasurer, the supervisor of the royal hospital and various ranks of judges—had to

This coat of cut velvet was made in Iran for the Czar of Russia, who in 1644 gave it to Queen Christina of Sweden.

make do with various grades of woolen robes. As we expect from earlier usage, the bestowal of a luxurious robe on a Jewish director of the mint under Sultan Qansuh al-Ghawri (1501–1516) evoked no particular comment: As always, the robe ceremony was about the relationship between a king and those who served him, not religion.

Robes were equally central to the Ottoman court. Shortly before the defeat of the Spanish Armada, for example, robes figured in diplomacy between the Ottomans and England. Both powers had good reason to view Spain as a common enemy. In 1594, Queen Elizabeth promoted the connection by sending presents to Safiye Sultan, mother of Sultan Mehmed III (1593–1603) and one of the most powerful individuals in the Ottoman Empire. Along with a reply to Elizabeth’s letter, Safiye sent “an upper gowne of cloth of gold very rich, and under gowne of cloth of silver, and a girdle of Turkie worke, rich and faire,” plus a crown studded with pearls and rubies. It is doubtful that Elizabeth knew of the khil’a ceremony or that robes were part of the “circulation of fabulous objects” in the Asian world, but she apparently enjoyed wearing the luxurious Turkish robes. Master politician that she was, Elizabeth probably kept her court and the Spanish spies guessing whether she was signaling a new Ottoman connection or merely enjoying exotic dress.

In India, a half a century later, the meaning of khil’a was still common currency between the Mughal Empire and its rivals, and from the 1660’s comes an account of the dire consequences of rejecting Mughal robes. In a well-documented incident, Mughal forces surrounded a regionally successful king named Shivaji and escorted him to Delhi, ostensibly to integrate him into the Mughal Empire. In the hall of public audience, officials brought Shivaji forward and robed him. The emperor, however, neither spoke to him nor



acknowledged the ceremony; Shivaji was then ushered to the very back of the audience hall. He fully understood the insult, and contrary to court rules, he refused to stand quietly; instead he shouted that he would not stand behind men whose backs he had seen in battle. Receiving no satisfaction, he took off the robe and threw it on the floor, saying, “Kill me, but I will not wear the khil’a,” whereupon he and his entourage turned their backs on the emperor—a serious breach of etiquette—and stalked out of the hall. Everyone at court expected them all immediately to be executed, but because of the support of a few high Mughal nobles, Shivaji was merely imprisoned, and he managed, some months later, to escape back to his own territory.

It was only in the 19th century that khil’a began to disappear. Across the whole of “the robing world,” as part and parcel of colonial domination, European rulers rejected robes and insisted instead on hats and pants. They introduced their own symbols of honor, such as banners for regiments and medals for individuals. To the lawyers and military men who led nationalist movements of independence, khil’a soon seemed too redolent of monarchy: old-fashioned

and out of step with the fast-changing modern world.

Yet honorific robing in the khil’a tradition has not entirely disappeared. Tibetan Buddhists regularly place a prayer shawl on one they honor. In India and abroad, Sikhs use a khil’a ceremony to honor those who serve the religion, such as an activist, writer or politician. Also in India, a luxurious shawl—a pared-down version of khil’a—often accompanies a cultural award in writing or music. In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the foreign head of a successful trade or educational mission may receive a beautiful robe. In a few countries in Africa, honored visitors—US Senator Hillary Clinton was one in 1997—receive and are expected to wear luxurious local robes. Among Sufi teachers, the “robe of simplicity” continues to be favored dress.

Khil’a has also long been in use, in modified form, in the West. Last spring, my wife once again received a robe of honor, but this time it was not in Afghanistan but in our home state of Michigan. It was at a commencement ceremony where she received her doctoral degree. As the faculty and the new graduates filed in, I suspected that few had any idea why they were wearing the long robes, or why a

Far left: French jewel merchant Jean-Baptiste Tavernier used this etching, showing the robe presented to him in 1652 by Shaista Khan, uncle of the Mughal emperor of India, as the frontispiece of his book *Travels in India*. Left: Sir Anthony van Dyck’s 1622 portrait of Robert Shirley shows the robe Shirley wore as ambassador of the Safavid court of Persia to England.

luxurious velvet hood was bestowed on the doctoral candidates.

Although western academic robes hark back to the medieval European church robes that gave the wearer certain freedoms from civil authority, the deeper history of church robes goes back much further, to the sixth- and seventh-century conflict between Rome and Constantinople. The Eastern Church drew on the khil’a ceremony and robed its bishops to ensure their loyalty. Rome soon imitated Constantinople with robing of its own. By the end of the sixth century, there were clothing and robing regulations for clerics all across Christendom.

Wherever in the world academic commencement ceremonies include robes, both faculty and graduates are, literally, covered in a tradition almost 2000 years old that connects them with courts and kings from Spain, Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, India and China, and which carry the distant echoes of the Silk Roads and their travelers, like Ibn Battuta. ☉



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in the March/April 2008 issue of *Saudi Aramco World*), is a look at family, trade and intellectual networks across Asia in the years between 500 and 1500. He conducts world and Asian history workshops for high-school and college teachers and lives in Ann Arbor.

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Ibn Battuta: J/A 00
Sultan of Delhi: M/A 06
Ibn Fadlan: N/D 99

I watch the train to Cairo disappear and I feel I have indeed cut myself off from

my friends and everyone I know. I love Egypt, but now it is Arabia that calls me.

-Port Said, February 22, 1933



This portrait of Lady Evelyn was made a few years before her visit to Saudi Arabia. Opposite: On her 1933 pilgrimage, she became the first international traveler to record the buses that had recently begun service in Makkah.

Stanton *50 Queen Anne's Gate*

Lady Evelyn Cobbold achieved celebrity at age 65, in 1933, when she became the first British-born Muslim woman to perform the pilgrimage to Makkah. She was a Scottish aristocrat, a grandmother and a Mayfair socialite, and an accomplished deerstalker, angler and gardener, and, uniquely, she was both a Muslim and an Arabic-speaker. Yet the story of her colorful career has been overlooked, as has her contribution to the literature of the *Hajj*. Nor has she been studied for what her life has to say about being a Muslim in a western society.

Mayfair to Makkah

She was not born into a Muslim family, yet Lady Evelyn claimed to have been a Muslim from as early as she could remember. She disclaimed any moment of conversion, and there is no record of her having formally converted before an imam. She wrote:

"As a child, I spent the winter months in a Moorish villa on a hill outside Algiers.... There I learned to speak Arabic and my delight was to escape my governess and visit the Mosques with my Algerian friends, and unconsciously I was a little Moslem at heart.... Some years went by and I happened to be in Rome staying with some Italian friends when my host asked if

I would like to visit the Pope. Of course I was thrilled.... When His Holiness suddenly addressed me, asking if I was a Catholic, I was taken aback for a moment and then replied that I was a Moslem. What possessed me I don't pretend to know, as I had not given a thought to Islam for many years. A match was lit and I then and there determined to read up and study the Faith."

Evelyn was born in Edinburgh in 1867, the eldest child of Charles Adolphus Murray, Seventh Earl of Dunmore, and Lady Gertrude Coke, daughter of the Second Earl of Leicester. Permanently short of money, and with an incurable wanderlust, Lord Dunmore found it both cheap and congenial to take his family to North Africa every winter. Evelyn and her siblings, as they arrived, thus grew up in the company of Algerian and Egyptian nurses and household staff. The impact on young Evelyn was profound. Steeped in the culture and language of everyday life in the Arab Muslim world, she came to feel completely at ease and at home there.



Lady Evelyn Cobbold

For a relatively poor aristocrat, Evelyn married rather late, at age 24, to John Dupuis Cobbold, scion of a wealthy brewing family in eastern England. They met in Cairo and were married there in April 1891. At her new home in East Anglia, she faced a future of domesticity, relieved by the frequent travels at home and abroad typical of her wealthy contemporaries. Three children arrived between 1893 and 1900, but it is fairly clear that Lady Evelyn found it hard to settle. And the clues to her restlessness have to do with Islam and the Arab world.

An untitled poem she wrote in Cairo in 1889 already evinces a spiritual longing for meaning in life and an affinity with Islam. In it, she wrote:

... The vague longings that
filled my soul,
Took the form of a prayer
I upward sped,
To Him, the One, The Essence
of All....

And the weird cadence of the Mueddin's cry
Bid the faithful prepare for the day that was nigh....

By 1900, Lady Evelyn was journeying without her husband. She was back in North Africa in 1911, at the age of 43, traveling in Egypt with a female companion. Her book about the trip—*Wayfarers in the Libyan Desert*, published in 1912—is a revealing diary, forthright in its admiration for Islam.

From this point on, it becomes increasingly plain that she regarded herself as a Muslim. She was making regular winter visits to Egypt, and a series of letters in Arabic survives from 1914 and 1915, from Arab

Lady Evelyn's permission to make her pilgrimage was arranged by Saudi Arabia's ambassador in London, Shaykh Hafiz Wahba, shown here during one of the visits to England (probably 1935) by HRH Prince Sa'ud ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz. Wahba stands on the left and slightly behind the prince; Wahba wrote the original introduction to Lady Evelyn's *Pilgrimage to Mecca*. Above: Lady Evelyn in Jiddah.



friends there and in Syria. Some address her as "Our sister in Islam, Lady Zainab," using her adopted Muslim name. Her friendship from 1915 with the British Muslim Marmaduke Pickthall, who produced one of the most respected renderings of the Qur'an into English, provides further testimony.

By the 1920's, anecdotal information suggests that Lady Evelyn's attachment to Islam had become a cause of estrangement from the Cobbold family, and in 1922, she and her husband formally separated. She received a generous financial settlement, including the deer forest of Glencarron in the Highlands, making her a very wealthy woman in her own right. For much of the 1920's, she was occupied by a cavalcade of grandchildren and by the field sports at which she excelled. But in 1929 her husband died, and it seems that she now began seriously to contemplate performing the pilgrimage to Makkah.

Lady Evelyn announced her intention to perform the Hajj to Saudi Arabia's minister in London, Hafiz Wahba, who wrote to King 'Abd al-'Aziz in Riyadh requesting formal permission. But, typically for her, she did not wait for a reply, relying instead on a social contact in London to send a letter of introduction to Harry St. John ('Abd Allah)

Philby in Jiddah. Philby had become a Muslim in 1930, and he and his wife, Dora, duly received their unsolicited guest. They introduced her to Jiddah's small expatriate social circle and even invited the prince (and future king) Faisal to tea to meet the prospective pilgrim. While awaiting permission from the king for Lady Evelyn to go Makkah, Philby arranged for her to travel by car to Madinah, organizing accommodation with a family there.

February 28, 1933: The King is away at Riyadh, his capital in Nejd, sixteen days' camel ride from here, so I fear he will not get the letter his Minister in London wrote him for some time.... Till that letter reaches the King, I must possess my soul in patience,



At her Glencarron estate in northwest Scotland, Lady Evelyn was known as a superior deerstalker and hunter.

and my time is pleasantly spent bathing in the warm sea within the coral reefs, for fear of sharks, or in motor drives in the desert....

March 2: How I envy the pilgrims we meet on their way to Mecca, while we return to the social life of Jeddah, which would be very pleasant if one were not aware of the mysterious City of Islam hidden in the hills only a few miles from us. Why do we always long for the unattainable, for the Blue Bird which hovers just beyond our reach?

March 9: The Emir Faisal arrived punctually at five o'clock.... It was impressive to see his tall figure enter the doorway clad in a brown and gold Abba over a flowing white robe and the picturesque headdress of Nejd, the Koffeya of diaphanous white bound round his head by black and gold chords—called the Aghal.... The Emir is slender and exceedingly graceful in his movements and, like most Nejd Arabs, has an air of distinction and good breeding....

March 15: Two hundred and fifty miles [400 km] from Jeddah to Medina took us fifteen hours to

accomplish and I take off my hat to the little Ford that gallantly carried us through those sandy wastes.... Besides the pilgrims on camels, we met many on foot, toiling slowly through the scorching desert with water jugs in their hands clad in their Ihram (or two towels), and, as they were bare headed, many carried umbrellas. Ten days is the usual time it takes a camel to accomplish the journey between Medina and Jeddah and three weeks for the pilgrim on foot....

As a visiting notable, Lady Evelyn found conditions were not nearly as hard as they were for ordinary pilgrims. The Saudis treated her with extreme courtesy, as befitted her status. And once permission arrived, she would be allowed to go to Makkah—some 70 kilometers (45 mi) away—by car, Philby once again providing her with a vehicle, guide and driver.

March 12: Today the news has come through that I am permitted to do the pilgrimage to Mecca and visit Medina. I had for so long lived in alternate fits of hope and despair, that I can scarcely credit that my great wish is at last to be fulfilled. Preparations for my journey are in the hands of my host...; while I prepare...my pilgrim dress which consists of a black crepe skirt, very full, and a cape and hood in one, to be worn over ordinary dress when I visit Medina, also a black crepe veil entirely obscuring my features; but for Mecca I shall be entirely in white, no colour is allowed in any garment....

Lady Evelyn arrived in the Hijaz at a historic juncture in Saudi Arabian history. Only just before her arrival, in September 1932, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had been proclaimed. Oil had not yet been discovered, and the world economy was mired in the Great Depression. The country had no source of income apart from pilgrimage receipts, and in 1933 pilgrims from abroad would slump to an all-time low of just 20,000—down from around 100,000 in the late 1920's. But economic salvation was in the offing. Lady Evelyn's visit to Jiddah coincided with the presence of American and British oil company negotiators, and in May 1933 King 'Abd al-'Aziz would sign the key concession agreement with the Americans that heralded the end of hard times for the Saudi economy.

March 2: We return to Jeddah and dine at the New Hotel, which was where the American engineers, who have come to try to obtain the oil concessions from the King, are now staying. Their wives, Mrs. [Lloyd] Hamilton and Mrs. [Karl] Twitchell, welcome us and give us an excellent dinner, and the party includes Mr. [Stephen] Longrigg, the English representative of the Iraq Oil Company, who is also here trying to

Lady Evelyn Cobbold

get the concession. Rivalry does not appear to spoil the friendly relations existing between all parties....

The fact that her son-in-law was a director of the Bank of England may also have played a role in winning permission for Lady Evelyn to make her pioneering Hajj, according to Sir Andrew Ryan, then Britain's minister to Saudi Arabia, who cast a somewhat jaundiced eye on her visit. "Lady Evelyn Cobbold...has been even more successful than anticipated," he reported. "...If [King] Ibn Saud receives her, her cup of blessing will be overflowing." In the event, Lady Evelyn did not meet the king, although she saw him when he arrived by car on the day of the Standing at 'Arafat, a key ritual of the Hajj.

March 26: I am in the Mosque of Mecca, and for a few seconds I am lost to my surroundings because of the wonder of it. We are walking on white marble through a great vault whose ceiling is a full fifty feet above us, and enter pillared cloisters holding the arched roof and surrounding an immense quadrangle.... I had never imagined anything so stupendous.... We walk on to the Holy of Holies, the house of Allah [the Ka'bah] rising in simple majesty. It would require a master pen to describe the scene, poignant in its intensity of the great concourse of humanity of which I was one small unit, completely lost to their surroundings in a fervour of religious enthusiasm.... I felt caught up in a strong wave of spiritual exaltation....

Pilgrimage to Mecca, published in 1934, is Lady Evelyn's fascinating account of her journey to the holy cities. As much a record of an interior experience of faith as a conventional travelogue, the book is remarkable for its sympathy and vividness. It takes the form of a diary, punctuated with lengthy digressions intended to help her readers understand Islam. They address topics such as the Qur'an, the life of the Prophet, Islamic history and science, the position of women, King 'Abd al-'Aziz's achievements and Islamic principles relating to warfare and tolerance.

March 27:
Having discoursed on the subject of tolerance, we pass

This photo of the corner of the Great Mosque in Makkah was first published in 1925 in Cairo by Ibrahim Rif'at, and Lady Evelyn reprinted it in *Pilgrimage to Mecca*.



on to discuss the crisis the world is now facing, and the emancipation of women. The sheikhs show some amusement, tempered with admiration at the methods adopted by the Western woman to win herself a place in the sun; their sympathy is all on the side of the ladies. Though I occasionally caught a twinkle in the eye of Sid Ahmed, and both the sheikhs often smiled, I never heard them give way to loud laughter....

Most remarkable about her book, however, is that as a lone female Muslim, she was able to witness something veiled from every western traveler before her: the female side of domestic life in the two holy cities. This, and her religious commitment, set the account apart from all other English-language descriptions of the Hijaz that had gone before.

March 27: My hostess had already initiated me into the secrets of the harem or women's quarters; the bakehouse where the bread is baked to supply the needs of the large company at present inhabiting the house; the great kitchen where she, the ladies and slaves all help in cooking and preparing the food; the laundry where more slaves are busy washing; while the three pretty nieces are ironing and folding away the household linen; the work-room where they sit sewing and gossiping....

April 7: As I have been granted the great privilege of being received as a guest in this Mecca household I feel it is up to me to refute the false impressions that still exist in the West about the harem. Not only in this house, but in every harem I have visited in Arabia I have found my host with only one wife. Far from being a sensuous life of ease these ladies are busy with their household duties; at the same time living a happy, even a gay life, entertaining their friends and having their own amusements and festive occasions. Uplifted but thoroughly exhausted by the rituals of the

Hajj, Lady Evelyn received special dispensation from the king to end her pilgrimage before the usual culmination at the three-day Feast of Sacrifice, 'Id al-Adha. Though she extols the egalitarianism of Islam and the way in which the Hajj symbolically makes all people equals before God, she was not averse to taking advantage of her social status. Her host at Makkah generously made

available to her the entire roof of his rented house at Mina, where otherwise all his womenfolk would have slept for the sake of the cool night air. At the Standing at 'Arafat, the same host invited her to share his tent, with its view of Jabal al-Rahmah, with his male guests. She readily accepted, not least because it was cooler, the women being consigned to a hot bell-shaped tent behind, where they could neither see nor be seen. When challenged by a pious passerby suspicious of her reading matter in the car on the way to 'Arafat (it was Charles Doughty's *Arabia Deserta*), her response was to declare robustly: "This is an English book, and I am an English Moslem and I am here on pilgrimage by permission of the King!" A lesser mortal might not have got away with it so easily. During her return voyage by sea, officials spared her the rigors of the full quarantine, giving her special quarters at Port Sudan and allowing her to leave after three days instead of the regulation five.

However, she revealed her fundamental sincerity while waiting to depart from Makkah on April 7 when, on her final return through the city, she found that she could not after all stomach Doughty because of his inability to fathom Islam. Instead, she took up the only other book she had brought with her, an Arabic Qur'an, and was "soon immersed in the beautiful sura 'Light,'" she noted. She had found that, after all, the suspicious passerby might have had a point.

Even before she returned to London, the newspapers made her an instant celebrity. The popular press viewed her pilgrimage as something out of the Arabian Nights while, in 1934, the more serious papers gave *Pilgrimage to Mecca* a favorable reception.

But what sort of Muslim was Lady Evelyn, and how should we regard her today? Though clearly firm in her faith, there is no record, during her life at home, of strict performance of the five daily prayers, or of charity to the poor and needy. No doubt she had uttered the *shahadah*, or declaration of faith, on various occasions, and there is some anecdotal evidence of fasting during Ramadan. But, of the Five Pillars of Islam, going on the Hajj seems to have been the one to which that she paid the most attention.

There is a long history of British converts to Islam before



A family makes its way to Makkah. The third camel in line bears a covered shelter called *shibriyyah*, which Lady Evelyn noted carried three members of the family.

her time, going back at least to the Crusades. But Lady Evelyn belongs in a later category: that of educated converts in Britain itself in the late 19th century. She was contemporary with various other eminent Muslims of this type—Abdullah Quilliam, Lord Headley, Lord Hothfield and Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, to name but a few.

Although Lady Evelyn lectured extensively in Britain about her book, there is no sign that she saw her faith as having special public and social implications. She apparently regarded Islam as a matter of private conviction and subscribed to it on her own terms. But there is no doubting that her faith was deeply held during her very long life. She lived for 30 years after her pilgrimage, dying in January 1963, one of the coldest months of the century in Britain. She was buried in arctic conditions but according to the precepts of Islam and, as she had stipulated, on a remote hillside on her Glencarron estate.

Her interment symbolized her two worlds: A piper, so frozen that he was hardly able to walk, let alone perform, played "MacCrimmon's Lament," and the equally refrigerated imam of the Woking Mosque in London declaimed in Arabic the *surah* "Light," which she had found so moving in Makkah. A verse from the same *surah* adorns the flat slab on her grave, over which the deer undoubtedly wander, just as she had wished. ☪



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Hajj: J/A 92; N/D 74
Proclamation of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: J/F 99
Concession agreement: M/J 08
Rituals of the Hajj: M/J 02

Further Reading

Pilgrimage to Mecca. Lady Evelyn Cobbold. Introduction by William Facey and Miranda Taylor. Notes by Ahmad S. Turkistani. 2008, Arabian Publishing Ltd., 978-0-9544792-8-2. King Abdulaziz Public Library, 9960-708-21-7. (Orig. pub. 1934, John Murray.)



Mushaira: Pakistan's Festival of Poetry



Retired banker Azhar Abbas Hashmi helped found the Karachi-based Aalami Mushaira in 1989. Today he sits on its organizing committee, and he worries that "we have a fast life, too fast for poetry."

Karachi's Aalami Mushaira (*aalami* means "worldwide" and *mushaira* is a public recitation of poetry) was established in 1989 by a group of businessmen and town fathers who belonged to a benevolent society called Sakinane

Shehr-e Qa'id (Citizens of the City of the Founder), referring to Karachi, birthplace of Pakistan's founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Retired banker Azhar Abbas Hashmi remembers that, in the 1980's when Karachi was undergoing great political and social tensions, he and other members of the society wanted to bring the city together around some common element. They chose Urdu, Pakistan's national language and a tongue with particularly poignant meaning in Karachi: In 1947, after the partition of Pakistan and India, the city took in so many refugees from all over the subcontinent that Urdu, as lingua franca, supplanted the region's indigenous language, Sindhi.

Hashmi also looks back to a landmark Karachi mushaira held in 1952, the first time Urdu poets crossed the border from

WRITTEN BY LOUIS WERNER PHOTOGRAPHED BY KEVIN BUBRISKI

The announcer breaks into the evening's proceedings to ask the driver of the car with license plate 6734 to please move it from the emergency exit immediately. The 15,000 people in the crowd rustle and fidget with impatience. "Enough with numbers. Now listen to my words," says Ali Zeryoom, the man who has been interrupted. "If patience is defeat, then my country has lost to yours."

No, this is not a political speech, nor a diplomatic address, nor even an awards ceremony after an international cricket match. Ali Zeryoom is an Urdu poet, and he is reciting the first verse of a couplet from a *ghazal* he has chosen for the occasion of the *Aalami Mushaira*, the 18th annual dusk-to-dawn international poetry symposium in Karachi, Pakistan. His listeners are now quiet. When he completes the second verse, whose unvarying refrain word is so familiar to the crowd that they shout it out in unison, they roar in the traditional accolade of Urdu poetry aficionados: "*Vah, vah! Vah, vah!*" Fifteen thousand right hands are thrust toward Ali.

The master of ceremonies, or *maizban*, is Rizwan Siddiqui, a well-known television personality. He is seated to Ali's left, and like all the two dozen poets onstage waiting their turn to recite, he sits cross-legged on an ample pillow.

He interjects good-naturedly, "These are not your words!" Ali answers, "If not mine, then whose are they?" And immediately he launches into another kind of poem, a *nazm*, on the subject of motherhood, which now has the crowd clapping rhythmically.

A *mushaira* is usually a refined and intimate affair, often a private gathering of poets and knowing connoisseurs of that most demanding of poetic forms, the *ghazal*, whose compression of deep meaning into few words can, at its best, produce a sublime literary experience. In Mughal times, a mushaira invitation would have commonly specified the *tarab*, or fixed rhyme scheme and meter, to be used throughout the evening. As latter-day poetic standards have slipped from the heights occupied by such masters of the ghazal as Mirza Ghalib (1796-1869) and Mir Taqi Mir (1723-1810), mushairas today often mix many forms of poetry, including ribald jokes, political humor and sentimental love lyrics that can be semi-intoned in a style called *tarannum*.

Mushairas today often mix poetic forms from traditional ghazals to jokes and politics.

Tell your friends, Dagh, it's not child's play,
The task of learning Urdu is uphill all the way.

—Dagh Dehlvi (1831-1905)

He who says that Urdu with Persian can't compete,
Read out to him the verse of Ghalib; see, how it succeeds.

—Mirza Ghalib (1796-1869)

Only in this language will I talk to God.
Urdu will be my tongue even on the Judgment Day.

—Maikash Kashmiri (d. 2006)

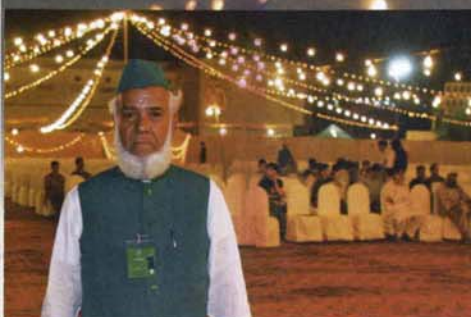
Watch at the end of night a fading lamp, breathing hard.
The poet is left as weak and worn, when a ghazal is done.

—Firaq Gorakhpuri (1896-1982)

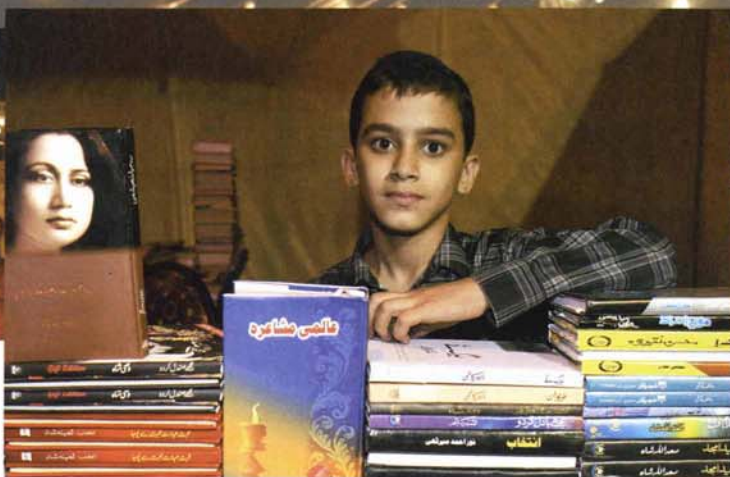
Previous spread: Best-selling romantic Wasi Shah of Lahore recites to an enthusiastically interactive audience at the annual *Aalami Mushaira*.



Setting up the *Aalami Mushaira* takes several days. In the end, some 15,000 people attend the all-night affair, and many more watch it on live television.



Jahangir Khan of Karachi knows every poet.



Bookstalls feature published poetry.



Sara Khan's favorite poet is Wasi Shah.



Poet Hijab Abbasi backstage.



Karachi deputy mayor Nasreen Jalil (left).



Autograph-seeker Anum Masood, age 12.

India, at which were present such luminaries as Jigar Muradabadi, Josh Malihabadi, Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Zehra Nigah, known as the city's songbird. "That helped to heal some old wounds," he says, "and we were aiming for something similar again—a mission, not simply a mushaira."

Yet Hashmi worries that Urdu's high literary culture is being lost. "Today we have a fast life, too fast for poetry," he says. "I remember fondly my school days, when my father and schoolmaster were my only teachers. Now our teachers are the mass media and the supermarket." As the comic poet Amir ul-Islam recited later that night, "Our language is supposed to be Urdu / I wish we would speak real Urdu."

Indeed, patronage—or at least a comfortable income—is essential for poets to flourish. William Dalrymple's recent biography of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal emperor and himself an accomplished poet, quotes a letter that Mirza Ghalib wrote to Queen Victoria, reminding her of the tradition of royal support for the arts, of how rulers "rewarded their poets and well-wishers by filling their mouths with pearls, weighing them in gold, and granting them villages and recompense."

The romantic poet Wasi Shah from Lahore takes his pearls and gold in the form of royalties from his books, which sell in the millions. Dashing handsome, dressed for the night's mushaira in a red tie and business suit, he recites, "I wish to be your bracelet /

There is so much ellipsis, ambiguity and economy in Urdu poetry that English translations are often twice as long—or more.

When you go to bed, you will be with me / When you push me up your arm, you will play with me / When you go to sleep at night / I will be a pillow for your eyes."

In the audience, 23-year-old banker Sara Khan hangs on his every word. "I like Wasi Shah because I am alone, still waiting for someone to enter my life, and his verse reflects my sad heart." Sajjad Hussein, a student of statistics at Urdu University, has come to his first mushaira more out of curiosity than sentiment. "My home is in the far north, near the Siachen Glacier in the Karakoram Range," he says. "My mother tongue is Balti, very different from Urdu, and more difficult. But I always want to learn new things about poetry. Ghalib is already my favorite." For her part, Farrouk Jehan has brought her nine-year-old nephew along with a picnic, and she plans to stay until the early hours. "Tomorrow is a holiday, so we can sleep late. I want him to love poetry as much as I do."

Backstage after his recitation, Shah speaks passionately about his craft to a bevy of fans, including 12-year-old Anum Masood, who wields a pink autograph book dedicated to her favorite poets. "I write a poetry of love, and I want the world to know that we Pakistanis are about more than terror," Shah says. "Our poetry does not produce violence. Just as I am living as a poet, I want to die as a poet, in peace." And then he paused to recite the first couplet he

ever wrote, at the age of eight, when his father died: "Like bubbles in the water, bubbles always go to clear / On the day your father dies, bubbles also disappear." Anum, however, seems more starstruck by Shah's celebrity than touched by his words as a grieving child.

Translating Urdu poetry, especially the ghazal, is an impossible task. Better call it "rendering a rough meaning," or "catching the gist of the words." There is so much ellipsis, ambiguity and economy that a typical seven- or ten-word verse in Urdu must sprawl in all directions when put into English. The late poet Agha Shahid Ali's English-language translations of ghazals by Faiz Ahmed Faiz, set on facing pages from the originals, run double their length. Yet sometimes, with the help of the poet herself, a sense of possibility can be achieved.

Take this couplet, a study in paradox and the emotional confusion that grief often brings, from Hijab Abbasi, a housewife, former social worker and previous Aalami Mushaira poet, who tonight is sitting backstage in the VIP section, enjoying the recitations from a comfortable club chair. On the occasion of the death of her father's best friend, she wrote,

"Your death brought happiness / But once buried, I am always sad." Clearly such a poem is best suited for being whispered among intimate friends, not over a microphone before a crowd.

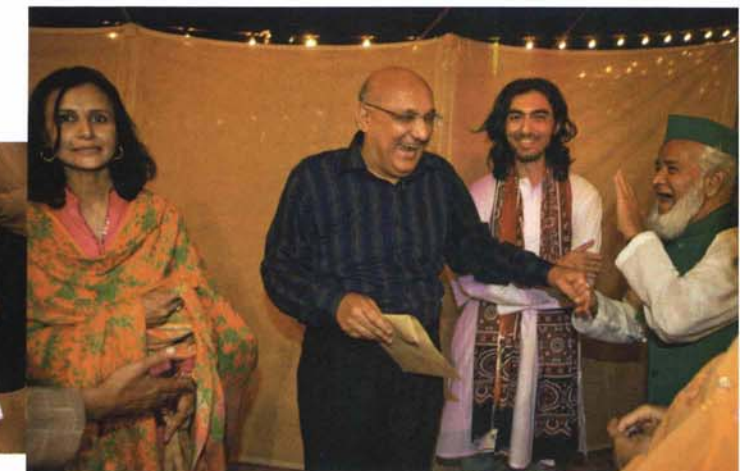
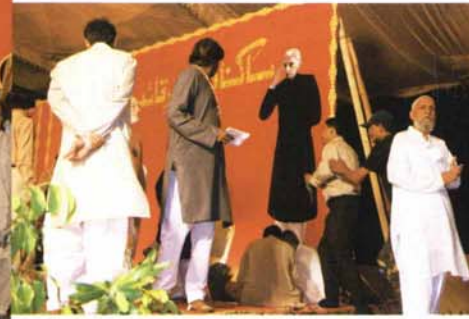
Yet even to a non-Urdu speaker, a ghazal poet's physical expression during recitation can guide further meanings. The

After a day of withering pre-monsoon heat, the Aalami Mushaira begins outdoors at 11:00 p.m.

hands of Ahmed Navid, a Karachi poet, for example, are in constant motion, as if hiding, pulling or scattering his syllables. He holds his hands together, tents them, points and waves them. At times, he is shrugging off a rhyme, smoothing the air, or shaking his fingers. At others, he is saluting, beseeching or forgiving his listeners. Only a single couplet from a good 20 minutes of recitation can begin to be captured in words alone: "What are you trying to hide, that even your clothes cannot hide? / Silence, for which even an audience is not sufficient."

Other arts and cultural groups take advantage of the presence of poets from India and other parts of Pakistan—Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, Faisalbad and Quetta—attending the Aalami Mushaira to sponsor more specialized events in private venues on the evenings that follow. A mushaira at the elite Karachi Club takes place on the lawn, the audience in glittery *salwar kameez* and neat *kurtas*, reclining on bolsters, enjoying tea served by bow-tied waiters. Many of the same poets recite here, too, and, like the Aalami Mushaira, this evening too runs toward dawn. Although the

Attended by enthusiasts and eccentrics, the cognoscenti and the merely curious, an Urdu mushaira has no convenient analog in the West.





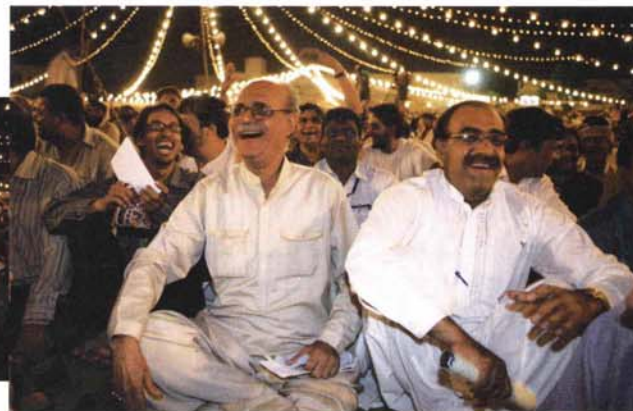
crowd is more reserved in its praise, more discriminating in its tastes, they too offer hearty acclamations of “Vah, vah!” when earned.

Sehar Ansari, the erudite former head of the Urdu Department at Karachi University, is the last to recite, an honor always given to the most esteemed poet of the group. He recites a couplet with multiple meanings in this time of both domestic and cross-border strife in Pakistan: “Why use fire to extinguish fire? / Kill us with love just as well.”

Another follow-on mushaira is held at the *markaz sadat-e amrohvi*, the community center for migrants to Karachi from the town of Amroha, near Delhi—famous as the birthplace

into an encore by exhorting him, “*Mukarrar, mukarrar!*” (“Again, again!”)

Dr. Kunwar Bechain, a retired professor from Meerut University near New Delhi, is reciting at the Aalami Mushaira, and visiting Pakistan, for the first time. “I am very happy to be here,” he says. “The feelings are the same across the border because poets are never divided by a line.” His own surname means “restless,” so by way of introduction, the maizban jokes, “We too are restless for you to start.”



Fans show appreciation with smiles, upraised hands and shouts of “Vah!”

of some of the greatest Urdu poets, starting with Ismail Amrohvi in the 17th century and stretching forward into the late 20th century with Rais Amrohvi, his brother Jaun Alia and the master of all Amrohvi poets, Mussafi. The club is compiling a biographical dictionary of native-son poets that currently includes 566 names.

Naqoosh Naqvi, the maizban for this mushaira, was born in Amroha in 1942 and came to Pakistan a decade later. He is well versed in the maizban’s job, having hosted more than 50 such occasions, so he knows just when to cut a long-winded poet short, and when to cajole a great poet

Bechain begins with a sung couplet: “There are thousands of fragrances in this world / But nothing better than the smell of bread to a hungry man.” The maizban tries to animate the crowd: “Applaud him, you are not sitting in front of a jury!” Bechain ends with a couplet about how words can be misused: “I wanted to make toys of them / but the world has turned them into weapons.”

The logistics of serving 15,000 poetry fans over an eight-hour performance are daunting. The day before the mushaira, the organizing committee was joined by Karachi deputy mayor Nasreen Jalil to make certain that the catering company that had been hired could spread sufficient carpets for the capacity crowd. A road grader had smoothed the dirt on the parking lot behind Urdu University, and the stage platform and three central poles strung with electric lights had been erected.

Aghazal poet's physical expression becomes part of the poem's meaning.

and introduces the first poet. More than 25 are scheduled to appear; most remain seated onstage throughout the night. The reciting poet, who takes a front seat on a raised, low-railed dais, often turns back to his fellows after completing a particularly fine verse, as if to seek inside approval.

Toward four o'clock in the morning, a crowd favorite, Ather Shah Khan, a humorous poet known by his pen name, “Jadi,” is introduced, and the crowd shakes

High-swinging television camera dollies for live broadcast on Metro-One TV were in position, too.

By nine o'clock the following night, the crowd begins to trickle in. Some stop outside the gates to sample the kebabs and browse the bookstalls. Water stations ring the seating area. It has been 44 degrees Celsius (111° F) that day, and the pre-monsoon heat is still withering. At 11:00 p.m, an imam recites a verse from the Qur'an, and the maizban calls for attention

itself from the reflective, introspective mood that the previous ghazal poet had established. In a buffoon's voice, Jadi brings the cross-legged crowd to its metaphorical feet. “Uncle, where are you tonight? / Uncle, I don't see you / Maybe he has died! / I also was young, two years ago.” His verse aims for the funny bone more than the cerebral cortex, yet this very mix of the high and the low, the comical and the conceptual, is what makes the Aalami Mushaira such a yearly success.

Wasim Bareilvi is among the leading Urdu poets of India.





Ahmed Navid

Zakia Ghazal

Munawar Rana

Wasim Bareilvi

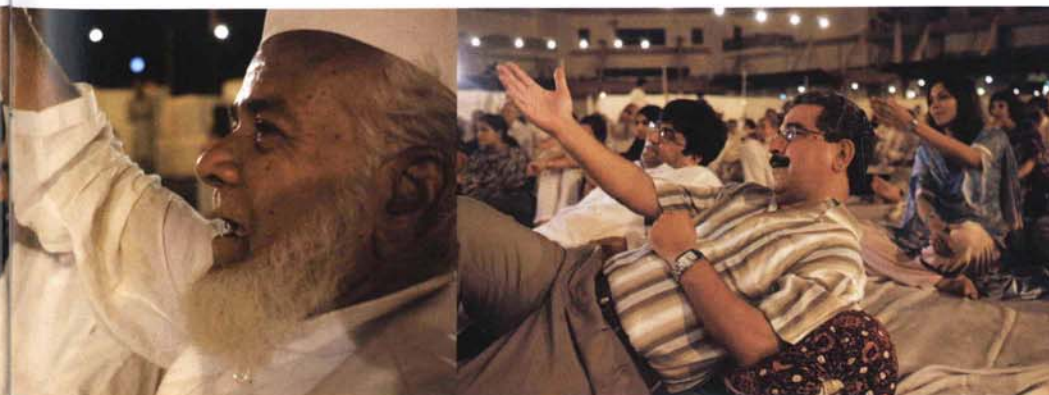
Kunwar Bechain

Inayatullah Khan

Ahmed Navid, who works in the advertising business, is reciting here for the second time, and although his verse is aimed higher, he recognizes the positive role that such a mass gathering, whether for poetry or for sports, plays in city life. "Poetry is itself a medium," he says. "It doesn't need a show. If you are a good poet, you don't need a stage. But as the great poet Mir Taqi Mir said, 'What is a mushaira? Just people getting together.'"

A mushaira of this size brings out the enthusiasts as well as the eccentrics. Backstage, many amateur, self-published poets stuff their books into the hands of those better known. Others are eager to recite to whoever will lend an ear. Saeedul Kabir intones a few verses from American poet Carl Sandburg's "The People, Yes," which he follows with an Urdu poem by Sahir Ludhianvi that he says Sandburg's directly inspired. Nearly out of breath, he next declaims from English romantic poet Robert Southey's "Battle of Blenheim," and then Josh Malihabadi's poem on the very same subject—the emptiness of military victory after blood has been spilled on all sides.

Poetry fans show their appreciation at the Karachi Club mushaira, one of the satellite recitations around the Aalami Mushaira.



The future of Urdu poetry may be found in the verse of intense, long-haired Atif Tauqeer, who works as a late drive-time disc jockey. Besides being a poet, he is, according to his Web site (www.atiftauqeer.com), a man who gets his words out any way he can, working as a scriptwriter, producer, director, storyteller, actor and editor. In the cluttered world of multimedia, he knows that poets must diversify their performance space, beyond mushairas and books, if they want to be heard. Atif was the third poet to recite at the Aalami Mushaira, when the crowd was still streaming in and before it had settled down to really listen.

From Atif's Web site, fans can download his recitations, join a live chat room and participate in a poetry-lover's forum—all very 21st-century. "Couplets are heartbeats," he says. "Some poems can be written in a moment, because love needs only a moment." Somehow, digital audio seems entirely appropriate for his of-the-moment modernity. "Media should uplift people, not keep them down. We have so much we must think about in our times—climate change, terror, racism. A poet is fortunate if people can understand what he wants to say."

The sky is still dark when the first call to the dawn prayer sounds from neighboring minarets. It is time to conclude, although the maizban has done an admirable job in keeping on schedule. No poet's feelings have been hurt, and several have been singled

out for the praise of "Vah, vah!" that follows the calls "Mukarrar, mukarrar!" Only one poet is still to recite, and he has ample time to finish before the final prayer call in another 15 minutes.

At the final couplet, the maizban hurries words of thanks to the poets, their listeners and the organizing committee. The task of knitting together this polyglot city of more than 12 million residents—with more than 1500 migrants arriving every day from all parts of the country—has not been easy. The Aalami Mushaira, this celebration of Urdu poetry at its best, is one of the few glues that hold. As the Karachi poet Tariq Sabzwari recited earlier in the night,

Whatever be my city's air, I'll love it still
Whether in the sun or shade
This land of mine, this land of ours. 🌐



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Kevin Bubriski (www.kevinbubriski.com) is a documentary photographer who lives in southern Vermont. His solo exhibition "Nepal in Black and White" is on view through October 13 at the Rubin Museum in New York City.

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Agha Shahid Ali: J/A 01

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Lines quoted on page 26 are excerpted from *Master Couplets of Urdu Poetry*, K.C. Kanda, tr. 2001, Sterling Publishers (New Delhi), 81-207-2356-2, Rs 350 pb.

In the cluttered world of multimedia, poets must diversify their performance space if they want to be heard.

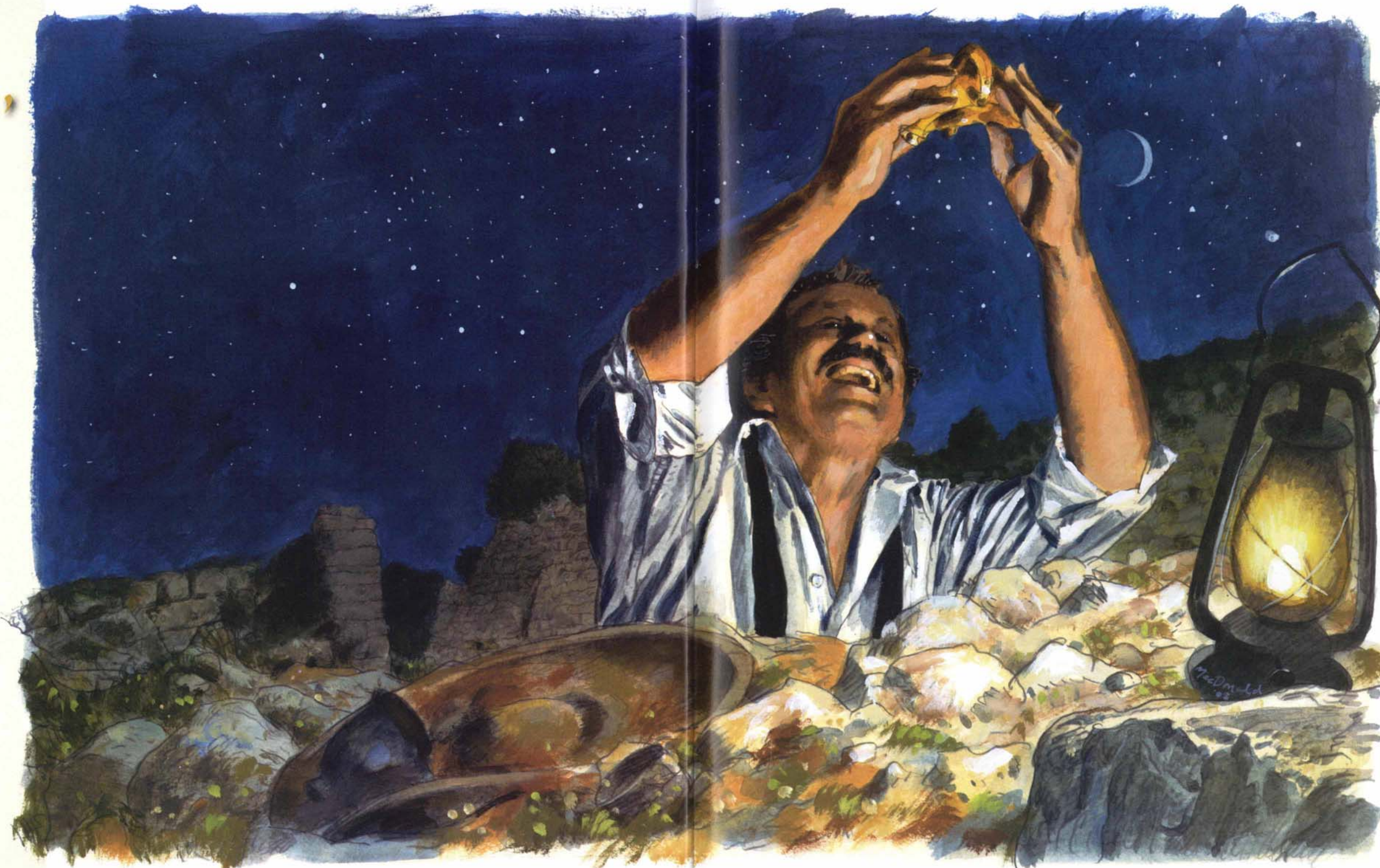
I
WITNESS
HISTORY:

WE,
THE
SYNDICATE
OF
TROY

OF
TROY

WRITTEN BY FRANK L. HOLT

ILLUSTRATED BY NORMAN MACDONALD



YOUR HONOR, WE, THE ACCUSED, THROW OURSELVES UPON THE MERCY OF THE COURT. WE'RE HERE TO BEG YOUR PARDON—LITERALLY. WE MAY BE GUILTY OF BEING FAMOUS, BUT PLEASE DON'T MAKE US FAMOUS FOR BEING GUILTY.

We're victims of circumstance who have been lied to, lied about and led astray. Our gang never meant to hurt any human (at least no human who can't remember the world before the Iron Age), and even then just the daggers and axes among us. Mostly we're just a bunch of pretty little things that wouldn't even harm a Hittite. Look at us, Your Honor: Don't we deserve a second chance, like that old codger obelisk and that cheeky scrap of pottery you've been listening to lately? Their tall tales and crackpot stories don't begin to testify to the sort of misery we've suffered.

was an alias for Troy. That's how come the dame's last name was "Of Troy" and not "Of Hisarlık." I ain't sure it matters much: She wasn't a local girl anyways. She was stolen from some heavy hitters over in Greece who got hot about it and mobbed up to get even with the family that grabbed her. Some say she was a cheating flirt who brought it on herself; others say she was just a victim—like us in the Syndicate. Either way, she was quite the looker, and that's why there was all the fuss. They measured beauty back then on this funny ship-scale, and they say her face was worth a thousand!

Why? All because we of the Syndicate are royal treasures from the wrong Troy—as if that's our fault. Were we ever naïve! We knew no better until it was too late to save the Syndicate from aiding and abetting archeological crime. To plead our case, we call our first witness. He can tell you how we got into this trouble.

Yer Honor, we all got "made" a long time ago. I was the first one the Boss signed up, back on May 31, 1873, in Turkey. He called me "The Shield." I'm bronze, and I'm in bad shape, I know: not much to look at as treasures go. I don't talk so good—my lower lip, see, is all busted up—but I'm the biggest, and the Boss's number one, so I get to tell the first part of our story.

Back in our hometown of Hisarlık, the Boss set up shop and muscled out the competition, which was this guy named Frank Calvert. Frank owned most of the place, and he said it was valuable because a big war happened there once, on account of some dame named Helen. He said Hisarlık was just an alias for "Ilium," and Ilium

Then this guy Homer—no last name—wrote a coupla long songs about the war, and they were hits for, I don't know, seems like a jillion years. I'm sure a smart judge like you has heard of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, all about these pro gangstas whacking each other and bragging about all the bloodshed. This one mug, Achilles, he could drop a dozen guys before breakfast. Old King Priam, the Trojan don, had to watch his favorite son Hector get popped on account of his other son Paris, the one that kidnapped Ms. Of Troy in the first place. Another guy, Odysseus, he kind of reminds us of us: He spent 10 years in the wind after all the fighting and then—look out—he sneaked home and killed all the goons trying to move in on his wife, Penelope. The Boss always talked about these folks like they was friends of his and he was just dropping by the neighborhood for a chat about old times.

Truth is, before the Boss came visiting, we didn't know nothing about the Trojan War, and we never laid eyes on Helen nor any of the thugs fighting over her. It was the Boss who made us say we did. He took credit for everything that Frank knew already, and it was the Boss who decided to make himself famous—he was already rich—as the genius who dug up the dirt about Troy. He wanted to show how it all had gone down just the way Homer sung it. That old Greek, the Boss said, was humming history, and our job in the Syndicate was to back up the Boss in case nobody wanted to believe him and Homer.

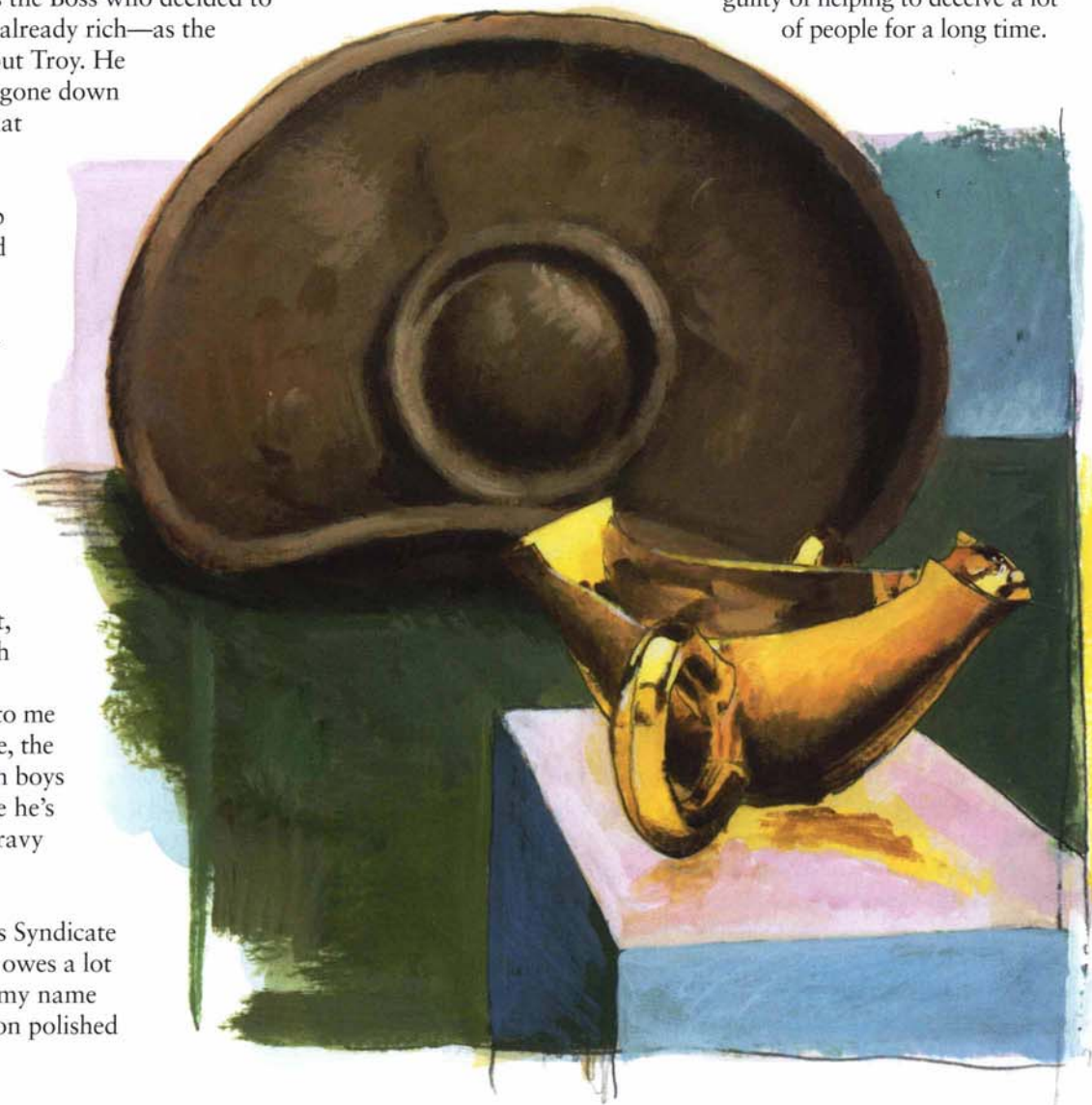
But this is what really happened: There we were at Hisarlik, a.k.a. Troy, a bunch of unsuspecting locals living in ruins, minding our own business, sinking lower and lower in the world, like we had for centuries. I was in real deep the day the Boss showed up and smacked me with a shovel—*bam!* That rung my ears a bit, and then he came after me with a big knife. He called our little get-together “archeology,” but to me it felt like a mugging. Behind me, the Boss spotted some of our golden boys and went after them, too. Since he's one of them, I'll let my pal “Gravy Boat” testify about that part.

Your Honor, the famous Syndicate organized on that day owes a lot to me: I'm as ritzy as my name suggests, not to mention polished

THE BOSS CALLED OUR LITTLE GET-TOGETHER “ARCHEOLOGY,” BUT TO ME IT FELT LIKE A MUGGING. BEHIND ME, THE BOSS SPOTTED SOME OF OUR GOLDEN BOYS.

and refined—24-carat gold, to be precise. I neither look nor speak much like my long-time partner, “The Frying Pan.” Yes, I know he still fancies himself “The Shield,” but in spite of what the Boss thought him to be, everyone now knows the fellow is a dented kitchen skillet. He's a simple, honest soul even if he's not (as they say) all there. The Boss found him in pieces and never put him together properly. While searching for riches and weapons from the Trojan

War, he thought it sounded a lot better to be finding some hero's shield than a pan with a broken handle. The latter pieces, the Boss in turn fantasized, could be seen as the hasps of a disintegrated wooden treasure chest that had allegedly protected valuables like me. So, the Boss dreamed up his colorful Trojan War scenario in which this supposed coffer and its carrier's shield were abandoned beside the burning walls at the moment the city fell. A grand tale it was, and he christened the Syndicate “King Priam's Treasure,” which was either a terrible mistake or a shameful lie, depending upon your estimation of the Boss as either a sloppy archeologist or a slippery con. Either way, we in the Syndicate were made guilty of helping to deceive a lot of people for a long time.



I'm sorry to say that we played right along and kept to our code of silence. That's why “Frying Pan” ended up a fugitive with me in Moscow, while his handle is still hiding out in two pieces—one in St. Petersburg, the other in Berlin. We've been in serious trouble since the day we were found.

The Boss, of course, had his own name, one of the most celebrated of his time: Johann Ludwig Heinrich Julius Schliemann. He was born in 1822 and he lived until 1890. He was an impressive, self-made type who overcame scandal and tragedy to become a millionaire, a world traveler, a scholar, a prolific writer and—what concerns us—a self-proclaimed discoverer of lost civilizations. A hero to emperors, kings and commoners worldwide, he set out to find us, and, boy, he sure was determined he would find us. Too bad we weren't quite where and when and what he wanted us to be.

But we're not fakes. We are indeed genuine treasures, indeed from Troy, and Schliemann—I'll call the Boss that now—did prove that the city Homer sang about really existed, right where Mr. Calvert told him to look. He made invaluable contributions to history, but unfortunately he also lied about his life and work in order to hide his flaws and make his achievements seem greater than they were. I think today you call this “hype.”

If so, we are the worst examples. Schliemann was desperate to find evidence of the rich city of Priam that, according to Homer, was sacked by the Greeks sometime around 1200 BC. The discovery of “Frying Pan” and the rest of us on the last morning of May 1873 allegedly locked up Schliemann's case and right away made him the most famous archeologist in the world. People loved his romantic story of Priam's treasure chest filled with the fabulous wealth that included me and lots of other gold, silver and bronze—9000 of us artifacts in the full Syndicate. Among us was even, he said, the very jewels worn by Helen of Troy herself. Well, you choose whether to believe him or not.

With bravado, Schliemann enumerated to his fans all the mortal dangers he had faced, how he had had to send away his helpers at the last moment to save us artifacts from possible treachery, and how he secretly dug us out with only the help of his young wife, Sophia, who used her shawl to smuggle us away as he passed each object to her. It all sounded too good to be true—and it was! Sophia was nowhere in Turkey at the time of our excavation, and Schliemann later fudged the date and circumstances of the discovery, misrepresented the actual find spot and even doctored his diary to cover his



**THE BOSS—
JOHANN LUDWIG HEINRICH
JULIUS SCHLIEMANN—
WAS A SELF-PROCLAIMED
DISCOVERER OF LOST
CIVILIZATIONS.**

tracks. To him, it seemed that the truth meant about as much as the dirt we were buried in.

All the while, we treasures sure enjoyed the attention. We dared not admit to the world that we had absolutely nothing to do with Priam or Helen. All of us were much too old! We hail from the early Bronze Age, from the emporium of Troy circa 2400 BC. That was five cities, risen and fallen, before the 1200 BC of Homer's Priam and Helen. So if an army of Greeks did indeed attack Troy, and if a big wooden horse ever really did roll into town, we missed that spectacle, having already been underground for more than a millennium. Schliemann making us pretend otherwise was like asking relics of Charlemagne to pose as witnesses to World War II.

“Frying Pan” and some of the boys would still like to believe that Schliemann made an honest mistake about our age, and that the rest was a web of little white lies to please the public. They say archeology in the 19th century tended to be more sensation than science. In that case,

so what if we were really unearthed inside, outside, or on an ancient wall? Who should care if Mrs. Schliemann was actually there or not? Does it matter if we came out of the ground on June 7—as he states in his diary—or a week earlier—as he also states in his diary?

Your Honor, I appreciate now that it does matter. You see, in archeology you only get one chance. The Syndicate will never outlive those lapses of judgment. We will never be fully trusted again, never valued for what we are without feeling your disappointment for what we are not. Once a defendant like me is held in archeological contempt, judges and juries never forget, and they seldom forgive. I wish we could go back and be discovered differently.

By the standards of archeology today, Schliemann at the very least turned error into crime. He twisted important facts and tainted one of the finest gatherings of artifacts ever found. He criminalized us time and time again by changing his story. More seriously, he put us at odds with not just the professional standards of archeology, but also the laws of modern nations. Schliemann not only gave us a false identity, but he also smuggled us away. He worked in Turkey under an agreement that guaranteed his host country half of all artifacts recovered. Instead of honoring the agreement, Schliemann tricked the Turkish overseer at Hisarlik and pirated us away in six sealed trunks and one heavy bag aboard the Greek ship *Taxiarches*. In Athens, Schliemann gleefully unpacked and displayed our stunning selves at his home, where delighted crowds flocked to see the exhibition. A famous photograph

of Sophia wearing the so-called “Jewels of Helen” circulated far and wide, and on August 5, Schliemann published in a German newspaper his first dramatic account of our discovery. The world was immediately mesmerized, although some quickly frowned at his shameless subterfuges. Frank Calvert tried in vain to garner the credit he deserved, and naturally the government of Turkey took Schliemann to court. We were wanted fugitives.

Schliemann retaliated with defiant threats to sell “his” collection—that was a good one!—to various institutions, including the Louvre and the British Museum. When that failed, he explored the possibility of making copies of us, then surrendering the fakes to Turkish authorities while keeping the originals. In 1874, a court tried to seize the treasures, but he had craftily sent us into hiding. He paid a hefty fine for this, but then he turned around and offered Turkey five times that sum for purchase of the whole Syndicate outright. The frustrated Turks

A GANG NAMED THE “REDS” ARRESTED US AND CARRIED US TO A PRISON IN MOSCOW CALLED THE PUSHKIN MUSEUM.

accepted the deal in 1875—or so Schliemann later claimed in his memoirs.

We came out of our hideouts and we settled into the vaults of the Greek National Bank while Schliemann—now our owner—returned to his unorthodox archeology. In 1877, he sent us to London where we thrilled another adoring public. By then, however, we were grow-

ing jealous of his latest finds at Mycenae in Greece, considered by some experts to be more splendid than any of us from Troy. The Mycenaean artifacts set off another global frenzy of what has been called “Schliemania.” Then, in 1878, he returned to Troy in search of greater glories. Was that even possible? We lived on edge, debating what he might unearth next, and then arguing over what he meant when he published an enigmatic promise to leave us to “the nation I love and esteem most.” At first, most of us thought he must be referring to Greece, the homeland of his wife, Sophia. Others suggested Russia, where Schliemann had lived from 1846 to 1866 and made his commercial fortune. But also possible were France, Britain and even the United States, where Schliemann had once gained

citizenship to more easily divorce his first wife, who was Russian. Only Turkey seemed off-limits. By the end of 1880, we had our answer: It was Germany—in exchange for a bevy of ego-flattering titles and honors. During the next year, Schliemann arranged us to his liking in the new ethnographic museum of Berlin.

While in German custody, we in the Syndicate of Troy did our time, with good behavior, until the rise of the Nazis. We could hear their rallies right outside the walls. Surrounded by an angry hive of buildings that headquartered the Gestapo and the SS, we knew war was coming. On September 2, 1941, our Syndicate buried itself deep in a concrete bunker of the Berlin Zoo, surrounded by bombproof walls and booming anti-aircraft guns. With every concussion, we longed for the heavy silence of our centuries underground, back home in Hisarlık. While all around us elephants, giraffes and other exotic inmates perished from weapons no Trojan warrior ever imagined, we endured until the battered city of Berlin fell in 1945. It was then we vanished.

Stop the proceedings right there, Yer Honor! I ought to tell this last part, because I think the Boss would want it that way. Maybe I am just a frying pan and maybe I ain’t, but I sure felt like a shield during all that fighting. Anyways, we were all hunkered down to wait out the war when a bunch of soldiers broke in and nabbed us. Turns out these fellows was one gang in a big army trying to beat Mr. Hitler who called himself something that sounded like “Furor,” and we were hiding right nearby when eternity grabbed him and shook hands. Then, like the Greeks in Homer’s song, the soldiers that busted into Berlin had their share of disagreements among themselves. They did a lot of chest-thumping, fist-waving and finger-pointing. When it came time to loot the place, one crew grabbed this, another that. In all the confusion, me and old Gravy Boat and the rest of the Syndicate dropped clean out of sight. Word was we got destroyed.

It took about 50 years for everybody to figure we made it out alive, and where we went. As I said, a gang named the “Reds” arrested us and carried us to a prison in Moscow called the Pushkin Museum. Nobody was the wiser until 1991, when a coupla sharp Russian sleuths found us out. They spilled the beans and the whole world showed up to gawk at us like it was 1873 all over again. Too bad Homer wasn’t around to sing about it, but I hear his grandson Mr. TV kind of took up his trade and told a fine story about us. We’re now what you call jailbird celebrities, waiting in your court of public opinion to see if we stay in Russia or get



A FAMOUS PHOTOGRAPH OF THE BOSS'S WIFE, SOPHIA, WEARING THE SO-CALLED “JEWELS OF HELEN” CIRCULATED FAR AND WIDE.

extradited to Germany, Greece or Turkey.

Well, Yer Honor, that’s our story, from one end of history to the other. We spent the biggest part of it down under, sleeping with the dishes of dead Trojans and waiting for the Boss to find us. Fact is, when me and the gang first went underground at Troy, your obelisk wasn’t even born; he was just part of a big rock over in Egypt. He wasn’t a stand-up guy for another thousand years. Later, we kept right on dozing underfoot at Hisarlık during all his traveling days. For every week of his life he was lost and buried, we spent a month waiting for sunlight. If you think that obelisk served a long sentence before his pardon, I guess we suffered through a whole paragraph. That young obelisk was up again and strutting in his new piazza 284 years before the Boss ever dug us up. And that day didn’t improve our situation much, because we’ve been on trial ever since.

You might think it’s a good thing being wanted. You might say we ought to feel grateful we were flushed

from hiding in Hisarlık, Athens, Berlin and Moscow. But you’re only human. We in the Syndicate see it different. Getting found doesn’t mean you ain’t still lost to the world, and being treasures from Troy ain’t enough for some people unless maybe you fried an egg for Priam and poured some gravy for Helen.

Yer Honor, we’ve learned this the long, hard way. We’re sorry for all the trouble. Begging your mercy, we confess that we were never there at the Trojan War, and we sure found out for ourselves what Ms. Of Troy must have felt like with her reputation ruined and all those nations fighting over her.

So what do you say? Bang that gavel, and let us go home. We promise we’ll never do it again. ☪



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Norman MacDonald (www.macdonaldart.net) is a Canadian free-lance artist, living in Amsterdam, who specializes in history and portraiture. This is the third article he has illustrated in the “I Witness History” series.



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- That old codger obelisk: S/O 07
- That scrap of pottery: J/A 08
- Troy: J/F 05
- Autobiography of a Coin: S/O 97



Suggestions for Reading

Readers of *Saudi Aramco World* who want to range more widely or delve more deeply than a bimonthly magazine can do will find interesting material, most of it recently published, in this list. Without endorsing the views of any of the authors, the editors encourage varied and omnivorous reading as a path to greater understanding. The books listed here are available online, in libraries, from bookstores—we urge our readers to patronize independent bookstores—or from their respective publishers; International Standard Book Numbers (ISBN) are given to facilitate ordering. Please do not order books from *Saudi Aramco World*. The full-text electronic archive of “Suggestions for Reading” from 1993 to the present can be found on the magazine’s Web site at www.saudiaramcoworld.com.



1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World. Salim T. S. Al-Hassani. 2006, Mega Basim, 978-0-9552426-1-8 (2nd ed.), \$59.50/£29.50 hb.

In 1993, Donald Cardwell, an eminent historian of science at Manchester University, challenged Salim Al-Hassani, an engineering professor at the university, to bring to light Muslim contributions to science and civilization, virtually ignored in the West, dating from the seventh to the 17th century. Fifteen years later, Al-Hassani has met the challenge—and then some—creating a foundation and a Web site (MuslimHeritage.com) that give a detailed, lively and easily understood encyclopedia of the achievements of Muslim astronomers, doctors, mathematicians, philosophers, geographers, architects and other scientists. This book is the outgrowth of a touring exhibition that reminds the world of the pivotal role Arab and Persian scholars had in European civilization, and is a gold mine of revelations: from 10th-century physicist Ibn al-Haitham’s finding that light emanates from objects and not the eye itself to the 14th-century astronomer Ibn al-Shatir anticipating Copernicus’s sun-centered theory of the solar system by more than a century. And who knew that 12th-century author Ibn Tufayl recounted the tale of a solitary individual on a deserted island some 600 years before Daniel Defoe wrote *Robinson Crusoe*? —RICHARD COVINGTON



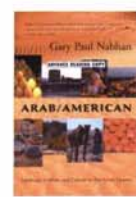
The Adventures of Amir Hamza. Ghalib Lakhnavi and Abdullah Bilgrami. Musharrif Ali Farooqi, tr. 2007, Modern Library, 978-0-679-64354-8, \$45.00 hb. 2008, 978-0-812-97743-1, \$25 pb.

There is a treasure of wonderful, imaginative stories in the collective psyche of the Indian subcontinent. In Sanskrit, there is the mammoth *Ocean of Story*, a collection of fairy tales and folklore that goes back to the mingling of Aryan and Dravidian stock some four millennia ago. Many Indian story motifs found their way into the *Arabian Nights*—that Middle Eastern cornucopia of adventures and wonder-tales beloved by Arabs since the Middle Ages and ultimately taken to heart by the West. Then there are the countless stories of Hamza, uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, first spun by storytellers in Persia, and elaborated and multiplied in Mughal India. Those tales found their way into Urdu, and a 19th-century edition of them, complete and unabridged, has just been translated into English for the first time in this volume. The stories are fossils of an oral tradition that vanished with the death of the last of the professional storytellers, or *dastangos*, in 1928. But what vibrant fossils they are! Amir Hamza, as articulated here, is not your average uncle. A superhero of Mughal vintage, he travels the world—and beyond—with his sidekick, the wily Amar Ayyar, battling evil and setting things right. The translation, by Pakistani-Canadian scholar Farooqi, is masterful. The book contains nearly 1000 pages, but the tales are generally short and self-contained, accessible to sample rather than reading straight through. But prepare to be swept up by the wave of narrative, which could very well carry you from beginning to end before you realize it. —ROBERT LEBLING

The American Muslim Teenager’s Handbook. Imran Dilara and Yasmine Hafiz. 2007, Acacia, 978-0-9792531-2-6, \$11.95 pb.

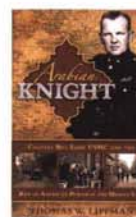
Next to Carol Anway’s *Daughters of Another Path*, this is the best self-published book on Islam in America. Written by two Pakistani-American teens with their mother, it tackles every topic an American Muslim teen would wonder or worry about—including taboo subjects like drinking and dating

and wearing the veil. The authors also undertook a major survey of American Muslim teens, probably the only comprehensive survey of its kind, to unmask true Muslim-teen views on controversial topics. While geared to a youthful audience, the decorative pages, with illustrations, pictures and quizzes, appeal to any age. The text conveys understanding and sincerity without patronizing the reader. Highly recommended for Muslim young people, especially those struggling against American conformity. —ASMA HASAN



Arab/American: Landscape, Culture and Cuisine in Two Great Deserts. Gary Paul Nabhan. 2008, University of Arizona Press, 978-0-8165-2658-1, \$40 hb; 978-0-8165-2659-8, \$17.95 pb.

The deserts of the title refer to the American Southwest and the arid regions of the Middle East, places thousands of miles apart geographically but much closer in other ways. Nabhan, an Arab-American by birth, director of the Center for Sustainable Environments at Northern Arizona University by profession and a rural folklorist by calling, explores the convergences between these two regions in a series of personal essays. The author’s observations are literary rather than sociological or anthropological, and in this lies the book’s considerable charm. The chapter titled “Camel Whisperers” is a good example of his approach. Nabhan recounts the near-mythical story of Hadji Ali (“Hi Jolly” in Arizona folklore), a Syrian-Greek camel driver at the center of the US Army’s 19th-century attempt to use camels as draft animals. Nabhan’s extensive research into the story, related in his confessional style, transforms a minor historical footnote into an evocative reflection on immigration, cultural identity and the vagaries of fate. Whether eating hummus and quebbe (the Arab hummus and kibbe, brought to Mexico via al-Andalus) in a café in Mexico or recognizing American weeds on the banks of the Nile, Nabhan maps out new territory in the literary landscape of writing about deserts—and in the penultimate chapter he relates the territorial battles of hummingbirds to the history of Middle Eastern conflicts. Writing both natural history and cultural analysis, Nabhan displays a keen ability to discern the ancient Arab strands in the contemporary multicultural tapestry that is the US-Mexico borderland. —KYLE PAKKA



Arabian Knight. Thomas W. Lippman. 2008, Selwa Press, 978-0-9701157-2-0, \$25.95 hb.

One writer has called American Marine Col. William Eddy (1896–1962) “probably the closest thing the United States has had to Lawrence of Arabia.” This may be true in a sense, since Eddy, like Lawrence, spoke Arabic, was present as Middle Eastern history was made and even had a role in shaping his country’s policy toward the Arabs, particularly in the Arabian Peninsula. But unlike Lawrence, Eddy stayed well below the radar, to such an extent that few Americans today can tell you who he was. An iconic photograph of the historic shipboard meeting of Saudi Arabia’s King ‘Abd al-‘Aziz and US President Franklin Roosevelt in 1945 shows Eddy in uniform, interpreting for the two leaders—the only Arabic-English interpreter present during their more than four hours of in-depth discussions. This meeting was the centerpiece of a rich and eventful life chronicled in fascinating detail by journalist Lippman. He tells the human story of the summit aboard the USS *Quincy* in Egypt’s Great Bitter Lake—how a great man of the desert came to encounter and connect with the urbane, cultured president of a new world power.

Lippman goes far beyond this event, using rare archival material and interviews to reconstruct the largely unknown story of Eddy’s life. Born in Sidon, Lebanon, to an American missionary family, Eddy spoke fluent Arabic—not only Lebanese colloquial but also classical Arabic—and was a lifelong student of the Arabs, their culture and their faith. He could recite large portions of the Qur’an from memory. After Belleau Wood, Princeton and the OSS, he became a diplomat, serving as the top US envoy in Saudi Arabia. Like Harry St. John Philby, Eddy was a trusted friend of King ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, often joining the monarch for deep desert treks. Later in his career, after the accession of King Saud, Eddy lent his expertise to Aramco, working for its offices in Beirut and Washington. Lippman sees Eddy’s career as a metaphor for the growing American involvement in the Middle East. Beyond this, it is also a highly personal tale of one man’s deep affection for a culture and society other than his own. —ROBERT LEBLING



The Architecture of Yemen. Salma Samar Damluji. 2007, Laurence King, 978-1-85669-514-5, £40 hb.

Nearly as remarkable as the architecture it documents, Damluji’s book takes the reader beyond the carved doors and mud-brick towers for which Yemen is renowned and into the design and craftsmanship of an extraordinary—and vanishing—urban fabric. Readers expecting the usual lavish gift-book treatment of the fabled cities of Sana’a or Shibam might, at first glance, be disappointed. Instead, Damluji illustrates the architecture of a selected number of buildings in seldom-visited villages in four regions, thus chronicling the distinctive legacy of Yemeni architecture. Fellow architects and historians will appreciate the book’s specialist focus, with its abundant architectural drawings and an extensive glossary of Yemeni building terms, but even casual readers will be transported by the stunning photographs of the stone and mud-brick houses that seem to rise naturally from the crags. Of particular interest are the interviews with the master builders who welcomed Damluji into their homes to discuss the traditional methods and local materials they use. In this respect, the book is a celebration of an architecture imbued with significant socio-economic and environmental values—a style, the author makes clear, worthy of investment and encouragement, and not merely preservation. —KYLE PAKKA



Being Muslim. Haroon Siddiqui. 2007, House of Anansi, 0-88899-786-8, \$9.95 pb.

As part of the “Groundwork Guides” series, conceived to tackle contemporary issues, *Being Muslim* offers an intense, micro-level commentary on Islam and today’s political landscape. Siddiqui, a *Toronto Star* columnist, asserts on his first page that Muslims are “the biggest victims of the attacks of September 11, 2001.” He levels much harsh criticism at American foreign policy and politicians and the post-9/11 media, among others. Amid the critiques, he offers valuable tidbits, debunking some critical stereotypes—including pointing out that the Prophet Muhammad was actually only in battle for a week of his 23-year prophetic career. His detailing of discrimination against European Muslims, especially young Muslims, is chilling. Although some topics, such as women in Islam, warrant a longer treatment, and the chapters lack unifying connectors, many topics, such as the excellent recounting of the Danish cartoon incidents, are well suited to his approach. —ASMA HASAN



The Columbia Sourcebook of Muslims in the United States. Edward E. Curtis IV. 2008, Columbia UP, 978-0-231-13956-4, \$75 hb.

There are very few books that can claim to tell the full American Muslim story. This book can claim it and does it. With wide-ranging first-person accounts—including those of an HIV-positive Muslim woman and a wheelchair-bound Muslim woman’s life-threatening *Hajj* journey—this eminently readable book shines a bright light on the diversity and history of American Muslims. Ranging from African slaves brought to the United States to the Shriners and present-day American Muslim politicians, Curtis has assembled the most comprehensive collection of American Muslim voices ever. This book is highly recommended for people of all ages and backgrounds curious about American Muslims or who are simply looking for an enlightening and moving read. —ASMA HASAN



Discovering Qatar. Frances Gillespie. 2006, Creative Writing and Photography, 99921-70-32-8, QAR 100, £28 pb. Available at www.nhbs.co.uk and from gillespi@qatar.net.qa.

The author, a resident of Qatar since 1985, brings her breezy and informative voice, honed by writing several pictorial souvenir books about Qatar and for the in-flight magazine of Qatar Airways, to a survey of the Gulf nation’s history and natural fauna. The result is a book enjoyable and useful to residents and tourists alike. Short chapters cover the prehistory and modern story of Qatar, from the earliest settlements in 6000 BC to its status as a trading partner in the Bronze Age civilization of Dilmun and up through its pearling and petroleum eras. Other chapters focus on the indigenous animals of the peninsular nation: foxes, hedgehogs, snakes, ospreys, sea turtles, dugongs and other denizens of desert and sea. Full of historic and contemporary photos, the book captures Qatar in the time before the discovery of oil and gas and also showcases the nation’s surprisingly varied wildlife. Gillespie’s passion and enthusiasm for her adopted home shine through, particularly in regard to the conservation of Qatar’s environment and traditional culture. In *Discovering Qatar*, what might seem a uniformly lifeless and flat landscape to the casual eye is revealed instead to be a place of fragile beauty and rich history. —KYLE PAKKA

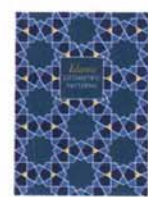
Dubai: The Vulnerability of Success. Christopher M. Davidson. 2008, Columbia UP, 978-0-231-70034-4, \$32.50 hb.

Written by “a loyal but critical friend” and former resident of Dubai, this book recounts the history and investigates the political and economic future of the Arabian Gulf’s most glamorized and globalized city-state. Beginning as a small fishing and pearling community, and passing through its modest oil era, Dubai is now a booming metropolis of more than two million mostly expatriate residents and the most important trading center on the Gulf, a city where petroleum accounts for less than ten percent of GDP. Davidson, now at Durham University, broaches the probability of future problems as economic necessities intersect the cultural and religious realms.



Encyclopedia of Islam in the United States. Volume One and Volume Two. Jocelyne Cesari. 2007, Greenwood Press, 978-0-313-33625 (set), 978-0-313-33626-3 (vol 1), 978-0-313-33627-0 (vol 2), \$199.95 (set) hb.

This two-volume encyclopedia manages a challenging task. It addresses the experiences of Muslim Americans within two contexts: first, their religious beliefs; and second, the politics, society and culture of the United States. The task is all the more ambitious because both Muslim Americans and the country in which they live are complex and constantly evolving. To meet its goals, Volume 1 offers A-to-Z entries that run the gamut—from *hadith* to hip-hop to human rights; from imam to internet to the Islamic Society of America; from prayer to politics to public intellectuals. Volume 2 provides a wide array of primary sources that address key themes, including religious life; the challenges of citizenship; terrorism and 9/11; gender, race and Islam; and Muslim artistic and cultural expression. Taken together, the two volumes provide a comprehensive reference tool that would be a useful addition to public, school and university libraries. —JULIE WEISS



Islamic Geometric Patterns. Eric Broug. 2008, Thames & Hudson, 978-0-500-28721-7, \$21.95 pb.

The amazing thing about the most complex Islamic patterns is their fundamental simplicity. These designs on floors, walls, windows and ceilings of world-famous mosques, *madrasas*, monuments and palaces dazzle the eye with their intricacy, creativity, power and sometimes even whimsy. As Dutch artist Broug demonstrates, the complexity of these patterns is often reducible to a single geometric shape—a square, pentagon or hexagon, for example—which is elaborated by adding straight lines and arcs until the shapes begin multiplying and mutating, almost like living organisms. Broug sees the creation of these remarkable patterns as both art and science. He shows the reader how to draw them, step by step, using only a pencil, ruler and geometric compass. In the process, we recreate the experiences of the Islamic artists and

craftsmen who first developed these distinctive geometrical patterns many centuries ago. We also learn important chunks of art history, since the patterns we develop are taken from actual buildings and artworks from Spain to Kyrgyzstan. The author discusses structures like the Mustansiriya Madrasa of Baghdad, built by an Abbasid ruler in the 13th century; the Capella Palatina, royal chapel of Norman king Roger II of Sicily; and the ninth-century Qarawiyyin Mosque of Fez, Morocco. Supplementing the book is an excellent CD with a strong image gallery, desktop wallpapers, pattern-construction sequences and other useful features.

—ROBERT LEBLING



The Islamic Middle East and Japan: Perceptions, Aspirations, and the Birth of Intra-Asian Modernity. Renée Worringer, ed. 2007, Markus Wiener, 978-1-55876-406-4, \$68.95 hb; 978-1-55876-407-1; \$24.95 pb.

Military engagements took place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries between the Ottoman Empire, Iran and Meiji Japan on the one hand—each an eastern power undergoing a fast-paced, reluctant process of forced western-style modernization—and imperial European powers,

including Tsarist Russia, which were encroaching upon the others' borders and spheres of influence. This collection of scholarly essays turns sideways such "East vs. West" conflict paradigms and instead examines the warming relationship between Near East and Far East based on Iranians' and Ottomans' shared interests with the Japanese, who had so impressed their fellow Asians in their resounding victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War.

—LOU WERNER



Language For A New Century. Tina Chang, Nathalie Handal and Ravi Shankar. 2008, Norton, 978-0-393-33238-4, \$27.95 pb.

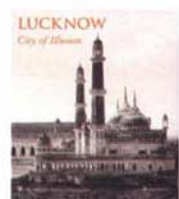
In the confusing days after September 11, three young poets—one Palestinian–French–American, one Indian–American, one Chinese–American—decided that, with all the questions and misconceptions suddenly in the air, "putting together an anthology seemed the necessary path." A beautiful and far-ranging achievement, this book presents the poems of more than 400 poets from 59

eastern and Middle Eastern countries (as well as many expatriate eastern and Middle Eastern poets) writing on themes as evocative as "In the Grasp of Childhood Fields," "Bowl of Air and Shivers" (death as a subject), "Earth of Drowned Gods" (the political) and "The Quivering World" (matters of eros). A hefty and rich collection, it lives true to its title in seeking the new and contemporary from both the well-known (Mahmoud Darwish, Naomi Shihab Nye, Michael Ondaatje and Bei Dao) and the obscure. No unified culture or voice emerges, and that is largely the point. As one of the anthology's editors writes, "At the intersection of politics and culture, there is simply human consciousness."

—ANN WALTON SIEBER

Loot: The Battle Over the Stolen Treasures of the Ancient World. Sharon Waxman. 2008, Times, 978-0-8050-8653-9, \$27.50 hb.

This is an even-handed exploration of a fraught topic: Should archeological and other cultural treasures reside where they are safest, best protected and accessible to the most visitors, or in the countries in whose territory they were found, of whose history they form a part and from which they were illegally or extralegally removed? Waxman, a former *New York Times* correspondent, interviews personalities all along the chain of "ownership"—smugglers, government officials, dealers and curators—explores the political and cultural ambiguities and suggests a collaborative middle way.



Lucknow: City of Illusion. Ebrahim Alkazi and Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, eds. 2006, Prestel, 3-7913-3130-2, \$79 hb.

The Alkazi Collection of Photography has commissioned a series of well-informed essays to accompany its sumptuous 19th-century images of the palaces and religious monuments that gave this northern Indian city its reputation as a royal capital that outshone even Delhi under the Mughals and Hyderabad under the

Nizams. Lucknow was where the Indo-Saracenic building style—filigreed archways, bulbous domes and polychrome façades—reached its height and glory under the patronage of the fabulously wealthy Nawabs of Oudah. Yet

all goes silent in the book's central pages with Felice Beato's ghostly eight-plate panoramic city view from 1858, which shows the massive and unmerciful destruction of such beauty wrought by the British in the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny.

—LOU WERNER

Saudi Arabia: The Great Adventure. Owen Oxley. 2005, Stacey International, 1-905299-07-9, £27.50 hb.

Owen Oxley recorded more than pictures of people and places after he arrived in Saudi Arabia in 1950 and became a photographer for the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco). He also kept notes on and off the job during his five-year stay, which coincided with a postwar boom in oil production that had begun to change the face of the kingdom. This coffee table-sized book dovetails more than 300 of his black-and-white photos with 19 essays to highlight the human side of Aramco's distinct blend of Saudi and American culture. These range from the personal ("Romance") to the public (Sa'ud ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz's first visit to Aramco's Dhahran headquarters as king in 1954) to the quotidian (journeying into the desert with an exploration team). Oxley's often-iconic images portray the actors—grand and ordinary, at work and at play—who were transforming the world around them.



Scattered Pictures: Reflections of an American Muslim. Zaid Shakir. 2005, Zaytuna Institute, 0-9702843-5-7, \$15 pb.

Shakir, an activist imam who has studied in the Arab world, often intimates in these essays that he believes Muslims aren't sufficiently educated about their own religion. His attitude may stem from his own journey to Islam, told in the gripping first chapter, "The Making of a Muslim." Most touching is his admiration for his non-Muslim mother, whom he brings to life by reprinting her diary entries. In other essays, he covers a wide range of

topics, including an honest account of the shortcomings of today's American mosques. He ingeniously analyzes Islam's attraction to African-Americans by evaluating the Prophet Muhammad's fondness for his contemporaries of African descent. Although his finding that Islam does not generally allow a woman to lead prayers is surprising, considering his usual outspokenness, Shakir otherwise doesn't disappoint, being opinionated, pragmatic and touching all at the same time.

—ASMA HASAN

Secrets of Healthy Middle Eastern Cuisine. Sanaa Abourezk. 2006, Interlink, 1-56656-327-5, \$19.95 pb.

The author is a Syrian-American, an accomplished chef trained both at her mother's knee and at culinary schools in Florence and Paris, and a nutritionist. Many of the 150 recipes in this compilation are familiar, but they have been re-engineered to be even healthier than we now know Levantine cuisine to be, using less fat and containing less cholesterol without reducing flavor. Each recipe includes a nutritional analysis, and friendly chats, cultural or exhortatory, head some of the 12 chapters; there's also a spice list, a glossary and an index.



War on Error: Real Stories of American Muslims. Melody Moezzi. 2007, University of Arkansas Press, 978-1-55728-855-4, \$18.95, pb.

Moezzi, an Iranian-American lawyer, presents a group of young American Muslims, one per chapter, in an extended interview. As a self-proclaimed "Child of Fresh Off the Boat" (or COFOB), she expresses frustration at elder American Muslims' traditionalism, including the separation of genders at Islamic events. Though not an academic book, *War on Error* draws the reader in with its anecdotal evidence of the diversity of the American Muslim community. The cover art—an American flag re-made with such Muslim-themed fabrics as Indian prints, embroidery and tassels—symbolizes the deeper theme that Muslims have become part of the American fabric. Teen and college-age Muslims, and their parents, would probably benefit most from reading this book.

—ASMA HASAN

Suggestions for Viewing

REVIEWED BY CHAR SIMONS



Al Boum. Khalid al-Zadjali, dir. 2005, Oman, 105'. Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center (info@sccc.org). \$7.95 + s/h. Oman's first feature film is a charming tale set in a picturesque fishing village where traditional life and the seafaring economy are threatened by a local shaykh's development scheme. Nour, the female protagonist, organizes fishermen to oppose the plan. "Could this be the destiny of our village—just a museum for tourists?" ponders a villager. The film addresses the growing tension between tradition and globalization in the region, and among the outsiders driving change and their insider allies.



Between Two Notes. Florence Strauss, dir. 2006, Canada / Israel / Palestine / Syria, 90' / 45'. National Film Board of Canada (www.nfb.ca/store). \$26.70 individual / us\$275 institutional. Set in Cairo, Tel Aviv, Beirut, Damascus and Aleppo, this documentary explores the harmonizing impact of music that reaches across the Arab-Israeli political divide. The film's narrative of the common heritage of music is woven through local musicians' performances on the 'ud, santur, nay, violin and four-valve Arab trumpet, and the blending of oriental and occidental scales. "If you deal with this music, you have to deal with peace," notes one musician.

Captain Abu Raed, Amin Matalqa, dir. 2007, Jordan, 95'. Paper and Pen Films, kim@dominion3.com.

This is one of Jordan's first feature films, produced by a 90-person crew of 14 nationalities. It consists of two parallel tales, one of a widowed airport janitor who finds a pilot's hat and takes on its owner's persona to tell stories to neighborhood children that will spark their dreams. The other is of a female pilot whose father is trying to marry her off. Shot mostly in Amman, the film portrays the new multilingual Jordan and tackles issues of poverty, abuse, alcoholism and dashed dreams.



Caramel (Sukkar Banat), Nadine Labaki, dir. 2005, Lebanon, 96'. www.amazon.com. \$19.99. ASIN B0016MLIK2.

This taboo-breaking feature film is about five women at a Beirut beauty salon, from different generations, backgrounds and religions, who struggle to deal with heartbreak, sexuality and aging between haircuts, facials and intimate conversations. Themes include the unattainable quest for beauty and the high emotional toll of societal and family obligations. The film's focus on social issues rather than war makes it a rare breed in recent Lebanese cinema.



Encounter Point, Ronit Avni, dir. and Julia Bacha, co-dir. 2006, Israel / Palestine, 85'. Arab Film Distribution (www.arabfilm.com/item/429). \$24.99 individual / \$350 institutional. ASIN B000R4SKEV.

This documentary offers, at last, a somewhat hopeful examination of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It profiles the Forum of Bereaved Palestinian and Israeli Families, who come together in shared grief around the deaths of their children. Members, who work to educate their own communities about creating change through grassroots organizing, include a Palestinian man who gave up hero status to work for peace and a Jewish Israeli mother seeking reconciliation with the family of the sniper who killed her son.



Iraq in Fragments, James Longley, dir. 2006, us / Iraq, 94'. Arab Film Distribution (www.arabfilm.com/item/417). \$29.99 individual / \$400 institutional.

An opus in three parts, this documentary filmed during two years in Iraq offers a series of intimate portraits: a fatherless 11-year-old apprenticed to the domineering owner of a Baghdad garage; individuals in two Shiite cities rallying for regional elections; and a Kurdish farm family that welcomes the US military. While not offering any fresh insights into the war or occupation, the gritty shards of contemporary life depicted in the film put a human face on suffering and struggle.

Kilometre Zero, Hinar Saleem, dir. 2005, Iraqi Kurdistan / France, 96'. Global Film Initiative (www.globalfilm.org). gfi-info@globalfilm.org. \$18.71 individual / \$195 institutional. ASIN B000YVB2PC.

This feature film tells the story of conflict between Iraqi Kurds and their countrymen. The setting is the Iraq-Iran war of the 1980's, when Kurds were drafted to serve in the Iraqi army. The film pairs a Kurdish soldier, under orders to return the body of a dead soldier to his family, with an Iraqi taxi driver who will drive them cross-country to the dead soldier's home. Scenes between the men, in the close quarters of their truck, are interwoven with often comic scenes of Iraqi soldiers and officers.



Le Grand Voyage, Ismael Ferroukhi, dir. 2004, France / Morocco, 108'. Film Movement (www.filmmovement.com). \$12.95 and \$24.95 individual. UPC 616892-650027.

This funny, poignant road movie focuses on an elderly, religious, Moroccan-born father and his very secular teenage son Reda, who he demands drive him from their home in France to Makkah. Through sightseeing in Italy, a mysterious woman hitchhiker in Serbia, a blizzard and hospitalization in Bulgaria and border difficulties and theft in Turkey, Reda learns why his father wanted to make the trip by car rather than plane. In the end, the struggle between the Hajj-bound father and his rebellious son becomes a journey of love. This is the first feature film of the Hajj to be shot on location.



Men at Work, Mani Haghighi, dir. 2006, Iran, 75'. Film Movement (www.filmmovement.com). \$12.95 and \$24.95 individual. UPC 616892-844821.

This film tells an offbeat, humorous tale of four ordinary guys and a big rock. Middle-aged buddies from Tehran, on a ski trip, discover an oddly shaped, weather-beaten boulder by the side of the road at a picturesque vista. Attempts to dislodge the rock by pushing, digging, pulling by donkey, prying with a makeshift lever and ramming it with an SUV gradually disintegrate into a tale of betrayal, defeat and renewed hope. The men's stubborn and ultimately futile tactics to push it over the edge seem to stand for something intractable, whether in the state or the masculine psyche.

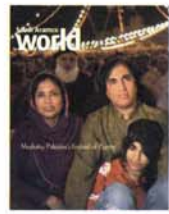
What's a Human Anyway? Reha Erdem, dir. 2004, Turkey, 128'. Global Film Initiative (www.globalfilm.org/catalogue05.htm).

This feature film is set in a modern-day Istanbul apartment building where family, friends and neighbors live in close quarters. The story centers around four males stepping into manhood: an amnesiac taxi driver, a little boy who refuses to be circumcised, a young man who refuses to do military service and a 30-year-old man who refuses to leave home. Punctuated with touches of humor, the film illuminates life in a very patriarchal society. The finale puts together the intricate pieces of the puzzle, and all the events each character has experienced create a larger picture of what it means to be human.

Yacoubian Building, Marwan Hamed, dir. 2006, Egypt, 165'. Strand Releasing (strand@strandreleasing.com). \$27.99 individual.

This feature film tackles a number of social issues by focusing on the lives of people who live or work in an actual colonial-era building in downtown Cairo. Inhabitants range from poor families living in converted rooftop storage rooms to a wealthy, foreign-educated "pasha." A blend of classic Egyptian cinema, post-World War II Italian neorealism and Hollywood action film, the portrayal of modern Egyptian society depicts disaffected and alienated Egyptians of all generations. It features strong performances by leading man Adel Emam and chanteuse Youssra.

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For students: We hope this two-page guide will help sharpen your reading skills and deepen your understanding of this issue's articles.

For teachers: We encourage reproduction and adaptation of these ideas, freely and without further permission from *Saudi Aramco World*, by teachers at any level, whether working in a classroom or through home study. —THE EDITORS

Analyzing Visual Images

Magazine editors and designers make decisions about how to present the photographs in the magazine's pages. Their decisions have to do with the kinds of photos they have available, the content of the article the photos accompany, and the effect they are hoping to create. Without reading the articles, look at the photos that accompany "Following Washington Irving" and "Mushaira: Pakistan's Festival of Poetry." Pay particular attention to how the photos are presented on the page. With a partner, discuss what you notice. For example, a single image can fill a whole page (as on page 2) or half a page (as on page 4), or it can be tucked into the written text (as on page 5). Do the photos and how they're presented make you interested in reading "Following Washington Irving"? Why or why not?

Now look at "Mushaira: Pakistan's Festival of Poetry." The team has made very different choices about layout. What do you notice about how the photos are presented? Compare the way the photos are laid out on the pages with the photo layout of "Following Washington Irving." With your partner, discuss how the photo "strips" make you feel. What do they suggest about the content of the article? Do they pique your curiosity and make you want to read the article? Why or why not? Which layout do you prefer? Why?



Class Activities

This month's Classroom Guide is organized around three themes: *Celebrity, Ceremonies and Creating Unity*.

Theme: Celebrity

People might say that ours is a society that is obsessed with celebrities. We see stars' pictures splashed on magazine covers and tabloid television shows. In fact, it can be difficult to get away from reports about Brangelina's babies or Britney's latest debacle. And a recent ad for an American presidential candidate negatively likened his opponent to celebrities Paris Hilton and Britney Spears. It's important and timely, then, to think about celebrity—what it means and the role celebrities play today and have played in the past. It's also important to decide what you think about celebrities, be they movie stars, politicians or billionaires. Three articles in this month's *Saudi Aramco World* include celebrities, and so the following activities, based on the articles, will help further your thinking.

What is a celebrity?

With your classmates, brainstorm definitions for the word *celebrity*. Have a volunteer write them on the board or chart paper. Look the word up in a dictionary (hard copy or online). Add to your class definition of the word. To push your thinking to a deeper level, respond to these questions to expand your definition: Is there a difference between being famous and being a celebrity?

Are all famous people celebrities? Do you admire celebrities? Why or why not?

Now think about this: In 1961, Daniel Boorstin, a historian, defined a celebrity as "a person who is well-known for his well-knownness." As a class, discuss Boorstin's quote. What do you think he meant? Did he think highly of celebrities? How can you tell? Do you agree with him? Boorstin contrasted celebrities with heroes. Use the contrast as a way to further expand your definition. Finally, as a class, write one definition of the word *celebrity*. It can be two or three sentences long if necessary—or shorter if possible. Keep the definition posted in the room as you proceed with these activities.

What kinds of people are celebrities?

Read the three articles in this month's magazine that mention celebrities: "Mushaira: Pakistan's Festival of Poetry," "Mayfair to Makkah" and "We, the Syndicate of Troy." Find and circle the places in the articles where celebrity comes up. Make a list on the board of the kinds of people who become celebrities. Start with the three articles, which identify as celebrities a) people who do something considered exotic (Lady Evelyn Cobbold), b) poet-performers (Wasi Shah) and c) criminals (Johann Schliemann). List other people who fit into these three categories. In addition, identify other categories of people who are sometimes celebrities, and list people who fit those categories.

Class Activities (cont.)

Do you think of celebrities in a positive or negative way? Why? Review your definition of *celebrity*, the articles you have read and your lists of celebrities and types of celebrities. If you want to expand your research, look at a few magazines in the supermarket checkout line or watch a few celebrity-reporting TV shows. Then write an essay that answers the question: Do you think of celebrities in a positive or negative way? Your essay should have a thesis that states your answer to the question, and then supporting evidence and arguments that will let your reader know why you hold the opinion you do.

Theme: Ceremonies

Ceremonies are formal events. They may mark rites of passage, like high school graduations, weddings and funerals. They may celebrate public events, like treaty-signing ceremonies or the ceremonies that open and close the Olympics. Or they may be part of religious occasions, like a circumcision or a first communion. Anthropologists study ceremonies. They learn from ceremonies what different groups of people believe to be important. "Suitable Luxury" describes diplomatic ceremonies, with a focus on ceremonial clothing. Read it and think about ceremonies by completing the following activities.

What ceremonies have you participated in?

Think about ceremonies you have attended or been part of. Have you been to a family member's wedding? Been part of a graduation ceremony? What was the experience like? Write down some notes using these questions to guide you. What occasion did the ceremony mark? Did you or others have to dress a certain way? Were you expected to behave a certain way? Was the ceremony conducted in a lighthearted way, or a grave, serious way? Were there specific foods (or restrictions on food) associated with the ceremony?

How was the ceremony similar to and different from other ceremonies of its kind? For example, what did the wedding you attended have in common with other weddings, and how was it unique? How was one school's graduation ceremony similar to and different from other schools' graduations? Make a Venn diagram to compare and contrast two ceremonies of the same type. Then, with a partner, answer this question: What, if anything, must be part of a particular kind of ceremony for it to be recognizable as that ceremony?

What was the *khil'a* ceremony? What purposes did it serve?

Read "Suitable Luxuries." Think about the characteristics of ceremonies that you have already considered and apply them to the *khil'a*. For starters, what was the *khil'a*? Who participated in it? When and where was it practiced? What special clothing did participants wear? Were there special behaviors and foods associated with it? Write a short response to this passage from the article: "Khil'a thus became a network of ceremony that crossed boundaries of religion, region and ethnicities. Just as it was practiced in Christian Constantinople and Confucian China, so was it practiced in ancient Central Asia."

Now think like an anthropologist. Think about the *khil'a* as a window into the cultures that used it. What purposes did it serve? What did people hope to accomplish by doing the *khil'a*? What did it mean, and what made it meaningful?

What kinds of ceremonial clothing do people wear today?

Now that you've thought about the *khil'a*, think again about modern ceremonies. As a class, make a list of the different kinds of

ceremonies you identified earlier. Are specific clothes associated with any of them? For example, many brides wear white dresses, and many graduates wear caps and gowns. To get an idea of how important ceremonial clothing might be, imagine the ceremonies you have identified without anyone wearing the ceremonial clothes. For example, what would a wedding feel like if the bride and groom wore jeans? What would a graduation feel like if the graduates didn't wear special robes? Are the clothes essential to the ceremony?

What makes a ceremony a ceremony?

Look back at the work you have done on this theme. Make a table that shows the different characteristics of ceremonies across the top. Down the side list different ceremonies. Fill in the table to show which ceremonies include which characteristics. Step back from the table and answer this question: Which characteristics are necessary for a ceremony to be a ceremony? Which are not essential?

Theme: Creating Unity

How do people create unity where there are differences and divisions? To answer the question, read "Suitable Luxury" and "Mushaira: Pakistan's Festival of Poetry" and complete the following activities.

What causes divisions among people and groups of people? Why might people want to create unity?

"Mushaira: Pakistan's Festival of Poetry" reports that the festival began in the 1980's as a way "to bring the city [Karachi] together around a common value." What political and social strains divided the city at the time? Why do you think people wanted to bring the city together? To help you answer the questions, think about a situation you're more familiar with, such as something that has divided your school or community, or something that has divided a place you have seen on the news. What caused the division? What were the symptoms of the division? For example, did people avoid each other? Was there violence or crime? Did the division trouble people? Why or why not? Did they want to do something about it, rather than let it be? Why or why not? Make notes to answer these questions. Then write a newspaper article reporting on the division, its causes and symptoms, and reasons why people do or don't want to deal with it.

How do people create unity?

Sometimes ceremonies can help create unity. To see how, turn your attention to "Suitable Luxury." What kinds of divisions does it describe? How did the *khil'a* ceremony attempt to deal with those divisions? Find and highlight the places in the article that answer the questions. Think back to the example of division that you looked at earlier. With a partner or a group, think about how you could create a sense of unity. For example, what kind of ceremony (like the *khil'a*) might you develop to create a sense of unity? Or what kind of event (like the *Aalami Mushaira*)? Plan your ceremony or event. If it's a ceremony, act it out. If it's an event, design a Web page that announces and describes it.



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Events & Exhibitions

Afghanistan: *Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul* explores the cultural heritage of ancient Afghanistan from the Bronze Age (2500 BC) through the rise of trade along the Silk Roads in the first century of our era. Among the nearly 230 works on view, all from the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul, are artifacts as old as 4000 years, as well as gold objects from the famed Bactrian Hoard, a 2000-year-old treasure of Bactrian grave goods excavated at Tillya Tepe in 1978 and long thought to have been stolen or destroyed, but rediscovered in 2003. The earliest objects in the exhibition, from Tepe Fullol in northern Afghanistan, are fragmentary gold vases dated between 2500 and 2200 BC. A second group, from the former Greek city Ai Khanum in a region conquered by Alexander the Great, reflects Mediterranean influence between the fourth and second centuries BC, and includes Corinthian capitals; bronze, ivory and stone sculptures representing Greek gods; and images of Central Asian figures carved in Hellenistic style. Trade goods from a third site, at Begram, date from the first century and include ivory statues and elaborately carved Indian ivory reliefs, as well as vases, bronzes and painted glassware, many imported from Roman, Indian, Chinese and East Asian markets. The Tillya Tepe group consists of some 100 first-century gold objects, including an exquisite crown and necklaces, belts, rings and headdresses, most inset with semiprecious stones. Many of the Bactrian objects reflect the distinctive local blend of Greek, Roman, Indian and Chinese motifs. Asian Art Museum of **San Francisco**, October 24 through January 25; Museum of Fine Arts **Houston**, opens February 22.



This partly gilded silver ceremonial plaque depicting Cybele, the goddess of the fertile earth, was found in the "temple with niches" at the archaeological site of Ai Khanum in Afghanistan. It dates from the beginning of the third century BC.

Color and Light: Saudi artist Sameera Ismail steps away from her impressionistic images to more pointillist, brighter, post-impressionist renderings. Her layered washes and spontaneous and dramatic brush strokes result in highly interactive images. Arabian Collections Gallery, **Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia**; through September 21.

Painted Photographs: Colored Portraiture in India From the Alkazi Collection of Photography. Photography reached India in 1840, and artists swiftly engaged with the new medium. This exhibition presents a unique Indian art form: color tinting of photographic images. It includes portraits of Indian rulers standing against dramatic and theatrical backdrops as well as studio images. Organized by such themes as aspects of kingship and modes of art practice, they explore the period from the 1860's to the 1930's. Catalog £20. Brunei Gallery, SOAS, **London**, through September 27.

Sunken Treasures of Egypt presents a spectacular collection of some 500 artifacts recovered from the seabed off the coast of Alexandria and in Aboukir Bay. Lost from view for more than 1000 years, they were brought to light by an ongoing series of expeditions first launched in 1992. Thanks to these excavations, important parts of a lost world have resurfaced, among them the ancient city of Thonis-Heracleion, the eastern reaches of Canopus, the sunken part of the Great Port of Alexandria and the city's legendary royal quarter. The finds shed new light on the history of those cities and of Egypt as a whole over a period of almost 1500 years, from the last pharaonic dynasties to the dawn of the Islamic era. Antiquo Madero de Legazpi, **Madrid**, through September 28; Venaria Reale, **Torino, Italy**, opens in January.

The Greeks presents more than 180 artifacts that shed light on the imprint left by the Greeks on world civilizations and cultures. The exhibition is divided into sections that cover pre-history and antiquity, the Byzantine period, the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire and the creation of today's modern Greek state. Exhibits, from the Benaki Museum in Athens, include sculptures, ceramics, jewelry, textiles, paintings, metalwork, icons, toys, figurines, lamps and wooden chests. Canadian Museum of Civilization, **Gatineau, Quebec**, through September 28.

Magic in Ancient Egypt: Image, Word, and Reality explores how the Egyptians, known throughout the ancient world for their expertise in magic, addressed the unknown forces of the universe. Ancient Egyptians did not distinguish between religion and magic, and believed that the manipulation of written words, images and ritual could influence the world through a divinely created force known as Heqa, personified as the eldest son of the solar creator Atum. The exhibition also examines connections between magic and medicine and the use of magic after death. **Brooklyn [New York] Museum**, through September 28.

Orientalism: An Eye for the Exotic. In the 19th century, technology, trade and politics opened up exotic locations to both travel and the imagination. Artists were already captivated by Japanese art and design, and the phenomenon called Orientalism added a focus on other eastern cultures, including those of Iran, Turkey, Algeria and India. In homes and galleries, imported objects from exotic lands mingled with European and American versions of Oriental art, designs, scenes and life. Morse Museum of American Art, **Winter Park, Florida**, through September 28.

Sarcophagi From Ancient Egypt: Gardeners of Amon in the Valley of the Queens features 40 heretofore unexhibited pieces, including 28 sarcophagi and one mummy, from the collection of the Egyptian Museum of Turin, where they were transferred in 1903 from the collection of Italian archeologist Ernesto Schiaparelli, who discovered them during his excavations in the Valley of the Queens. The exhibition's sections are "Thebes, the City of Kings and Gods," "Tombs for the Princes of Egypt," "The Reuse of the Princely Tombs" and "Oblivion and Rediscovery." Museu Egipci de **Barcelona, Spain**, through September 30.

Treasures of Islamic Art shows woven textiles and carpets, illuminated manuscripts, inlaid metalwork, blown glass, ceramics, carved wood, embellished furniture and calligraphic panels from the 12th through 20th century. Photographs by Saudi artist Reem Al-Faisal complement the art works. Waqif Art Centre, **Doha, Qatar**, through October 5.

Babylon: Myth and Truth explores the myth of Babel and the facts of Babylon: two worlds in one exhibition. The first section, "Truth," exposes the roots of our western culture by looking at the archeological remains of Babylon, revealing what lies behind the legends. More than 800 objects are exhibited, among them statues, reliefs, votive offerings, architectural fragments and documents. The second section, "Myth," views Babylon as a metaphor for civilization's dark side: repression, terror, violence, hubris and madness. This story is not a historical one, but illuminates a civilization that needs the myth of Babel in order to understand itself. Pergamonmuseum, **Berlin**, through October 5; British

Museum, **London** (with about 100 objects), opens November 13.

Perspectives: Y. Z. Kami presents two monumental portraits from the Tehran-born artist's current series depicting individuals in meditation. In a third work, he uses collage and verses by Jalaluddin Rumi to create a spiral of calligraphy. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through October 13.

50 Years: 50 Photographs by Kamran Adle. From graffiti at Iranian bazaars to silent moments at a Zoroastrian temple, Adle has recorded the pulse of the nation for 50 years. Aaran Art Gallery, **Tehran**, through October 15.

Ghada Amer: Love Has No End, the first US survey of the renowned artist's work, features some 50 pieces from every aspect of Amer's career as a painter, sculptor, illustrator, performer, garden designer and installation artist. **Brooklyn [New York] Museum**, through October 19.

Beyond Orientalism: How the West was Won Over by Islamic Art is not about how European and American artists depicted the Islamic world. Rather, it shows how the Islamic world changed aesthetics in the West, most visibly in the decorative arts, especially glass and ceramics, but also in architecture and fine art. The exhibition puts artifacts from the museum's own collection alongside the works that they inspired. Islamic Arts Museum **Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur**, through October 25.

Life After Iraq: Photography By Angela Catlin. Since war broke out in 2003, at least 4.7 million Iraqis have been forced to flee their homes. Around two million of the displaced have crossed into Syria and Jordan. The Scottish Refugee Council commissioned award-winning photojournalist Angela Catlin

and writer Billy Briggs to travel to Syria and document the lives of ordinary Iraqis living there after fleeing their homeland. The exhibition also provides insight into the lives of Iraqi refugees who have come to Scotland. St. Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, **Glasgow**, through October 26.

Overlapping Voices: Israeli and Palestinian Artists offers a rare opportunity to discuss different artistic practices from a conflicted area. Both Israeli and Palestinian societies contain a range of people, cultures and positions with disparate and intertwined histories. This exhibition brings together some representative voices in 22 art projects. Essl Museum, **Vienna**, through October 26.

Ghadah Al-Kandari's portraits "are not about celebrating the female figure or the emotions that inhabit a woman's being. My canvases are home to people with whom I have a parasitic relationship.... I live vicariously through them and they through me." These eight paintings of twelve women "all have one thing in common," says Al-Kandari. "They carry the weight of my world on their shoulders." Dar Nur, **Kuwait City, Kuwait**, through October 31.

Recent Sculptures In Bronze: Dia al-Azzawi has achieved an extremely original and persuasive symbiosis of Sumerian architectonics with the dynamic of western modernity. Through a body of work that is transgressive and cross-cultural and holds multiple existential and political meanings, at once tragic and playful, making life triumph over death, al-Azzawi is helping to create a new Arab civilization. Galerie Claude Lemand, **Paris**, through October 31.

Kufic Korans: Calligraphy in the World of Islam features a broad range of visual cultures, from Egypt to Iran, united by an appreciation for beautiful Arabic text. All the manuscripts displayed feature an angular style of Arabic calligraphy called *kufic*, considered to have originated in Kufa, a city in modern Iraq. Today the term is used by calligraphers and scholars to describe a wide range of angular Arabic scripts. Early kufic Qur'an manuscripts, enhanced by gold and silver illumination, were commissioned by powerful Muslim rulers and large mosques. The angular, horizontal style also lent itself well to architectural inscriptions on monuments. Later, kufic would be revived by calligraphers and artisans looking back to the austerity of the past and exploring the style's potential to become more ornamental and abstract. Even in the 21st century, international corporations and local businesses in the Islamic world often use kufic for their logos and nameplates. Museum of Fine Arts **Boston**, through November 2.

Um Kulthum: "The Fourth Pyramid" marks the 30th anniversary of the death of the great singer also called "The Lady," "The Voice of the Arabs" and "The Star of the East." The exhibition includes photographs, audio and film clips, documents and

costumes in each of four sections: "The Egyptian," about Um Kulthum as a person; "The Talent," about her abilities as a singer and interpreter; "The Engagement," about her relations with her usually adoring public; and "The Heritage." Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, through November 2.

Excavating Egypt: Great Discoveries from the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology offers a view into the lives of both royal and average Egyptians, showing more than 200 ancient objects and works of art from the earliest periods of Egyptian history to the late Roman period. The exhibition also tells the story of archeologist William Matthew Flinders Petrie (1853-1942), one of archeology's greatest pioneers, and captures the adventurous spirit of the early days of Egyptian archeology. The exhibits include one of the world's oldest garments, a rare beaded-net dress from the Pyramid Age, ca. 2400 BC; a fragment of a history book from 2400 BC; the earliest examples of metalwork in Egypt; the earliest examples of glass—so rare the Egyptians classed it with precious gems; the oldest "blueprint," written on papyrus; and the oldest known royal monument, from the reign of the legendary Scorpion King about 3100 BC. Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, **Coral Gables, Florida**, through November 2.

Azerbaijan: 5000 Years of History and Culture in the Caucasus. Ethnological Museum, **Berlin (Dahlem)**, through November 16.

Persian Visions: Contemporary Photography From Iran presents more than 80 images that provide a revealing view of Iranian life and experience. The 20 artists featured are among Iran's most celebrated and include Esmail Abbasi (references to Persian literature), Bahman Jalali, Shariyar Tavakoli (family histories), Mehran Mohajer, Shoukoufeh Alidousti (self-portraits and family photographs) and Ebrahim Kahdem-Bayatvin. Some have lived abroad and returned to view their homeland from a changed perspective. Anti-exotic and specific, these images make up the first survey of contemporary Iranian photography to be presented in the United States. **Missoula [Montana] Art Museum**, through November 22.

Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past deals with both the looting of the Iraq National Museum in Baghdad and the ongoing looting of archeological sites that poses an even greater threat to the cultural heritage of Iraq and the world. Archeological finds and photographs of looted sites and damaged artifacts illustrate such themes as the importance of archeology to history and identity; looting and damage to archeological sites; past combat damage and current construction damage; loss of archeological context; the routes looted artifacts take from Iraq to art markets; progress of recovery efforts at the Iraq Museum; and what can be done. Oriental Institute Museum, **Chicago**, through December 31.

Treasures: Antiquities, Eastern Art, Coins and Casts presents more than 200 of the most significant objects in the Ashmolean's world-renowned collections. The exhibition provides visitors with a rare opportunity to discover the historic crossing of time and culture in this portrayal of artistic achievement and the development of civilization in Europe, the Near East and the Far East. The treasures represent more than 30 cultures dating from Paleolithic times to the present day, and are presented in nine sections reflecting basic aspects of human activity and interest throughout history. Ashmolean Museum, **Oxford, UK**, through December 31.

Palestine 1948: Remembering a Past Homeland presents the recollection of the *nakba*, "the catastrophe" that followed the establishment of Israel in 1948, from a Palestinian perspective. The exhibition comprises four sections, connected by the central theme of memory and loss. Historical photos by Khalil Raad (1854-1957) give a sense of everyday life in Palestine in the 1920's. In recently filmed video interviews, Palestinian refugees of 1948 tell their personal stories of war, escape and exile. American photographer Alan Gignoux shows photos of Palestinian refugees in combination with contemporary pictures of the precise locations they left in 1948. The video art of Palestinian Jumana Emil Abboud, a resident of Jerusalem, expresses the longing for a homeland and raises the question of impossibility of return. Tropenmuseum, **Amsterdam**, through January 4.

The Horse examines the long, powerful relationship between horses and humans and shows how horses have changed warfare, trade, transportation, agriculture, sports and many other facets of culture. Exhibits include fossils and artifacts from around the world and from 50 million years ago to the present. Among the institutions cooperating in creating the exhibition is the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage, and the roles of the horse in Arab culture—and of Arab horses in equine culture—are part of the exhibition. American Museum of Natural History, **New York**, through January 4.

Ayşe Erkmen: Weggefärten (Fellow Travelers) is a comprehensive solo exhibition of the Turkish conceptual artist's works. First forging a path (Weg) from the building's outside to its interior, she links the various spaces leading to the actual exhibition site on the first floor of the east wing. Along with sculptures and a large installation dovetailing with earlier works, the exhibition includes her film oeuvre. Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, **Berlin**, through January 11.

Homer: The Myth of Troy in Poetry and Art presents the historical Homer and the extraordinary influence of his epics, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, whose first appearance in written form marked the transition from the preservation of literature in human memory to its storage in ever newer extracorporeal forms. To show how the epics were received, the exhibition

juxtaposes objects from antiquity with later works of art from the Renaissance to modern times: Odysseus's wanderings, the Trojan horse and the characteristics of the gods of antiquity are still common artistic references today. A highlight of the exhibition is the eighth-century "Nestor's Cup," whose three-line inscription is one of the earliest references to *The Iliad*. Reiss-Engelhorn Museums, **Mannheim, Germany**, through January 18.

Evet: I Do! German and Turkish Wedding Culture and Fashion from 1800 to Today juxtaposes the customs and clothing associated with what is, for most people, still a very important occasion, when a simple "I do!" changes lives. Special clothing for bride and groom emphasizes the importance of the transition. Exhibits from Turkish and German museums, from the 19th century to con-temporary designers' products, help answer such questions as "Why are bridal gowns traditionally white? What happens on the henna night? What—and why—is a shivaree?" Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, **Dortmund, Germany**, through January 25.

Battleground: War Rugs from Afghanistan presents 118 carpets that tell the story of a world turned upside down. Beginning soon after the USSR invaded Afghanistan in 1979, Afghan rug weavers bore witness to disaster by weaving unprecedented images of battle and weaponry into their rugs: Kalashnikovs replaced flowers, jet fighters replaced birds. War rugs continued to be produced through three decades of international and civil war. Textile Museum of Canada, **Toronto**, through January 27.

Shared Beauty: Eastern Rugs and Western Beaded Purses. Beaded purses were extremely popular in the 1920's, and a wide variety of patterns was depicted on them, including flowers, landscapes and other motifs. Some of the most fashionable designs were copied from Persian, Turkish, Caucasian, Turkmen and Indian carpets and textiles, and this exhibition explores the juxtaposition of bags and rugs and, more generally, the influences of eastern art on western art and fashion. **Indianapolis [Indiana] Museum of Art**, through March 8.

Generations Under the Arabian Sun commemorates Saudi Aramco's 75th anniversary and includes more than 500 historical pictures of company and community life. Grouped by decades, the 25 to 50 pictures per group are complemented by dioramas showing special events or developments in the company's past. bereskep@aramco.com or +966-3-872-0458. Saudi Aramco Community Heritage Gallery, **Dhahran, Saudi Arabia**, through April 1.

Shrunken Treasures: Miniaturization in Books and Art highlights more than 30 small-scale manuscripts and rare books, ranging from Books of Hours and copies of the Qur'an to almanacs and books of poetry, and explores the many reasons for miniaturizing art, from the need for portability, through

Events & Exhibitions

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the desire to concentrate supernatural powers, to the ambition to make boundary-stretching works of art. Walters Art Museum, **Baltimore, Maryland**, through October 2009.

Latifa Echakhch creates sculptures and installations that explore the visual and architectural codes of identity. The Moroccan-born artist makes allusions to Islamic geometric patterns and minimalism, colorfield painting, radical politics and the bureaucracy of residency visas, examining how even the most banal objects can be infused with cultural assumptions. Tate Modern, **London**, September 19 through November 23.

Utopian Visions brings together four Arab female artists living and working in various locations around the globe. They explore the idea of a perfect world, each with her own unique vision and style. Works by Rima Al-Awar (North Carolina and Toronto), Rana Chalabi (Cairo), Roula Ayoub (Beirut) and Emna Zghal (Tunis and New York) will be on display. Arab American National Museum, **Dearborn, Michigan**, September 25 through March 29.

The Essential Art of African Textiles: Design without End illustrates the diverse classical textile genres created by artists in West Africa, displaying some of their earliest-documented and finest works. Textiles have constituted an important form of esthetic expression throughout Africa's history and across its cultural landscape, and have been a focal point of the continental trading networks that carried material culture and technological innovations among regional centers and linked Africa to the outside world. Exhibits include items from the Metropolitan's own holdings along with some 20 works that had entered the British Museum's collection by the early 20th century, as well as works by seven living artists. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, September 30 through March 29.

Art and Empire: Treasures from Assyria in the British Museum. From the ninth to the seventh centuries BC, the Assyrians emerged as the dominant power in the Near East,

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Anna Richards Brewster: *American Impressionist* presents more than 50 plein-air scenes, portraits and still-lives in oil, watercolor, gouache and pen in an examination of the struggles and triumphs of a successful but little-known artist. Brewster traveled extensively, including in the Arab world, but the show is organized by style over her 45 most productive years, from her Barbizon-influenced romanticism through her impressionist, loaded-brush style to her Hopperesque realism. Catalog. **Fresno [California]** Metropolitan Museum, March 28 through June 14.

Brewster's draftsmanship and her light touch with color show in her 1926 watercolor "Arab Marketplace."



controlling all of present-day Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt, as well as large parts of Turkey and Iran. This exhibition includes the most powerful and moving of the art of the Assyrians. Military dress and equipment, horse trappings and harnesses illustrate life in the army. Carved ivories, furniture fittings and metal vessels showcase the luxurious lifestyle enjoyed by the king and his court. An array of three-dimensional objects—figures of deities, clay tablets, clay seals and sealings—address the administration of the empire, trade, legal and social issues, and interrelationships between religion, magic and medicine. Exorcisms, omen texts, mathematical texts and literary compositions from the royal library enshrine the wisdom of ancient Mesopotamia, the cradle of western civilization. Museum of Fine Arts **Boston**, September 21 through January 4.

The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting, 1830–1925 shows more than 110 images of bazaars, baths and domestic interiors in the Near and Middle East by such artists as Joshua Reynolds, J. F. Lewis, W. H. Hunt, David Wilkie, John Singer Sargent, William Holman Hunt, J. M. W. Turner, Roger Fenton, Andrew Geddes and Edward Lear. It is the first exhibition to survey British painters' representations of the Middle East from the 17th to the early 20th century; their responses to the people, cities and landscapes of the region; the cross-pollination of British and Islamic artistic traditions; and the use of "the Orient" as an exotic backdrop. Catalog. Pera Museum, **Istanbul**, October 2008 through January 2009.

Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs includes 130 works from the Egyptian National Museum, among them a selection of 50 spectacular objects excavated from the tomb of Tutankhamun, including one of the canopic coffinettes, inlaid with gold and precious stones, that contained his mummified internal organs. An additional 70 pieces in the exhibition derive from the tombs of royalty and high officials of the 18th Dynasty, primarily from the Valley of the Kings. These additional works place the unique finds from the tomb of Tutankhamun into context and illustrate the wealth and development of Egyptian burial practice during the New Kingdom. The exhibition is more than twice the size of the 1979 "King Tut" exhibition, and is on an "encore

tour" of US museums. Tickets: 1-877-888-8587. **Dallas [Texas]** Museum of Art, October 3 through May 17.

Teaching About the Arab World and Islam is the theme of full-day teacher workshops conducted by Arab World and Islamic Resources and School Services (AWAIR) of Berkeley, California. www.awaironline.org. Sites and dates currently scheduled include **Jackson, Mississippi**, October 4; **Oxford, Mississippi**, October 17.

The Photographs of Lalla Essaydi looks at the Moroccan-born artist's iconic depictions of family members in traditional attire and covered in calligraphic writing. The words break the expected silence, speaking of Essaydi's thoughts and experiences, caught between past and present. Frist Center for the Visual Arts, **Nashville, Tennessee**, October 10 through January 25.

Akhenaten and Nefertiti: Sun and Shadows of the Pharaohs examines in detail the connections among power, art and religion during the reign of Pharaoh Akhenaten and his wife, Nefertiti. In the 14th century BC, Akhenaten proclaimed the existence of a single god, of whom the sun was the tangible manifestation, and threw off Egypt's millennia-old polytheistic traditions. To promote their belief and display their new faith, Akhenaten and Nefertiti discarded the ancient artistic and literary canons and founded a city, Tell el-Amarna, conceived to serve the one god. But both proponents and adversaries of the new belief succumbed to intolerance, and all memories of the episode were erased by the couple's successors on the throne. The exhibition also shows how archaeologists, using both artistic masterpieces and day-to-day objects, are able to discover the aspirations and accomplishments of the most original of all the reigns of ancient Egypt. Musée d'art et d'histoire, **Geneva**, October 10 through February 1.

Garden and Cosmos: The Royal Paintings of Jodhpur. Newly discovered paintings from the royal collection of Jodhpur form the core of this groundbreaking exhibition of 61 paintings from the desert palace at Nagaur, along with a silk-embroidered tent. These startling images, 120 centimeters in width, are unprecedented in Indian art and reveal the emergence of a uniquely sensuous garden aesthetic in the 18th century. Ten 17th-century Jodhpur paintings

borrowed from museum collections in India, Europe and the US reveal the idiom from which the innovations of later Jodhpur painting emerged. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, October 11 through January 4.

Sabah Naim's photo-based pieces have traveled worldwide. The Egyptian artist's new body of work transposes the everyday of everyday life into the surreal of her imagination. Her characters, a vast collection of anonymous and simple people photographed in the streets of Cairo, invite intimacy and closeness, and Naim investigates their individuality. B21 Gallery, **Dubai**, October 13 through November 6.

Bonaparte and Egypt charts Napoleon's expedition to Egypt from the invasion through to the changed Egyptian identity after the French withdrawal, and also explores the birth of Egyptology, as the newly "discovered" culture swept the world and led to the rise of orientalism, a fascination with ancient Egypt and massive importation of Egyptian artifacts to Europe. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, October 14 through March 29.

Edge of Arabia: Contemporary Art From Saudi Arabia explores the individual expression of values and beliefs in a climate of change, and features works by 17 leading artists including Faisal Samra, Ahmed Mater al-Ziad Aseeri, Reem Al Faisal and Manal Al-Dowayan. Brunei Gallery, SOAS, **London**, October 16 through December 13.

A People's Migration: The Bakhtiari Kuch is a photographic essay by Caroline Mawer depicting an Iranian nomad family on their semiannual *kuch* (migration) on foot, with their flocks and families, over 3000-meter mountains in southwestern Iran. This ancient way of life is now vanishing fast. Mawer is a Persian-speaking British photographer and adventurer who accompanied one extended family. Brunei Gallery, SOAS, **London**, October 16 through December 13.

Timbuktu to Tibet: Rugs and Textiles of the Hajji Babas is organized not by country of origin but by function and means of production of the 70 non-western textiles on display, exploring their cultural contexts and functions and presenting the stories of the people who made them. The exhibition illuminates the central role

of textiles in cultures worldwide and also chronicles how western understanding and appreciation of such pieces have changed over the course of the 20th century. All the objects exhibited are from the collections of members of the Hajji Baba Club, the oldest society of rug and textile collectors in the US. A two-day symposium called "Cultural Threads: Exploring the Context of Oriental Rugs and Textiles," including presentations by its curator and other experts, takes place October 17 and 18; www.textilemuseum.org/symposium.htm. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, October 18 through March 8.

Bedazzled: 5000 Years of Jewelry feature some of the museum's greatest masterpieces, as well as many treasures on view for the first time, among more than 200 pieces on display. Besides a special section devoted to rings, highlights include a bright blue faience amulet featuring the lion-headed goddess Sekhmet from fifth century BC Egypt. Walters Art Museum, **Baltimore, Maryland**, October 19 through January 4.

Byzantium 330–1453 highlights the splendors of the Byzantine Empire, exhibiting around 300 objects including icons, detached wall paintings, micro-mosaics, ivories, enamels and gold and silver metalwork. Some of the works have never been displayed before. The exhibition begins with the foundation of Constantinople in 330 by the Roman emperor Constantine the Great and concludes with the capture of the city by the Ottoman forces of Mehmet II in 1453. Along the way it explores the origins of Byzantium; the rise of Constantinople; the threat of iconoclasm; the post-iconoclast revival; the remarkable crescendo in the Middle Ages and the close connections between Byzantine and early Renaissance art in Italy in the 13th and early 14th centuries. Royal Academy of Arts, **London**, October 25 through March 22.

Beyond Words: Contemporary Calligraphy From the Middle East presents a diversity of works that transcend the strict rules of traditional calligraphy and explore the medium's scope for development of personal ideas. Artists included in the exhibition are Rafa Al Nasiri, Yusef Ahmed, Ali Hassan, Mohamed Kanoo, Khaled Al Saai, Hassan Massoudy and Farhad Moshiri. Galerie Kashya Hildebrand, **Zurich**, October 26 through December 6.

In Praise of Shadows explores the traditional art form of shadow plays and their influence on the world of contemporary art, bringing together key works by eight contemporary artists from seven different countries and two master filmmakers. At the heart of the exhibition is the shadow theater tradition of Turkey and Greece, and its character Karagöz (Karaghiozis in Greece), an ever-hungry trickster who lives through hundreds of adventures and misadventures with a varied set of supporting characters. The more than 250 items on display range from free-standing models of theaters to

drawings, collages and wall installations; they also include a significant number of rare figures and silhouettes, films, photographs, texts and manuscripts pertaining to shadow theater, and early silhouette and stop-motion movies. Film programs and lectures and live performances by Turkish and Greek shadow players are scheduled. Irish Museum of Modern Art, **Dublin**, November 5 through January 4; **Istanbul** Museum of Modern Art, opens January 27.

Tutankhamun: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs is [another] extensive exhibition of more than 140 treasures from the tomb of the celebrated pharaoh and other sites. It includes his golden sandals, created specifically for the afterlife and found on his feet when his mummy was unwrapped; one of the gold canopic coffinettes, inlaid with jewels, that contained his mummified internal organs; and a three-meter figure depicting Tutankhamun as a young man, which originally may have stood at his mortuary temple. Providing context and additional information are 75 objects from other tombs in the Valley of the Kings, including objects related to Khefnep (Cheops), Hatshepsut and Psusennes I. Boissieuillet Jones **Atlanta [Georgia]** Civic Center, opens November 15.

Wonderful Things: The Harry Burton Photographs and the Discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamun complements the Tutankhamun exhibition above. The tomb, one of the most famous archeological finds of all time, was one of the first large-scale excavations to be thoroughly documented through photography. The clearance of the tomb took 10 years, and in that time, photographer Harry Burton took more than 1400 large-format black-and-white images. The exhibition consists

of 50 of Burton's photographs with explanatory labels, wall panels that discuss the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun and the role of the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute in its interpretation, the early use of photography in archeology, the photographic career of Harry Burton, and how the photographs fueled the public relations campaign of the excavators and spawned the myth of the curse of Tutankhamun. Carlos Museum, Emory University, **Atlanta, Georgia**, opens November 15.

Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium BC focuses on the extraordinary art created as a result of a sophisticated network that linked kings, diplomats, merchants and others in the Near East during the second millennium BC. Approximately 350 objects from royal palaces, temples and tombs—as well as from a unique shipwreck—provide an overview of artistic exchange and international connections throughout the period. From Syria, Mesopotamia and Egypt in the south to Thrace, Anatolia and the Caucasus in the north, and from regions as far west as mainland Greece all the way east to Iran, the great royal houses forged intense international relationships through the exchange of traded raw materials and goods as well as letters and diplomatic gifts. This movement of precious materials, luxury goods and people resulted in a transformation of the visual arts throughout a vast territory. Many of these works have either only recently been excavated or have never been shown abroad. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, November 18 through March 15.

Beyond Boundaries: Islamic Art Across Cultures is the long-awaited opening exhibition of Qatar's new Museum of

Islamic Art. Part of the museum's collection was exhibited at the Louvre in 2006 under the title "From Cordoba to Samarqand," and featured metalwork, ceramics, jewelry, carpets, calligraphy, textiles and carved ivory. Recently, the museum bought the Nuhad Es-Sahid collection of Islamic metalwork and 40 Mughal and Persian miniature paintings from the collection of Stuart Carey Welch. Museum of Islamic Art, **Doha, Qatar**, November 22.

Islamic Fabrics in the Collection of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire uses a small, high-quality textile collection to explore the socio-political history of Islamic Egypt. Exceptional items on exhibit include a very fine Mamluk tunic and, from the same period, a baby tunic made from small salvaged scraps of embroidered linen. Often fragmentary, such textiles nonetheless provide essential information on the clothing, living conditions and funeral rites of Islamic Egypt. Musée d'art et d'histoire, **Geneva**, December 4 through April 1.

The Saudi Aramco Exhibit relates the heritage of Arab-Islamic scientists and scholars of the past to the technology of today's petroleum exploration, production and transportation, set against the background of the natural history of Saudi Arabia. **Dhahran, Saudi Arabia**.

Information is correct at press time, but please reconfirm dates and times before traveling. Most institutions listed have further information available at their Web sites. Readers are welcome to submit information for possible inclusion in this listing. Some listings have been kindly provided to us by *Carvas*, the art and culture magazine for the Middle East and the Arab world.

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