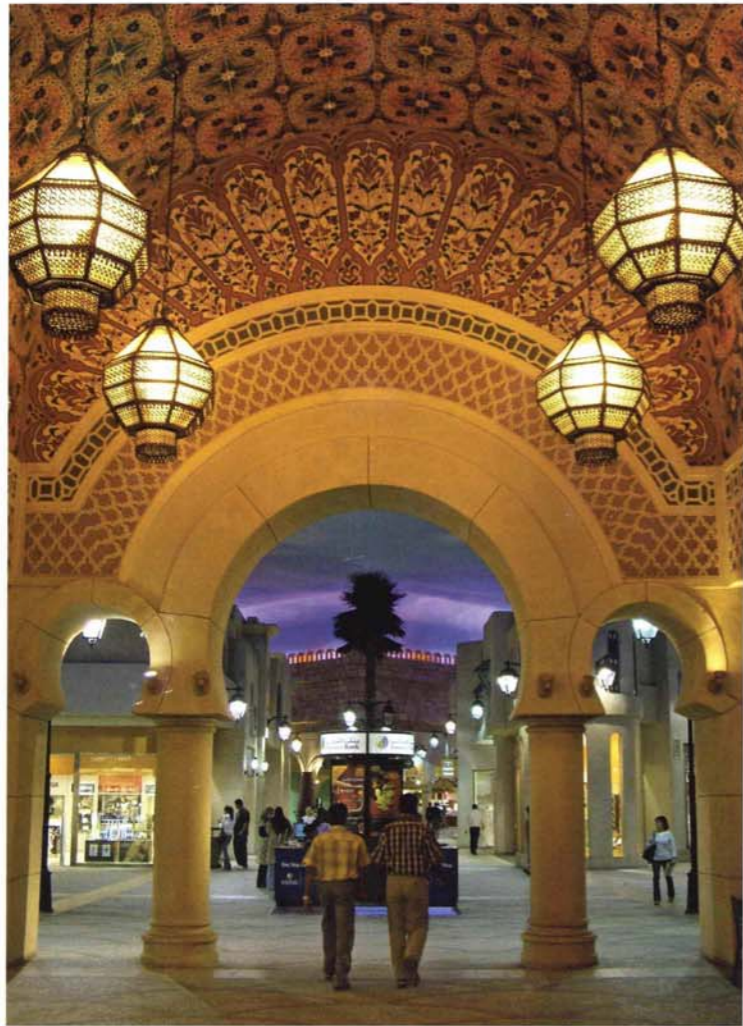


March/April 2008

Saudi Aramco world



2008 marks the 75th anniversary of Saudi Aramco... providing energy to the world.
75
Energy for generations



East Meets West in Venice

Saudi Aramco
world
www.saudiaramcoworld.com

Saudi Aramco World

March/April 2008

Published Bimonthly
Vol. 59, No. 2

2 East Meets West in Venice

Written by Richard Covington

For much of the millennium before the rise of Portugal and Spain, Venice flourished as the hub of Europe's trade with the lands to its east and south, weaving not only economic ties but also a web of cultural exchanges. The profound mutual influences between East and West inspired a major exhibition as well as fresh looks at Venice by historians.



Edutaining Dubai

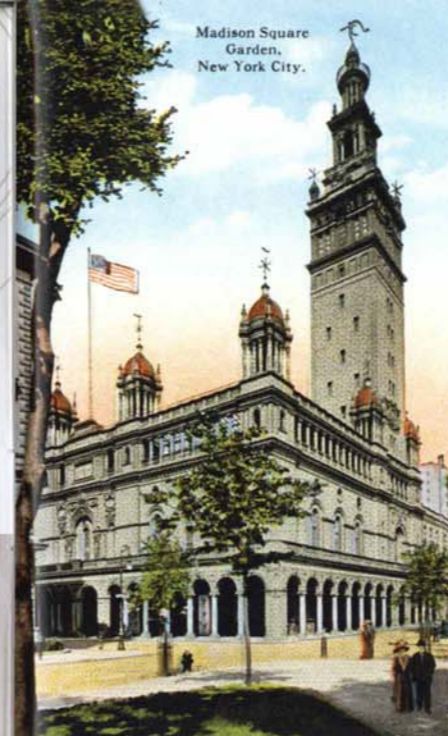
Written by Tim Mackintosh-Smith
Photographed by Dick Doughty

14

In the introduction to his 14th-century travelogue, Ibn Battuta wrote that he intended to provide both "entertainment" and "edification"—in that order. So too does the huge 21st-century shopping mall named after him, where nearly 300 stores coexist with six clusters of museum-like exhibits about the traveler and his medieval world. Is this any way to learn history?



2: CAMERAPHOTO ARTE, VENICE / ART RESOURCE; 20: LABRECHT MUSIC AND PHOTO ARTS LIBRARY / ALAMY; 30: EDWARD WILLIAM LANE / MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MODERN EGYPTIANS (1866, DETAIL)



Madison Square Garden, New York City.

20

Third Generation

Written by Louis Werner

Though he had never set foot in Seville, New York architect Stanford White chose that city's iconic Giralda as his model for a new Madison Square Garden in 1888. In doing so, he brought an architectural form with North African roots to its third continent—and the popular result became a touchstone for decades of American corporate design.

New Nomads of the High Atlas

Written by Cloe Medina Erickson
Photographed by Kristoffer Erickson

Video at www.saudiaramcoworld.com by
Cloe Medina and Kristoffer Erickson

In central Morocco, where alpine pastures plunge into valleys walled by sheer limestone cliffs, seasonal migrations of western rock climbers are bringing new faces to old folkways. From eating savory *tagine* dinners to rebuilding the village schoolhouse, villagers and climbers are learning how each can benefit from the other, much as villagers and nomads have done for generations.



30

The Indefatigable Mr. Lane

Written by Jason Thompson

Before he even arrived in Alexandria from his native Britain in 1825, Edward William Lane professed a "zealous attachment" to his quest to explore not only Egypt's monuments, but also its people and its Arabic language. He did all that and more, and his books became landmarks of scholarship—yet his most comprehensive work, the *Description of Egypt*, went unpublished in full until the year 2000.



40 Classroom Guide

Written by Julie Weiss

42 Suggestions for Reading

45 Suggestions for Listening

46 Events & Exhibitions

Cover:



In a relief on the Palazzo Camello, the home of the Mastelli family, an Arab caravaner and his camel exchange a glance they have held since as early as the 12th century, when the Mastelli brothers—spice traders of Peloponnesian origin—first settled in Venice. Their spice shop in the Cannaregio district was "at the sign of the camel," which surely indicates what is in the bale on the camel's back. Photo by Alberto Campanile / Cubolimages / Alamy.

Back Cover:



Entrance 2B of the Ibn Battuta Mall takes the visitor from the northwest parking lot, through this vaulted arcade, into the simulated evening of Tunisia Court. Each of the mall's six courts is built around both a retail category and a land that Ibn Battuta visited in the 14th century. Photo by Dick Doughty.

Publisher
Aramco Services Company
9009 West Loop South
Houston, Texas 77096, USA

President and Chief Executive Officer
Mohammed Y. Al-Qahtani

Director Public Affairs
Deya A. Elyas

ISSN
1530-5821

Editor
Robert Arndt

Managing Editor
Dick Doughty

Assistant Editor
Arthur P. Clark

Administration
Karim Khalil

Circulation
Edna Catchings

Design and Production
Herring Design

Printed in the USA
RR Donnelley Wetmore Plant

Address editorial correspondence to:
The Editor
Saudi Aramco World
Post Office Box 2106
Houston, Texas
77252-2106 USA

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.

Printed on recycled paper

www.aramcoservices.com



East Meets West IN VENICE

WRITTEN BY RICHARD COVINGTON

IN A QUIET CORNER OF VENICE'S CASTELLO DISTRICT, FAR FROM THE CROWDS THRONING ST. MARK'S SQUARE, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN ENNIO CONCINA DIRECTS MY GAZE UPWARD TO A WORN STONE FRIEZE DECORATING A 16TH-CENTURY PALAZZO.

Through binoculars, I can barely make out the palm trees, gazelles, camels and other Middle Eastern images on the Palazzo Zen, ancestral home of one of the most prominent Venetian families involved in diplomacy and trade with the Islamic world.

"The entire façade was once covered with frescoes recounting the Zen family's contributions to the Venetian Republic," says Concina. "The frieze was a memento of Caterino Zen the Elder's mission in the 15th century to the Turkmen *khan* Ozun Hasan in Persia."

What an amazing family it was! Nicolo Zen explored Greenland and the Orkney Islands in 1393–1395. In 1398, his brother Antonio made it as far as Nova Scotia—or so claim Frederick Pohl and other historians. Daragon Zen traded in Arabia in the 15th century. In the 16th century, Pietro Zen was vice-consul in Damascus and voted unsuccessfully against war with the Ottomans in 1537. Pietro's son Francesco wrote the earliest western book praising Turkish architecture, and another son, Nicolo, compiled a history of the Abbasids. The Zen chapel in the Basilica of St. Mark was constructed in the 16th century as the funerary chapel for Cardinal Giovanni Battista Zen.

Venice's fortunes, like those of the Zen family, have been inextricably linked to the Islamic world at least since the eighth century, when her merchants began trading with Alexandria. In this long-running tale of interdependence, the Adriatic city was a gateway to the Middle East, giving Muslims a taste of Europeans as businessmen rather than Crusaders.

The Venetian Republic was "an entrepôt for the importation into Europe of profitable luxury goods such as carpets and textiles, and opened a European door to the Islamic cultures that created those goods," writes Walter Denny, an art professor at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, in the catalogue for "Venice and the Islamic World." This landmark exhibition of art, ceramics, metalwork and fabrics ran at the Arab World Institute in Paris, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and Venice's own Palazzo Ducale last year.



From the cupolas, pointed arches and gilt mosaics of the Basilica of St. Mark to the labyrinth of winding streets that Cambridge University architectural historian Deborah Howard compares to a "colossal *souk*," Venice has borrowed liberally from Muslim architecture and urban design. (See "Seeking Islamic Venice," page 11.)

Inside the Muslim cities of Alexandria, Constantinople (later renamed Istanbul), Damascus, Acre, Aleppo, Trebizond and Tabriz, the Republic created mini-Venices, commercial enclaves overseen by a

bailo, or consul, complete with churches, priests, merchants, doctors, barbers, bakers, cooks, tailors, apothecaries and silversmiths.

"Abroad, Venetian diplomats and merchants traveled throughout the Islamic world, from the Nile Delta to Syria to Constantinople to Azerbaijan," notes Denny, "and their *relazioni* or reports to the Venetian authorities still serve as important documentation of Islamic politics, history, economics and art."

Without Muslim trade, Venice would simply not have existed. Instead of the powerful maritime republic, "La Serenissima," that dominated Mediterranean commerce from the 12th to the 16th century, the lagoon settlement would likely have remained a fishing village.

But of course, there was trade—arguably the greatest the world had known. Silk, spices, carpets, ceramics, pearls, crystal ewers and precious metals arrived in Venice from the East, while salt, wood, linen, wool, velvet, Baltic amber, Italian coral, fine cloth and slaves went to Egypt, Anatolia, the Levant and Persia.

"Who could count the many shops so well furnished that they also seem warehouses," marveled the Milanese priest Pietro Casola on a 1494 visit to Venice's Rialto, "with so many cloths of every make—tapestry, brocades and hangings of every design, carpets of every sort, camlets of every color and texture, silks of every kind; and



Opposite: Venice's Grand Canal curves east at its mouth and opens toward the Mediterranean—and the world. It served as Europe's maritime gateway to Turkey, the Levant and North Africa for more than a millennium. Top: On a quiet canal, the Palazzo Zen was the home of one of Venice's great trading and exploring families. Nicolo Zen, a 14th-century envoy to Cairo, brought home the bold design of Venice's famous Doge's Palace. Above: A 13th-century statue of a "Moorish" trader sports a later, comically oversized turban.

OPPOSITE: JONATHAN BLAIR / CORBIS; UPPER: SARAH QUILL / VENICE PICTURE LIBRARY / BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY; LOWER: RICHARD COVINGTON

so many warehouses full of aromatics, spices and drugs, and so much beautiful white wax!” (Presumably, the priest was happy to locate wax suitable for votive candles.)

It was a somewhat one-sided business, since trade with Venice was a relatively minor aspect of the Mamluk and Ottoman economies. Nonetheless, the Republic was important enough to be the only Christian city to appear on Ibn Khaldun’s 14th-century world map. Yet for Venice, on the other hand, Muslim trade represented fully half the Republic’s revenues.

Christian pilgrims flocked to the city from across Europe to sign on for package tours to the Holy Land. These visitors were so critical to Venice’s economy that they were invited into the Palazzo Ducale to be individually embraced by the doge himself, and sailings were sometimes delayed on purpose to force the faithful to linger longer, and spend more money, before departing for Jaffa. On separate galleys, Venetian merchants collected Muslim pilgrims in Tunis, Djerba and Alexandria and brought them to the Levant en route to Makkah.

The 13th-century Venetian Marco Polo brought back tales of the fabulous Middle and Far East, of course. But there were other, less famous travelers, such as 23-year-old Alessandro Magno, whose 16th-century diary portrays daily life in Alexandria and Cairo with ink sketches of typical house interiors and sights like the Sphinx and pyramids at Giza. (Like Venice, each city had around 150,000 residents.) Although Magno was a tourist, many young Venetian noblemen spent years at a time learning Arabic and bookkeeping in their homeland’s far-flung commercial outposts. Other visitors were bowled over by Muslim craftsmanship. After inspecting pieces of delicately incised

Venetians, Turks and others would have met in markets like this one in the Jerrahpasha district of Constantinople, across the Golden Horn from the Venetians’ trading centers. The spiral column shown in this illustration from a 16th-century Ottoman manuscript was erected in about 405 by the Eastern Roman emperor Arcadius.

inlaid metalware in Damascus, 14th-century merchant Simone Sigoli breathlessly declared, “If you had money in the bones of your leg, without fail you would break it to buy these things.”

Numerous Arab words were absorbed into Italian, including trade terms such as *doana* (customs) and *tariffa* (duty) and the names of luxury goods such as *sofa*, *divan* and *damasco*. A gold ducat was a *zecchino*, taken from the Arabic word *sikka*, or mint.

As the chief European center for publishing, Venice also printed many Arabic texts in Latin and Italian translation,

including the *Canon*, the standard medical reference book by Persian physician Ibn Sina (called Avicenna in the West), and commentaries on Aristotle by 12th-century Córdoba philosopher Ibn Rushd (known in the West as Averroës). Even the first printed text of the Qur’an was published in Venice in 1537–1538 by enterprising local booksellers aiming to crack Arabic-speaking markets. Riddled with errors, the edition proved a dismal failure, but it did inspire translation into Italian in 1547, according to Stefano Carboni, the curator for the Met exhibition.



ALFREDO DAGLI ORTI / MUSEO CORRER, VENICE / BILDARCHIV PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ / ART RESOURCE



“From the last years of the 15th century onward, Venetian publishers printed Muslim treatises on medicine, philosophy, astronomy and mathematics,” explains Giandomenico Romanelli, the director of the city’s Correr Museum, an extensive repository of art, ceramics, maps and manuscripts. Elaborately tooled leather bookbindings made in Venice were modeled after those of Istanbul, Tabriz and elsewhere in the Muslim world, he notes. In publishing, trade, diplomatic relations and pilgrimages, “Venice was the hinge between East and West,” says Romanelli.

The connection is deeply entrenched in myth and history. According to legend, two Venetian merchants spirited away the bones of St. Mark from Alexandria in 828, hiding them in a basket beneath a shipment of pork. Images of the episode appear in mosaics on the façade and ceiling of St. Mark’s Basilica, which was built to house the saint’s remains.

To Venetians, possessing the relics of St. Mark gave the city a holy status to rival Rome, the seat of western Catholicism. The Republic set about establishing its reputation as the new Alexandria, where the evangelist had preached and been martyred. In the 15th century, a campanile tower was erected at the Basilica of San Pietro

Top: A detail from a 16th-century view of Venice shows the arrival of both lateen- and square-rigged ships. Above right: A palace built on the Grand Canal in the mid-13th century was allocated to the city’s Turkish merchants in 1621 as warehouse and living accommodation, and was thereafter known as the Fondaco dei Turchi. Today it is Venice’s natural history museum. Right: At the eastern end of the Mediterranean, the Khan al-Umdan at Acre offered similar facilities to Venetian traders.

Castello in homage to the famous Pharos, Alexandria’s ancient lighthouse. Paintings by Gentile Bellini, Giovanni Mansueti and Vittore Carpaccio mingle Venetian and Alexandrian backdrops in scenes depicting St. Mark.

The recent exhibition was designed to illustrate Venice’s sta-

tus as a “privileged partner” of the Islamic world, says Carboni, who was himself born near the Rialto and has devoted the past two decades to studying the artistic exchanges between Venice and the East. “Venice is usually associated with Byzantium, not the Islamic world,” he explains. “But I wanted to surprise the public with the breadth of artistic, cultural, mercantile and diplomatic connections.”

Carboni is quick to point out that the key to the pragmatic Venetians’ trading success was that they never regarded themselves as superior. “Muslims were understood simply as figures in the wider world with whom it was necessary to do business,” he says. “Also, the Venetians were far more tolerant from the religious point of view than the rest of Europe.”

For centuries, the Christian Republic carried on a diplomatic high-wire act, balancing competing allegiances to

Muslim rulers and the Catholic Church, essentially doing whatever was necessary to keep commerce as free and unhindered as possible. Even during the Crusades, the Venetians continued trading with Islamic partners. The Fourth Crusade, in fact, famously turned into an opportunity for Venice to attack the Byzantine empire, not Muslims. After the sack of Christian Constantinople in 1204, Venetians brought back incalculable treasures, including the four bronze horses now in the basilica museum. (The ones on the roof are copies.)

From time to time, the Vatican placed restrictions on trade with Muslims. But the Venetians, eager to assert their independence from papal authority, circumvented the bans by trading surreptitiously through Cyprus and Crete.

The Mamluks, who ruled a vast stretch of territory from Egypt to Syria from 1250 till 1517, relied on the Venetian navy to protect their coasts, according to Deborah Howard. Although diplomatic relations were generally warm, the sultan Qansuh



A VERY BRIEF HISTORY

Fleeing Gothic and Lombardic tribes in the fifth century, settlers from the Italian mainland took refuge on the Adriatic lagoon islands that would become Venice. Driving piles into the seabed, the refugees gradually enlarged the islands and built bridges linking them. Lacking arable land, the earliest Venetians relied on fishing and trade, declaring an independent republic in 726 and erecting the first fortress for the *doge*, or duke, and the government in the ninth century. After sacking Constantinople in 1204, the Venetians adorned their city with loot from the Byzantine capital, ushering in a golden age of commerce with the Middle East

and the Orient that lasted some four centuries. By the 16th century, the population of Venice was around 150,000, roughly the same as Cairo's, and the city was filled with artistic and architectural masterpieces. As Portuguese, Spanish and English explorers shifted the balance of trade away from the Mediterranean to the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, Venice lost its dominance of the merchant routes to the East. After Napoleon abolished the Republic in 1797, the once-proud city went into a prolonged decline. Today, tourism buoys the economy, and a project to save the sinking city from flooding, under discussion for at least 40 years, may finally be getting underway.

al-Ghuri personally placed chains on vice-consul Pietro Zen in 1511 and imprisoned him in Cairo for holding secret talks with Shah Ismael, the first Safavid ruler of Persia. The Venetians were seeking a Persian alliance to contain the expanding Ottoman empire, which did indeed end Mamluk power six years later, in 1517.

Carboni acknowledges that Venetians had a "love-hate relationship" with the Ottomans, who, unlike the land-locked Mamluks, nurtured aspirations to usurp Venetian control of the eastern Mediterranean. Despite several bitterly fought conflicts—notably over Corfu in 1537, Cyprus in 1571, Candia (Crete) from 1646 till 1669 and Morea between 1684 and 1716—overall there were many more years of peaceful trading than war, he says, and it was Napoleon, not the Ottomans, who finally conquered Venice in 1797.

Like the ambitious French emperor, the Ottoman sultan Mehmet II, who conquered Constantinople in 1453, had a hunger for world

An unknown painter of the Italian school created this view looking down over the busy Constantinople harbor.



recognition. "He wanted to be acknowledged by the European powers as the equal of emperors and kings," says Carboni. To spread his fame, Mehmet requested that the Venetian government send an artist to immortalize him in portraits and a sculptor to forge medallions with his image.

The Venetians thought it would be in their interest to please the conqueror of Constantinople, so they selected Gentile Bellini, the most prominent painter of the time, and sent him off in 1479. In the nearly two years he resided at the Ottoman court, Bellini painted numerous portraits that ultimately left their marks on local artists and miniaturist painters in Istanbul and as far away as Isfahan and Tabriz.

Mehmet's publicity campaign succeeded beyond his dreams. The Bellini

portraits have spawned so many copies on everything from book covers and posters to banknotes, stamps and comic books that, according to the Turkish Nobel Prize-winning author Orhan Pamuk, "any educated Turk must have seen them hundreds, even thousands, of times." They embody the iconic image of an Ottoman sultan "the way Che Guevara's portrait incarnates that of a revolutionary," Pamuk observes in the French magazine *Connaissance des Arts*. After Mehmet's death, his son and successor, Bayezid II, who warred with the Venetians over their southern Greek territory of Morea, sold Bellini's portraits in the Istanbul bazaar to help finance the construction of a mosque complex.

When it came to Muslim artists and craftsmen settling in Venice, however,

the locals wanted to limit the competition; they allowed in very few artisans. Instead, the city imported impressive quantities of luxury goods made overseas, including Mamluk and Persian carpets, Syrian and Egyptian glass, Iznik porcelain and incised metal bowls and ewers from Syria.

From Venice, carpets were sold throughout Europe. Cardinal Wolsey, first minister to the English King Henry VIII, was "a pathological carpet collector," who pressured diplomats to give him dozens as gifts, says Denny.

Venetians bought raw silk from the shores of the Caspian Sea in northern Persia, manufactured elegant velvet caftans with Ottoman-style floral designs and sold them in Constantinople and elsewhere in the Muslim world. To combat the Venetian monopoly on luxury textiles, the 16th-century Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha promoted new techniques to produce silk brocades

and velvets that are "among the supreme artistic achievements of Ottoman art," according to Denny.

Ultimately, the development of the pedal-powered loom and spinning wheel in Europe led to the export of so much cheap cloth that it constituted what one economist called an early example of product dumping in Islamic markets. In the 15th century, Cairo historian Taqi al-Din al-Maqrizi exhorted Muslims to abandon low-quality European fabrics and wear local clothing instead.

A similar give-and-take process occurred in glass production. Recognizing that the glassmakers of Syria and Egypt had no serious rivals in Europe, the Venetians began importing raw glass, as well as broken glass (cullet) and plant soda ash from the Levant around the 13th century to copy Muslim designs at home. So successful was the transfer that certain enameled and gilt beakers, decorated with camels and

desert plants and once believed to have originated in Syria, turned out to be Venetian-made. By the middle of the 15th century, Venetian glassmakers had perfected a technique to produce *cristallo* glass, a clear, colorless creation, free of defects, that successfully imitated expensive rock crystal. Ottoman artisans soon adapted the technique in the manufacture of Iznik



porcelain. Thus a process that had begun with Venetians borrowing styles and materials from Islamic craftsmen came full circle with Ottoman ceramists building on Venetian expertise.

As cargoes of carpets, glass, silks and porcelains filled the harbor, it was obvious how Venetian fortunes and spirits faced East. The sheer energy of the commerce driving the city was a spectacle and entertainment to behold.

Left: Venice, as rendered by Ottoman admiral and cartographer Piri Reis in his *Kitab-i Bahriye*, a book of portolan charts and sailing directions produced in the early 16th century. Top: In 1479, at the request of Ottoman sultan Mehmet II, Venice sent one of its most prominent painters, Gentile Bellini, to Constantinople for nearly two years to paint portraits of the sultan. Widely reproduced, these became both stylistically influential and iconic. (Orhan Pamuk's novel *My Name is Red* deals with the upheaval western painting caused in court circles.) Above: Eastern styles in turn influenced Bellini, as evidenced by his portrait of a seated Ottoman scribe, now in Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

The scale of trade was staggering; the sight of countless ships coming and going was breathtaking. From his quayside house overlooking the Riva degli Schiavoni, the 14th-century poet Petrarch, on a three-month visit from Florence, marveled at ships the size of “floating mountains,” the square-rigged, round-hulled cogs that boasted five decks and a hold. Four centuries later, the 18th-century painter Canaletto found the harbor just as vibrant, filling his canvasses with dozens of ships at anchor and a forest of masts.

Convoys of galleys, two-masted lateeners and cogs set sail for Constantinople, Alexandria, Tripoli and Beirut carrying wool, wood and metals. By the 15th-century, they were also laden with such manufactured goods as textiles, soap, paper and glass. In return, cotton, spices, dyes, aromatics and salt arrived from Syria and Egypt, and silk, slaves and furs from the Tartar regions of Central Asia.

“On board the ships were sailors, soldiers, merchants, as well as doctors, priests and master carpenters,” Concina explains. Trumpeters and bagpipers were on hand to herald arrivals into ports of call; some captains even had them announce mealtimes. A diary compiled in the 1440’s by the trumpeter Zorzi da Modon that is now in the British Library describes life aboard ship and includes musical notations for leading crew and passengers in songfests. The outward journey to Alexandria took around a month and the return trip against the wind at

least six weeks, notes Howard. Pilgrim voyages to the Holy Land were far shorter, taking around three weeks each way.

The state-run *mude* system, an immense trading network lasting for nearly 200 years from the early 14th century to the early 16th century, dispatched armed convoys to destinations as far north as England and Flanders and as far east as the Black Sea, according to Concina.

Overseas, trading posts known as *fondacos* (*funduqs*, *khans* or *wakalas* in Arabic) served as home bases for Venetian merchants.

First mentioned by Herodotus in the fifth century BC, these caravanserais eventually stretched from Spain to China and are illustrated in the *Maqamat*, a 13th-century compendium of travelers’ tales by Muhammad Ali al-Hariri. Constructed around a large square courtyard with a well, the two- or three-story structure had colonnaded arcades with storage rooms for goods

and stables for pack animals on the ground floor and rooms for travelers on the upper levels. Typically, the *fondaco*’s single great gate was locked at night, both to protect merchants from robbery and to keep close watch on them. Although most of the *fondacos* decayed or were destroyed long ago, Acre’s Khan al-Ifrani, with its huge Gothic arches, is one that still exists; it has been converted into private residences.

Over the centuries, Venetian enclaves expanded around the *fondacos*. In Constantinople, where the Venetian quarter was located near the spice market, the residents built three churches over the course of 400 years from the 11th to the 15th century. The former house of the bailo is now—still—the Istanbul residence of the Italian consul-general. In Trebizond on the Black Sea, the



with his retinue of 20 attendants for an unusual 10-month round of treaty negotiations in 1506 and 1507, he caused a sensation as he was escorted around the city by pages and macebearers. Taghribidi and other Muslim diplomats were housed on the Venetian island of Giudecca so they could be controlled and watched, says Pedani.

Before the creation of a temporary *funduq* for Muslims in the late 16th century, merchants visiting Venice and a handful of artisans stayed at inns near the Rialto. But even when the *Fondaco dei Turchi* opened in 1621 in the Santa

Venetians built a church, houses, warehouses, quay and loggia.

Despite treaties intended to protect them, the Venetians were occasionally held prisoner in their *fondacos*, and one 17th-century bailo was hanged in Istanbul. Instead of retaliating with sanctions, the Venetians continued business as usual. “The boundlessly cynical Venetians never let morality, religion or ideology get in the way of making money,” Romanelli dryly observes.

In contrast to the extensive Venetian settlements in cities of the Muslim world, there were no permanent Muslim embassies in Venice. Ambassadors generally came for brief annual stays ranging from several days to a few weeks, according to Maria Pia Pedani, a specialist on Ottoman history at the University of Venice. When Mamluk envoy Taghribidi arrived from Cairo

Croce quarter, across the Grand Canal from the Jewish ghetto, it housed fewer than 100 merchants, including Turks, Bosnians, Albanians and Persians. An imposing, three-story building with two tiers of colonnaded arcades surrounding an inner courtyard, the *Fondaco dei Turchi* had been modeled after Middle Eastern *funduqs*. Above the ground-floor warehouse were living rooms, a bath and a prayer room. Muslim visitors were free to come and go during the day, but were locked in at night. The former *fondaco* now houses the city’s natural history museum.

“We have accounts of Turks having coffee at the Piazza San Marco and exchanging news from Turkey,” Concina explains. “Despite frequent wars with the

Ottomans, Turkish merchants were figures of respect.”

When I meet Giampiero Bellingeri, a leading authority on Venetian-Turkish relations from the University of Venice, at the 18th-century Caffè Florian, a landmark institution on St. Mark’s Square, the professor reminds me that the Caffè was modeled after coffee houses in Istanbul.

“The Ottoman authorities banned cafés from time to time because they were seen as places where subversive ideas circulated,” he explains. “Poets exalted coffee as ‘the black angel’ that inspired them.”

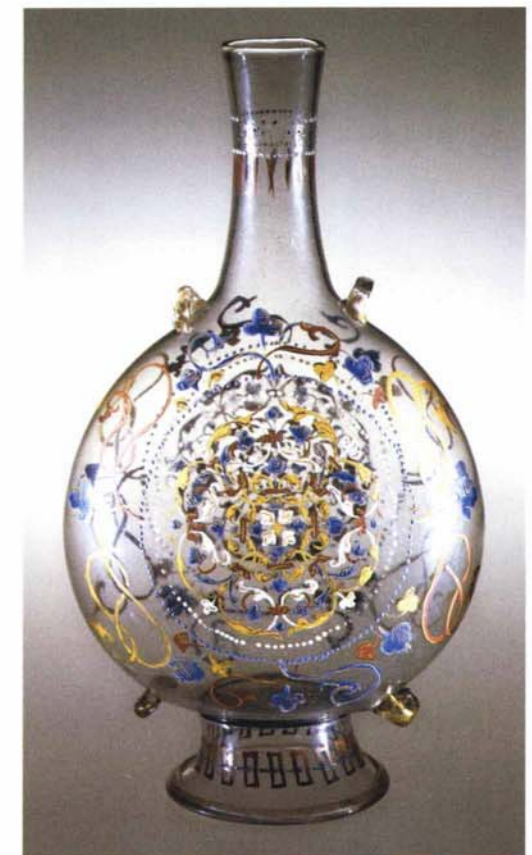
While Venetians respected Turkish merchants, they could not admit that the Ottomans possessed a well-developed culture of their own. “It was only after the Ottomans were defeated at Vienna in 1683 that we could begin to acknowledge that the Turks were not barbarians and had produced literature and art of great finesse and profound reflection,” says Bellingeri. “Once the Ottomans ceased to be a military threat, we could begin seeing them as equals.”

And, occasionally, as objects for ridicule. Carlo Goldoni, the 18th-

Venetian relations with the Ottoman Empire were sustained by trade, but punctuated by conflict. In the mid-17th century, the Turks retaliated against the Venetians for attacks on Turkish ships by the Knights Hospitaller of St. John, beginning a quarter-century of war. A Venetian painter depicted the “Action of August 27, 1661,” a battle in which the combined forces of Venice and Malta—22 ships—defeated a Turkish fleet of 36 galleys.



Above: A Mamluk governor, or *na'ib*, and his retinue prepare to receive Venetian consul Niccolò Malipiero in Damascus in 1511. The cupola of the Great Umayyad Mosque is in the background. Right: “Pilgrim flasks,” originally made of metal or leather, evolved into mostly decorative objects in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. This example is decorated with vaguely vegetal patterns in gilt and enamel. A significant portion of the Venetian economy was fueled by Christian pilgrims, who embarked for the Holy Land from Venice.



century Venetian playwright, wrote a number of works poking fun at Turks and Persians—yet mocking Venetians in equal measure. In “The Impresario of Izmir,” an unwitting Turk comes to Venice to organize an opera company and becomes so embroiled in the quarrels of backbiting divas and a nasty castrato that he returns home in frustration without a troupe.

Around the corner from the Florian, Bellingeri takes me to the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana to inspect a masterpiece of Venetian forgery. Inside the library, we slip quietly past scholars poring over books and manuscripts at long tables and enter a back room where the so-called “mappamundo,” the 1559–1560 map of the world created for the Ottoman market, is displayed on one wall. In the center of the map, intricately detailed drawings of western and eastern hemispheres are joined in the shape of a heart, surrounded by cramped scrawls of miniscule Ottoman script that describe cities, states and empires of the known world.

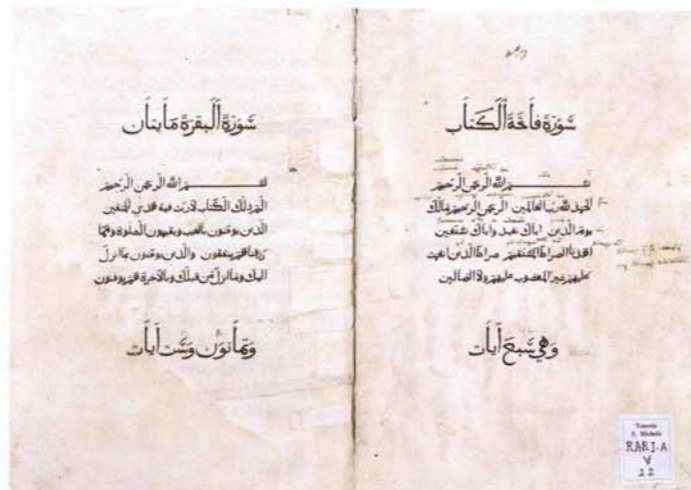
The text purports to have been written by “poor, powerless, indigent Hajji

Ahmed from Tunis,” says Bellingeri. He allegedly studied in Fez and was captured by “the Franks,” but allowed to continue practicing his religion. In compiling the map, Ahmed explains that he consulted Socrates, Plato and Abu al-Fida, the last a Syrian geographer-prince who lived from 1273 to 1331 and was greatly respected by Venetian scholars, Bellingeri explains.

Where did the mapmaker live, I ask. “Good question,” the professor replies. “He never says, and for good reason. In fact, Ahmed was a fictional creation by the Venetian scholars who made the map. They thought that having a Muslim author would make it sell better in Islamic lands, but their ruse didn’t work.”

It certainly couldn’t have helped the map’s authenticity that the true authors made several glaring errors. “When my colleague, the late Giorgio Vercellin, and I saw mistakes in writing the words *Islam* and *Allah*, we figured the authors had to be Venetian, not Muslim,” says Bellingeri with a wry grin. Even though there’s no proof, the professor is positive the forged map was a collaboration by Giovanni Battista Ramusio, a noted cosmographer and naval historian, and Michel Membré, a former ambassador to Persia and the Republic’s senior dragoman, or interpreter.

Apart from the counterfeit map, the Biblioteca Marciana contains one of the most extensive collections of Islamic manuscripts, incunabula and later printed books in the world. The day after meeting Bellingeri, I have an



appointment with Marino Zorzi, the library director, to view a remarkable pair of books. One, the *Iskandarnama* or *Book of Alexander*, is an illustrated manuscript dated 1430 from Edirne, the Ottoman capital before Mehmet II conquered Constantinople; the other, *Diverse Dressing Habits of the Turks*, is a 17th-century volume devoted to Ottoman clothing.

Inside his corner office across from the Doge’s Palace, Zorzi is obliged to partially close the heavy wooden shutters to block out the dazzling sunlight and his breathtaking view across the water to the Palladian church of San Giorgio Maggiore. Pushing aside exhibition catalogues and books scattered on an enormous table, the director makes room to pore over the two books.

“The *Iskandarnama* is probably the most important Islamic work of art in Venice today,” Zorzi explains. “It’s one of the few illustrated manuscripts we have from the Ottoman empire.”

Acquired by the library in 1797 as part of an extensive collection of Greek manuscripts, Arabic and Islamic books, coins and objects donated by Giacomo Nani, Venice’s chief superintendent of naval affairs, the *Iskandarnama* is a curious East-meets-West cultural grab-bag. It contains not merely the highly embellished exploits of a legendary Muslim version of Alexander the Great, but also an account of the Prophet Muhammad’s journey to heaven, episodes from the Persian *Book of Kings*, or *Shahnama*, the signs of the zodiac and the planets as well as conversations between the

book’s poet-author Taj al-Din Ibrahim ibn Khidr Ahmadi and a friend.

The costume book, donated to the library by the patrician bibliophile Giralamo Contarini in 1843, could not be more different. Bound in inexpensive cardboard and about the size of a trade paperback, this popular edition was published in Istanbul but features Italian captions, indicating it was published for export. It presents a cross-section of Ottoman society with 62 realistic portraits of individuals characterized by the vividly colored clothes they wear.

The turbaned sultan Bayezid I, “the Thunderbolt,” strikes an unusually meditative pose in a blue robe and sleeveless purple tunic. Regally attired in a dark pink tunic dress with gold belt and brocaded cape, the unnamed wife of a sultan sports red lipstick, painted eyebrows and a crown surmounted by a broad fan. There’s a court page in a long orange caftan and domed hat, a head gardener all in green, a hunter with rifle, horn, axe and plumed hat. On one page, a bare-foot Hindu pilgrim with a wispy beard and fringed cape carries a stick to support him on his begging rounds; another illustration shows a sword-bearing soldier with a leopard skin slung around his shoulders and a human head dangling from his belt. In addition to the court treasurer in sober brown caftan and a pair of eunuch harem guards, there’s also a jaunty idyll of three women in a rowboat.

As modest as the *Iskandarnama* is opulent, the costume book strikes me as yet one more means through which the Venetians were bent on acquiring knowledge, culture and wealth from the Islamic world. Collectors like Contarini and Nani, mapmakers like Ramusio and Membré, explorers and diplomats like Marco Polo and the Zen family, all depended on Muslim trade to make their fortunes. As Zorzi reopens the shutters on one of the world’s most glorious perspectives, with black gondolas bobbing in the silvery water, I wonder how much of this image would have remained a mirage without the matchless Venetian ambition to embrace the risks and possibilities of trading goods and ideas with the strangers of the East. ☉

SEEKING ISLAMIC VENICE

Tracking down Islamic influences and Muslim connections in Venice is not hard if you know where—and how—to look. If you stand on the square in front of St.

Mark’s Basilica, signs are all around. To the right is the Doge’s Palace with its distinctive three-tiered merlons, modeled on crenellations on Cairo’s Ibn Tulun Mosque. To the left is the Torre dell’Orologio, the 1498 clock tower with a giant blue zodiac dial identical to the clock face in al-Ghazari’s 13th-century treatise on robots. (Twelfth-century historian Ibn Jubayr mentions a similar clock with descending weights at the Great Mosque in Damascus.)

At your back is the Caffé Florian, an 18th-century institution patterned after coffee houses in Istanbul. Straight ahead, the tall cupolas of the basilica resemble mosque domes in Cairo’s City of the Dead



The Doge’s Palace incorporates such Islamic motifs as the decorative merlons atop its façade.

and across the Arab world. Stone window grilles resemble the decorative tracery abundant in Muslim religious architecture. On the basilica’s facade is a glittering 13th-century gold mosaic depicting the theft of St. Mark’s body from Alexandria in 828. Venetians built the first church, a precursor to the present 11th-century basilica, to house the saint’s relics.

Inside the basilica’s atrium, Biblical mosaics with scenes of banquets, bedside miracles and camels traversing deserts were modeled on similar scenes in illustrated Arabic texts such as al-Hariri’s *Maqamat* and the Persian epic, the *Shahnama*, according to Cambridge University architectural historian Deborah Howard.

Within the main sanctuary, which is covered floor to roof with opulent mosaics, the entrance to the treasury is surmounted by a pointed



The coffee shop came to Venice from Istanbul, and the Caffé Florian, still open in St. Mark’s Square, was the first.

arch with a Fatimid-style relief of peacocks and the gap-toothed decorative border called billet molding, common in Jerusalem and other cities of the Levant. The treasury itself showcases stunning Arab pieces, including a rock-crystal ewer that belonged to the 10th-century Fatimid caliph al-‘Aziz, a 10th-century Abbasid glass bowl carved with lions and a delicately beautiful, silver gilt and niello casket incised by Arab craftsmen in 12th-century Sicily with images of women playing a lute and a harp.

Upstairs in the basilica museum are five 16th-century gold-and-silver brocaded carpets from Isfahan. Another well-preserved Persian carpet measuring 150 by 275 centimeters (5’ x 9’) is woven with ducks and flowers surrounding bright

A mosaic in the Basilica San Marco depicts customs officials in Alexandria repulsed by the pork that hid the purloined remains of St. Mark.



Top: This copy of the Qur’an was printed in Venice by Paganino and Alessandro Paganini, using moveable type, in 1537—the first-ever printed Arabic edition. Venice was a center of typography and printing technology, and also of the commercialization of book- and map-printing. The Paganini Qur’an was not a commercial success, however, for both religious and practical reasons. Above: Scholar Giampiero Bellingeri points to the “Hajji Ahmed” world map that he believes was actually produced by Venetian cartographers for sale in the Ottoman Empire. The Muslim pseudonym would have given the map greater credibility.

TOP: SAN MICHELE IN ISOLA / BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY; LOWER: RICHARD COVINGTON
TOP: RICHARD COVINGTON; CENTER: JOE MURADOR / GRAND TOUR / CORBIS; LOWER: RICHARD COVINGTON

blue, interlacing designs in the center. A third carpet was donated by the Safavid Shah Abbas I in the 16th century, with instructions that it be used to present items from the basilica's treasury during religious celebrations.

Next to the basilica, the 14th-century Doge's Palace is completely without fortification, virtually unique for the time in Europe. Instead, the two levels of colonnaded arches make for a blessedly open and airy ground floor and second-story loggia. Howard maintains that the Venetian envoy Nicolo Zen brought home this bold architectural plan after his 1344 visit to Cairo, where he saw the Iwan al-Kabir, the official hall of justice, and the Citadel Mosque of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad. The exterior design of the Doge's Palace bears a striking resemblance to both buildings.

Upstairs inside the Doge's Palace, the walls of the Shields Room, where visiting envoys gathered, are covered with giant, vividly colored maps of the Mediterranean, Italy and Arabia. They were drawn by 16th-century geographer Giovanni Battista Ramusio, who used numerous Muslim sources, including maps by the 13th-century prince Abu al-Fida. In a nearby room, the Sala della Quattro Porte, is Gabriel Caliari's 1603 painting of Doge Mario Grimani flanked by turbaned emissaries from Shah Abbas I, dressed in blue and white silk. In the foreground, black-robed Venetians admire a magnificent cloak, velvet brocade and a silk rug threaded with gold, perhaps the very one that's in the basilica museum.

While this painting delivers a pointed lesson on the benefits of diplomacy, the vast murals in the Sala del Scrutinio, dramatizing the murderous chaos of the

naval Battle of Lepanto and other Venetian victories, are reminders that the peace-loving Serenissima could fight when provoked. Elsewhere in the palace are various spoils of war: an enormous red Ottoman banner, gorgeous ships' lanterns bearing crescent moons and *tughs* or standards, two-meter (7') poles decorated with horse tails. The more tails, the higher one's rank in the Turkish court; the sultan had seven.

Across the Grand Canal from the San Marco quarter, the Accademia gallery concentrates a number of masterpieces with Muslim references. In Giovanni Mansueti's painting of scenes from the life of St. Mark, Mamluk figures wearing conical red *zamt* hats and the white "horned" judicial turbans crowd an Alexandrian cityscape that evokes

Venetian architecture. In a Tintoretto painting from between 1562 and 1566, St. Mark reaches down from the heavens to lift up a drowning Saracen sailor. In Gentile Bellini's detailed account of a religious procession through St. Mark's Square, housewives proudly drape Turkish carpets from balconies lining the north side of the piazza. In Paris Bordone's 1534 painting of a fisherman returning the doge's ring, Andrea Gritti, the

Venetian chief of state from 1522 to 1538, is enthroned on a western Anatolian "star ushak" carpet with red, green and gold arabesque designs.

Back outside, simply wandering the streets is an education in Islamic influence on Venetian architecture. Christopher Wren, the 17th-century architect of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, wrote about Islamic elements in Gothic art and architecture—from ogive windows to the resemblance of flanking church towers to minarets. John Ruskin, the 19th-century art critic and philosopher, went even further, arguing in *The Stones of Venice* and other works that much of Venice was directly copied from the Near and Middle East.



Leading private homes often incorporated architecture from Islamic lands, including the Ca' d'Oro with its pinnacles and, below, the Palazzo Dario with its "telephone-dial" decoration.

ing open staircases, flat-roofed terraces and balcony verandas that resemble *mashrabiyyah* windows—imitate floor plans in the Levant, she says. Exterior windows are based on scale models of *mibrabs*—prayer niches—brought back from the East.

Impressed by Islamic architecture, Venetian merchants wanted to adapt elements of the style at home, partially for aesthetic reasons and partially to advertise their trading success. Two of the more striking Muslim-influenced palaces are the Ca' Dario and the Ca' d'Oro. On a mission to Cairo, 15th-century diplomat Giovanni Dario so admired Amir Bash-tak al-Nasiri's magnificent palace that he incorporated its distinctive "telephone-dial" motif in marble decorations for his own palace, down the Grand Canal from the Accademia. On the opposite side of the serpentine Grand Canal past the Rialto bridge, the Ca' d'Oro is one of the most lavishly decorated palaces in the city, with its ogive windows, cream-colored Gothic tracery and Egyptian-style pinnacles. Originally, the façade was painted in gold leaf and ultramarine like the interior of a Persian palace, says Howard. The Ca' d'Oro now houses a museum of paintings, sculpture and furniture, and contains a medallion portrait of Mehmet II by Bellini.

Walking from the Rialto back to St. Mark's Square, I try to imagine what the shops were like in the 15th and 16th centuries, when storekeepers inflated prices to take advantage of visiting eastern dignitaries and merchants. Glass, silk and tapes-



tries are still on sale, but nowadays, the boutiques are also filled with Furla bags and dresses, watches, sneakers, gianduja chocolates and La Perla lingerie. Chinese immigrants sell me a souvenir bag printed with a painting of St. Mark's Square.

Inside the Correr Museum at the opposite end of the square from the basilica, I have a look at Jacopo de Barbari's panoramic 1500 map of Venice, showing dozens of ships jostling for space in the harbor.

These days, instead of the round-bellied cogs in de Barbari's map, the waterside Riva degli Schiavoni is lined with water buses, called *vaporetti*, car ferries and cruise ships. A two-story ochre-brown building with Mamluk crenellations midway up its façade was a 15th-century bakery that produced long-lasting ships' biscuit for voyagers. Nearby were houses for pilgrims awaiting departure for the Holy Land.

Across a small bridge, the Naval History Museum displays elaborately carved side panels from wooden galleys, the figure of a Turkish prisoner from the stern of a warship, large models of galleons, triremes and galleys, and a full-sized boat rigged like a Nile felucca.



The back of the so-called "Throne of St. Peter" is inscribed in Arabic.

Up the broad Via Garibaldi with its working-class cafés and shops, I make my way to the Basilica of San Pietro Castello, the city's principal cathedral until 1807, when the Basilica of St. Mark's became Venice's primary church. An immaculately white stone campanile rises from the grassy park surrounding the basilica. Constructed from 1482 to 1488 by Mario Codussi, the bell tower was erected at the eastern tip of the city as a Venetian version of Alexandria's Pharos lighthouse. Inside the magnificent cathedral is the so-called "Throne of St. Peter," donated by the Byzantines to thank Venice for its help wresting Sicily from the Arabs in the 13th century. In fact, it is not a throne at all, but a stone chair with a back fashioned from a 12th-century Islamic funerary stele inscribed with Qur'anic verses around a six-pointed star.

Elsewhere, Near and Middle Eastern references pop up in unexpected places across the city. At a museum of Greek icons next to the church of San Giorgio dei Greci, I stumble across a page from a 14th-century copy of *The Alexander Romance* with Arabic writing in the margins. Nearby, at the Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, paintings by Vittore Carpaccio from the early 16th century portray Mamluk musicians and judges against Near Eastern backdrops as St. George slays a dragon and baptizes converts. On the wide square in front of the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, schoolchildren play noisy games of soccer and tag in front of 1489–1490 stone panels by Tullio Lombardo, one representing St. Mark healing the cobbler Anianus in Alexandria, the other of the evangelist baptizing him. In one of those historical juxtapositions peculiar to Venice, I find myself seeking out the first printed copy



A copy of *The Alexander Romance*, acquired in 1430 from Edirne, now in the Biblioteca Marciana.

of the Qur'an at the church of San Francesco

della Vigna. Legend has it that St. Francis embarked from the site in the 13th century, on his way to Egypt to try to convert the sultan.

Out in the Cannaregio district, about as far north as you can get in the main city without swimming, lies a Moorish mystery—four statues of Muslims in the Campo dei Mori. This theatrical quartet, "dressed up like characters from the cast of a comic opera," as Howard writes, probably once graced the nearby Palazzo Camello, which still sports a charming stone frieze of a turbaned man gazing up at a camel with a bulky pack strapped to its back. The most prominent of the figures leans awkwardly in his niche next to the birthplace of 16th-century artist Jacopo Robusti, or Tintoretto. The poor fellow is weighed down by an outsized turban, probably added a century or more after the image was originally carved in the late 13th or early 14th century. Some historians once thought that the stone "moors" belonged to a *fondaco* created for Arab merchants, but Howard disagrees, speculating that the statues may have something to do with the Moro family and its role in the spice trade. No one really knows.

And I like it that way. In a city where the minutiae of the past have been pored over for centuries, it's reassuring that some links of the Republic's DNA, and aspects of its East-West trade in particular, remain a question mark for future generations of scholars. 🌐



An iron-nosed statue of a trader is said to be a portrait of one of the Mastelli brothers.

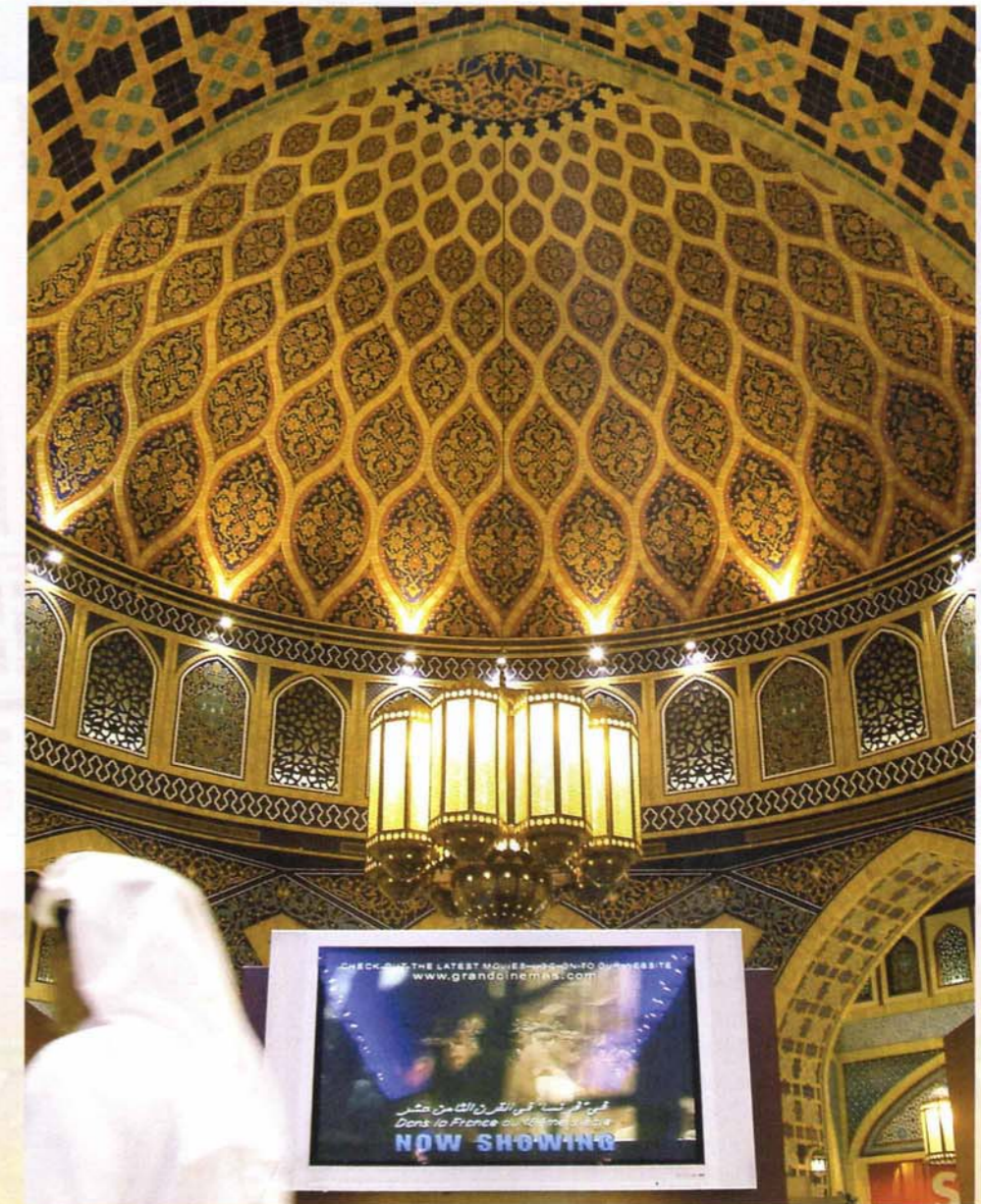


Paris-based author **Richard Covington** writes about culture, history and science for *Smithsonian*, *The International Herald Tribune*, *U.S. News & World Report* and *The Sunday Times* of London. His e-mail is richardpeacecovington@gmail.com.

📖 **Related articles** from past issues can be found on our Web site, www.saudiaramcoworld.com. Click on "indexes," then on the cover of the issue indicated below.

Venice's trade: J/A 05 Pharos: M/A 94, M/A 02 Maps of Arabia: J/F 04
Early printing: J/A 07 Mude: J/A 05 Ibn Tulun Mosque: J/F 05

🌐 **To see additional material about Venice in literature, read "Venice and the Printed Page" in the Web edition of this issue at www.saudiaramcoworld.com.**



Left: Standing beneath Chinese-style carved and painted beams, Ibn Battuta Mall “edutainer” Athalia Heynes explains to young visitors the medieval maritime voyages of both Ibn Battuta—who nearly died in two shipwrecks—and 15th-century Chinese admiral Zheng He. Heynes is one of six mall staffers who offer Arabic and English-language tours of the mall’s historical displays. Above: Vaulting over the center of Persia Court and framing previews for the 21-screen Grand Megaplex cinema, a dome designed to resemble the one on the Shaykh Lutf Allah Mosque in Isfahan rises on piers that, in turn, recall Baghdad’s Mustansiriyyah Madrasa.

Edutaining Dubai

the cab driver asked where I wanted him to drop me. “India, please,” I said, looking at my watch. Nearly 10 a.m.—time for takeoff.

From India I walked briskly via Persia to Egypt. There I passed through the hall of a 14th-century Mamluk palace, then out between the twin pylons of a pharaonic gateway. In front of me was a large yellow helium balloon tethered in the center of a circular pool. I crossed the water by a bridge, stepped into the gondola of the balloon and began to rise. To my right, Tunisia, then Andalusia, came into view; to my left, a line of terracotta red—the wall of Beijing’s Forbidden City. Behind me lay a busy freeway and a bleary sea and, in front, beyond a burgeoning urban jungle of cement and asphalt, the desert.

Here in Dubai—it really is Dubai—you have to pinch yourself sometimes. The place can be disconcertingly dreamlike (or nightmarish, when you find yourself trapped in a rush-hour jam on that freeway). And the most dreamlike spot in all Dubai is here, at the Ibn Battuta Mall, where the sort of temporal and spatial slippages we usually experience in sleep have spilled over into the reality of waking life. Not that the elements of that opening scene were quite real—except, of course, the road, the desert and the sea.

From my swaying aerial viewpoint, I surveyed the setting of the mall and remembered my first visit to Dubai six years ago. Then, there was little here that was man-made but the highway linking the emirate to its neighbor, Abu Dhabi. Now, that single main road had sprouted into knotty junctions and multiple offshoots that fed vigorous growths of building. A mile or two away, a dense clump of tower blocks rose far higher than my balloon on its 150-meter (500’) tether; in the distance beyond them, Burj Dubai rose far higher still, a stretch-ziggurat of a

building destined to be the tallest in the world. (Rumor has it that its completion is on hold, just to make sure it overtops potential rivals.) Dubai is a grow-your-own Manhattan, fed on a rich mulch of cash. And the growth isn't just sky- and landward. As if having the Empty Quarter next door weren't elbow-room enough, Dubai has thrust giant limbs out into the sea—the artificial peninsulas of the Palms, already beginning to bristle with villas. As I craned out over the rail to peer at the hazy outlines of this rampant real estate, it wasn't dangling from a balloon that made me dizzy: It was the sheer speed at which a city could expand. The mapmakers' nightmares must be worse than the motorists'.

It is Nakheel, the company also backing the Palms, that developed the Ibn Battuta Mall, which is the largest themed shopping center in the world. Seen from above, it was not a beautiful building: 110,000 square meters (27 acres) of gray cement roof and air-conditioning ducts, relieved by three oddly placed domes. But its size was undeniably impressive: The irregular range stretched 1300 meters from end to end—four-fifths of a mile.

Judging by the number and acreage of its malls, Dubai's national sport is not camel racing, but shopping. (In modern Anglo-Arabic, "mall" is *mawla*; the classical Arabic meaning of the word is, by a nice coincidence, "wealth.") Mall-builders go to enormous lengths, and not only literally, to draw potential customers. Not far away along Shaykh Zayed Road, for instance, is the Mall of the Emirates, an unremarkable building into which a *Star Trek*-style spaceship appears to have crash-landed. This vast metallic pod, simmering in the fierce Gulf heat, is actually a gigantic fridge-freezer containing a ski run with (real) snow and pine trees. Given this sort of competition, I had been intrigued to hear, back at the end of 2004, that Nakheel was designing its contribution to Dubai's mall culture around the 14th-century Moroccan wanderer Ibn Battuta. He may well be the greatest traveler of all time, and his *Rihlah* the greatest travel book, but it seemed to me that his crowd-pulling qualities might be overshadowed by the prospect of slaloming down the ski slope while the desert outside broils.

As the balloon descended to its mooring by Egypt Court, I recalled that Ibn Battuta's own story had taken off, so to speak, in Egypt, with a vision of flight and of distant lands: "I dreamed I was on the wing of a huge bird which flew me

in the direction of the *qiblah* [toward Makkah], then to Yemen ... then far to the east." Only another nice coincidence? Perhaps the Ibn Battuta Mall did make a sort of sense. For the people who dream up malls, big is beautiful: Why not build your plan around the man who'd spent half a lifetime following his own dream across the known world of his day?

Back in the severely air-conditioned interior of the mall, however, I began to wonder just what Ibn Battuta himself would have made of this evocation of that world of his. It was certainly too cold. And was it not also perhaps a touch too... *Las Vegas*?

Yet maybe I was being a touch too cynical. Strolling through the mall's six courts, themed on some of the lands



The Moroccan traveler set out in 1321 from the western end of the Muslim world and ultimately reached China; similarly, developer Nakheel in 2004 assigned themes to the six sections of the mall, from Andalusia to Tunisia, Egypt, Persia, India and China. Outside the Géant Hypermarket, lit to evoke a Mediterranean evening, Tunisia Court shows models of medieval hydraulic technology. At right, pharaonic columns and overscale frescoes that imitate Egyptian tomb paintings decorate a section of Egypt Court.

he had visited—Andalusia, Tunisia, Egypt, Persia, India and China—I saw plenty that wouldn't have struck him as entirely alien: striped walls in the Mamluk hall, imitating the variegated stone used by Egyptian masons of his age; the carved lattice windows of India Court (even if they looked more 17th-century Taj Mahal than 14th-century Tughluqid); the great tiled dome of Persia Court, a fair simulacrum of the dome of the Shaykh Lutf Allah Mosque in Isfahan (again a quarter of a millennium too late for Ibn Battuta, but borne on piers borrowed from Baghdad's Mustansiriyyah Madrasa, a building he did see). Even the pleasing profile of the rubbish bins looked as if it might be an echo of the big *martaban* storage jars the

traveler came across in Southeast Asia. A purist would nuzzle about materials and anachronisms, but only a hopeless pedant could fail to be impressed—and not just by the scale, but by the sheer *fun* of it all. Like the 19th-century confections of London's Leighton House and Frederic Church's arabesque mansion by the Hudson, this was nothing if not orientalism at its most exuberant.

But it wasn't only the architecture that was exuberant: So too were the contents. A 24-meter (78') sailing junk with a yawning hole in its side sat high and dry in China Court. It would have gained a rueful nod of recognition from Ibn Battuta, who lost his companions in the wreck of just such a vessel. But next door, under the dome of India Court, the life-sized wooden elephant would have mystified him. "Al-Jazari's Elephant Clock," a sign explained. As I read the plaque, human figures in an elaborate double-decker howdah on the elephant's back began to move, as they never had in the original, which didn't get beyond a drawing in al-Jazari's 13th-century manuscript *The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices*. More ingenious devices were scattered about the other courts, jostling for attention alongside re-creations of armillary spheres, astrolabes and other scientific instruments of the Arab Middle Ages, a camera obscura, and displays about 'Abbas ibn Firnas, the ninth-

The mall, a strange marriage of Mammon and the Muses, fairly revels in its own happy hybridity.



century pioneer of hang-gliding, and Zheng He, the Ming Dynasty Chinese Muslim admiral and voyager. To say the least, the Ibn Battuta Mall had a habit of wandering off its theme; but then, like all the best writers of his age, Ibn Battuta himself had been nothing if not digressive and impulsively curious.

There was, of course, another theme. "Great Stuff," says the mall's motto, "Fantastic Place." The stuff—the goods, the shopping—comes first. Ibn Battuta's world that starts in Andalusia and ends in China also begins with the Géant Hypermarket and culminates in the Grand Megaplex 21-screen cinema with IMAX-in-the-round, a world of hyper-consumption and mega-entertainment unimaginable to Ibn Battuta—and indeed to the majority of 21st-century humanity. To me, the resulting incongruities were no less fascinating than al-Jazari's elephant clock: the tile-spangled azure vault of Shaykh Lutf Allah's dome above and Debenhams department store, with its "Mid-Season Savers," below; an Emirati lady, in discreetly expensive sunglasses, chatting on a cell phone next to a giant cuddly emu outside a pharaonic toy shop; an Australian voice echoing among the hieroglyphic friezes above Gloria Jean's coffee shop—"A free croissant? But *nothing's* free in Dubai!"

Nothing was free in the Dubais of Ibn Battuta's age either: the great emporia such as Calicut in India, Zaytun (Quanzhou) in China and Tabriz in northwest Iran. In 14th-century Tabriz, mall-going also seemed to have been the national pastime: "They were buying huge quantities and were trying to outdo one another," Ibn Battuta said of the power-shopping Mongol ladies in the city's gold and perfume bazaars. "What I saw of this was a scandal!" But more often, Ibn Battuta wrote in praise of healthy economies and well-stocked *sucs*. Besides, I had seen nothing overtly scandalous here in Dubai, and I felt that, after the initial shock of the hyper-and mega-scale of it all, he might have admired the commercial side of his mall. But the fact remained that the resulting juxtapositions, or collisions—Mamluks and Marlboro Classics, Adidas and astrolabes, Persian tiles and Pizza Express—were very strange indeed, far stranger than the idea of skiing in the Mall of the Emirates, that architectural Baked Alaska down the road.

Reading a press release in the mall management reception area, I found that it fairly reveled in the happy hybridity of the place. "Edutainment," it announced, was "a key element of the mall," while Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, executive chairman of Nakheel, explained that the six courts "strongly project the historical and cultural richness" of Ibn Battuta's life. A few lines on, however, I learned that the same six courts were "retail zoned": Andalusia, Tunisia and so on were also themed "Convenience, Family, Modern Trends, Lifestyle, Designer Fashion and Entertainment." In the Ibn Battuta Mall, a strange marriage of Mammon and the Muses, I suspected it was Mammon who was calling the shots.

The management people agreed that while Ibn Battuta was, of course, "added value," his mall was essentially "retail-driven." And from their point of view, the drive was clearly heading in the right direction: It was already attracting around 10 million shoppers a year, and with a residential building boom

virtually in its back yard, that number looked set to grow. I left the office with a notebook bulging with figures: 60 cleaners, 275 retail stores, a 3500-member gym, 5000 parking spaces—you get the idea—and a nagging twinge of that faint cynicism that had bugged me ever since I'd first heard of the Ibn Battuta Mall. "Added value"? As if Ibn Battuta was the cultural gilt, so to speak, on the commercial gingerbread.

It was José, the Filipino waiter who served my Lebanese lunch in the China Garden, who made me start to think I was being a little unfair. "Oh yes," he said as he cleared away my plates. "I know all about Ibn Battuta." He did, too, because he spent the occasional breaks in his 14-hour working days playing "the game."

"What game?" I asked. "The Ibn Battuta treasure game, in Tunisia Court," he explained. "It's good to find out something about Middle East culture." So it seemed that edutainment might even work.

"Actually we prefer 'interactive learning experience' to 'edutainment,'" Ludo Verheyen told me as we made our way toward Tunisia Court. The well-named Ludo, Dutch director of the Cape Town- and Dubai-based MTE Studios—the firm responsible for putting Ibn Battuta into the mall—was not only the best person to take me to play the game; he was also an enthusiast, and thus the perfect antidote to my lingering cynicism.

An enthusiast and, it turned out, a perfectionist. "We brought in Moroccan artisans to work on Andalusia Court," he told me, "and the decorators who did China Court came from Fuzhou, in Fujian Province." (One of the Chinese cities Ibn Battuta visited, I remembered.) "Oh, and you saw the external walls of China Court?" Ludo went on. I nodded, recalling their distinctive terracotta red. "We, er, removed a strip of paint from the wall of the Forbidden City, to get the color just right."

"What about the 'Ingenious Devices'?" I said, as we reached India and the elephant clock. "They don't exactly have a lot to do with Ibn Battuta."

"Well, after we'd planned the courts, we realized we'd ended up with these huge empty spaces, and we had to fill them with something." To judge by the number of mall-goers photographing each other next to the elephant, the automata had proved an inspired choice. Moreover, Ludo told me, a recent CNN television



Ibn Battuta's 1342 escape from the temperamental patronage of Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughlug of Delhi piques visitors' curiosity. Opposite: Walking from Tunisia Court to India Court, a family passes both a 14th-century abstract and a 21st-century commercial form of display.

See more photos at www.saudiaramcoworld.com.

minutes rather than every hour, I felt another twinge of doubt coming on: Wasn't this all just "instant heritage," "history lite," ready-made, packaged and imported? On the other hand, given that virtually everything else was imported, from the English mall manager to the cream in the zucchini soup, why not import the history too?

Nor was the history necessarily lightweight. Descriptive panels by the exhibits featured such non-household names as that of the astronomer Ibn Dawlatshah of Kirman. Watching an interactive video, I enriched my astrolabe-specific vocabulary with the terms *rete* and *alidade*. In fact, by the time Ludo and I had

I felt another twinge of doubt: Wasn't this all just "history lite," ready-made, packaged and imported? But then, why not? I had to admit I was being edutained.

program on Dubai had used two "iconic" shots to illustrate the city-state: Burj al-Arab, the sail-shaped and allegedly seven-star hotel in the sea; and the elephant clock. Two more eloquent public-relations images could hardly have been chosen. Dubai, they say, is futuristic, innovative, wealthy; but it is also rooted in a long tradition of Arab and Islamic ingenuity.

But as the figures on the elephant clock moved, operated not by al-Jazari's intended hydraulics but by microchips and, because of the brevity of modern attention spans, every 10



reached Tunisia Court and toured the main Ibn Battuta exhibit (featuring not only the traveler and his career, but also related subjects as diverse as the textile trade and Chinese *guzheng* music) I was positively in need of some light relief, and thus I was glad when Ludo introduced me to the treasure game.

He left me following the traveler round the Old World on an interactive touch-screen, while simultaneously collecting chests of gold to give to the present-loving Sultan of Delhi and dodging (as Ibn Battuta had) a devilish figure representing that dreadful 14th-century pandemic, the Black Death. Even here, though, the intellectual pressure was maintained: To get the gold, you had to answer multiple-choice questions, and if you got one wrong, you lost a life.

I had to admit I was being edutained. But what about the other mall-goers? I decided to find out what they'd learned.

Mr. and Mrs. Da Silva from Nigeria could be forgiven for thinking Ibn Battuta was "an early Muslim leader," as they'd come straight from the airport. Mr. 'Abdallah from Saudi Arabia stroked his beard: "Ibn Battuta was a scholar... No! A great traveler. It's good to see all these civilizations together here. We can benefit from them." Mrs. Kirstens from Denmark, window-shopping with a small baby, knew that Ibn Battuta had traveled from Morocco to China. She wouldn't hazard a guess as to what his dates were, but Mr. Rami from Syria got it exactly right, despite his tentative, "Er... first half of the 14th century?" It was Mr. Husam, a Palestinian living in Jordan, who proved to be the model edutaine: "I've come mainly to see the exhibits," he told me. "I can go shopping anytime. But I've come to expand my knowledge about Ibn Battuta, and I can't do that just anywhere."

A further half hour hovering around the central Ibn Battuta exhibit in Tunisia Court revealed that Mr. Husam wasn't alone in his search for knowledge. During this time I noted that more than 30 people, of various ages and races, looked closely at the displays and the descriptive panels. A few sums in my notebook produced a rough but surprising figure: Here, in the

My cynical self was by now thoroughly disarmed. Here, in the course of a year, perhaps a quarter of a million people would discover something about Ibn Battuta and his world.

course of a year, perhaps as many as a quarter of a million people would discover something about Ibn Battuta and his world.

The cultural message was getting through to the mall's younger visitors, too. A screen showing the animated adventures of the Young Ibn Battuta (in appearance an Arab cousin of Pinocchio) attracted a small but enthralled audience. But for one of these at least, there was another star that even the cartoon hero couldn't upstage: Adam Bashir, aged eight, from Manchester, England, didn't have to think twice when I asked him what was the best thing in the mall. "The elephant!" he declared. ("Phew!" said his father. "I thought he was going to say McDonald's.")

My cynical self was by now so thoroughly disarmed that I went and had my photo taken with Ibn Battuta, or rather the young cartoon version of Ibn Battuta, brought to life by a roaming actor in a padded suit. I could see the real Ibn Battuta having some reservations about being played by a character out of Disneyland's central casting, but at the same time, I couldn't help feeling that he might have rather approved of his mall. After all, his own aim, stated in the introduction to his book, was to offer "entertainment ... delight ... edification ... interest"—and what is that but "edutainment"?

It was now mid-evening, prime time, and the courts and domes of the mall hummed with the voices of thousands of shoppers, or potential edutainees. I was exhausted, but then I must have walked from Andalusia to China and back half a dozen times. I'd also explored Ibn Battuta's world on the even more microcosmic scale of the

treasure game. And here I have a confession to make. Having spent the last 12 years physically following Ibn Battuta's journeys through the real world, and having written three books (stocked, I was pleased to see, by the bookshop in Egypt Court) and presented a television series about the traveler, I still failed miserably: I lost a life in Marrakech, another in Calicut, and I finally fell victim to the Black Death in Chittagong.

Clearly I still had a long way to go, in every sense. And with that in mind, I actually bought something for that wider world outside the mall: a pair of walking boots. ☉



Tim Mackintosh-Smith (tim@mackintosh-smith.com) is the author of *Travels with a Tangerine: A Journey in the Footnotes of Ibn Battutah* (John Murray, 2001) and *The Hall of a Thousand Columns: Hindustan to Malabar with Ibn Battutah* (John Murray, 2005). He also edited *The Travels of Ibn Battutah* (Picador, 2002). His 2007 television series on Ibn Battutah has appeared on the BBC and the National Geographic Channel and is scheduled to be broadcast by PBS. **Dick Doughty** is managing editor of *Saudi Aramco World*.



Related articles from past issues can be found on our Web site, www.saudiaramcoworld.com. Click on "indexes," then on the cover of the issue indicated below.

Ibn Battuta: J/A 00, M/A 06 Al-Jazari's Elephant Clock: M/J 07
Leighton House: N/D 78 Zheng He: J/A 05
Church's mansion: N/D 05 astrolabes: M/J 07

THIRD GENERATION

WRITTEN BY LOUIS WERNER

When the Almohad caliph Abd al-Mu'min ibn Ali left his Berber stronghold in North Africa to invade Al-Andalus in 1146, he could hardly have imagined that, along with his army and his reformist faith, he was crossing the Straits of

Gibraltar with an architectural archetype that—700 years later—would be copied, adapted and rebuilt again and again in America.

Such was the influence of the classic Almohad minaret, as seen in the Kutubiyya of Marrakesh (begun in 1158, completed in 1195), the unfinished Hassan minaret in Rabat (begun in 1195) and, most famously, the Giralda

of Seville (begun in 1184, completed in 1198). And such was the talent of a single American architect, Stanford White of the New York firm McKim, Mead and White, that his homage to the Giralda, the Madison Square Garden tower (begun in 1889, completed a year later), would become a template for grandiose corporate towers all over the United States.

Stanford White (1853–1906) was the leading architect of America's "gilded age" at the turn of the 20th century, responsible for such New York City landmarks as the First Bowery Savings Bank, the Washington Square Arch and Judson Memorial Church. These and all of White's buildings display elements of the Beaux Arts esthetic, which he had studied in Paris, a wildly creative amalgam of Classical,

Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque elements and references.

As a student at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris in 1878, White traveled in southern France and Italy—but not as far as Spain—absorbing all architectural traditions. If he had made it to Seville, he would no doubt have been impressed by the Giralda's own amalgam of styles, from its Roman foundation stones, up its Almohad square shaft with decorative *sebka* masonry, blind arches, balconies and lobed windows, past its

30-meter-high (100'), five-level baroque belfry, added in the mid-16th century by Hernan Ruiz, and culminating in a weather vane in the shape of an allegorical female figure of Faith holding a shield and palm frond and spinning atop a ball pivot.

Instead of seeing the real Spain, White saw it in his imagination in the opera *The Barber of Seville*, whose performance he noted in a letter to his mother. He may also have read an 1885 issue of the leading professional magazine, *American Architect*, which featured floor plans, elevations and illustrations of the Giralda. We can only speculate that these experiences inspired him to emulate the Seville landmark when, in 1888, he won the

commission to design a theater complex at the northeast corner of New York's Madison Square, at 26th Street and Madison Avenue.

White designed this Madison Square Garden, the second in a series of four arenas by that name, as an ornate and expensive building, a full city block long and wide, with buff and yellow brick and terracotta ornament, an arched pedestrian colonnade and a tower culminating 105 meters (340') above street level with a four-meter (13') wind-pivoting statue of Diana,



Architect Stanford White, ca. 1906

Roman goddess of the hunt, holding a bow and arrow. The tower came to be called the "Diana Tower," just as the Giralda, whose name means "weather vane" in Spanish, takes its name from its uppermost part.

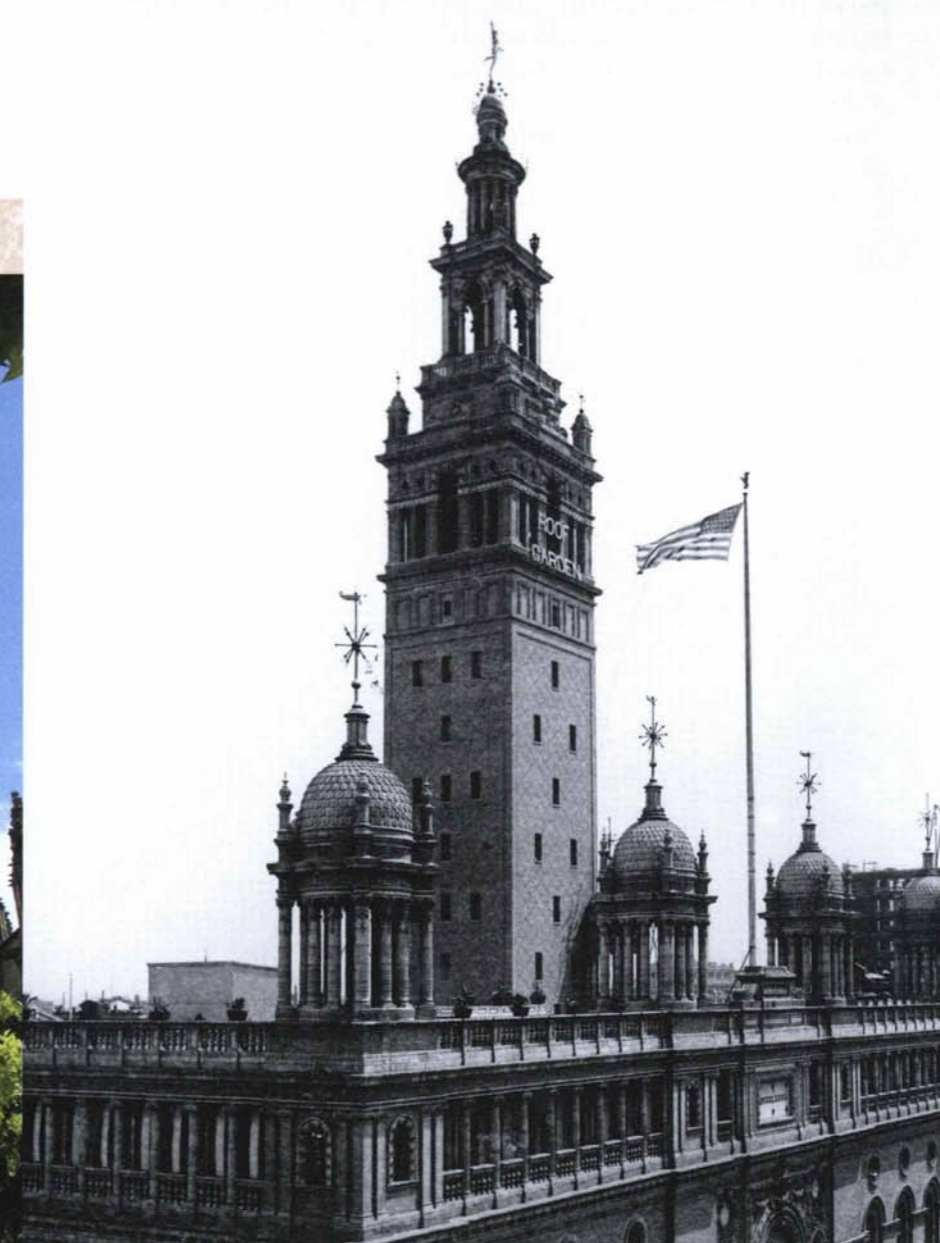
The *New York Sun* newspaper, perhaps immodestly, called the tower "the greatest achievement of the 19th century, unrivalled by any creation in art in many centuries."

But the tower itself—the city's second-highest structure, illuminated with 1400 incandescent bulbs, 100 arc lights and two sweeping searchlights—was far from modest. An elevator ascended to a public viewing platform on its top loggia, just below the Diana statue, from which the view reached as far as Connecticut.

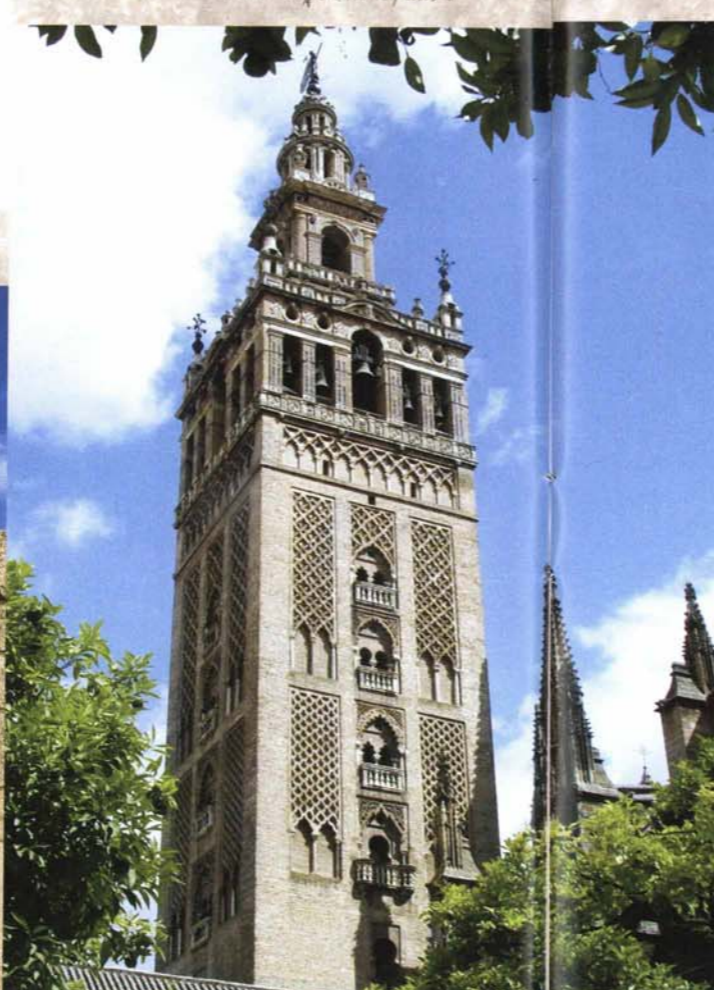
White's tower was praised in a vehemently opinionated essay entitled "The Use and Abuse of Precedent," published in 1893 by H. Langford Warren, an architecture critic and professor at Harvard University. The don warned, "Work that either from ignorance or of purpose attempts to dispense with precedent altogether or which uses the forms of past art without an intelligent knowledge of their meaning is not only ungrammatical but incoherent, formless, ugly.... It is to architecture what the gibbering of an idiot is to language."

But White's tower, Warren wrote, was "a splendid example of the best use of precedent. The language has been thoroughly mastered and is used with the utmost ease and freedom as well as with grace and beauty." In his influential opinion, White's version of the Giralda was a complete success. "Stage for stage, feature for feature," Warren

Madison Square Garden, New York, 1890



Giralda, Seville, 1198



Kutubiyya minaret, Marrakesh, 1195



Hassan minaret, Rabat, 1195 (unfinished)



FROM LEFT: PAUL SOUDERS / CORBIS; GUENTER ROSSENBACH / ZEFA / CORBIS; DICK DOUGHTY / SAUDI ARAMCO WORLD / PADIA; FREDERIC LEWIS / GETTY IMAGES; TOP: BETTMAN / CORBIS



Ferry Terminal, San Francisco, 1898



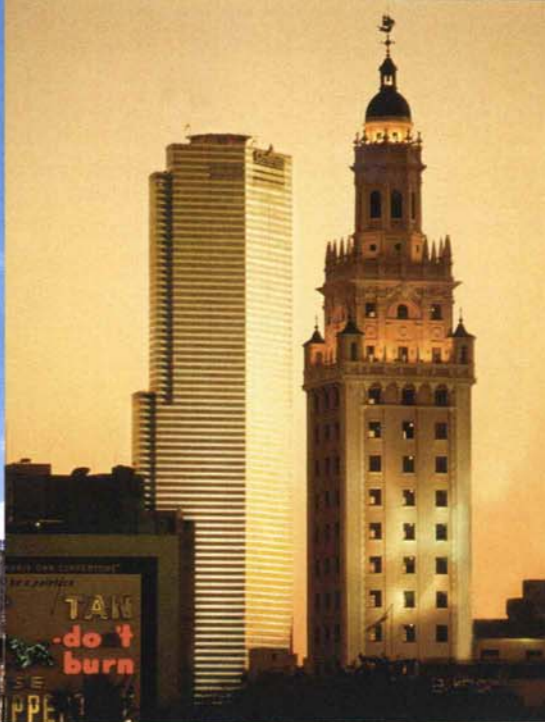
Electric Tower, Buffalo, 1901



Dreamland Tower, Coney Island, 1904



Wrigley Building, Chicago, 1921



Freedom Tower, Miami, 1925

applauded, “the Seville tower is closely followed, and the architects of the New York tower have contrived to give a lightness and grace to their design.” The Diana tower, he concluded, had more “*élan*” than the Giralda itself.

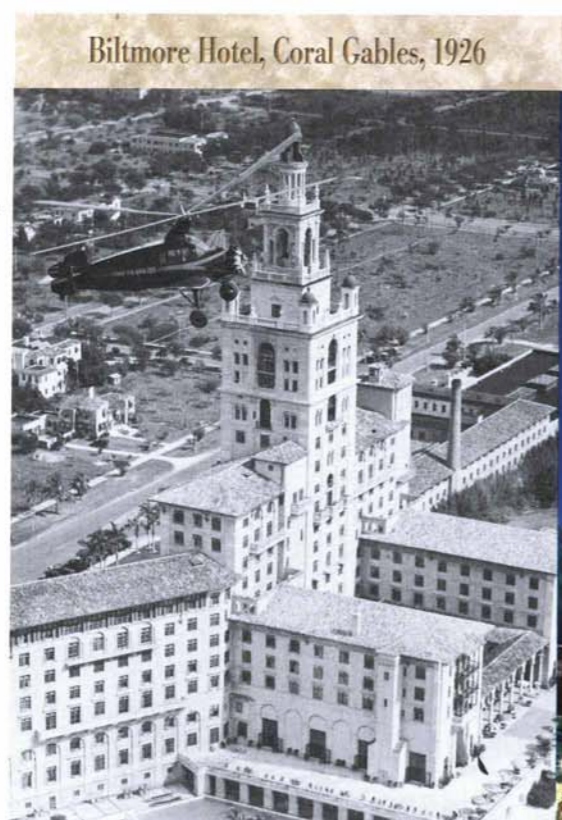
He noted its “nobler proportions and more perfect harmony of parts”—and in fact the New York tower was taller and slimmer than its model, and bulged slightly in the middle in order to trick the eye into seeing it, from a distance, as perfectly straight. Although it lacked the decorative elements of the Almohada construction, Warren thought that the newer tower had “a unity of design which the Giralda, with its two styles, necessarily lacks, and the detail of its upper stages is generally more refined as well as richer.”

Given the visual clash between the Diana Tower’s utterly plain shaft and its exuberant upper colonnades and loggias, one might disagree with Warren’s view that the newer showed a superior stylistic unity to the older. However, as a principal theorist of the “American Renaissance,” a movement invoking quality and cultural values in all building, Warren’s opinion carried much weight. The idea of a purely symbolic tower, an architectural

extravagance whose only function was to attract attention to the building it rose above, now had the imprimatur of the American Renaissance movement, and it became a touchstone for all corporate design.

Ironically, the Madison Square Garden tower came close to never being built. The breakneck day-and-night pace of construction of the main building, with 1000-man shifts working under artificial light, had stretched its

THE FUNCTION OF A SYMBOLIC TOWER, A PURE ARCHITECTURAL EXTRAVAGANCE, WAS ONLY TO ATTRACT ATTENTION TO THE BUILDING IT ROSE ABOVE.



Biltmore Hotel, Coral Gables, 1926



Empire State Building, New York, 1931 (with Madison Square Garden, 1968)



Country Club Plaza, Kansas City, 1967

TOP: FROM LEFT: CLAY MCCLACHLAN / IPIN, C.D. ARNOLD / CORBIS; BETTMAN / CORBIS; RALF FINN HESTOFT / CORBIS; MORTON BEBE / CORBIS

BOTTOM: FROM LEFT: BETTMAN / CORBIS; RUSSELL KORD / ALAMY; VINCE STRIANO / CORBIS

investors, including White, to the limit, and it was momentarily decided not to complete the tower. Only when the contractor agreed to build it at half its \$450,000 completion cost did it go forward.

Using White’s Diana tower itself as a precedent and model, architects in other parts of the country built towers that might be called third-generation heirs to the Giralda, among them San Francisco’s Ferry Terminal (1898),

Buffalo’s Electric Tower (1901), Coney Island’s Dreamland Tower (1904), Chicago’s Wrigley Building (1921), Miami’s Freedom Tower (1925) and Coral Gables’ Biltmore Hotel (1926).

The completion of New York’s Art Deco-style Empire State Building in 1931, though it perhaps, through a squinted eye, might conjure up something of the Giralda, is considered the beginning of a forward-looking American corporate building style and the endpoint of the American Renaissance. But that did not mean the last of the Giralda look-alikes. In 1967, an exact half-scale replica of the Giralda was built as the centerpiece of Country Club Plaza, a Spanish Revival-themed shopping and entertainment complex in Kansas City, Missouri—the American sister city of Seville.

The end of White’s tower, and of White himself, was not kind. Madison Square Garden went bankrupt in 1925 and was quickly razed, tower and all. By a mean twist of fate, that decision was made by its mortgage holder, New York Life Insurance Company, for which years earlier White had designed an addition to its lower Manhattan office. The company built a new headquarters, featuring a pyramidal tower of squat and ugly proportions, on the very ruins of White’s.

Well before this demolition, which alone might have killed White’s spirit, he had been murdered while dining in Madison Square Garden’s rooftop restaurant. His killer blamed him for a rumored romantic involvement, which had supposedly unfolded in his private tower apartment, decorated with oriental divans and a muted light fixture in the shape of a Seville orange tree. “It would take Scheherazade to describe it adequately,” wrote one of his visitors.

The trial of White’s killer took place in a New York courthouse with an extravagant Gothic tower modeled directly on Schloss Neuschwanstein, the castle of King Ludwig II of Bavaria, and voted one of America’s 10 most beautiful buildings in 1885. In the 1960’s,

the courthouse and its tower were slated for demolition themselves, and only at the last moment were they saved by a group of architectural preservationists motivated, in part, by the razing of White’s landmark tower.

As a final coda to the story of the Diana Tower, a private four-story townhouse, located just two blocks from the site of White’s Madison Square Garden, collapsed without warning in October 2007—101 years after White’s death. It is said to have once housed one of his apartment-offices where he entertained, worked and drew inspiration from the city around him. ☉



Louis Werner is a free-lance writer and filmmaker who lives in New York. He can be reached at wernerworks@msn.com

Related articles from past issues can be found on our Web site, www.saudiaramco.world.com. Click on “indexes,” then on the cover of the issue indicated below.

Almohads: S/O 92, J/F 93
Giralda of Seville: J/F 94
Egyptian Revival architecture: J/F 82



WRITTEN BY CLOE MEDINA ERICKSON
PHOTOGRAPHED BY KRISTOFFER ERICKSON

NEW NOMADS OF THE HIGH ATLAS

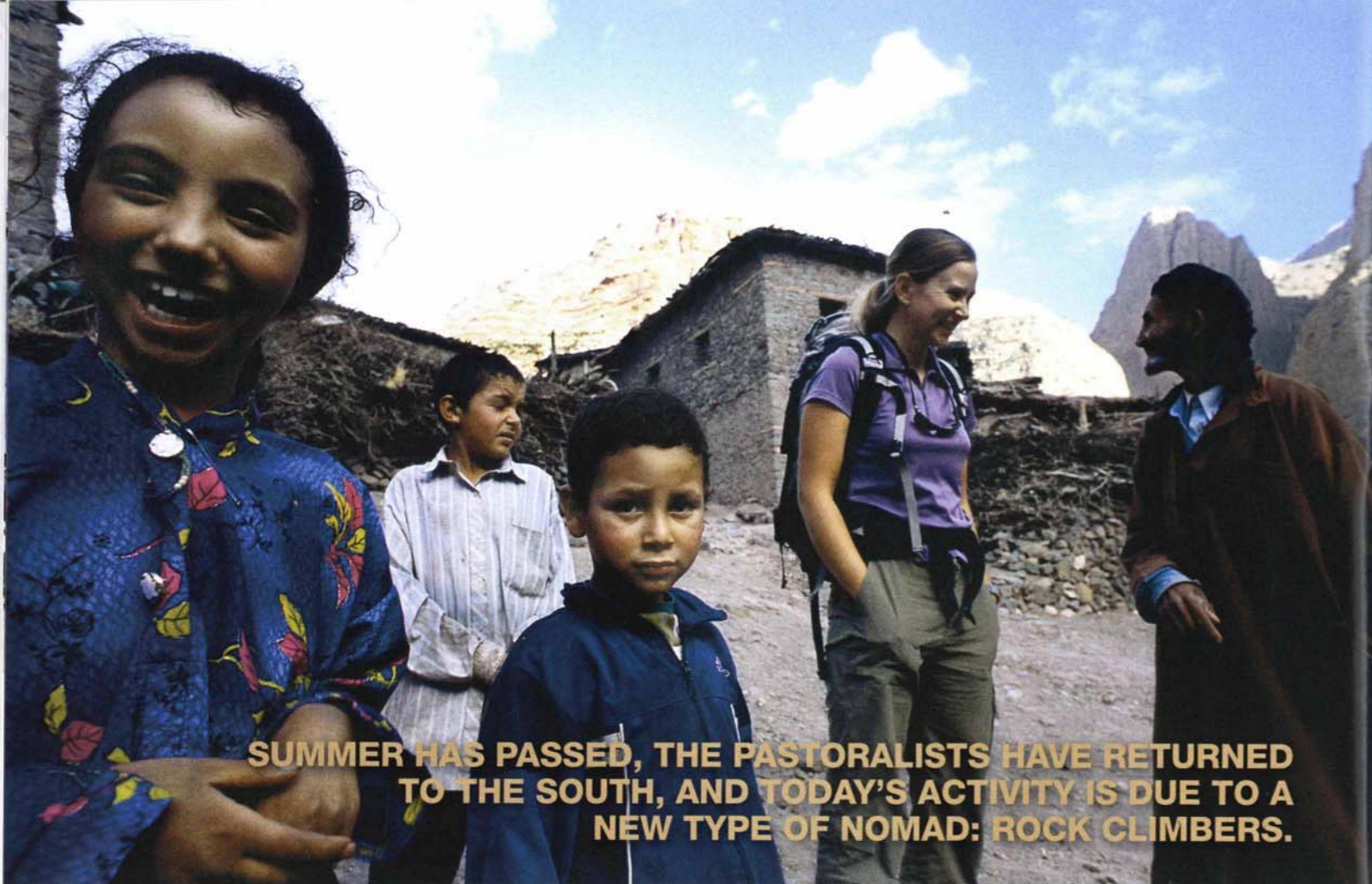
“We didn’t wake up until five today,” says Sa’id Mas’udi, shielding his eyes from the scorching mid-morning sun and the full day of work that lies ahead. It is the 23rd day of Ramadan, the Islamic lunar month when Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. Overtired by the short nights demanded by their religious duty and the work of running a seasonal guesthouse, Mas’udi and his family slept through *suhur*, the pre-dawn Ramadan meal. Now they must wait until sunset to eat or drink again.

Mas’udi’s modest home of mud and stacked stone in the remote village of Taghia, Morocco—a three-hour walk from the nearest road—is bursting with the activity and noise of arriving and departing travelers. Tents are packed and unpacked, donkeys are loaded and unloaded, routes for the day’s journeys are discussed and Fatima, Mas’udi’s wife, bakes loaf after loaf of bread to feed their guests.

The roadless Zawiya Ahansal region of Morocco’s central High Atlas Mountains is named after Sidi Sa’id Ahansal, a local 14th-century religious teacher believed to be a descendant of King Idris I of Morocco and the Prophet Muhammad. It has been a crossroads for travelers and a place of

To see a brief video about the village and the climbers, go to www.saudiaramcoworld.com.



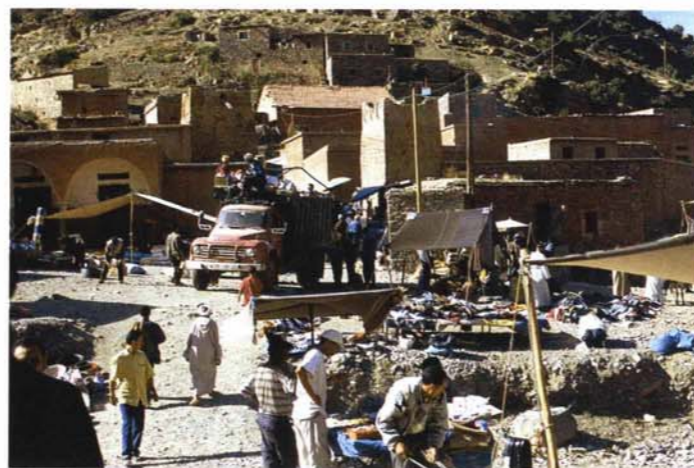


SUMMER HAS PASSED, THE PASTORALISTS HAVE RETURNED TO THE SOUTH, AND TODAY'S ACTIVITY IS DUE TO A NEW TYPE OF NOMAD: ROCK CLIMBERS.

seasonal migration for centuries. The historic trade route from Timbuktu to Marrakesh passes over the rugged plateaus and deep limestone gorges that dominate the landscape, crossing eastward from the Atlantic plains over the Atlas and into the Sahara. With an elevation above 2000 meters (6500'), the plateaus are covered in deep snow in the winter, leaving only the gorges with their springs, forests and irrigable land capable of supporting permanent habitation. In the summer, however, the snow melts to reveal fertile pastures, an irresistible invitation to the nomadic pastoralists who spend their winters in the desert regions south of the Atlas. Summer has passed, the pastoralists have returned to the south, and today's

activity is due to a new type of nomad: rock climbers. They arrive in the spring and the fall instead of the summer, drawn by the towering limestone walls rather than the fertile plateaus. This year the climbing migration coincides with Ramadan, and two unique cultures find themselves at a fragile tipping point. The permanent inhabitants—Berbers, or Ihansalen, as they are referred to locally—and the foreign climbers now face the same challenge their ancestors and predecessors have faced for centuries: Finding a sustainable balance

between tradition and outside influence. Mas'udi wears the exhaustion of this challenge on his face; we hear him replace the typically optimistic Ihansalen response—"ma feish mushkila," meaning "No problem"—with "mushkila shwiya," "It's a small problem." Serious rock climbers live a migratory existence. They travel the world, following seasons and weather patterns, always searching for destinations with



untapped climbing potential. Over the past decade, Zawiya Ahansal has become one such destination. Ernest Gellner, an English social anthropologist who spent time in the region during the 1950's and '60's, foreshadowed its imminent rise in popularity among travelers in his book *Saints of the Atlas*:

"The environment is favourable, indeed charming. Sidi Sa'id Ahansal had chosen his place well, and it is in my view destined, when roads become adequate and the rise of national income in Morocco creates the demand, one of the favoured tourist centres in the Atlas." For French professional climbers Arnaud Petit and Stephanie Bodet, the mountains of Zawiya Ahansal are comparable to the most famous in the world. They first visited the region in 2002. Now, they return every year.

"The climbing is world class. There are very few places in the world with such a concentration of untapped climbing potential and such high limestone walls," says Petit. "It is possible to equip a sustained route with more than 15 pitches (600 meters). That is incredible."

Establishing climbing routes on limestone—"equipping" the route—requires the placement in the rock of permanent anchors, usually 8- to 12-centimeter bolts (3-5"), with a drill. A "pitch" is the climb from one such "belay point" to the next, typically 30 to 60 meters (100-200'). The climbers who establish the routes must possess optimum strength, endurance and mental focus, but even so, it can take up to a month for a group of four experienced climbers to equip a 600-meter (2000') route. Once permanent anchors are in place, others can climb the route. Word of the solid, continuous stone in Zawiya Ahansal has spread quickly

through the world climbing community, and each season sees more and more climbers. In the last four years, the number of climbers visiting the area—most of them Europeans—has grown from 20 to over 400 in the fall season alone, a significant number in a region of only a few thousand local inhabitants. "The combination of dry weather,



Students help construct rafters for the roof of their new school. All the building materials for the school, a collaborative effort by local residents and American climbers, were brought to the village on donkeyback.

With popularity comes pressure. Luckily, the Ihansalen have a history of negotiating sustainable relationships with their neighbors: Their land use agreement with the Ait 'Atta, the largest and most dominant nomadic tribe between the Atlas and the Sahara, has weathered nearly 1000 years. Under its terms, the Ihansalen allow the Ait 'Atta free passage to the high pastures during the summer, ensuring the survival of their flocks. In return, the Ait 'Atta provide security to the Ihansalen from other, potentially dangerous, tribes passing through the region; both groups benefit from the weekly market where they trade much needed merchandise with each other.

In the summer, the Ait 'Atta greatly outnumber the Ihansalen, but their relationship has been maintained in large part thanks to the existence of "professional neutrals"—descendants of Sidi Sa'id Ahansal—and their establishment of a center of sanctity, a religiously based crucial zone, in which they guarantee unimpeded trade and free passage to those with a shared interest in the territory.

excellent rock, hospitable people and an adventurous setting creates the perfect conditions for a rock-climbing holiday," says Conrad Anker, an athlete for The North Face and one of the premier climbers in the world. He visited the region in 2006 and understands the rapid growth in its popularity. "The vertical nature of the cliffs ensures that the climbs that are established are difficult. Hence, top climbers want to come and test their mettle," says Anker.

The influence of professional neutrals has diminished over the last century with the establishment of Morocco's centralized government, which now acts as a mediator among the tribes. However, rapid demographic change is encouraging the designation of new neutrals with some of the same characteristics as the old: a respected position in both groups and, perhaps more important, literacy. Thus a familiar mechanism, naturally taking shape between the Ihansalen and the European climbers,

Previous spread: Conrad Anker wedges his fingers into a crevice in the limestone as he climbs to establish a pitch on the 650-meter "La Bas" route high above the village of Taghia in Morocco's central High Atlas Mountains. La bas is a colloquial Arabic greeting which means "no harm." Above: Author and climber Cloe Medina Erickson visits with local residents in Taghia. Right: The centuries-old Monday market in Zawiya Ahansal draws the local Ihansalen and seasonal nomads to trade.

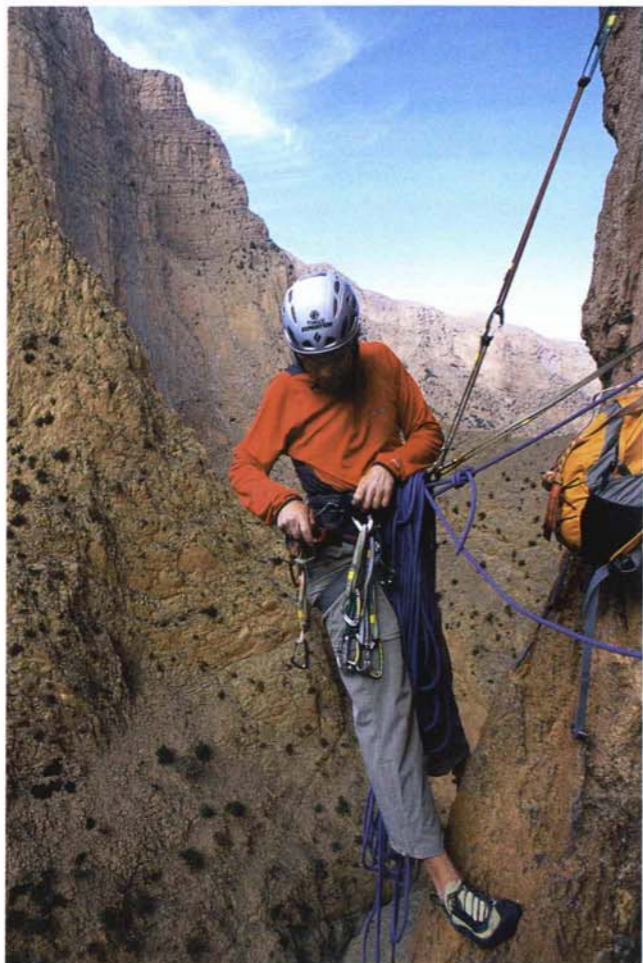
may ensure a similarly sustainable and mutually beneficial relationship for their future.

Mas'udi and Yusuf Rizki, Taghia's other guesthouse owner, have a working knowledge of French and Arabic, a characteristic that has marked them for this "neutral" role. However, the end of Ramadan sharpens the cultural differences between the climbers and the Ihansalen and increases the burden on the two men and their families: Taking care of guests means sacrificing sleep and time together during a holiday. In addition, as always, there are the risks of exposing their sons and daughters to the westerners' foreign lifestyle.

"It is very difficult for me to prepare food all day," says Fatima on the laborious task of feeding a house full of foreigners during Ramadan. "They eat in front of us. Especially today: We slept through *subur* and must wait hours to eat."

During his travels, Anker has observed firsthand that the tourists' values can create conflict, and even such supposedly simple items as clothing and food have deep cultural signification that can be misunderstood.

"The biggest challenge facing mountain communities is the influx of tourists, their money, their values and their demands on the infrastructure," says Anker. "The money, in general, has a positive effect, as people are paid for their services and goods, and the multi-



headed a community development project that restored Taghia's school and a network of mountain trails. This collaboration helped strengthen ties between the two cultures.

"The responsibility to create a sustainable relationship rests with the visitors. They are the guests—they have come there of their own volition," says Anker. "Treating the local people with respect and courtesy, being mindful of cultural mores and being grateful go a long way toward creating a mutually beneficial relationship."

Rizki sees providing educational opportunities to the children as a personal obligation, especially now with the foreign influence. "The children see them [the climbers] and their material goods and they do not understand the differences," says Rizki. "But at some level they do understand, and it makes their life much harder to accept."

Rizki donated land for a preschool for the village's children

and began construction on it. "Our children are so far behind compared to other Moroccans," he says. "When they begin grade six, many of them still cannot read or write, and then they just continue to fall further behind."

The preschool's curriculum will focus on religion and the Arabic and French alphabets. Rizki hopes the school, operated on donations, will supplement public education, giving the local children the boost they need to match their peers. For now, the families' sacrifices are outweighed by the benefits of cash in a previously subsistence economy. With the money earned from their seasonal hospitality, Mas'udi and Rizki have begun to improve the Ihansalen way of life and provide their children with increased opportunities through education.

In 2006, Mas'udi and a group of The North Face climbers spear-

plier effect spreads it through the community. In fact, tourism is a fine way of moving some of the accumulated wealth of the industrialized nations to countries that are rich mainly in scenic resources."

headed a community development project that restored Taghia's school and a network of mountain trails. This collaboration helped strengthen ties between the two cultures.

"The youth of Taghia dream about the western way of life. It seems that they want to be connected with the world. It would be egotistic to wish to maintain people in their traditional way of life, especially the women, who live a

very hard life in these mountains. If the effect of tourism can be to bring more women to school, it will be a great change," says Bodet.

As history shows, relationships in this extreme and varied land must be mutually beneficial in order to last. Like the Ihansalen and the Ait 'Atta, the climbers and the Ihansalen are finding something in each other that they lack in their separate lives. New economic and educational doors are opening for the Ihansalen, leading to increased outside opportunities. In exchange, the foreigners experience unparalleled climbing opportunities and a unique culture in a region still beyond the limits of modern communications and transportation.

"We hope that they will come not only for the climbing, but for the culture also," said Petit, who also hopes the visitors will be able to adapt to the place they are visiting. "Morocco is a Muslim country, and we have to respect the Moroccans' traditions and religion in order to live peacefully together."

Today the atmosphere at the guesthouse emphasizes the fragility and the uncertain outcome of this cultural balance. Mas'udi's nephew Mahmud Jani passes his weary eyes over the climbers bustling in and out.

"Maybe by 2010 things will change and there will be more tourists in Taghia than residents," he laughs. "Then we will both have gotten what we wish for: they a place in the natural world and we an opportunity in the city." ☉

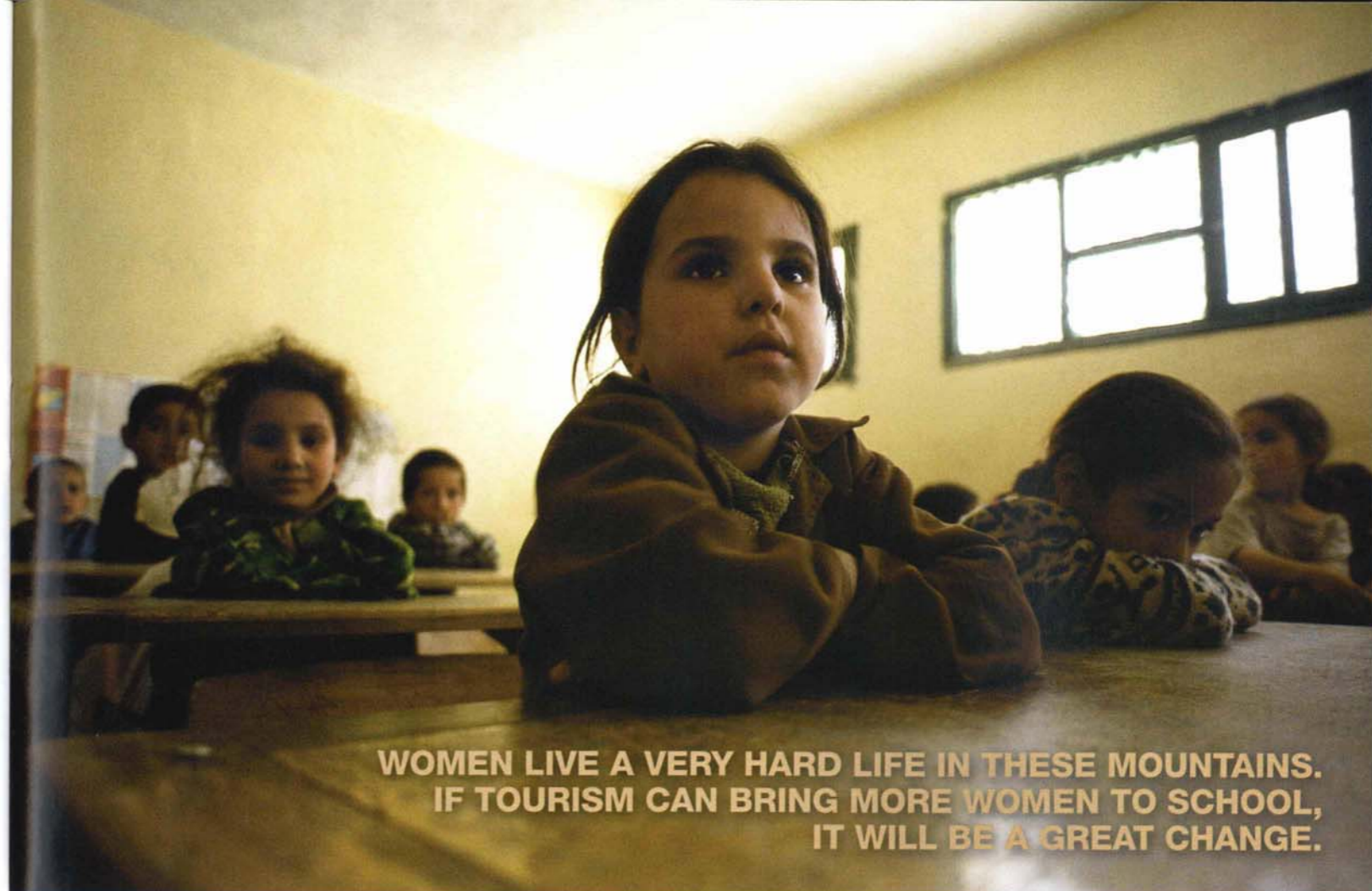
on the restoration and conversion of a historic *kasbah* into a regional library. Free-lance photographer **Kristoffer Erickson** (kris@ericksoncreativegroup.com) has documented exploration and culture in the great mountain ranges of the world for more than a decade. He is a member of The North Face mountaineering team. The Ericksons are based in Livingston, Montana.



Cloe Medina Erickson (medina@ericksoncreativegroup.com) holds a master's in architecture. She is currently collaborating with locals in the Zawiya Ahansal region of Morocco



Above: Conrad Anker organizes his gear at a belay point on "Baraka," a climbing route on Mount Oujdad, a 2695-meter peak. *Baraka* means "blessing." Left: Sa'id and Fatima Mas'udi's daughter, Rashida, watches climber Renan Öztürk as he sketches the landscape of her village from the guesthouse. She started school in Taghia in 2006.



WOMEN LIVE A VERY HARD LIFE IN THESE MOUNTAINS. IF TOURISM CAN BRING MORE WOMEN TO SCHOOL, IT WILL BE A GREAT CHANGE.

Above: Youngsters attend class in Taghia's school, refurbished as a cooperative project by village families and The North Face climbers. Right: Sa'id and Fatima Mas'udi load their donkey for the weekly trip to Zawiya Ahansal's market, a three-hour walk from Taghia.

www.globalgiving.com/1793

View "The Daily Balance" (3m:50s) at www.saudiaramcoworld.com.

An Account of the Journeys and Writings of The Indefatigable Mr. Lane

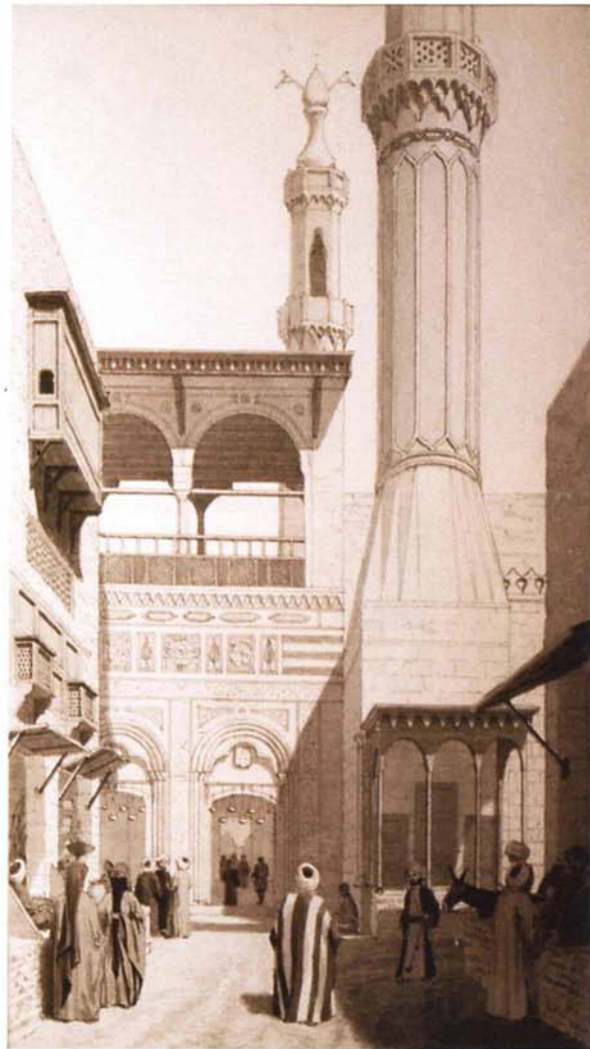
WRITTEN BY JASON THOMPSON

Late one September afternoon in 1825, an apprehensive 24-year-old Englishman arrived in the Eastern Harbor of Alexandria, Egypt. “As I approached the shore,” he wrote, “I felt like an Eastern bridegroom, about to lift up the veil of his bride, and to see, for the first time, the features which were to charm, or disappoint, or disgust him.” He continued:

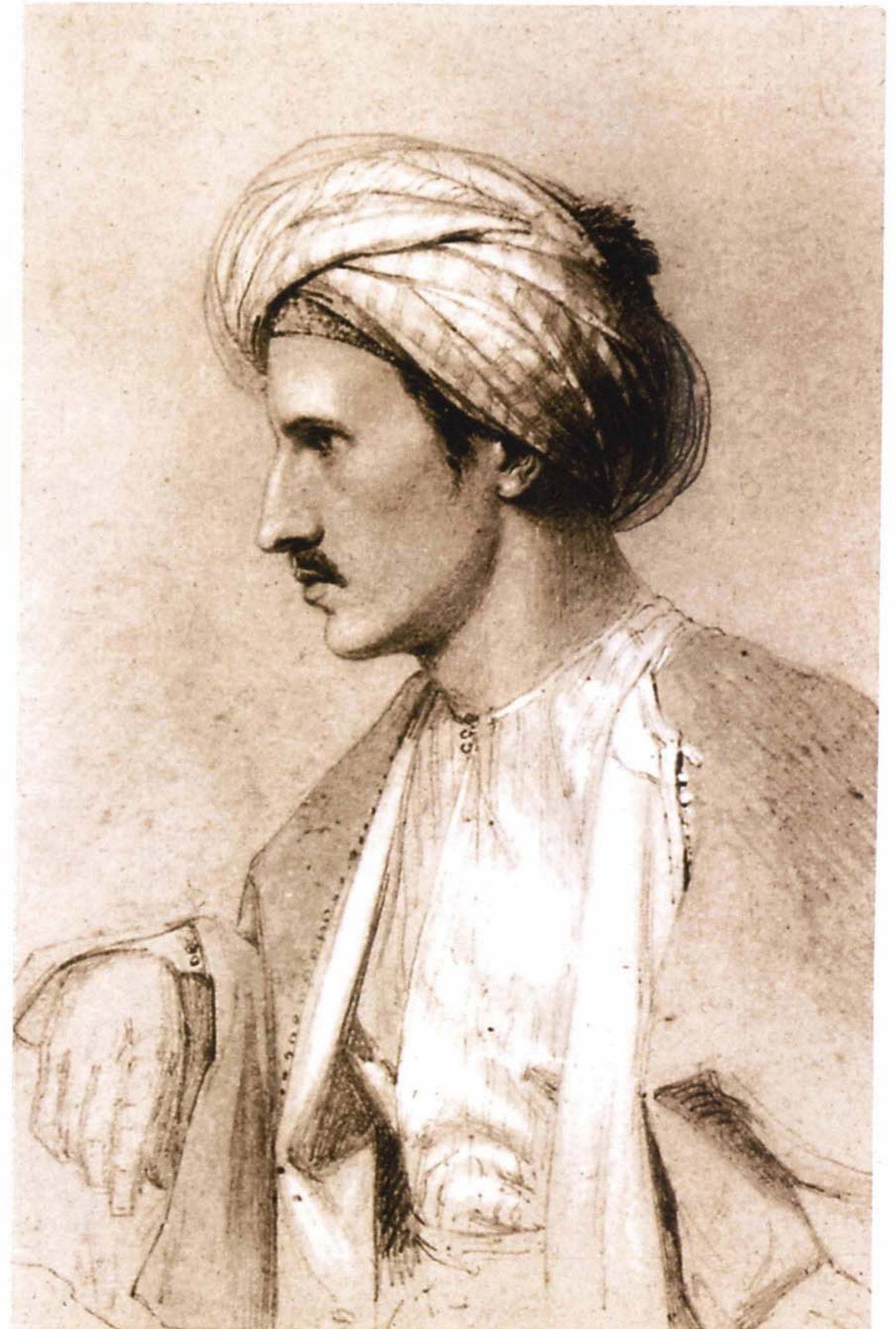
I was not visiting Egypt merely as a traveller, to examine its pyramids and temples and grottoes, and, after satisfying my curiosity, to quit it for other scenes and other pleasures: I was about to throw myself entirely among strangers; to adopt their language, their customs and their dress; and, in associating almost exclusively with the natives, to prosecute the study of their literature. My feelings therefore, on that occasion, partook too much of anxiety to be very pleasing.

Edward William Lane need not have worried. He would become, one day, Britain’s most renowned scholar of the Middle East. He would write a fascinating study of Egyptian society, a book so definitive and widely read that it would never go out of print; his great Arabic-English dictionary would become a basic, irreplaceable reference work; and his translation of *The Arabian Nights* would delight and instruct generations of readers. Lane’s name would come to be known throughout the field of Middle Eastern studies, admired by western and Arab scholars alike.

Four years earlier, Lane had been working as an engraver’s apprentice in London. It was a natural enough career choice, for the Lanes were an artistic family. Lane’s great-uncle was the painter Thomas Gainsborough, and one of his elder brothers, Richard J. Lane, became a highly skilled artist. But Lane was not destined to become an engraver. The rediscovery of ancient Egypt in the aftermath of Napoleon’s Egyptian expedition had created a great popular sensation, and enigmatic, stately objects from that antique land filled the British Museum. Fascinating accounts by travelers on the Nile inundated booksellers’ shops. Giovanni Battista Belzoni’s visually stunning exhibit about the tomb of Seti I, which he had recently discovered in the Valley of the Kings, opened not far from where Lane worked. All these things turned the



Edward Lane adopted the dress of an upper-class Ottoman when he made his first visit to Cairo in 1825, and his brother Richard sketched him in that garb, opposite. He relished the freedom this gave him to explore unobtrusively and to draw what was then still largely a medieval city, portraying such scenes as the entrance to al-Azhar University, above.



EDWARD WILLIAM LANE, FROM MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MODERN EGYPTIANS; OPPOSITE: RICHARD LANE / COLLECTION OF CATHERINE LANE POOLE DUPRE

imagination of the apprentice engraver in new directions. As he later explained:

A zealous attachment to the study of oriental literature, and a particular desire to render myself familiar with the language of the Arabs, and with their manners and customs, induced me to visit Egypt. But these were not my only motives. I had long entertained a wish to examine the antiquities of that most interesting country: and as I felt, even before I commenced my travels, that there was a probability of my publishing the observations that I might make; I purposed to execute a series of sketches of all the most remarkable objects that I might see; well convinced that a drawing, in many cases, is worth many pages of description.

For several years, Lane devoted every spare moment to reading everything he could find about Egypt, ancient and modern, and to learning Arabic. The British politician Lord Bexley, avid amateur scholar and friend of the Lane family, provided the funds for Lane to realize his dream of traveling to Egypt. So it was that Lane arrived in Alexandria that September afternoon in 1825. But he worried as he prepared to

set foot on the shore: What would he do after all that preparation if he did not like Egypt after all?

Those initial apprehensions vanished soon after his arrival. Egypt during the early 19th century, though nominally a province of the Ottoman Empire, was under the firm control of its pasha, Muhammad Ali, who ruled the land almost as a sovereign monarch. His hand was sometimes heavy, but he created conditions of

almost unprecedented order and security that enabled visitors like Lane to travel through the country at will and observe it at leisure and in safety.

Cairo was then a city of perhaps a quarter of a million people, still thoroughly medieval in customs and appearance, looking much as it had for hundreds of years. Lane found great pleasure walking through its narrow, intricate streets, looking at the people, admiring the profuse specimens of

Lane included himself (seated, far left) in this scene near the entrance of Cairo's Khan al-Khalili bazaar. He depicts *sakkas* (water carriers) accompanying a caravan, one afoot, the other steadying the waterskin on a donkey.

'...a drawing, in many cases, is worth many pages of description.'



EDWARD WILLIAM LANE, FROM DESCRIPTION OF EGYPT (2)

Islamic architecture, and lingering in the shops and coffee houses. He found a house in the northwestern part of town, far from the quarters inhabited by Europeans—Franks, they were called. Casting off his Frankish attire, he dressed only in Egyptian clothing when he was in Egypt and conformed to Egyptian manners. Within a year his Arabic was fluent. He even adopted an Eastern persona, becoming known as Mansur Effendi, a name engraved on the signet ring he wore on the small finger of his right hand until the end of his life.

"I have associated, almost exclusively, with Muslims, of various ranks in society," he wrote. "I have lived as they live." That provided the perspective for the close observations of Egyptian society and language that proved essential for his work, but it was more than just a convenient pose. As the Egyptian scholar Leila Ahmed wrote, "Lane loved Egypt, unreservedly loved almost everything about it. From his arrival, his entire life and the work he undertook would be an act of devotion and service to this country and culture that he so much loved and in which he felt, almost from the start, more at home than he did in his own land."

Although Lane did indeed associate almost exclusively with Muslim Egyptians, he was also part of a small circle of young European Egyptologists and orientalists who were present in Egypt during the 1820's and who aided each other in their research. This circle included such people as Sir Gardner Wilkinson, the founder of Egyptology in Britain, Robert Hay, Joseph Bonomi, James Burton, Frederick Catherwood and the future Duke of Northumberland. Some of them are little remembered now, but their work is of great importance to scholars in many different specialties. Like Lane, they adopted eastern lifestyles and identities in Egypt: Wilkinson, for example, was known as Ismail; Bonomi took the playful name Abu Nom. All wore Egyptian clothing.

Lane was now immersed in his studies of Arabic and contemporary Egyptian culture, but he retained a lively interest in ancient Egypt and made it a major part of his first book. "Never did I spend a more happy time," he wrote of the days he passed living in a tomb while he worked at the Pyramids of Giza. With some knowledge of the recently deciphered hieroglyphs, he was able to identify many ancient monuments with much greater certainty than before. His notes and drawings for places and objects that were damaged or destroyed in subsequent years have permanent Egyptological value. Had his first book, *Description of Egypt*, been published during his lifetime, Lane would be remembered as a pioneering Egyptologist as well as a distinguished orientalist.

During his first trip to Egypt, Lane twice ascended the Nile through Upper Egypt and Egyptian Nubia (the latter now submerged by Lake Nasser) to the Second Cataract at Wadi Halfa, traveling by *dahabiyeh*, the conveyance of choice for generations of Nile voyagers. From the comfortable cabin at the back of this sleek river boat, with its elegant triangular sail, he could watch the panorama of Egypt roll past, stopping and studying the great archeological sites. From his copious notebooks and sketches, preserved in British archives, we can follow his progress all along the way. By the time Lane left Egypt in April 1828, after a year



Lane's focus from his earliest moments in Egypt was on its people. This colorful Cairo street scene shows an upper-class man in front of a busy copperware shop. Under the arch, a soldier of Muhammad Ali's army stands before two Egyptian women.

and a half in Cairo and about as much time upcountry, he had plenty of material for his intended book.

Lane was not alone when he departed from Egypt, however: He was accompanied by a little girl named Nefeeseh whom either he or his friend Robert Hay purchased in the Cairo slave market. Perhaps eight years old, she had been taken captive during the turmoil of the Greek War of Independence (1821–1826) and brought to Cairo for sale. Family tradition holds that Lane passed the slave market one evening and saw her standing in the shadows, pitiful and alone, and was moved by compassion to buy her. But his papers suggest that Robert Hay purchased her—a more likely story because Lane could have ill afforded a Greek female slave, the most expensive kind of all. However it happened, Nefeeseh passed into Lane's care. He took her to England to be raised by his mother. Years later, when Nefeeseh was a grown woman, she and Lane married. They enjoyed a good, companionable

marriage of 35 years until parted by Lane's death. "Never, I believe, has there existed a more affectionate wife," Lane confided to Hay.

Like some travelers, Lane found that the worst jolt of culture shock came not from going to the Middle East but from returning home. After becoming used to sitting on divans, carpets and cushions, English furniture was hard to bear. "I cannot endure these chairs," he whispered to an acquaintance one night at a dinner party.

"I will tuck my legs under me and then I shall be comfortable." He became known in society as "Egyptian" Lane.

The worst jolt of culture shock came from going home.

Problems of readjustment did not prevent Lane from starting immediately to write *Description of Egypt*, a remarkable work that ranged across nearly the entire field of Egyptian studies. Loosely set within the framework of his travels and personal experiences, it included such subjects as ancient, medieval and modern Egyptian history; it contained a detailed overview of the geography and produce of the land, close descriptions of the city of Cairo, an itinerary of the towns and ancient monuments in the valley of the Nile and much more. The first draft also included chapters about the "manners and customs of the

London's Albemarle Street. This was aiming high, for Murray's was the publisher not only of literary luminaries like Lord Byron but also of the great explorers and travelers of the Middle East: J. L. Burckhardt, the great Belzoni and dozens of others. But Lane had apparently judged correctly, for John Murray II, then head of the firm, was impressed with what he saw, and so was the expert he consulted about it. In their considered opinion, it was "the best work which has been written on the subject." As for the drawings, Murray exclaimed that they were the most accurate he had ever seen: "the more the work contained of them, the better."

There was just one problem. Murray liked the "manners and customs of the modern Egyptians" section but thought it did not fit into the overall work and insisted that it be removed. Lane agreed only with great reluctance, but once that issue was settled, Murray agreed to publish the book. He told Lane to finish writing it and to work up the illustrations to a highly finished state so they could be reproduced by the finest means possible, whether by engraving, lithography (Lane's preferred method) or woodcuts.

Elated by Murray's acceptance, Lane set to work and produced a large manuscript of nearly 300,000 words, written in his beautifully clear hand. He also prepared approximately 200 illustrations. All are clearly done, and the best should rank at least as minor works of art, but Lane's primary objective was always to convey as much information as possible in each picture and with the utmost accuracy. His illustrations, as he later stated, were made "not to embellish the pages, but merely to explain the text."

But just as he finished all that work, Britain was seized by the extended political crisis that culminated in the Reform Bill of 1832. Trade was paralyzed; only books about politics were selling. Murray decided it was prudent to postpone publication of *Description of Egypt*. As the delay became ever more protracted, Lane sank into depression. He longed to see his work in print, and he needed the money he thought he would make from it. He also missed Egypt painfully. He had been happy there: Every moment was meaningful, each day brought new experiences, the future was full of possibilities. "Think what

I would give for one week again at Thebes, & how I should employ it!" he wrote to Robert Hay, who was still in Egypt. "I wish I were in your place." He longed to return, but he had no money.

Then Lane remembered the "manners and customs of the modern Egyptians" section he had removed from *Description*



Lane twice ascended the Nile as far as the Second Cataract. This drawing of his boat (*dahabiyeh*) and its crew is typical of his illustrations: It attempts to convey as much information as possible, including details of the boat, the crew's clothing, their musical instruments—and even *shadufs*, the water-raising device in the background, right.

of *Egypt* at Murray's insistence. He took it to a remarkable 19th-century institution known as the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, which existed for the stated purpose of "imparting useful information to all classes of the community." The SDUK decided that Lane's book would indeed be useful and paid him an advance to go back to Egypt and gather additional material for it. That enabled Lane to sail on his second trip to Egypt at the end of 1833.

Once again Lane threw himself into Egyptian life as he examined its nuances more carefully than ever, recording them meticulously in word and picture, as his many surviving diaries, workbooks and letters attest. Working with characteristic speed and energy, he finished the book in exactly one year and was preparing to return to England when a devastating epidemic of bubonic plague exploded in Alexandria and spread to Cairo. Lane fled in the opposite direction, south to Thebes, where he spent several more months living in one of the Tombs of the Nobles on the west bank that his friend Gardner Wilkinson had remodeled into a comfortable house. We might look askance today at risking spreading the disease by traveling on a rat-infested boat, but Lane's prompt action may well

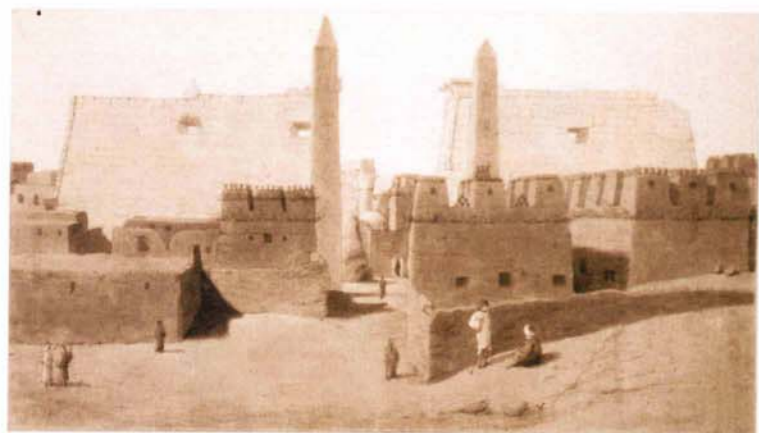
Lane fled south to Thebes to escape the bubonic plague.

have saved his life, for the Great Plague of 1835 killed one-third of Cairo's population.

An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians was published in December 1836. It was an instant success, selling out its first printing within a matter of weeks and subsequently going through numerous editions and reprints, right down to the present day.

Acclaimed during the 19th century as "the most perfect picture of a people's life that has ever been written," *Manners and Customs* exerted an extraordinary influence that has only grown stronger with time. As Edward Said wrote in his controversial book *Orientalism* in 1978, the book became "an authority whose use was an imperative for anyone writing or thinking about the Orient, not just about Egypt."

But Lane's elation over the success of *Manners and Customs* was short-lived, for a few days after its appearance,



When Lane first viewed Luxor Temple in Upper Egypt in 1826, the village of Luxor had spread into it, and the obelisk at the right had not yet been taken to Paris, where it stands today.

modern Egyptians," an examination of contemporary Egyptian society far deeper and more accurate than anything written about it before.

When he had finished about one-third of the book, Lane took the manuscript and preliminary sketches for its illustrations to the eminent publishing firm of John Murray in

EDWARD WILLIAM LANE, FROM DESCRIPTION OF EGYPT (2)



This portrait of Lane dates from 1835, after his second trip to Egypt, during which he wrote *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*.

that bottle—its shape, its design, its stopper—might all be drawn accurately from real life. So, too, with many other details like manners, political organization, religious practices and material culture, all of which are to be found in profusion in the pages of *The Arabian Nights*. It was precisely those details that Lane wanted to present, with explanations, to an English readership.

Lane's translation of *The Arabian Nights* appeared in monthly installments between 1838 and 1840 and was then published complete in three volumes. Highly readable and thoroughly enjoyable, it reigned supreme as the leading English translation for most of the 19th century. Although it was eventually displaced from its preeminent position by other translations, Lane's has its partisans even today, for there is still no one translation of *The Arabian Nights* that can be considered definitive. One of the beauties of Lane's translation is its 650 illustrations, executed by some of Britain's leading wood engravers under Lane's careful supervision and well worth perusing for their own sake.

Preparation of *The Arabian Nights* was a great achievement, but also a relentless ordeal that forced Lane to write prodigiously—besides correcting proofs for both words and pictures—month after month for three years. But the end of the task brought no relief: First, his mother, the most important formative influence in his life, died. Then the publisher of *The Arabian Nights* went bankrupt before paying him in full. Having just married Nefeseh, Lane needed money more than ever. Yet he was not sure what his next major project would be or how he could make it pay. In 1841, at age 40, Lane was experiencing an authentic midlife crisis.

At that crucial moment his old friend the Duke of Northumberland came to his aid. The duke offered to support Lane in the preparation of a definitive Arabic-English dictionary. For Lane, who had once written how he had been

possessed, as a young man, by "a zealous attachment to the study of oriental literature,

and a particular desire to render myself familiar with the language of the Arabs," this was the consummation of a relationship that had been developing all his life. Financed by the duke, Lane prepared to return to Egypt to gather the classical Arabic lexicographical texts that would form the basis of his dictionary.

Nothing existed like the dictionary he planned. The standard works were the 17th-century Arabic-Latin dictionaries of Franciscus Raphelengius and Jacob Golius. Magnificent accomplishments in their time, they had long fallen out of

date, being limited in sources, deficient in organization and scope, and marred by mistakes. Georg Freytag's *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum*, published during the 1830's, did little more than replicate the shortcomings of its predecessors. And all of those dictionaries were composed in Latin, a language that was not only already slipping into decreasing scholarly use but was also unsuitable for treating Arabic. As Lane told the Duke of Northumberland, "There are thousands of Arabic words & phrases which Cicero himself could not have expressed" in Latin. It was high time for a dictionary of Arabic and a major modern European language. Lane set about single-handedly to fill that need.

Lane sailed on his third trip to Egypt in July 1842, accompanied by Nefeseh and by his sister, Sophia Poole, and her two sons, Stanley and Stuart. The Lanes were always a close family, and Sophia had been deserted by her husband, so Lane was glad to have her with him. He and Nefeseh never had children, so he had come to think of Stanley and Stuart as his own. But he also hoped Sophia would write about her experiences in Egypt. Although his *Manners and Customs* had been praised for its completeness, Lane knew that its descriptions of women were superficial: He had been unable to interview Egyptian women and had had to draw almost all of his information about them from Egyptian men. Sophia, however,



This portrait has sometimes been identified as Edward Lane's Greek-born wife Nefeseh, whom—according to family tradition—he found in a Cairo slave market, purchased and later married. (In fact, Lane's friend Robert Hay was probably the principal in the transaction.) More probably, however, the portrait is a study by Lane's brother Richard of an unidentified young Egyptian woman, made from a sketch by Lane. Nonetheless, Nefeseh would have dressed much like this in Cairo.

the firm of John Murray, under new management, abruptly cancelled its agreement to publish *Description of Egypt*, the book that Lane cared about even more. And while Murray's had waited, the book market had changed. Big, illustrated, expensive books like *Description of Egypt* had become risky financial ventures, and indeed Lane was never able to find another publisher. Although his attention turned to other things, he regretted his failure to publish his first and favorite book for the rest of his life. Not until the year 2000, a century and a quarter after his death, was *Description of Egypt* published.

Lane's dismay was somewhat assuaged by a consuming new project, a translation of *The Thousand and One Nights*. Lane had long been interested in this classic work, also known as *The Arabian Nights*, because he thought it presented "most admirable pictures of the manners and customs of the Arabs, and particularly of those of the Egyptians." That such fantastic tales, redolent with magic and improbable coincidences, should be taken as a reliable guide to Arab and Egyptian society might seem strange, but Lane clearly understood something very important about *The Arabian Nights*: A *jinn* might not really be held captive in a bottle for centuries, but the descriptions of

Lane's Arabian Nights was the leading English translation for most of the 19th century.

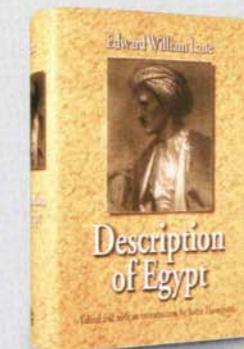
Publication of the *Description of Egypt*

Although *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* made Lane famous as an orientalist, the book he cared about

most was *Description of Egypt*, the reason for his first trip there in 1825. After accumulating a large collection of notebooks and sketches, Lane returned to England, revised the manuscript of *Description of Egypt* through three drafts and brought the illustrations to a high state of readiness, only to be prevented from going to press by a prolonged series of setbacks. This was a bitter disappointment, and Lane continued to hope for the rest of his life that some way might be found to publish the book—but always in vain. After his death, the notes, pictures and manuscript drafts of *Description of Egypt* were scattered to various British collections.

During the 1990's, Jason Thompson, an expert on British scholars, artists and travelers in the Middle East, began

working through Lane's papers and painstakingly reconstructed a definitive edition of *Description of Egypt*. For a long time, however, it looked as though Thompson's attempt to resuscitate Lane's first book would merely reprise Lane's futile efforts: Publisher after publisher turned it down as commercially unviable. But Mark Linz and Pauline Wickham, the director and senior editor of the American University in Cairo Press, immediately saw the book's potential. "Our reaction was tremendous excitement," Linz said. "We knew this was an important book and that Jason Thompson was the only person who could handle it." In 2000, nearly 170 years after *Description of Egypt* was originally intended to be printed, the American University in Cairo Press published a complete, fully illustrated edition of it. The confidence that Thompson, Linz and Wickham placed in Edward William Lane's previously unpublished book turned out to be justified: *Description of Egypt* will soon enter its third printing.



could go places he had not, and would be able to write about Egyptian women in much more depth—and her resulting book would also help pay the bills.

This third and longest trip was far different from the preceding ones. Before, Lane had been much in society and traveled extensively through the country. This time he remained at home, sometimes not going out of doors for months on end, working steadily at his overwhelming task, assisted only by Sheikh Ibrahim al-Dasuqi, his Arabic language assistant. Al-Dasuqi helped Lane with copying and could discuss fine points of Arabic grammar and spelling. Every once in a while, for a change of pace, they played Arabic word games together, but Lane's focus never strayed far from his dictionary.

Meanwhile, Sophia worked on her book, aided by Lane, who sometimes supplied material and always offered suggestions. He reviewed and approved each chapter when she finished it. Covered from head to ground in her black *habarah*, her face concealed by a long, heavy veil, Sophia would ride forth on her donkey, accompanied by servants, to visit the harems of the great, including that of the Pasha of Egypt, the powerful Muhammad Ali, where she always received a warm welcome. These occasions, as she explained, provided "frequent and familiar intercourse with the ladies of the higher and middle classes ... such as, I believe, few Englishwomen have enjoyed."

Sophia's book, *The Englishwoman in Egypt*, was received enthusiastically in Britain when it appeared in three volumes between 1844 and 1846. "Mrs. Poole has now done for Egypt what Lady Mary Wortley Montague did for Turkey," one

reviewer wrote, comparing Sophia to the great 18th-century ethnographer of Turkish women and society, "and even more, as her relationship to Mr. Lane, the celebrated Arabic scholar, and long a resident in Egypt, has enabled her to supply information on subjects not generally to be expected from female travelers." Even so, Sophia did not go nearly as far as Lane might have wished, for, as she openly admitted, she could never sufficiently overcome her own social and religious prejudices to present a full picture of women's life in Egypt. Nevertheless, *The Englishwoman in Egypt* became one of the classic studies of 19-century Egyptian women.

The Lanes and Pooles returned to England in 1849 and settled in Worthing, a quiet town on the southern coast. Lane left it just once, and then only to travel to nearby Brighton to visit a dying friend. At Worthing, he maintained the tightly focused lifestyle he had developed in Egypt, beginning each working day early by saying the *bismillah*, the opening lines of the Qur'an—"In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful"—and working until 10 at night, stopping only for meals and an afternoon walk in the nearby countryside when the weather was fine. Every Friday he put his lexicographical work aside to spend time with his family and perhaps receive a few close friends, but most other callers, no matter how distinguished, were politely but firmly refused by his wife and sister, who closely guarded his precious time. Every Sunday was reserved for studying the Bible, which he read in Hebrew.

The first of the eight volumes of Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon* were published in 1863 and the work's importance



Lane's sister, Sophia Poole, accompanied him on his third trip, during which she wrote *The Englishwoman in Egypt*.

Most Europeans in Egyptian Dress

Most European travelers in Egypt during Lane's day adopted Egyptian dress in the hope of passing unnoticed as foreigners. Usually they lived and dressed not as native Egyptians, for whom they could never hope to be mistaken, but as members of Egypt's Ottoman Turkish elite, who were accepted as an integral, if privileged, part of Egyptian society. That provided the additional advantage of ensuring a degree of deference from the general population. As Lane wrote in his *Description of Egypt*:

If dressed in the European style, he [the traveler] is seldom molested or insulted: but if habited as a Turk,

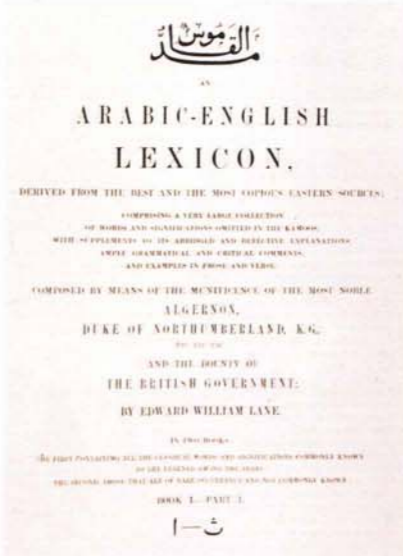
he commands respect, & as he passes the peasant employed in the labours of agriculture, or driving his loaded ass or camel, or riding from one town or village to another, he gives, or returns, the salutation of peace. One influential traveler whose example Lane followed in Egypt was Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, the famous Swiss explorer and Arabist who discovered Petra and Abu Simbel. "I wonder whether you would recognize me if you could see me now," Burckhardt wrote to his parents in Switzerland. Burckhardt's clothing is commemorated on his tomb in Cairo's Bab al-Nasr Cemetery; a full set of Lane's Egyptian clothing is preserved in Oxford's Ashmolean Museum.

This photographic portrait of Lane was made in 1863, the year the first of his *Arabic-English Lexicon's* eight volumes was published. To this day, the *Lexicon* remains indispensable to scholars.

was immediately recognized. Even the London *Times* took notice: "Of the manner in which Mr. Lane has performed his work it is difficult to speak in terms of too high praise. It displays all the photographic accuracy for which he is so well known, combined with scholarship of a kind—acquired as it was in the East—which is hard to attain. His familiarity with Eastern minds and habits of thought, and with all the objects of Eastern life, give him an uncommon insight into the meaning and intention of an Arab writer.... It is not too much to say that the work, when completed, will do more to advance the study of Arabic than any other which has appeared during this century."

Working with his incredible industry and persistence, Lane published the succeeding volumes of the *Arabic-English Lexicon* at roughly two-year intervals, but it was all too apparent that he was racing against time and death. He finished writing the fourth volume, covering the letters ش, س, and ص in 1870, but on the very day it was printed, all but one copy was destroyed by fire. Two years were lost. Lane was 68 years old and in frail health. His response was to increase his efforts, focusing even more tightly than ever on the *Lexicon*. But composition, printing and proofing could only go so fast. Lane was working on the article ق for volume six on August 5, 1876 when he was taken ill; he died five days later. The *Lexicon's* final three volumes were published under the supervision of his great-nephew, Stanley Lane-Poole, who later made a name for himself in Arab numismatics, among other areas.

Edward William Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon* is still an indispensable reference tool for the classical Arabic language. Of the many scholarly accolades it has received over the decades, the one by the great Cambridge orientalist A. J. Arberry in 1960 is representative: "Every Arabist since Lane has had good cause to bless him for his superhuman labours, and to regret that he had not begun his project earlier in life, so that there might have been a greater chance of its completion. It is certainly true to say, that every work produced in this century relating in any way to Arabic studies has drawn heavily upon the *Lexicon*. It is a sufficient tribute to its unique greatness, that to this day it remains supreme in the field of Arabic



lexicography: no scholar or group of scholars has produced anything to supplant it."

That evaluation holds true in the 21st century. Professor Manfred Woidich of the University of Amsterdam describes Lane's *Lexicon* as "a fine combination of eastern and western scholarship. For the scholar busy with classical Arabic, it is an indispensable working tool which will not be replaced in years to come."

Lane is buried in London's West Norwood Cemetery, not far from the graves of his acquaintances, the artists David Roberts, who sought Lane's advice before making his epochal trip to Egypt, and the less renowned but highly gifted Louis Haghe, whose fine hand reproduced the works of many of his more famous fellows, including Roberts, for publication. Lane had once hoped Haghe would prepare the finished prints for *Description of Egypt*.

But one should not visit West Norwood to see Lane's grave monument, because the local government, not knowing or caring who he was, smashed it and carted away the pieces some years ago, laboring under some misguided idea about clearing space. Yet all of Lane's major books—*Description*

of Egypt, Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, The Thousand and One Nights, and the *Arabic-English Lexicon*—are in print at this moment, monuments more enduring than stone to a modest man and his zealous attachment to the study of Arabic literature. ☉



Historian and writer Jason Thompson (jasthomp@gmail.com) has published extensively about the development of Egyptology, classical studies and orientalism in the 19th century. His new book, *Edward William Lane: A Biography*, is in press.

Related articles from past issues can be found on our Web site, www.saudiaramcoworld.com. Click on "indexes," then on the cover of the issue indicated below.

The Arabian Nights: J/F 08
The Englishwoman in Egypt...: M/A 04
Manners and Customs...: S/O 03
 Belzoni: J/F 78
 Hay: M/A 03
 Lady Mary Wortley Montague: J/A 80
 Burckhardt: S/O 67, N/D 74, M/A 06



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

Class Activities

This issue's Classroom Guide is organized around shopping. The Visual Analysis section is embedded.

Theme: Shopping

Shopping is a both a timeless necessity and, when prosperity allows, a pastime. People have always traded and shopped for things they need, like food, and for things they want—like iPods. Dubai's business leaders surely recognize how many people like to shop: Dubai has an abundance of shopping malls, with even more in the planning stages. But shopping has had its place historically, too, as you will read in "East Meets West in Venice," and it has a place today even in the less-developed parts of the world, as you will read in "New Nomads of the High Atlas." In the activities that follow, you'll have a chance to think about shopping—your own experiences and those that you'll read about in *Saudi Aramco World*.



that made it a place where people shopped in the Middle Ages? What is it about Dubai's location that makes it a place where people shop today? Of course, several centuries have passed since Venice was a shopping hub. What has changed in that time that has made Venice less of a shopping lure and Dubai more of one?

"East Meets West in Venice" notes that ships carrying Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land often postponed leaving Venice so that travelers would shop more in the port city. Think about similar situations today. What kinds of places have "captive" shoppers—that is, people who, for some reason, are stuck someplace? How do sellers capitalize on these stuck people? (Hint: Up until the 1970's, often the only things you could buy at airports were chewing gum and newspapers.) When you find yourself stuck in one of those places, do you ever shop for something you did not plan to buy?

What kinds of places do people go to to shop? How do shoppers behave in the different settings?

Team up with one or more people for shopping excursions. Your mission: Go to different kinds of shopping venues and observe consumer behavior. With your group, go to a supermarket, a clothing store at a mall, an outdoor shopping area such as a farmer's market or street vendor, and a home computer. Watch how shoppers behave in each setting. What do you notice? Start with these questions, recording your findings for each place, and then come up with additional questions of your own: Do people use shopping lists? Do they spend a lot of time looking at things they might buy? Are people in groups, or alone? Do they talk? To whom? How old are the shoppers in each place? Are there more women than men? Try asking people about the following: (First explain that you're working on a school project!) Are they shopping for something specific or "just looking"; what factors do they consider when deciding on a purchase; and so on. Make notes and prepare a presentation of your findings for the class. Based on the presentations, make a graphic that compares consumer behavior in different settings. How is that behavior similar across settings, and how is it different? Write a short summary that explains your findings.

What kind of shopping environments do different sellers create? Why?

Think about the Ibn Battuta Mall in "Edutaining Dubai." Write your own description of the shopping environment there, based on

What kind of shopping experiences do you have?

Do you shop? Think about your own shopping experiences: What do you buy—groceries? clothes? music? books? Where do you shop? Do you enjoy shopping? Write a shopping journal. Be sure to address these topics:

- when you shop
- how often you shop
- what you shop for
- where you shop
- where the things you shop for have come from
- what the shopping experience is like for you
- details about a recent shopping excursion.

Keep your journal entry in mind as you work through the rest of the activities. It should help you think about shopping in other times and other places.

Now turn your attention to the shopping enterprises described in *Saudi Aramco World*.

How does location affect shopping?

Find Venice and Dubai on a map. What is it about Venice's location

Class Activities (cont.)

the article's descriptions and the photographs in the printed magazine and the Web edition. In your description, explain why the mall's designers chose the Ibn Battuta theme. Discuss: How did Tim Mackintosh-Smith feel about the mall and its theme? How did his opinion change? Why did it change? What do you think about the mall's theme? Why?

Imagine a mall with a theme based on another traveler or explorer. What about a Lewis and Clark mall, for example? Or a Sir Edmund Hillary mall? Or a Marco Polo mall? What would its "courts" be? What structural elements (e.g., columns, rivers, etc.) would it include? What objects? What people? Working with a group, design your own historically themed mall. Choose a theme person and identify at least five courts for your mall, as well as the structures, objects and people you would want represented there. Present your mall design to your class. Explain it. Include the historical references, and also how the design would encourage shoppers to buy things. After all, as Mackintosh-Smith reports, "The stuff—the goods, the shopping—comes first."

Mackintosh-Smith uses the phrase "temporal and spatial slippage" when describing his experience at the Ibn Battuta mall. What do you think he means? Write a definition of the term based on how he uses it and what he says about it. Use the photos in "Edutaining Dubai" to explore the idea of temporal and spatial slippage. Choose any one of the photos to analyze. Without reading the caption, answer these questions about the photo: What is included? What different time periods are represented in it? What makes you think so? What different places are represented in it? What makes you think so? Write a caption for the photo as if you were Tim Mackintosh-Smith. Include one sentence that describes what's in the photo, and then write at least two more sentences that relate the photo to the article's analysis of the Ibn Battuta Mall. Compare your caption with another student's.

Think about someplace you've been where temporal and/or spatial "slippage" happens. Take photographs of the place that show the slippage in a way that's similar to the photos in "Edutaining Dubai." Then write a caption for your photo, using the caption you wrote for Dick Doughty's photo as a model.

How does shopping get integrated into settings whose primary purpose is not shopping?

These days it's possible to shop in just about any setting, in all kinds of places that are not intended primarily as shopping venues. For example, you can visit an art museum and buy not only postcards and books with images of art, but all kinds of other items that are only vaguely connected to the museum. You can shop in hospitals, ballparks and even at religious shrines. In your day-to-day activities, pay attention to and list as many different "non-shopping" places where you can shop as you can. Pay attention, too, to places where you *really* can't shop. List those, too. When you look at the two lists, try switching them around. For example, if you could, would you make it impossible to shop at a history museum? Or would you make it possible to

shop at a funeral home? Write a fictional account of the place you've imagined.

What kind of relationships do people develop and maintain in order to make shopping possible?

To shop at a mall, you don't have to interact much with other people there. You have to be polite enough, but in general you can have minimal contact and still make your purchases.

That's not the case in every shopping environment, as you can read in "East Meets West in Venice" and "New Nomads of the High Atlas." Both articles describe the kinds of relationships people develop to make commerce possible. (To be sure, the rock climbers described in "New Nomads" aren't shopping the same way people shop at the mall in Dubai, but they are buying a service from the people of the Zawiyah Ahansal region.) In both places, how does the need for buying and selling affect how people behave toward each other? Look at the photograph at the top of page 26. What do you see in it that suggests the kind of adaptations both the climbers and the local people have had to make in order to do business together?

Are there situations in which it's better not to develop shopping relationships?

Shopping takes place within many contexts. One context, of course, is economic. But there are also political and ethical contexts within which we shop. How much do they affect us? Giandomenico Romanelli says that Venice's traders ignored them completely: "The boundlessly cynical Venetians never let morality, religion or ideology get in the way of making money," he said. Can you think of comparable situations today? Do some research to find out about the Fair Trade movement and the growth of organic products. Or research debates in your country about human rights and trade: Trade between the US and China is a good starting place. Learn about the situation. Then take a position for or against the morality of making economic gain more important than other considerations.

How well can people combine other activities with shopping?

The Ibn Battuta Mall is intended to provide shopping opportunities and also education. Circle the parts of the article that address the education element. How successful does Mackintosh-Smith think the mall is? How does he reach his

conclusion? Look back at your own themed-mall design. What kinds of educational activities could you use to make your visitors' shopping experiences educational as well as pleasing on a consumer level? Develop at least one such activity with your group. Have another group try doing it to see how well it works.



Julie Weiss is an education consultant based in Lowell, Massachusetts. She holds a Ph.D. in American studies. Her company, Unlimited Horizons, develops social-studies, media-literacy and English as a Second Language curricula and produces textbook materials.



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.

An Arab’s Journey to Colonial Spanish America: The Travels of Elias al-Mūsili in the Seventeenth Century. Elias al-Mūsili. Caesar E. Farah, tr and ed. 2003, Syracuse UP, 0-8156-0790-3, \$24.95 hb.

This curious little travelogue is an interesting look at early Spanish America through Arab eyes. In fact, it purports to be the first account by an “Eastern” traveler to the New World. It was written by an Iraqi Chaldean priest from Aleppo who visited South and Central America in the late 17th century, barely 150 years after the conquest. In those days, non-Spaniards could not travel to “the Indies” without royal permission; thanks to a recommendation from the Pope, al-Mūsili received the needed permit and sailed aboard a Spanish galleon to Venezuela. He traveled from there to Colombia, Panama, Peru and other Andean lands, followed by adventures in Central America and Mexico. Al-Mūsili was not a great writer; his Arabic style was said to be weak. But he was adept at recording what he saw—wildlife, native peoples, Spanish overlords, the ever-present Jesuit missionaries—and supplemented his accounts with local lore and legend. He was fascinated by glittering gold and silver and visited every mining operation he came across, though they were “restricted” sites, and somehow managed to secure at least one mule-load of silver, and perhaps other treasure, before he left the New World. (In fairness, it should be said there is no evidence that he used the funds he raised for anything but legitimate clerical activities.) Eight years after starting out, he returned to his diocese in Aleppo and there finished his memoir, which remained in a single manuscript copy until it was discovered in that city in the late 19th century.

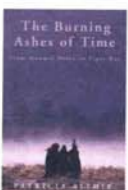
—ROBERT W. LEBLING



Artichoke to Za’atar. Greg Malouf and Lucy Malouf. 2008, University of California, 978-0-520-25413-8, \$29.95 hb.

Just as “Middle Eastern” ties together the cuisines of North Africa, the Levant and the Gulf, so does Chef Greg Malouf tie together his own heritages: Lebanese-Australian by birth, he trained in restaurants across Europe and Asia. This is neither a scholarly reference book nor an exhaustive cookbook, though there are recipes for each ingredient entry. Rather, Greg and Lucy undertake a personal exploration of Middle Eastern cuisines, ingredient by ingredient. From dates to eggplant, saffron to sumac, each cuisine shares similarities and approaches through ingredients. Each entry describes an ingredient and includes its history, source and use in various cuisines, as well as a guide on how to purchase and store it. The recipes include updated versions of such traditional items as baba ghanoush and fusions like sticky lamb-shank soup with fresh fenugreek and molten mozzarella. The photographs are stunning.

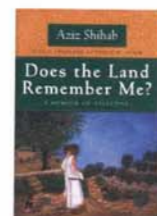
—JULIETTE ROSSANT



The Burning Ashes of Time: From Steamer Point to Tiger Bay. Patricia Aithie. 2005, Seren, 1-85411-400-X, £9.99 pb.

Aden, at the southwestern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, served as the main coaling station for colonial Britain’s steamship service between Suez and Bombay beginning in the 1840’s, thus creating an unlikely link between Wales and Yemen. The high-quality Welsh coal that fired the ships’ boilers made Cardiff’s docks the busiest in the United Kingdom and a magnet for generations of Yemeni workers who found work feeding the vessels’ furnaces and dumping the ashes that remained. Many emigrated from Steamer Point, a coal-bunkering point in Yemen, to Tiger Bay, adjacent to the port of Cardiff, where a sizeable Yemeni community remains today. A number served

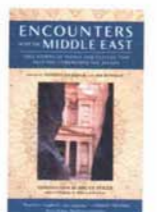
in the Royal Navy in the two World Wars. The author traveled to Yemen to find living links between her hometown and Aden and its hinterlands. She recounts her discoveries in a book that is part detailed travelogue, part detective story.



Does the Land Remember Me? Aziz Shihab. 2007, Syracuse UP, 978-0-8156-0862-2, \$19.95 hb.

Aziz Shihab’s question about his native Palestine is followed by another, equally urgent: Does he remember the land? Shihab feels sad and guilty for leaving, setting out in 1950 as a young man to “Amirka” to escape the conditions of his homeland and make his way as a journalist. His father warns, “I heard America makes people forget,” and remembering does become tricky when one has shifted from one cultural identity to another. Shihab focuses his memoir on a visit in 1966 to his dying 106-year-old mother, on what he saw and felt as he went about the country: visiting a Bedouin in his tent for a political discussion; attending a Jerusalem fundraising dinner for Pat Robertson; befriending a Jewish Iraqi soldier who was initially hostile; debating whether to sell a piece of terraced land; going to feast at a poor friend’s house and finding out later that his friend had borrowed money for the food. Shihab’s sensibilities saw-saw between his American and his Arab identities; he is especially bitter about his adopted country’s treatment of his homeland. Troubled and searching, Shihab wrote this memoir on his own deathbed, and died just months after it was published. But he has paid his debt to the land and to memory, and in doing so helps us all better remember the crucial story of the Palestinians.

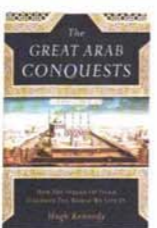
—ANN WALTON SIEBER



Encounters With the Middle East: True Stories of People and Culture That Help You Understand the Region. Nesreen Khashan and Jim Bowman, eds. Bruce Feiler, intro. 2007, Solas House, 978-1-32361-8-3, \$17.95 pb.

Encounters is an earnest collection of writings from mostly American, mostly young people, most of them seeing the Middle East for the first time: “a heady cocktail of jet-lag, adventurousness, and naïveté,” as one narrator describes her own state. Most of the incidents and encounters are on the delicate everyday level: Drinking too much tea on a bus ride in Turkey; smoking molasses-flavored tobacco in the *sheesha* in Alexandria; getting grouchy from lack of sleep in the Old City of Jerusalem; committing Arabic bloopers in a Kuwaiti barbershop; bonding with a cab driver in Damascus; joining a family in Bahrain to watch a Shia ritual. Small details of difference and interaction are savored, wide-eyed. Although an occasional ugly-American moment creeps in, stereotypes are mostly avoided, and the simple and instructive pleasure of the friendly encounter carries the day.

—ANN WALTON SIEBER

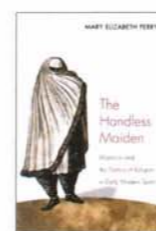


The Great Arab Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live In. Hugh Kennedy. 2007, Da Capo, 978-0-306-81585-0, \$27.95 hb.

Kennedy provides a lively tour d’horizon of the Muslim world circa 750, after the lightning conquests that brought the Islamic Empire up to the Pyrenees and past the Oxus. The introduction carefully assesses the trustworthiness of the sometimes fanciful Muslim chronicles, mostly written in the ninth and 10th centuries. The book uses al-Tabari’s

Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk (History of the Prophets and Kings) extensively, along with some archeological evidence and contemporary non-Muslim accounts. Each section’s tight geographical focus—Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Transoxiana—and ample bibliography make this a helpful guide to students, and a concluding chapter entitled “Voices of the Conquered” provides some unexpectedly mixed reactions from Byzantine and Sasanian observers of the invading Arab armies.

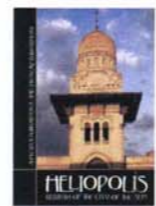
—LOUIS WERNER



The Handless Maiden: Moriscos and the Politics of Religion in Early Modern Spain. Mary Elizabeth Perry. 2007, Princeton UP, 978-0-691-13054-5, \$19.95 pb.

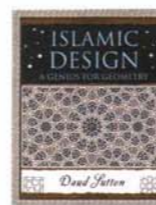
This is a rare, sympathetic look into the lives of the Moriscos—those Muslims and their descendants who remained in Spain after the completion of the Spanish Christian reconquest in 1492 and who were then forcibly baptized. Their status as “New Christians” made them subject to the Spanish Inquisition, for Old Christians often suspected the Moriscos were secretly clinging to their Muslim faith. As it turned out, the suspicions were accurate. Perry has delved deep into the little-consulted *aljamiado* literature (Romance language written with Arabic letters) and into a wealth of myths and legends. One of these is of the Handless Maiden, a princess who remains devoted to Allah despite having her hands amputated by her unbelieving father—an enduring metaphor for the Morisco experience. The author found that it was most often Morisco women who preserved what they could of Muslim belief and practice, and passed it on to their children. Perry is the first author to devote a book to Morisco women, and she succeeds by letting them speak for themselves. She traces their lives through the fall of Granada, the Muslim rebellion of 1499, the forced conversions of 1502, subsequent decades of repression, the Alpujarras revolt of 1568 and the expulsion of Moriscos from Spain in 1609. Most Moriscos fled to Muslim lands after the expulsion, though for many the suffering did not end there, as many North African Muslim communities had their own suspicions about the Moriscos. They were best received in Tunisia, where the Ottomans protected them and allowed them to retain their identity as Hispano-Muslims.

—ROBERT W. LEBLING



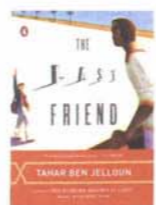
Heliopolis: Rebirth of the City of the Sun. Agnieszka Dobrowolska and Jaroslaw Dobrowolski. 2006, American University in Cairo, 978-977-416-008-0, \$24.50 pb.

This book about a storied Cairo suburb will intrigue anyone with an interest in Egypt or early-20th-century urban planning. The original Heliopolis occupied a strategic position where the Nile branched into its multi-channeled delta. The first known temple there was built by King Djoser (2630–2611 BC), and a cosmogony developed associated with the sun god Atum. Medieval rulers later appropriated stone from the city’s monuments to use in their own buildings in Cairo, until—by the 19th century of our era—just a single obelisk remained. Enter Baron Edouard Empain. In the early 1900’s, the Belgian-born railroad magnate founded a new city, also called Heliopolis, not far from its namesake. His project and what’s become of it are the focus, in words and pictures, of much of this book. The authors are conservation architects who live in Heliopolis, and their work reflects their métier.



Islamic Design: A Genius for Geometry. Daud Sutton. 2007, Wooden Books, 978-1-904263-59-3, £4.99 pb.

Students and art aficionados interested in the geometry that underpins classical patterns in Islamic design will find this conveniently pocket-sized book to be a clear step-by-step primer to a wide range of patterns, from simple, apprentice-level works to such dizzyingly complex masterpieces as *muqarnas*.



The Last Friend. Tahar Ben Jelloun. 2007, Penguin, 978-0-14-303848-1, \$13 pb.

Readers searching for hidden meaning in this story of two Moroccans who share their lives’ trials and joys over 40 years may be disappointed. Those looking for a candid tale of intertwined lives that span cultural and generational divides will not, nor will those seeking insight into a country emerging from a colonial power’s grip into the modern

world. Set mainly in Tangier, Morocco’s cosmopolitan northern port, the book follows the friendship of two men, Ali and Mamed, in their own voices, from their school days through adulthood. Readers will find whispers of Albert Camus in Ben Jelloun’s spare prose and in his tale’s harsh conclusion.



Medieval Cuisine of the Islamic World: A Concise History with 174 Recipes. Lilla Zaouali. M. B. DeBevoise, tr. Charles Perry, forew. 2007, University of California, 978-0-520-24783-3, \$24.95 hb.

Zaouali, Tunisian and Sorbonne-educated, presents the unexpectedly rich medieval tradition of Arab cookbooks and cuisine, explaining both cultural background and culinary context and presenting recipes in typical modern groupings: soups, meats, breads and so forth. The book contains an excellent foreword by Charles Perry, author of *A Medieval Arab Cookery* (2001) and *A Baghdad Cookery Book* (2005). Because medieval Arabs wrote and cooked from cookbooks, he points out, “Islam has the richest medieval food literature in the world.” With an attractive design and texture, the book is straightforward and easy to use, whether as cookbook or history book—or a fine gift.

—JULIETTE ROSSANT



Memories in Translation: A Life between the Lines of Arabic Literature. Denys Johnson-Davies. Naguib Mahfouz, forew. 2006, American University in Cairo, 978-977-424-938-9, \$19.95 hb.

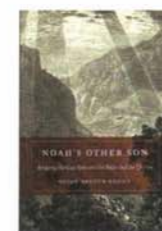
Denys Johnson-Davies’s story of becoming the pioneer (and premier) translator of Arabic literature does much more than survey his achievements as an interlocutor between the Arabic- and English-reading worlds. He recounts his decision—on a whim, he claims—to sit for the Arabic exam at Cambridge at age 15, and then spend a year at the School of Oriental Studies in London until he reached the minimum age to enter university. (He had spent his youth in Egypt, Sudan and elsewhere in East Africa, speaking Arabic but never “learning” the language.) Johnson-Davies discusses his work with the BBC’s Arabic Section during World War II and his time teaching Arabic translation in Cairo after the war. But the book’s most fascinating parts come when the author discusses his relationships with poets, publishers and writers—including Nobel Prize-winning novelist Naguib Mahfouz—from that time on.



Napoleon’s Egypt: Invading the Middle East. Juan Cole. 2007, Palgrave MacMillan, 978-1-4039-6431-1, \$24.95 hb.

Cole presents Napoleon’s campaign in Egypt as seen from contemporary French and Arabic sources, many rare and untranslated, in addition to the well-known account by al-Jabarti. He notes the parallels between this first modern case of western intervention in the Middle East—a failure, as he makes clear, both militarily and politically—and those more recent. Tactics that Napoleon thought would be welcomed—Maltese translating French into Arabic, claims that France’s anti-Catholic policies were in fact pro-Islamic, pulling down gateways that separated Cairo’s residential quarters at night—backfired miserably when the translations could not be read, Muslims took offense at attacks on another scriptural religion, and neighborhoods became dangerous. Such unexpected and unintended consequences in a foreign occupation show that some things never change.

—LOUIS WERNER



Noah’s Other Son: Bridging the Gap Between the Bible and the Qur’an. Brian Arthur Brown. 2007, Continuum International, 978-0-8264-2797-7, \$21.95 hb.

The author explores the similarities among the scriptures of the world’s three major religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Brown’s ultimate goal is to empower religious moderates to take part in an interfaith alliance promoting mutual understanding and respect, and the comparative analysis of scripture is his vehicle. To better appreciate and understand the Torah and Bible, knowledge of the Qur’an is indispensable. More than 20 familiar Biblical figures, whose teachings are also in the Qur’an, are used to represent humanity as a whole. Noah’s other son—surprisingly unknown to many Christians but well known to Muslims—and the stories of the flood embody the epic theme of warnings unheeded and the danger of religious extremism. While historical, political and cultural animosities still exist

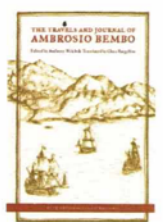
among the three religions, Brown suggests that an essential foundation in the scriptures will contribute to allaying them. In an era of discord, this work rejoices in the affirmation of human spirituality. —KHALID AFANDI

Saudi Women Speak: 24 Remarkable Women Tell Their Success Stories. Mona AlMunajjed. 2006, Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 9953-36-9816, \$20 hb. Sociologist Mona AlMunajjed's interviews present an account of the often overlooked but important work of Saudi women. Her subjects are some of the kingdom's most influential and forward-thinking women, a sampling of courageous pioneers including businesswomen, charity leaders, educators, doctors, academics and artists; they discuss their families, careers and their personal successes and challenges. AlMunajjed also asks their opinions of Saudi men, the West's perceptions of Saudi women, their hopes for the future and advice they might give other Saudi women. It is a rare and pleasurable opportunity to read their views and opinions in their own words. This book should be mandatory reading for journalists and others who want to learn about modern Saudi society. It is available online from www.adabwafan.com. —KAY HARDY CAMPBELL



Syrian Episodes; Sons, Fathers, and an Anthropologist in Aleppo. John Borneman. 2007, Princeton UP, 978-0-691-12887-0, \$27.95 hb.

What happens when you cross an energetic tourist with a Princeton professor of anthropology and give him entrée to Aleppo, Syria's second-largest city, for a semester? The answer is in this book. The author, arriving on a Fulbright fellowship to teach and research, takes an apartment in the former Venetian Consulate, "right off the *Souk al-Atarin*" (the spice market) in the old Silk Road city. He asks questions at every turn, from the bathhouse to the university cafeteria to the homes where he's a guest, and he paints a remarkable picture of a place where deep-rooted traditions are being tested daily by modern interventions. Blocked from classroom teaching by a Byzantine bureaucracy, he makes the people of the city and the wider countryside his university—resulting in what he describes as a mutual "encounter with the extraordinary."



The Travels and Journal of Ambrosio Bembo. Anthony Welch, ed. Clara Bargellini, tr. 2007, University of California, 978-0-520-24939-4, \$24.95 pb.

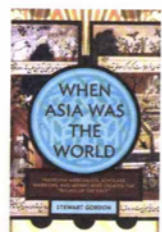
Ambrosio Bembo was a young Venetian nobleman who traveled to the Middle East and India in the late 17th century. He wrote a detailed account of his travels and had it illustrated with 52 line drawings by French artist G. J. Grélot, who traveled with him on the return trip. Bembo's book was never published in his lifetime, perhaps because the author felt it could not compete with other travel books of its kind, but it was rediscovered some three centuries later and was finally published last year. The book is least interesting when Bembo is journeying from one city to another. It is much more compelling when he settles into a new community and describes the people, customs and culture around him. He traveled first to the bustling market city of Aleppo in Ottoman Syria, accompanying his uncle, the newly named Venetian consul there. He paints valuable descriptions of the European merchant community and the Ottoman bureaucracy with which it interacts. But soon Bembo sets off through Mesopotamia to Basra, then travels by sea to India's west coast and eventually sails back from Goa to the Gulf coast of Safavid Iran. His descriptions of life in such Persian cities as Shiraz and Isfahan are among his finest and most fascinating—whether he is munching flatbread topped with fresh fennel on the streets of Isfahan, hobnobbing with wealthy Armenian merchants in Julfa or traveling with a caravan in the hills of western Iran. Bembo's youthful perspective and insatiable curiosity are great assets, and a blessing for the reader. —ROBERT W. LEBLING



The Voice, the Word, the Books: The Sacred Scripture of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims. F. E. Peters. 2007, Princeton UP, 978-0-691-13112-2, \$29.95 hb.

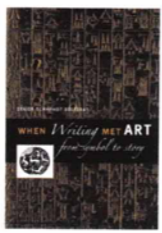
In these days it is especially a pleasure to encounter a gentle, intelligent work, written for the educated general public, that promotes understanding, even empathy, for "the other." Peters, an accomplished scholar of the three major Abrahamic religions, offers new information and insights for practitioners of these faiths as well as for the inquiring

and the curious. His prizewinning book traces the evolution of three scriptures—the Bible, the New Testament, and the Qur'an—from their origins as oral revelations through their earliest written versions to the canonical texts we know today. Each scriptural development took a different course, but all three showed certain similarities, beyond the sharing of certain prophetic and historical pasts. The author compares the processes and tells us about the roles of scribes, translators and other key players. We learn about the scroll, the codex, the history of manuscripts and the introduction of printing. Peters is respectful of each tradition and leaves us with the impression of a grand sequential process, unified yet varied, like a tapestry woven from the strands of Middle Eastern history. —ROBERT W. LEBLING



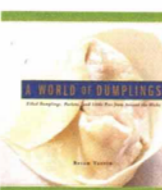
When Asia Was the World. Stewart Gordon. 2007, Da Capo, 978-0-306-81556-0, \$26 hb.

In this readable collection, Gordon looks at the years from 500 to 1500 across Asia, then the location of the greatest cities and the largest empires in the world. His approach is to summarize the accounts of eight individuals—all good observers—who traveled widely during the millennium: Xuanzang was a Buddhist monk who traveled more than 15,000 miles, all within the Buddhist sphere. Ibn Fadlan was a diplomat sent from Baghdad far into what is today Russia. Philosopher and medical writer Ibn Sina (Avicenna) found patronage from Iran to Afghanistan. Abraham bin Yiju, a Jewish pepper merchant born in Tunisia, traveled throughout North Africa, Arabia and India. Jurist Ibn Battuta was able to find employment and patronage from Spain to China. Ma Huan hired on as a translator of Arabic with a fleet sent by the Ming emperor from Nanjing to Indonesia, India and Arabia. Babur was a descendant of Genghis Khan who founded a dynasty that would rule India for two hundred years. The author provides background information and explanation so that complex interactions become accessible to the reader, and the book is enhanced by good illustrations and a very useful bibliography. —CHARLES SWEENEY



When Writing Met Art: From Symbol to Story. Denise Schmandt-Besserat. 2007, University of Texas, 978-0-292-71334-5, \$45 hb.

The author of this book is recognized as the discoverer of the origin of writing. Schmandt-Besserat now considers early art, or visual imagery, and its interaction with writing. She argues that the first major interaction was in about 3500 BC, when writing caused fundamental changes in the way designs were organized. Examining pottery imagery, wall paintings, seals and stone reliefs, she shows how writing techniques were applied to Mesopotamian art, rendering it linear and creating a sequential story. "[A]rt increased its capacity to communicate information and thus became narrative." The second interaction occurred between 2700 and 2600 BC. Schmandt-Besserat cites three well-known art objects to show how three individuals placed their written names on artistic creations to assure their own immortality. This new interaction of text and art paralleled an ancient tradition: the ritual uttering of one's name to the gods, required to assure one's survival in the underworld. The author sets forth her argument persuasively and concisely in fewer than 150 pages, well illustrated with artwork and texts. Schmandt-Besserat's findings matter today because, as she puts it, the West is heir to the ancient Mesopotamian tradition, and the interface of writing and art that she describes still resonates in how we communicate. —ROBERT W. LEBLING



A World of Dumplings: Filled Dumplings, Pockets, and Little Pies From Around the Globe. Brian Yarvin. 2007, Countryman, 978-0-88150-720-1, \$21.95 pb.

What could be more basic—and thus more universal—than a tasty filling inside a baked or boiled or fried dough wrapper? From gyoza in Japan to (Arab) esfiha in Brazil and from kroppkakor in Sweden to fatayer in Lebanon, Yarvin has collected 100 recipes for this "world food" that will have even duffers making manti just minutes after mulling "the basics" in section one. The book is arranged geographically, with Central Asian and Middle Eastern varieties in the third section, but there are many savory recipes and plenty of interesting information throughout. No wonder "my little dumpling" is a term of endearment!

Suggestions for Listening

REVIEWED BY CHRIS NICKSON



The Definitive Collection. Rachid Taha (Wrasse) This well-deserved career retrospective shows Rachid Taha in a very interesting light. For over two decades he's portrayed himself as an iconoclast, caught between Algerian and French culture (outraging the latter with an '80's punk version of the sentimental anthem "Douce France," which here seems very tame). But, in fact, he

proves to be someone with a deep knowledge and reverence for the music of the Maghreb. A number of the tracks here are updates of works by classic composers like Farid El Atrache or Ahmed Khelifi. Even some of his own work, like "Ida," draws heavily on the past, offering a potted history of Raï in six minutes. Virtually all the music here has its roots in North Africa, even if its branches spread broadly through contemporary France, and he doesn't shy away from politics, both blatantly in "Menfi" or with a wry twist, like the subversion of the Clash with "Rock El Casbah." There's a solidity and weight to his body of work (even fluff like the Arab-disco "Voilà Voilà") that stands in sharp relief in this compilation. He's not so much tearing down as continuing the tradition—but with a rare, playful sense of adventure.



Aman Iman: Water is Life. Tinarawen (Independiente)

The third bite of the apple for the Tuareg group Tinarawen comes after a great deal of international touring and acclaim. In their wake a lot of bands playing a similar spare desert blues style have released CDs, but they remain the assured, undoubted leaders of the pack.

There's still a breathtaking spontaneity about the music (perfectly displayed by "Ahimana"), but there's also a strong discipline and economy to the sound. It's all wonderfully layered, built around hypnotic rhythms or guitar riffs, whether on the rolling "Toumast" or the slower "Soixante Trois," with a natural sense of vast spaces in their playing that carries the listener into the grandeur of the alien landscape that fills "Imidiwan Winakalin." They can become surprisingly funky, as on "Tamatan Tilay," before bringing everything gently to rest with the acoustic "Izarharh Tenere," a lilting, glistening pillow of a song. Listening to them is like hearing the raw, primal roots of rock'n'roll, finding the Ur-text of modern musical history, a wonderful voyage of discovery that leaves your sense of the world slightly changed. That's a tall order for any group, but these nomads manage it. The only problem is, that's a huge responsibility to live up to in future.



Taqasim. Marcel Khalife (Connecting Cultures)

Oudist Khalife is inspired by poetry, specifically the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish, with whom he's worked over the years. There may be no words on this album of taqasims, or improvisations, but it's still suffused with lyrical poetry. Working with double bass and percussion, Khalife creates gloriously expressive flows of melodies and ideas over the course of three extended tracks. Ideas tease through, to be explored, worried at, dissected and rebuilt before being set free. It's a very meditative disc, but that's the nature of deep improvisation. In this case it becomes a conversation—more a discourse, really—between the musicians, but in darker tones, as Khalife keeps to the lower register of his instrument, letting tone and space speak as loudly as the notes themselves. It steadfastly refuses to fall into any musical category, although it's undoubtedly influenced by Middle Eastern music, but the tendrils flicker over jazz, classical and beyond. The music demands attention, but carries you along in its wake, a thrilling trip that's both cerebral and passionate. Above all, it's a disc without ego, where a trio with impeccable technique and questing minds make poetry out of music.



Dub Qawwali. Gaudi + Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (Six Degrees)

The late Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan was the greatest of the modern qawwali singers, bar none. His wonderful vocal improvisations could be stratospheric and at his best he could move huge audiences. This album takes unreleased material from the 1960's and 1970's and places it

in a radically different context, slotting his vocal tracks over strongly reggae-inflected backing. On the surface, that sounds like a bizarre and unlikely combination, but it works in an astonishingly natural way. Along with a strong rhythm section and strings, producer/musician Gaudi builds full songs, often quite catchy around the singing, as with "Othe Mera Yar Wasda." Although Nusrat is the centerpiece name, here he effectively becomes one part of an ensemble, subsumed into the whole without the wilder, brilliant flights of fancy. Yet that's fine; as part of the churning, rhythmic mood of the whole, he takes on a different force, his voice rallying and resonant. It's a truly daring deconstruction, and Gaudi deserves praise for having the vision to see that it would work. The results are not only fresh and intriguing, but also immensely satisfying. And from this, a whole new generation might discover Nusrat's more spiritual canon.



The Legend. Oum Kalsoum (Manteca)

She was without doubt the Arab singer of the 20th century. On Thursday nights the Middle East closed to hear Oum Kalsoum's radio broadcasts, and four million people lined Cairo's streets for her funeral in 1975. This budget-priced double CD forms a strong introduction to her work and sublime melismatic power. Schooled in the classical tradition, she was never bound by it, but used it as a springboard to her amazing popularity. Whether working with a small group, as she did in the 1930s, or later with a big ensemble, her way with a line, her remarkable tone and sustain helped bring her unrivaled fame. The brilliance of her technique shines brightest on the dramatic, emotional epic "Najh Elborda" and on "Tab En Nasim Al Alil," but there's not a note that doesn't impress here. It's a master class in expression and control, ranging from the raw tradition of the spare "Wehakkak Ental Mona Waltalab" to the daring of the Western-inflected "Yalli Sana't El Gamil." Running the gamut of her lengthy career, this is the perfect primer on one of the most influential musicians ever to record, a woman whose shadow still lies long over her native Egypt.



Vieux Farka Touré. Vieux Farka Touré (World Village)

The late Ali Farka Touré, doyen of Malian guitarists, never wanted his son to be a musician. But when the boy showed talent and perseverance, he arranged for the great kora harp player Toumani Diabaté to mentor the lad. The result of the apprenticeship is here on Vieux's debut. The influence of his father is obvious on the rhythmic, circular style of guitar playing, but he's no carbon copy; there's a maturity and distinctive voice to his writing and singing, less spare in his playing and richer in harmonies. It's a disc with some beautifully poignant moments, like the pair of father-son duets recorded not long before Ali's death in 2006 (with the older man in full, glorious electric flow on "Diallo"), but much more, it's a showcase of talent, like the full arrangement with horns that beefs up "Ana" or the delicious, raw, bluesy "Courage," where Vieux shows his impressive lead guitar chops. Diabaté also features on two instruments, a richly melodic traditional tune and another long piece that closes the disc with the tenderness of a lullaby. From this CD it's obvious that Vieux Farka Touré is the finished article, rounded and confident, with the legacy of his father but so much more of his own to add.

Top Downloads (eMusic.com)

- El Lilady by Amr Diab
- Journey to Eternity by Shahran and Hafez Nazari
- Bomb Singa Ling by Oojami
- Sashane Allah by Mass El Ghiwane
- Dab Item Nachate by Najat Aatabout and Hassan Dikouk

Chris Nickson is a journalist and broadcaster who covers world music. He's the author of *The NPR Curious Listener's Guide to World Music* (Perigee Books).

Events & Exhibitions

Faith & Power: Women in Islam. Muslim women have occupied positions of power for as long as Islam has existed. This ranges from the commercial reputation of the Prophet Muhammad's first wife, Khadija, through the 12th century Yemeni ruler Malika Arwa, to the modern-day political leadership of such Islamic states as Pakistan and Bangladesh. This exhibition explores a rich history that has often been overlooked, and, beyond examining the lives of these women and attitudes toward them, it also provides a physical dimension with artifacts from distant times and places. Jewelry, clothing and the accoutrements of power bring new vividness to the lives of forgotten queens, consorts and wielders of influence from behind the throne. Islamic Arts Museum **Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur**, March 30 through June 30.

A 19th-century Ottoman *anteri* robe made of velvet. The decoration of scrolling vines and arabesques is embroidered in couched gilt threads.



Cihat Burak Retrospective: Modern Traveler, Daring Painter, Timeless Historian charts the life of an unconventional master of modern Turkish art and offers insight into Turkey's social and cultural history. Paintings, ceramics and prints are among the more than 200 works on display, complemented by 23 photographs of Burak taken by renowned photographer Ara Güler. **Istanbul Modern**, through March 23.

Egyptian Mummies: Immortality in the Land of the Pharaohs traces the origins of mummification, exploring the cultural background of the practice, ancient Egyptians' concept of the afterlife and their religious beliefs. It also tracks the development of mummification techniques over time. The exhibition includes more than 300 objects, not only human and animal mummies but also mummy masks, sarcophagi, protective amulets and statuettes of deities, as well as textiles, jewelry and tools. A separate exhibition is provided for children. **Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart, Germany**, through March 24.

Women of Islam: Photographs by Rania Matar focuses on the issue of the headscarf in Muslim culture. The Boston photographer returns repeatedly to her native Lebanon in pursuit of images of her culture and heritage, and this newest body of her work, in black and white, provides insight into a way of life that is under

in the 20th century and now marks the trend towards globalization in the 21st. Also crossing social and cultural boundaries, blues music colors an emotional mood and haunts the airwaves worldwide. In both music and textiles, blue is a mode of communication. **Textile Museum of Canada, Toronto**, through April 6.

Islam and Astronomy: Science in the Service of Religion is the topic of a talk in which Silke Ackermann, the British Museum's curator of European and Islamic scientific instruments, explores the role science plays in Islam, the advanced skills of Muslim scholars and their influence on the West. In conjunction with the exhibition **1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World**, 2:30 p.m.; free, but reservations required. **Croydon [uk] Clocktower**, April 8.

The Phoenicians and the Mediterranean presents aspects of the culture of these famed navigators and merchants, beginning with their origins around the city-states of Byblos, Sidon and Tyre. Known primarily for their diffusion of the alphabet and their remarkable sculpture, the Phoenicians were also creators of household objects and furnishings of great refinement. The exhibition deals with Phoenicians' writing—on coins, seals, clay tablets and stone stelae—their religion—represented by stone and metal statues of their pantheon and commemorative plaques—their commerce—responsible for the pan-Mediterranean diffusion of purple cloth and cedar wood—and their craftsmanship in glass, pottery, ivory and precious metals. **Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris**, through April 20.

The Arts of Islam: Treasures From the Nasser D. Khalili Collection comprises more than 500 pieces, including a detailed panoramic watercolor of Makkah from 1843, the earliest known visual record of the city. The exhibition presents both secular and religious art, including calligraphy and manuscripts, talismans, miniature paintings, carpets and other textiles, works associated with the pilgrimage, and both everyday and treasury objects. Other objects relate to science, horsemanship, falconry and the Muslim world's relations with Europe. This is the first showing in the Middle East of part of the 20,000-item Khalili Collection, the world's most comprehensive. **Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi**, through April 22.

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. **Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona Beach, Florida**, through April 25; **Mulvane Art Museum, Topeka, Kansas**, May 17 through August 24.

Paradise: Work by Kutluğ Ataman displays three recent works by the Turkish artist. The title work presents 24 video portraits of residents of Orange County, California, including the oldest clown in the world, a wedding planner, car- and star-obsessed teenagers and members of the Laughter Yoga Institute of Laguna Beach. **Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston [uk]**, through April 26; **Vancouver [bc] Art Gallery**, through May 9.

Curiouser and Curiouser: What a Wonder is This World presents selected images from the life's work of documentary photographer Brynn Bruijn. The traveling retrospective exhibition shows images—many originally photographed for *Saudi Aramco World*—of the daily activities of people in Africa, China, Europe, Russia and Tibet, while accompanying text references from Lewis Carroll's *Alice* encourage us to look at the ordinary in extraordinary ways. **Von Liebig Art Center, Naples, Florida**, through April 27.

From Gilgamesh to Zenobia: Ancient Arts From the Near East and Iran underlines the importance of those regions in the development of such aspects of western culture as writing, accounting, economy, case-law, the sciences, literature, religions and moral concepts. Objects on display include the famous Gilgamesh Plaque, Luristan bronzes, cylinder seals and inscriptions. **Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels**, through April 27.

Fragmentation and Unity: The Art of Sari Khoury features more than two dozen abstract works by the internationally known artist and educator, who left Jerusalem at 17, in the 1950's, to forge a new life in the American Midwest. Khoury, who died in 1997, was a prolific writer and speaker; his words share gallery space with his artworks. **Arab American National Museum, Dearborn, Michigan**, through April 27.

Picturing Jerusalem: James Graham and Mendel Diness, Photographers presents 70 photographs from the 1850's by the Scottish missionary James Graham and his Odessa-born student, Mendel John Diness, two leading 19th-century photographers working in Palestine. Also exhibited are Diness's glass-plate negatives, silver prints, albums, notebooks and other photographic materials, found in a 1989 garage sale

in Minneapolis. (See *Aramco World*, J/A 04.) The exhibition sheds light on the decade's progress in the field of photography, and political and social aspects of the Holy Land under Ottoman rule. **Yeshiva University Museum, New York**, through April 27.

Pearls to Pyramids: British Visual Culture and the Levant, 1600–1830 explores the intersection of British visual culture with the countries of the eastern Mediterranean in the early 17th century, when Britain reasserted itself as a dominant participant in the Mediterranean trade long monopolized by Venice. The exhibition, nearly 90 works altogether, introduces the geographical and historical context of that trade with paintings by Sir Peter Lely and the William van de Velde and through early travel accounts that expressed and inspired fascination with eastern societies. The impact of such commodities as coffee and silk is examined through prints, broadsides and illustrated books. Other items, including architectural drawings made on scholarly expeditions, reflect growing interest in the classical and biblical sites of the Near and Middle East in the 18th century. The exhibition concludes with an examination of the increasingly militaristic cast to the British presence in the Levant in the 19th century following Nelson's victory over Napoleon in Egypt. **Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut**, through April 27.

The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting, 1830–1925 shows more than 90 images of bazaars, baths and domestic interiors in the Near and Middle East by such artists as Joshua Reynolds, J. E. Lewis, W. H. Hunt, David Wilkie, John Singer Sargent, William Holman Hunt, J. M. W. Turner, Roger Fenton, Andrew Geddes and Edward Lear, and provides information on the cross-pollination of British and Islamic artistic traditions and the use of "the Orient" as an exotic backdrop. **Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut**, through April 28; **Tate Britain, London**, June 4 through August 31.

1001 Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World demonstrates the scientific contributions made by scholars of the Muslim world, using engineering principles, historical manuscripts and multimedia technology to recall a "golden age" of scientific innovation by Muslim scholars between the years 600 and 1600. Coffee, soap and public baths, clocks, experimental optics, the numbers 1 through 9 and the first attempt at flight are among the contributions discussed. **Croydon [uk] Clocktower**, through May 3.

Impressed by Light: Photographs From Paper Negatives, 1840–1860 is the first exhibition to highlight British photographs made from paper negatives, and features approximately 120 works by such leading artists as Roger Fenton, Linnaeus Tripe and B. B. Turner, as well as many now unfamiliar practitioners. The exhibition demonstrates that, contrary to standard histories, these "calotypes" flourished during the 1840's and 1850's. The exhibition follows the

progress of the movement from the invention of the process by William Henry Fox Talbot in 1839 to the Great Exhibition of 1851, where the esthetic possibilities of the calotype were amply illustrated, to its flowering in the years immediately thereafter. During the 15 years of the calotype's existence, a body of work was created that significantly expands the understanding of photographic history. Most of the works in the show have never before been exhibited in the United States. **National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.**, through May 4; **Musée d'Orsay, Paris**, May 26 through September 7.

War Artists of the Middle East shows the work of British artists who have documented conflict in the Middle East, from World War I to Iraq and Afghanistan, and incorporates travel journals, interviews, film and photography, all documenting the complex landscape of social and political change that shaped the Middle East. **Imperial War Museum, London**, through May 11.

Mummies: The Dream of Eternal Life combines natural history and anthropology to take the visitor on a trip to the various regions, cultures and continents where mummification—of humans or animals—is practiced or natural mummification is used. The exhibition includes the Ice-Age "Windeby Girl," a complete Egyptian mummy with sarcophagus, a child mummy from Peru and mummified animals; the oldest exhibit is from the age of the dinosaurs and the most recent from the second half of the 20th century. **Reiss-Engelhorn Museums, Mannheim, Germany**, through May 18.

Between the Sea and the Desert: The Many Cultures of North Africa showcases the rich and diverse textile culture of the *maghrib*, western North Africa. Luxurious silks and embroideries from the coastal cities present a cosmopolitan Mediterranean tradition based on Hispano-Moresque, Arab and Ottoman sources. The men's robes and women's shawls produced by the indigenous Berber population reveal traditions that flourished and remained unchanged deep in the Atlas Mountains. Rugs made by sedentary Arabs and Berbers of the plains between the sea and the desert, with their bright colors and dramatic patterns, demonstrate the weavers' exposure to the different cultures of Maghreb. **Textile Museum of Canada, Toronto**, through May 18.

Royal Tombs of the Scythians: Under the Sign of the Golden Griffin displays more than 6000 spectacular finds from recent excavations of burial mounds—*kurghans*—on the steppes of Eurasia, the home of the legendary horse-borne nomads known as the Scythians. From the eighth to the third century BC, they held sway over an area stretching from Outer Mongolia across Siberia to the Black Sea. For a long time our knowledge of them was based solely on the accounts of Herodotus; now, modern archeology and scientific and anthropological research can show us the environmental conditions, eating habits, illnesses, and family and trade

relationships of this people, creating a comprehensive portrait of Scythian life. Exhibits include mummies so perfectly preserved over more than 2500 years that their tattoos and parts of their clothing have survived; objects of gold and silver; garments of fur, felt and silk decorated with jewels; magnificent jewelry, weapons and ornamented armor; and objects made of wood and leather. **Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg**, through May 25.

Origins of the Silk Roads: Sensational New Finds from Xinjiang presents Han Dynasty (Bronze Age) grave goods from the Tarim Basin, including rare textiles and other organic objects preserved by the region's extraordinary aridity, that open a new window on people's lives and lifestyles—and the development of the Silk Roads—in the period from the second millennium BC to about AD 500. More than 190 objects are on display. **Reiss-Engelhorn Museum, Mannheim, Germany**, through June 1.

Babylon is a bold attempt to reconcile history and legend by assembling objects from around the world to document both the factual foundation of the ancient city in about 2300 BC and the myth rooted in that fact. This approach is made possible by the use of new studies that do not depend on either biblical or classical sources; rather, the great eras of Babylonian history are represented by stela, statues and statuettes, precious objects, and documents and texts in the form of cuneiform tablets, papyri and manuscripts. The evolution of the mythical and psychological representation of Babylon is presented through a collection of printed works, drawings, paintings and miniatures. The exhibition thus allows the viewer to evaluate the influence of Babylon's cultural heritage in past and present-day civilizations, and to affirm the role of that heritage at the roots of western culture. Drawings, texts and other works elucidate the various phases of Babylon's "rediscovery" from the 17th century to today. **Musée du Louvre, Paris**, through June 2; **Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin**, opens June 26.

Excavating Egypt: Great Discoveries from the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology displays artifacts and artwork, archival photos and documents, photomurals and other materials that tell the story of archeologist William Matthew Flinders Petrie (1853–1942) and his exploration of ancient Egyptian civilization, capturing the adventurous spirit of the early days of Egyptian archeology. Excavation notes and personal journals bring to life one of the field's great pioneers, shedding light on his innovative methods and his theories on the young science of archeology. The exhibition features more than 200 of Petrie's most significant finds, not displayed since they were hidden in London at the beginning of World War II. They include a rare beaded-net dress from about 2400 BC, a fragment of mankind's first history book, the earliest examples of metalwork in Egypt, the earliest examples of glass—so rare the Egyptians classed it with gems—the oldest "blueprint" and the

first royal monument, from the reign of the legendary Scorpion King, from 3100 BC. **Columbia [South Carolina] Museum of Art**, through June 8.

China: At the Court of the Emperors presents more than 100 masterpieces from the Tang Dynasty (618–907), whose capital at Chang'an was the eastern terminus of the Silk Roads and, in the eighth century, the world's largest city, with a population estimated at two million. The dynasty, which reigned over a renaissance of the arts, crafts and literature, flourished in part because of its openness to new ideas, not only those from Central Asia, Persia and Greece but also from India and Japan. The exhibition displays frescoes, stone sculptures, gold and silver objects, ceramics, terracotta statues, glass plates, jewels and precious lacquerwork, including recent finds from Shaanxi Province. Some of these objects reflect Islamic techniques and influences from Persia. **Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, Italy**, through June 20.

The Path of Princes: Masterpieces of Islamic Art From the Aga Khan Museum Collection reveals a millennium's worth of artistic production from the ninth to the 19th century. With provenances ranging from Spain to Indonesia, these objects from the Aga Khan Museum Collection testify to the craftsmanship of centuries of artisans. Among the works on display are illuminated manuscripts, metal and glass, as well as jewelry and paintings. **Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon**, through July 6.

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. Additional 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, more than twice the size of the 1979 "King Tut" exhibition, marks the first time treasures of Tutankhamun have visited Britain in 26 years. **O2, London**, through August 30.

For Tent and Trade: Masterpieces of Turkmen Weaving includes some 40 rugs and tent trappings from the museum's world-class collection, all woven from the white, long-staple, highly hydroscopic wool of adaptable, fat-tailed Saryja sheep, endemic to Central Asia. In spite of the fact that most of the weaving is done on simple horizontal looms staked to the ground, the work of Turkmen weavers, of which extant examples date back to the fourth century BC, is very skillful, well designed and highly patterned. Also on view are five striking mantles masterfully embroidered and worn by women of three different Turkmen

Events&Exhibitions

Continued from previous page

tribes. de Young Museum, **San Francisco**, through September 7.

In Palaces and Tents: The Islamic World From China to Europe describes Muslim contacts with neighboring cultures through more than 300 objects, divided into three chronological sections and one political one, dealing with Russia, that includes a magnificent Bukharan tent. State Hermitage Museum, **St. Petersburg, Russia**, through September 7.

Tutankhamun and the World of the 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 colossal 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. Museum für Völkerkunde, **Vienna**, 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.

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. These include such iconic works as *Barbie Loves Ken*, *Ken Loves Barbie* (1995/2002) as well as numerous

SAUDI ARAMCO WORLD (ISSN 1530-5821) is published bimonthly by Aramco Services Company 9009 West Loop South, Houston, Texas 77096-1799, USA

Copyright © 2008 by Aramco Services Company. Volume 59, Number 2. Periodicals postage paid at Houston, Texas and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Saudi Aramco World Box 2106 Houston, Texas 77252-2106

works devoted to world politics, including some of her more recent antiwar pieces. While she describes herself as a painter and has won international recognition for her abstract canvases embroidered with erotic motifs, Ghada Amer explores and expresses broader ideological and aesthetic concerns: the submission of women to the tyranny of domestic life, the celebration of female sexuality and pleasure, the incomprehensibility of love, the foolishness of war and violence and an overall quest for formal beauty. **Brooklyn [New York]** Museum, through October 19.

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.

Maps: Finding Our Place in the World features more than 100 unique, rare and often beautiful artifacts, including maps on cuneiform tablets, medieval maps, manuscript maps of explorers, globes, maps of areas all around the Earth and maps of nowhere: utopias and imaginary maps. This ambitious exhibition broadens visitors' understanding of the almost universal human activity of mapmaking. Walters Art Museum, **Baltimore**, March 16 through June 8.

Masters of the Plains: Ancient Nomads of Russia and Canada examines two of the world's great nomadic cultures side by side for the first time, providing a unique look at the bison hunters of the Great Plains of North America and the livestock herders of the Eurasian steppes. More than 400 artifacts from Canada and Russia permit exploration of food preparation, sacred ceremonies, art, trade, housing design, modes of travel and warfare in the two cultures, which each took shape some 5000 years ago and lasted into recent times—a longevity that compares favorably with history's greatest civilizations. Albin Museum, **Samara, Russia**, opens in March.

Exploring South Asian Photography is a series of lectures and conversations. A conversation with photographers Ram Rahman and Sunil Gupta of New Delhi takes place April 2; a lecture on "Women Photographers in India" by Sabeena Gadihoke (Jamia Millia University, New Delhi) takes place on May 7. ① Janet Sartor@harvard.edu. Both events at Sackler Lecture Hall, Harvard University Art Museums, **Cambridge, Massachusetts**.

The Queen of the Night, a paleo-Babylonian terracotta plaque in high relief, was created between 1800 and 1750 BC, and is emblematic of the



To Live Forever: Egyptian Treasures from the Brooklyn Museum uses some 120 objects dating from 3600 BC to the year 400 of our era to illustrate the range of strategies and preparations that the ancient Egyptians developed to defeat death and to achieve success in the afterlife. The exhibition explores the belief that death was an enemy that could be vanquished, a primary cultural tenet of ancient Egyptian civilization. To survive in the next world, Egyptians would purchase, trade or even reuse a variety of protective objects such as statues, coffins, vessels and jewelry. The exhibition explains the process of mummification, the economics and rituals of memorials, the contents of the tomb, the funeral accessories—differentiated by the class of the deceased—and the idealized afterlife. Exhibits include the vividly painted coffin of a mayor of Thebes, mummies, stone statues, gold jewelry, amulets and canopic jars. On opening day at 2 p.m., curator Edward Bleiberg of the Brooklyn Museum will discuss religion, esthetics and immortality as seen through the objects on display. **Indianapolis** Museum of Art, July 13 through September 7.

This painted statuette of a standing hippopotamus was made between 1938 and 1539 BC, during Egypt's Middle Kingdom. It is a little over 18 centimeters (7") long.

reign of Hammurabi, king of Babylon. It is the focus of a presentation by Dominique Collon of the British Museum. 12:30 p.m., Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, April 9.

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 archaeological sites that poses an even greater threat to the cultural heritage of Iraq and the world. Archaeological 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**, April 10 to December 31.

Looting the Cradle of Civilization: The Loss of History in Iraq, a public symposium, will include talks by McGuire Gibson, professor of Mesopotamian archeology, University of Chicago; Geoff Emberling, director, Oriental Institute Museum; Donny George, former director, Iraq National Museum, Baghdad; John Russell, former advisor on culture to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq; Elizabeth Stone, professor of

Mesopotamian archeology at SUNY Stony Brook University, New York; and Patty Gerstenblith, authority on cultural property, De Paul University College of Law. Admission \$75; for pre-registration, 773-702-9507 or oi.uchicago.edu. 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Oriental Institute, **Chicago**, April 12.

Butabu: Adobe Architecture of West Africa: Photographs by James Morris presents 50 large-scale images of structures from monumental mosques to family homes. For centuries, complex adobe structures have been built in the Sahel region of western Africa. Made only of earth mixed with water, these labor-intensive adobe structures display a remarkable diversity of form. Morris, a British photographer whose work centers on the built environment, has created both a typological record of regional adobe construction as well as a rendering of West African architecture that reflects the sensuous, surreal and sculptural quality of these distinctive buildings. Several ambitious religious buildings depicted seem to push the physical limits of mud architecture. More humble structures, such as private homes or neighborhood mosques and churches, are highly expressive and stylish, and often intricately decorated. These African adobe buildings share many of the qualities now much admired in the West: sustainability, sculptural form and the participation of the community

in conception, fabrication and preservation. Queens Library Gallery, **Jamaica, New York**, April 12 through June 21.

Lukas Werth in Pakistan: Werth's photographs have a unique aura: The settings are determined by the subjects themselves, and the selection for the images of both historic and modern urban locations, and both religious and private spaces, speaks for a very delicate relationship between photographer and photographed. Local architecture and decoration are used to indicate foreignness, and Werth's presence in relation to his subjects seems restrained but not secretive. His exposures and printing techniques result in gravure-like effects that give his images, shot in black-and-white, the warmth that must have illuminated the original scenes. Pergamonmuseum, Museum für Islamische Kunst, **Berlin**, May 2 through June 22.

Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums From the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. Among the most remarkable of Mughal paintings and calligraphies are those commissioned by the Emperors Jahangir (1605–1627) and Shah Jahan (1627–1658) for display in lavish imperial albums. A window into the world views of the emperors, these exquisite images depict the rulers, the imperial family in relaxed private settings, Sufi teachers and mystics, allies and courtiers, and natural history subjects. Many folios are full-page paintings with superb figural borders; others are collages of European, Persian, and Mughal works collected by the emperors. Produced by the atelier's leading artists, they reveal the conceptual and artistic sophistication of the arts of the book at their apex in the early 17th century. The exhibition brings together 86 masterpieces—many not previously exhibited in the United States—from the renowned Dublin collection. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, May 3 through August 3.

Türkiye'den Tasarım—Design From Turkey: Turkish themes and design elements have inspired European art and handicrafts for centuries, and this selection of 80 objects created by internationally known Turkish designers shows that that relationship continues. The 12 designers represented in the exhibition, though of different generations, have in common that their work includes elements from far back in Ottoman and Turkish artistic traditions, combined with modern functional forms. Their interpretations of historical motifs and concepts is far from obvious or "typical," but it adds depth to the attractiveness of their work, and visitors will find themselves intrigued by the conversations that arise between the museum's historical artifacts and the modern objects in this exhibition. Pergamonmuseum, Museum für Islamische Kunst, **Berlin**, May 22 through June 29.

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. National Gallery of Art, **Washington, D.C.**, May 25 through September 7.

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, and 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.**, June 7 through September 7.

Babylon elucidates the unexpectedly close intellectual and spiritual connection between the ancient Near East and Europe over a time span of several millennia. In the first part of this extensive exhibition, archeological artifacts, thematically organized, document that the roots of European civilization reach back into the second millennium BC. The second part explores the reception of Babylonian culture into the intellectual history of Europe from late antiquity into the 21st century. Museum of the Ancient Near East, Pergamonmuseum, **Berlin**, June 26 through October 5.

The Arts of Kashmir demonstrates the cultural riches of the region, with its Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic art dating from the fourth to the 20th century. The exhibition includes some 135 objects: carpets and embroidery, calligraphy, furniture, paintings, papier-mâché and sculpture. **Cincinnati [Ohio]** Art Museum, June 28 through September 21.

Faces of Ancient Arabia is drawn primarily from a recent gift of some 60 works of Yemeni alabaster sculpture dating from the third century BC to the third century of our era, and focuses on the importance and splendor of the kingdoms of Southern Arabia—the land of the Queen of Sheba—which prospered through trade in incense and other precious goods with Egypt, the Near East and the Roman Empire.

Ancient authors wrote about the region's wealthy cities, huge temples and precious statues. ① 410-547-9000 or info@thewalters.org for specific days and times. Walters Art Museum, **Baltimore**, July 20 through September 7.

Amarna: Ancient Egypt's Place in the Sun offers a rare look at the unique royal center of Amarna, the ancient city of Akhetaten, which grew, flourished and vanished in hardly more than a generation's time. The exhibition features more than 100 artifacts, including statuary of gods, goddesses and royalty, monumental reliefs, golden jewelry, personal items of the royal family and artists' materials from the royal workshops. University of Pennsylvania Museum, **Philadelphia**, indefinite.

Objects of Instruction: Treasures of the School of Oriental and African Studies displays parts of its rich collection of artifacts known only to specialists: Islamic manuscripts, ceramics, African textiles and archeological finds. Brunei Gallery, **SOAS, London**.

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 *Canvas*, the art and culture magazine for the Middle East and the Arab world.

Saudi Aramco World is published bimonthly in print and on-line editions. Subscriptions to the print edition are available without charge to a limited number of readers worldwide who are interested in the cultures of the Arab and Muslim worlds, their history, geography and economy, and their connections with the West.

To subscribe to the print edition electronically, go to www.saudiaramcoworld.com/about.us/subscriptions/new.aspx. Fill out and submit the form. To subscribe by fax, send a signed and dated request to +1-713-432-5536. To subscribe by mail, send a signed and dated request to *Saudi Aramco World*, Box 469008, Escondido, California 92046-9008, USA, or mail the subscription card bound into the printed magazine. If requesting a multiple-copy subscription for a classroom or seminar, please specify the number of copies wanted and the duration of the class. All requests for subscriptions to addresses in Saudi Arabia must be mailed to Public Relations, Saudi Aramco, Box 5000, Dhahran 31311, Saudi Arabia.

Change of address notices should be sent electronically to www.saudiaramcoworld.com/about.us/subscriptions/change.aspx, or by fax or mail to the addresses above. In the latter cases, please be sure to include your customer account number, or an address label from a recent issue, or your complete old address.

Back issues of *Saudi Aramco World* and *Aramco World* from 1960 onward can be read on-line, downloaded and printed at www.saudiaramcoworld.com. Click on "Indexes." The issues are available in text form through September/October 2003, and with photographs and illustrations for subsequent issues. Printed copies of back issues, to the extent they are still in print, can be requested by e-mail (saworld@aramcoservices.com), fax (+1-713-432-5536) or postal mail (Special Requests, *Saudi Aramco World*, Box 2106, Houston, Texas 77252-2106, USA). Bulk copies of specific issues for use in classrooms, workshops, study tours or lectures will also be provided as available.

Indexes: An annual index is printed in the January/February issue of each year. A cumulative index is available on-line at www.saudiaramcoworld.com; it is fully text-searchable and can also be searched by title, subject or contributor.

Permissions:

Texts of articles from *Saudi Aramco World* and *Aramco World* may be reprinted without specific permission, with the conditions that the text be neither edited nor abridged, that the magazine be credited, and that a copy of the reprinted article be provided to the editors. This general permission does not apply, however, to articles identified as reprints or adaptations from other sources, or as being copyrighted by others.

Photographs and illustrations: Much of *Saudi Aramco World's* photo archive can be accessed through the Public Affairs Digital Image Archive (PADIA). Go to www.photoarchive.saudiaramcoworld.com. You can search for and order images without charge.

Unsolicited Material: The publisher and editors of *Saudi Aramco World* accept no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs or illustrations submitted for any purpose. Article proposals should be submitted in writing and with patience. Self-addressed stamped envelopes are not required, as they constitute too great a temptation for the editors. Guidelines for contributors can be found at www.saudiaramcoworld.com/about.us/guidelines.htm.