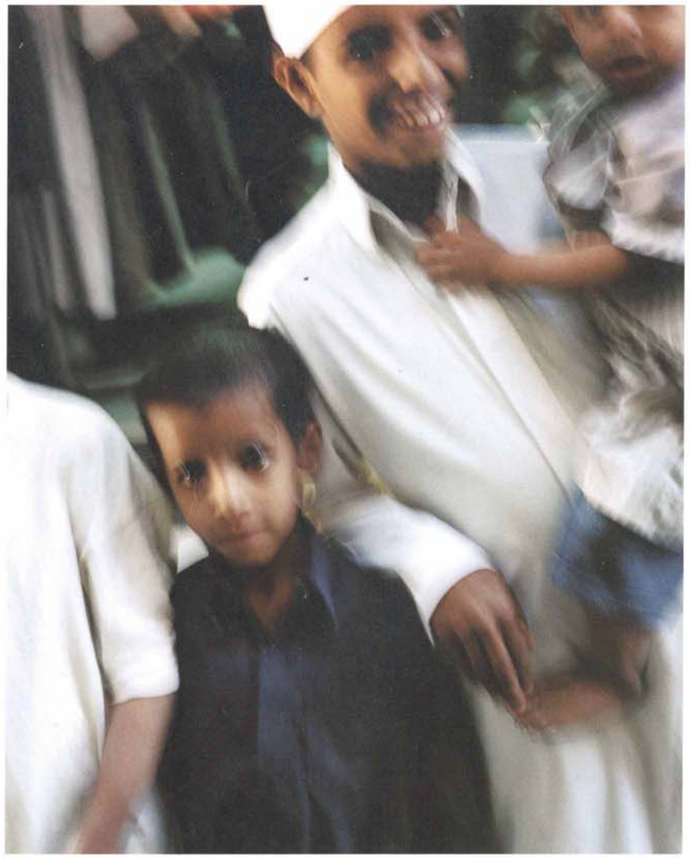

Saudi Aramco world

March/April 2001

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new doors to the kingdom

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New Doors to the Kingdom

By Peter Harrigan
Photographed by Brown W. Cannon III

The words "tourism" and "Saudi Arabia" never appeared in the same sentence until recently, but the kingdom—the beckoning goal of pilgrims for more than 14 centuries—is embracing a new category of foreign visitors. Though the numbers are still small, commercial tourism is Saudi Arabia's fastest-growing industry, and it is expected to become the country's second-largest, after oil. Today's tourists include some 2.5 million pilgrims per year, Saudi families on vacation, and since 1999, bus-tour visitors from Japan, Europe and North America.

Djibouti: A Future in Arabic

By Louis Werner
Photographed by Lorraine Chittock

Atop the shaky tectonic rift that cleaves the Horn of Africa lies one of the continent's smallest nations and one of the world's hottest places, a land that was known to humanity's oldest ancestors. Today Djibouti is also a cultural confluence, with a legacy in the salt trade, searching for prosperity amid the region's no less tectonic politics. "Anyone who says that life is hard," wrote French poet Arthur Rimbaud during his sojourn in Djibouti, "should come here to study philosophy."

18: LARRY LUXNER

Cover:

There are believed to be more than 4000 archeological sites in Saudi Arabia, many not yet thoroughly investigated. The most famous is Mada'in Salih, which more than 2000 years ago was an entrepot at the southern frontier of the Nabataean realm that reached north and west to Syria. Today only the sublime sandstone tombs remain, and tourists follow in the footsteps of long-gone traders.

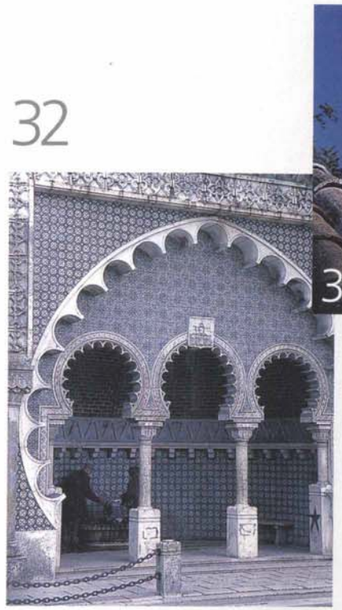
Back Cover:

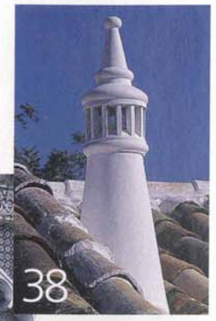
Curious, welcoming and eager to show off their town, three young brothers and a sister pose in the market in Khamis Mushayt. The city was named for the weekly Thursday (*khamis*, in Arabic) market of the Mushayt tribe. It is the largest city in the province of 'Asir, which leads the country in attracting tourists and is the home of Saudi Arabia's first college of tourism.

Flying the Furrow

By Alan McGregor
Illustrated by Benjamin Freudenthal

After World War I, commercial aviation in the Middle East came to seem both possible and necessary to Europe's colonial powers. To keep aviators on course between Baghdad and Cairo, the British Royal Air Force in 1921 plowed a 500-kilometer line across the deserts of Iraq and what was then called Transjordan. Until the advent of radio in the next decade, navigation by "FTF"—"follow the Furrow"—made possible the first airmail and passenger service in the Middle East, and provided a trunk line linking Europe with India and eastern Asia.





The Mystery of Algarve's Chimneys

By Tor Eigeland

Some do look like minarets, and nearly all look as though they belong more to North Africa than to Europe. But historians and local lore maintain that the Arabs who ruled Portugal's southernmost province for half a millennium never used chimneys at all. So why do chimneys rise in a seemingly infinite proliferation of "Moorish" styles from nearly every Algarvian roof? There was only one way to find out: Go there.

Arabian Memories in Portugal

By Habeeb Salloum
Photographed by Tor Eigeland

From the eighth to the 13th centuries, Arab rule and the cultural flowering of al-Andalus also included much of Portugal, and the Arab legacy suffuses modern Portuguese music, food, art and language: To this day a Portuguese verb for diligence and tenacity is *mourejar,* "to work like a Moor."

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Printed on-recycled paper

new doors to the kingdom

written by Peter Harrigan
photographed by Brown W. Cannon III

"All aboard, we're off to sea!" calls Muhammad al-Siddiqi. He is dressed down for the day trip, sporting a polo shirt and shorts rather than the traditional *thawb* and *ghutra* he wears in the office. Fourteen tourists from the United States follow him onto the launch, accompanied by tour guide Sameer Qadi. Minutes later, al-Siddiqi lights a cigar as he maneuvers the boat into the center of the creek that leads to the turquoise waters of the Red Sea.

We 30 Americans felt magically, if precariously, suspended on the bridge between honest-to-goodness travel and prefabricated tourism....

We were tourists, to be sure. Our group of mainly older and well-heeled US globetrotters was being cosseted on this pioneering two-week journey around Saudi Arabia by highly regarded Lindblad Special Expeditions. Our tour leaders had paid the Rijal Alma community in the kingdom's southwest 'Asir highlands to present the enthralling performance of valley and mountain dancing. But we felt like genuine travelers as well, having at least briefly transcended the global commonplaces of Disney-cloned artifice.

—Jack Schnedler, "Lifting the Veil,"
The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, March 19, 2000

The "back-of-the-bus gang" on a recent Smithsonian study-tour in Saudi Arabia. Opposite, main: **In old Jiddah, thanks to historical-preservation efforts, visitors can still see characteristic *rawasheen*, window coverings that cut glare while admitting sea breezes.** Insets, from top: **A restored stairway in al-Dir'iyah, historic center of the first Saudi state. Studying in the library of the Dhahran Ahliyya School. A teacher's new house in al-Jawf. An embroidered dress in a shop window in Khamis Mushayt.** Previous spread: **A folkdance troupe performs for tourists in 'Asir, and an American tourist snaps a souvenir in the Hijaz.**

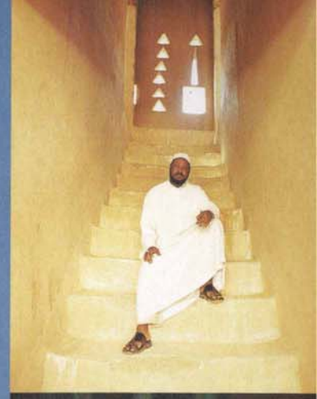
The general manager of Annakheel Village, a sprawling, palm-dotted beach resort north of Jiddah, al-Siddiqi is the organizer of this day's outing. For Qadi, manager of domestic tours for Saudi Tourist and Travel Bureau, it is part of one of the tours that his agency runs—in fact, one of about 30 such tours it has organized in the months between late 2000 and spring 2001. Working with foreigners who have come to Saudi Arabia neither to work nor to worship, but to sightsee and to learn, puts both men on the leading edge of a blossoming tourism industry.

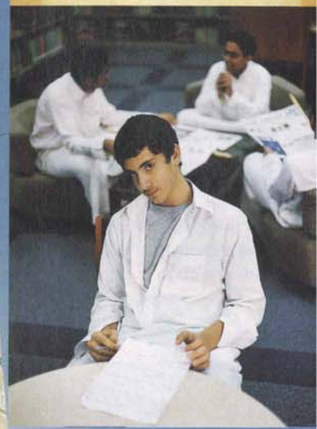
Now nearly two weeks into the tour, the group has clocked some 6500 kilometers (4000 mi), beginning in Riyadh, where its members toured the National Museum and the ruins of the former capital, al-Dir'iyah, and walked the *suq*s, including a camel market. They then zigzagged across the country on six domestic flights, visiting al-Jawf in the far north, Dammam, Jubail, Hofuf and Qatif in the east and the Nabataean masterpiece of Mada'in Salih in the northwest. According to the itinerary, today is for relaxation: "a full excursion to the Red Sea, which contains one of the greatest coral reefs in the world, with over 200 species of coral."

Muhammad al-Siddiqi

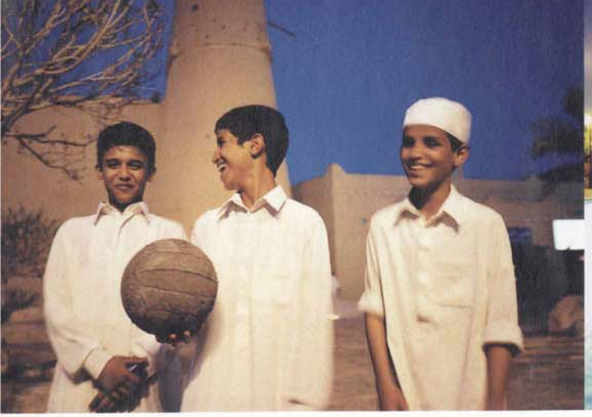
Internet consultant Jan Zastrow of Honolulu, Hawaii cannot wait for the anchor to drop so she can don mask, snorkel and fins. "I'm not an exotic-destination junkie, and I've never even been a group tourist before, but this was the only way to get here," she says.

For her, the trip to Saudi Arabia satisfied a curiosity that she developed two decades ago when she worked in the library at Columbus College in Georgia. "We received a lot of titles on Bedouin life and desert culture and I became fascinated by those images and descriptions," she explained. "But what really nailed my interest was that I could step out of the library and bump right into Saudis who had once led the life those books described, had moved out of the desert to towns in Arabia, and had gone on to become students in the States." Zastrow herself went on to a master's degree program in Arab studies at Georgetown University.





AL-SIDDIQI: SAMIA EL-MOSLIMANY



Left to right: **In Riyadh's historic center, boys take a break from playing soccer in front of the restored Masmak Fort, centerpiece of the unification of Saudi Arabia by King 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud. The guesthouse of the governor of Najran, Prince Mish'al ibn Sa'ud ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, is built in traditional style of the western mountain region. A view up into two of the 210 tent-like units that make up the roof of the 42.5-hectare Hajj Terminal at King 'Abd al-'Aziz International Airport in Jiddah.** Below: **Saudi humor comes through during a tour group's stop near Riyadh.**

"This is the last frontier of tourism, now gradually, thoughtfully and carefully opening up."

—Peter Voll

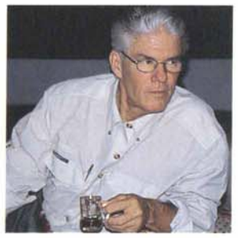
LEFT: PETER VOLL ASSOCIATES; RIGHT: SAUDI ARAMCO

A visit to Arabia, however, had to wait until last year, when she spotted an advertisement for the tour offered by California-based Distant Horizons, one of some 50 international tour operators now offering excursions to Saudi Arabia in partnership with 10 government-approved Saudi tour operators. This year, these numbers are expected to rise as travel companies in North America, Europe, Australia, Taiwan and Japan eye Saudi Arabia, and Saudi investors pump up what the kingdom hopes will become a significant, nonpetroleum part of the economy. Janet Moore, proprietor of Distant Horizons, calls the level of interest in Saudi Arabia "remarkable," and has four groups scheduled to travel there this year.

These efforts are very new. The first full international package tour of the kingdom was organized in 1995, when Saudi Arabian Airlines invited one group of Japanese to see the major sights on a two-week trip. "We learned a lot" from that initiative, says Farouk Ilyias, tourism manager for the national flag carrier. The airline then began to "bring in selected groups from America and Europe."

Yet properly speaking, the first Western tourists arrived on a day trip in 1992, when a Bombay-to-Aqaba cruise ship carrying alumni of Stanford University received permission to dock for a guided tour of the city of Jiddah.

"That visit gave us a kick-start," says Peter Voll, who organized the cruise for Stanford and went on to found Peter Voll Associates (PVA), which specializes in educational tours worldwide and which ran its first all-Saudi Arabia tour in 1999. For 2001, Voll has slated—and in many cases, already filled—10 tours to Saudi Arabia, and he has scheduled stops at Jiddah, Dammam and Jubail for two international cruises.



Peter Voll

Last year, Japan still led the arrivals list with 661 tourists in 41 groups. Germany held second position with 566 visitors; the United States was a close third at 500, all of whom came under the auspices of university alumni associations, the Smithsonian Institution or the American Bar Association. The tourists' average age is over 65 and most are "retired professionals, educated and well-traveled, with money and leisure," explains Voll, who adds that, in the United States alone, "this is a half-billion-dollar-a-year market of intelligent, sensitive, experienced and serious travelers. It is the most significant travel audience in the USA today."

For this group, Voll says, "Arabia is the strongest market for the educational travel audience focusing on cultural and eco-tours. People *want* to come to Arabia. This is the last frontier of tourism, closed for years and now gradually, thoughtfully and carefully opening up." It also benefits, Voll contends, from being historically misunderstood in the West. "People have not had the chance to see the personality of the region, its history, culture, diversity and rich legacy. It is an incredible part of the world."

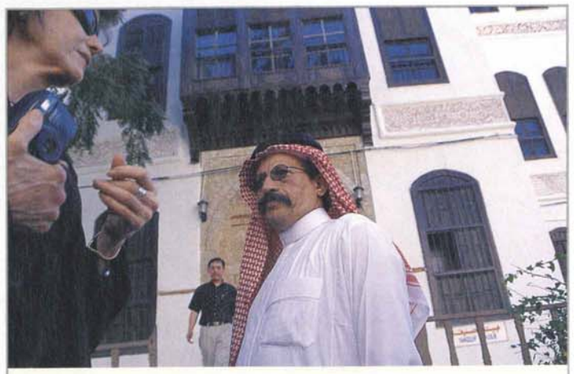
Visitors from Japan tour the Saudi Aramco Exhibit in Dhahran. Last year Japan sent more tourists to Saudi Arabia than any other country—661, in 41 groups.

Of all the countries I visited on my reporting trip—Egypt, Jordan, Saudi, Oman and Yemen—I would list Saudi and Jordan as the destinations I would most like to visit again. I feel this way about Saudi for a number of reasons. First of all, the people were warm, friendly, accommodating, even affable. This is not what I expected. I had a preconceived (always dangerous!) notion that Saudis were grim, conservative, distant and haughty people. Well, I couldn't have been more wrong. I found the people I met to have a love of laughter, a sense of hospitality that was above and beyond the call of duty, and a sincere desire to make us all feel welcome, well taken care of and at ease.

As far as the sites, I found them very interesting. I found the architecture esthetically pleasing, and reminiscent of that in the American Southwest, a region I love. I enjoyed learning the history of the country, especially at the museums, the National Museum in Riyadh being the best, of course, with the museum at Aramco being second.

—Tom Verde, who toured the country on assignment for the public radio program *Savvy Traveler*.

Of course, travelers are nothing new in the lands that became Saudi Arabia in 1932. Pilgrims, merchants, wanderers, soldiers on the march, hucksters on the make, adventurers, mendicants, mariners and migrants have made their way to, and through, the Arabian Peninsula since the dawn of history. Among them, Muslim pilgrims have been the most numerous, having journeyed to Makkah and Madinah for some 14 centuries. (See sidebar, p. 10.) In addition, hundreds



Sami Nawar leads the Historical Area Preservation Department in Jiddah, capital of the Western Province, a city whose metropolitan area is now 500 times the size it was before World War II. Despite that growth, and thanks in part to Nawar's efforts, the city's core has retained a flavor of its past. Since 1990, Nawar and his staff have offered tours that have helped to highlight their work in preservation and urban archeology. Among Saudi cities, Jiddah is second only to Abha in tourist traffic, and most pilgrims from abroad pass through its airport.

of thousands of expatriate workers from around the world have lived and worked in the kingdom since the discovery of oil in 1938, helping to build the modern nation's economy. In that same three-quarters of a century, tourism—defined as recreational travel—mushroomed into one of the rest of the world's biggest industries, and it is only in that time that Saudi Arabia has gained its reputation for inaccessibility.

That changed officially in April 2000, when Saudi Arabia's Council of Ministers formed the Supreme Commission for Tourism (SCT) and charged it with expanding opportunities for domestic investment and job generation in the field. The SCT's secretary-general, Prince Sultan ibn Salman ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, well-known both as the kingdom's first astronaut and as a staunch advocate of cultural preservation, explains that the job "is to organize a new and sustainable tourism sector in the country. This is a complex industry involving interdependent elements such as education, services, security, economics and transport. This means we have to repurpose various government agencies and link their functions to us. We are building an organization from scratch."

On her tour, in one of those serendipitous moments that often come with travel, Jan Zastrow was able to get reacquainted with David Long, her former professor at Georgetown and the first director of the university's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies. Author of two books on Saudi Arabia (*The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, University Press of Florida, 1997, and *The United States and Saudi Arabia: Ambivalent Allies*, Westview Press, 1985), Long was the group's traveling expert, providing background, answering historical questions and giving informal lectures.

In the group, Long says, "there is constant discussion. I have had to work hard. These are sophisticated world travelers at the level of a postgraduate course."

In the short history of such tours to Saudi Arabia, Long's role has become a standard one: Most American, European and Japanese groups feature the en-route services of scholars from their home countries, many of whom have career-long connections with the country and the region.

"For years there has been a huge interest in the country, but little scholarly, journalistic or tourist access," says Long, who lived in Saudi Arabia during his diplomatic career more than 30 years ago. "Things are now changing. Opening up the country to non-pilgrim visitors will contribute to a greater understanding by outsiders of one of the least-understood countries in the world."

Saudi youngsters, returning to the marina as the sun sets, buzz the tour boat on their jet-skis while Zastrow talks of her experience so far. "Before we set off, we were warned not to expect too much. But people here have turned somersaults to provide us with what we want. As I see it developing, I think this destination is a niche market. It needs to be presented with a lot of reading as an introduction, focusing on behavior, religion, history and culture. There are so many rich themes to explore."

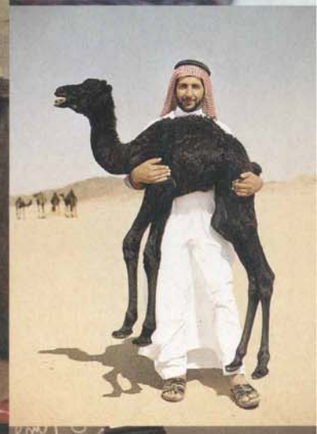
In Riyadh, archeology professor Ali Ghabban is uncovering those themes. As the head of the SCT's cultural-heritage program, he is cataloguing the national assets that will be grist for the cultural-tourism mill. "We are building an exhaustive inventory of sites that are of archeological, historical and cultural interest. They include historic sites associated with the Prophet Muhammad, the creation of the Saudi state, Arab poetry, and Arab heritage, values and traditions," he explains. "Such sites are important to Arabs and Muslims and will interest the international community, too."

Prince Sultan maintains that cultural tourism can be "a motivator and an engine of cultural renewal in our lives—in schools, in our homes and the community. I see it driving a revival of craft, art, traditions, music, story-telling, poetry, folklore and architectural heritage."

Ghabban spills over with ideas. "We have sites of important battles in the kingdom, and places mentioned by famous Arab poets. We have ancient pilgrimage routes. Did you know there are three old pilgrim routes from Yemen? One coastal, the other highland and the third inland!" Old crafts are also part of his focus: "We want to bring back dormant craft activities. Take incense burners. Our research shows that there were once more than 50 types here. Now there is only one predominant type. We want communities to uncover their local forms and bring back these ancient items. We are telling our communities to unearth their culture and present it."

Some have already begun doing this, however informally. With some five million foreign residents in Saudi Arabia,

The Supreme Commission on Tourism is banking on tourists' interests in local, traditional cultures to help preserve those cultures in Saudi Arabia.



On the final night of a tour, guides spread carpets on the silent sands of the Empty Quarter, built a fire, offered dates, rice and lamb for dinner and recited poetry until guests fell asleep in tents. Insets, top to bottom: **Folkdance in Najran. A rare black baby camel. Pupils and their teacher at the Dhahran Ahliyya School. The wide open spaces during the five-hour drive from Madinah north to the monuments at Mada'in Salih.**

SAMIA EL-MOSLIMANY

14 centuries of hospitality

by Ni'mah Isma'il Nawwab

Malaysian pilgrims in Malacca prepare for their Hajj by practicing the *tawaf*, the circling of the Ka'bah, around a scale model of the building.

For centuries, "forbidden cities" such as Lhasa, Hue, Timbuktu and Peking's imperial palace have attracted travelers and adventurers. Yet none has fascinated more than Makkah, site of the Ka'ba, toward which Muslims worldwide turn five times a day in prayer. Makkah is the goal of the annual pilgrimage, called *Hajj* in Arabic, that every physically and financially able Muslim is obliged to make—and longs to undertake.

Makkah, together with Madinah, the second holiest city of Islam and burial place of the Prophet Muhammad, remain "forbidden cities," at least to non-Muslims. But this has not meant any dearth of travelers: Millions of pilgrims visited before the dawn of Islam. In the 1421 lunar years since then, the pilgrims have totaled more than a billion.

Today, most pilgrims arrive by air, but in the past they converged following land and sea journeys that were often grueling. Fleets of ships from the Indian subcontinent and the Far East made use of seasonal monsoon winds; land routes took months or even years to complete as pilgrims traveled on foot or by horse or camel caravans that varied from simple strings of pack animals to mobile tent cities.

Pilgrims traversed every sort of terrain, entered towns and cities en route and intermingled with people of diverse cultures. Some had to work along the way to earn passage or sell goods from their home countries. Some married and started families on their odyssey. As they traveled, and while they stopped to rest or work in preparation for the next leg of their journey, local hosts, including royal courts, welcomed them. The hospitality customarily extended by Muslims everywhere, both along the way and in the holy cities, was crucial to every pilgrim's journey, and its generosity helped alleviate hardship.

Makkan hospitality long predates the Prophet Muhammad's birth in the late sixth century of the West's Gregorian calendar. The services offered to travelers were distributed by task among families, and fulfilling these tasks was a coveted honor. With the spread of Islam and the passage of time, people of all occupations found ways to help the pilgrims, and so the efforts of those serving each year branched out. Doctors, students, vendors, craftsmen and whole families undertook the provision of accommodation, food, religious orientation and all manner of assistance in the environs of Makkah and nearby pilgrimage sites.

Those who offered hospitality in the special category of religious guidance services came to be known as *mutawwifs*. According to several historical accounts, the occupation of *mutawwif* was a privilege originally bestowed on scholars and theologians who greeted pilgrims arriving from various Islamic countries and spoke to them in their own languages.

The more general hospitality services accorded the pilgrims, whom the Makkans called *duyuf al-Rahman*, "guests of [God] the Merciful," evolved into a full-fledged and well-structured institution known as *tiwafah*. Youths in the responsible families took up often exhausting tasks, from bookkeeping and tracking the numbers of pilgrims, recording their routes and arranging accommodation, to making travel plans for them and following their rites.

The economic impact of the Hajj was always enormous. It stimulated the trade that had flowed through Makkah since long before Islam, and it led to businesses that greeted, housed, fed, guided and provided medical care to pilgrims. Muslims from other countries helped mosques and schools in the holy cities through religious endowments known as *waqfs*, which were often established during the Hajj. Families that owned typical multistoried Makkan homes often vacated their first and second floors to accommodate pilgrims. (As a child in the 1970's, I remember that to get to my Aunt Maymunah, ensconced in the upper reaches of her home, I had to pass by the sleeping bodies of pilgrims in the courtyard and all the way from the doorstep up through several stories of her home.)

With the pilgrimage also came scholarship, and students from throughout the Muslim world came to study in the holy cities. Some resided at the homes of Makkan or Madinan scholars; others lived in guest houses known as *rubats*, established by patrons. Several hundred of these *rubats* exist today. After their studies, students either went back to their own countries, or stayed on. Pilgrims and students together made the holy cities into melting pots of Islamic cultures, a characteristic that to this day distinguishes Makkah and Madinah from other cities in Saudi Arabia.

Nowadays hundreds of families in the holy cities still volunteer their help in accommodating pilgrims, sending food and often juice to pilgrimage sites and doing whatever they think may help. Although hotels and furnished apartments are now commonplace, the need for assistance remains ever-present, and the interaction between the residents of the holy cities and the pilgrims continues even now that much Hajj travel is organized on a package-tour basis.

This year, international visas for both Hajj and *'Umrah*, the "lesser pilgrimage" that can be undertaken at any time of year, are being granted in greater numbers and for greater lengths of time. Saudi officials expect tourism revenues to increase accordingly, and for pilgrims to benefit from learning more about the country.

—Ni'mah Isma'il Nawwab writes from Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

SAMIA EL-MOSUMANY (2); TOP RIGHT: SABRINA RIGAS; OPPOSITE: PETER HARRIGAN

Ali Ghabban

religious, educational and recreational tours have long been a staple of expatriate life. For the majority Muslim foreign community, Makkah and Madinah remain the most frequently visited cities, but for non-Muslims, natural and cultural-history sites, the desert and the reef-rich sea have been most popular. For two decades, aided by her Saudi husband, Yusuf Abdulraheem, American-born Sabrina Rigas has led groups of interested foreigners, whose jobs are in the oil-producing Eastern Province, into heartland areas of Saudi Arabia. Her convivial, personalized itineraries take her travelers into family homes, and her weekend trip to Qasim, a historic province in the Najd region north of Riyadh, has proved to be one of the most popular.

"This is a family-oriented society, and foreigners want to know how Saudis, especially women, interact and spend time at home," says Rigas. "This really interests people. There is a serious lack of information out there and I see my homespun efforts as helping to drive out stereotypes. After the trip, people tell me that they learned more about life—real, everyday life in the kingdom—from those two days than from perhaps a decade of living and working in the country."

Now, she is beginning to deal with formal tour operators: PVA offers an optional three-day extension with Rigas.

"The whole experience mesmerizes Saudis, too, who at first can't quite understand why we are taking tour groups to Qasim," says Rigas. "The groups get to meet my mother-in-law in her home. She is in her seventies and has had a busy life raising a family and trading spices. The visitors always ask her the same question: 'What do you think about us?' She appreciates that they are interested in her culture and have made an effort to get out and see it for themselves." Invariably, Rigas says, before the tourists leave the home, her mother-in-law gives spices to everyone. "I always tell her not to, but she always insists," says Rigas, who sees this generosity as part of the experience. "The groups get to experience Najdi hospitality for themselves."

Nearly 1600 kilometers (1000 mi) and two domestic flights away from Qasim, Ali al-Shabbi is helping to lay an institutional foundation for that hospitality. The trait is paramount in Saudi culture and he intends to make it equally characteristic of the kingdom's nascent tourism industry. Al-Shabbi is dean of the two-year-old Prince Sultan College of Hotel Science and Tourism in Abha, the mountain capital of 'Asir province and currently the hub of the nation's domestic tourism industry.

"Nearly 90 percent of the jobs in the country's hotel, catering and hospitality sectors are now held by foreign

This is totally unlike anything we expected. I thought it would be a dog-and-pony show. I love my *abaya*. I don't see it as sexist. It simply offers protection against sun, sand, flies and unwanted gazes. It's a sensible defense against the elements and unwanted intrusion. In the West we look on it as sexist, and never think of it from another vantage point. I approached it, like everything on the tour, with a healthy curiosity.

—Betty Kunsdon, a Travelers Century Club member who has traveled to more than 200 countries

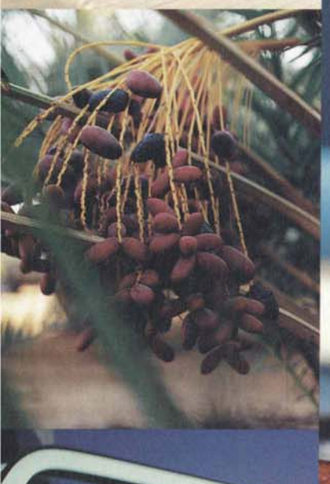
Ali al-Shabbi

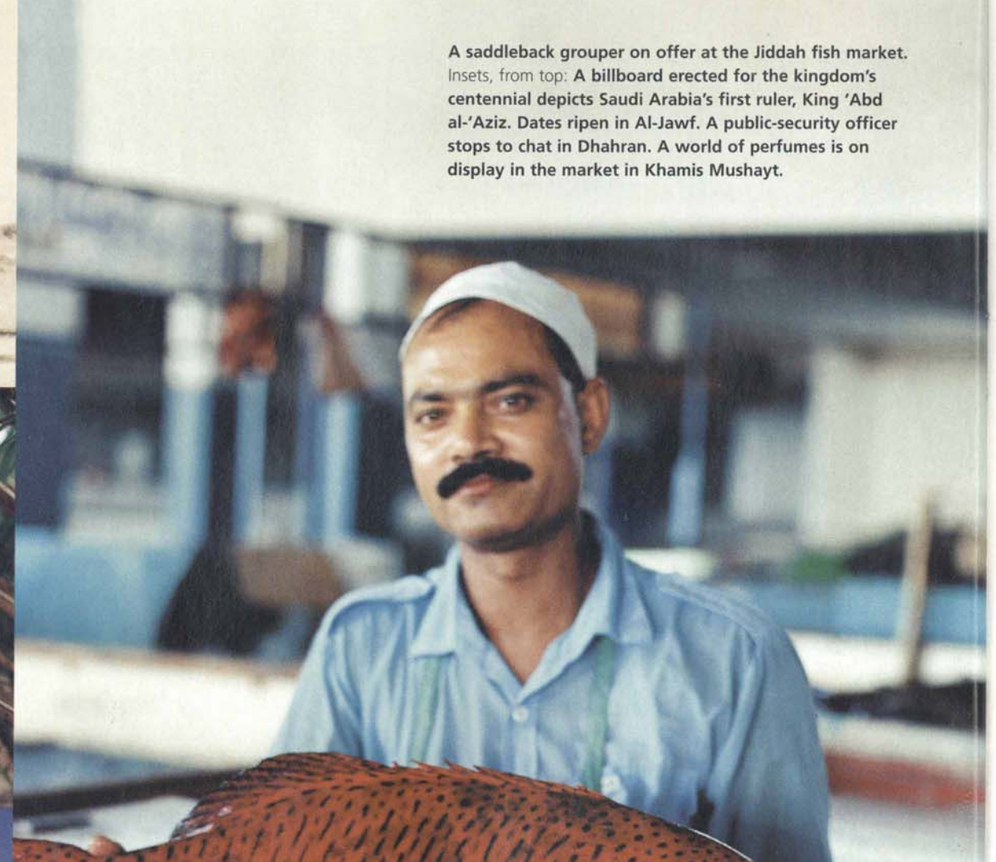
workers," al-Shabbi points out. "That could potentially translate into a quarter of a million jobs for Saudis."

Prince Sultan College is one of only four private colleges in the kingdom, and it is the first in Saudi Arabia (and in the Arabian Gulf region) to focus on management-level skills in tourism. The first class of 95 students, each of whom pays an annual tuition of approximately $10,000, is due to graduate at the diploma level next year, and the first bachelors' degrees in tourism and hospitality will be granted in 2004. A second diploma-level course for tourist guides will be added soon.

Al-Shabbi explains that, through an affiliation with Virginia Tech in the United States, the curriculum follows international standards while at the same time taking into account Islamic requirements for family and personal privacy. With an estimated 110,000 young Saudis annually coming onto the job market, he is confident the college will be in demand.

"Some of my friends are surprised that I'm paying for my own education when others get paid to attend state universities," says 25-year old Raddan Eid al-Zahrani, who worked in a bookstore and borrowed from relatives to pay his college fees. "Tourism is a new field and people here still have





A saddleback grouper on offer at the Jiddah fish market. Insets, from top: **A billboard erected for the kingdom's centennial depicts Saudi Arabia's first ruler, King 'Abd al-'Aziz. Dates ripen in Al-Jawf. A public-security officer stops to chat in Dhahran. A world of perfumes is on display in the market in Khamis Mushayt.**

Among foreign visitors to Saudi Arabia, pilgrims outnumber non-Muslim tourists by a thousand to one.

LOWER: SAMIA EL-MOSLIMANY

little idea of hospitality as an industry or field of study. I'm sure my investment will pay off," he says.

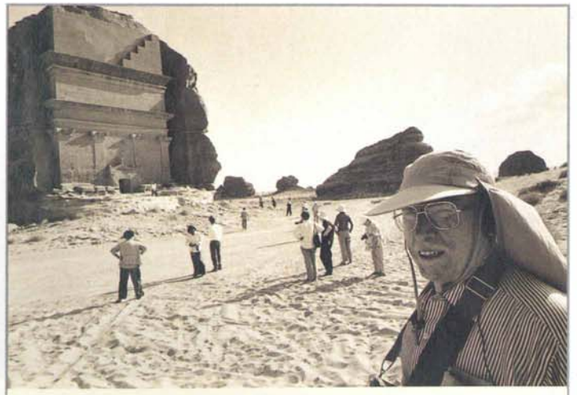
To bolster and spread such confidence, al-Shabbi is a frequent public speaker, well versed both in articulating persuasive arguments and in trend-spotting. Later on the day of our interview, he is due to talk to Abha's community leaders and businessmen on what has become a prominent topic in the nation's press, boardrooms, conference halls and homes—tourism.

But enthusiasm about tourism's potential is easier to come by than hard numbers delineating its early economic impacts. Before the SCT was formed, tourism was not counted as an economic sector in Saudi Arabia. Thus, extracting meaningful statistics from the more general trade-and-services categories is difficult, and estimates of the current contributions of the new sector are, for the time being, both inexact and lacking anything with which they can be compared. As for growth, experts believe the infant sector is almost certainly expanding at one of the fastest rates of any in a national economy where overall private-sector growth for 1999 hovered around 2.5 percent. In his presentations, al-Shabbi estimates tourism's annual growth rate to be at least double that. He tells his audiences that tourism "is set to become the number-two contributor to Saudi Arabia's economy," after oil.

International arrival figures appear to support his contention. In 1999, Saudi Arabia counted some 5.7 million visitors, based on visas issued. The total is low, for it does not include numerous visitors from the other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries—Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates—whose nationals do not require visas to enter Saudi Arabia. Of the 5.7 million who came on visas, one million arrived on the annual Hajj, or pilgrimage; another 1.5 million came throughout the year to perform 'Umrah, a personal "lesser pilgrimage" or "visitation" to the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah. Some 2.6 million more came on business missions, for extended stays as expatriate employees, or as visitors to relatives, and the remaining 600,000 passed through in transit.

Such numbers show how small a role the new international package tourists play in the country's larger picture. Among the pilgrims, the number of 'Umrah visitors, already the largest category, is poised to begin rising dramatically, for with the beginning of the *hijri* year 1422 on March 26, 2001, there will no longer be limits on the number of 'Umrah visas issued. Moreover, pilgrims will no longer be restricted to a two-week stay in the immediate vicinity of the Holy Cities: They will be permitted to travel for a month to all other parts of the country after they fulfill their religious obligations. Saudi Arabia's Minister of Hajj Ayad Madani explains that 'Umrah visitors, as well as performing their rituals, "can now also become tourists and go sightseeing around the country, enjoy our coasts, deserts, mountains and archeological sites, visit our medical facilities, call on relatives and go on shopping tours. Dubai, Jordan and Bahrain already promote themselves as 'Umrah-linked destinations, actively marketing special packages, using their airlines, with stopovers in their own countries en route. So, with external competition, it is only natural that we in Saudi Arabia should compete too." Madani forecasts that tourism numbers could rise as much as 500 percent, which would push 'Umrah traffic figures toward one million pilgrims a month. This would create enormous new demands for accommodation, transport and other services, all of which would create jobs and boost the Saudi economy, while also allowing more people to make pilgrimages.

Ayad Madani

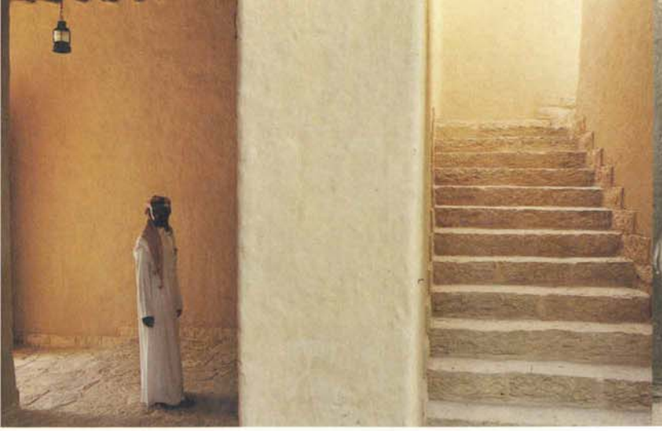


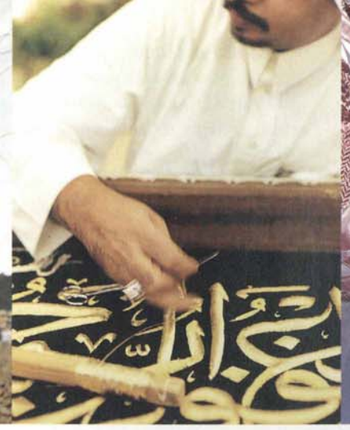
Saudi Arabia reminds me of the Soviet Union in the early 1980's, when people came back from there and said, "This country is not the enemy." To say there is a lot of misunderstanding about Saudi is an understatement...but we confuse culture and religion. Look at it from their perspective.

—Sharen Rozen, lives near Boston

Last year, pilgrims arrived from 170 countries. Bernard Poletti, French ambassador to Saudi Arabia, says that for his country too, Hajj and 'Umrah are "very significant." Four million Muslims live in France, he points out, half of them French citizens, and some 12,000 people come to Saudi Arabia from France on pilgrimage every year. "With the new 'Umrah rules," he says, "we anticipate considerable interest from the French Muslim community in religious and cultural tourism."

Poletti, himself an enthusiastic desert traveler, feels a personal affinity for adventure tourism. "The French have a fascination for the desert," he says, and this, combined with France's experience as the country that attracts the greatest number of tourists of all—70 million each year—




Above, from far left: **The clean lines of traditional adobe architecture mark al-'Udaibat, the country home of Prince Sultan ibn Salman ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, head of the Supreme Council on Tourism. Boys with an *'ud* in Dumat al-Jandal. Hanging out at soccer practice in Wadi Tihama. Gold-embroidered Qur'anic calligraphy adorns the *kiswa*, the covering crafted annually to drape the Ka'bah at Makkah. The start of the Abha Trophy 2000 mountain-bike rally.** Below: **In a 10-minute ride, a cable car at Rijal Alma'a rises some 1600 meters (5100') in the Sirwat Mountains.**

Rugged 'Asir Province is the most popular destination of Saudi Arabia's $1.2-billion domestic vacation industry.

OPPOSITE, MAIN AND OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT: PETER HARRIGAN

makes his country "keen to cooperate" with efforts to build the tourism industry in Saudi Arabia.

He spoke at the end of a grueling, adventurous day for 75 mountain-bikers who recently pumped their way around the 2000-meter (6500') peaks and dramatic escarpments of the 'Asir mountains for six days in the Abha Trophy 2000. Panting up ascents and burning brake pads on descents steeper than any bike-rally trails in Europe—some more than 35 degrees—the rally was sponsored in part by a French company, Nature Extrême Developpement, which also organizes cycling events in Jordan, Oman and Egypt, as well as in the Andes and Himalayas.

The Abha Trophy 2000 was originally the idea of the vice president of the 'Asir Tourism Board, Prince Bandar Khalid al-Faisal, whose energies have helped the region, which this year expects some 1.5 million visitors, begin to become the nation's "mountain playground." The tourism board was the first regional body of its kind in Saudi Arabia when it was formed in 1987. Now, its focus will increasingly embrace national goals, says its secretary-general, Muhammad al-Odadi.

Prince Bandar, who himself competed in the rally ("I was just happy to finish!") along with four other Saudi cyclists, is optimistic about the region's potential. "We are feeling our way forward," he says. "People here are showing interest in adventure activities, and this summer we plan to open a school for recreational microlight [ultralight-airplane] flying. We want to involve the local population in all aspects of tourism," including desert camping, camel-trekking, horse-riding and diving. "I see Saudi Arabia as a specialized market with considerable assets that can be utilized to attract non-Muslim tourists," he says.

Among the rally's European participants was Trevor Newland, an athletic 60-year-old who is chairman of the Ski Club of Great Britain, the biggest outdoor-activity association in the United Kingdom. He was on his second visit. "Ski enthusiasts would love to come to areas like this to cycle, trek, climb and scuba-dive to get fit before the winter ski season," he says. "Our 26,000 members have both the time and the money, and this is an unspoiled and friendly destination with good facilities."

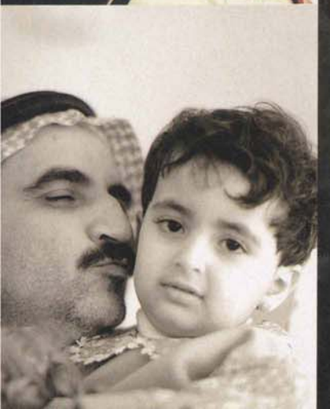
By far the largest part of the tourism market, however, lies closer to home, in the domestic sector that 'Asir already targets: Saudi holiday-makers and visitors from neighboring GCC states. For some time now, the government has been exhorting Saudis to stay home rather than leave the country for foreign destinations, where they spend an estimated $8 billion a year. Although domestic travel by Saudis is rising, the SCT estimates that its total revenues constitute only 15 percent of what Saudis spend overseas.

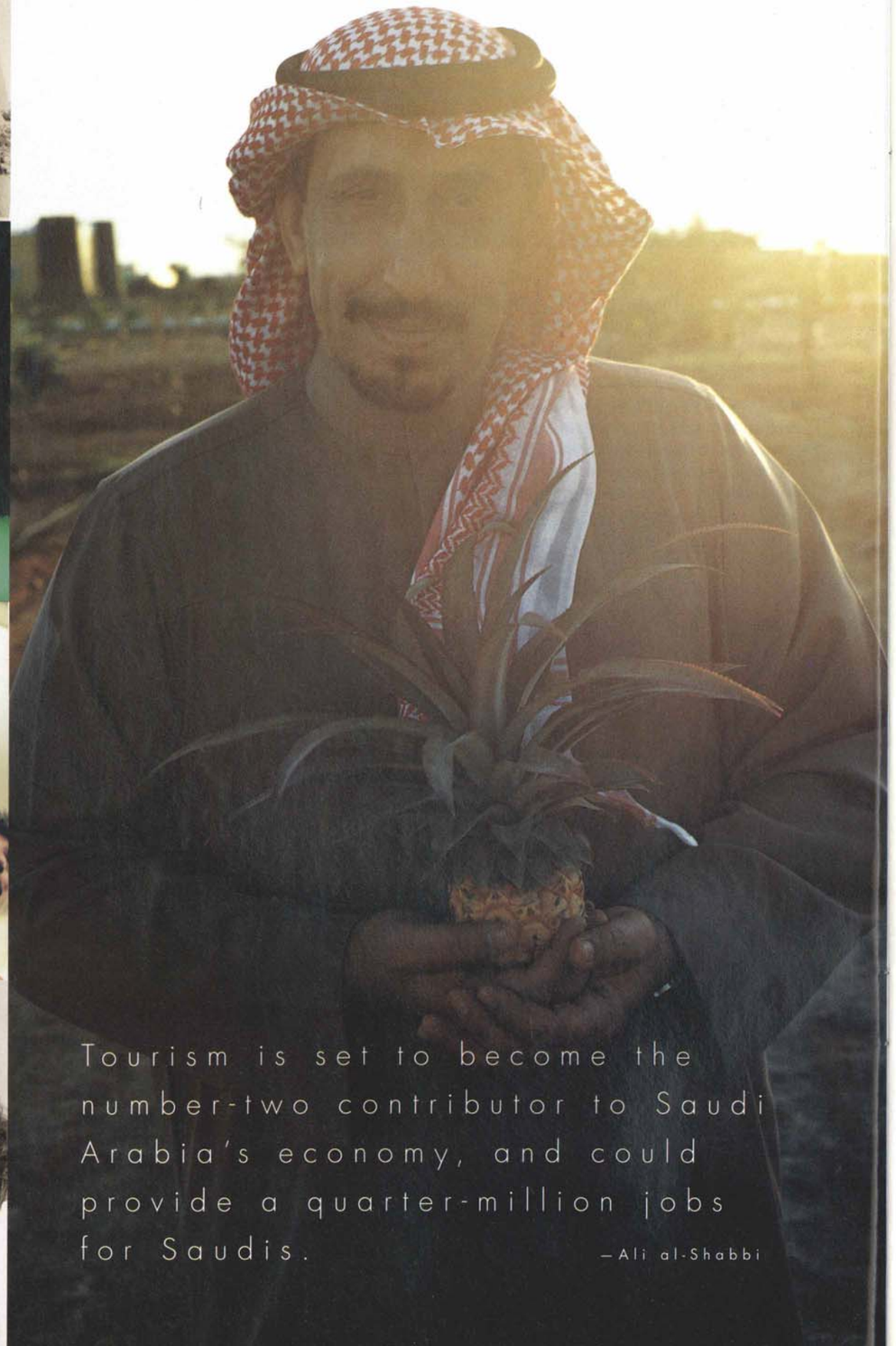
Beyond redressing this imbalance, the SCT maintains that the private investment, construction and development that is making domestic tourism increasingly attractive to Saudis is providing exactly what the country needs: adding needed diversity to the economy, stimulating a range of regional and small businesses, and boosting employment opportunities.

The private sector is buying in. Investments in new resort facilities are up, and many are aimed at the domestic and 'Umrah-tourism markets. One of the largest private companies in the business is Syahya, based in Abha, which in six years has developed a portfolio of tourism assets worth $265 million, including seven major resort properties in 'Asir, entertainment complexes and 16 kilometers (10 mi) of cable car routes. New developments slated include ultra-modern shopping malls and the country's first health spa.

Summer festivals are one new, popular drawing card for domestic Saudi tourists. In recent years they have appeared in many major Arab cities from Morocco to Jordan to Oman. Among them, the Abha Summer Festival, now entering its third season, claims to be the largest and, at eight weeks' duration, the longest of them all. Pioneered by the region's governor, Prince Khalid al-Faisal, himself a well-established poet and artist, it features musical and theatrical performances, poetry and literary evenings, art exhibitions, children's entertainment, parades, sports, heritage activities, and lakeside fireworks-and-lasers shows.

Visitor numbers are up more than 15 percent annually, says the Tourism Board's al-Odadi, and for this summer, Saudi Arabian Airlines has secured landing rights in Abha for 747's. Al-Odadi also hopes to put the festival into homes this year by securing pan-Arab satellite transmission rights through Saudi TV.





Tourism is set to become the number-two contributor to Saudi Arabia's economy, and could provide a quarter-million jobs for Saudis.

—Ali al-Shabbi

Abha's success has triggered parallel events in the Eastern Province, which now has a tourist board of its own. In the western part of the country, Madinah, al-Baha, Ta'if, Hail, Yanbu' and Jiddah all now run festivals with various mixes of cultural, sporting and shopping activities, all aimed at the pleasure—and the riyals—of domestic tourists.

Among these cities, Jiddah is the second most-visited destination for Saudi tourists, and its summer festival is second only to Abha's. Launched in 1999, it is scheduled at the beginning of schools' summer vacations, to get Saudi families to come to the city rather than board, say, one of the three-a-week nonstop summertime flights to Orlando, Florida. Last year, the tactic worked. An estimated 1.2 million Saudi tourists filled Jiddah's hotels, apartments, restaurants and malls near capacity.

Site Seeing

More than 50 operators worldwide now offer tours to Saudi Arabia, and many more offer Hajj and 'Umrah travel services. This list is not comprehensive, but it gives a few easy-to-access starting places to explore the possibilities of travel. Neither *Saudi Aramco World* nor Saudi Aramco endorse or vouch for any services found through these websites; however, all tours to Saudi Arabia are subject to Saudi government standards. Please contact tour operators or embassies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for further information.

Ace Travel: www.ace-travel.com
Alia Tour Services: www.aliatours.com
Archaeological Institute of America: www.archaeological.org
Comptoir des Voyages: www.comptoir.fr
Eurasia Travel Co. Ltd: www.eurasia.co.jp
iExplore, Inc: www.iExplore.com
Lindblad Travel: www.specialexpeditions.com
Meridian Internationale Kultur- und Seminarreisen: www.meridian.de
National Geographic Expeditions: www.nationalgeographic.com
Nomad: www.nomad-reisen.de
Peter Voll Associates (PVA) Educational Travel: www.pvatravel.com
Saudi Arabian Airlines: www.saudiairlines.com
Smithsonian Institution: www.smithsonianstudytours.si.edu
Worlds Apart Travel: www.worldsapart.org

Opposite, main: **Prince Mish'al ibn Sa'ud ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz holds a pineapple from his garden in Najran.** Insets, from top: **A man escapes the midday sun beside Masmak Fort in Riyadh, whose capture by 'Abd al-'Aziz Al-Sa'ud in 1902 was a victory that made possible the formation of today's Saudi Arabia. Women's dresses and packaged *hijabs* (veils) hang in the market in Khamis Mushayt. A flower-crowned flute player carries a tune for folkdancers in 'Asir. A tour guide, at home in al-Jawf, plants a kiss on his daughter's cheek.**

The day after his Red Sea excursion with the Distant Horizons group, Muhammad al-Siddiqi speaks of the "fast-growing" Saudi family-oriented market that, in the summer, accounts for nearly all his business. "Saudis are increasingly expecting local, family-based entertainment, shows and activities. Just three years ago, summer occupancy was only around 60 percent. Now we are over 90 percent."

He assesses the trends this way: "With the long three-month summer holidays, Saudi families are now splitting up the period. They are staying part of the time at home, then taking a local Saudi vacation, and then they are going abroad. It's the second of these that interests us, of course. There are more attractions here now with festivals, and there are improved and more varied facilities. And of course there is the economic factor—the days are over when average families here could afford three months abroad. Also, I detect that religion and values are playing a part in this trend. We are comfortable here, and we feel safe, both physically and morally."

Not that there is anything new in Saudis enjoying their own country. "Local tourism has been here for years," says al-Siddiqi. "When we were kids we used to go to the desert for vacations. It's a traditional way to spend time, to relax, have fun, cook and enjoy the outdoors. Our very own style of local tourism is still popular."

The beachside resort managed by al-Siddiqi is among the properties in the $347-million portfolio of Saudi Hotels and Resorts Company, which two years ago moved into the top 100 privately owned Saudi companies as the country's largest tourism company. Its present aggressive schedule of investments in waterfront developments in the Eastern Province, on the coast of the Arabian Gulf, demonstrates its confidence that domestic tourism is taking off, and that it will, indeed, be the largest slice of the country's tourism pie in the near future.

Back in her home in Hawaii, Jan Zastrow reflects on her visit. "I am thrilled with the openness with which the Saudis are embracing tourism. Next time I hope to join a dive tour as well as see more of Jiddah, and I want to get into the desert," she says. And despite her years of study of the country and the language, she says she still found unexpected links of familiarity. "Here in Hawaii we have what we call 'the aloha spirit,'" she says. "The Saudi equivalent is *ahlan wa sahlan*," a phrase that means simply "welcome" but denotes the whole panoply of Saudi hospitality. For her, that hospitality was the lasting memory.

Peter Harrigan works with Saudi Arabian Airlines in Jiddah, where he is also a contributing editor and columnist for *Diwaniya*, the weekly cultural supplement of the *Saudi Gazette*.

Brown W. Cannon (Bcannon3@aol.com) is a free-lance photographer who lives in Mill Valley, California.

Djibouti

A FUTURE IN ARABIC

WRITTEN BY
LOUIS WERNER

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
LORRAINE CHITTOCK

The salt deposits of Lake Assal served as currency 3000 years ago in the days of the Axumite empire. One of the lowest-lying and hottest places on Earth, the lake is still frequented today by salt cutters, whose bagged harvests are trucked to the busy container-ship port of Djibouti. A geothermal power plant has been proposed for the lake, where tectonic rifting makes energy from deep within the Earth accessible.

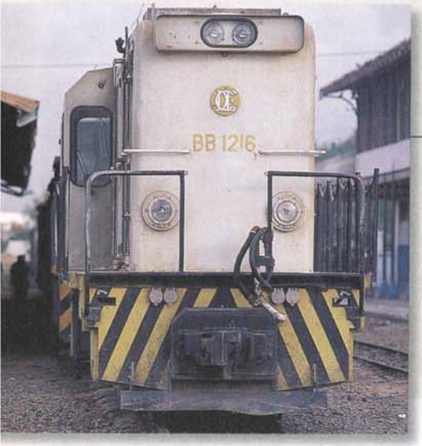
Tiny Djibouti, geographic keystone of the Horn of Africa, half the size of the Netherlands, is a cultural palimpsest, where traces of the past show through to the present. Almost three decades of independence as a free port on a busy shipping lane, a century as a French colony, and more than a millennium of Islamic faith today overlie but do not obscure the vastly older folkways of the country's original Afar and Somali peoples.

The recent history of this extremely water-poor nation includes both ethnic tensions and periodic spillovers of nearby wars. Though the truce and power-sharing agreement forged in the early 1990's between the majority Issa, the country's dominant Somali clan, and the less populous Afar people seems to be holding, the presence of some 100,000 non-natives—Yemeni traders, Ethiopian and Somali refugees, European businessmen and, under a defense treaty, 3000 French soldiers—complicate the balance in a nation whose population numbers fewer than 700,000.

Ismail Tani is chief of the presidential cabinet in Djibouti, and an adviser to President Ismail Omar Guelleh. He is also a leading man of letters who has thought much about his country's culture. "Yes, we have different races and traditions here, but Somalis and Afars have much in common," Tani says. "Our poetry, song and dance are very close, except in language. That is the problem now, to find a common language."

French, English, or Arabic? Only French was taught during the years—from 1884 until 1977—that Djibouti was a colony, and educated Djiboutians today are francophone. "But look across our borders," says Tani, speaking in French, "whom can we speak it with? When the soldiers leave, their language will also leave."

At independence, Arabic was introduced in the primary schools, and Djibouti joined the Arab League. English is now taught in high schools but rarely spoken. "Arabic," Tani says, "is the future."



Clockwise from left: **The railroad linking Djibouti with Addis Abba, Ethiopia was the world's most profitable rail line between the World Wars. The bus station in Djibouti-Ville, the capital city where some two-thirds of the country's population lives, is the first stop for incoming migrants from the countryside, as well as for people escaping regional strife. At the port of Djibouti, some three-fourths of the cargoes are transshipments to or from land-locked Ethiopia. French colonial culture is on the wane, says chief of the presidential cabinet Ismail Tani. "Look across our borders," he says. "Arabic is our future."** Opposite: **The deep tectonic tear in the Earth's crust known as the East African Rift shows at Earth's surface in Djibouti, where much of the terrain testifies to recent volcanic activity. Almost none of the country is arable, and little of it is suitable for grazing.**

As a distinct territorial entity, Djibouti was almost an afterthought of colonial history. By the late 19th century, the European scramble for Africa had reached the Horn, with the Italians in Eritrea and on the southern Somali coast, the British on the northern coast and across the Bab al-Mandab in Aden, and the French hurrying to catch up. Their prize, although late in coming, was the Gulf of Tadjoura and the land about its desolate coastline.

Until then, the Gulf's two settlements, Tadjoura, and Obock on the north shore, were of minor importance. The larger ports of Massawa (now in Eritrea) and Zeila (in Somalia) north and south of the Bab al-Mandab, the narrow mouth of the Red Sea, had long monopolized trade with Abyssinia. Inland, Afar tribesmen scared off all but the most intrepid from opening alternative land routes.

Frenchman Arthur Rimbaud, poet turned coffee trader, then gun-runner, waited out 12 full months in Tadjoura for a new partner to lead his weapons caravan after his first partner was killed. In letters to his mother, written on his upland march that was to take three times longer than expected, he decried "the horrible landscape here that evokes the imagined terror of the moon."

The French toehold, first gained as a friendship treaty with the chief of Obock in 1862, led to the creation of a French territory in 1884. That grew considerably when the colony moved to the other side of the Gulf in 1888 to the site of present day Djibouti-Ville, in order to ensure both a water supply and to implement the plan to build a railroad to land-locked highland Ethiopia.

The French had a far different view of the benefits of such a railroad than did the Somali clans through whose lands it ran. Proud people who considered walking beside—rather than riding atop—a camel to be demeaning found themselves required to heft the crossties and swing the pickaxes.

Few Somalis have forgotten the episode. Much of the tribal jewelry and weaponry still in use was fashioned from stolen railroad spikes, and Somali bards still recite execration poetry about their pressed labor. For poet Ahmed Aden Ad'Adleh, declaiming today in the shade not far from the Djibouti station, rhymed resentment is as raw as his grandfather's blisters were at the turn of the century:

A man who's never been worked like a coolie,
Nor ordered about by a crew-boss bully,
Now, he's lucky not to be treated so cruelly.

It took 20 years, a company bankruptcy, and the signing of the Anglo–French–Italian Tripartite Treaty before the railroad was completed in 1917. For the following two decades, as Ethiopia's sole legal trade link to the outside, it was the world's most profitable line. In 1930, the train attracted a

LARRY LUXNER (TRAIN; ISMAIL TANI); JOHN DAWSON (PORTERS)

number of otherwise unlikely literary travelers, who passed through Djibouti en route to Addis Ababa for the coronation of Haile Selassie as emperor of Ethiopia.

One was British writer Evelyn Waugh, who could find no pleasure in Djibouti's "stifling boulevards; the low-spirited young men at the vice-consulate; the familiar rotund Frenchmen, their great arcs of waistline accentuated with cummerbunds; the seedy café clientele."

Ironically, the only hints of the colonial past today are in the shaded arcades around Place du 27 Juin 1977, the square named for the date of Djibouti's independence. African Djibouti begins at Place Muhammad Harbi, a crowded market overlooked by the Humuda mosque's squat, round minaret. Nearby is the bus station, first stop for rural migrants who have flowed cityward in recent years, giving Djibouti a population that is 75 percent urban and making it Africa's only city-state.

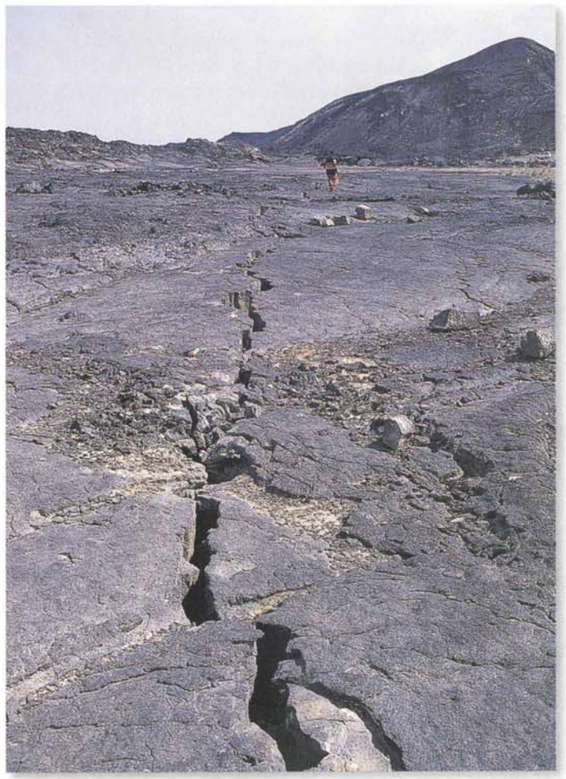
The town ends abruptly, as it did when Waugh visited. Five minutes after leaving the train station, he saw only "a country of dust and boulders, utterly devoid of any sign of life." Only the hardy Afar people have succeeded in living in such a moonscape. Their ancestral lands take in the northernmost three-quarters of the country, a terrain varying from the 2000-meter (6400') heights of the Gouda mountains to Lake Assal, which at 157 meters below sea level (502') is the world's third-lowest geographical point.

Also called the Danakil, after a northern subclan, the Afars are a Cushitic people whose language, customs, and warlike reputation mirror those of the Somalis. Separated from their kinsmen by Ethiopian and Eritrean borders, only in Djibouti do Afars make up a large enough part of their nation's population to play a major political role. The colony's name change in 1967 from "French Somaliland" to the "French Territory of the Afars and Issas" reflected this growing clout.

The tribe is an ancient one, and the fact that the earliest known hominid, known as *Australopithecus afarensis*, should have been found in Afar country (which extends into Ethiopia) is entirely fitting. The name Afar itself is probably derived from Ophir, the land of ivory, apes, and gold mentioned in the Old Testament and ruled by the Queen of Sheba. The Afar tribal structure of clans and subclans is a complex affair. J.S. Trimingham, author of the scholarly reference work *Islam in Ethiopia*, wrote of their lineages, "no one has yet been able to get the distinctions clear because of their aversion to strangers."

Says Hassan Ali Muhammad, a high-ranking government official and amateur Afar folklorist, "This has always been our home, so we have always been here to greet whatever foreigner landed on our shores. Arabs, Persians, Greeks, French—there have been so many, and all have found it too hot to stay."

Besides animal husbandry and fishing, the Afar economy is based on artisanal salt mining and salt export to the Ethiopian highlands. In Axumite times, pound-weight salt bars, called *amoleh*, were dug by the Afar from salt flats in the Danakil Depression and served as the empire's basic currency.



Hand methods are still used to mine and export salt from Lake Assal, 100 kilometers (62 mi) west of Djibouti-Ville. Its 60 square kilometers (23 sq mi) of salt flats are 97-percent pure and amount to some two billion tons of salt, with six million tons added annually by evaporation of lake water. Walking into Assal's sunken cirque at midday is like going suddenly colorblind: Just when one thinks the sun cannot drain another shade of color from the dun of the desert or the volcanic ash, the flats make everything—even the lake's bluest of blues—go briefly stark white.

Wilfred Thesiger saw Lake Assal on his way to the coast in 1934. "No where was any sign of life," he wrote in his memoirs. "No shrub nor wisp of vegetation, no bird in the sky, not even a lizard among the rocks." He must not have been there on saltcutting day.

Sun-grizzled Muhammad Qasem rejoices that he must load only one more caravan before he can return to his village to celebrate the end of Ramadan. "God willing, it will go fast, for it is hot, and I want to leave this miserable place for a few weeks," he says.

Qasem has worked here as long as he can remember, and the job, he says, has never been easy, even in winter months. He recalls an Afar proverb—so many of them center on the land's blasting heat!—that seems meant just for him: "As rain falls from morning clouds, so should a man cut salt early in the day." But it is past noon, and Qasem is still at it.

He and his six fellow laborers no longer cut the salt into rectangular bars wrapped individually in doum-palm fronds. The work now is less exacting, if just as tiring. They fill plastic sacks with odd-shaped pieces without fear of breakage. *Amoleh* is no longer accepted as market money.

Geochemist Ibrahim Hussein hopes to mine more than Lake Assal's salt. He is studying the feasibility of capturing the geothermal energy that bursts from the seams of this geologically active zone. Last August, Geothermal Development Associates, a US company, released a study proposing a 30-megawatt power plant at Lake Assal. The power would meet approximately half of the country's summer requirements, "an important start for an otherwise resource-poor country," Hussein says.

Making this possible is the fact that Earth's crust is exceedingly thin here: Deep beneath Djibouti, movements of molten rock are pulling apart three tectonic plates like a child tearing apart puzzle pieces. In 1978, fresh lava erupted over the five-kilometer (3-mi) strip that separates Lake Assal from the bay at the western end of the Gulf of Tadjoura, known in Afar as *ghoubet al-kharab*, "navel of the world." At the same time, the distance between the African continent and the Arabian Peninsula widened by 1.25 meters (4').

North and east of Lake Assal, the Gulf of Tadjoura's shore is mostly a torrid zone of tumbled basalt, but inland the Sultan of Tadjoura owns gardens of banana, pepper and orange, all lushly irrigated by streams flowing down from the fogblown forest of Dai. And the 1400-meter (4500') climb up to Dai puts one in a world altogether different from that of the coast. Junipers, eucalyptus and olive trees shelter troops of baboons and grazing herds of cattle. A derelict plantation house recalls the French colonists. Dai's schoolteacher-cum-guide wraps himself in imported wool against the unaccustomed cold and tries to peek through the mist down to his home village of Tadjoura on the coast.

It is a whitewashed fishing settlement of perhaps a thousand people, with seven mosques for the seven clans that fall under the sultan's quasi-independent rule, and it stretches along a shore dotted with oleander and doum palms. Rimbaud was not impressed by Tadjoura after his sojourn of a year. "I am doing well," he wrote in a letter. "As well as can be expected in 130 degrees in the shade. Anyone who says that life is hard should come here to study philosophy."

But Thesiger, who loved hardship, was ecstatic about the place. "For me, it belonged to that authentic Eastern world of which Conrad wrote, a world remote, beautiful, untamed. Its palm-fringed beach and sparkling green and blue sea; the sombre outline of mountains across the bay, dhows at anchor offshore, with dugouts passing to and fro...the sound of a stringed instrument, the throb of a drum, the smells of dried shark's meat, clarified butter, wood smoke and spices."

More than 60 years after Thesiger, the beach still becomes animated as sunset approaches. Boys cry shrilly for buyers of their needlefish and flounder. Men tend to their nets, and women strolling bareheaded reveal some of the Afars' 98 ways of plaiting hair to signify age, marital status and number of children. But outgoing ships are still as scarce as in Rimbaud's day, when he waited a month to post a letter. Communication with Djibouti-Ville is now by an asphalt road financed by Saudi Arabia.

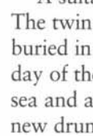
Sultan Abd al-Kader Muhammad, simultaneously juggling a glass of tea and a bottle of mineral water, receives visitors on this Ramadan night in a *majlis* full of tobacco smoke and petitioners. They have come from all reaches of his 5000-square-kilometer (2000-sq-mi) domain, roughly one quarter of the whole country. Seated beside him are the tribal electors, who install a new sultan upon the death of the old. The throne alternates between the two most important clans, and last changed hands in 1985.

A sultan's enthronement maintains all the old traditions. The twin clay drums, or *dinkara*, that symbolize his office are buried in the deceased sultan's house and only dug up on the day of the enthronement festivities. They are washed in the sea and a freshly slaughtered calf's skin is stretched to make new drum heads. The drums are beaten. The new sultan wears a turban cloth that belonged to Har el-Mas, the pre-Islamic founder of the clan, and a slow-moving procession steps through the village accompanied by the singing of praises.

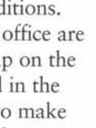
"I have no army, for I need no army," says the sultan, gesturing to the aged retinue seated around him. "I rule by words alone." He acts, in fact, as a court of last resort. Only inter-clan cases and final appeals come to his attention, and he acts only after his council has spoken. Personal modesty, largesse from the bounty of his gardens, and consensus are indeed all that undergird his rule over subjects once fabled throughout the world for their ferocity.

The view from the sultan's rooftop sweeps over the Gulf of Tadjoura toward Djibouti harbor. Silhouetted cargo ships are at anchor there. The few dhows that might once have lazed past the hulking liners are in drydock. This busy industrial port no longer has the patience for sailpower.

Though Tadjoura is still much what Rimbaud called it—*"un petit village avec quelques mosquées et quelques palmiers"*—Djibouti's future lies ever more with its ties to the Arab world and, beyond that, to world commerce and banking. Not much longer will it trade only in salt or the currency of an Afar sultan's "words alone."



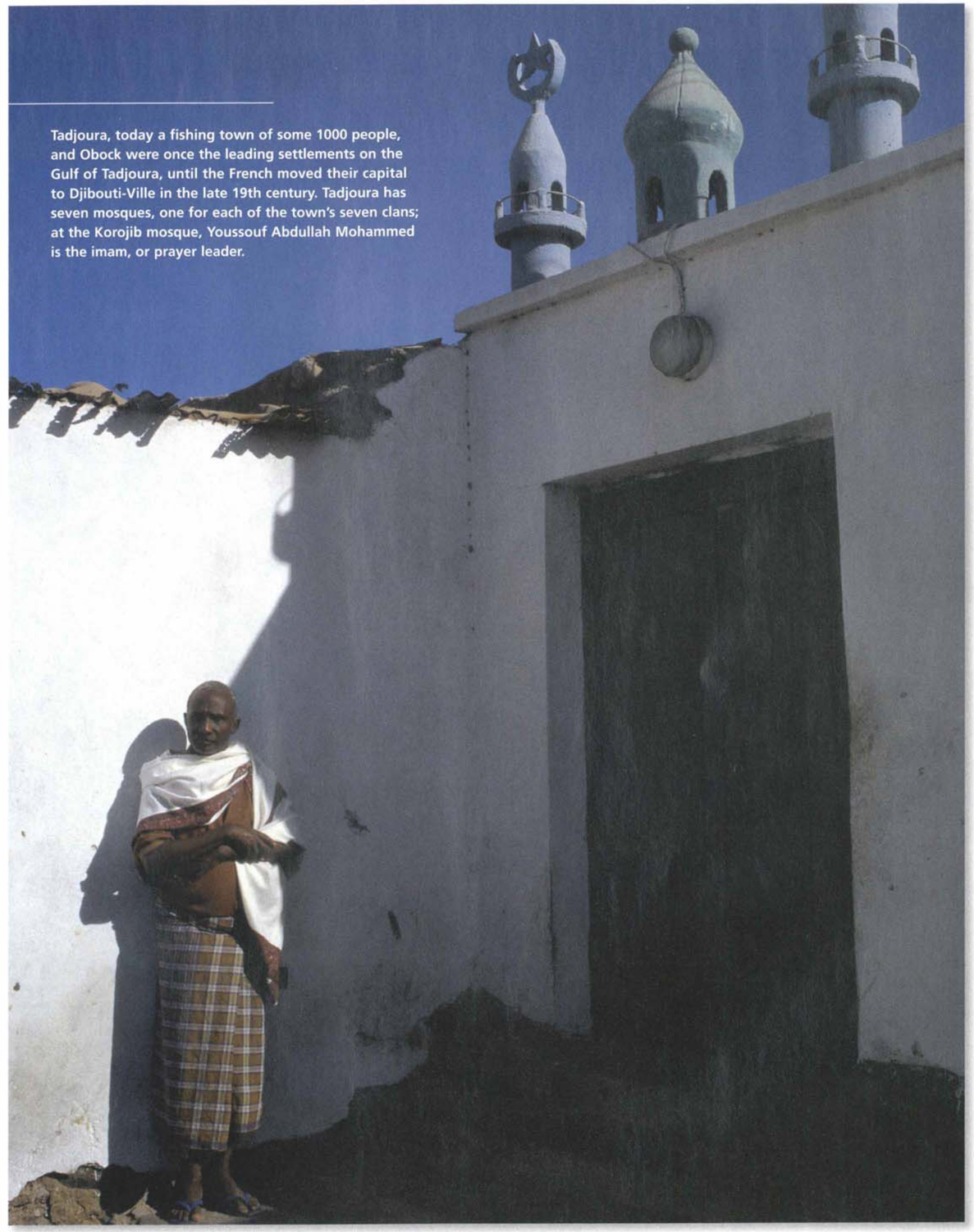
Filmmaker and writer **Louis Werner** lives in New York. Free-lance photographer **Lorraine Chittock** lives in Nairobi with her husband, John Dawson. Her most recent book is *Cairo Cats;* she can be reached at cats@camels.com.



Larry Luxner contributed additional reporting for this article.

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World:*

Somalia: November/December 1988; September/October 1989.
Wilfred Thesiger: July/August 1981.
Eritrea: November/December 1996.



Tadjoura, today a fishing town of some 1000 people, and Obock were once the leading settlements on the Gulf of Tadjoura, until the French moved their capital to Djibouti-Ville in the late 19th century. Tadjoura has seven mosques, one for each of the town's seven clans; at the Korojib mosque, Youssouf Abdullah Mohammed is the imam, or prayer leader.

FLYING THE FURROW

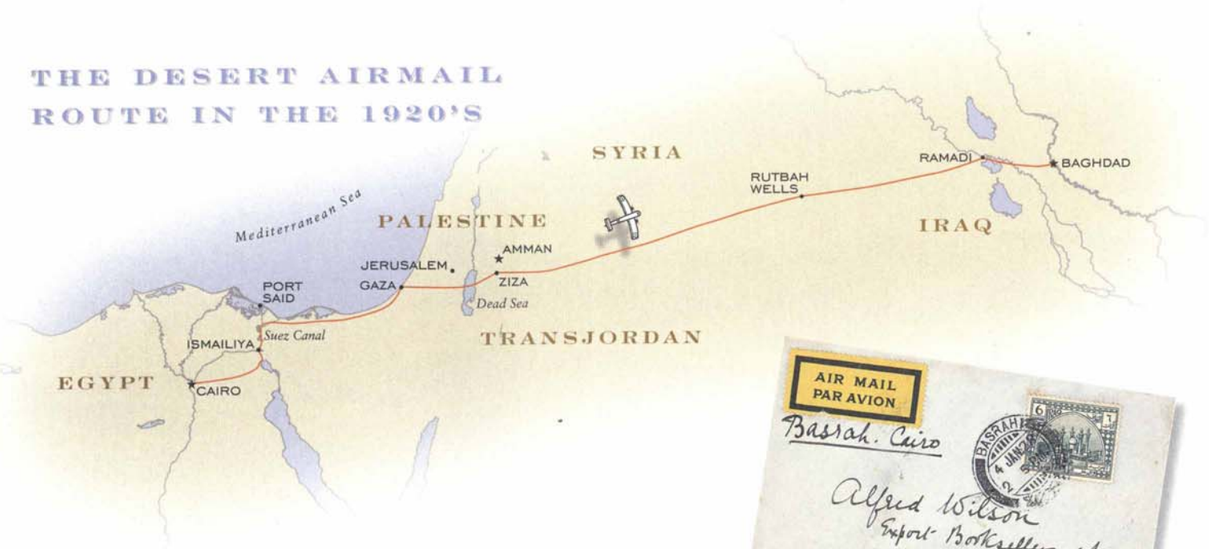
WRITTEN BY ALAN MCGREGOR ⊙ ILLUSTRATED BY BENJAMIN FREUDENTHAL

VICKERS VERNONS LANDING AT RUTBAH WELLS, 1922

The crew was growing puzzled. "What's happened to Africa?" they asked themselves. Their 325-kilometer (200-mi) flight across the Mediterranean, expected to take two hours, had now lasted three, and there was still no sign of the North African coastline.

It was August 7, 1918—three months before the end of World War I—and the twin-engined Handley Page 0/400, a biplane bomber of the British Royal Air Force (RAF), had taken off from Crete at first light with a spanking tail wind, bound for Cairo. It was piloted by Brigadier General Amyas Borton; the co-pilot was Major Archibald McLaren. Two mechanics and McLaren's dog Tiny made up the rest of the crew.

They were out to prove a point.



Earlier, Borton had proposed to the Air Council that, instead of shipping aircraft like the 0/400 to Alexandria in crates by sea, ferrying them by air—with enormous advantages of speed—had now become possible. He asked to be assigned to prove it.

Borton had discussed the implications of the idea with his superior, Major General Geoffrey Salmond, who commanded the RAF in the Middle East. With the war nearing an end, Salmond was beginning to imagine peacetime air routes stretching from England to India, Australia and Africa, all via the Middle East. He saw Borton's proposal as a step toward the realization of such empire-girdling long-distance routes.

Leaving Manston, England on July 18, Borton and his crew flew via Paris, Lyon, Miramas, Pisa, Rome, Otronto, Potasi and Crete, with overnight stops in each of those places. It was a spartan trip: At Lyon, Borton considered himself fortunate to find an aircraft packing-case, complete with wood shavings for dunnage, in which he made "a very comfortable bed." In Rome, sleeping under the wing of the plane, he was savaged by mosquitoes, despite covering his head with his undershirt. Now, three hours out from Crete, Africa was proving elusive.

Borton and McLaren guessed that the wind had shifted, slowing them and causing them to drift. And indeed, the coast appeared soon afterward, and the map showed they were some 50 kilometers (30 mi) east of their intended landfall near Sollum. No harm done: They continued east along the coast, and after being airborne nearly five and a half hours, they set down at Marsa Matruh for refueling. In the afternoon they flew on to Alexandria, and continued to Cairo the next day. Their actual flying time to Cairo was 37 hours.

The challenge of long-distance flight in the Middle East was formidable. In any direction, there were deserts to cross, and deserts, to an aviator, were little different from oceans: vast, almost featureless, expanses. Radio directional beacons still lay a decade in the future, en-route weather stations did not yet exist, and aircraft engines were not entirely reliable. Navigation was strictly visual, aided by sun and compass and confirmed—not always reliably—by comparing visible ground features, such as rivers and railway tracks, to maps. Although aircraft were equipped with radios for two-way Morse-code communication, radio range was limited to 150 to 300 kilometers (90–180 mi), and the letter-by-letter transmissions were painfully slow. In a featureless desert, crews could only suppose their likely location.

Three years after Borton's flight, in June 1921, the RAF inaugurated a fortnightly service between Cairo and Baghdad, the first step toward a regular England–India route. It carried official mail and senior civil servants, and became known as the Desert Airmail Service. The route was some 1520 kilometers (940 mi) long, from the airfield in the Cairo suburb of Heliopolis—where the Egyptian capital's airport still lies—to Hinaidi, just south of the Iraqi capital. The first aircraft on the route were two-man, single-engined bombers, the De Havilland DH9A, flown in pairs as a precaution in case of engine failure. (Bombers were used because of their cargo capacity, and, in addition to mail, they carried spare wheels, tents, bedding and goat-skins full of water.)

Before the first Cairo–Baghdad flight, the RAF had to solve the navigational problem presented by some 760 kilometers (470 mi) of desert between the refuelling stations at Ziza, 50 kilometers (30 mi) south of Amman, and Ramadi, on the Euphrates River 130 kilometers (80 mi) north of Baghdad. While flyers in North America and Europe often followed railway tracks, construction of a railway across the desert was hardly practical. Nonetheless, some now forgotten genius suggested, a facsimile might be: A distinct, plowed furrow, of some two meters' width, could serve as a line-of-sight navigational aid.

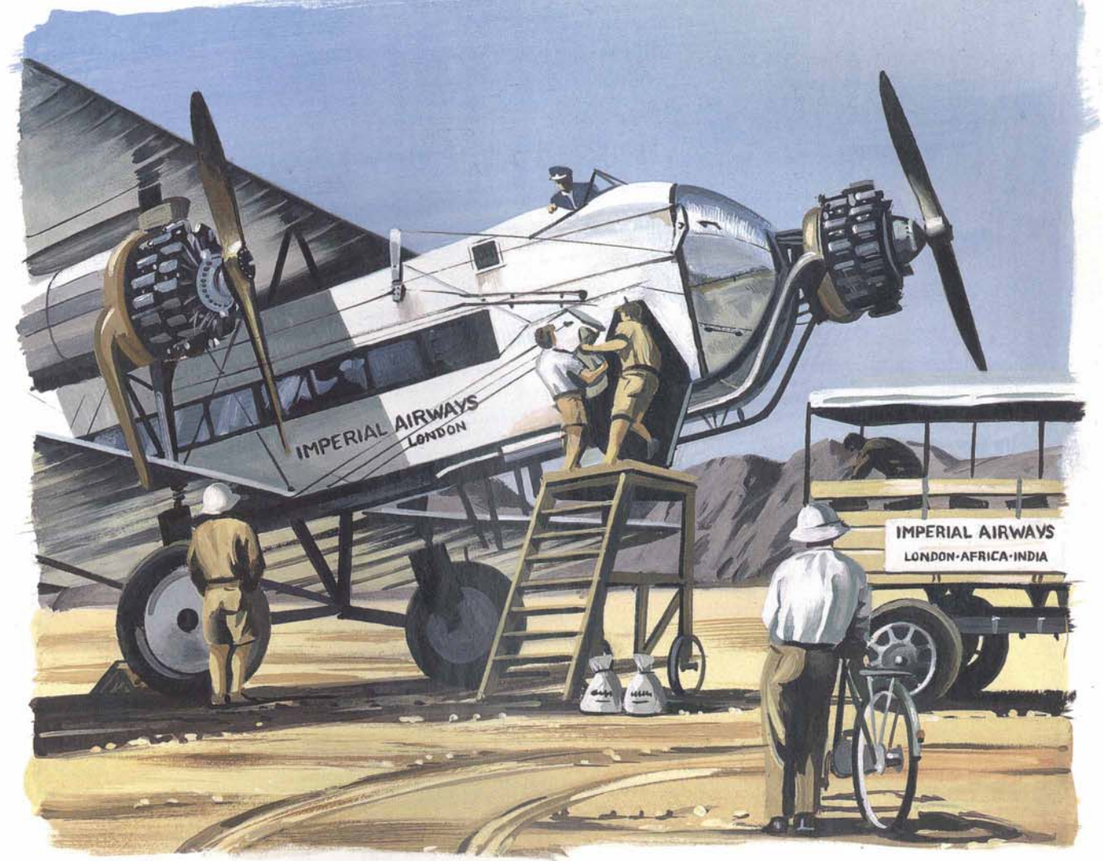
Shortly after this brilliant suggestion was made, the route was initially marked with chain harrows, and in 1922, teams on Fordson tractors, pulling weighted plows and escorted by armored cars, set out eastward from Amman and westward from Baghdad, aiming to meet halfway. They plowed a total of some 500 kilometers (310 mi), and the remainder of the route, which lay over scattered black basalt rock, they marked in white paint. The task took eight weeks.

Every 40 kilometers (25 mi) or so, the plowing crews also demarcated emergency landing fields, each prominently numbered for identification from the air and marked with arrows indicating direction of approach. Fuel was made available at two of them, protected from theft and attack by a heavy bronze dome. The depot's locking system was ingeniously designed to function also as a double lock on the aircraft cabin doors, so that an aircraft could not take off either with its door open or with the depot key left at the fuel tank.

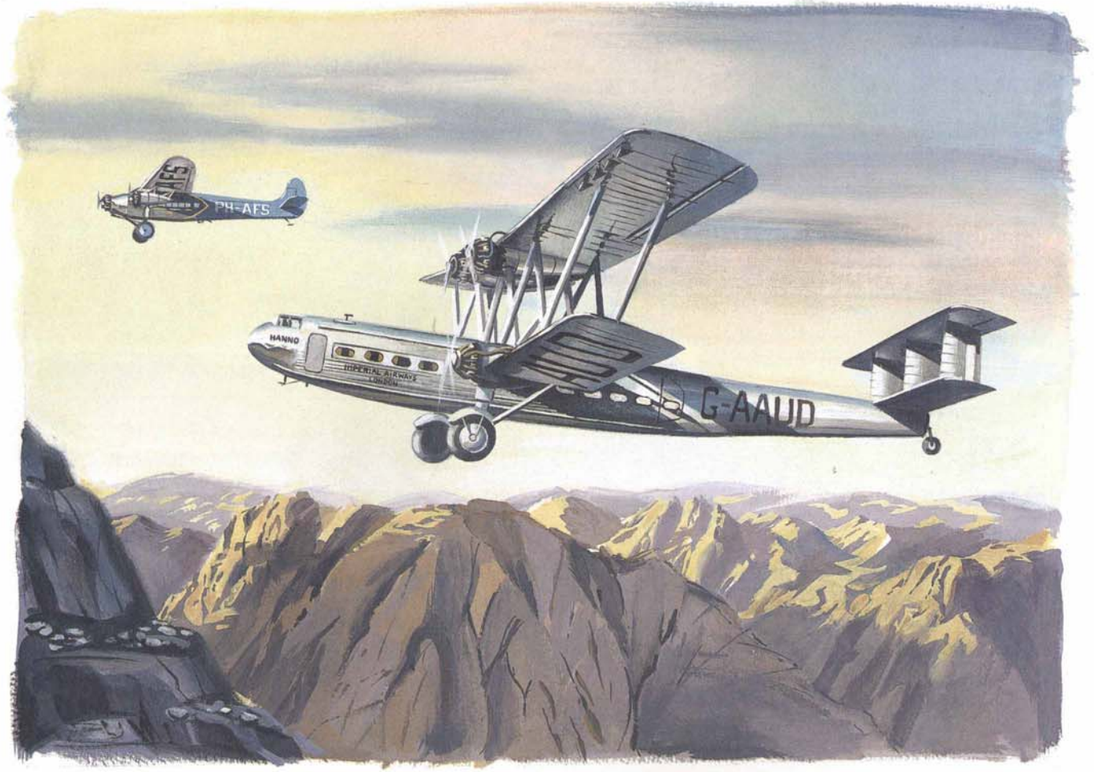
Had this desert been similar to many parts of the Sahara, what came to be called simply "the Furrow" would have disappeared within weeks, filled in by drifting sand. But much of this terrain in what is today Jordan and western Iraq was cast up by volcanic action, and tends to be hard, often stony ground, with patches of sand and hardened mud. As a result, pilots referred to flying "FTF" on this route: "follow the furrow."

Not everyone was happy with this navigation system, however: From altitude, the Furrow looked like "a thin pencil line on the desert's surface," one pilot griped. Others complained of the strain of flying a straight line for hour after droning hour. Still other critics claimed that the Furrow allowed aircrews to become altogether too relaxed.

The aircraft type most closely associated with the early days of the Cairo–Baghdad service was the Vickers Vernon, powered by the same twin Rolls Royce Eagle engines that had carried John Alcock and Arthur



ARMSTRONG-WHITWORTH A.W. 155 ARGOSY I LOADING AT ZIZA, 1929



HANDLEY-PAGE HP42 OVERTAKEN BY A KLM FOKKER FXII OVER PALESTINE, 1932

Whitten Brown on the first nonstop west-to-east North Atlantic crossing in June 1919. In the Middle East, if the mail load were light, a Vernon, which had an open cockpit with an enclosed cabin behind, could carry six or seven passengers.

Crews on the Desert Airmail Service had to be all-rounders. The aircraft generally flew at no more than 2700 meters (under 9000'), which meant that engine failure would give them only a few minutes to glide—often steeply—down to an impromptu landing. Passengers often literally pulled their weight, too, irrespective of social status, by joining in to handle the gasoline cans should more fuel be needed. Fueling en route was a slow job at best, as the fuel had to be filtered through chamois to remove water and grit. Given the unwelcome local attention a landing aircraft could attract, visible for many kilometers in the treeless landscape and with another noisily circling overhead, there was ample incentive to get back into the air and away, for there were Bedouin along the route who resented the aircraft as intruders that frightened their herds.

At the end of 1926, the RAF handed over the Cairo–Baghdad route to Imperial Airways, formed two years earlier, for incorporation into their Britain–India service. Pilots continued to benefit from the Furrow, which was still clearly visible. The 1929 edition of Cook's *Traveller's Handbook for Palestine, Syria and Iraq* mentions that "the convoys meet the Cairo–Baghdad airmail track leading from Amman." The same publication says that Imperial Airways had a weekly service between Cairo and Baghdad with a connecting flight to Basrah. "The journey from Cairo to Baghdad takes just under 12 hours with a halt at Gaza and Rutbah [Wells] in the desert."

At Rutbah Wells, which lay on a high plateau halfway between Damascus and Baghdad, the airline developed an overnight resthouse in an old fort. (In 1932, to serve passengers to and from India via the Arabian Gulf, they added a second one in Sharjah, then one of the Trucial States and now one of the United Arab Emirates.) There, a common complaint in winter was the cold, for the builders at Rutbah Wells had, unaccountably, made no provision for fireplaces or chimneys. "We dined in overcoats," a passenger reported, "and had a very shivery night." One compensation, whereby passengers might momentarily forget the temperature, was the experience of climbing the circular stone staircase to the roof. "Breathtaking, millions of stars sparkling in the clear desert air," one said. Above the roof there was a radio

and observation tower whose beacon was visible to aircraft 130 kilometers (80 mi) around. If few travelers praised the resthouse meals as first-class, all agreed that lounge, bedrooms and other conveniences were "clean, comfortable and well arranged." In the morning, a brass bell summoned passengers to embark.

Given Britain's dominant political position in the area, Imperial Airways had a head start across the Middle East, but other countries were catching up quickly. The end of World War I set off a flurry of surplus-bomber conversions throughout Europe that led to the first generation of aircraft for passengers, mail and freight. Despite the modest British lead, the French, it turned out, had a clearer perception of what air transport would eventually mean for colonies in the Far East and Africa. In Paris, a government policy of subsidizing airlines contrasted with the British contention that airlines "must fly by themselves." To this day, the French economic model is still demonstrating its validity.

As European air services became common, Belgium, Britain, France, Italy and the Netherlands—the colonial powers—dispatched proving flights to Africa, Asia, the Antilles and Latin America, preparatory to establishing new, far-flung routes of regular service. General Salmond sent three RAF survey teams to select possible sites for no less than 42 landing grounds between Cairo and the Cape of Good Hope. The Germans, having been stripped of colonial holdings, concentrated on technical development, especially that of aircraft instrumentation, and they circumvented the Versailles Treaty's ban on constructing large aircraft by establishing manufacturing facilities in Italy, Spain and Switzerland, thereafter demonstrating that their aircraft were better than any others produced in Europe.

Deutsche Lufthansa carried out its first proving flights to Egypt in February 1935, culminating in a same-day Berlin–Cairo round-trip flight: 16½ hours in a Junkers 52/3m. Subsequent German flights pushed farther east. The Italians, also relative latecomers, inaugurated a flying-boat service to Tunisia in 1929, and they developed routes down through Africa. In 1939 they started flying-boat service from Rome to Buenos Aires, where nearly half the population was of Italian origin. By 1936, Imperial Airways itself operated nearly 30,000 kilometers (18,000 mi) of routes that linked 23 countries.

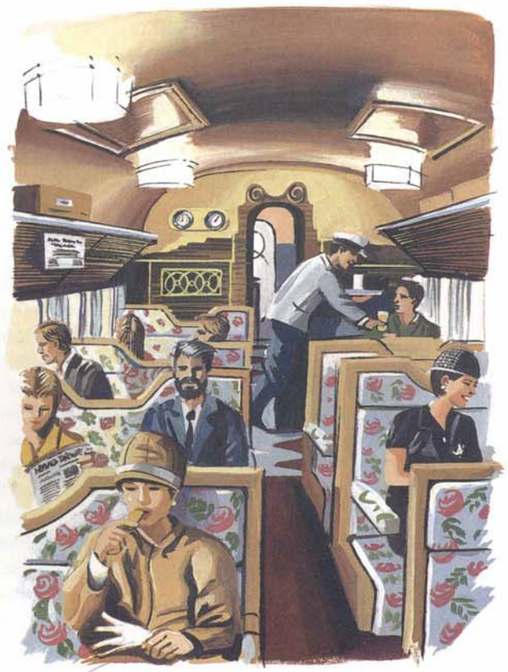
Few wartime aircraft conversions survived in regular service long after World War I, and many innovations appeared in Middle Eastern skies during the late 1920's and mid-1930's. Air-cooled engines gradually superseded the much heavier water-cooled ones, and from British and French factories there came a series of heavy, even stately, biplanes: The largest was the four-engined, 24-passenger Handley Page HP42, constructed first in 1930 with an upper wingspan of 40 meters (130') and a triple rudder. Renowned for luxurious furnishings and relative quietness—albeit in an era when air travel was deafeningly loud—the HP42 proved ponderous in the sky, rarely attaining even its nominal 160 kph (100 mph) cruising speed. Only eight were constructed.

Captain Griffith James "Taffy" Powell, a veteran pilot of Imperial Airways' HP42 service in the Middle East, recalled that, going east to Jordan from the Sea of Galilee, "you had to climb all the way, keep going straight to get over the hills. It was the limit of the ability of the HP42. In the hot weather, you were sometimes lucky to make a thousand feet of altitude in five minutes.

"It was the most regal-looking aircraft, but not in the least streamlined," he added. "It had a certain dignity. I once had [Imperial Airways chairman] Sir Eric Geddes standing beside me in the cockpit saying 'You're supposed to be doing 100 mph,' and I said 'Well, the aircraft won't do it!' He was annoyed. The aircraft's performance was disgraceful, really."

British pilots' impatience was in no way lessened by the in-flight indignity suffered when a three-engined Fokker FXII of KLM overtook an HP42 en route to Baghdad. Pulling up alongside, the Dutch captain slid open his cockpit window, gestured to his British counterpart, and forged ahead to land at Baghdad well ahead of the HP42.

Passengers, on the other hand, liked the service and the aircraft. Sir Montagu de P. Webb, who made a number of early air trips between England and India, effused in 1933 about a trip from Karachi, including the Baghdad–Cairo leg aboard the



HP42 INTERIOR, CIRCA 1932

BY FLYING BOAT

FROM CAIRO TO SOUTHAMPTON

In mid-1946 I flew from London to Cairo aboard a twin-engine BOAC Dakota-class DC-3, a journey of almost 19 hours with refueling stops at Marignane (near Marseilles), Malta (with crew change) and El Adam. My return flight, however, was altogether more comfortable.

In Cairo I met several people who praised BOAC's flying-boat service, and I learned that it would soon be discontinued. Not to miss my chance, I booked a "boat" flight home, where a final rail connection would take me from Southampton Water to London.

The Cairo check-in was for a civilized 0900 hours at the Air Booking Centre, which lay across from the Egyptian Museum on Midan Ismailia (now Midan Tahrir). From there it was but a few minutes bus ride to Rod el Farag, below Bulak bridge on the Nile, where the Sunderland flying boat was moored close to the *S.S. Puritan,* a stern-wheeled Nile steamer that served as a 38-cabin floating hotel for transiting passengers traveling to and from points farther east. It was these passengers who were first to pass through customs, and to be conveyed by launch to the waiting flying boat. I could see that the crew was proceeding with pre-flight checks.

On boarding through a low doorway, curved up at the top, the first impression was of relative spaciousness. Along a gently-rising, carpeted corridor, the fuselage was divided into cabins, each seating four people facing each other, much like a European train compartment. There was ample breadth and leg room. I was shown to a cabin already occupied by three Burmese ladies who spoke almost perfect British English.

One by one, the four supercharged Bristol Pegasus engines started up. As the craft gathered speed, the Burmese ladies startled me by suddenly and simultaneously drawing over their heads the outer layer of their copious garments. They remained thus as the aircraft surged forward under full take-off power, the high wave thrown up by its bows completely covering the cabin portholes. As a passenger remarked: "The rise of a flying boat resembles all that [an amusement park] just fails to achieve." Then we lifted clear of the water, and the three ladies, obviously seasoned travelers, immediately uncovered their heads and rearranged their dress.

We followed the Nile, then turned northwest, crossed the coast and headed out over the Mediterranean toward Crete. In late afternoon, we landed in the wide bay at Augusta, Sicily. A launch took us ashore, where a bus brought us to the BOAC rest-house—a former Italian naval barracks—a short distance along the coast. After dinner, I took a digestive stroll on the road by the rocky shore. Then to bed, lulled by the sound of the waves. I was awakened at 0700 hours by a steward's knock at the door; he also brought a cup of tea. There was time for an unhurried breakfast before the bus returned us to the harbor for embarkation. (On take-off the ladies from Burma repeated their head-covering maneuver.) A good tail wind made the refueling stop at Marignane unnecessary. We reached Southampton Water by mid-afternoon.

The two-day trip, with regular meals, reading and sleep, wafted along at 311 kph (200 mph), was a real rest cure. Crammed nowadays into seat 56C or somewhere in the "serried rows" of 21st-century economy class, I remember it very fondly indeed.

HP42 *Hanno*: "London in five days—what more could one want!" He described a strong headwind on the leg from Rutbah Wells to Gaza:

> But what is this? Our engines are slowing down, and we are descending to earth. Landing so gently as to be almost unnoticeable, our Engineer steps out and runs ahead to show the way to some unknown destination. Taxiing after him, *Hanno* comes to rest over a small circular iron cover to what is clearly a large receptacle underground. In fact, it is an emergency petrol supply. Our Captain, faced with the possibility of more strong head-winds before reaching Gaza, decides as a precautionary measure to take in more petrol. So we all alight and watch the proceedings.

The last British biplanes operated by Imperial Airways on the Cairo–Baghdad run were both trimotors: the De Havilland DH66 Hercules, which carried seven passengers at 178 kph (110 mph), and the Armstrong Whitworth Argosy, which carried 20 passengers at 155 kph (96 mph). They were succeeded by the first of the four-engined, all-metal monoplanes: the Armstrong Whitworth Atlanta, whose speed exceeded that of biplanes by only some 25 percent; the De Havilland Albatross, which could reach 340 kph (210 mph) carrying 22 passengers, and the Armstrong Whitworth Ensign, whose capacity was 40 passengers but which cruised at 275 kph (170 mph).

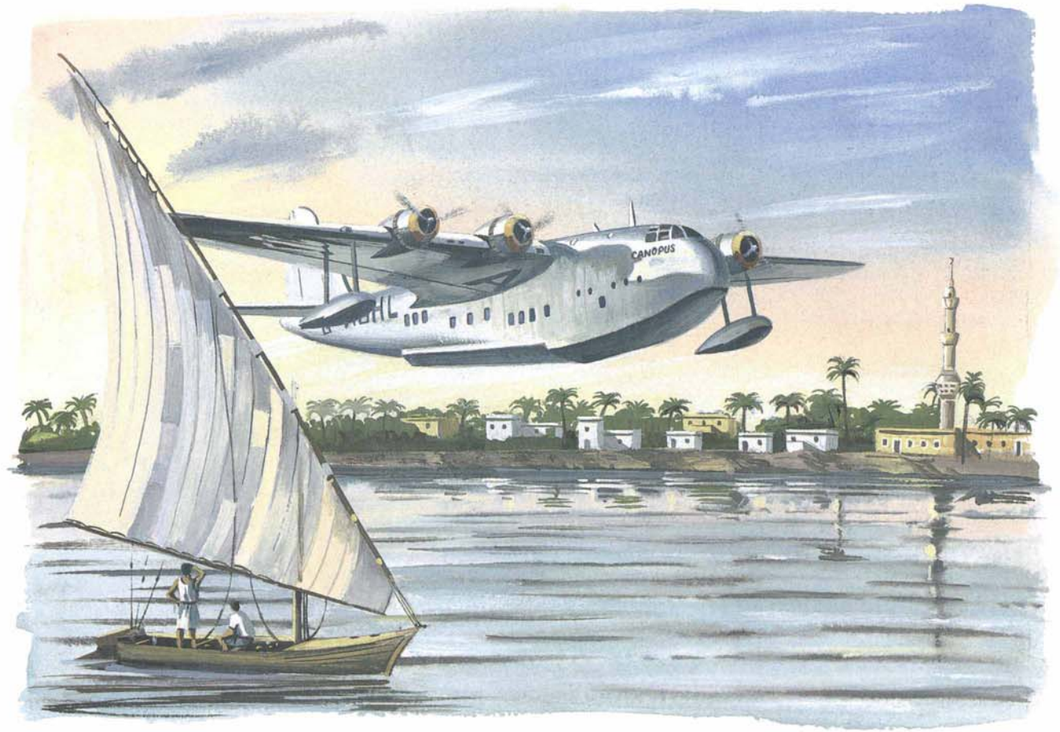
But the best-remembered aircraft of Imperial Airways and its successor, the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC), between the World Wars are without doubt the flying boats. (See sidebar, at left.) While airlines of most European countries also operated flying boats at one time or another, only Britain maintained regular flying-boat services via Egypt to India, the Far East and Australia for almost two decades, as well as down the length of Africa. As Imperial Airways was fond of naming its aircraft after distant destination cities, the first of its flying boats, which reached Alexandria in July 1928, was a three-engined, 12-passenger "Calcutta-type" aircraft named *City of Alexandria.* At various times, flying boats landed in Alexandria's east harbor and, later, on Lake Mariut; on the Nile at Rod el Farag, north of Cairo; on the Dead Sea at El Lisan; on the Sea of Galilee and on Lake Habbaniyah in Iraq.

May 1936 saw the arrival on a proving flight of the first four-engined Short C-Class Sunderland, a 24-passenger luxury flying boat, a great step forward from its predecessors. The all-metal, high-wing Sunderlands had been designed for the Empire Air Mail program, for which Alexandria served as a hub. By 1938 the airline was carrying some 2000 tons of mail annually.

Yet for all the progress, the route from England to India via the Middle East, first surveyed in 1919, was blocked by politics from full completion until the late 1930's. Because of a dispute with Italy, France declined to permit British aircraft to fly over French territory to Italian destinations—the most practical way to circumnavigate the Alps. This obliged passengers arriving in Paris by air from London to take the train from there to Brindisi, Italy, where they boarded an Imperial Airways flying boat for Egypt and went on to India. Another obstacle was Persia's initial opposition to transit flights, though this was later modified to permit passage along the eastern shore of the Arabian Gulf. With the rail link between Paris and Italy, a journey in the late 1920's and early 1930's from Croydon, south of London, to Karachi took seven days, and the one-way fare was £130.

By the late 1930's, and especially following the enormous aviation advances that came with World War II, land-based aircraft became increasingly rapid and preferred over flying boats. Still, BOAC promoted their flying boats as luxurious alternatives, emphasizing their comfort and relaxed atmosphere and downplaying their relatively slow cruising speed. Advertisements touted the "absence of that chained-to-a-seat feeling" and contrasted the flying-boat experience to that of "bored passengers sitting in serried rows" in land-based aircraft.

Serried or not, the public in general opted for speed over comfort. The last BOAC flying boat was decommissioned in November 1950. By then, flying "the Furrow" was already a memory, superseded by the early radio aids to navigation, more advanced versions of which still guide aircraft today.



SHORT S23 C-CLASS SUNDERLAND "CANOPUS" TAKING OFF FROM ROD EL FARAG, 1937

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Atop the hill that hosted Lisbon's first settlement in the 12th century BC rises the castle built by Arabs in the eighth century. It was named the Castle of St. George by Christians in the 14th century to commemorate their alliance with England.

Arab Memories In PORTUGAL

"I hope that you will enjoy our *fado*. Tourists rarely appreciate this." Maria do Carmo Norqueria, a Portuguese tourist official, went on to wax poetic about the country's folkloric song tradition. Its name means "fate" or "destiny," and it remains little known outside the country. "As for me," she concluded, "it brings out the deepest of my emotions."

I smiled. "I have heard it many times, and I love it! Did you know that it's related to traditional song styles in the eastern Arab lands?" Maria looked at me but did not comment. Perhaps my remark puzzled her, for I have found that Portugal's Arab legacies are so many that even in the country itself, they can be difficult to discern.

That evening, in the semi-darkness of Lisbon's João da Praça Restaurant, Maria Armanda, one of Portugal's top *fadistas*, poured out her soul in a free and flexible rhythm, singing piercing lyrics of sorrow and despair. Her voice was so sweeping, so stark with lamentation, yet so driven by cathartic, passionate love for life that it touched my own deepest emotions though I understood few of her words. As Armanda threw back her head with her eyes half closed and clutched and twisted the ends of her black shawl, it was as if the late Umm Kulthum, one of the greatest singers the Arab world has ever known, had not died in 1975 after all, but had secretly emigrated to Lisbon.

Soulful and bluesy *fado* fills the evening at A Severa restaurant in Lisbon. Top: Almond-based marzipan, a sweet that arrived in both Portugal and Spain with the Arabs, is still a favorite.

WRITTEN BY HABEEB SALLOUM

PHOTOGRAPHED BY TOR EIGELAND

"The lateen sail and the astrolabe, introduced by the Arabs, were instrumental in setting our nation on its age of discovery."

—José António Preto da Silva

George Sawa, who holds a doctorate in historical Arab musicology from the University of Toronto, explains *fado*'s links to Arab music. The plucking of the strings on the mandolin and guitar, he says, is similar to the strumming style Arab musicians use on the fretless *'ud*, the ancestor of the lute of the European Renaissance. *Fado*'s switches between minor and Phrygian modes parallels the Arab use of *nahawand* and *kurd*. Some *fado* forms, Sawa adds, are repetitive, like early Arab *muwashshaat*, where a phrase is repeated over and over.

Musician and historian of cartography Benjamin Olshin says of the similarity that "you can hear this in the music." Similarly, the authoritative *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* locates *fado*'s roots in the Arab musical tradition. Olshin adds that "There is also other Portuguese music which is clearly Arab-inspired. Listen, for example, to the modern flautist Rao Kao."

The next morning, Antonio, a native of Lisbon, guided our group into the capital city's Alfama district, the heart of historic Portugal. "We are walking through the Arab part of Lisbon. Its outline has not changed since the Moors built this section of the city," he said, apparently taking for granted that all in our group would know that Arabs had once called Lisbon—*Lishbuna*—home.

In Spain, most of the country's inhabitants and a good number of its visitors are at least passingly familiar with its Arab heritage. But it is less well known that Portugal, too, was at one time part of al-Andalus, the land known in the West as Moorish Spain. Cordoba was the capital of al-Andalus; its counterpart in southern Portugal was Silves.

This *nora*, or waterwheel, in Algarve is a descendant of the Arab waterwheel that helped revolutionize agriculture in Portugal as in Spain. Top: The market in Loulé, Algarve, shows Arab influences in its arches and dome.

"A good number of our people, especially educated people, know quite well that the Arabs were part of our history," says José António Preto da Silva, a former Portuguese tourism commissioner in Canada. "They contributed to our language, our architecture and especially to our knowledge of navigation. The lateen sail and the astrolabe, introduced by the Arabs, were instrumental in launching our nation into its Age of Discovery."

Alfama, bustling beneath its hilltop Arab castle, is today a testimony to the Arabs' brilliant legacy of *convivencia*—peaceful cohabitation—of learning, innovation and culture that shaped the European Renaissance. Though it was founded by the Phoenicians and later embellished by Romans and Visigoths, the Arabs gave it its name, which comes from *al-hammah*, "hot spring." Amid narrow, cobbled streets that follow the Arab platting, and among the complexity of close-quartered whitewashed houses, the aura of the long-gone Muslim city still lingers. Climbing plants and stone vases still sprout flowers in courtyards, and all appear to have more in common with North Africa than Europe.

It was in 711, soon after the first Arab probe across the Strait of Gibraltar, that the Iberian Peninsula came under Arab rule. In the western portion of the peninsula, this rule continued until the end of the 10th century, when the northern provinces of what is today Portugal fell to Bermudo II, Christian king of León, who called the newly acquired lands Portucalia. Over the next 250 years, the Christian *reconquista* continued to push the Arabs south. In 1139, emboldened by a brilliant victory over the Arabs at Ourique, Afonso Henriques declared himself independent of the rule of Castile and declared Portugal independent under his own crown. From that date, Portugual began to develop a national identity distinct from that of the Galicians, Léonese, Catalonians, Castilians and others in the Iberian realms, which later united to become the nation of Spain.

In the mid-13th century, Afonso III conquered Faro, the last stronghold of the Arabs, the city that is today the capital of Algarve, the southernmost province of the country. With its fall, five centuries of Arab rule in Portugal ended. (In what would become Spain, it would be 240 years more before the last Arab kingdom was extinguished in 1492.) But the Arab legacy enriched and shaped Portugal indelibly.

The Arab introduction of new agricultural technology, and the Arabs' plain hard work, made Arab Portugal prosper. To this day, the common Portuguese verb *mourejar* means "to work like a Moor," and it implies unusual diligence and tenacity. The Arabs introduced and expanded groves and fields, some of which dated from Roman times, of almonds, apricots, carobs, figs, lemons, olives, oranges, pomegranates, rice, palms, sugar, spices and numerous vegetables. Today, many of the orchard and garden products that grace the tables of Portugal carry modified Arabic names. (See sidebar, page 37.)

Throughout al-Andalus, Arab agriculture thrived with the construction of irrigation systems, parts of which are still in use today. Sometimes built on Roman foundations, this watering network was made more useful still by the introduction from Arab lands of the windmill, the watermill (Portuguese *azenha*, from the Arabic *al-saniyah*), and the water wheel (Portuguese *nora*, from the Arabic *na'urah*). These innovations may have been the greatest gifts the Arabs gave to Spain and Portugal, for thanks to them Iberian fields were for centuries better developed than those in the rest of Europe. The 12th-century Moroccan geographer al-Idrisi described Algarve as a land of beautiful cities surrounded by irrigated gardens and orchards.

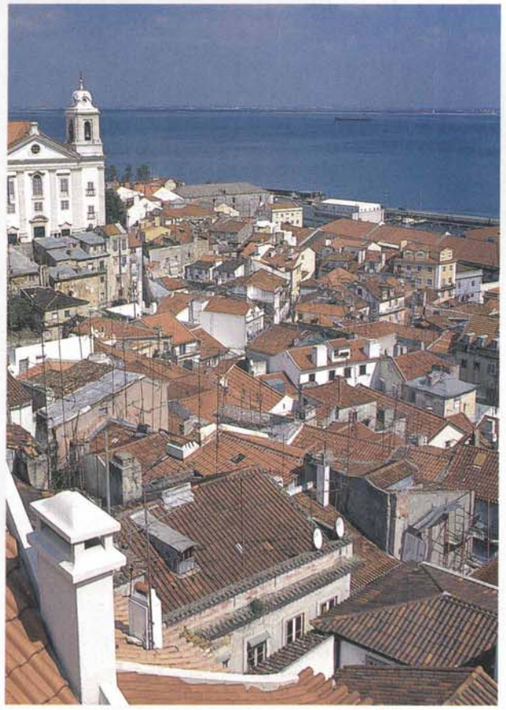
After 1249, although their western Iberian kingdoms were no more, Arabs continued to live in the Christian-ruled kingdoms, working the land, constructing and decorating homes, villas and palaces. The 1492 expulsion of Muslims from Spain led to a similar expulsion from Portugal in 1497, but even after this, the cultural legacy lived on. The early-16th-century court of Manuel I, for example, the ruler who patronized the first Portuguese voyages to India around the Horn of Africa, featured Arab clothing, Arab dances and music, and Arab-style harnesses for horses.

One Arab decorative tradition that has endured to become part of modern Portuguese identity is the love of vivacious ornamental tiles, called *azulejos*. (The word comes from Arabic *al-zulayj*, "polished stone.") On the walls of

A 1997 tile mural overlooking a park in Monchique, Algarve has artistic roots in the Arab geometric, decorative tile tradition known as *azulejos*, which was later also influenced by Dutch pictorialism.

homes, churches, country mansions, train stations and countless other structures, these colorful, often geometrically patterned tiles seem to bring out the beauty of every building they adorn. Tiled walls in every city and village harmonize with Portugal's baroque and Manueline architecture—the latter developed largely by Francisco Arruda, an admirer of Arab artistry and one of Portugal's finest architects in the period after the Age of Discovery.

During the 18th century, which the Portuguese regard as the "golden age" of *azulejos*, the Dutch influence brought pictorial tiles—featuring animals, castles, ships, flowers, people and religious scenes—and blue-on-white monochrome tiles. But it is the early, geometric styles of *azulejos* that show the clearest stylistic ties to the Arabs. Outside Lisbon, intricately patterned tiles on the walls and floors of the National Palace and the Peña Castle in Sintra, the Church of Nossa Senhora do Pópulo in Caldas da Rainha, the Church of the Misericórdia in Vila do Conde and many other structures throughout the country incorporate a fine selection of Arab and Arab-inspired tile work.



Alfama is the oldest of the city's many colorful districts, and in Arab times, it was the heart of Lisbon.

The colors, aromas and flavors of the Portuguese kitchen are another important inheritance from the Arabs. In the days of al-Andalus, basic meats included lamb, goat, some beef and much seafood. Many of the Portuguese names for fish—such as *atum* (tuna, from Arabic *al-tun*), *sável* (shad, from *shabal*) and even almêijoa (clams, from *al-majjah*)—attest to the origins of Portugal's seafood habit. The Arab sweet tooth was passed on, too, as Portugal's candied fruits and its many pastries made of almonds, egg yolks, honey and rose water demonstrate. Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre noted in his book *The Masters and the Slaves* (1933) that old Portuguese cookbooks are filled with Arab recipes often simply called "Moorish lamb," "Moorish sausage," "Moorish hen," "Moorish fish," "Moorish broth" and so on.

Three centuries after the fall of Arab rule, as the Portuguese age of discovery was flourishing, the court of Manuel I featured Arab clothing, Arab dances and music, and Arab-style harnesses for horses.

Besides the fields, the tiles, the kitchens, the Arab architecture of castles, gates and city walls and the audibly Arabic names of towns and geographical features, there is the less definable but very persuasive Arab look and feel of Portugal's landscape, especially in Algarve, to remind the visitor of this important part of the country's history. The sparkling white houses with red terracotta roofs, set in lush orchards, the courtyard patios drowsing in their flowery shade, and the fretted chimneys unique to southern Portugal—all these are evidence of a kind. (See page 38.)

Loulé, parts of whose 12th-century ramparts remain, is a city whose houses are adorned with attractive terraces and colorful minaret-like chimneys, situated in one of the loveliest parts of Algarve. Likewise, the older sections of Olhão and Tavira, with their narrow streets, *kasbah*-style town architecture and, again, the "Moorish" chimneys, also appear more North African than European. And crowning all these towns is Silves, known as Shalb when it was the Arab capital of Algarve, vying with Cordoba to be the intellectual center of the western Islamic world. The mystic Ibn Qasi, the poet-king of Seville, al-Mu'tamid, and the poet Ibn 'Ammar were all born in Shalb. Devastated in the *reconquista*, the city never again reached its former size or glory, and today it is a modest place whose economy relies heavily on tourism. Only the Arab castle, the Alcazaba (from *al-qasabah*, the fortress), the nearby cathedral (which retains vestiges of the mosque it was built on) and a gate in the Arab city walls remain.

Despite all these visible traces, for me there is still no better indication of the Arab contribution to Portuguese life than what can be heard in a long and heartfelt *fado*. Although its modern form is urban and it developed, as we know it, only in the 19th century, it is increasingly performed throughout the towns of Algarve, albeit largely for tourists.

Fado is perhaps most appropriately performed at night. Then, when a *fadista* pours out her soul to remind us of all we cannot know, cannot control, cannot understand—our loves, our histories—she inevitably recalls for me the gripping, expansive songs of the Arabs who once called this land home, and whose influences remain today.

Habeeb Salloum is the author of five books and numerous articles on Canadian, Arab and Latin American history, travel and culinary arts. He is currently collaborating with his daughter Muna on an etymology of Arabic contributions to Spanish.

Free-lance photographer and writer **Tor Eigeland** began contributing to this magazine from Beirut in the late 1960's, after which he lived in Spain. His home now lies on the other side of the Pyrenees, in southwest France. Visit his website at www.toreigeland.com.

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

The Age of Discovery: May/June 1992

Arab roots of flamenco: November/December 1994

The Arabs in Spain: September/October 1976, September/October 1992, January/February 1993

Seville's poet-king: January/February 1993

Ornamental tiles: March/April 1992

Arab sweets: September/October 1989, May/June 1996

A LEGACY IN LANGUAGE

Portuguese is saturated with more than a thousand words of Arabic origin—more even than Spanish. Some are easy to spot: Portuguese words beginning with "al-" are almost all the result of assimilation of the Arabic prefix that means "the-" (and which in Spanish became "el-"). Similarly, Portuguese place names beginning with "Ode-" or "Odi-", such as Odeleite, Odelouca and Odiáxere, all stem from the Arabic *wadi*, meaning valley. For this list, however, I have concentrated on words that, for the most part, are legacies to both Portuguese and Spanish, and in some cases to English as well. Note, though, that some of the meanings have shifted!

FOODS

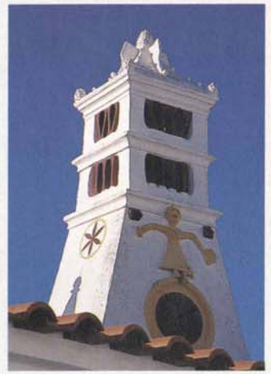
ARABIC	ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE
al-karawiyah	caraway	*alcaravia*
al-badhinjan	eggplant	*beringela*
al-zanjabil	ginger	*gengibre*
al-laymun	lime	*limão*
al-zayt	oil	*azeite*
al-zaytun	olive	*azeitona*
al-naranj	orange	*laranja*
al-rumman	pomegranate	*romã*
al-aruzz	rice	*arroz*
al-za'faran	saffron	*açafrão*
al-isbanakh	spinach	*espinafre*
al-sukkar	sugar	*açúcar*
sharab	syrup	*xarope*

OTHER WORDS

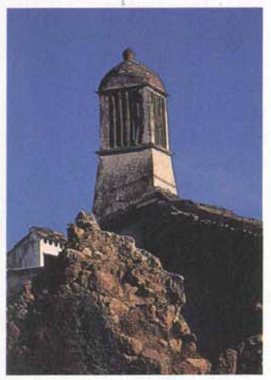
ARABIC	ENGLISH	PORTUGUESE
amir al-bar	admiral	*almirante*
al-kimiya'	alchemy	*alquimia*
al-jabr	algebra	*álgebra*
al-manakh	almanac	*almanaque*
'anbar	amber	*âmbar*
al-samt	azimuth	*azimute*
jamal	camel	*camelo*
gharrafah	carafe	*garrafa*
sakk	check	*cheque*
al-zanqah	lane	*azinhaga*
al-mijrash	mortar (for grinding)	*almofariz*
al-misk	musk	*almuscar*
al-jayb	pocket	*algibeira*
ta'rifah	tariff	*tarifa*
al-makhzan	warehouse	*armazem*
sifr	zero	*cifra*

PLACE NAMES

ARABIC	ARABIC ROOT	MEANING
Albufeira	*al-buhayrah*	*the lake*
Alcantarilha	*al-qantarah*	*the bridge*
Alcaria	*al-qariyah*	*the village*
Aldeia	*al-day'ah*	*the small village*
Alfambras	*al-hamra'*	*the red*
Alferce	*al-fa's*	*the pickaxe*
Algoz	*al-ghuzz*	*name of an Arab tribe*
Aljezur	*al-juzur*	*the islands*
Almadena	*al-madinah*	*the city*
Almansil	*al-manzil*	*the house*
Almodôvar	*al-mudawwar*	*the round*
Alvor	*al-barr*	*the port, the dry land*
Salema	*Salam*	*peace*
Odemira	*wadi al-amirah*	*valley of the princess*





Clockwise from top left: **Porches, circa 1713; Porches; Alte; Ribeira de Algibrel; near São Bras de Alportel; Tavira.**

The Mystery of ALGARVE'S CHIMNEYS

Cones, cubes, prisms, cylinders, pyramids, balloons; squat stumps, slender fingers, plain white or colorfully decorated: All these descriptions fit chimneys known as the *chaminé Algarvia*.

If there is one thing that characterizes Portugal's southern, sunny Algarve, it is ornamental chimneys. And if the chimneys have anything at all in common, it is that many bring to mind minarets, even miniature mosques.

During several visits to the area as a tourist, I became fascinated with them, all the more because nobody seemed to know much about their origins. If I heard anything it was "They came from the Arabs," or "The Moors started them," comments usually tossed off with a shrug. Nothing more specific. Whoever popularized them—and they appear on new apartment blocks as often as on old buildings—the Algarve chimney is everywhere, often right next to the satellite dish or television aerial.

When I pointed out that some people claim that the Muslims, who lived in the Algarve for more than 500 years and in Spain's neighboring al-Andalus for some 800 years, didn't build chimneys, people would just shrug again, and insist that their chimneys were nonetheless "from the Arabs." But these were conversations with local men-in-the-street, or at least men-in-the-village-lane. From my home, I started to fax tourism offices, architects and the University of the Algarve. Long Internet searches yielded nothing beyond general mentions of the chimneys in connection with the Algarve, along with a barrage of hotel and package-tour offers and, later that month, an annoyingly large phone bill. In the library, works on the Arab architecture of the Algarve and Andalusia did not mention chimneys at all, which left me more puzzled: Anyone who cooks or heats must either have chimneys or live in a perpetual fug, and the sophisticated Arabs of al-Andalus had a refined cuisine as well as dozens or hundreds of bathhouses in every city. It didn't add up. This was turning into detective work.

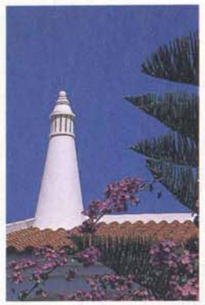
Then the Algarve Tourism Office sent me this information by fax:

"'How many days of chimney do you want?' was the question the Algarve master mason asked of the homeowner who ordered a chimney built. The cost of a chimney was measured by the time it took to make it: The more delicate and difficult its construction, the more expensive it became. According to the time spent, chimneys varied from very simple shapes to others flaunting complicated, beautiful tracery, or representing miniature clock towers or houses. The minaret aspect of the chimney reveals the influence of the Arab style. Not that the Arabs used chimneys, nor did they build them during their occupation of the region (the chimneys only appeared centuries later), but there is an undeniably Moorish influence in the south of Portugal with regard to architecture and ornamentation."

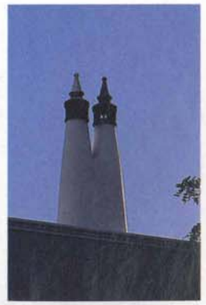
On new apartments in Porches, decorative chimneys are part of neo-Arab style. Top: **A model chimney identifies a country restaurant named "Chaminé Algarvia."**

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED

BY TOR EIGELAND



São Bras de Alportel



Monte Seco

Cumeada

Alte

Porches

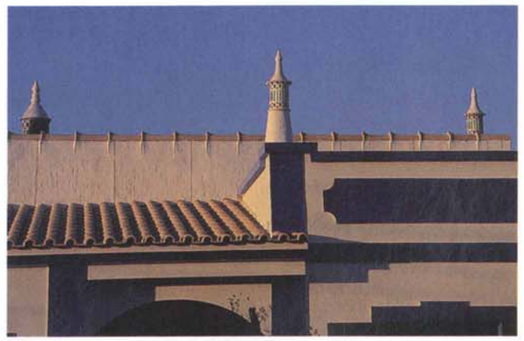
What? No chimneys? I still didn't believe this. What did the Arabs do with smoke from their elaborate bathhouses and kitchens? The fax continued:

"Nowadays, modern buildings display mass-produced chimneys bearing no relation to the authentic works of art of the old chimneys. The latter are, in fact, unique, and it is well worth exploring the region to observe these beautiful objects, which reveal the Algarve people's love for ornamentation."

"Exploring the region...." That did it. I booked a flight to Portugal in hopes that, in the chimneys' homeland, I might find someone who could give me a straight and believable answer.

My first port of call was Lisbon, specifically a fish restaurant in the old port area, where I met with Filipe Jorge, an architect who has been working for years on a book about Algarve chimneys. For more than three centuries, he told me, chimneys of this type have been constructed not only in the Algarve but also in Alentejo Province north of the Algarve and in Spanish Andalusia, which borders the Algarve to the east. The oldest chimneys, he said, date to the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

"Did the Arabs have chimneys?" I asked. Jorge hesitated, then replied, "Mostly their architecture doesn't have chimneys. That is a paradox. But when [masons] build chimneys here today they copy things like minarets. This is a very difficult thing, the lack of direct references. Obviously there is some kind of Arab, Muslim influence. After all, there were so many centuries of Muslim presence. But it is difficult to make a quick and direct connection with that.



Chimneys punctuate the horizontal lines of a home near Estoi.

"History is quite nebulous, isn't it?" he philosophized. "I have talked to many historians and historians of art. Nobody has a solid opinion. It almost seems mythical.

"It also has to do with the way they paint these houses all white. The houses all look more or less the same, so the chimney is what makes the difference between the houses. It is the signature of the owner."

Most of the chimneys are constructed in one of two ways, Jorge explained. Some are built of brick, which is covered with plaster and perhaps paint and tile; others are built from four or more—sometimes many more—prefabricated, molded pieces of plaster, "like making cakes." A master mason would often prefer the former method, and he would do the job free-hand, displaying the most intricate creativity his patron could afford.

That evening I flew to Faro, Algarve's capital, and drove on to a country inn outside Estoi, a town known for its chimneys. Although the sky was dark by then, the chimneys were ever-present in other forms: The driveway to the inn was lined with electrically lit lanterns shaped like Algarve chimneys. The lamps in my room, fitted with standard light bulbs, were—you guessed it!—chimney shapes. It was kitsch, yes, but colorfully thematic all the same.

The next morning looked and felt like a North African morning. The golden dawn backlit a palm tree in front of my window. After sunrise, the light soon turned glaringly, almost blindingly bright, especially when I gazed past the palm toward the whitewashed farmhouses beyond. Later, as I drove northwest, only the Portuguese license plates along the sparsely traveled road kept me from believing I was in fact in North Africa. It was hot and the land was dry. The white villages looked just like those on the other side of the Mediterranean. I saw the truth of Jorge's assertion of "a definite connection between North African and southern Portuguese architecture."

Master masons asked, "How many days of chimney do you want?" The value of the chimney was measured by time.

The name *Algarve* comes from the Arabic *al-gharb* ("the west"), referring to the province's position at the western edge of the former Muslim empire and, as well, at the western edge of al-Andalus, of which the Algarve was part until it became a separate Arab governorate in 1140. In the fields, scrabbling alongside desert scrub and cacti were olive, carob, fig, citrus, pomegranate and almond trees, and grapevines, all of which need little water. They were all also favorites of the Arabs, and some, like the citrus, almonds and pomegranates, were first imported and naturalized by them.

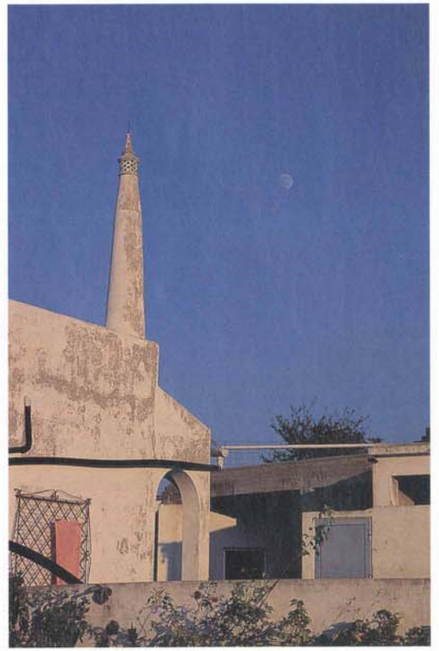
The farmhouses I passed were mostly small, plain and almost windowless. They were brilliantly whitewashed, and atop them rose plenty of chimneys, often not just one but three or four per house, each different in style. Crowned with striking tops, the openings in the sides of the chimneys appeared as circles, squares, rectangles, triangles and grids in infinitely varying combinations and proportions. Some were clearly in use, as evidenced by their blackened tops. Others were apparently decorative only, for they were sparkling clean.

Why so many chimneys for one modest home? One, I learned from conversations that day, might be for the "stove house" above the everyday eating area. Another might serve the main kitchen, used only for parties or visitors, while another one or two could indeed be strictly ornamental. The heart of a traditional Algarve home, I was told, is the big, wide fireplace or hearth called a *lareira*. From it, the chimney rises straight up, without any throat or other constriction. The *lareira* had to be big and wide to accommodate the many meat, sausage and other farm products that had to be hung in it for drying or smoking, according to the season. The straight-up design also allowed brush-cleaning from the bottom, unlike European and American chimneys, whose throated fireplaces often require that cleaning be done from the top down.

From the countryside around Estoi, I drove to the charming old town of Porches, one of the few reasonably quiet towns near the aggressively tourism-oriented Algarve coastline. The other distinctive decorations of the region were apparent along the way, for many houses had what are called *açoteias*, roof terraces of the kind common in North Africa, as well as *platibandas*, colored friezes of tile or paint that also have Arab origins.

In the middle of Porches, atop a small, plain whitewashed building that hosts a cozy restaurant, sits what is believed to be the oldest Algarve chimney. White, square and tapered, it was built in 1713, and it is in a glorious state of preservation. On the lower part it has a primitivist figure of a woman with outstretched hands, painted yellow; she stands on a yellow circle. Despite his research, Jorge, who had told me where to find this chimney, could tell me nothing about its background, nor could a village neighbor.

Porches, I found, also hosts some of the region's newest chimneys. Best characterized as "modern Moorish," a new apartment block I passed looked like a set-piece for a movie with a modern Moroccan story-line. You find yourself looking among the gleaming white curves and domes for the minaret of the neighborhood mosque, but you have to settle, in the end, for large numbers of slender, tall, round Algarve chimneys, all ornamental.



On a farmhouse in Loulé, the chimney resembles a miniature minaret.

"It is still a mostly unexplored theme," Jorge said later when, over another meal, I tried to extract more information from him about the omnipresent, historically inscrutable chimneys. "So far there is no finish to this story. They are sort of lost in time." He sighed. "But we Portuguese are quite calm about this. We are in no hurry to find the end of the story."

Free-lance photographer and writer **Tor Eigeland** began contributing to this magazine when he lived in Beirut in the late 1960's, and continued for the two decades he lived in Spain. His home now lies on the other side of the Pyrenees, in southwestern France. His website is at www.toreigeland.com.

SuggestionsforReading

Readers of *Saudi Aramco World* who want to range more widely or delve more deeply

than a bimonthly magazine will find interesting material, most of it recently published, in this list. Without endorsing the views of any of the authors, the editors nonetheless encourage varied and omnivorous reading as a sure, if winding, path to greater understanding. The books listed here are available in libraries, from bookstores—we urge our readers to patronize independent bookstores—or from their respective publishers; ten-digit International Standard Book Numbers (ISBN) are given to facilitate ordering. Please do not order books from *Saudi Aramco World*.

Adventures in the Bone Trade: The Race to Discover Human Ancestors in Ethiopia's Afar Depression. Jon Kalb. 2000, Copernicus Books, 0-387-98742-8, $29 hb. In the trenches of anthropology, you keep your head down: You don't want to overlook anything, and you don't want to offer a colleague a tempting target. So Jon Kalb discovered early in his 30 years studying the Afar Depression of Ethiopia, first as a geologist, then as an organizer and participant in the expeditions that found traces of some of the earliest ancestors of modern humans: Lucy, the First Family, Bodo Man, the Aramis Skeleton and the Buri Skull. The "bone wars" among rival teams of scientists were hardly less savage than the armed conflicts that took place around them, and Kalb's fascinating, first-person account makes a very good read, and provides insight into the human politics of science and the science of human development.

Arab Dress, A Short History: From the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times. Yedida Kalfon Stillman, ed. by Norman A. Stillman. 2000, Brill Academic Publishers, 90-04-11373-8, $101/ƒ191.72 hb. This is a richly illustrated historical and ethnographic survey by an acknowledged expert in the field, covering the evolution and transformation of modes of dress over the past 1400 years throughout the Middle East, North Africa and—for the Middle Ages—Muslim Spain. Stillman deals with clothing in the social, religious, esthetic and political context of each period, including the present day.

The Book of Strangers: Medieval Arabic Graffiti on the Theme of Nostalgia. Attributed to Abu 'l-Faraj Al-Isfahani. Trans. by Patricia Crone and Shmuel Moreh. 2000, Markus Wiener Publishers, 1-55876-214-0, $49.95 hb; 1-55876-215-9, $18.95 pb. In 10th-century Iraq, when the flourishing of the Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad made long-distance travel relatively easy, the author—possibly pseudonymous, certainly peripatetic—gleaned verses from gates, doors, walls and the occasional piece of paper, and left us a delightful, spontaneous volume that illuminates the flesh-and-blood humanity of a bygone age. Or does it? The high literary quality of so many of the verses engenders as much skepticism as pleasure: Was this all really graffiti, "found writing," or did the author compose some—or all—of it? The translators, who have taken pains to make the book accessible to general readers, give the author the benefit of the doubt. Either way, the form is surprisingly appealing, and the road-weary poetic sentiments are laced with irony and dark wit that presage today's "been there, done that" cliché: "Have mercy on the stranger in a distant land / What a disaster he has brought upon himself. / He left his loved ones. They did not benefit from life after his departure, / and neither did he."

A Border Passage: From Cairo to America—A Woman's Journey. Leila Ahmed. 1999, Farrar Straus & Giroux, 0-37411518-4, $24 hb; 2000, Penguin USA, 0-14-029183-0, $13.95 pb. Two transformations make up this book: The political and social 20th-century transformation of Egypt, and the transformation of a Cairene child into a self-aware Egyptian woman scholar in the West. The mutually reflecting viewpoints of the child, the foreign student in England, the developing scholar and the established intellectual authority—author of an important book on *Women and Gender in Islam*—make this articulate memoir three-dimensional. The facts may or may not be objectively accurate, but "their trace and residue in my consciousness" are equally important.

A Concise History of the Crusades. Thomas F. Madden. 1999, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 0-8476-9429-1, $22.95, hb; 0-8476-9430-5, $12.95, pb. This excellent short history of the crusades to the Holy Land rejects the notion that most crusaders' primary motivation was mercenary rather than religious, and nicely balances military with political history. Madden interestingly discusses the difficult diversion of crusader fervor to domestic targets such as the Albigensians, and argues that the papacy's fixation on Muslim expansion left the church vulnerable to the internal threat of Protestantism.

The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives. Carole Hillenbrand. 2000, Edinburgh University Press, 0-7486-0905-9, £80 hb; 0-7486-0630-0, £29.95 pb. The author calls this book "an outline," but in fact only specialists will need to go beyond its 650 heavily illustrated pages, in which she covers Muslim reactions to the first crusade, the development of the Muslim counter-crusade, the role of the concept of *jihad*, and the Muslim reconquest. Less linearly, Hillenbrand also deals with Muslims' stereotypes about crusaders and Muslim reactions to their culture, and with the continuing effect of the crusades on the minds and opinions of present-day Muslims. Her sources are widespread—the contemporary ones all Islamic, the modern ones also Western—and mostly textual, but they do include monuments and artworks. The book is equipped with lists, glossaries, chronologies and footnotes, and constitutes all one is likely to need for a foray into the territory that lies on the other side of the European accounts we learned in school.

Difficult and Dangerous Roads: Hugh Clapperton's Travels in Sahara & Fezzan 1822-1825. Jamie Bruce-Lockhart and John Wright, eds. 2000, Sickle Moon Books, 1-900209-06-3, £10 pb. Between 1788 and 1830, when European geographical knowledge of Africa was still largely drawn from classical Greek, Roman and Arabic texts, London's African Association sponsored ten expeditions to the northern part of the continent. One of the least known of these was to the central Sahara from Tripoli to Lake Chad, and it included Clapperton, then a young naval lieutenant. He proved an astute and faithful diarist—except for gaps during his bouts with malaria—with a keen eye for detail and without cultural condescension. His writings were discovered only recently, and are published here for the first time. Notable is the care taken by the editors to reproduce in type the often hasty quality of the handwritten diary, with all its uncapitalized sentences, dashes between loosely connected thoughts, and jotted notes. It makes for an idiosyncratic read, but it all the more vividly transports the reader to Clapperton's side as he learns for Britain that the Sahara is not an impenetrable barrier but that, with the help of well established local knowledge, it can be crossed.

Egypt: Gift of the Nile—An Aerial Portrait. Photographs by Guido Alberto Rossi; text by Max Rodenbeck. 2000, Harry N. Abrams. 0-8109-3254-7, $55 hb (orig. pub. 1991, Editions Didier Millet and 1992, Harry N. Abrams). This lushly republished coffee-table volume opens with a chapter titled "Egypt of the Mind," which outlines the often extremely romantic notions of European travelers to Egypt in the 18th and 19th centuries. With some 178 mostly large photographs of the subjects modern visitors to the country find most attractive—monuments, Cairo, the Nile, the desert and the sea—the book is in fact an "Egypt of the Mind" for our own era: It relies on a photographic eye to select scenes that fulfill the desire to experience beauty and myth at the cost of social and historical understanding. The book fascinates nonetheless, for it is well-produced, well-written and the beauty in the photographs, however incomplete its message, is real and compelling.

Egyptian Harvests (Moissons Égyptiennes). Margo Veillon; edited and introduced by Charlotte Hug. 2000, American University in Cairo Press, 977-424-580-6, $37.50 pb. Born in Egypt in 1907 of European expatriate parents, Margo Veillon made the country both her home and her subject, and today she is one of Egypt's leading artists. She has directed her hand always toward the workaday world of peasant life along the Nile, toward the "ancestral gestures" as well as "strenuous chores...[and] the subtle alchemy of water, earth, and life." Her paintings are about task-focused motions, often swift and intense but always ritualistically rhythmic—winnowing, reaping, sowing, tying, loading, sorting, mixing—and her subjects are at all times stooping, reaching, turning, carrying, pushing, never in repose, meeting the millennial demands of subsistence agriculture. She paints not for ethnographic detail, but to capture a sense of inner experience, using a style on the borders of realism and abstraction where her own sweepingly curvaceous gestures capture energy as much as form. The book includes almost as many photographs as paintings and drawings, which help to explain some scenes Veillon has painted; however they are too many and displayed too large, at times distracting from the masterful, far more affecting paintings.

Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East, 1789-1923. Efraim Karsh and Inari Karsh. 1999, Harvard University Press, 0-674-251520, $29.95 hb. The authors reject the view that the modern Middle East of nation-states is exclusively the product of global power politics, and attribute an equal share of responsibility to the actions of Ottomans, Hashemites, Muhammad Ali, 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud and other such regional actors. They describe a complex and pragmatic pattern of cooperation and conflict between Middle East and West—hardly a simplistic "clash of civilizations." The book begins with the on-again, off-again dalliances of Ottoman Sultan Selim III and his successors with Britain, Russia and France, and ends with a more general discourse on the violent and turbulent wake left by imperial ships of state, be they European or Middle Eastern. It moves briskly through the whirl of allegiances forged, broken and reforged, through wars actual and threatened, and shows how regional powers also operated from the perspective of self-interest rather than national unity or pan-Arabism. The authors' style is scholarly, but easily within the grasp of the non-specialist. Efraim Karsh is director of the Mediterranean Studies Program at King's College, University of London; Inari Karsh is a scholar of Middle East history and politics.

Islam: A Thousand Years of Faith and Power. Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair. 2000, TV Books, 1-57500-092-X, $28 hb. Interweaving ideas, arts and biography with religious and political history, this is an excellent overview of Islam from the seventh to the 17th century, the millennium in which "the essential features of Islamic civilization were elaborated and disseminated throughout Eurasia." The general reader will find an energetic narrative that neatly elucidates what he may have found to be overwhelming historical material; specialists will appreciate the steady stream of interdisciplinary distillations and the connections among events and ideas. The book begins with the world context in which Islam was revealed, and its basic tenets. It then discusses Islam's rapid spread and its growth into the religion of empires from Morocco to Iraq, Persia, India and Southeast Asia. "It is not too much of an overstatement," the authors say, "that at a time when unwashed Europeans in northern forests wore leather jerkins and ate roast game and gruel...bathed and perfumed Muslims inhabited splendid palaces with running water and sanitation systems.... Given Islam's importance in the world today, we must try to approach it with something more than our old stereotypes." The book ends with Islam's gradual eclipse by Christian Europe, beginning with the discovery of New World resources and the Portuguese expansion into the Indian Ocean trade. The authors are noted specialists in Islamic arts and culture, professors of Islamic and Asian art at Boston College. The book complements their documentary series "Islam: Empire of Faith," produced by Gardner Films and scheduled for broadcast this spring in the US on PBS. (VHS and DVD copies will be available from PBS Home Video at 1-800-752-9727, www.shoppbs.com.)

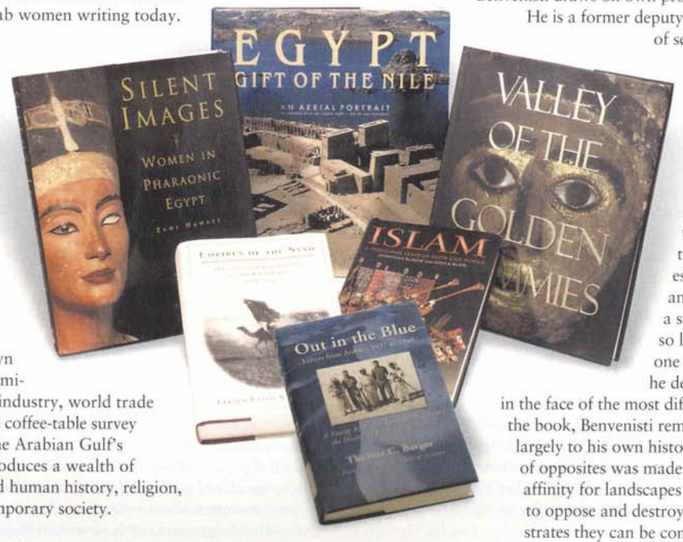
On Being a Muslim: Finding a Religious Path in the World Today. Farid Esack. 1999, Oneworld Publications, 1-85168-146-9, $17.95/£10.99 pb. South Africa is a crucible not only for contemporary racial relations but also, as this set of essays demonstrates, for matters of faith as well. Esack refers to himself as a Muslim liberation theologian, and he is a smartly candid one at that. His book is a bold, deeply reflective, often humorously confessional, unpolemical ramble through his delights and agonies over the world and the crosscurrent demands of faith. Early on, he writes: "This work is, in many ways, about a South African engaged in the struggle for justice and trying to relate that struggle to his Islam.... The struggle to live as a child of the times in a liberated society and to be committed to Islam is incredibly difficult if you take your theological heritage seriously. Every answer seems to be accompanied by a multitude of questions." His gaze inward is no less honest or intense: The book is arranged as a psychological journey outward from a relationship with God to relations with self, other individuals and society. While Muslims will likely enjoy this articulate book most, non-Muslims will appreciate Esack's personal illumination of the qualities and challenges of modern Muslim life.

Ottoman Jerusalem: The Living City 1517-1917. Sylvia Auld and Robert Hillenbrand, eds. 2000, Altajir World of Islam Trust, 1-901435-03-2, £145, 2 vols., hb. This is the definitive work on four centuries of vivid and vibrant Muslim history. The authors, 33 international scholars, establish beyond question that—though not a political capital—Jerusalem was a city of great economic, cultural and religious importance in Ottoman times, and that, contrary to received opinion, it was never neglected by its Ottoman rulers. Rather, almost every one adorned the city with religious, commercial and educational buildings or, in the case of Süleyman the Magnificent, with its beautiful protecting walls. The book includes essays on Jerusalem's religious, social and political history, its intellectual and commercial lives, what its people wore and even the music they played and heard, and the exhaustive two-volume work, with some 500 illustrations, concludes with an intensely detailed survey of the city's Ottoman architecture.

Out in the Blue: Letters from Arabia 1937-1940: A Young American Geologist Explores the Deserts of Early Saudi Arabia. Thomas C. Barger. 2000, Selwa Press, 0-9701157-3-3, $34.95 hb. American companies' early exploration for oil in Saudi Arabia in the 1930's and 1940's, under an agreement signed with the government of King 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, may be viewed as one of the last great expressions of the American frontier mentality: optimistic, constructivist and a little naïve. It was also very successful, finding large amounts of oil, establishing what is now a major international oil company (Saudi-owned and -operated), and building close personal relationships among Saudis and Americans that set the tone for decades of cooperation and a remarkable degree of mutual comprehension across cultural boundaries. One of the most interesting American characters of this early time was the geologist Tom Barger, whose open-minded, enquiring attitude, square dealing and empathetic individualism contributed greatly to the success of the Saudi–American enterprise. Barger, green as grass but quick and eager to learn, corresponded intensively with his parents and with the bride he left behind in North Dakota, writing in detail about his exploration work "out in the blue"—in the desert—and what he was learning about Arabia and

the people he worked with. Now his son Tim has edited those letters, with some additional material, into a most informative and charming account of a great adventure as seen through the eyes of a delightful and gifted young man. It is a gripping read, and implicitly instructive about the ways Americans could be dealing with other nations today. The book will be serialized in a major Arab newspaper, and Tim comments that "I originally thought *Out in the Blue* might make a modest contribution to Americans' understanding of Saudi Arabia, but in light of the serialization in *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, I'm beginning to think that it may also help a few Arabians gain a better understanding of us Americans."

The Poetry of Arab Women: A Contemporary Anthology. Nathalie Handel, ed. 2001, Interlink Books, 1-56656-374-7, $22 hb. This has the makings of a landmark: the first survey of poetry entirely by Arab women with roots in nearly every Arab country, some living in their countries of origin and others abroad, some writing in Arabic and others in French, English and other languages. The editor notes that when she began searching for poets in 1995, her task was relatively difficult, but that in the last couple of years, electronic communication has made new literary networks and international journals possible and helped bring "an openness to the Arab world that did not exist before," making possible this strong introductory collection. The 34 poets, each of whom is represented by two to five poems, were not selected so much for their influence—although that was certainly a factor—as for their ability, collectively, to stake out the extent of the poetic terrain covered by Arab women writing today. While the 60-page introduction helps the reader with the inevitable difficulties of context that such a broad survey presents, there is sublime, occasionally fierce beauty in the poems themselves, which arrive with vitality, freshness and surprising power. The book augurs well for the broader recognition of Arab poetry, by women or men, as a world literary force.



Qatar. 2000, Stacey International, 1-900988-25-9, £35 hb. Once known for its pearls, Qatar is now a prominent center for petroleum-based industry, world trade and—more recently—media. This coffee-table survey casts a friendly, detailed eye on the Arabian Gulf's second-smallest country and introduces a wealth of information about its natural and human history, religion, government, economy and contemporary society.

Revising Culture, Reinventing Peace: The Influence of Edward W. Said. Naseer Aruri and Muhammad A. Shuraydi, eds. 2001, Olive Branch Press, 1-56656-357-7, $17.95 pb. Eleven essays appreciatively assess some of the ways in which Said, author of some 17 books and chair of comparative literature at Columbia University, has helped shape the intellectual landscape of recent decades. Emphasized are his more politically oriented intellectual projects, especially matters of identity, regard for "the other," and cultural relationships of dominance and subordination. His 1972 classic *Orientalism* is now regarded as seminal, a contemporary premise for much of the cultural-studies field today. As a Palestinian, Said has remained closely engaged with his people's quest for peace with freedom and justice, and in doing so he has been able to keep in mind the humanity of those—often both Palestinians and Israelis—whom he opposes. He has thus helped make possible, at least, conflict without enmity and dialogue without polemics, according to Princeton international law specialist Richard Falk, whose commentary opens the book. Other essays discuss Said's influence on the disability rights movement (and by extension on the identity concerns of all minorities) and his advocacy of a "single-state solution" of the problem of Palestine. This book makes it clear that Said's writings are likely to continue to be relevant, even influential, as cultures mix ever more rapidly around the globe.

The Revolt of the African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century. Alexander Popovic. 1999, Marcus Wiener, 1-55876-162-4, $39.95 hb; 1-55876-163-2, $18.95 pb. The revolt of the Zanj, who had been brought from East Africa to work salt mines and agricultural centers, mostly in southern Iraq, lasted 14 years (839 to 883), during which the Zanj sacked Basra—where most of their owners lived—and established a capital city of their own in defiance of the rule of Abbasid Baghdad. It was the first and only major uprising against an Islamic caliphate, and it was also the first uprising of diaspora Africans. This valuable book is the first full-length study of the event.

Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land Since 1948. Meron Benvenisti. 2000, University of California Press, 0-520-21154-5, $35/£21.50 hb. Readers familiar with the conflict over Palestine know that everything about it comes down to land, and Benvenisti writes as the son of a geographer who was part of the project that renamed in Hebrew some 9000 Arabic geographical features, often with the effect of effacing history. His father's fieldwork steeped the younger Benvenisti in a pre-1948 Arab landscape that most Israelis today regard as, at best, a geographical blank. After the 1948 war, "The victory... utterly destroyed my childhood landscape, and my sense of loss was mixed with pride...." Benvenisti compares his country with Spain, where—500 years after the departure of the Arabs—the map remains carpeted in names of Arab origin, "signposts of memory" that he seeks to resurrect for his own land, if not physically then at least by not letting them lie forgotten. To do this, Benvenisti draws on own professional intimacy with the land: He is a former deputy mayor of Jerusalem and author of several previous books, including a statistical survey of the occupied territories (1984, *The West Bank Data Project*). But *Sacred Landscape* is extraordinarily powerful because it is a personal journey based on inquiry, laced with the kind of doubt and ambiguity that only a mature writer allows to surface; he writes that it "is essentially an attempt to provide answers to myself; to lay to rest a subject that has haunted me for so long." And by such acts as titling one chapter "Ethnic Cleansing," he demonstrates a sober fearlessness in the face of the most difficult questions. Throughout the book, Benvenisti remains a cautious optimist, thanks largely to his own history as a man whose reconciliation of opposites was made possible by his honest, early affinity for landscapes that many believe exist only to oppose and destroy each other. Benvenisti demonstrates they can be complementary.

The Seventy Wonders of the Ancient World: The Great Monuments and How They Were Built. Chris Scarre. 1999, Thames and Hudson, 0-500-05096-1, $40 hb. Taking as its starting point the traditional seven wonders of the ancient world, this book adduces 63 additional engineering marvels from around the pre-industrial world, spanning the ages from the Pyramids of Giza to the 16th-century Great Temple of the Aztecs. Neither a travelogue or an art history, *The Seventy Wonders* examines temples and shrines, palaces and baths, harbors, fortifications and colossi from the functional viewpoint of the engineer. The focus is on construction methods and techniques, all amply illustrated with photographs, artists' reconstructions and cutaway diagrams. From well-known monuments such as the Nabataean tombs at Petra and the Ziggurat of Ur to such less familiar ones as the Arch of Ctesiphon in Iraq and the Marib Dam in Yemen, it celebrates countless builders, most of them anonymous, who have left legacies in stone.

Silent Images: Women in Pharaonic Egypt. Zahi A. Hawass; foreword by Suzanne Mubarak. 2000, Harry N. Abrams, 0-8109-4478-2, $49.50 hb. This elegantly produced volume combs three millennia of writings, tomb paintings and sculptures for information about women's roles beyond fertility, femininity and (on four recorded occasions) the throne. It is necessarily a mostly inferential project, for, as the author states, "Nowhere do we find for certain a text written by a woman for other women." Nonetheless, there is a wealth of information, and it points toward a highly stratified society, relatively unchanging in this respect over nearly all of its long history, in which women played largely private, family-related roles and men acted as breadwinners in public roles. All was regarded as part of the cosmic order known as *maat*, and a considerable dose of *noblesse oblige* appears to have been part of men's social codes, "to counteract oppressive tendencies." The author is Undersecretary of State for the Giza Pyramids and director of the Bahariya Oasis excavation. (See *Valley of the Golden Mummies*, below.)

Silver: The Traditional Art of Oman. Ruth Hawley. 2000, Stacey International, 1-900988-27-5, £18.50 hb. Fine crafting of precious metals has been known since the earliest civilizations in the Middle East. Whereas gold's expense limited its use for everyday objects, this was much less the case for silver. Oman, as a maritime crossroads, developed a particularly skilled tradition of silversmithing that drew upon the styles and techniques of regions from India to Persia, Egypt and North Africa. This brief survey, organized according to history, social function and ornamental style, is the product of the author's four years of study while resident in Oman in the 1970's. Later, she expanded her inquiries to include the history of silver throughout the region, and the book is notable for its efforts to relate Omani traditions to the others that participated in an artistic cross-pollination.

Splendors of Islam: Architecture, Decoration and Design. Dominique Clévenot and Gérard Degeorge. 2000, Vendome Press, 0-86565-214-7, $70 hb. Architecture is the most immediate visual testimony of Islamic civilization, and surface decoration has remained central to the visual effects of Islamic architecture. This lavishly illustrated coffee-table volume focuses on the ornamental dimension of Islamic architecture through four approaches: the history of Islamic architecture; materials and techniques, including mosaics, stucco, brickwork, ceramic, bronze and wood; ornamental modes such as calligraphic, geometric and vegetal; and the esthetic relationship between structural forms—arches, cupolas and columns—and their ornamental coverings. Masterpieces from across the Islamic world are highlighted, with special attention paid to the finer details of well-known monuments.

Stations of Desire: Love Elegies from Ibn 'Arabi and New Poems. Michael A. Sells, translator and author. 2000, Ibis Editions, 965-90125-1-9, $11.95 pb. This compact book is Sells's quietly elegant new translation of *Turjuman al-Ashwaq* (*Translator of Desires*) by Muhyi al-din Ibn al-'Arabi, who was born in the 12th century in al-Andalus and later lived in Damascus. Ibn 'Arabi based these love poems on the traditional Arabic *qasida* (ode) form, and they became his most famous composition. The love he evokes is variously human and divine, elevating in the former case and grounding in the latter. In between the two major parts of Ibn 'Arabi's work, surprisingly, appear 11 poems by Sells himself, but the effect of this interjection is less audacious, less disruptive than one might think: Sells's compositions, clearly written from the present day, successfully connect our own time to that of the 800-year-old verses that flank them. Sells teaches at Haverford College, and is the author of several books aimed at making classical Arabic texts (including the Qur'an) accessible to English readers today.

A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom. Whitall Perry, ed.; introd. Huston Smith. 2000, Fons Vitae, 1-887752-33-1, $32.50 pb. (Orig. pub. 1971, Simon & Schuster and 1986, Harper & Row.) Drawing broadly upon the Qur'an and other worldwide sources of religious inspiration, and organized as a soul's pilgrimage from creation to transcendence, this is a magisterial compilation offering multiple insights on almost every imaginable topic of spiritual life. This paperback edition makes the 1144-page, cross-referenced classic newly accessible to contemporary readers.

Uncovering the Past: A History of Archaeology. William H Stiebing, Jr. 1993, Oxford University Press, 0-19-508921-9, $14.95 pb. This is a non-technical introduction to the field that has given us an unprecedented, ever-expanding body of knowledge about the past. The author taught a freshman-level archeology course for some 25 years before crystallizing his experience in this logically organized book for the general reader. Beginning with the humanism of the Renaissance, which stimulated interest in Greece and Rome, the author traces archeology through the computer age. Here are compact accounts of early and more recent finds on land and underwater, set out chronologically by region, from Anatolia and the Near East to the Aegean and the Nile Valley; the New World, and the Far East. Stiebing concludes with the 20th-century's adoption worldwide of the scientific methods and standards that largely prevail today. There are famous stories here, such as Schliemann's notorious pursuit of Troy, controversy over ownership of the "Elgin marbles," and discovery upon discovery in Egypt, but an equally important narrative is of the growth of archeology from "heroic" treasure-hunting to science-based, multidisciplinary teamwork. The book offers a lasting impression of how young, dynamic and productive the field is.

Valley of the Golden Mummies. Zahi A. Hawass. 2000, Harry N. Abrams, 0-8109-2898-1, $49.50 hb. Egyptologists have repeatedly trumpeted "the greatest discovery since Howard Carter opened Tutankhamun's tomb" in 1929, but when archeologist Zahi Hawass announced the discovery of a vast, undisturbed Greco-Roman necropolis near Bahariya Oasis in 1999, the comparison rang true. At least 60 gilded mummies have been found so far, and Hawass estimates that perhaps as many as 10,000 more remain hidden beneath the sands. No royal mummies have been brought to light; instead, this cemetery, 18 centuries old, is the final resting place of merchants and landowners who had grown wealthy thanks to the strategic location of the oasis astride trade routes. Hawass writes in an easy, anecdotal style that may disappoint specialists, but everyone should be pleased with the book's presentation: The photographs are stunning and reveal not just the mummies, but the splendors of Bahariya Oasis and the Western Desert as well. Another strength is the scope of the book, which has chapters on the discovery of the necropolis (a donkey stumbled into one of the tombs); artifacts associated with the burials; Egyptian religious beliefs; the mummification process; the history of the oasis and its people, and other nearby historical sites. Hawass anticipates decades of excavation, and readers, once finished with this volume, will be as eager for the next book as Hawass is for the next digging season.

Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance. Fadwa El Guindi. 1999, Berg Publishers, 1-85973-925-5, $55 hb; 1-85973-929-6, $19.50 pb. University of Southern California anthropologist, ethnographer and filmmaker Fadwa El Guindi approaches the freighted phenomenon of veiling across the grain of previous, often ethnocentric or feminist, scholarship: Veiling is not a matter of gender, turning on the "invisibility" and seclusion of women and their function as wellsprings of honor in a patriarchal society, she claims; rather, veiling is a matter of identity and privacy—privacy of space and body—that turns on the concepts of reserve, respect and restraint, and it is part of a broader "dress" movement that includes men as well as women. "Veiling also symbolizes an element of power and autonomy and functions as a vehicle for resistance" to both "colonizing powers and authoritarian local states." Much textual and field research has gone into El Guindi's exploration, and many will find her conclusions persuasive, disputed though they are. Certainly the veil is not what we thought it to be, and veiling is both more complicated and more interesting than we knew.

Venice and the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture 1100–1500. Deborah Howard. 2000, Yale University Press, 0-300-08504-4, $60 hb. For several centuries, Venice was the European hub of Eastern Mediterranean trade, and the city's architecture from that time clearly shows Muslim influence on the styles of building there. More complex is to lay out just which architectural devices were borrowed, adapted or inspired; when this occurred in each instance; through whom and which media; and why the process took place at all. In this sense, Howard's book is an elegant case study of cultural transfer in the Middle Ages, for Venice was hardly alone in the European Mediterranean in displaying a degree of affinity for Islamic styles despite the overt hostility of the Crusades. The author first discusses trade patterns and the limitations of the media through which visual ideas were transmitted, and then she examines San Marco and the Palazzo Ducale in great detail, as well as several other palaces and pilgrim hostels. The resulting insight into the process of "orientalization" is likewise insight into a newly revealed chapter in the intertwined histories of Christianity and Islam. Howard is reader in architectural history at Cambridge. This is her fourth book on Venetian architectural history.

COMPILED BY DICK DOUGHTY, ROBERT ARNDT AND KYLE PAKKA

The Middle East

A Decade of Children's Literature 1990–2000

By Carol Johnson Shedd

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Ali Child of the Desert. Jonathan London. Illus. Ted Lewin. 1997, Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 0-688-12561-1, $15.95 hb. Ali and his camel become separated from his father in this attractive book. Remembering what his father has told him Ali is able to survive a sandstorm.

Cairo. R. Conrad Stein. 1996, Children's Press, 0-516-20024-0, $26.50 hb. Though the text is brief, but still covering a good deal of Cairo's history, this book would be enjoyed by any age. The book is illustrated with superb photographs, and the format is creative and exciting.

Daily Life in Ancient and Modern Baghdad. Dawn Kotapish. Illus. Ray Webb. 2000, Runestone Press, 0-8225-3219-0, $25.26/£9.99 hb. This is another in the "Cities Through Time" series, which provides an excellent resource in middle school. The text is informative and interesting, and covers briefly, but adequately, the history, culture and people of Iraq. The layout is very appealing.

Daily Life in Ancient and Modern Istanbul. Robert Bator. Illus. Chris Rothero. 2000, Runestone Press, 0-8225-3217-4, $25.26/£9.99 hb. One in the "Cities Through Time" series, this book is an attractive and informative history of Turkey's ancient and most famous city. A very good resource.

The Day of Ahmed's Secret. Florence Parry Heide and Judith Heide Gilliland. Illus. Ted Lewin. 1990, Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 0-688-14023-8, $5.95 pb. Beautiful illustrations and a quiet and charming story bring the bustling city of Cairo to vivid life in this story of a young boy's pride in learning to write his name.

The Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt. Leonard Everett-Fisher. 1997, Holiday House, 0-8234-1508-2, $6.95 pb. Each god is given a full page, boldly colored illustration and simple text, with references to symbols of the gods found on ancient papyri, tombs, and monuments. This is an enticing introduction to Egyptian mythology.

The Golden Age of Islam. Linda S. George. 1998, Benchmark Books, 0-7614-0273-X, $28.50 hb. A very attractive, informative history of Islamic civilization from the eighth to the 13th century CE. Though written for children of middle-school age, it would also be useful as a brief introduction to this period for older students. The book includes the basics of Islamic faith and practice, as well as references to famous Muslims of the period, including women.

The Golden Sandal. Rebecca Hickox. Illus. Will Hillenbrand. 1998, Holiday House, 0-8234-1331-4, $15.95 hb; 0-8234-1513-9, $6.95 pb. A delightful "Arabian" version of the Cinderella story, this charmingly illustrated picture book is a joy to read.

Habibi. Naomi Shihab Nye. 1997, Simon and Schuster, 0-689-80149-1, $16 hb; 0-689-82523-4, $4.99 pb. Unabridged audio cassette: Narr. Christina Moore. Recorded Books, 0-7887-3642-6, $49.24. Moving from Missouri to her father's hometown of Jerusalem is, at first, an unwelcome change for 14-year-old Liyana—but also an eye opener. This is a well written, very interesting novel, which portrays the issues that confront Jews and Arabs in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

The House of Wisdom. Florence Parry Heide and Judith Heide Gilliland. Illus Mary GrandPre. 1999, DK Publishing, 0-7894-2562-9, $16.95 hb. A young boy in ninth century Baghdad, inspired by his scholar father, goes on a search for knowledge and wisdom. The book sheds a bright light on the great work of scholars during this golden period of Islamic civilization.

The Roses in my Carpet. Ruhksana Khan. Illus. Ronal Himler. 1998, Holiday House, 0-8234-1399-3, $15.95 hb. This is a very moving picture book about a fatherless refugee boy from Afghanistan and his loving care for his small family. The illustrations portray realistically and beautifully the environment of the refugee camp. Though older children might consider the format too young, it would be a very good resource for middle school teachers.

Sacred Places. Philemon Sturges. Illus. Giles Laroche. 2000, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 0-399-23317-2, $16.99 hb. This is an unusual and beautifully illustrated book which introduces the concept of sacredness to young children. Twenty-eight structures around the world are described and shown in colorful "paper relief."

Sami and the Time of the Troubles. Florence Parry Heide and Judith Heide Gilliland. Illus. Ted Lewin. 1992, Clarion Books, 0-395-72085-0, $6.95 pb. Once again Ted Lewin has worked with this mother-and-daughter team of authors to produce a very impressive children's book. Though never identified, the book takes place in Lebanon, and we understand how children and others carried on a normal life during a period of war and uncertainty.

The Seven Wise Princesses: A Medieval Persian Epic. Wafa' Tarnowska. Illus. Nilesh Mistry. 2000, Barefoot Books, 1-84148-022-3, $19.99 hb. This nicely illustrated book of folklore and fairy tales is a translation of a Persian classic by the 12th-century Sufi poet Nizami. Shah Bahram invites seven princesses from different lands to come live in his palace compound and tell their tales of wisdom, adventure, mysticism and magic.

Sitti's Secrets. Naomi Shihab Nye. Illus. Nancy Carpenter. 1994, Simon and Schuster, 0-02-768460-1, $16.95 hb. 1997; Aladdin, 0-689-81706-1, $5.99 pb; 1998, Center for Applied Research in Education, 0-87628-371-7, $5.99 pb. Thousands of miles of land and sea separate American Mona and her Palestinian grandmother, but a visit to her father's small village cements a lasting friendship.

The Space Between Our Footsteps: Poems and Paintings From the Middle East. Naomi Shihab Nye, ed. 1998, Simon and Schuster 0-689-81233-7, $19.95 hb. Poets and artists from 19 Middle Eastern countries explore their ideas about universal human themes.

The Storytellers. Ted Lewin. 1998, HarperCollins, 0-688-15178-7, $16/£10.99 hb; 0-688-15179-5, $16 lb. A young boy and his grandfather carry on the tradition of storytelling in the market place in Fez, Morocco. A splendid book for showing modern Morocco.

The Tale of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. Eric A. Kimmel. Illus. Will Hillenbrand. 1996, Holiday House, 0-8234-1258-X, $15.95 hb. Bold, funny and colorful illustrations add flavor to this retelling of the most famous tale of the Arabian nights.

Trouble. Jane Kurtz. Illus. Durga Bernhard. 1997, Harcourt, 0-15-200219-7, $15 hb. A classic folk tale about a young boy in Eritrea who tries to stay out of trouble as he goes off to the grazing ground with his two goats. Along the way the reader learns about the geography and culture of the people.

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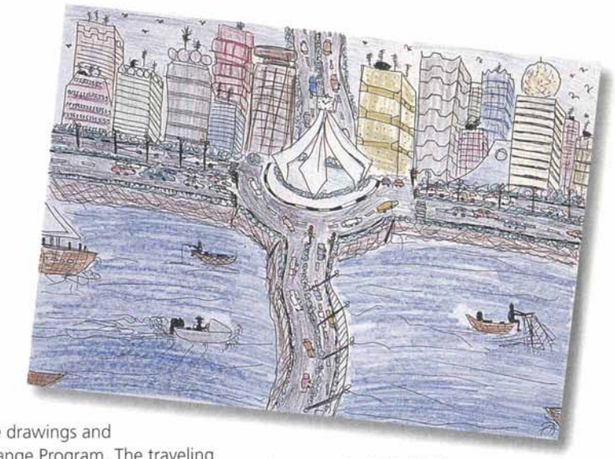
Events&Exhibitions



Sultan Hossein Saleh Ali, 10
"View of Dubai"

Traditions in the Middle East is a hands-on exhibition for families and children centered on children's art from Egypt, Iran, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Children can enter a Bedouin tent, explore a replica of an Egyptian tomb, bargain in a bazaar, try their hands at Arabic calligraphy and geometric art, knot carpets, play musical instruments, and try on traditional clothing and shoes from the Middle East. In late July, children can join in the theater workshop and perform tales from the *1001 Nights*. This exhibition is the latest regional thematic offering from the World Awareness Children's Museum, created in 1995 through a local initiative to put "touch-and-do" aspects of world cultures before children. Today, the museum welcomes more than 4000 visitors and sponsors nearly 50 traveling art exhibitions each year. The drawings and paintings are acquired through the museum's International Youth Art Exchange Program. The traveling exhibitions, available for loan to schools, museums and other institutions, are curated from an archive of 5000 pieces of children's artwork from some four dozen countries. Information: 518-793-2773, fax 518-745-1364, wacm@worldchildrensmuseum.org. **Glens Falls, New York**, through September 1.

<< March

Encounters With Kiarostami presents works by Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami, one of the most important directors of the 1990's. March 23, 7:00 p.m.: "And Life Goes On...." April 19, 7:00 p.m.: Meet the Director: "Kiarostami at the Freer." April 21, 2:00 p.m.: Meet the Director: "Close Up." Free tickets. Information: 202-357-2700. Freer Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**

Teaching About the Arab World and Islam is the theme of teacher workshops co-sponsored by the Middle East Policy Council in Washington, D.C., and conducted by Arab World And Islamic Resources and School Services (AWAIR) of Berkeley, California. The program is fully funded and workshops can be requested by any school, district, office of education or university. Information: 510-704-0517, awair@igc.org. Sites and dates include: **Boston**, March 17; **Santa Rosa, California**, March 30; **Oakland, California**, March 31; **Amherst, Massachusetts**, April 2; **Bluefield, Virginia**, April 21; **Washington, D.C.**, May 5; **Ann Arbor, Michigan**, May 11–12; **Boulder, Colorado**, May 15–16.

Antioch: The Lost Ancient City will present a great ancient city enlivened with the sights and activities of daily life in the second through sixth centuries, bringing the inhabitants of Antioch—their public and private lives—into the museum. A variety of mosaics, sculpture, frescoes, glass, metalwork, pottery, coins and weights are displayed in their architectural and cultural contexts. The exhibition, consisting of approximately 160 objects, including some of the finest examples of mosaics from Antioch, evokes the luxury of the domestic settings of the elite and the street life of a polyglot metropolis. Catalogue. **Cleveland [Ohio]** Museum of Art, March 18 through June 3.

Court and Conquest: Ottoman Origins and Design for Handel's "Tamerlano" at the Glimmerglass Opera juxtaposes Judy Levin's sumptuous, self-consciously Baroque-Orientalist costumes, produced for Jonathan Miller's 1995 production of Handel's 1724 *opera seria*, with the Ottoman, Timurid and European Orientalist works of art that inspired the designs. Levin's task was substantial: Design for an opera composed in 18th-century Europe, set in 15th-century Turkey, and performed in present-day US and Europe. The exhibit was originally organized by the Kent State [Ohio] University Museum. Catalogue. Brunei Gallery, **London**, through March 23.

A Distant Muse: Orientalist Works from the Dahesh Museum of Art extends investigations around the "discovery" of Islamic and Arab lands by Europeans in the 19th century through 50 works that demonstrate that Orientalism was not a simple dynamic between subject and object or between dominance and dependency, but rather "a convergence of influences" that included Middle Easterners who participated in the "Orientalizing" of their own cultures for their own advantage. Flagler Museum, **Palm Beach, Florida**, through March 25.

India Through the Lens: Photography 1840–1911 presents 135 photographs taken on the Indian subcontinent during photography's early golden age. The exhibition emphasizes the esthetic qualities of the images as much as their social and historical importance, and highlights the art of the panoramic photograph, the British passion for archeological and ethnographic documentation, and the work of Felice Beato, who recorded the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny in 1857. Also on view are Samuel Bourne's landscapes, and works by Lala Deen Dayal, an Indian photographer equally at home in the opposing worlds of Indian princes and British viceroys. Catalogue. Visit also the electronic community-based exhibit **India Through Your Lens** at www.asia.si.edu/indiaphotos. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through March 25.

<<< April

Agatha Christie and the East: Criminology and Archeology traces those two strands in the life of the "Queen of Crime," displaying diaries; hitherto unpublished photographs of Christie and her husband, archeologist Max Mallowan; more than 200 artifacts from his excavations in Iraq and Syria; and a compartment from the Orient Express. The exhibition emphasizes Christie's participation in the digs as restorer and photographer. Antikenmuseum **Basel**, through April 1.

Women of the Nile explores the essential role of women and the variety of their responsibilities in the four primary aspects of Egyptian life: in the home, the temple, the palace and the afterlife. Denos Museum Center, **Traverse City, Michigan**, April 7 through September 19.

Empire of the Sultans: Ottoman Art from the Khalili Collection explores the influence of the Ottoman sultans over affairs of state and religion with displays of calligraphy, Qur'ans, manuscripts, arms and armor, metalwork, ceramics, textiles and scientific instruments from the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art. Catalogue. **Portland [Oregon]** Art Museum, through April 8; Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, **New York**, April 28 through July 8.

The Glory of Ancient Egypt's Civilization displays more than 123 objects selected from the inexhaustible collection of the Egyptian Museum of Cairo and the Luxor Museum. National Museum of Art, **Osaka**, through April 8; Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art, **Sapporo**, April 21 through July 1.

Cleopatra of Egypt: From History to Myth looks at the real-life reign of Cleopatra VII, last of the Ptolemaic line to rule in Egypt, whose liaisons with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, and her suicide in 30 BC upon Octavian's capture of Egypt, have made her an object of fascination ever since. Of Macedonian descent, she was the only ruler of her house to learn the Egyptian language and sacred iconography, and she used them skillfully to political advantage. The exhibit traces representations of her from her own time to the present day. British Museum, **London**, April 12 through August 26.

Traditional Iran displays ethnographic portraits, paintings of street scenes and cartoons of daily life along with textiles, brassware, wooden figures and replicas of monuments. Nance Museum, **Lone Jack, Missouri**, April 15 through October 31.

Islamies is an exhibition of photographs by the Iranian-born Magnum photographer Abbas, who has specialized in presentation of the culture of Islam. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, through April 15.

Jerusalem shows lithographs of the city by the renowned early-19th-century artist David Roberts along with contemporary artifacts and symbols of the three faiths that call the city holy. Kirkpatrick Library, Central **Missouri** State University, **Warrensburg**, April 16 through May 30.

Continued from previous page

Islam in Tibet. Gray Henry, editor of the 1997 book *Islam in Tibet*, the first sustained English-language consideration of Muslim Tibetans, will lead a discussion on the history of that community and of Muslim-Buddhist coexistence in Tibet. Excerpts from the films "Islam in Tibet: The Ornaments of Lhasa" and "Beads of Faith" will be shown. 6:30–8:30 p.m. Donation $10. Registration 212-685-4242 ext. 12, tifcony@aol.com. Interfaith Center of **New York**, April 17.

The World of the Herods and the Nabataeans is a double conference intended to explore changes in our knowledge of the history and archeology of the Herodian dynasty in Syria-Palestine and of the Nabataeans in Arabia from the Hellenistic to the Roman period. More than 40 leading scholars from half a dozen nations will speak. There will also be material-culture seminars on pottery, coins and textiles, and the exhibition **Cleopatra of Egypt** will be on display. British Museum, **London**, April 17–19.

Asian Traditions in Clay: The Hauge Gifts presents 81 vessels from three important ceramic traditions. On display are 33 examples of ancient Iranian painted or burnished earthenware, 16 low-temperature-glazed earthenware works from Islamic Iran and Iraq, and 35 Khmer stoneware vessels. The exhibition explores the different technologies and uses associated with the objects and the different esthetics that gave rise to them. Catalogue. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through April 22.

Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures: Orientalism in America, 1870–1930 presents seminal paintings along with decorative arts, sheet music, advertisements, Shriner memorabilia, photographs, fashion items and Hollywood posters and film stills. All demonstrate how images and impressions of "the Orient"—which then meant mostly North Africa and the Levant—were created, and often marketed, to suit American needs, creating stereotypes that endure to this day. The landmark exhibit shows the gradual acceptance of a "constructed" and imaginary "Orient" into US cultural thought, some three decades after it was introduced. Catalogue $60 hb, $30 pb. Mint Museum of Art, **Charlotte, North Carolina**, through April 22.

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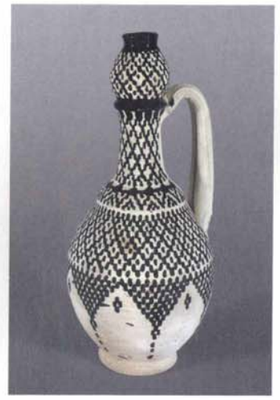

The Sainsbury African Galleries

open to mark the return to Bloomsbury of the British Museum's African collections after nearly three decades at the Museum of Mankind. Comprising more than 200,000 objects, the African collections encompass archeological and contemporary material from northern and sub-Saharan Africa and Madagascar, offering an unparalleled comparative archive of textiles, ceramics, metalwork and wood sculpture. Traditionally under-represented regions such as the Maghrib, Northeast Africa and Madagascar are featured strongly in the new displays, as is the work of some of Africa's foremost contemporary artists. Arranged thematically and centered on the continent's cultural life and artistic achievements, sections are devoted to wood sculpture, masks and masquerade; pottery, brass-casting, forged metalwork; textiles and items of personal adornment. British Museum, **London**, permanent.

Water vessel decorated with black resin, Fes, Morocco, 20th century.
BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

Sight-Seeing: Photography of the Middle East and its Audiences, 1840–1940 shows approximately 90 works by both amateurs and professionals, ranging from snapshot albums to mass-produced postcards, and from panoramic prints to lantern slides. The exhibit examines how images of the Middle East functioned as surrogates for first-hand experience or as souvenirs of travel, thereby shaping attitudes about the Middle East. Fogg Art Museum, **Boston**, through April 22.

Sultan 'Ali of Mashhad, Master of Nasta'liq displays the art of the calligrapher born in Mashhad, Iran in 1442 who became the definitive practitioner of *nasta'liq*, a calligraphic style favored in the 15th and 16th centuries for poetical texts written in Persian. Two dozen works, some enlivened with brilliant illumination, are on display. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through April 22.

50 Years of *Aramco World* displays 76 photographs that reflect both the magazine's history and the cultural and geographical diversity of its coverage. Information: 806-742-2974. International Cultural Center at **Texas** Tech University, **Lubbock**, April 24 through June 1.

The Strange and the Wonderful in the Lands of Islam evokes creations of the imagination: sea monsters, chimeras, fabulous heroes, angels and demons through more than 200 manuscripts and objects from the Middle East, India and China. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, April 27 through July 23.

A Calligrapher's Art: Inscribed Cotton Ikat From Yemen. Weaver, calligrapher and dyer joined forces in the ninth and 10th centuries to produce striped cotton textiles that were so highly valued that rulers often gave them to subjects whom they wished to honor. Some of these fabrics are inscribed in Arabic in ink or gold leaf, others bear embroidered inscriptions, embroidered geometric patterns, or woven repeat patterns, often warp resist-dyed. This collection is exhibited for the first time. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through April 29.

Ikat: Splendid Silks of Central Asia showcases the labor-intensive, richly colored, explosively patterned silks known as ikats. Practiced in many parts of the world, ikat-making reached its zenith in 19th-century Bukhara and Samarkand (in today's Uzbekistan), where guilds of craftsmen—among them Tajiks, Jews, and Uzbeks—cooperated. This exhibition includes 40 wall hangings, velvet strips, and robes. Catalogue. **Denver** Art Museum, through April 29.

Suffer the Little Children: Sanctions Against Iraq shows 25 photographs by Alan Pogue taken in Iraq over the past three years. Information and viewing hours: 512-478-8387 or 512-423-9812. **Austin, Texas**, through April 30.

Cobalt and Copper: Pottery Techniques in the Islamic World focuses on shaping, glazing and firing to provide a comprehensive introduction to ceramics and examine why different techniques, glazes and colors—particularly blue—were favored at different times. British Museum, **London**, through April.

Nuzi and the Hurrians: Fragments From a Forgotten Past opens a window on the little-known world of the Hurrians, displaying objects excavated at Nuzi, now Yorghan Tepe, in northeastern Iraq. Nuzi was only a provincial agricultural town, but yielded finds—including nearly 5000 cuneiform tablets—that illuminate everyday life in the 14th century BC. Very early glass, pottery and figurines, jewelry, tools and weapons are among the 150 objects on display, part of the largest Nuzi collection outside Iraq. So are texts of depositions taken in a lurid case of malfeasance brought against a town mayor. Harvard Semitic Museum, **Cambridge, Massachusetts**, through April.

The Salcombe Cannon Site Treasure is a collection of more than 400 gold coins and related artifacts produced by the Sa'dian Sharifs who ruled Morocco during the 16th and 17th centuries. Recovered in 1995 from a shipwreck at Salcombe Bay in Devon, the cache is evidence of flourishing trade between Morocco and Europe from the late 16th century. British Museum, **London**, through Spring.

May

Petrie Awakened: An Archaeological Encounter With Palestine explores and celebrates Flinders Petrie's Palestinian archeology collection. Institute of Archaeology, University College **London**, through May 1.

Arts of the Islamic World: 20th-Century Middle Eastern Paintings. In the first international auction of its kind, Sotheby's will include 20th-century paintings, many from the collection of Syrian journalist, writer and publisher Riad El Rayyes, in its sale "Arts of the Islamic World." Paintings from the estate of the Ottoman artist Princess Fahrelnissa Zeid will also be included. Information: +44-207-293-5169, amanda.stucklin@sothebys.com. Sotheby's, **London**, May 3.

The Jewelled Arts of India in the Age of the Mughals shows some 300 pieces dating from the mid-16th to the early 18th century from the al-Sabah Collection of Kuwait. In addition to earrings, pendants and bracelets, the show also features a superb collection of daggers. British Museum, **London**, May 4 through September 9.

Gold of the Nomads: Scythian Treasures from Ancient Ukraine presents 165 of the finest gold objects from Scythian graves and burial mounds, many in the "animal style" associated with the Central Asian steppes, and many excavated since 1975 and thus never before exhibited in the United States. The Scythians were a nomadic people who originated in Central Asia in the early first millennium BC and flourished in what is now Ukraine from the fifth to the third century BC. Their arms, horse trappings and other artifacts show Near Eastern and Greek influence, and recently excavated items are causing a reevaluation of the interrelationships among the Aegean world, the Near East, and Central Asia as far east as Mongolia. Royal **Ontario** Museum, **Toronto**, through May 6; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, **Kansas City [Missouri]**, May 27 through August 11.

From Alexander to Mark Antony: Images of Power on Ancient Coins displays perhaps the finest portraits available of Alexander and his successors, including Pompey, Julius Caesar, Mark Antony and Augustus. The rarity of statues and paintings means that coins are the best opportunity to see these men as they wished to be seen. The exhibition draws upon the Museum's unrivalled collection, now supplemented by the recent C.A. Hersh bequest of 8000 Greek and Roman coins. British Museum, **London**, through May 6.

Persepolis: Documenting an Ancient Iranian Capital, 1923–1935 displays photographs, sketchbooks, watercolors, scale drawings and "squeezes" (papier-mâché casts) of inscriptions made by German archeologist Ernst Herzfeld and the team from the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute that excavated Persepolis, one of the capital cities of the Achaemenid Persian empire that flourished between 550 and 330 BC and stretched from the Aegean to the Indus. The excavation set the stage for a new understanding of Persian imperial architecture and sculpture. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through May 6.

Struck on Gold: Money of the Mughal Emperors highlights the ways in which religion, poetry and calligraphy were reflected in the coinage of the different currency systems used in Mughal India. The Mughal emperors included portraits of themselves as well as signs of the zodiac on their coins—unusual for Muslim rulers—and minted enormous presentation coins, all of startling beauty. The exhibition examines the origins of the emperors and explores the spread of their empire and its later fragmentation. British Museum, **London**, May 10 through September 9.

Syria, Land of Civilizations assembles more than 400 cultural treasures—some never before seen abroad—to present one of the world's oldest cultural centers and explore some of the seminal events that took place there. Mesopotamia, the palace of Mari, the most ancient forms of writing and the earliest evidence of farming, Queen Zenobia and her oasis city of Palmyra, the first great Islamic dynasty in Damascus—all are parts of Syria's legacy. The exhibition also highlights the West's intellectual and scientific ties to Syria. Catalogue. A concurrent exhibition, **Contemporary Syria**, explores everyday life, particularly from the perspective of young people. Provincial Museum of Alberta, **Edmonton, Canada**, through May 13.

Strokes of Genius: Contemporary Iraqi Art shows 55 works in varied media, selected by an intercultural curatorial panel, created by 34 Iraqi artists living in that country and in more than a dozen countries abroad. The 34 are among 150 artists, many of them young, who have contributed over five years to produce a book, website and traveling exhibition that highlights both historical roots and contemporary experiences. The book (of the same title) will use reproductions, interviews, essays and biographical sketches to impart a broad understanding of Iraqi art in recent decades. It will be published late this year by Saqi Books (£17.95 hb). Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, **Exeter** University, May 14 through July 20; Hotbath Galleries, **Bath**, August 8 through September 13.

Guadameci: White Leather Embossings by Jorge Centofanti. Embossed mural hangings of a uniquely soft, white sheepskin are an art form that began in Córdoba in Arab Spain in the ninth century, but has been virtually forgotten in modern times. During the past 30 years, however, Argentinian-born Jorge Centofanti has worked in Britain to revive guadameci, so-called after the town Ghadames in Libya, which was known for its production of alum-tanned goatskin. Centofanti exhibits 20 hangings, made using his own original molds, and presenting stories, Arabic calligraphy and symbolic and decorative themes. Canning House, Belgrave Square, **London**, May 21 through June 1.

Dancing on Common Ground: Tradition and Innovation is the theme of the Second International Conference on Middle Eastern Dance, which offers an academic symposium, workshops and performances. Information: 714-432-5880. Orange Coast College, **Costa Mesa, California**, May 25–28.

Nomad Architecture of the Mediterranean Region presents some 50 tents from the collection of Arnaud Maurières and Eric Ossart, who maintain that there is an underlying pan-Mediterranean identity that links them regardless of their exact origin. The tents are organized into five sub-regional groups and accompanied by photographs. Technical analyses of the textiles are included. Catalogue (Spanish and Catalan). Information: info@cdmt.es. Centro de Documentació i Museu Tèxtil, **Terrassa (Barcelona), Spain**, through May 27.

The Eternal Image: Egyptian Art from the British Museum is the first loan ever of some 150 pieces that span 3000 years of Egyptian history, from a tiny royal portrait of carved ivory to the colossal granite statue of Seti II. Included also are rare wooden sculptures and papyrus paintings. **Toledo [Ohio]** Museum of Art, through May 27.

The Art and Tradition of the Zuloagas: Spanish Damascene from the Khalili Collection features some of the finest work of Plácido Zuloaga, a late-19th-century Spanish master of the art of damascening, the process of decorating iron, steel or bronze surfaces with gold or silver "onlays." The process took its name from Damascus, from where it spread to Italy and Spain, although it may have originated in China. Real Fundacion de **Toledo**, through May.

June

Cairo Carnivale is an annual celebration of music, dance, and cuisine from the Near and Middle East. Information: www.mecda.org. Rio Hondo College, **Whittier, California**, June 2 and 3.

Antoin Sevruguin and the Persian Image offers a pictorial record of the social history and visual culture of Iran, displaying 50 photographs grouped thematically. Sevruguin, one of the great 19th-century photographers and a visual interpreter between East and West, ran a studio in Tehran from the late 1850's until 1934. Sackler Museum, **Cambridge, Massachusetts**, through June 10.

Sites Along the Nile: Rescuing Ancient Egypt is an exhibition of nearly 600 objects from 5000 BC to the seventh century of our era. The artifacts were rescued by archeological excavations from looting and flooding, making this collection a world-class resource. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, **Berkeley, California**, through June 30.

Later

The Unknown Paradise: Archaeological Treasures from Bahrain presents nearly 600 objects outlining 4500 years of the history of this past and present center of international trade in the Arabian Gulf. As the bronze-age commercial link among the civilizations of the Indus, Oman and Mesopotamia, Bahrain was the home of the rich and sophisticated Dilmun civilization (2100–1700 BC), whose most important trading commodity was copper. Bahrain enjoyed another, less well-known florescence at the intersection of Hellenic and Parthian culture (300 BC–AD 600), when it was known as Tylos. Information: +49-351-814-450. Landesmuseum für Vorgeschichte (Museum of Prehistory), **Dresden**, through July 8.

Mysteries of the Mummies: Rotating Preview will present at least one important artifact—a coffin, a mummy, canopic jars, and so on—every six months as the museum cleans and conserves new Egyptian artifacts. Carlos Museum, Emory University, **Atlanta**, through summer.

Earthen Architecture: Constructive Cultures and Sustainable Development is the theme of six separate, intensive courses in project design and building and conservation techniques, many of which are drawn from traditional methods of the Middle East. Course lengths vary from four days to four weeks, and all instruction is in French. CRATerre-EAG, **Grenoble, France**, through October 26.

Saudi Bedouin Jewelry displays more than 100 pieces donated recently by Lewis Hatch and Marie Kukuk that have doubled the extent of the collection of the Nance Museum. **Lone Jack, Missouri**. Permanent.

The Saudi Aramco Exhibit, newly renovated, 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. Permanent. **Dhahran, Saudi Arabia**.

Information is correct at press time, but please reconfirm dates and times before traveling. Most institutions listed have further information available through the World Wide Web. Readers are welcome to submit information for possible inclusion in this listing.

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