Saudi Aramco world

September/October 2004

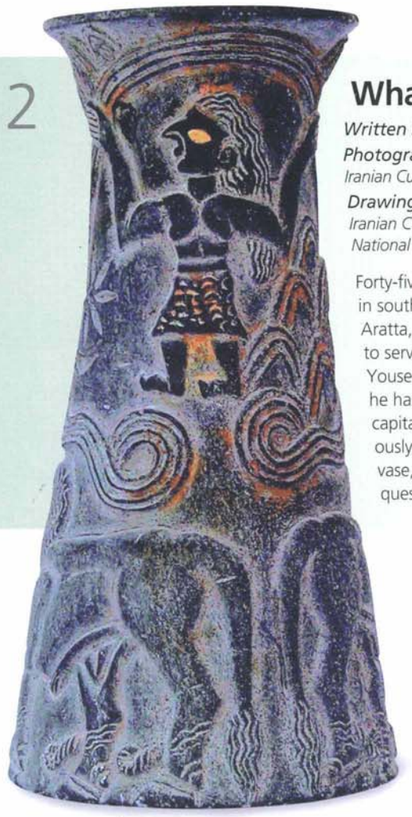
Saudi Aramco world

Promises and Possibilities
Images of Islam in America

Saudi Aramco world

September/October 2004

Published Bimonthly
Vol. 55, No. 5



Cover:

Tazwell Tariq Martin, 13, came to the National Mall in Washington, D.C. to represent the city's Sister Clara Muhammad School at an interfaith prayer meeting on the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. He says he is writing a novel about "a boy named Shadow, who lived in Egypt in the year 320 BC, and he is the one chosen to fight evil like no other." Martin hopes he and his peers will be "good people who take care of their generations." Photo by Alexandra Avakian.

Back Cover:

Eagles are common motifs among the thousands of carved-chlorite artifacts found at Jiroft, and this 4500-year-old emblem holds two snakes in its talons. Archeologists have called this object a "handbag" for its shape, but its actual purpose is unknown. Photo by Yousef Madjidzadeh.

Six, maybe seven million people. Nearly two-thirds born in the United States. "In America, historically brimming with promises and possibilities, Muslims live their faith and pursue their dreams of achievement," writes Tayyibah Taylor. "Without minimizing our post-9/11 challenges, Muslim Americans are poised to do over the next generation what others have done before: Forge their hyphenated identities with the strength of their accomplishments." A photographer, a writer and an editor take a sampling from America's streets, homes and dreams.

Commentaries on the photographs by Tayyibah Taylor

Practicing Muslims aspire to live with minds cognizant of God's power and presence. A saying from one of the many stories about the Prophet Muhammad is "Live as if you see God. And though you don't, know that God sees you." Realizing that spiritual peace and piety are not contingent on which country you live in, but rather on what is in your heart, Muslims try to cultivate a portable peace.

Excerpts from Muslim- and Arab-American literature selected by Nathalie Handal

Chiaroscuro

I'd seen it in moments
but never this: shadow relieving
light; the edge of forgotten;
a flatiron, the single sliver
stretching into tenement,
many stories, room into
room; a way to give.

—by Nuar Alsadir

The Web Marketing Association has named our Web site, www.saudiaramcoworld.com, 2004's "Best Magazine Web Site."

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

President and Chief Executive Officer
Mazen I. Snobar

Director Public Affairs
Jamil F. Al Dandany

ISSN
1530-5821

Editor
Robert Arndt

Managing Editor
Dick Doughty

Assistant Editor
Arthur P. Clark

Administration
Karim Khalil

Circulation
Edna Catchings

Design and Production
Herring Design

Printed in the USA
Wetmore & Company

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

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

Printed on recycled paper

www.saudiaramco.com

What Was Jiroft?

WRITTEN BY RICHARD COVINGTON
PHOTOGRAPHED BY YOUSEF MADJIDZADEH / IRANIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TOURISM ORGANIZATION (ICHTO) / GAMMA
DRAWINGS BY SEDIGHEH PIRAN / ICHTO / NATIONAL MUSEUM OF TEHRAN / GAMMA

It was around two o'clock on a mild mid-February afternoon that colleagues called head archeologist Yousef Madjidzadeh to look at some telltale markings in a dusty trench. It was the last day of the six-week digging season at the Jiroft archeological site in the southeast Iranian desert, and Madjidzadeh (mad-zhid-**zah**-day) was jotting down notes before closing up for the year. The Iranian-born archeologist, who has been excavating at Jiroft for two years, has become increasingly convinced that the remains of this 4500-year-old city hold the key to a Bronze Age kingdom whose existence promises to rewrite at least a chapter or two of the history of the ancient Middle East.

"I took the pick in my hand and started to help dig out what turned out to be a remarkably well-preserved stamp-seal impression," Madjidzadeh recalls, now back at his home in the Mediterranean port city of Nice, France.

Painstakingly extracting the five-centimeter- (2"-) long rectangle from the trench wall's packed clay, the archeologist turned it to the sunlight. Amid faintly inscribed lines and images of human and animal figures, he was amazed to discover what appeared to be an unfamiliar form of writing. To Madjidzadeh, the seal impression came as his first evidence that this ancient city's society was literate.

Opposite: **The carving on the lower register of this cylindrical chlorite container (↕ 10.5 cm) resembles a gate and a city wall, while the upper register suggests multiple dwellings and gates—possible hints at Jiroft's size and sophistication.** Above, left to right: **Five chlorite artifacts: A cup's vegetal motif may represent the "tree of life" (↕ 22 cm). On a vase, flowing water wraps the base while date palms decorate the upper register (↕ 23.5 cm). This plaque in the shape of a double-headed eagle was originally inlaid with turquoise, cornelian and lapis lazuli (↕ 25.5 cm). Of uncertain function, this "handbag" depicts two intertwined and confronting snakes (↕ 15 cm). A small chlorite cup is inlaid with decoration (↕ 5.3 cm).** Background: **"Unrolled" design from the cylindrical box opposite.**

"To be able to say that Jiroft was a historic civilization, not a prehistoric one, is a great advance," he says. "Finding writing on that seal impression brought tears to my eyes. Never mind that we can't read it—that'll come later."

Though others have downplayed Madjidzadeh's declarations that Jiroft was more than a regional culture, archeologists generally agree, he says, that a distinct civilization is characterized by unique monumental architecture and by its own form of writing. "This past winter, we found both," he beams.

Gray-bearded, easy-going and energetic in his mid-60's, Madjidzadeh is feeling the glow of vindication. A few years after Iran's 1979 revolution, he was dismissed as chairman of the department of archeology at Tehran University. After years of self-imposed exile in Nice with his French-born wife, he returned during the intellectual thaw that followed the 1997 election of President Mohammad Khatami.

The discovery of the Jiroft site came by accident. In 2000, flash floods along the Halil River swept the topsoil off thousands of previously unknown tombs. Seyyed Mohammad Beheshti, deputy head of Iran's Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO), asked Madjidzadeh to begin excavations because of the archeologist's long-standing bullishness on Jiroft's significance.

As the author of a three-volume history of Mesopotamia and a leading Iranian authority on the third millennium BC, Madjidzadeh has long hypothesized that Jiroft is the legendary land of Aratta, a "lost" Bronze Age kingdom of renown. It's a quest that he began as a doctoral candidate at the University of Chicago, when in 1976 he published an article proposing that Aratta, which reputedly exported its magnificent crafts to Mesopotamia, was located somewhere in southeastern Iran.

According to texts dating from around 2100 BC, Aratta was a gaily decorated capital with a citadel whose battlements were fashioned of green lapis lazuli and its lofty towers of bright red brick. Aratta's artistic production was so highly regarded that about 2500 BC the Sumerian king Enmerkar sent a message to the ruler of Aratta requesting that artisans and architects be dispatched to his capital, Uruk, to build a temple to honor Inanna, the goddess of fertility and war. Enmerkar addressed his letter to Inanna: "Oh sister mine, make Aratta, for Uruk's sake, skillfully work gold and silver for me! (Make them cut for me) translucent lapis lazuli in blocks, (Make them prepare for me) electrum and translucent lapis!" prayed the Sumerian ruler.

"When one imagines that Uruk was the heart of the Sumerian civilization and that its king is asking another ruler about 2000 kilometers (1200 mi) distant to send his artisans, one realizes that the quality of their work must have been extraordinary," says Madjidzadeh. "The craftsmen must have

LOWER: MOHAMMAD ESLAMI-RAD

Excavations at Jiroft's Konar Sandal A, one of the site's two major mounds, are revealing the base of what may have been one of the world's largest ziggurats.

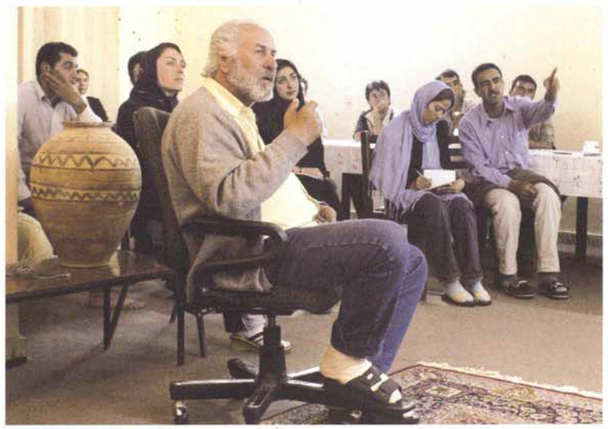
These decorated clay jars, like the tens of thousands of chlorite artifacts found at Jiroft, cannot be carbon-dated because they contain no traces of organic matter. Indeed, none of the artifacts seem ever to have been used.

been known all over. Today there is no doubt in my mind that Jiroft was Aratta." A handful of colleagues agrees, including the French epigrapher François Vallat, who compares Jiroft to the Elamite kingdom of southwestern Iran.

So far, however, there is no proof, and others are less sure.

"When you start reconstructing actual geographical regions based on legend and mythology, you're always in deep water," says Abbas Alizadeh, an Iranian-born archeologist at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. "Some scholars think Aratta is in Azerbaijan. Others say Baluchistan or the Persian Gulf. It's a murky business."

Yet even if Jiroft turns out not to be Aratta, it is nevertheless a pivotal clue to a better understanding of the era when writing first flourished and traders carried spices and grain, gold, lapis lazuli and ideas from the Nile to the Indus. Although not on a par with the more influential civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt and the Indus Valley, "Jiroft is obviously a very important archeological complex," says Holly Pittman, an art historian at the University of Pennsylvania who is one of a growing number of non-Iranian scholars who are being allowed into the country. "It's an independent, autochthonous Bronze Age civilization with huge numbers of settlements of all different sizes that we have only just begun to explore."



"The artists had such a naturalistic way of rendering images," says **Yousef Madjidzadeh,** foreground. **"It was a style that was not seen anywhere else in that era."** Opposite: **On a chlorite cup, a bull-man wearing bracelets, foot rings, a necklace with a medallion and a headband lifts a panther in each hand (⅄ 14.5 cm).**

By comparison to the research documenting other third-millennium civilizations, these are indeed very early days, she explains. "We don't yet have enough material to compare it to Mesopotamia. But you have to remember that 500 teams of archeologists have been digging in Mesopotamia for 100 years. In Jiroft, we've had two seasons with one team of fewer than 30 scientists."

Even so, among the spectacular finds so far are the remains of a city a kilometer and a half (.92 mi) in diameter, an unusual two-story citadel surrounded by a fortress wall 10.5 meters (34') thick, and a ziggurat resembling Sumerian ones that is among the largest in the ancient world—17 meters (54') high and 400 meters (1280') on each side at the base. The team has also uncovered 25 stamp and cylinder seal impressions from two to five centimeters (¾"–2") long that depict bulls, ibex, lions, snakes, human figures—and writing.

Perhaps the most impressive discoveries have been staggering numbers of carved and decorated vases, cups, goblets and boxes made of a soft, fine-grained, durable gray-greenish stone called chlorite. Literally tens of thousands of pieces have been found, but the vast majority have been looted from their original tombs by local farmers, who were the first to stumble across the gargantuan honeycomb of gravesites uncovered by the floodwaters of 2000.

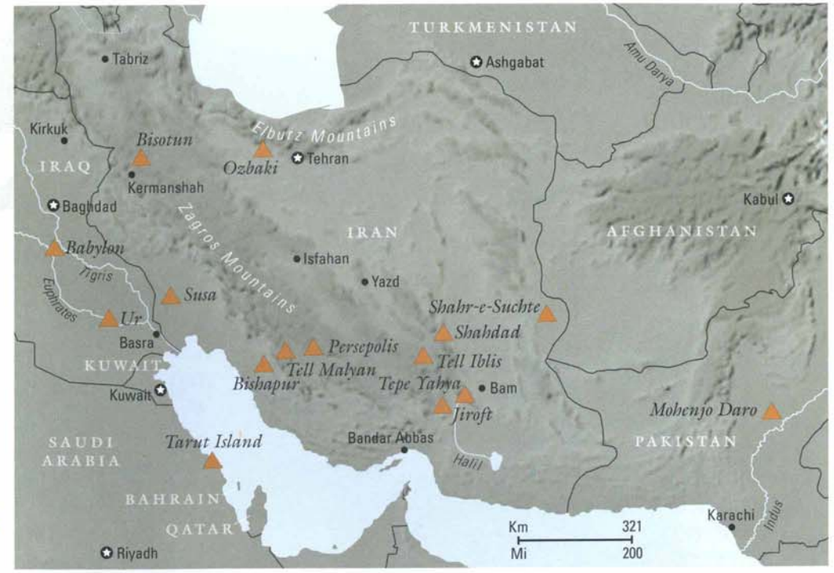
"Thousands of people were digging," Madjidzadeh explains, and antiquities dealers swooped in behind them to buy up the finds by the dozens. Farmers often sold chlorite vases worth tens of thousands of dollars on the international market for a few sacks of flour. Ultimately, in the fall of 2002, the Iranian authorities stepped in to halt the looting and seize hundreds of contraband artifacts.

The Jiroft artifacts are a "missing link" in understanding the Bronze Age, Madjidzadeh says, because they help explain why so many incised chlorite vessels, all with remarkably similar imagery, have turned up at widely separated ancient sites, from Mari in Syria to Nippur and Ur in Mesopotamia, Soch in Uzbekistan and the Saudi Arabian island of Tarut, north of Bahrain. Until now, the principal center of production of these vessels was a mystery. Although some of them were probably manufactured locally, the sheer volume of artifacts at Jiroft argues that the most prolific chlorite workshops of all were there. (See sidebar, page 8.)

Jiroft artisans fashioned pieces with what seems strange and enigmatic iconography. Some were encrusted with lapis lazuli from Afghanistan, carnelian from the Indus Valley, turquoise, agate and other semiprecious,

LOWER: MOHAMMAD ESLAMI-RAD

Chlorite vessels similar to the stunning examples recently unearthed at Jiroft in southeastern Iran have been found from the Euphrates to the Indus, as far north as the Amu Darya and as far south as Tarut Island, on the Gulf coast of Saudi Arabia. Iranian-born archeologist Yousef Madjidzadeh speculates that some of these objects were in fact imported from Jiroft, which he is convinced is the legendary third-millennium-BC city of Aratta. Other archeologists, however, dispute this conclusion, maintaining that the vases, bowls and cups from Mesopotamian and Indus Valley sites were manufactured locally. What is clear is that Jiroft traders brought lapis lazuli from Afghanistan and carnelian from the Indus to decorate the ornate vessels they manufactured.



Major archeological sites from the fourth and third millennia BC.

imported stones. "The artists had such a naturalistic way of rendering images," says Madjidzadeh. "It is a style that was not seen anywhere else in that era.

"There must certainly have been a school of stonecarvers, because you see such an aesthetic unity of these objects throughout the kingdom. This high-level artistic quality did not suddenly appear from nowhere," he maintains. "The traditions must have taken 300 to 400 years to develop."

Carved into one gray chlorite cup, mythic creatures with human heads and torsos and bulls' legs hold panthers upside-down by their tails. On the surface of a stone weight shaped roughly like a ladies' handbag, two horned scorpion-men appear to swim toward each other. "Hunters who were believed to be as powerful as bulls or as agile as lions entered into legend, and their images became animalized as bull-men and lion-men," the archeologist suggests in explanation.

Round chlorite boxes are decorated with representations of curved gates, woven reed walls, ziggurats and other architectural details that hint at what Jiroft's buried buildings probably looked like.

Along with the chlorite objects are also pink and orange alabaster jars, white marble vases, copper figurines, beakers and a striking copper basin with a eagle seated in its center, as well as realistic carved stone impressions of heraldic eagles, scorpions and scorpion-women.

Chlorite

From the middle to the late third millennium BC, vases, bowls and cups made of chlorite were traded throughout the area shown on the map above. Similar to steatite and soapstone, the mineral was valued by artisans because it was durable but soft enough to carve easily and fine-grained enough to hold carved details well. Its color ranged from jade green (from which came its Greek-derived name) to smoky gray, with some pieces nearly as black as obsidian.

Although abundant chlorite deposits are scattered across Iran and the Hajar Mountains of the United Arab Emirates, archeologists have so far uncovered ancient chlorite quarries and workshops in only two locations: at Tepe Yahya in the Kerman province of southeastern Iran and at Tarut, where some 600 intact vessels and fragments were unearthed. It is still unclear where the raw material for the chlorite objects found in Sumeria originated, and similarly, the chlorite mines at Jiroft remain elusive.

A vase shows an eagle with an eye of inlaid colored stone. In its talons are serpents that writhe asymmetrically about the top of the vase; on the back is another, smaller eagle. Only a few of the many original limestone inlays remain (↕ 26.2 cm).

Many of the scenes on the Jiroft vessels bear a strong resemblance to the gods, beasts and plants portrayed on Sumerian statues, plaques and cylinder seals. "Jiroft leads me to imagine that Iran had a far greater influence on Mesopotamian culture than I previously thought," observes Jean Perrot, the grand old man of Middle Eastern archeology in France.

To Carl Lamberg-Karlovsky of Harvard University, who excavated a site named Tepe Yahya some 90 kilometers (50 mi) from Jiroft in the 1970's, what is particularly remarkable about the Jiroft finds is that so many thousands of brand-new, empty chlorite vessels were manufactured for no other apparent purpose than to be buried in tombs to honor the dead. "The fact that not a single one of them contains even a trace of oils, perfumes, foodstuffs or drugs, nor shows any other sign of use, is very curious," he marvels.

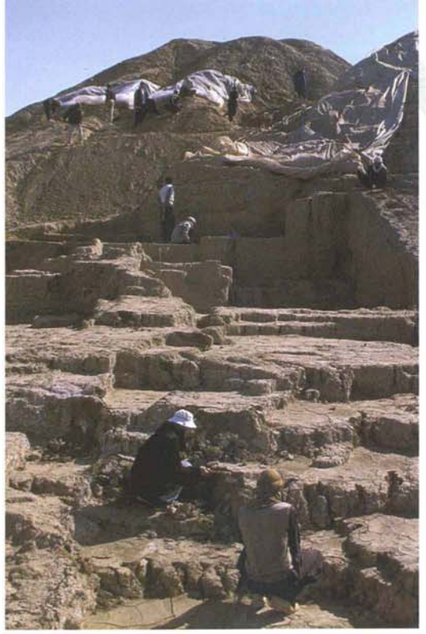
Despite the crackdown on pillaging and the hiring of a dozen armed guards, theft at Jiroft still continues. This winter, while working on the city mounds, Madjidzadeh received a tip that looters were digging at gravesites six kilometers (3.7 mi) away. Racing to the cemetery with one of the guards, he caught sight of several dozen looters, who escaped on foot when they saw Madjidzadeh coming. One of his laborers later told him that it was rumored the looters had managed to spirit away a priceless golden fish figure. One looted gravesite reportedly yielded an astonishing 200 artifacts, including 30 finely crafted chlorite vessels.

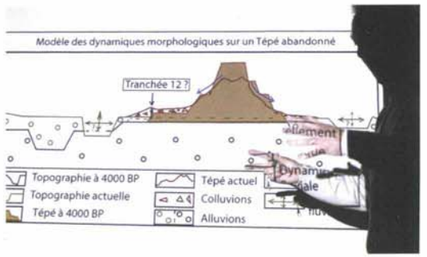
"Was it the tomb of the lord of Aratta?" asks Madjidzadeh sadly. "Because all the objects were ripped out of context and have disappeared, we'll never know—even if they turn up in the antiquities market."

On his days off, the archeologist travels to surrounding villages to give lectures about the significance of Jiroft and its irreplaceable artifacts.

"I show photos of the objects and our excavations and tell the villagers in simple language that all these works belonged to *your* grandparents, *your* ancestors," he explains. "'They are your heritage. You don't sell your heritage. If we put these cups and vases in a museum, they will attract tourists. This will bring more money than selling the pieces once or twice. You and your children will benefit from the tourists and education.' Little by little, people understand more about the cultural value of the finds."

On the international art market, it's a different story. Museums and private collectors have been quick to recognize the cultural, esthetic and, in particular, monetary worth of artifacts that Madjidzadeh is sure were stolen from Jiroft.





Top left: **Marble objects have been found at Jiroft sites, too: This ibex figure, only 26 millimeters high, may be a brooch.** Top: **An Iranian archeologist and local workers dig on the west side of Jiroft's second mound, Konar Sandal B.** Top right: **This copper basin (Ø 40 cm) has a resting eagle in its middle.** Above: **A slide of the cross section of a third-millennium-BC tell—a mound created by centuries of habitation—helps geomorphologist Éric Fouache explain that the region's many artesian wells made Jiroft's development possible.**

"I scour the Internet, auction catalogues and brochures and have been shocked to see museums in Switzerland, Japan, Turkey, Pakistan and elsewhere buying these objects," he says.

Protecting Jiroft is an overwhelming task, for Madjidzadeh and his team have uncovered more than 250 separate sites across an area about the size of Austria or South Carolina. In the forested mountains 150 kilometers (90 mi) north of Jiroft, other archeologists have discovered copper mines that likely produced the ore for the copper and bronze artifacts unearthed in Jiroft's gravesites. But so far, no one has pinpointed the chlorite mines.

French geomorphologist Éric Fouache, the team's expert on reading the strata underlying the archeological sites, has discovered something else, however, which gave the Jiroft region a crucial advantage over Mesopotamia: water. A network of artesian wells supplied abundant water for irrigation and drinking even when the Halil River ran dry. With these sources of water, the inhabitants developed an agriculture based on calorie-rich date palms rather than the cereals of the Tigris and Euphrates delta, says Fouache. Palm groves also provided shade for extensive gardening.

"So it's very possible the Jiroft people developed agriculture more easily than the Mesopotamians," asserts the scientist.

Next year, Fouache plans on probing deeper to locate earlier remains buried by the region's frequent tectonic upheavals. "Based on aerial photographs showing traces of past ground shifts, we expect to find older settlements not visible from the surface," he says.

CENTER (2): MOHAMMAD ESLAMI-RAD / GAMMA

The primary Jiroft site consists of two mounds a couple of kilometers apart, called Konar Sandal A and B and measuring 13 and 21 meters high (41' and 67'), respectively. It was at Konar Sandal B that the archeologists dug out the seal impressions bearing writing. So far, the archeologists have excavated around nine vertical meters (28') of Konar Sandal B, discovering vestiges of a monumental, two-story, windowed citadel whose base covers nearly 13.5 hectares (33 acres). Madjidzadeh speculates that this imposing edifice once housed the city's chief administrative center and perhaps a temple and a royal palace.

Finding the structure's façade was difficult enough, but locating an entrance took the team weeks of digging through clay packed hard by millennia of rain-wash. "The mud is like stone," Madjidzadeh complains. "You can hardly get a pick into it."

This winter they stumbled across what appears to be the city's main gateway, a squared-off earthen portal that closely resembles architectural details depicted on several chlorite vases. The team has also uncovered a second wall and vestiges of a third, with trenches exposing both private houses and another sizeable public building—perhaps a trading center.

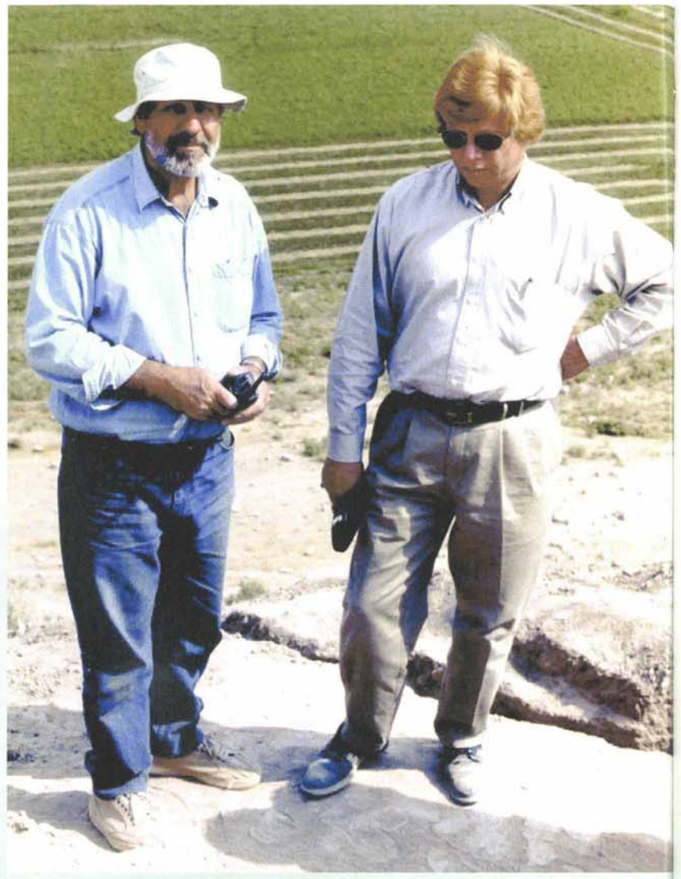
"We know it's another monumental building because the bricks are larger than the bricks used in private homes," says Madjidzadeh.

According to the archeologist, the enormous ziggurat at Konar Sandal A was a tremendous feat of engineering that required four to five million bricks. Like its Sumerian counterparts, it was probably a sacred structure, a bridge between earth and sky, and it was probably topped by a room where the city's protective god could woo his mortal consort, usually the wife or daughter of the ruler.

Although very little is known of the beliefs and rituals of Jiroft's inhabitants, Madjidzadeh is convinced that the practice of burying the dead with a relative fortune in artifacts points to a well-organized religion with a priestly class that could command the efforts of craftsmen. Since the ancient Mesopotamian epic of Gilgamesh mentions scorpion-men

continued on page 10

Iran's Archeological Renaissance



You wouldn't think that 6000-year-old bones and pottery shards would wow a bunch of 20-year-olds. But then you wouldn't be reckoning with the archeology students at Shiraz University.

"I felt like a celebrity," marvels Abbas Alizadeh. After a two-hour lecture to an auditorium packed with students and locals, the Iranian-born archeology professor from the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago was besieged by questioners. "Finally, I had to escape," he laughs. Alizadeh, who in 2001 pioneered renewed Iranian-US archeological ties, has witnessed firsthand the new surge to research and protect Iran's 10 millennia of cultural heritage.

It's an urgent push that comes just in time. As the country's population grows exponentially, monuments are being threatened by agricultural expansion and the roaring pace of industrial development.

"The Iranian economy is growing fast," says Massoud Azarnoush, head of the Iranian Center for Archaeological Research in Tehran. "New dams, irrigation networks, highways, railroads and factories are under construction everywhere. Once-remote areas are becoming accessible to development and agriculture, which are proving a serious menace to archeological remains."

Although some 20,000 ruins are listed with the national center, Azarnoush estimates that the real total should be at least 10 times that—a staggering 200,000 historically significant archeological sites scattered around a nation the size of Alaska, or three times the size of France. It's a heritage on a par with Egypt, Turkey or China. The sites range from tiny settlements and cemeteries to sprawling cities like Persepolis, capital of the Achaemenid kings, and the earthen citadel at Arg-e-Bam that in December 2003 was devastated by an earthquake.

Today, Tehran devotes some $20 million annually to archeology, according to Azarnoush, and it recently issued directives requiring building projects to avoid damaging archeological remains. "In many cases, we've succeeded in protecting uncovered sites and relocating highways, rail lines and dams," he points out.

Still, there are thousands of sites at risk. Leading the list are extensive Elamite and Sassanian finds threatened by sugar-cane farming in Khuzestan province and pre-Bronze Age settlements at Tepe Pardis, on the outskirts of Tehran, whose bricks are being cannibalized for housing.

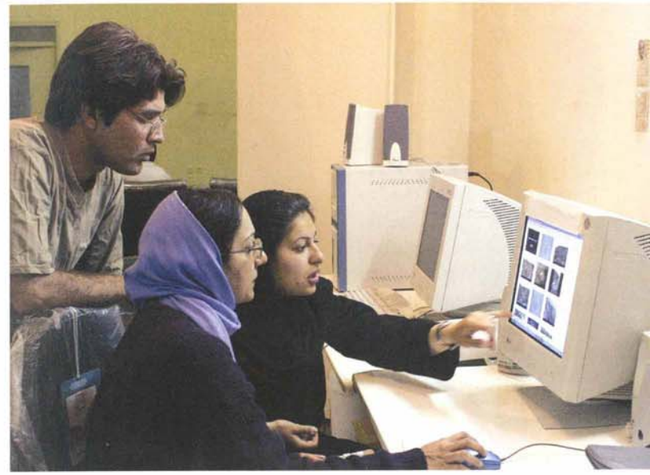
Other sites, like Jiroft, suffer rampant looting fueled by demand from international museums and collectors. "Of course, Iran is trying to stop this trafficking, but when museums with huge resources buy the objects, it doesn't matter how much protection you have for the sites," Azarnoush complains. Although the country's chief monuments have armed guards, remote areas are patrolled by the "Guardians of Cultural Heritage," an informal brigade of around 10,000 unarmed volunteers who report thefts to local police.

Key to reducing looting is public education similar to the efforts of Jiroft's Yousef Madjidzadeh, together with a campaign to open up ongoing digs to visits from local residents and foreign tourists so they can see what a proper job looks like, and appreciate the emerging heritage.

"One of the first things we did at Bam after the earthquake was to create a passage through the ruins to permit visitors to see the damage to the citadel," says Azarnoush.

And after some 25 years of isolation, the Islamic Republic is letting international teams back into the country, thanks in large part to Azarnoush and Seyyed Mohammad Beheshti, deputy head of the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO). In August 2003, the government invited some 40 scholars, including professors from Harvard University, the University of Chicago and the University of Pennsylvania, to tour important sites and negotiate shared excavations.

Opposite: **It was Madjidzadeh's longstanding belief that Jiroft was the third-millennium kingdom of Aratta that led Seyyed Mohammad Beheshti, deputy head of the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization,** wearing sunglasses, **to offer the dig to him.** Below: **Sedigheh Piran produces an archeological drawing at the National Museum of Tehran. Such drawings "unroll" the decoration on three-dimensional objects and help archeologists visualize all of the design at once.** Right: **At the Jiroft dig site's dormitory, University of Pennsylvania doctoral student Karen Sonik and Iranian colleagues discuss the progress of the second digging season.**



RIGHT: MOHAMMAD ESLAMI-RAD / GAMMA

Azarnoush estimates that there are a staggering 200,000 historically significant archeological sites in Iran.

"The Iranians are doing an outstanding job preserving some major monuments, undertaking new site surveys and trying hard to control looting," observes Harvard's Carl Lamberg-Karlovsky, who is now working with local archeologists at Bronze Age sites in the Atrak river valley near the border with Turkmenistan. "But this rebirth of international cooperation is immensely welcome. Isolation kills science."

The key to the new agreements is that an equal number of Iranians and foreigners participate in the digs. "Under the Shah, outside expeditions came in, did their research and left," Azarnoush explains. "There was virtually no scientific benefit for Iranians."

Now, a team sponsored by the German Archaeological Institute is exploring copper mines from the fourth millennium BC discovered near Isfahan; Japanese archeologists are surveying the third-century city of Jalaliyeh; French researchers are poring over remains of Cyrus the Great's fifth-century-BC capital at Pasagardae near Persepolis; and scientists from the University of Sydney are unearthing finds from second-millennium-BC Elamite sites near the Iraqi border.

For Azarnoush, who earned his doctorate from the University of California at Los Angeles, the decades of isolation proved an accidental boon in at least one respect.

"It forced us to become more self-reliant," he maintains. "Now we are better able to negotiate excavation terms on a more equal basis. We desperately need these outside collaborations in order to modernize our research and persuade our overly traditional archeologists that they have to broaden their teamwork with paleozoologists, paleobotanists, physicists and other branches of science." Under these academic joint ventures, Iranians and foreigners also will cooperate on post-excavation conservation plans and bilingual publication of results, he adds.

Last May, in a gesture of goodwill, the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago returned to Tehran 300 ancient Persian clay tablets that had been unearthed in the 1930's. It was the first batch of several thousand cuneiform tablets that will be repatriated after the Institute finishes photographing them for a digital inventory.

Since the Oriental Institute's Alizadeh first began traveling back to Iran in the mid-1990's, he has begun to help set up an archeobiological laboratory in Tehran to house bones and seeds from various sites around the country. Earlier, he salvaged thousands of pottery shards that had lain underwater for decades in the cellars of a museum in Tehran, and created a databank to catalog them. He is training young archeologists to establish mini-databanks for the network of 52 regional research centers at principal excavations around the country.

What has struck the Chicago professor most during his time back in Iran is the insatiable hunger of students to pursue archeology despite the shortages of professors, equipment and training materials. "Even though I warn them they are going to be unemployed for a long time, maybe forever, they say they love it and won't give up," he explains. "It's both sad and encouraging."

continued from page 7

similar to ones carved on Jiroft's stone vases, the archeologist also suggests that parts of the Gilgamesh narrative circulated in Jiroft and may even have had their origins there.

Another of the recent season's top finds was the discovery by Marjan Mashkur, an Iranian researcher based in Paris, of shark bones and shells from the Gulf, 200 kilometers (120 mi) south. To Madjidzadeh, this find confirms that Jiroft merchants plied well-worn trade routes that led to the Gulf and on to Mesopotamia, dealing in chlorite vessels, lapis lazuli and other precious stones, and commodities fabricated in Jiroft.

Even at this relatively early stage, Madjidzadeh believes he has enough evidence to turn some of the fundamental precepts of Middle Eastern archeology on their head. The fabulous royal treasure excavated in the 1920's by Leonard Wooley at the Sumerian capital of Ur, including the iconic, shell-encrusted ibex standing to nibble the leaves of a gold tree, may ultimately be traced back to the workshops of Jiroft, he says. So might chlorite vessels from Uruk, Mari and Soch.

"We're not sure what gold pieces might have come from Jiroft," says Pittman, "but some of the chlorite pieces in Mesopotamia may well prove to have been exported from this region of southeastern Iran."

"Three years ago, I would have agreed with the common assertion that Mesopotamia was the cradle of civilization," Madjidzadeh says. "Now I'm changing my mind to Jiroft, which, in its heyday, was just as important and as extensive as Sumerian civilization."

For some in the field, this comparison sets off alarm bells.

Lamberg-Karlovsky is one of the skeptics. While the Harvard professor acknowledges the importance of the discovery of Jiroft and its chlorite vessels, he warns against hyperbole. "To imply that Jiroft is the most ancient Oriental civilization is way off the mark," he argues. "In terms of actual material recovered so far, there is nothing earlier than 2500 BC, which is a thousand years later than the southern Mesopotamian world."

Madjidzadeh, however, maintains that pottery found at Jiroft compares to shards from Tepe Yahya dated to 2800 BC. In addition, he reasons, it would have taken nearly half a millennium for Jiroft's artisans to develop the degree of skill that attracted King Enmerkar's envy in 2500 BC, an inference that pushes back the establishment of Jiroft to about 3000 BC. Unfortunately, carbon dating of the vases and pots—the most reliable technique for gauging the age of artifacts—is not possible at Jiroft, since there have been absolutely no traces of organic residue in any of the materials unearthed so far. The Harvard archeologist and others deprecate Madjidzadeh's contention. "These are very tenuous conclusions," says Lamberg-Karlovsky. "To try to put Jiroft on the same level as the Sumerian, Egyptian and Indus Valley civilizations, or even as the Bactrian material of central Asia, is to exaggerate and distort the archeological record. Jiroft is just not in the same ballpark."

Madjidzadeh, in white hat at center, examines objects found near Konar Sandal B in a trench overseen by Romain Pigeaud of the Paris National Museum of Natural History.

Based on his own chemical analyses of chlorite pieces from Tarut, Mesopotamia and elsewhere, Lamberg-Karlovsky states that the stone finds in those places were mined locally. He is thus wary of claims that Jiroft pottery was widely exported.

"It's very significant that Jiroft was the center of production for huge numbers of chlorite vessels, but to say that the vessels found in Mesopotamia, the Arabian Peninsula and the Iranian plateau came from Jiroft is patently false," he declares.

Madjidzadeh counters that chlorite vessels may indeed have been produced elsewhere—but by itinerant artisans and stonecutters originally from Jiroft or local craftsmen imitating Jiroft styles.

For Rémy Boucharlat, chief of the French Center for Scientific Research in Tehran, it's possible that Jiroft exported chlorite vessels to Mesopotamia and beyond. "Yet we still don't know if the Mesopotamians carved their own imagery on unfinished stone or whether the iconography originated in Jiroft," he says.

UPPER: MOHAMMAD ESLAMI-RAD / GAMMA

Left to right: **This cut chlorite plaque (⁝ 27 cm) depicts a "scorpion man," a figure that may be part of Jiroft's mythology. A "handbag" (⁝ 15 cm) shows a doorway or gate with a downward arcing lintel; its repeated curves may be a way of indicating depth. Another chlorite plaque (⁝ 35 cm) shows an eagle in a heraldic position; it was originally inlaid with turquoise, carnelian and lapis lazuli.**

The Oriental Institute's Alizadeh agrees that Jiroft artisans could well have traveled to Mesopotamia and other areas in the Middle East, but he too deflates some of Madjidzadeh's more grandiose claims, including the assertion that Jiroft's civilization predates Sumer's. After examining the writing on the seal impression uncovered in February, the Chicago archeologist now doubts its authenticity. Compared to the sophisticated systems of writing that already existed in the region by 2500 BC, the Jiroft artifact presents "an extremely vague series of scratches," he says.

"There's great excitement about Jiroft because of the prodigious number of chlorite vessels found there, but the problem is that we don't know anything about the makers of these objects," argues Alizadeh. "What is significant is the similarity to designs found in Elamite culture, but to call Jiroft a civilization is not exactly true at this point. Possessing a major manufacturing workshop does not qualify the site as a civilization."

Perhaps more exciting than the beautiful chlorite bowls, vases and cups, which after all reveal little information about the ancient inhabitants of Jiroft, says Boucharlat, are the newly excavated settlements and buildings. "We're now entering a second phase of discoveries, one that goes beyond fine objects to a knowledge of the culture and its relatively high level of social organization and technical proficiency," he explains.

Regardless of what impact the site ultimately makes on Middle Eastern archeology, there is no doubt that Jiroft is serving as a pilot program for Iranian professors and graduate students to work alongside international—mainly American and French—colleagues.

"Before the 1979 revolution, there was tremendous collaboration between Iranian and foreign archeologists," notes Pittman, who first came to excavate in Iran more than 25 years ago. "We're trying to pick up where we left off."

As Madjidzadeh explains, "One of my conditions for inviting foreign archeologists to participate at Jiroft is that they accept Iranian students for training at their universities to learn updated techniques and western methods of teaching."

This round box shows a snake confronting a panther, whose head is visible at far left (⁝ 7.4 cm).

Now, however, the obstacles to such exchanges are not only on the Iranian side. Despite the University of Pennsylvania's eagerness to train Iranian researchers, the US government has so far refused to grant them visas.

"It's immensely frustrating," Pittman admits. "Until the geopolitical fireworks calm down a bit, we're not going to have any luck training them here in the US. And training the next generation of archeologists is the most urgent need by far for the country's heritage."

With more archeologists, Iran could again become a hotspot for the study of ancient civilizations. Certainly Madjidzadeh, who earns less in Iran than a skilled laborer does in France and who pays his own airfares between Nice and Tehran, is not in his profession for money. Ironically for an archeologist once hounded out of the country, local officials in the town of Jiroft are planning to name a square after him.

"I go to Iran because I love archeology and I love to help the nation," he says. "It's a part of my life I could never change even if I wanted to."

Paris-based author **Richard Covington** writes regularly about culture, the arts and media for the *International Herald Tribune*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Smithsonian*, *Reader's Digest* and other publications. He can be reached at richard.covington@free.fr.

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

Gilgamesh: M/J 96, J/A 83, N/D 66
Hurrians in Syria: M/J 97
Indus Valley civilizations: S/O 99
Mesopotamian archeology: N/D 84
Sumerian language: M/A 00
Tarut Island: M/A 79, J/F 70
Trade in the third millennium BC: J/A 03

ARDENT FOR ARGAN

WRITTEN BY KITTY MORSE PHOTOGRAPHED BY OWEN MORSE

"*VIENS VOIR MES CHÈVRES!*" ("Come see my goats!") calls a shepherd boy to camera-toting tourists as they scramble down the steps of a brightly painted bus. For a few coins, he allows the photographers to click away to their heart's content. Their subject: a score of nimble black goats perched meters off the ground among the gnarled limbs of a spiny argan tree.

Goats have long foraged in the parched landscape of the Souss plain in southwestern Morocco. Whenever edible plants are in short supply on the ground, the ruminants have learned to look—and climb—up to the leaves and olive-like drupes, or fruits, of the argan tree (*Argania spinosa*; also called "Moroccan ironwood").

The local economy depends on the fruit of this endemic tree, which yields a prized and healthful oil rich in vitamins A and E and unsaturated fatty acids. With a lifespan of two centuries or more, the argan tree is of such value to the indigenous Berbers of the region that trees are often specifically included in legal lists of the assets of an estate.

The argan tree's economic importance motivated Zoubida Charrouf, a chemist and researcher at Rabat's Mohamed V University, to select *Argania spinosa* as the subject of her doctoral dissertation in 1984. She and her colleagues found that over the previous 20 years, the argan forest's density had shrunk from 100 trees per hectare to only 30—that is, from 40 per acre to 12. The leathery-leafed botanical survivor from the Tertiary Epoch seemed headed for extinction. A severe drought that coincided with a dramatic increase in the region's human population had led to overgrazing by both goats and camels, and thus to an upset of the region's delicate ecosystem, in which the argan tree was a keystone species. Scientists predicted that this unique forest of more than 800,000 hectares (3088 sq mi) would shrink by as much as 40 percent by 2008. This would lead to diminished harvests and would probably spur the migration of rural families to already overcrowded cities.

The researchers joined with local officials to persuade the government to declare two percent of the argan forest off-limits to grazing. In 1998 UNESCO took up the cause and declared part of the argan forest—including the 54,000-hectare (208-sq mi) Souss-Massa National Park—an international Biosphere Reserve.

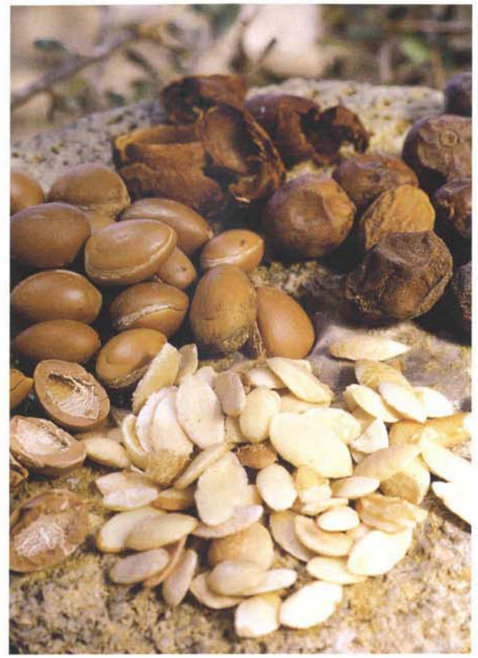
"Over two million people make their living directly or indirectly from the *Argania spinosa*. We had to motivate farmers to remain on the land," says Charrouf. "One of the obvious ways was to build upon existing tradition and increase the scale of commercial production of argan oil. Since women are the keepers of tradition, the ones who have the ancestral know-how for producing argan oil, it seemed logical to turn to them first. Thus the idea of founding a women's cooperative."

It took three years of lobbying to secure approval from national and local authorities to make Cooperative Amal ("hope") a reality. In 1999, it opened in the village of Tamanar, 100 kilometers (62 mi) north of the cosmopolitan resort city of Agadir. It was the first establishment of its kind in Morocco.

The cooperative's beginnings were less than auspicious for Charrouf and her financial backers, who included Moroccan businessmen, the British Consulate and Canada's Centre de Recherches pour le Développement International. Local officials were skeptical of the all-women enterprise. And Berber men were reluctant to let their wives work outside the home. For this reason, the cooperative's founding membership was composed almost exclusively of widows and divorced women. But as drought and economic pressure continued and the cooperative began to prove its value, many unemployed husbands came to count on their wives' membership as a source of steady income for their families.

"A cooperative is often the driving force behind other improvements within a community—improvements to its infrastructure, healthcare delivery and schools," says Charrouf. For this reason, some *caïds* [governors] who originally opposed cooperatives in their districts now encourage their development."

In the beginning, Charrouf, Cooperative Amal's manager, Khadija Rhalimi, and its elected president, Amina Edelcadi, faced what might diplomatically be called "a marketing challenge" to the international acceptance of argan oil: For centuries, farmers had gathered the argan nuts not directly from the trees, but from the ground, where they had been either expectorated or excreted by arboreal goats who had eaten the fleshy fruit. Charrouf is quick to point out that this archaic harvesting method is obsolete except on the most remote farms, and that all modern commercial enterprises like Cooperative Amal rely exclusively on tree-harvested fruit.



Above: **Argan fruits, like peaches or mangos, have an outer fleshy part that surrounds a hard shell that contains the seed. Once the seeds—the argan nuts—are extracted, the shells can be burned as fuel for cooking and home heating. Goats like to eat the fruits, but humans prefer to crush the seeds for their rich and tasty hazelnut-like oil. The oil and the forage they provide for nimble goats** (opposite) **make argan trees vital to the livelihoods of some two million people. Drought, overgrazing and firewood collecting endanger the trees, which also serve as an ecological bulwark against the further expansion of the Sahara in Morocco.**

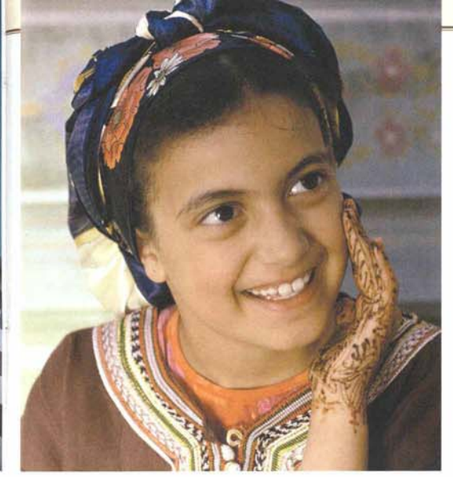
Women gather the drupes (*afiash* in Berber) and dry them in the sun. They separate the nut from the flesh (*allig*), then crack open the nut to recover the kernels within, which can contain up to 50 percent oil. These they roast, then grind to extract the oil. The nutshells are used as fuel for heating and cooking. The allig and the leftover oilcake from the ground kernels are shaped into patties called *tazgamout* and sold as cattle feed.

On a hot June morning, dozens of gunnysacks bulging with sun-dried argan fruits were piled high within Cooperative Amal's cavernous warehouse and production facility. Seventy-eight-year-old Ijja Oubla, the cooperative's oldest member, sat on a colorful straw mat astride a stone block. She processed the argan fruit while bantering with co-workers. A kettle of water for mint tea boiled nearby on the coals of a *canoun* next to Fatima Fakir, who, at 30, is Amal's youngest member. Like Ijja, she is adept at cracking open each nut with a small, oval stone. Proof of her dexterity rests by her side: a large bowl filled with smooth, mahogany-colored kernels. Even so, it takes her 15 to 20 hours to accumulate the 2½ kilograms (5½ lb) of kernels required to produce one liter (26 fl oz) of argan oil.

The work is tedious, yet clearly a source of pride for Fakir and her 70 co-workers. But surely a machine could perform this task more quickly? Amina Edelcadi explains the rationale for perpetuating the manual operation.

"It's simple. If we used purely mechanical means, these women would be out of a job. You have to remember that our main purpose is to provide employment for as many women as possible."

Members of the cooperative earn around 35 dirhams a day (about $3.50), depending upon production. Some industrious workers receive as much as $75 a month. (Morocco's



Above: **In the Cooperative Amal in Tamanar, women crack argan-nut shells with round stones. It takes 15 to 20 hours—depending on skill—to crack enough nuts to produce a liter of oil. The nuts are then roasted** (above right) **before being pressed. The oil is filtered and bottled; the leftover oilcake is used as animal feed.**

average gross national income per person is about $99 a month.) At the end of the year, all members share in Cooperative Amal's profits.

Fakir breaks into a broad smile when asked how the Cooperative Amal has changed her life. "My husband likes the fact that I bring home some money, and my pay allows me to send our daughter to school. It also gives me the chance to attend literacy classes."

> "MY HUSBAND LIKES THE FACT THAT I BRING HOME SOME MONEY, AND MY PAY ALLOWS ME TO SEND OUR DAUGHTER TO SCHOOL. IT ALSO GIVES ME THE CHANCE TO ATTEND LITERACY CLASSES."

"At my age, I like not having to depend on anyone," chimes in the venerable Oubla.

Earning an income is important, but so is the development of each woman's self-esteem. "When I see a woman walking along the side of the road wearing new clothes, accompanied by her equally well-dressed children, I know she must belong to the cooperative," says Charrouf.

She is also proud of Cooperative Amal's effect on local society. "Every day, I see the positive impact of cooperatives. Let me tell you a story," she says, brushing back a lock of hair from her face. "A governor wanted to dump his town's garbage in a nearby stand of argan trees. The local women banded together and picketed with signs that read *'Touchez pas à ma forêt!'*—'Don't touch my forest!' The national media caught wind of the story, and the caïd had to relent!"

Cooperative Amal does make a few concessions to modernity: a gas-fired roasting drum and electric machines for pressing the kernels and filtering the oil. In addition, it employs nitrogen gas infusion in the bottling process to delay oxidation of the argan oil and extend its shelf life. A traditional processing implement, a hand-turned granite quern called a *raha*, is on display in the cooperative's foyer. One just like it is still in use in Casablanca's Marché Central, but it is mainly for the benefit of tourists.

The members of Cooperative Amal de Tamanar grind almost 200 kilograms (440 lb) of kernels every week, and annually they produce 10,000 liters (2640 gal) of argan oil. Most is for domestic consumption, but some is shipped to specialty stores in Europe, Canada and the United States. To bring argan oil to the attention of the global market, the cooperative has set up a Web site.

In October 2001, Cooperative Amal received a special jury award from the prestigious international Slow Food Association, a group that promotes respect for traditional and ecologically sound methods of food production.

Success and international recognition inspired other communities within the argan forest. A discreet sign lures visitors to another cooperative, Cooperative Ajdigue ("argan blossom") in the village of Tidzi, 60 kilometers (37 mi) south of Essaouira. Inside, Samira Anjar and a colleague apply attractive labels to bottles of argan oil, to decorative jars of argan-based lotion and face cream, and to containers of an aromatic and delicious Nutella-like concoction of ground almonds, honey and argan oil called *amlou*.

Like its counterpart in Tamanar, Cooperative Ajdigue received financial assistance from both national and international sources. It markets its oil in Morocco, Holland, Germany and France.

In Essaouira, along Morocco's coast, Jean-Claude and Evelyne Dulac, together with Mohamed Kabbaj, own the internationally renowned Dar Loubane restaurant. They are ardent aficionados of argan oil. They use it, as well as amlou, to enhance many of the dishes featured in their elegant 18th-century *riyyad*, or courtyard guest house, inside the walls of Essaouira's picturesque city center.

"Try a teaspoon of amlou on a warm *baghrir*," Evelyne coaxes, showing the leavened pancake to patrons. "*C'est délicieux!*"

Diners discern the oil's light, hazelnut-like flavor in a number of dishes, from a vibrant salad of charcoal-grilled red bell peppers and marinated anchovies to a sumptuous *tagine* (stew) of chicken and dried apricots.

"Essaouira's cooks like to sprinkle argan oil over a dish of steamed couscous," Evelyne adds. "I often fry eggs in the oil before seasoning them with a little cumin. Our foreign patrons love it."

Moroccans treasure their argan oil for its pharmaceutical and cosmetic uses as well, for which oil is extracted from unroasted kernels. It is said to cure juvenile acne and rheumatism, and its high content of linoleic acid makes it a popular hair conditioner and nail fortifier, notes Charrouf—who is also president of Morocco's Ibn al Baitar Association for the study of medicinal plants. She believes the discovery of further medical applications for argan oil is only a matter of time.

In 2003, Charrouf organized GIE Targanine, a legally recognized umbrella organization comprising four cooperatives, each with its own director and its own marketing program. She hopes to see 30 more cooperatives open by the end of 2005.

"At this rate, we may even create enough work to employ a few men!" she says with a laugh.

Argan oil from unroasted seeds is a popular cosmetic, said to be useful for dry skin, wrinkles and blemishes. Below: ***Amlou*** **is a richly tasty mixture of ground almonds, honey and argan oil. Scooped onto fresh bread and served with mint tea, it makes a delicious and traditional breakfast.**

Kitty Morse (www.kittymorse.com) was born in Casablanca and lives in California. Author of nine cookbooks, she leads an annual culinary tour to Morocco. Photographer **Owen Morse** illustrates his wife's books. His work most recently appeared in *Saudi Aramco World* in the March/April 2002 issue.

Cooperative Amal:
www.targanine.com

Argan oil suppliers:
www.argan3.com (Quebec)
www.earthy.com (Michigan)
www.haddouch.com (Washington)
www.exoticaoils.com (Pennsylvania)
www.argania.ch (Switzerland)

Promises and Possibilities
Images of Islam in America

Photographs and captions by Alexandra Avakian / Contact Press Images

Commentaries on the photographs by Tayyibah Taylor

In Muslim tradition, it is said that God has 99 names—learn them, and you will learn all of the divine attributes. The very first name is "Ar-Rahman," "The Most Gracious." This street sign, in the middle of a rural community in Mississippi, evokes the remembrance of God and, at the same time, gives the Muslim residents a comforting sense of belonging and fellowship.

Kelly Collins, 11, collects pebbles as her brother Jason Collins, 13, crosses the street toward home in New Medinah, Mississippi, a rural community of some 20 mostly Muslim families founded in 1987. "Jason and Kelly came to visit for the summer of 1999," says their grandmother, Florence Muhammad. At the end of their visit, she says, "Kelly cried, Jason had a sad look on his face, wanting to stay and not return to New Orleans. The next summer when they came to visit, their mother realized that the environment here would be better for them. There were so many unhealthy things going on in the city.... To live here in New Medinah has given us a different perspective.... Muslim community life makes it easy to remember God, your family and your neighbors.... In 20 years I pray that I live to see New Medinah incorporated, with a balanced way of life for all people."

Excerpts from Muslim- and Arab-American literature selected by Nathalie Handal

Ar-Rahman Road

On my street,
mercy resides
Spiders get carried out of houses
in Styrofoam cups
gently airlifted to safety
Children swap Legos for Tonka trucks for Barbies
never chided for not sharing
broken toys buried in the backyard
(along with hard feelings)
On my block church bells ring
early on Sunday morning
and every prayer is for another
The Lord's Prayer mingles
with the sound of the adhan
floating from the nearby mosque
On my street
we want for nothing,
but salaam
Long for nothing,
just rahman

—by Dima Hilal

Florence Muhammad and her granddaughter, Kelly, prepare supper. Florence is a teacher's assistant at the New Medinah Islamic School, treasurer of both the school and the mosque, Masjid al-Halim, parent to her grandchildren and wife to Lateef Muhammad. "My husband and I moved to New Medinah in 1998 from New Orleans. It was my idea to move here when I made my first visit in 1997. My husband has a different story. When I told him I would like to move to New Medinah, he said, 'I will see you at 'Ids and at the retreat, all once a year.' I asked him, 'What do you hear?' He told me, 'Nothing.' I said, 'Isn't that wonderful peace and quiet?' Being from the city, it was too quiet for him. After visiting and twice attending weekend retreats of camping out, he could actually feel the peace and hear the quiet. It all grew on him."

Does a Muslim woman have the right to work, some ask. In actuality, she has the right not to work, since Muslim men are required to provide complete financial support for all women who are dependent on them. Should a woman elect to work, all the money she earns is hers to spend or invest as she desires. Some Muslim women choose to dedicate themselves—and often their incomes—to their home lives. Others opt for entrepreneurship and other jobs that require them to juggle family and work.

"Today there will be sisters and cousins and aunties and uncles and even more cousins.... Coincidentally, they always come at dinner time. Always at the moment we turn on the stove."

—from *The Language of Baklava*, by Diana Abu-Jaber (forthcoming)

Mountains of rice, shiny shoes,
a hurricane of dancing.
Children wearing little suitcoats
and velvet dresses fell asleep in circles
after eating 47 Jordan almonds
Who's getting married? Who's come home
from the far place over the seas?

—from "The Palestinians Have Given Up Parties," by Naomi Shihab Nye

There is no such thing as a typical Muslim wedding in America. With over 80 ethnicities represented, traditions run the gamut. A bride might wear a gown of white satin and tulle or she may dress in a scarlet caftan embroidered with gold. The ceremony might last an hour or it may extend into three festive days with various rituals and parties. Guests may be separated by gender, or maybe not, and they may feast on a five-course meal in a four-star hotel or sip punch in a mosque basement. The constant that all weddings share is the feeling of spiritual importance.

Latifa Sharara and Khalil Raizae get married in her parents' home in Dearborn, Michigan followed by a big reception at the nearby Fairlane Club. Her family fled the war in Lebanon, and Latifa grew up in this Detroit suburb where the midwestern, middle-class landscape is heavily spiced with Arab restaurants, shops and mosques—an American dream, Arab style. Dearborn began attracting both Christian and Muslim Arab immigrants in the early 20th century when the Ford automobile plant opened. Fords are still made in Dearborn, and Arab-Americans still work at Ford, a tradition that remains an economic mainstay of one of the largest concentrations of Arab-Americans in the country.

From the ashes of September 11, 2001 rose an unexpected phoenix—interfaith bonding. Throughout the country, Jews, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and others invited Muslims to dialogue and explore each other's beliefs. Every request extended and each invitation accepted helped in some minute way to dissipate the pain felt by all. These discussions have resulted in a greater awareness of our world, our neighbors and ourselves.

Saleem Hamdani owned this small general store in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. On September 11, 2001, his son Salman, a police cadet and emergency medical technician, was on his way to a class when he glimpsed the burning World Trade Center towers. He ran toward them and, while helping people there, was killed. The US Congress, the New York Police Department and the press lauded his heroism. But his father Saleem's heart broke, and Saleem began succumbing to illness. He died on July 21, 2004.

Talat Hamdani, Saleem's widow and Salman's mother: "Saleem was always fascinated with America.... Of course, we came in search of the American dream. I worked at a pharmaceutical warehouse and he worked at a junkyard in Mamaroneck for five years. Then we got this store in 1985. Salman worked with him in the store on evenings and weekends. Saleem and Salman were best friends.... Salman was a very gentle soul, felt everyone's pain. He could not turn away his eyes if he saw a bird in distress, let alone a human being.... One of the statements from his journal was, 'Why does the world misunderstand one's sympathy and compassion for weakness?' Salman was very proud to be a Muslim and prayed five times a day. He was also very proud to be an American.... I don't know what the future holds for me, but I have a mission: to make the world realize that no religion is evil, and the international and humanitarian religion that will bind us together and bring global peace is respect for each other, irrespective of our race, nationality, religion or color."

The Native Son

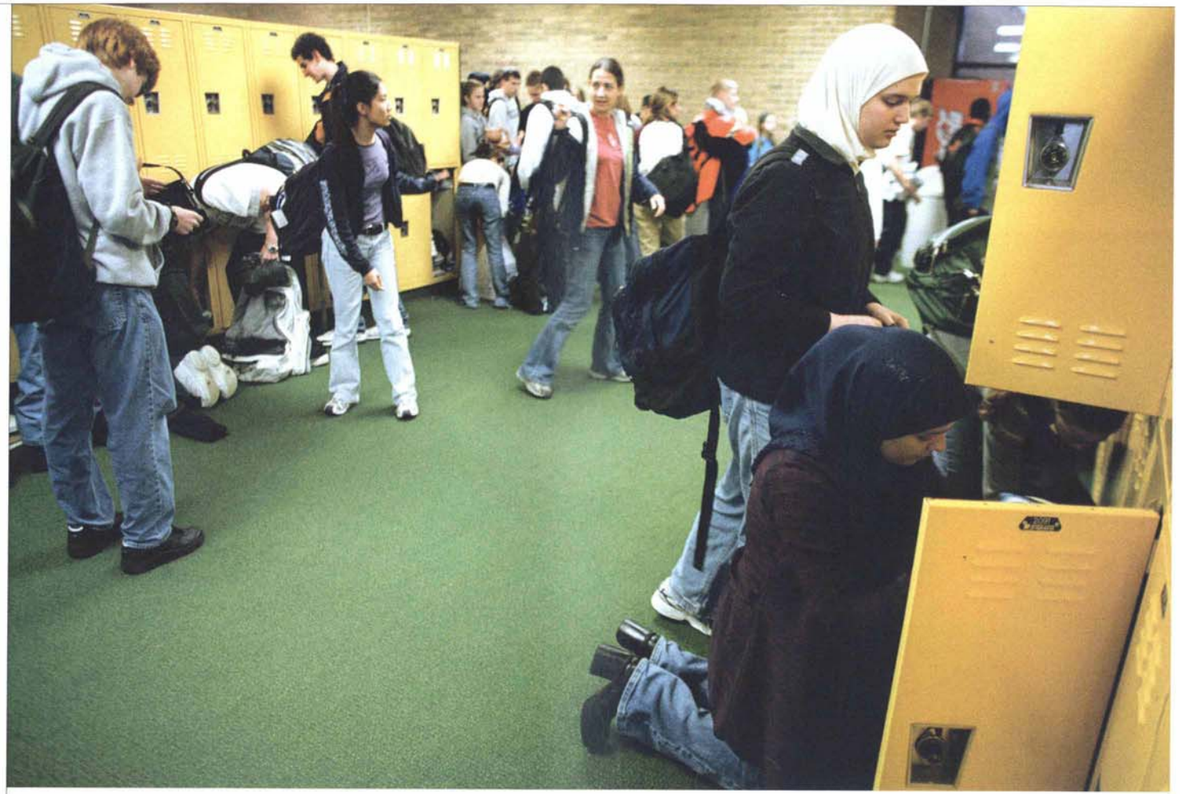
The traffic sounds loud
screeching tires
rubber against concrete.

He's rearranged
his entire stock
neatly packed away
all his dreams
decorated his store
with all the dust,
the paper rubbish,
collected
from catastrophe.

Who is he burning
alone in this city
so you can live in peace?

Every day he buries his son
over and over
selling plastic flags
on a corner
of your city streets.

—by Sarah Husain



Twins Rima and Noura Dabdoub collect their books from their lockers at the end of another day at Sycamore High School near Cincinnati, Ohio. "Five years from now, I will most likely be finishing my master's degree in education," says Rima (standing). "In 10 years I hope to have found a nice place to teach and have gotten married. Who knows, in 20 years lots of things could happen. I will always continue to study and learn new things, and help in improving the world around me. I hope that by doing my best and always helping others I can make a difference."

"In five years I want to be in law school studying international law," says Noura (kneeling). "In 10 years I would like to be married and working in politics.... In 20 years I want to still be doing the same thing, and I would also like to have children by then."

Rima talks about what it's like wearing a *hijab* at Sycamore: "It makes people look at who you are as a person, instead of judging you on your looks.... It took people a little while to figure out what I was all about, and then they treated me like any other person. Of course you have the occasional bullies who try to cause trouble, but I just ignored them and didn't let it bother me. I always had the support of my teachers and principals. They always said that if I ever had a problem, I could come and talk to them." She says one of the questions most often asked about wearing hijab is, "How many scarves do you have?" She answers, "I lost count a long time ago!"

"It was difficult at times," adds Noura, "mainly because I was so obviously different from most of the other kids at school. Besides the difference of religion and dress, most of the time I was different from other girls at school because of the things that interest me. For example, most of my high school dated and had boyfriends or girlfriends, which seemed to take up a lot of time, energy and emotion. I never had to deal with that, so my free time was spent doing other things, such as politics or working on projects for my Muslim youth group."

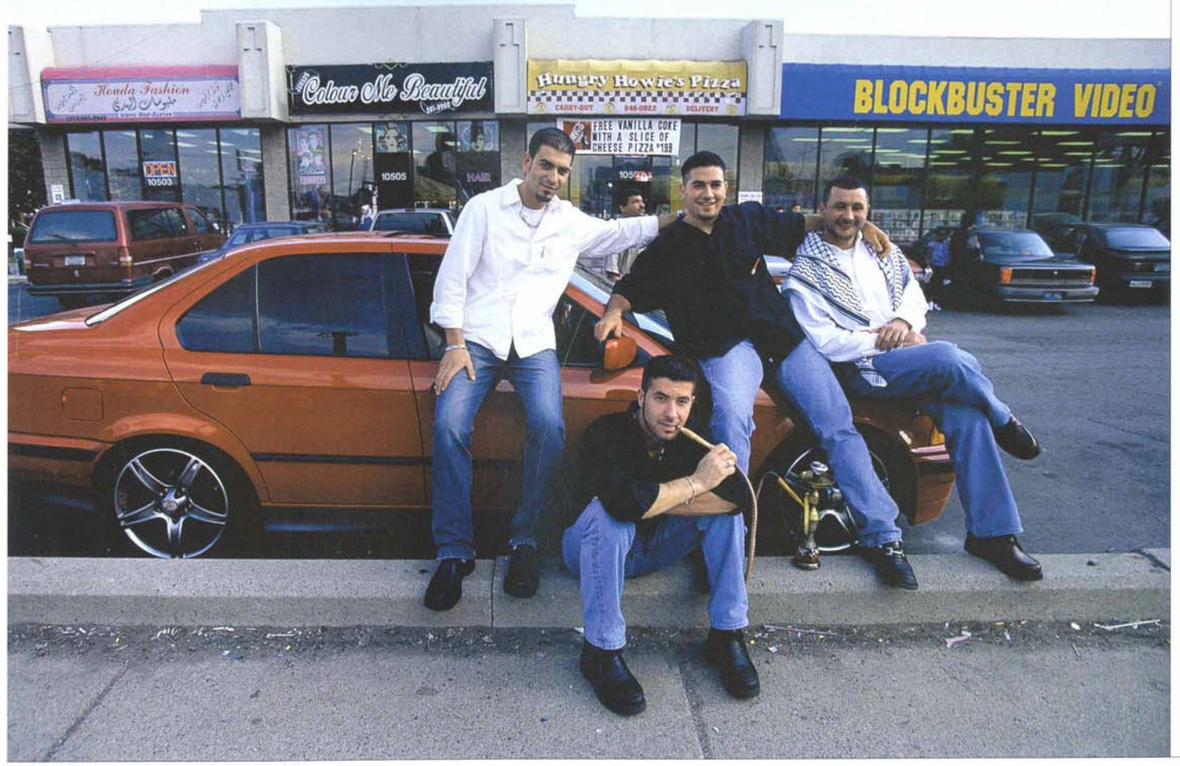
When my second daughter wanted to run track and play on the volleyball team in high school, we had to petition the school board and the league's athletic association for special permission for an exemption from wearing the team uniform. The letter detailing our religious requirements of modesty was accepted. Instead of a tank top and shorts, she wore a long-sleeved T-shirt, sweat pants and a scarf. At a time when peer acceptance and conformity is of paramount importance to teenagers, it was difficult for her being the odd one out—the covered one.

Take it, bro
yeah, get Jamila in the picture...
w'allah she's beautiful, bro
I get my hair cuts there just to...
to marry her
Heck no!
...

Settle down, bro, I'm just kidding
Y'allah, pass the argeela
what flavor?
bubbly, bubb, bubbly, bubble
apple?
strawberry w'allah?
It's apple, habibe
...

—from "Sleeper Cell," by Iron Sheik

With a second- and third-generation population burgeoning in diversity and numbers, Muslim Americans are crafting a unique hybrid culture. Spinning flavors and traditions from around the world and wrapping them together with American fibers, they are weaving a remarkable cultural textile full of fusions like Ramadan fast-a-thons, T-shirts emblazoned with Qur'anic sayings in Arabic, 'Id picnics, and hip-hop lyrics about hijab and hanging out at the strip mall.



In Dearborn, Michigan Hassan Abu Aleiwe, 22 (far right), sits with friends to watch the annual Arab International Festival from in front of the hair salon where he works. He came to Dearborn from Lebanon four years ago. "All my friends are Muslim just because the city I live in is 75 percent Muslim. We usually like to go to places where they have Arabic entertainment.... They serve *argilah* [waterpipe], Turkish coffee, and also have Middle Eastern food." (What do they talk about? "Girls!") "I find keeping up with the busy American life is America for me. Here you have lots of opportunities, but you have to work very hard on it. When it comes to having a good time, I always prefer my traditional habits, like spending time with family, which I don't see in American life. I'm actually working on having my own hair salon in the next couple of years, *inshallah*."

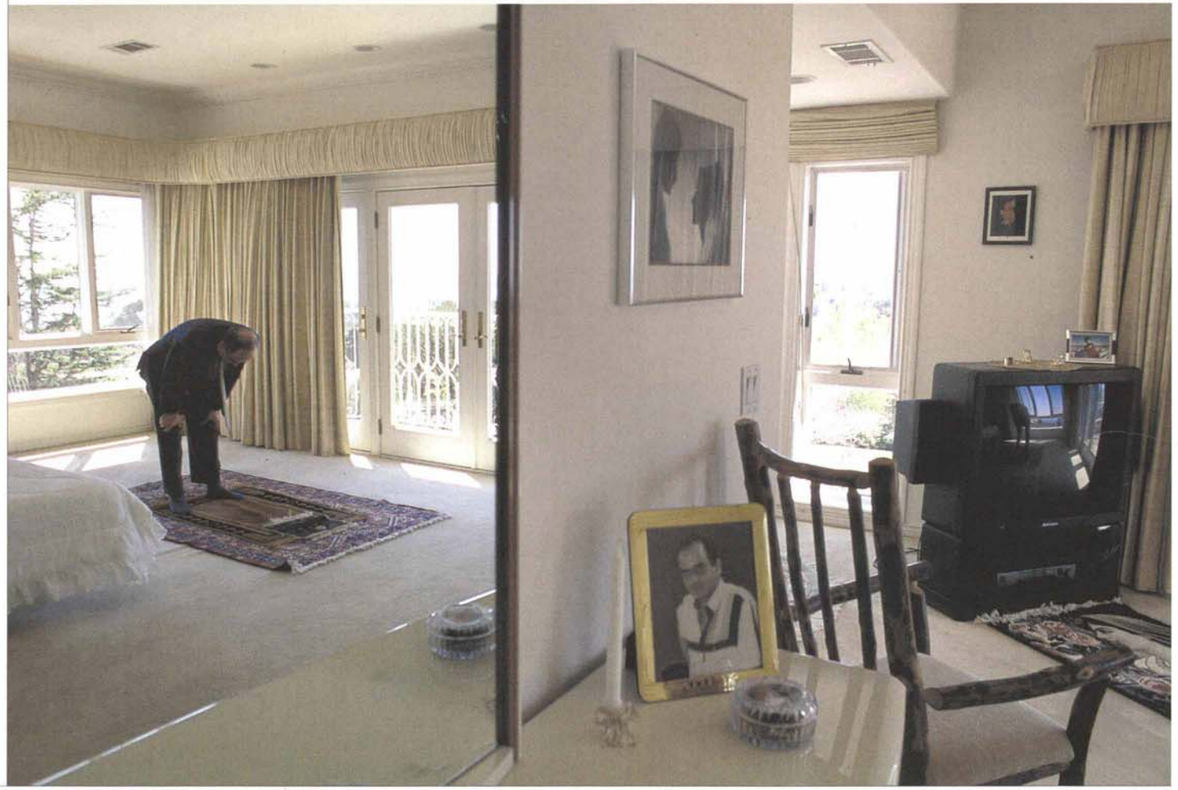
"I grew up with prayer and it has helped me through my life, particularly during the times that I faced difficulties and hardship," says Mohammad Sadegh Namazikhah, MD, who recently opened a private practice after years as professor and chairman of the endodontics program at the University of Southern California. Coming to the US from Iran in 1978, he is also founder, president and CEO of the Iranian Muslim Association of North America (IMAN), as well as founder of the Sepideh Namazikhah Foundation, named for his late daughter. (At his daughter's funeral, the pallbearers were friends from the local Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities.) IMAN offers a mosque, library, classrooms, conference rooms, auditorium and a ballroom as well as community services: language and computer classes, programs for youth and women, and health care. In April, IMAN sponsored an Interfaith Festival of Unity for Abrahamic Religions, and in another campaign it raised $837,000 to aid victims of the earthquake earlier this year in Bam, Iran. "Coming to the United States opened all the doors to these successes," says Namazikhah.

In the next 10 years, he says, he hopes to spend more time "serving the community." More than that, "I wish everybody in the entire world has an opportunity to practice their religion the way they want and extend their hands to help others. America is the land of liberty and I hope it stays the way it is supposed to be."

He is transparent as a thousand gestures,
his whole body arcing in altering worship,
sunlight riffling through the room
and in a moment, his soul will swath
itself around the border of skin,
stroking those veins excavated with dreams,
and greet the angels within.

—by Deema Shehabi

Combining physical movements, recitation and meditation, the ritual prayer—*salat*—is a workout for the body, mind and soul. It can be prayed anywhere that is clean, so besides in the mosque, prayers are said at home, at work or even in the park—wherever the appointed time finds a Muslim. Anyone who deliberately and routinely interrupts his or her day to do something is likely to see a positive consequence. Stopping five times a day to communicate with the Creator brings a sense of peace for Muslims.



Earlier this year, when a small group of women marched to a West Virginia mosque and demanded a share of the prayer space designated for men, the national Muslim conversation about the women's prayer space intensified. Should women pray behind men? Be secluded behind a partition? Or aloft in a balcony? In a separate room with closed-circuit television? While many women prefer the privacy of a separate mosque space, other women say such separation is a cultural, not a religious, practice, and they favor praying where they, like the men, can most readily see and hear the *imam*. The conversation continues.

Restless breathing mountains of the East,
enclosed in swells of desert light
tumble down, like moving hymns
into the waiting lips of prayer-filled people
creating the giant hush
of an earthen resistance.

—from "The Glistening," by Deema Shehabi

The end of Ramadan fills the mosque at the Islamic Center of Greater Cincinnati, an "American Arabesque" mosque founded in 1995. Shakila Ahmad is a member of the mosque who works frequently with interfaith groups in the community. "Women have tremendous rights in Islam that are often overshadowed by cultural and tribal traditions in many parts of the world. We begin by looking at the examples in the Prophet's own life of women such as Khadija and Aisha to see tremendous talents put into action, whether in business or religious scholarship, and the respect that was accorded them." For her personally, "prayer truly allows me to get closer to God. If reflected upon, it is a profound and focused way to remember all I must be thankful for.... It is crucial for us to learn and respect each other while being true to Islam, allowing us to realize that we truly have more in common than in difference."

The Ahmad family celebrates 'Id al-Fitr at their home in West Chester, Ohio. Today's food is prepared under the direction of Jamila (standing, center, hands clasped). On the couch (left to right) Shakila sees what her eldest daughter Hinna received from her grandmother; she is joined by Sufia, a friend of Hinna's. In the center of the room, cousins Waqas, Saif, Hassan and Amun open presents. The older children have finished opening theirs and have gone downstairs. The men have congregated in the living room. "'Id day you get to be with your closest friends and family," says Hinna. "The gifts and money are pretty cool, too."

After a long month of fasting during the sunlit hours, the end of Ramadan is greeted with joy and a celebration of the spiritual accomplishments. After the morning prayer, it's three days filled with parties and leisurely visits with family and friends. Though celebrations differ according to cultural traditions, there are usually candy, gifts and games for the children, lavish spreads of food for the adults and new clothes for everyone.

"The thing I like most about Ramadan? ... When the whole family and the friends you've invited gather around the table and there's this wonderful anticipation of something delicious about to happen. Of relief, and bounty, and of something shared. And it's that. That's the thing. What makes it extra special. The sense in the room that you've all been through something together."

—from *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith*, a play by Yussef El Guindi

"As I started to become a more practicing Muslim, I wanted to combine Islam, my faith and my spirituality with my art work. ... The repetition in patterns and symbolism has always had a spiritual significance as they represent the infinite nature of God."

—Reem Hussein, artist

"Did that hurt?" winced a woman at the grocery checkout stand as she eyed the black, swirling vines that snaked around my pinkie, across the back of my hand and beyond my wrist. She looked less than convinced when I explained it was a not a tattoo but a vegetable dye that would fade in a few weeks. Later that same day, I was in my car, waiting at a stoplight, when I heard a truck horn beside me. I looked over to see the driver holding up—in solidarity, he thought—his own arm, tattooed with a tiger in combat with a cobra. I waved back.

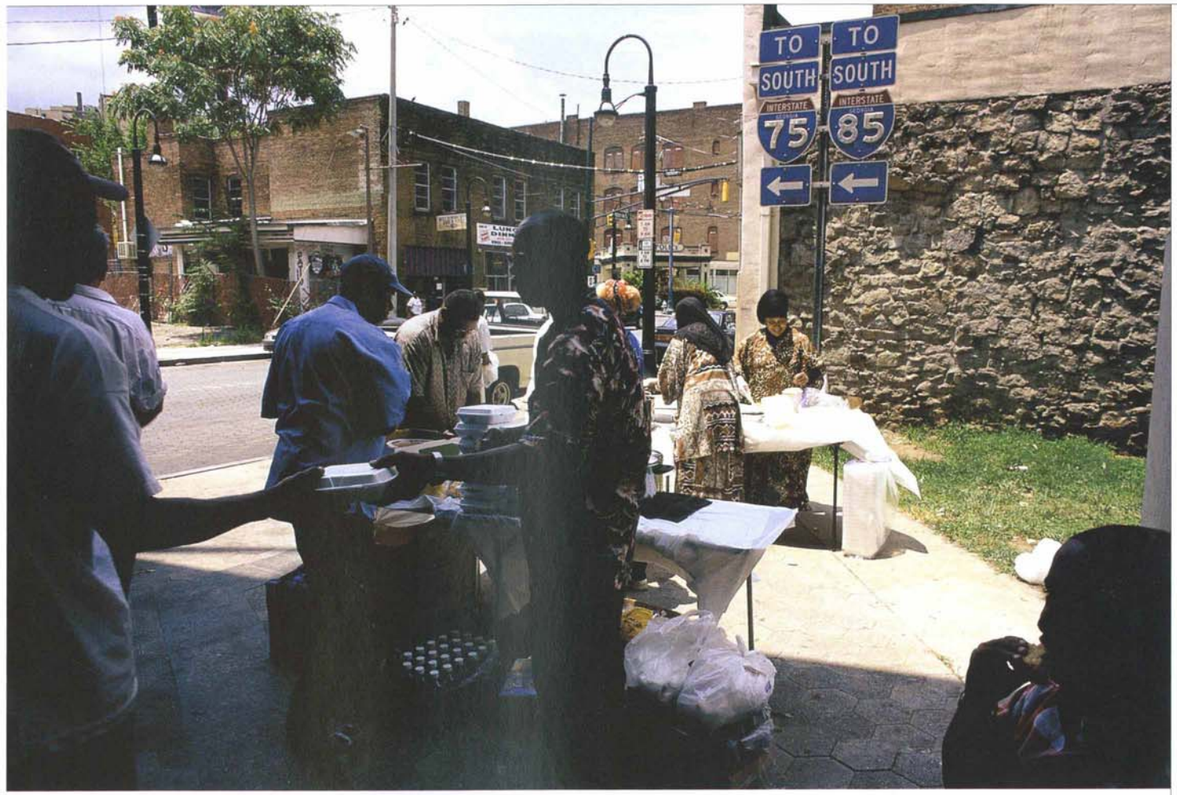
Noura Dabdoub compares henna tattoos with her friends at the end of Ramadan. "I actually don't like getting henna done, because usually it fades fast on my skin, and looks bad after a couple of days," she says. It would, however, be great to experience 'Id al-Fitr in a Muslim country, "because the majority of the country would be celebrating along with you. Here in the US, we celebrate within our small Muslim communities, but then we have to go back to school or to work the next day. Sometimes students even have to miss 'Id prayers because of exams, or they cannot celebrate with their families if they live away from home. Our communities are getting better at making 'Id a fun holiday for everyone by having carnivals or community dinners, but it's still not the same as experiencing 'Id in a Muslim country."

On Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C., a group of Muslim Americans gathers for a peaceful political march. Muslims are "a very young community" politically, says Ibrahim Hooper, spokesman for the Washington-based Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR). Before 9/11, he says, "We were on the same track that so many other minorities have been on ... jobs, schools, a future for the kids, living ordinary lives like anybody else." After 9/11, he adds, Muslims have begun to pay attention particularly to civil liberties. "Whatever stage [Muslims] are at politically, it is clear there will be growth in numbers and political maturity and sophistication.... They must vote, engage in the political process, whether it's elections for the school board or for President. Political involvement is the only thing that will deflect the negative influences that are impacting the community during the post-9/11 period."

I am a Muslim from the Thomas Jefferson Mosque.
I pray in the corners of the White House.
I pray in the hallways of the Congress and the Pentagon.
I am a liberal, I am a conservative.
I am a Democrat, I am a Republican.
...
Come together, right now, over me.
Drop the labels, talk about it.
Find a common ground.

—from "Message to America," by Tammam Adi

It is no longer unusual to see campaigning politicians stopping at a mosque during Friday prayers to shake hands with Muslim constituents. Muslim Americans are increasingly realizing the power and importance of voting and are becoming active in the political arena.



In downtown Atlanta, Sisters United in Human Service, Inc. is a six-year-old, full-time charity that feeds the homeless. Charity is one of the five pillars of Islam, an obligation for all Muslims, but one of the founders of the organization, Sister Khayriyyah Hanan Faiz, has joined that obligation with her master's degree in social work to make it her professional life. "We must be concerned about those who struggle and who have less than we, if we truly are to be considered believers in God. The need ... shows up in our families, in our backyards, in our jobs and in our communities, in our nation and worldwide. God willing, I hope to be able to spend more time with my children and grandchildren.... The world I'd like to see my grandchildren live in is a world of peace and regard for human life. This is the world I am working for now."

Working to rid our cities of social ills is more than just an opportunity to do good deeds. It is part of worship. Advocacy for justice and equality is faith in action and evidence of our belief. There is a *hadith* of the Prophet that says, "If you see something wrong, change it with your hand. If you can't do that, speak out against it. If you can't speak against it, then hate it in your heart—but that is the lowest level of faith."

True piety does not consist in turning your faces towards the east or the west—but truly pious is he who believes in God, and the Last Day, and the angels, and revelation, and the prophets; and spends his substance—however much he himself may cherish it—upon his near of kin, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and the beggars, and for the freeing of human beings from bondage; and is constant in prayer, and renders the purifying dues; and [truly pious are] they who keep their promises whenever they promise, and are patient in misfortune and hardship and in time of peril; it is they that have proved themselves true, and it is they, they who are conscious of God.

—The Qur'an, 2:177

According to the Qur'an, there are seven heavens, and of them, the sky we see each day is the lowest. To celebrate my own 50th birthday, I went skydiving through our lowest heaven, enveloped for a few minutes by the silent majesty of this creation, weightless, boundless, exhilarated. Now, I look up at the sky with renewed awe.

The Hayward area of northern California has become home to many Afghans who have fled decades of conflict, often arriving destitute via the refugee camps of Pakistan. In the US, they have worked and studied to rebuild their lives. Kite-flying was one of the popular sports banned under Afghanistan's former Taliban rulers. But in Afghanistan, as in the Indian subcontinent, kite-flying is also a competitive sport, one in which the strings are coated with a mix of glass and glue that gives them the power to cut each other. Then the flyer's goal is not to courteously avoid tangling other lines, but to engage them: Last kite up wins.

Goodi Paran
("Flying Dolls")

Hills like mother,
overlook
a crowd of boys
tugging at strings
shimmering
with powdered glass.
Goodi paran
in primary colors
cut the belly of clouds.

More than swaying and
swooping,
more than a rush of joy
and legs and elbows
more than well-orchestrated
squeals of joy,
this is a moment of renewal,
a dream of molten green
and sky
ablaze with release.

—by Zohra Saed

AVAKIAN: BILL MOKDAD

Alexandra Avakian is a free-lance photographer represented by Contact Press Images. Over two decades her clients have included *National Geographic*, *Time*, *The New York Times Magazine* and more than a dozen others.

Tayyibah Taylor is founder, publisher and editor-in-chief of *Azizah* magazine (www.azizahmagazine.com).

Nathalie Handal (www.nathaliehandal.com) is a poet, playwright and writer currently teaching at Columbia University. She is the editor of the award-winning anthology *The Poetry of Arab Women: A Contemporary Anthology* (Interlink).

Authors excerpted:

Nuar Alsadir is an Arab-American poet whose work has appeared in numerous literary journals.

Dima Hilal was born in Beirut and raised in California. Her work has appeared in various journals and anthologies.

Diana Abu-Jaber is author of two novels, *Arabian Jazz* and *Crescent*. She teaches at the University of Miami.

Naomi Shihab Nye has published many books of poetry and prose for readers of all ages, and has edited numerous anthologies.

Sarah Husain is a Pakistani-American poet and activist living in New York.

Iron Sheik is an Arab-American hip-hop artist living in Michigan.

Deema Shehabi is a writer, editor and poet who lives in northern California.

Yussef El Guindi is a Seattle-based playwright, originally from Egypt, whose work has been produced around the US and in the Arab world.

Reem Hussein is an Egyptian-American visual artist who has exhibited throughout the US.

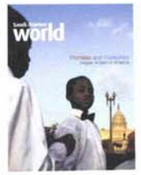
Tammam Adi is director of the Islamic Cultural Center of Eugene, Oregon.

Zohra Saed is an Afghan-American poet whose work has appeared in anthologies and literary journals worldwide.

www.cair-net.org
www.isna.net

Reader's Guide

WRITTEN BY JULIE WEISS



For students: We hope this two-page guide will help sharpen your reading skills and deepen your understanding of this issue's articles.
For teachers: We encourage reproduction and adaptation of these ideas, freely and without further permission from *Saudi Aramco World*, by teachers at any level, whether working in a classroom or through home study.

—THE EDITORS

Analyzing Visual Images

Usually the activities in this section focus on one photograph, walking you through an in-depth analysis of it. This month, we take a different approach. "Promises and Possibilities: Images of Islam in America" (page 16) is a collection of photographs—a photo essay—whose images are both visually appealing and narrative: They tell a story about Muslims in the US. To address it as a photo essay, these activities ask you to look for similarities among the photos, so you can identify themes that emerge from the collection.

Most of the time, photographs contain a horizon—that is, a horizontal line that divides the picture in the same way that the actual horizon appears to separate earth and sky. It's less common to see photos with vertical lines that divide them left and right, yet several of the photos here are split, or nearly split, vertically. The result is that the photos appear to be cut in two.

1. Choose three such photos.
2. With a partner, locate the vertical line or lines. What effect does the vertical split have on the way each picture looks? To answer the question, as you look at each of the photos, ask yourself what catches your eye first. Why? What do you look at next? What after that? Do you find the photos appealing? Interesting? What pleases your eye? What don't you like?
3. Then think about the symbolic effects of the vertical lines. Again, start by looking at each photo on its own. Write or speak the story that the photo tells. What role does the vertical line, or the split it creates, play in the story? What's the feeling? Why do you think Alexandra Avakian took the pictures this way? After you've told the stories of your three photos, discuss with your partner any pattern that emerges among the three. Write what you think the vertical lines might symbolize in each one. Remember that there are no right answers, but be prepared to explain how you came to the conclusion you did.

Class Activities

The activities in this section are designed to engage students with the material in *Saudi Aramco World* while encouraging them to connect it to the larger themes in their other studies. This month's activities revolve around three themes: **Cause and Effect**, **International Conflict and Cooperation**, and **Interpreting Evidence**.

Theme: Cause and Effect

Actions produce results. You make decisions every day about what to do to bring about something you want to happen: This is called a desired effect. You want to see your friends at school, so you have to get to the bus stop on time or else you'll miss them. You want a new bicycle, and so to bring about that effect, you have to work at the movie theater to earn the money to buy it. Of course, there are many cause-and-effect relationships that people have no control over: Hurricanes Charley, Frances and Ivan had effects no one either desired or controlled.

How can examining cause-and-effect relationships help people solve problems?

Solving a problem in the natural environment might seem pretty straightforward: To save the argan tree from extinction, outlaw cutting them down. But it's far more complicated, as Zoubida Charrouf discovered. Read "Ardent for Argan" on page 12. As you do, notice how her efforts set off what's called a "domino effect"—a sequence of effects—because the argan tree was connected to southwestern Morocco's ecology, economy and culture.

If you're going to grapple with a problem like saving the argan tree, you need to be able to think far ahead: What's your goal? What actions will lead to that goal? What other outcomes will your actions lead to? Which will be good? Which will be bad? For whom? How will you address them? Then, what else might *those* actions put into motion?

At the top of a horizontal white board, write Charrouf's goal: "Save the argan tree." Make a flowchart of her actions. Start on the left by stating the current situation. Then record what Charrouf did. By the time you finish, your flowchart should show the steps she took and their consequences. Remember that Charrouf and her colleagues could not anticipate all the consequences ahead of time, but once they happened, they had to deal with them anyway.

Now try it yourself. Identify a problem at your school or in your community, and pretend you have to ask for money and people to solve it. (It might be a lot of money and many people—that's okay.) Instead of making a flowchart, make a web. Put the problem in the center. Spin out possible actions you might take, and allies you might seek to help you. Then from each action, spin out as many effects as you can think of. Consider both the effects you're trying to accomplish and the unintended ones that might happen anyway. (If you can see that a proposed action would have bad effects, you will know ahead of time either to avoid or modify that action, or add other actions that address the bad effects.) When you've made the web, evaluate which options will be your best choices for solving the problem. If it will help you clarify your thinking, translate the web into several flowcharts, one for each proposed plan. Based on your analysis, write a proposal of how you recommend solving the problem.

When is it worth investing a lot of time to bring about a desired effect?

Sometimes, you have to keep working at something to get the effects you want. It can take a long time, as both "Ardent for Argan" and "What Was Jiroft?" (page 2) describe. Zoubida Charrouf began her work in 1984. Twenty years later, she is still involved in carrying out the program she helped begin. Similarly, archeological work goes on longer than one person's life. As one scholar notes, some 500 teams of archeologists have been digging in Mesopotamia over the past 100 years. Think about someone you know or have read about who achieved something that took a long time. What did the person do? What steps were involved in doing it? List them. For example, say your aunt is a surgeon. That involved four years of college, four years of medical school, plus internships and residencies. For parents to raise a family is an even longer process. How about an Olympic athlete's training? Write a letter to Charrouf or archeologist Yousef Madjidzadeh ("What Was Jiroft?"), and tell her or him what you admire about the perseverance their achievements show. If you've got a goal you can imagine working at for a long time, explain it in the letter. Include why you think the project will hold your interest for years. If you don't have a goal you can imagine working at for a long time, explain why you don't think you'd want to undertake something like they have, what you envision instead, and why you prefer it.

Class Activities (cont'd.)

Theme: International Conflict and Cooperation

You can read in the newspaper every day how countries deal with conflict. But of course countries deal with each other all the time on other kinds of issues, including trade, health care, famine relief and so on. In these activities, you'll look at international efforts in science and economic development.

How does social context affect scientific research?

A common belief is that the work of scholars and scientists in universities doesn't really matter to any of our daily lives. That belief, though, couldn't be farther from the truth, as you'll discover when you read "What Was Jiroft?"

Highlight the parts of the article that discuss how the political situation in Iran, and between Iran and other nations, affected the archeological work at Jiroft. Make a timeline that includes the key points in the story: 1979, 1997 and 2003. Under the time periods (pre-1979, 1979–1997, 1997–2003 and beyond), list the ways international relations affected archeological research at Jiroft.

Now step back. Identify at least two different ways that politics, economics and cultural values have affected archeological research in Iran. Write three complete sentences about each one. Make your sentences into a paragraph by writing a topic sentence that summarizes what you want to say about the relationship between international relations and scientific research. Finish with a second paragraph in which you take a position to agree or disagree with the statement, "Isolation kills science."

When, if ever, is it appropriate for outsiders to intervene in a country's environmental or cultural affairs?

"Ardent for Argan" reports that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stepped in to protect the endangered argan tree. In "What Was Jiroft?" scholars from the US, France and other countries have stepped in to protect cultural artifacts. These stories suggest that when what's at stake affects the world beyond one country's borders, others have the responsibility to intervene. But is this always true? And what might be the effects of doing so? Choose another controversial situation in the world today, and plan a class debate in which one side argues that outside intervention is acceptable while the other argues that it is not.

Theme: Interpreting Evidence

Artifacts may tell us something about an ancient civilization. On the other hand, since the artifacts themselves don't speak, it's really up to archeologists to say what the artifacts reveal. Interpreting what they say, though, is far from an exact science. Look again at "What Was Jiroft?"

How do archeologists decide what artifacts reveal about people from the past?

Yousef Madjidzadeh believes he has found the legendary city of Aratta. Other archeologists aren't so sure. On what evidence does Madjidzadeh base his belief? What do other archeologists say about his conclusions? Fill in the chart below to help you answer the questions.

Based on this evidence…	Madjidzadeh concluded that:	But other archeologists concluded that:
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.

How might future archeologists interpret "artifacts" from us?

It's easy enough to accept what archeologists say about civilizations that existed thousands of years ago. But think about how future archeologists might interpret what they find from our world, say, 4500 years from now. You'll quickly see it's not nearly so clear-cut. Let's say archeologists in the year 6504 have uncovered the remains of what appears to be a settlement. They might find that nearly every home has a room with a box in it, and that all the chairs in the room face the box. That's what they would observe, and even though *you* know it's a television set, would they know that? If they couldn't figure that out, what might they conclude? Perhaps that the people in 2004 believed the box was a kind of a god, and that they organized their homes around paying homage to it? That some homes probably belonged to priests because they had more than one of the boxes? You get the picture.

As a class, brainstorm a list of everyday objects—anything from dental floss to cans of soup to Palm Pilots. Divide the class into groups, and assign each group five of the artifacts on the list. With your group, prepare a presentation about the objects from the point of view of archeologists in 6504. Show a sample of each object, if possible, along with a description of the context in which you would have found it. For each object, come up with several ideas of what it might have been. You'll probably find that the incorrect analyses are more interesting and more revealing than the correct ones. So have fun with the exercise—and remember that you're dealing with the serious issue of how archeologists interpret the objects they find.

Julie Weiss is an education consultant based in Lowell, Massachusetts. She holds a Ph.D. in American studies and develops curricula and assessments in social studies, media literacy and English as a second language.

Suggestions**for**Reading

Readers of *Saudi Aramco World* who want to range more widely or delve more deeply than a bimonthly magazine can do will find interesting material, most of it recently published, in this list. Without endorsing the views of any of the authors, the editors 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; 10-digit International Standard Book Numbers (ISBN) are given to facilitate ordering. Please do not order books from *Saudi Aramco World*.

Ancient Laws and Modern Problems: The Balance Between Justice and a Legal System. John Sassoon. 2001, Third Millennium, 0-9536969-9-5, $27 hb.

Five thousand years ago, one's family and clan provided identity and security. Intertribal justice was often based on the law of talion; "an eye for an eye and a life for a life" maintained a rough equity among nomadic groups. In the subsequent thousand years, city life and social classes evolved, customs and precedents were codified, punishments became both harsher and more standardized, and laws began to be codified. We have found four law collections, none of them complete, in Sumer and Akkad. A fifth, that of Hammurabi, was found in Elam. To explain these laws and juxtapose them with our modern system, Sassoon invents a citizen of Sumer named Atu. The search for truth was paramount, he explains, using evidence, witnesses, oaths and, as a last resort, the river test. Family, children, slavery, the status of women, and matters as disparate as rape and adoption were treated in the context of property. Many punishments were harsher when applied to free men or nobles, who were often closer to their nomadic roots than their city-dwelling social inferiors, and so perceived talion as more fair than monetary punishments. The reader is left with the impression that the development of our own legal system has not been a linear progression from barbarism to civilized treatment, and that we must continue to review our laws, trials and appeals processes to achieve truth and justice for all. —CHARLES SWEENEY

Aristotle's Children: How Christians, Muslims and Jews Rediscovered Ancient Wisdom and Illuminated the Dark Ages. Richard E. Rubenstein. 2003, Harcourt, 0-15-100720-9, $27 hb; 0-15-603009-8, $15 pb.

The author of this history of medieval thought is a professor of conflict resolution, and he brings an unexpected modern flavor to his subject, showing us how conflict resolution lay at the heart of the heated debate between faith and reason in the young universities of Europe. The scientific and philosophical writings of the great Greek thinker Aristotle were lost to the West after the fall of Rome. But his works were saved in the East, translated into Syriac and then Arabic, and used to ignite a great era of scientific discovery in the Arab–Islamic world in the eighth and ninth centuries. The Arabic versions of Aristotle and the works of his Muslim commentators were later translated into Latin at Toledo and other centers, and found their way into the universities at Paris, Montpelier, Oxford, Padua and Bologna. Four centuries before Francis Bacon and René Descartes, a recognizably modern, rational perspective, based on Aristotle and his greatest Arab commentators—particularly Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroës)—swept through the universities, advanced largely by Dominican and Franciscan clerics. Religious conservatives sought to stem the tide. The resulting struggle between faith and reason became a culture war in Europe, leading eventually to the scientific revolution, the Protestant reformation and other sweeping changes. The author keeps his story relevant, lively and at times surprising: It's rare to find a book that mentions both George W. Bush's war in Iraq and Augustine of Hippo's view of evil in the same sentence. —ROBERT W. LEBLING

Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs, A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents. Collected and adapted: Sarah Conover and Freda Crane; illustrated: Valerie Wahl. 2004, Eastern Washington U. P., 0-910055-94-7, $19.95 pb.

This is an anthology of nearly 40 brief parables and folk tales—all just the right length for bedtime reading to young children—that draws from the broadest possible range of Islamic cultures, from China to Morocco. Some are from the Qur'an, others are from the *hadith*—the reported sayings of the Prophet Muhammad—and others are from folk traditions, including half a dozen classic Joha/Nasreddin Hoja stories. Interspersed are proverbs from equally wide-ranging sources. It's an eclectic, delightful presentation that will appeal to readers of any religious background who seek intercultural wisdom tales. All the stories are explained and sourced at the back of the book, which increases its value to students of Islam and world cultures, who will find in it a pleasurable, memorable path to understanding some of the life wisdom of Islam. —DICK DOUGHTY

The Breadwinner. Deborah Ellis. 2000, Groundwood Books, 0-88899-416-8, $5.95 / C$7.95 pb.

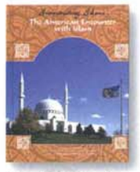
Parvana's Journey: Sequel to The Breadwinner. Deborah Ellis. 2002, Groundwood Books, 0-88899-519-9, $5.95 / C$7.95 pb.

Understanding the humanitarian gravity of contemporary Afghanistan is hard enough for an adult who has never been there, and it's even harder if you are younger. Ellis is a youth counselor in Toronto who also has recorded oral histories of women in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan. They inspired her character Parvana, age 11, middle of three daughters to an English-educated historian father and a magazine-writer mother, both of whom, at the beginning of Ellis's tale, have been barred from their jobs in Kabul by the Taliban. Life unravels quickly: Parvana's father is imprisoned, and she dresses as a boy to go out to earn a meager family living in the market. Later, she is separated from her mother and sisters, and when her father is released, they set out to find them. Her father soon dies, and she picks up an abandoned baby as well as an irascible, wounded boy as she walks through the bleak hills, guided by the thread of hope of reunion with the remains of her family in Pakistan. She finds solace by writing imaginary notes to a friend in France. Though she is scarred by horrific abuse and travail, her resourcefulness and courage make her heroism a universal metaphor of hope. —DICK DOUGHTY

How Greek Science Passed to the Arabs. De Lacy O'Leary. 2002, Kegan Paul, 0-7103-0747-0, £75 / $127.50 hb; 1979, Ares Publishers, 0-89005-282-4, $20 pb.

De Lacy Evans O'Leary, born in 1872, was a British historian and lecturer in Aramaic and Syriac at the University of Bristol. This book is one of his well-known classics, first issued in 1949, and, as such, it's more useful to scholars than to the average reader. O'Leary explores the role of early Christianity as a Hellenizing force in the Middle East, and traces the flow of Greek science and philosophy through the Nestorians and their Monophysite rivals to the intellectually curious—and somewhat Persianized—Arab Muslim Abbasids who ruled Mesopotamia from the eighth century. He pays close attention to the translators who brought the classics of Greek science into Syriac and Arabic, and to the cities that served as important science centers: Basra, Baghdad, Harran, Jundishapur and the rest. He also credits Bactria and India for their roles in transmitting Alexandrian Greek science by land and sea to the Abbasids. The Mesopotamian patchwork quilt of ethnicity and religion that O'Leary so carefully describes turned out to be a very fertile environment for scientific inquiry. Christians of many sects, Jews, Zoroastrians and Sunni and Shiite Muslims all contributed to the explosion of scientific knowledge.

They worked together, with reasonable tolerance for each other's differences, in a way that gives hope for the present-day process of nation-building in Iraq. —ROBERT W. LEBLING



Introducing Islam. General Editors: Khaled Abou El Fadl, Shams Inati and John Calvert. 2004, Mason Crest Publishers, 1-59084-696-6, $183.60 (8-volume series), $22.95 each, hb. (Titles: *The American Encounter with Islam; Heroes and Holy Places; Islam, Christianity, Judaism; Islamic Fundamentalism; Islam: The Basics; Muslims and the West; What Muslims Think, How They Live; Who Are the Muslims?*)

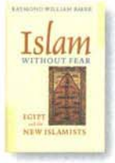
Written from points of view interior to Islam and to Muslim experience, this is a world-cultures textbook series addressed to North American students in grades 7 through 12. Each volume is slightly more than 100 pages long with copious, smartly captioned illustrations and an index, glossary and chronology. Together or in combinations to suit a curriculum, this is a solid foundation unit on the faith of Islam and its role in both world history and contemporary United States culture. —DICK DOUGHTY

Islam and Science. Muzaffar Iqbal. 2002, Ashgate Publishing, 0-7546-0799-2, £50 / $89.95 hb; 0-7546-0800-X, £17.99 / $29.95 pb.

The role of Islam in the modern world is much debated, and some claim that Islamic cultures cannot nourish scientific progress today as they did in the Middle Ages. Iqbal, who heads the Center for Islam and Sciences in Canada, tackles questions like this head-on. He analyzes the rise and fall of science in the Islamic world and probes the reasons for the "withering" of the scientific tradition there even as Western science was on the rise. Iqbal assesses the impact of colonization on scientific inquiry in Islamic cultures and weighs the prospects for reviving the role of science in today's Islamic societies. He focuses on the "Islam and science discourse," i.e., the interplay of a strongly held religious faith and the natural human impulse to understand the world and its complexities: At times, he finds, the two forces conflict; on other occasions they reinforce one another. Iqbal argues that religion did not cause the decline of science in the Islamic world, and that more important factors were fragmentation of the Islamic empire following the Mongol conquests and the misguided priorities of the fragments that remained—the Ottoman, Safavid and Timurid Empires. —ROBERT W. LEBLING

Islam Is… An Experience of Dialogue and Devotion. Mary Margaret Funk. Introduction: Dr. John Borelli; Afterword: Shahid Athar, MD. 2003, Lantern Books, 1-59056-061-2, $12 / C$16 pb.

Since 2001, interfaith dialogue among Judaism, Christianity and Islam has become a matter of urgency for many. The author is a Benedictine nun who is executive director of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue, a program that embraces Christian discussion with non-Christians who have similarly made a religious calling the highest purpose of their outward and inward lives. "We who call ourselves Christians are at a turning point in our relationship with Muslims in our shared world," she writes, one that requires us "to look deeply into the heart of Islam and its faith, its plurality of cultures and civilization. If we do not, we miss a jewel in our midst and risk generations and generations of conflict because of our ignorance." The book begins with Borelli's account of the mechanics of the Catholic Church's recent interfaith dialogue initiatives in the United States, in detail sufficient to help any group of any faith plan comparable activities. Funk then tells of her own background and her journey into "catching" the spirit of Islam through years of intermittent discussions and courses. As she moves into descriptions of basic tenets of Islam, she focuses on their spiritual significance to the individual and never underestimates their deeper complexities when refracted through history and culture. The afterword is a commentary on her journey by one of her long-standing Muslim colleagues in dialogue. —DICK DOUGHTY

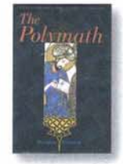


Islam Without Fear: Egypt and the New Islamists. Raymond William Baker. 2003, Harvard U.P., 0-674-01203-8, $29.99 pb.

Baker delves into a question largely ignored by Western academics and the mainstream media: Where is the moderate voice of Islam and what is it saying? Using Egypt, historically at the forefront in the development of Islamic thought and jurisprudence, as an example, he highlights the leaders, philosophies and aspirations of the group of Islamic moderates known as the New Islamists. The book focuses on half a dozen of the most influential of them—a diverse group consisting of religious scholars, journalists, members of the legal community and historians. Baker shows the major differences between, on the one hand, moderate Islamic reformers and their attempts to offer faith-based solutions to the social and political problems of the 21st century and, on the other, Islamic extremists and the sometimes violent means they use in their attempts to bring about change. Muhammad al Ghazzaly, Kamal Abul Magd, Fahmy Huwaidy and Yusuf al Qaradawy—the last regarded as one of the world's most influential Islamic scholars—are examined in light of their positions on socio-economic issues, foreign policy, education and the arts. This book serves as a valuable resource for those wanting to gain a better understanding of moderate Islam today. —HELEN EL MALLAKH

Lady Anne Blunt: A Biography. H. V. F. Winstone. 2003, Barzan Publishing, 1-900988-57-7, £19.95 hb.

This meticulous account of an extraordinary life brings Lady Anne Blunt out of the shadow of her husband, Wilfred Scawen Blunt, a famous poet and anti-imperialist and a notorious Lothario. Granddaughter of Lord Byron, Lady Anne moved in the highest artistic and political circles of her time, both in England and in Egypt, where the Blunts had a second home near Cairo. Lady Anne developed a love of horses early in life, and this passion led to a search for pure Arabians. On an arduous journey to Hail, in today's Saudi Arabia, in 1878 and 1879, she became the first western woman ever to reach the Najd and saw the fabled stables of the region's ruler, Ibn Rashid. Her account of her journey, titled *A Pilgrimage to Nejd*, is a classic Arabian travel tale rivaling those of Palgrave and Doughty, and the horses she brought back to England formed the nucleus of the famed Crabbet Stud she founded in Sussex. Winstone, author of a biography of Gertrude Bell, another important female figure in the history of the modern Middle East, draws upon Lady Anne's diaries, papers and letters, and his forthright style should garner a variety of readers, from horse fanciers and Victorian-era literary buffs to armchair adventurers and admirers of the lives of notable women. —KYLE PAKKA

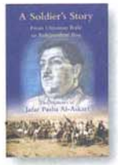


The Polymath. Bensalem Himmich; Roger Allen, tr. 2004, American University in Cairo Press, 977-424-821-X, $22.50 hb.

In this fictionalized account of Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406), we encounter the historian, scholar, diplomat, philosopher and jurist in his 50's, a recent widower, serving as university professor and judge in Cairo. The story recounts incidents in Ibn Khaldun's life—a compassionate ruling in a domestic case, his pilgrimage to Makkah to cure his grieving heart, his remarriage, his confrontation with Tamerlane—and the reader finds the conflicted scholar very sympathetic, wishing him well in avoiding pitfalls and seeking happiness and justice in an environment that is often cruel and unfair. Ibn Khaldun emerges from these pages as a cultured and devout servant of his God, a valued teacher and judge, and a faithful husband and friend. —CHARLES SWEENEY

A Ride To Khiva: Travels and Adventures in Central Asia. Frederick Burnaby. Orig. pub.: 1877. 1970, Ayer, 0-4050-3010-X, $23.95 hb; 1997, Oxford U.P., 0-19-280367-0, $4.98 pb.

Captain Frederick Gustavus Burnaby of the Royal Horse Guards was larger than life. At 193 centimeters (6'4") and more than 90 kilos (200 lbs), he was one of the strongest men in Europe. He had studied in Germany and spoke seven languages, including Russian, Turkish and Arabic. At his own expense, he took a long leave to travel across Europe to St. Petersburg; from there he set out for the Khanate of Khiva on the Aral Sea (part of modern-day Uzbekistan), which Russia had annexed just two years before. It was the worst winter in memory; the Russians were rumored to have banned foreigners from the area; and if his own government had known of his extended reconnaissance across a thousand miles of frozen steppes and deserts, it likely would have forbidden his journey. Burnaby was completely comfortable in his imperialism and his Protestant faith, but he was no bigot. In this thrilling memoir, written to inform British public opinion of Russia's ambitions in the areas bordering India, his observations are clear-eyed and prescient; the humanity of the Russians, Kazakhs, Kirghiz and Bukharis comes through at every turn. His story, one of the early moves in the Great Game, is still fascinating today. —CHARLES SWEENEY



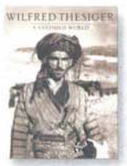
A Soldier's Story: From Ottoman Rule to Independent Iraq. The Memoirs of Jafar Pasha Al-Askari (1885–1936). William Facey and Najdat Fathi Safwat, eds.; Mustafa Tariq Al-Askari, tr. 2003, Arabian Publishing Ltd., 0-9544792-0-3, £25 / $39.95 hb. (Orig., in Arabic, Mudhakkirat Ja'far Al-'Askari, 1988, Dar al-Laam, London.)
In a telling passage early in his memoirs, Askari, an Iraqi from Mosul and the son of a colonel in the Ottoman army, visits a museum in Berlin where, for the first time, he sees the fabled walls of Babylon. Askari, angry and dismayed with the Ottomans who allowed the treasures of his native country to be taken, is also aware that their exhibition in Germany allows greater awareness of Iraq's civilization to spread. This moment, told in Askari's straightforward and familiar manner, reveals the complex forces at play in his heart that would lead him to switch from the Ottoman to the British side in World War I and become one of the Arab Revolt's greatest generals. Recounting a life full of intrigue, adventure and grand political drama, Askari's compelling memoir has a fitting opening: a description of his seven-day river voyage from Mosul to Baghdad aboard a *kalak*, a river craft made of inflated goat skins. Rising quickly through the ranks of the Ottoman army, Askari, while commanding the Sanusi forces in Cyrenaica (modern-day eastern Libya), was captured by the British and imprisoned in the Cairo Citadel where he gradually became convinced that the British offered more hope for Arab independence. Askari's development as an Arab nationalist, and his crucial role in the Arab Revolt and subsequent career in the foundation of the modern state of Iraq—twice prime minister, five times defense minister and twice Iraqi minister in London—places him at the center of movements whose reverberations are still felt today. Well-respected and liked by many of the key figures in the early 20th century in Europe and the Middle East, Askari, who spoke seven languages and was famous for his wit and ability to forge alliances, was assassinated outside Baghdad in 1936 while attempting to forestall Iraq's first military coup. Although his memoirs end with him in Aleppo as military governor in 1919, the ample footnotes and appendices, which include speeches, letters and articles written by and about Askari, round out the life of one of the region's most fascinating and influential characters. —KYLE PAKKA

To the Heart of the Nile: Lady Florence Baker and the Exploration of Central Africa. Pat Shipman. 2004, Morrow, 0-06-050555-9, $25.95 hb.
Barbara Maria Szasz was born in Transylvania in 1845. In her first 14 years she was caught up in a revolution, lost both her parents and was given to an Armenian family that named her Florenz, educated her and brought her up in their harem. At 14, she was put up for sale at a slave auction. Sam Baker, the second-highest bidder, kidnapped the beautiful young girl, and they traveled across Europe to Cairo, where they undertook a rescue mission to find James Grant and John Speke, discoverers of Lake Victoria and the source of the Nile. After hardship, illness and remarkable difficulties, they found the lost explorers—as well as Lake Albert, Murchison Falls and the source of the White Nile. Now named Florence, she and Sam married and returned to Victorian England, where Sam was knighted. In 1869 the Khedive of Egypt made Sam Pasha of Equatoria, with the charge of stopping the slave trade and opening the White Nile and Lake Albert to ship traffic. In four years Sam made a good start at doing so, and he and Florence were highly regarded by the local people well into the 20th century. This astonishing tale is a love story; a story of adventure, discovery and exploration; an insight into Victorian society; and a tale of heroism, perfidy and venality, all set against a backdrop of Ottoman luxury, English country life and the Nile River Valley. It is a great read.
—CHARLES SWEENEY

Tunisia: A Journey Through a Country that Works. Georgie Ann Geyer. 2004, Stacey International / Interlink, 1-900988-43-7, $27.95 hb.
A senior member of the US foreign press corps and an award-winning, syndicated columnist on international affairs, Geyer found in her years of global travels what at first seemed an anomaly: A small country where non-governmental development organizations outnumbered religious fundamentalist groups, where pragmatism trumped nationalism more often than not, and where "development," however fitful, largely served the common good. How have the current leaders and peoples of Tunisia tuned their unique symphony of histories, ethnicities, resources and aspirations to make harmonies more audible than dissonances? Geyer talked to Tunisians, from the president to Bedouins, and read up on the country's history. The result is an economic, political and cultural travelogue, a national portrait by a friendly but not uncritical outsider who brings more than 30 years of Middle East reporting experience to her pages. The book's subtitle—taken from a column by Geyer in the early 1990's—is today a common, proud slogan for Tunisia's development and investment sectors, part of a positive national self-image that serves as an inspiring model in the world today. —DICK DOUGHTY

The Unfurling. Ni'mah Ismail Nawwab. 2004, Selwa Press, 0-9701157-9-2, $14.95 pb.
Western readers with preconceived notions about what it means to be a woman in today's Saudi Arabia will find this book an eye-opener. Those without preconceptions will find it a most pleasurable learning experience. Ni'mah Nawwab, Saudi poet, essayist, editor and photographer, writes fluently in English, sharing in poetry her thoughts, her emotions, her important life experiences. She speaks of her identity as a Saudi woman, of her family, of her personal joys and frustrations, and of the fractious and fascinating world beyond her own circle. She is surprisingly at ease in juxtaposing the traditional and the modern. With poetry, she explores the horrors of war and terrorism, and somehow finds precious remaining scraps of humanity in the wreckage. Nawwab deals realistically with life's problems, yet she emerges as an optimist, a champion of the human spirit. Her poems are refreshingly honest and unafraid. —ROBERT W. LEBLING

A Voyage to Arabia Felix (1708–1710). Jean de la Roque. 2003, Oleander Press, 0-906672-50-3, £45 hb.
This unusual reprint sheds light on a little-known corner of history: 18th-century France's maritime trade with Arabia, specifically the beginning years of the Yemen coffee trade. In those days, Yemen was the world's only commercial cultivator of the coffee plant, and most exports of the precious bean were shipped to the Levant and Europe through Turkish and Egyptian merchants. Coffee had first been introduced to France only four decades earlier by a visiting emissary from the Ottoman sultan. Levantine businessmen then opened a few coffee shops in Paris, and before long, the beverage became a national vogue, though coffee beans were sometimes hard to find and very expensive. The two merchant ships that set sail from the Breton port of St. Malo in 1708 were France's first bid to bypass the coffee middlemen of the Mediterranean to ensure regular supplies and significantly lower costs. De la Roque's account of this first commercial voyage around Africa to the Yemeni ports of Aden, Mocha and Bait al-Faqih, translated into English in 1732, is attractively reproduced in facsimile—the first new edition of this work in 260 years. The volume also includes four other related works, including de la Roque's fascinating treatises on coffee cultivation, customs and history. Also featured is M. Cloupet's *New Travels in Arabia Felix* (1788), offering some perspective on the coffee trade from near the end of the century. Archeologist and Arabia specialist Carl Phillips provides helpful introductions to the texts as well as two solid bibliographies.
—ROBERT W. LEBLING



Wilfred Thesiger: A Vanished World. Wilfred Thesiger; introduction: Alexander Maitland. 2001, Norton, 0-393-05086-6, $35 / C$50 hb.
Edited under Thesiger's direction from the more than 25,000 negatives in the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford, this coffee-table volume focuses on the black-and-white photographs that in Thesiger's other works play only supporting roles. He was a superb photographer, and his eye for the human figure was sculptural. Working under extreme conditions, he produced photographs that stand with the best from the picture magazines of the mid-20th century. His images show not only the intimacies he earned but also, at times, hints of a subject's honest wariness of the tall white traveler from the industrialized—and colonizing—West. The "vanished world," of course, is the world in which the peoples of East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and the Iraqi marshes lived largely without connections to the world from which Thesiger came. Sadly missing from the book, however, are his earliest photographs from his sojourns among the Danakil, Nuba and Nuer peoples, images that he dismissed as "just snaps, ...evocative for me but of no artistic merit." It's a pity, as a few samples would have helped trace his development as a photographer, as well as offer glimpses, however imperfect, of the places and people so vividly described in his writings. —DICK DOUGHTY

Suggestions for Listening

REVIEWED BY CHRIS NICKSON

Egypt. Youssou N'Dour. Nonesuch
The half-griot Senegalese singer who's made his name as Africa's leading vocalist with his relentlessly percussive *mbalax* style takes an abrupt change of direction with an "unplugged" celebration of the peaceful, contemplative side of Islam. Mixing Egyptian strings with West African drums, N'Dour sounds more committed here than he has in years. It's a labor of love, recorded over a couple of years, with arrangements that bring to mind the timeless work of Um Kulthum. This is a beautiful, inspired album.

Amassakoul. Tinariwen. World Village
Tuareg nomads from Western Sahara, the members of Tinariwen grew up in the 1980's in the refugee camps of Libya, where they began making music. This is their second album, and it refines the fire of the first, refracting monochordal blues and resonant, often primal desert rock through the prism of their own wandering experiences. The roots of the blues—indeed, of most western music—are exposed here.

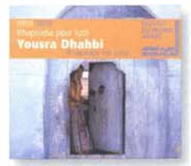
Arabian Travels and **Arabian Travels 2.** Various artists. Six Degrees
These are two collections of Arab and Arab-influenced electronica, not so much for the dance floor as for the headspace. There's a nod to this genre's two-decade history in a remix of Dissidenten's pioneering "Telephone Arab," and Mercan Dede and Samsara Sound System both acquit themselves well, although the remix of Dahmane El Harrachi's classic "Ya Rayah" is superfluous. Aimed at the cutting edge, it doesn't always get there, but when it works, this recording is quite thought-provoking.

Emm el Khilkhal. Oriental Music Ensemble. Birzeit University
Composed of four teachers from Palestine's National Conservatory of Music, this group focuses on instrumental pieces elegantly played. There are works from famous composers such as Muhammad Abdul Wahab and the Rahbani Brothers, but also a traditional Greek tune and a lengthy improvisation. There's a careful balance between the tradition of Arab music and modernity, and a true ensemble feel in the dynamics of the performances that gives a fine edge to the pieces. With instructors like these, the students at the Conservatory have a bright future.

Tassoumakan. Issa Bagoyogo. Six Degrees
Over the course of three albums, Malian Bagoyogo (known also as "Techno Issa") has been working to find his own seamless mix between the traditional sounds of his native Wassoulou area of Mali and 21st-century beats and loops. This time he and his producers have nailed it perfectly as the sound of the *kamele n'goni* ("young man's harp") blends with guitar and bass for music that crosses from soul to blues to R&B, all imbued with the ineffable spirit that sets the music of Mali apart. It's heady, even intoxicating at times, and some of the most modern African music to be heard.

Treasures of Algerian Music. Various artists. Institut du Monde Arabe
Culled from the archives of Algerian radio, these are the roots of modern Algerian music, the recordings where the early street sounds of both *chaabi* and *raï* begin to coalesce into the definitive genres we know today. But there's also plenty of Berber *kabyle* music and other styles, too, making this two-CD set invaluable to anyone with an interest in music history. More important, there's plenty of outstanding music, whether it's the great Dahmane El Harrachi singing the anthemic "Ya Rayah" (which can be compared with Rachid Taha's more recent version on *Made in Medina*) or the proto-raï of Ahmed Wahby's "Fat Elli Fat." The album's title doesn't lie: This is indeed a treasure box.

As Far As: A DJ Mix. DJ Cheb I Sabbah. Six Degrees
Like several other recordings from the Algerian-born DJ who now lives in San Francisco, this is essentially a musical journey from India to North and West Africa with touches of avant-garde jazz along the way. Interestingly, the North African tracks are the strongest, especially Makale's "Salla," where the beats hit nice and hard. But, as they should, the tracks slide seamlessly into one another, making for smooth, easy transitions between not only artists, but continents.



Rhapsody for Lute. Yousra Dhahbi. Institut du Monde Arabe
There are very few recognized female *'ud* virtuosos. Dhahbi, as part of the first female generation to find acclaim on the instrument, shows in this live recording that she has earned her plaudits. There's a wonderful sense of meditation in her playing, whether on the lengthy "Inquiétude" or on "Chuchotements." She's an excellent improviser who builds phrase on phrase and extends her ideas to communicate emotion, as on "Joie." At present this world-class instrumentalist is barely known outside the Arab world, but given this debut, that will soon change.

Sahara Lounge. Various artists. Putumayo
Though Arab electronica has become a force in the club world, for the most part this "Lounge" isn't where you'll find that force. There are a few great tracks—Soap Kills, Justin Adams and Sharif—that take chances with their sounds, but this relatively brief compilation is essentially Arab pop with pumped-up beats. The resulting music will leave your memory almost as soon as it enters—and it duplicates the remix of Dahmane El Harrachi's "Ya Rayah" (see **Treasures of Algerian Music** and **Arabian Travels.**)

The Spirit of Fès. Various artists. Le Chant du Monde
The annual Fes Festival has in recent years become the world's leading festival of spiritual music. It attracts performers from around the globe, from all faiths and denominations, who come to sing the music that is sacred to them. This live, two-CD set, recorded at the 2003 event, captures the breadth of the festival, from Tibet's Yungchen Lhamo to the gospel of the Anointed Jackson Sisters, with strong representation from the Arab world, including Morocco's own Women's Hadra Ensemble of Taroudant, Farida, and the Maqam Ensemble from Baghdad. Eclectic and remarkably powerful.

Events&Exhibitions

Authority and pomp radiate from the watercolor "Maharaja Madho Singh Marches to the Hunt," attributed to Sahib Ram and painted in Jaipur about 1755.

Arts of Mughal India presents some 30 works of art, including brilliantly colored, intricately detailed manuscript paintings and luxury objects in jade and lacquered wood, that offer a glimpse into the conceptually creative and technically innovative tradition of Mughal painting. In the early 16th century, the conquest of northern India by Babur (1526–1530) ushered in one of the most remarkable political, cultural and artistic periods in the history of the subcontinent. Babur was a direct descendent of both the Mongol conqueror Genghiz Khan and the Turkic warlord Timur, eponym of the Timurid dynasty of Iran and Central Asia. Babur and his successors—the Mughals, a term deriving from *Mongol*—ruled over India until 1858. The wealth and opulence of their courts so impressed foreign visitors that the term *mogul* entered the English language as a synonym for power and wealth. With the help of Persian painters, who migrated to India at the invitation of the second Mughal ruler, Humayun, early Mughal painting synthesized the refinement of Persian painting and the dynamism of Hindu compositions with western naturalism. The wide-ranging interests of the third Mughal ruler, Akbar (1556–1605), encouraged the extensive production of illustrated Hindu and Muslim epics, historical narratives and portraiture. Akbar's son Jahangir (1605–1627) was more interested in highly finished individual compositions and portrait studies, drawing on both Persian pictorial ideals and European naturalism. During the reign of his successor, Shah Jahan (1628–1657), the patron of the Taj Mahal, Mughal fascination with portraiture reached its zenith. The relative naturalism of earlier Mughal painting gave way to highly formal portraits, transforming figures into iconic images of power and grandeur assembled in a series of lavishly produced royal albums. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, **Washington, D.C.**, through February 5, 2005.

Steel: A Mirror of Life in Iran features some 250 objects from the renowned Tanavoli Collection supported by Persian miniatures and manuscripts selected from the Library's collections. Steel was an integral part of economic, social and religious life in Iran during the Safavid and Qajar periods (16th to early 20th century). Through the display of tools and implements used at home, in the bazaar, in war, on ceremonial and religious occasions, for horsemanship and for entertainment, the exhibition tells the story of traditional life in pre-modern Iran. Spoons, pen cases, padlocks, mirrors and tiny axes used to cut sugar blocks; helmets, buckles, standards and sheathes; cosmetic tools, jewelers' tools and butchers' scales: Almost every item, no matter how mundane and pragmatic its function, is an example of exquisite workmanship by an Iranian craftsman. ⓘ www.cbl.ie/whatson. Chester Beatty Library, **Dublin**, through September 15.

Archaeologies of Childhood: The First Years of Life in Roman Egypt gives a glimpse into the lives of children in that place and time. As they do today, factors including status, ethnicity, gender and individual circumstances made for varying experiences of childhood. Toys, dolls, remnants of children's clothing, images of children, protective amulets and educational tools all show what children looked like and how they learned and played in a North African culture 2000 years ago—when child mortality rates were high, health care and education limited, natural dangers abounded and child abandonment and slavery were facts of life. The exhibition also will feature material resulting from investigations of a child mummy from Roman Egypt. Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, **Ann Arbor, Michigan**, through September 15.

From Homer to the Harem: The Art of Jean Lecomte du Nouÿ displays more than 100 of his paintings, oil sketches and drawings, including some Orientalist pictures whose subjects were derived from his travels to Egypt and Morocco. This is the first retrospective of Lecomte du Nouÿ's work since his death in 1923. Dahesh Museum of Art, **New York**, through September 19.

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 may be requested by any school, district, office of education or university. ⓘ awair@igc.org, www.mepc.org or awaironline.org; 510-704-0517. Sites and dates include: **Jackson, Mississippi**, September 20–24; **Tulsa, Oklahoma**, October 2; **College Station, Texas**, October 8; **Athens, Georgia**, October 29–30; **New Haven, Connecticut**, November 6; **Madison, Wisconsin**, November 13; **San Francisco, California**, November 20; **Cincinnati, Ohio**, December 2–3.

Nomads and Villagers: Woven Work From Around the World: The Valerie Justin Collection is an exhibition of more than 40 traditional flat-woven textiles from the Middle East, Central Asia, North Africa and the Americas. The pieces include 19th- and 20th-century kilim and sumak rugs, saddle and food bags, tent and animal trappings and shawls and blankets in a variety of techniques. A video about the pieces in the collection, aimed at middle-school students, is available. ⓘ www.ncsu.edu/gad, 919-515-3503. Gallery of Art & Design, **North Carolina** State University, **Raleigh**, through September 26.

Kings on the Tigris: Assyrian Palace Reliefs presents large alabaster reliefs depicting religious-magical scenes from the Assyrian court of Assurnasirpal II in Nimrud. The panels, newly restored from fragments, testify to the culture of the Assyrian Empire of the ninth century BC, showing in images and words the deeds of the rulers of the Tigris as well as aspects of life in Assyria. Catalog. Albertinum, **Dresden**, through September 29.

Heaven on Earth: Art from Islamic Lands is an intimate introduction to the decorative arts of the Islamic world that draws from the State Hermitage Collection of St. Petersburg and the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art of London. The show's 133 works range from the eighth to the 19th century, and they highlight the varying roles of religion, geometry and the human figure as well as the tension between the glorification of God on the one hand and the glorification of earthly rulers—often artistic patrons—on the other. Five pages from the 16th-century Royal "Houghton" *Shahnama (Book of Kings)*, one of the finest manuscripts to come from the arts of the book in Persia, is a highlight of the show. Catalog. ⓘ www.hermitage-rooms.org.uk. Hermitage Rooms, Somerset House, **London**, through October 3.

Tutankhamen—The Golden Beyond: Treasures from the Valley of the Kings is a world-wide exhibition of some 120 artifacts from the tomb of Tutankhamen and other royal tombs of the 18th Dynasty (15th and 14th centuries BC), many shown for the first time outside the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. **Basel [Switzerland]** Museum of Ancient Art and Ludwig Collection, through October 3; Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle, **Bonn, Germany**, November 4 through May 1, 2005.

ReOrient 2004: Sixth Annual Festival of Short Plays Exploring the Middle East includes *Between the Eyes* by MacArthur Award winner Naomi Wallace, *Compression of Compassion* by Kevin Doyle and *Chocolate in Heat: Growing Up Arab in America* by Betty Shamieh and nine other plays and staged readings. ⓘ www.theatreofyugen.org. Noh Space, **San Francisco**, through October 10; Ashby Stage, **Berkeley, California**, October 15–24.

Caliphs and Kings: The Art and Influence of Islamic Spain. In the eighth century, allies of the first Islamic dynasty, the Umayyads, conquered much of the Iberian Peninsula, today's Spain and Portugal. For the next seven centuries, "al-Andalus"—as the region was known in Arabic—was the setting for, as Yale scholar Maria Rosa Menocal has written, "the chapter of Europe's culture when Jews, Christians and Muslims lived side by side and, despite their intractable differences and enduring hostilities, nourished a complex culture of tolerance." The sweeping influences of Islamic Spain are highlighted in 89 objects dating from the time of the Arab conquest in the eighth century through the 15th century, when the Muslims were expelled from Spain. The exhibition is part of the Washington-based Mosaic Foundation's 2004 Al-Andalus Festival Cultural Program. Catalog $35. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through October 17.

SACKLER GALLERY

The Trip to the Nile: Maxime du Camp and Gustave Flaubert in Egypt. A decade after the invention of photography in 1839, the French government financed a photographic expedition to Egypt, Palestine and Syria. It was led by Maxime du Camp, accompanied by Gustave Flaubert, then an unknown writer. It produced a collection of 214 photographs, of which du Camp published 125 in Paris in 1855, and inspired diary entries and letters by Flaubert; together, their words and images constitute an impressive documentation not only of the monuments but also of Egypt's people. Sixty photographs are displayed. The book *The Trip to the Nile 1849–1850: Maxime du Camp and Gustave Flaubert in Egypt, Palestine and Syria* is on sale for €18. Kestner-Museum, **Hannover, Germany**, through October 17.

The Book of Curiosities, probably composed in Baghdad before AD 1050, is a unique collection of maps of the then-known world, stretching from Taiwan to a western island labeled *Inghiltirah*. Its 96 pages have been unbound for conservation, so the exhibition offers a unique insight into the state of geographical information in the golden age of Islam—and a reminder of the Muslim knowledge without which the European Renaissance would not have occurred. Saudi Aramco contributed toward the acquisition of the book by the Bodleian Library. Bodleian Library, **Oxford, England**, through October 30.

Eternal Egypt: Masterworks of Ancient Art From the British Museum presents 3000 years of history from one of the world's earliest and most fascinating civilizations. Ranging from intimate possessions to monumental statues, the 144 diverse works include portraits and personal items of famous pharaohs such as Akhenaten, Amenhotep III, Tutankhamen and Ramses the Great. None have been previously exhibited in North America. Local restaurants offer Egyptian-themed menus during the exhibition's run. Royal **British Columbia** Museum, **Victoria**, through October 31.

From Mind, Heart, and Hand presents 76 masterpieces of Persian, Turkish and Indian drawings from Harvard University's Sackler Museum. The exhibition, one of the few ever to focus exclusively on drawings from the Middle East and South Asia, features works from the 15th to the 18th century, and showcases the role of drawings. Asian Art Museum of **San Francisco**, through November 28; Fogg Art Museum, **Cambridge, Massachusetts**, March 19 through June 12, 2005.

Queen of the Night, an exhibition of a spectacular terra-cotta plaque of a Babylonian goddess of the underworld that was crafted in Mesopotamia (today's Iraq) some 4000 years ago, also features storytelling, talks and workshops. National Museum and Gallery, **Cardiff**, Wales, through November 28; **Birmingham** Museum and Art Gallery, December 1 through April 19, 2005.

The Thracians: The Golden Realm of Orpheus presents more than 1000 artifacts that demonstrate the extraordinary artistic ability and craftsmanship of the Thracians, an Indo-European people, originating in present-day Bulgaria, who settled southeastern Europe and parts of Asia Minor between 7000 BC and the second century of our era. Trade and cultural connections with Greece and Persia, with the Scythians and other Eurasian steppe peoples, and with the Celts, the Romans and even Egyptians formed Thracian culture, whose expressions include the Orphean religion with its close ties to Greek mythology, magnificent works—many in gold and silver—of Thracian metal smiths and richly furnished graves. Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle, **Bonn, Germany**, through November 28.

The Queens of Sheba: Traditional Clothes of Yemen features spectacular women's costumes from eight regions of Yemen, accompanied by shawls, veils and other accessories, along with men's garments. The commercial development that accompanied the spread of Islam, beginning in the seventh century, helped Yemeni fabrics reach a wide public. Today, some textile techniques—such as weaving on horizontal hand looms and resist dyeing using horizontal binding—have survived, along with the natural dyes that have characterized the country's products for centuries: indigo, *war* (which dyes yellow and orange), saffron and woad. The exhibition is complemented by a photographic archive locating each of the textiles in its particular regional architecture, landscape and society. ⓘ www.cdmt.es, +34-93-731-5202. Centre de Documentació i Museu Tèxtil, **Terrassa, Barcelona**, through December.

Closely Focused, Intensely Felt: Selections from the Norma Jean Calderwood Collection of Islamic Art offers highlights of Iran's most celebrated achievements in the arts, such as the brilliant luster and *mina'i* ceramics of the 12th and 13th centuries and the court painting of the 16th and 17th centuries. Also included are objects that reflect the collector's fascination with manuscript painting from Shiraz during the 14th through the 16th century. "Closely focused, intensely felt" is how Calderwood sought to convey to her students the character and appeal of Persian art. Sackler Museum, **Cambridge, Massachusetts**, through January 2, 2005.

Sudan: Ancient Treasures leads the visitor through the largest country in Africa, from the early Stone Age to the 19th century of our era, including the medieval Christian and the Islamic periods. For millennia, Sudan has been the point of contact between central Africa and the Mediterranean world. Its ancient sites are among the great monuments of Africa, and its territory was home to the most powerful state in the Nile Valley, which briefly overwhelmed the Egypt of the Pharaohs. The exhibition will be accompanied by a program of lectures on Sudan past and present. British Museum, **London**, through January 9, 2005.

Opulent Interiors presents a selection of 23 of the museum's finest textile treasures in the finale of the three-part exhibition **Luxury Textiles East and West**. Dating from the 14th through the 20th century and originating in Asia, Europe and the Americas, the exhibits demonstrate the role textiles played in ceremonies and celebrations, dress and identity and public and private interiors. They include floor coverings, chair and table covers, bed hangings, quilts, curtains and cushions, in particular the 17th-century Mughal Indian architectural panel and the 16th-century Turkish double-niche carpet. **Los Angeles** County Museum of Art, through January 30, 2005.

Petra: Lost City of Stone features art and artifacts from the famous red sandstone cliff city in southern Jordan. Petra was a major crossroads of international trade routes from the first century BC to the second century of our era, when it was governed by the Nabataeans, who were renowned for trade, agriculture, engineering and architectural stone carving. The exhibition presents some 200 objects and a selection of 19th-century artworks documenting the European rediscovery of Petra. **Cincinnati [Ohio]** Art Museum, through January 30, 2005.

A Written Cosmos: Arabic Calligraphy and Literature Throughout the Centuries documents the development of Arabic calligraphy with rare historical manuscripts from famous collections, covering the period from the early Abbasid parchment manuscripts of the ninth century to Mamluk works of art from Egypt and Syria. Another part of the exhibition shows developments in contemporary Arabic calligraphy. Museum für Angewandte Kunst, **Frankfurt**, through January 30, 2005.

Floral Perspectives in Carpet Design examines the ubiquity of floral motifs from three perspectives—spiritual, cultural and artistic—as rendered in the designs of 17th- to 19th-century Indian, Chinese, Central Asian, Persian and Turkish carpets. The exhibition explores how these motifs speak to the transfer of ideas from culture to culture. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through February 6, 2005.

Palace and Mosque: Islamic Art from the Victoria and Albert Museum includes more than 100 works from one of the world's leading Islamic art collections. The exhibition's themes start with calligraphy—the noblest and most distinctive form of Islamic art—from the 10th to 18th century, and also include art for secular rulers, as exemplified by works from the 16th and 17th Ottoman and Safavid courts; art created for religious establishments, including works produced by Muslim artists for Christian churches, and a final section, "Artistic Exchange," with works of Islamic, European and Chinese manufacture that demonstrate the wealth of interaction among the Islamic Middle East and Europe and eastern Asia. A book, *Palace and Mosque: Islamic Art from the Middle East*, accompanies the exhibition. National Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through February 6, 2005.

Vanished Kingdoms: The Wulsin Photographs of Tibet, China and Mongolia 1921–1925 presents images of colored lantern slides made by Janet Wulsin when she accompanied her anthropologist husband to western China, Inner Mongolia and Tibet. Wulsin took the photographs, which were later painstakingly hand-colored by artisans in Beijing, who used their knowledge of local customs, colors and scenery to develop—but also interpret—the images. **Houston** Museum of Natural Science, through February 13, 2005.

Mummy: The Inside Story uses the latest imaging technology and an immersive theater to allow visitors to view a "virtual unwrapping" of the 2800-year-old mummy of Nesperunnub, priest of Karnak in Egypt. British Museum, **London**, through March 27, 2005.

Masterpieces of Islamic Art from the Metropolitan Museum adds some 30 works from what is considered America's finest collection of Islamic art to the Louvre's own impressive collection. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, through April 2005.

Digging Up a Story: The House of Claudius Tiberianus is an innovative, interdisciplinary exhibition that combines archeological artifacts and translated papyri from a single house in Kiranis, in Roman Egypt, to show what life was like there for a man and his family almost 2000 years ago. The papyri are particularly illuminating: They include letters from Claudius Tiberianus's son, Claudius Terentianus, who was on active duty with the Roman army in Alexandria, asking for money and supplies, asking for parental blessings to marry and complaining about lack of promotion. Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, **Ann Arbor, Michigan**, through May 2, 2005.

Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur returns to its Philadelphia home for a limited engagement following a five-year, 10-city tour and before traveling to additional sites. The show features more than 200 Sumerian treasures revealing traditions of royal life and death, excavated in the 1920's by Sir Leonard Woolley. They include the famous "Ram in the Thicket"—a statuette of a goat nibbling the leaves of a tree—jewelry, a comb, a wooden lyre decorated with a gold-and-lapis bull's head, games, furniture, seals and vessels of gold, silver and alabaster, many found in the intact tomb of a woman—a queen or high priestess—named Pu-abi who died between 2600 and 2500 BC, a high point of Sumerian culture. Catalog $75/$50. University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology, **Philadelphia**, through May 28, 2005.

Mirrors of the East explores the impact of the East on Europe, especially Spain, between the mid-19th and the 20th century by examining both the rediscovery of the world of al-Andalus and Islam and the presence of China and Japan in European fashions. Centre de Documentació i Museu

Events&Exhibitions

Continued from previous page

Current

Textil, **Terrassa, Barcelona**, through May 2005.

Art of the Ancient Mediterranean World: Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome shows 204 works that span a period from predynastic Egypt—6000 years ago—to the Roman late imperial period about AD 350. Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilizations developed neither in sequence nor in parallel, but rather underwent changes in a complicated and interactive manner in terms of both era and region, and this exhibition demonstrates how they influenced one another throughout their histories through travel and trade on the Mediterranean Sea. Brigham Young University Museum of Art, **Provo, Utah**, through June 4, 2005.

Luxury and Luminosity: Visual Culture and the Ming Court includes 48 objects—not all of them blue-and-white, and not all porcelain—that demonstrate the dynasty's connections with other cultures and the artistic influence it exchanged with them. Ming artists' use of turquoise and cobalt blue probably derived from imported ceramics from the Islamic world: A tankard emulates Iranian models, and Ming porcelain was exported in enormous quantities to Egypt, Turkey and other parts of the Muslim world. Freer Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through June 26, 2005.

Carved for Immortality. In ancient Egypt, brightly painted carved wooden figures of the deceased were placed in special chambers or niches in tombs to represent the person at different stages of his or her life. Because the wood used was often soft sycamore fig (*Ficus sycamorus*)—appropriate in that twin sycamores were believed to stand at the eastern gate of heaven, from which the sun god Ra emerged each morning—relatively few of these statues have survived from ancient times. Walters Art Museum, **Baltimore**, through June 26, 2005.

Sephardic Horizons uses paintings, graphics and artifacts from the museum's collections to tell the story of Sephardic Jews' creative coexistence with Christian and Muslim cultures during centuries of cultural flowering on the Iberian Peninsula. Magnes Museum, **Berkeley, California**, through July 15, 2005.

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

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

September

Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500–1800 assembles more than 200 objects from the centuries after Europeans discovered the sea route to Asia that illuminate ways East and West perceived each other during a period of intense cultural, commercial and technological exchange that prefigured our own age of global economic integration. ⓘ www.vam.ac.uk. Victoria and Albert Museum, **London**, September 25 through December 5.

The Colonial Andes: Tapestries and Silverwork, 1530–1830 focuses on two uniquely rich and inherently Andean art forms that flourished in the Viceroyalty of Peru in the colonial period. Among the 175 works of art on loan from collections in the United States, South America and Europe are carpets in which connections can be discerned to the Arab weaving traditions that enriched Spain in the centuries before the discovery of the New World. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, September 29 through December 12.

October

A Garden of Shawls: The Buta and Its Seeds. The natural grace of the gardens of Mughal India was reflected in the patterns of trees, vines and flowers that decorated textiles of the period. Kashmir shawls express this taste for fluid softness, flower-bright color and rhythmic design. One of the most recognizable design motifs in Kashmir shawls is the flame-shaped cluster with a bent tip, known as the *buta* or *boteh* or paisley motif. The exhibit includes spectacular variations and explores its design in history that goes back to fragments known from Egypt that are more than a thousand years old. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, October 1 through March 6, 2005.

Secrets of the Dead Sea is a documentary film that explores the historical, religious, astronomical and geological aspects of the Dead Sea using full-dome projection and animation as well as photography. **Houston** Museum of Natural Science, October 1 through January 2, 2005.

Imagining the Orient traces the 18th-century European cultural and artistic phenomenon of *chinoiserie*, the vogue for arts of imitation and invention that evoked faraway lands as diverse as China, Japan and Turkey. At the same time, Asian manufacturers began to create furniture, ceramics and porcelain expressly for the European market. The exhibition features paintings, decorative arts, textiles and prints. Getty Museum, **Los Angeles**, October 5 through April 3, 2005

Beyond East and West: Seven Transnational Artists presents new work by seven important contemporary artists with an intimate knowledge of both a so-called "East" (the Middle East and North Africa) whence they come and a "West" (Europe and America) where, primarily, they live and work. Beyond simply disrupting stereotypes, they address issues raised by competing cultural allegiances. Featured are Ghada Amer, Shahzia Sikander, Mona Hatoum, Y. Z. Kami, Jananne Al-Ani, Walid Raad and Michal Rovner.

Catalog. Hood Museum of Art, **Hanover, New Hampshire**, October 9 through December 12.

Musalsalat! Prime-Time Ramadan is a look through the lens of New York free-lance photographer Stephanie Keith at the Egyptian television and film industries' annual bonanza of productions for the Holy Month. Keith made many of the photographs on assignment for *Saudi Aramco World*, (ND03). Sony Gallery (formerly Ewart Gallery), American University in **Cairo**, October 11 through November 11.

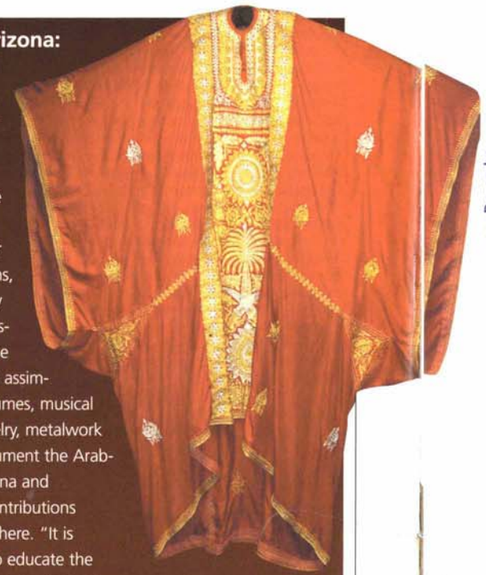
Pharaohs retraces major steps in the history of ancient Egypt through its rulers, including Kheops, Khephren, Akhnaton, Tutankhamen and Ramses II. The majority of the 200 important works displayed have been lent by the Egyptian Museum in Cairo and are being shown for the first time in France. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, October 12 though April 10, 2005.

Indian Textile Traditions: Exchange and Transformation is the topic of the Textile Museum's 27th Annual Rug Convention, which will explore the enduring appeal and influence of Mughal rugs and other textiles. Participants will be offered presentations by scholars and experts, receptions, exhibition tours and more. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, October 15–17.

Art of the Indian Subcontinent and the Himalayas is a new installation showcasing South Asian and Himalayan art in the Gallery's collection, considered to be among the most important in the world. As well as Buddhist, Jain and Hindu pieces, the exhibition includes sublimely beautiful Islamic objects, masterpieces of Mughal and Rajput painting and lavishly decorated Mughal court art objects, including an allegorical painting commissioned by the Emperor Jahangir that depicts an imaginary visit of King James I of England to the Mughal court. Freer Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, **Washington, D.C.**, opening October 16 and continuing indefinitely.

The Kingdom of Ugarit: The Beginnings of the Alphabet marks the 75th anniversary of the discovery of this major archeological site. Ras Shamra, on the Syrian coast, is the site of ancient Ugarit, capital of a kingdom of the second millennium BC, where excavations have revealed a rich and refined Mediterranean culture. Among thousands of cuneiform tablets in the Babylonian script were others written in a local language and a then unknown script—history's first alphabetic writing. Musée des Beaux-Arts, **Lyon, France**, October 21 through January 17, 2005.

Arab Americans in Arizona: Stories, Traditions, Experiences explores the immigration of Arabic speakers of different nationalities since the latter part of the 19th century and explains the diversity of the state's Arab-American communities—their religious beliefs, social customs, dress, language, music, family structure and traditions of hospitality—and shows how these have influenced their gradual assimilation. Artifacts include costumes, musical instruments, calligraphy, jewelry, metalwork and historical items that document the Arab-American experience in Arizona and the economic and cultural contributions Arab-Americans have made there. "It is the obligation of museums to educate the public about Arizona's diverse peoples and cultures," said Museum director Thomas H. Wilson. "As it has been with Native American subjects and currently with Chicano art, the Mesa Southwest Museum is exploring the history and contributions of a significant cultural group within our state, the Arab-Americans. The Museum is honored to collaborate with prominent Arab-American businesses and families in the valley, such as Basha, Coury, Habeeb, Saba and Tibshraeny, to bring this project to fruition." **Mesa** Southwest Museum, **Arizona**, October 9 through March 6, 2005.



This dress from Riyadh is made of silk with gold and silver embroidery.

COURTESY OF THE FRANCES M. MEADE COLLECTION / THE BEAD MUSEUM / MESA SOUTHWEST MUSEUM

JEAN MICHEL CLAJOT / SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND

People of the Red Sea, featuring Islamic and pre-Islamic culture, history and archeology in the regions on both the Arabian and African sides of the waterway, is the theme of the next session of the Red Sea Project, organized by the Society for Arabian Studies. ⓘ www.britac.ac.uk/sas. British Museum, **London**, October 29–30.

Hungary's Heritage: Princely Treasures From the Esterházy Collection includes spectacular Ottoman items—a jeweled dagger and a silver-gilt flag finial captured in battle, for example—whose presence is attributable to the fact that the Esterházy family rose to prominence during the Austro-Hungarian wars with the Turks in the 16th and 17th centuries. Gilbert Collection, Somerset House, **London**, October 26 through January 23, 2005.

November

Manuscripts From the Silk Road includes some 20 texts written on silver, bronze, leather, wood and vellum, as well as on mulberry or hemp paper, that date from the third to the 12th century and are written in languages as diverse as Chinese, Khotanese, Tibetan, Sanskrit, Gandhari, Bactrian, Syriac and Arabic. They are religious texts and learned commentaries, commercial documents and legal records, and together give an impression of the fruitful exchanges, busy commerce and bitter struggles that took place among the peoples and cultures along the Silk Roads. Sam Fogg, 15d Clifford St., **London**, November 4–12.

December

Current Archeological Research presents specialists talking about recent discoveries in their fields. Christiane Ziegler will speak on "The Louvre's Expedition to Saqqara." 12:30 p.m., Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, December 2.

Iraq and China: Ceramics, Trade and Innovation focuses on revolutionary and enduring changes in Iraqi ceramics that took place in the ninth century as the character of Islamic pottery responded to a wave of luxury Chinese goods imported by Arab and Persian merchants. During this period, Iraq became a center for Islamic ceramic production as new technologies transformed common earthenware into a vehicle for complex, multicolored designs. Following the gradual disintegration of the Abbasid Empire after the 10th century, migrating Iraqi potters transmitted these techniques to Egypt and Iran, from where they traveled to Europe, giving rise to the great majolica tradition in medieval Spain and Renaissance Italy. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, December 4 through April 24, 2005.

CORRECTION: In the March/April 2004 issue, the photo of the gazelle tracks on page 8 is by Stéphane Ostrowski, and the photo of the houbara bustard tracks on page 9 is by Xavier Eichaker, courtesy of the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development (NCWCD).

January

Current Archeological Research presents specialists talking about recent discoveries in their fields. Sophocles Hadjissavas will speak on "The Phoenician Necropolises of Kition on Cyprus." 12:30 p.m., Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, January 7.

Art of the Written Word in the Middle East. Throughout the Middle East, the written word is an emblem of the highest learning, the deepest thought and the greatest beauty, and is often incorporated in works of fine art. This exhibition explores different forms of the beauty of writing through manuscript pages of religious, scientific and legal texts; poetry and prose; and inscribed tiles, ceramics and metalwork. University of **Michigan** Museum of Art, **Ann Arbor**, January 15 through June 5, 2005.

Emily Jacir is a Palestinian-born artist who divides her time between New York and Ramallah. She uses photography, drawing, video, text and found objects to humanize the intractable geopolitical issues that torment the Middle East. Ulrich Museum of Art, **Wichita [Kansas]** State University, January 20 through March 6, 2005.

February

Asian Games: The Art of Contest uses the paraphernalia of games as well as paintings, prints and decorative arts that depict people playing games to explore the role of games as social and cultural activities in the diverse societies of pre-modern Asia. It also highlights the paramount importance of Asia as a source of many games now played in the West: chess, backgammon, Parcheesi, Ludo, Snakes and Ladders, card games and such sports as polo and field hockey. Drawing on major collections of Asian art in the United States, Europe, Japan and China, the exhibition displays more than 120 works of art, including spectacular examples of game sets from the 12th through 19th century. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, February 26 through May 15, 2005.

March

The Art of Medicine in Ancient Egypt. The causes of illness were little understood in ancient Egypt, and the prevention and cure of illness were of great concern to most Egyptians—a concern that informs much of ancient Egyptian art. This exhibition presents objects that address this concern, including the rarely seen Edwin Smith Papyrus, one of the world's oldest scientific documents. The 15-foot surgical papyrus deals with both the practical and the magical treatment of wounds. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, March 15 through July 17, 2005.

Permanent

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

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

Aramco World Contributor Wins Journalism Award

Rami Khouri, who contributed 17 articles to *Aramco World* between 1976 and 1990, and who is now executive editor of the Beirut *Daily Star*, on September 9 received at a ceremony in Brussels one of three Eliav-Sartawi Awards for Middle Eastern Journalism. Given annually by a nine-member jury, the awards recognize "courageous articles" written "to promote dialogue and peaceful coexistence, to break down myths and stereotypes, to expose readers to new perspectives and to open windows of understanding into the society of 'the other.'" Khouri's article, "Affirming the Law and National Will, From Babylon to Beirut," appeared in the *Daily Star* in October 2003. Khouri joined fellow award winners Amanda Paulson of *The Christian Science Monitor* and Imtiyaz Delawala of *Ha'aretz* on the podium. The Eliav-Sartawi awards are sponsored by Search for Common Ground, a non-governmental organization. The full text of Khouri's article is on its website, www.sfcg.org.

Rami Khouri, left, **accepts a 2004 Eliav-Sartawi Award from presenter John Hume.**

Subscriptions to *Saudi Aramco World* are available without charge to a limited number of readers interested in the cultures of the Arab and Muslim worlds, the history, geography and economy of Saudi Arabia, and their connections with the West. We can also provide multiple-copy subscriptions for seminars or classrooms. From Saudi Arabia, please send subscription requests to Public Relations, Saudi Aramco, Box 5000, Dhahran 31311, Saudi Arabia. From all other countries, send subscription requests to *Saudi Aramco World*, Box 469008, Escondido, California 92046-9008, USA.

Change of address notices should be sent to the addresses above. Please include an address label from a recent issue.

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

Indexes: A cumulative index through 1994 and subsequent annual indexes through 2003 are available in printed form and can be requested in the same way as back issues (above). An online cumulative index can be searched by title, subject, contributor or keyword (full text) at **www.saudiaramcoworld.com**. Click on "indexes."