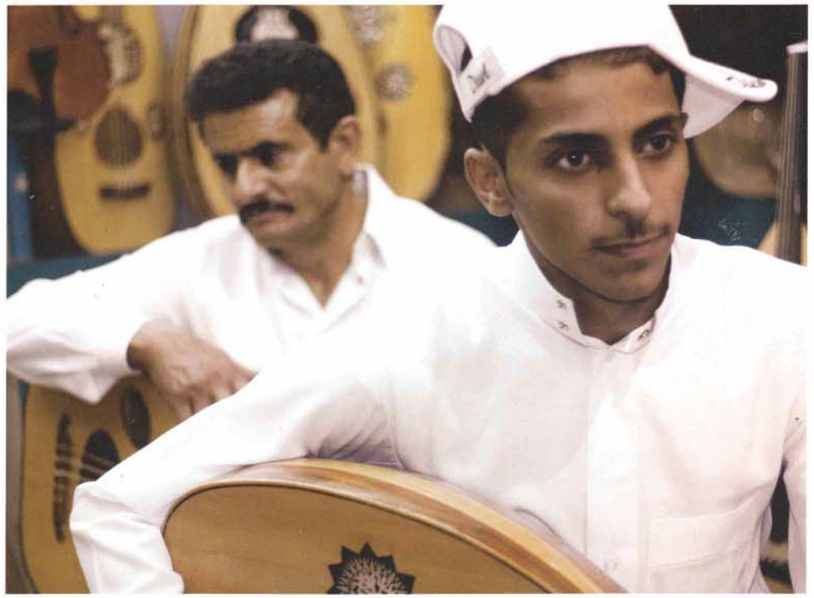

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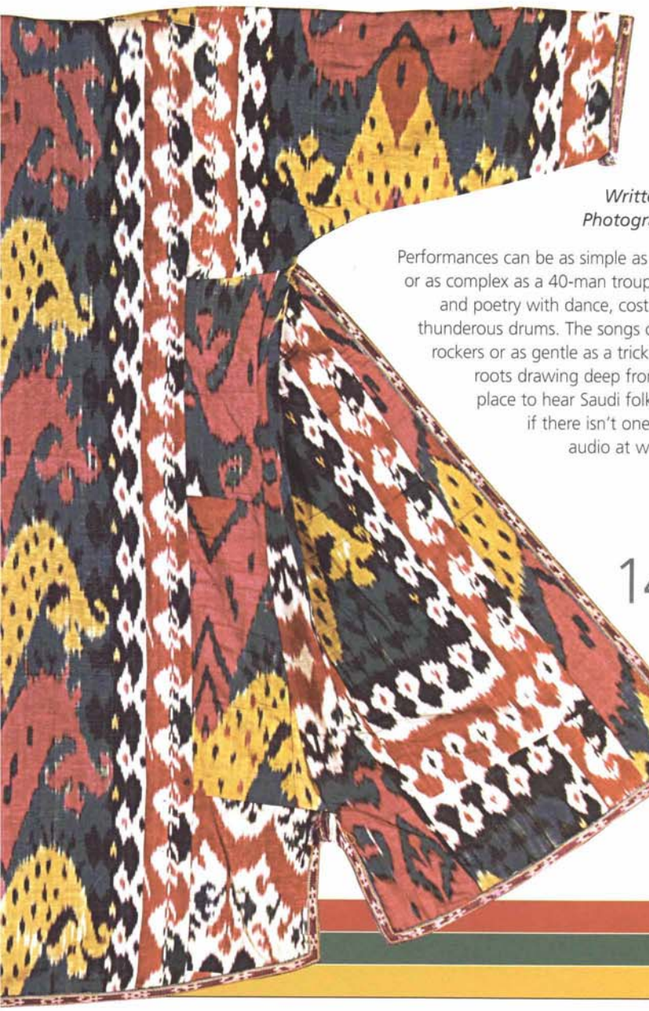
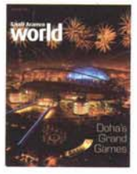


Saudi Folk Music: Alive and Well

Written by Kay Hardy Campbell
Photographed by Nicole LeCorgne

Performances can be as simple as a singer with an instrument, or as complex as a 40-man troupe blending song, storytelling and poetry with dance, costume and an orchestra led by thunderous drums. The songs can be foot-stomping house-rockers or as gentle as a trickling desert spring. With their roots drawing deep from regional histories, the best place to hear Saudi folk music is at weddings—and if there isn't one near you, try our streaming audio at www.saudiaramcoworld.com.

Cover:



Centerpiece of the 15th Asian Games in Qatar's capital, Doha, Khalifa Stadium was the site of both opening and closing ceremonies, each marked by fireworks and dramatic multimedia extravaganzas involving up to 8000 performers, in addition to the 12,500 athletes, 50,000 fans and a worldwide television audience of 1.7 billion. Qatar hosted what some call the best Asian Games ever—and even did itself proud in the medal count, winning nine golds. Photo by Jamie Squire / Getty Images.

Back Cover:

In a music store in Riyadh, a young man samples the sound of a new *'ud*. Together with other string instruments and a host of varied winds and percussion, the *'ud* is one of the central sounds in Saudi Arabian folk music today. Photo by Nicole LeCorgne.

24 Doha's Grand Games

Written by Char Simons

Like the little engine that could, Qatar made its mark as the first Arab country to host the quadrennial Asian Games in December. The Asian Games have now grown to include more sports and more athletes than the Olympics and—judging from the way things went in Qatar's capital city—more than enough pizzazz to give the global event a run for its money.

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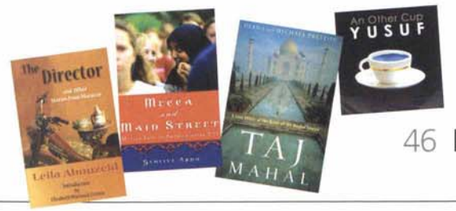

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Saudi Folk Music: Alive and Well

The smell of freshly cut grass fills the air as 50 young men gather on the field at the soccer club in al-Jishshah, a town of 8000 nestled among date palms on the edge of al-Hasa, Saudi Arabia's largest oasis. They form two facing lines and start singing a verse of poetry that one of them has just called out, establishing the melody. The verse honors the late King 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, the founder of Saudi Arabia: "Bless you, oh Shaykh, *who founded the state on honor and religion."*

This is not the ceremonial start to a soccer match. The al-Jishshah Folklore Troupe is beginning a rendition of al-'ardah*—literally "display" or "performance"—one of Saudi Arabia's most famous folk song and dance traditions.*

Written by Kay Hardy Campbell *Photographed by Nicole LeCorgne*

Another small group of men steps forward between the lines of singers and begins pounding out a majestically slow 6/8 rhythm in three parts on large frame drums. The men in the two lines, wearing long embroidered coats known as *daghla* over their white *thawb*s, bend at the knee and lean forward as they sing. Then they begin slowly lifting and lowering silver ceremonial swords in time to the stately rhythm.

The 'ardah is one of many Saudi folk-music traditions that Saudis refer to collectively as *al-funun al-sha'abiyyah*, the folk arts, or more simply, *al-fulklur*, folklore. Varying by region, and again by town and city within each region, individual traditions are known as an art (*fann*) or type (*lawn*). Many combine song with drumming, clapping and group dancing. Performers wear regional costumes and sometimes dance with props, such as the sword in the 'ardah or the bamboo cane in the Western Province's *mizmar*.

To get the full sense of these arts, one has to see them as well as hear them. They are poetry, song, music, rhythm, dance and costume all rolled into one.

There are hundreds of folk-music and dance troupes all over Saudi Arabia, their members spanning several generations. Like the al-Jishshah Folklore Troupe in the Eastern Province, they focus on regional traditions that they perform for weddings and other special occasions. Al-Jishshah's group specializes in several varieties of the 'ardah, as well as the songs of their town and the al-Hasa Oasis.

Blending elegiac poetry with singing, drumming and majestically slow dance movements, the 'ardah has become a symbol of traditional Saudi Arabian culture. While variations are also performed in other countries of the western Arabian Gulf, experts point to the

'ardah's origins in the Arabian desert among the Bedouin.

It started out as a war dance used to get men ready for battle. "In the old days before the unification of the kingdom, the 'ardah used to be called *al-faza'*, or 'fright.' After unification, the dance became a dance of peace. It became known as *al-'ardah al-najdiyyah*, since it is well known in Najd," or central Saudi Arabia, explains Muhammad al-Maiman, president of the Committee for Heritage and Folk Arts at the Riyadh headquarters of the Saudi Society for Arts and Culture. The society consists of a kingdom-wide network of artists and folklore specialists. Membership is open to both men and women and includes painters, writers, scholars, playwrights, historians, actors and musicians.

"The 'ardah tradition contains the national spirit," al-Maiman continues. "The poems are about the country. Its movements are dignified, masculine and proud—and it's an expression of history, too." He explains that there is a plan to teach the 'ardah to all schoolboys in the kingdom.

One can catch a glimpse of the 'ardah in live Saudi Arabian television broadcasts of the kingdom's folk-life festival at Janadriyah, held each year outside Riyadh. The festival opens with a rendition of an official 'ardah, as well as a performance of other folk-music and dance styles that are part of a multimedia stage show called the *Operette*. "The king also goes to another place in Riyadh to do an 'ardah so the general citizens can take part," al-Maiman adds.

Each rendition of the 'ardah, which might include as many as 50 lines of sung poetry, lasts up to half an hour. Then the singing swordsmen and drummers take a break before starting again. If a dancer gets tired during the song, he can rest his sword on his shoulders and continue stepping with the group. Though a large crowd often gathers to watch the 'ardah, practicality limits the performance itself to about 90 participants: two lines of 40 swordsmen with 10 drummers on one end. "The drums sound like thunder," al-Maiman says.

Just as Bedouin culture gave rise to the 'ardah, other traditional ways of life that predated the modern era produced distinct folk-music styles across the kingdom. Specific Eastern Province folk arts derive from pearl-diving, seafaring, oasis agriculture and long-distance trade. There are date-harvest songs in al-Hasa, and shepherding songs from the Southwest and other regions.

Neighboring cultures add spice to Saudi folk-music styles, reflecting long years of contact between Arabia and Africa and the Levant, as well as the Indian subcontinent. The western seacoast town of Yanbu' is famous for the *simsimiyah*, a harp-like lyre that is also found in coastal areas of East Africa and Egypt. The *surnai*, a loud, double-reed wind instrument, and several types of African drums made their way into Saudi and Gulf music, brought by immigrants from India and Africa who settled along the Arab Gulf coast over the centuries.

Poetic lyrics drive these folk-music traditions. They praise the valor of heroic leaders and tell battle stories, explore religious themes, pine for the beauty and sweet character of the lost beloved, mourn the loss of family and friends, and offer encouragement to the bride and groom. Songs often mention well-known places, lending them an extra air of nostalgia.

A simple, repeated melody passed back and forth by a soloist and a chorus forms the core of most Saudi folk songs. In towns and cities, the melody is sometimes picked up by a small ensemble of instrumentalists, who might play the *'ud* (unfretted lute), the *qanun* (lap-plucked zither), the *nay* (reed flute) and the violin.

Even in the most rural traditions, nearly all melodies fall within the esthetic principles of the centuries-old *maqam* system that is a hallmark of Middle Eastern music. It describes a series of modes or scales, as well as a way of improvising and forming melodies within those modes. Though there is no harmony, harmonic intervals can sometimes be heard for a moment or two in passing.

Drums are an orchestra in themselves. Most Saudi and Gulf folk music makes use of shallow frame drums that are held in the left hand and struck with the right. They range in size from 15 to 65 centimeters (6–26") across. A single-sided frame drum is called a *tar*; a double-sided drum, a *tabl*. Groups decorate these drums to suit their needs, such as in the 'ardah where colorful wool tassels and wooden handles are often added. Some folkloric troupes paint their names on their drums, along with traditional designs like the Saudi emblem of crossed swords and palm tree.

While a given rhythm might appear to be a simple 4/4 or 6/8 time on the surface, if you listen closely, you can hear a complex, multi-toned

"The 'ardah tradition contains the national spirit. The poems are about the country. **The movements are dignified, masculine and proud**—*and it's an expression of history, too."*

Members of the al-Jishshah Folklore Troupe rest their swords on their shoulders during a performance of the *'ardah*, one of Saudi Arabia's best-known song and dance traditions. In the kingdom's intensely local folklore, the Eastern Province, the al-Hasa Oasis within the province and the town of al-Jishshah in the oasis each has its "own" songs and dances.

Top: A member of the al-Jishshah Folklore Troupe pounds out a rhythm on a single-sided frame drum called a *tar*. Many of the rhythms are more complex than they first appear. Above: 'Ardah performers sing out lines of poetry as they dance. The 'ardah may include as many as 50 lines of verse.

richness as the drums play off each other, in syncopation.

"I've spoken with many musicians in Europe and I tell them we have harmony in our percussion, in our drumming," muses Tarek 'Abd al-Hakim, who at 86 is the dean of Saudi folk-music experts. A legendary composer and musician, he has long advocated the study and preservation of Saudi folk arts. He penned the melody for the kingdom's national anthem and is a former head of the Saudi Society for Arts and Culture.

"They have cellos, contrabasses and pianos doing the harmony, and violins doing the melody," he continues. "We have the same thing with our drums. Each one plays a different line. It's as if one is playing the melody and the others are playing harmony. In Taif, we have the folk-song style called *majrur*, with 12 tars playing, all of them small ones, all together."

Saudi musicians add one more layer of percussive sound to their arts: resonant, rhythmic clapping known as *tasfiq*. Found in many parts of the Arab world, tasfiq usually occurs during drum or instrumental refrains between song verses. One or two clappers lead the rest through a frenzied round of clapping, marking out complex rhythmic patterns that might inspire participants to dance. Hands fly up and down, in and out, in a blur, until suddenly, cued by the leader, they all stop at once at the end of the phrase, just in time for the solo singer to start up again.

Dance movements seem to fall into two categories: steps done in unison, often in a line; and free-style movements done as solos or in pairs. In the majrur of Taif, the participants wear long, multicolored *thawb*s that whirl out as they dance and twirl while singing and playing the tar. In other folk songs in which everyone is seated or kneeling, an inspired participant might jump up and shake his shoulders during a round of tasfiq.

Top: **Inspired by a *samiri* rhythm played by the 'Unayzah Folklore Troupe, a dancer springs up in a spontaneous solo performance.** Above: **The membership of Firqat al-Salam (the Peace Troupe), from Tarut Island off the kingdom's east coast, spans several generations.** Opposite page, top: **The *'ud* and violin often feature in the *sawt* songs of eastern Saudi Arabia and the Gulf.** Bottom: **Samiri drummers from 'Unayzah celebrate as they work through a complex sequence of movements.**

Then he might run to the opposite end of the line and twirl in front of a friend, only to dive back to his place just as the clapping ends and the solo singer starts up again.

While these traditions are certainly colorful and lively, drawing young and old alike, Saudi youth are also tuned in to the global music scene. Like their peers all over the Middle East, young Saudis enjoy listening to pan-Arab and Gulf-style pop music that's broadcast on satellite networks, like Saudi Arabia's Rotana, and Arab networks like LBC and MBC. How can the old folk-music traditions survive when competing with the glitz of modern pop music in all its forms?

"The folk arts are alive and flourishing," insists 'Abd al-Hakim. "The young people are studying them in the evening. They love the folk songs. Why? If you have a wedding party, you have to have folk music and folk dance." No matter how citified and worldly they are, most Saudi couples want to have a folkloric troupe perform for their wedding guests—because they expect it.

The al-Jishshah troupe includes teenagers as well as middle-aged men. After work and school, they regularly get together in the evenings to study and perform, because they love the old traditions and because there's a regular demand for them to perform at weddings and other occasions.

Another Eastern Province group called Firqat al-Salam, or the Peace Troupe, is based in the old port town of Darin on Tarut Island, just off Saudi Arabia's eastern coast. Spanning three generations, members study and perform the folk arts as a sideline to their main jobs working for Saudi Aramco, for the military or as teachers. They see their wedding performances as a community service. One member notes that, in the old days, weddings went on for five or six nights, but now they usually last just one. Still, the group is busy throughout the year performing for their friends and neighbors in the town.

The men of Darin once worked as fishermen and seafarers. Some of the group's members are avid fishermen, too, but only as a hobby. Their repertoire includes the *fjeiri* ("until dawn") songs of the pearlers and sailors, often sung late at night in special places dedicated to the art when the men were home from the sea. The art of fjeiri uses clay pots as earthy percussion instruments and has long rhythmic cycles, reminiscent of the slow, undulating waves of the Gulf carrying a dhow.

Firqat al-Salam also plays the African-influenced *laiwa* song style that features the surnai, as well as several unique percussion instruments—the tall *mesondo*, the *sif tabl*, made of cowhide and wood, and the biggest drum, the *tabl 'ud*. Adding a snare-like tone to the drum section, someone plays the *batu*, a bowl atop an upside-down metal tray, with wooden sticks.

To demonstrate songs in the *sawt* tradition, a salon-music style that is practiced along the Gulf from Kuwait in the north to Qatar in the south (with variations as far south as Yemen), some group members pick up the violin and 'ud and sit at the far end of two lines of men who kneel, facing each other. After a short improvisation on the 'ud, they start into the song, and some of the men in the lines begin to play a small, cylindrical hand-drum, called the *mirwas*, in a percussion pattern that lightly punctuates the melody. When the clapping starts up during the instrumental refrains, a couple of the men jump up to dance freestyle. In the old days, friends would pass an evening listening to this music in the *diwan*, or salon, of a private home.

> *"The art of sawt is one of the most beautiful and profound types of music in the Gulf area. It has* **spontaneity—structure mixed with improvisation.**"

"The art of sawt is one of the most beautiful and profound types of music in the Gulf area," muses Muhammad al-Jishi, a Saudi Aramco human-resources specialist from the east-coast town of Qatif. He plays the violin and composes music as a hobby. "The sawt I grew up hearing was coming from Bahrain and Kuwait. It has a rhythm that's quite different from the Egyptian styles. It has spontaneity—structure mixed with improvisation."

Public performance is not the primary goal of all folklore groups. The ancient city of 'Unayzah in the northern Najd is set in an expansive date-palm oasis along an old road to Madinah. Its people were farmers as well as traders who had dealings with the Bedouin tribes and with more distant partners in Baghdad, Kuwait, Bombay and Cairo. The men of 'Unayzah gather on Thursdays, the first day of the Saudi weekend, in the evening to sing poetry and perform their famous *samiri* folk songs. In the old days, they met in the sand dunes outside the city in summer; in winter, they gathered indoors. The weekly sessions continue today in Dar al-Turath, Heritage House, built for this purpose. While samiri is performed for weddings and other special occasions, 'Unayzans also keep the tradition going for their own enjoyment.

A group of men from 'Unayzah who live and work in Riyadh carries on the practice, meeting one night each weekend in a small home on the outskirts of town. There, under the stars in a courtyard, the multi-generational group talks about the events of the week, exchanges news of family and friends, and sometimes practices the samiri. There is no audience; members perform their art for their own pleasure.

Like other Saudi folk-music traditions, the samiri combines poetry, song, drumming and movement. But it is performed on the knees in unison. The repertoire of samiri poems is vast; the group in Riyadh keeps a large three-ring binder full of them. The songs take on the meter of the

poetry, which in turn drives the playing of the drums by the singers.

In one hypnotizing song style, the singers start in two lines facing each other and go through a slow, choreographed sequence. One line claps and sings while the other sways from side to side, lifting and lowering drums in a highly stylized pattern, all the time playing them and singing. Suddenly, the men throw the drums on the ground with a loud slap, in a movement called *khallu*, or "leave it." Then they lean to their neighbors to the right, then the left. When the sequence is over, they begin to clap in time so the other line can repeat the sequence. The men smile and laugh when they execute a difficult part perfectly.

Some samiri sequences are so complex that they take years to learn. Young people watch from the sidelines until they are ready to join in. They start by sitting on the ends of the line, only gradually working their way to the center, where the expert leader of each line, the *mu'allim*, sits.

'Abd al-Rahman al-Ruwaishid, 38, began to learn when he was seven, attending the weekly sessions in 'Unayzah. "My father, who is more than 80 years old, always took me on Thursday nights when he was with his friends there," he recalls. "I heard the drum and I moved with it. I grew up, practiced little by little, and now I can lead: Now I'm the mu'allim. Thank God, I have a good memory and can keep all the songs and movements in my head."

'Abd al-'Aziz al-Garzaie, a retired medical-services officer who earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin, started learning samiri in the 12th grade. "It's like doing aerobics," he says. "In the morning your thighs and legs are really stiff, especially if you go two to three weeks between sessions."

During a break in the samiri, a guest from the northern city of Tabuk brings out a one-stringed Bedouin instrument called a *rababa* and sings a traditional song of the desert. Others join in on the chorus. Bedouin poets and storytellers sing in unison with the rababa, which is played without percussion accompaniment.

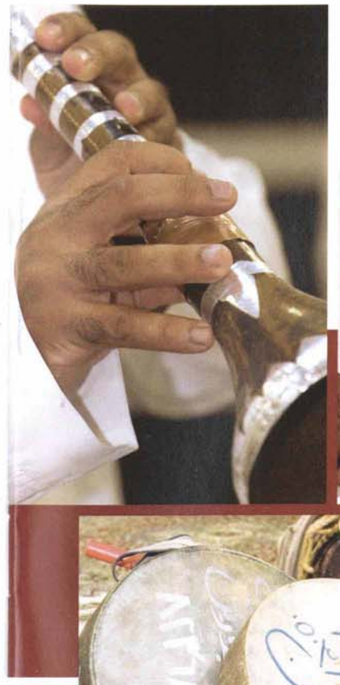
After a traditional dinner of roast lamb served Bedouin-style on trays on the ground, the group demonstrates a folk art that is popular all over the kingdom, *al-riddiyyah*, a contest between two poets. One poet sings out a simple melody with two lines of poetry. Then the rest of the men, standing in two lines facing each other, repeat it several times while clapping and bending at the knees, until the other poet replies with his own spontaneous verse. The dueling poets pace up and down between the chorus lines. If one fails to reply, the other continues with a new line. Eventually, one poet concedes and the victor is declared, all in good humor.

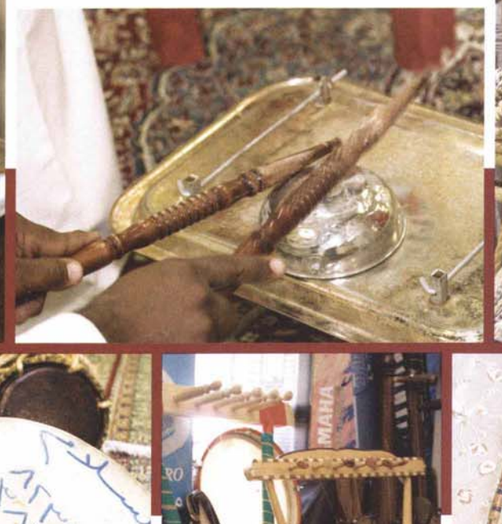
Some samiri sequences are so complex they take years to learn. *Young people start on the ends of the line, only gradually working their way to the center.*

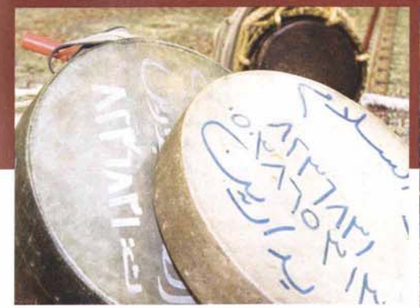
Above: **This assemblage of rare photos of the singers and 'ud players who made the earliest recordings of Saudi and Gulf music, producing 78-rpm records in the 1920's, comes from the folk-artifact collection of author and folklore expert Muhammad al-Quwi'i in Riyadh.** Right: **Saudi Television's Channel 2 films an open discussion at a "folk proverb" evening in Riyadh as well-known *rababa* player Saleh al-Biluwi, second row, right, waits his turn to perform.**

If you visit the musical-instrument stores in the kingdom's big cities, it's easy to believe that young people are interested in both traditional and modern music. In the afternoons, the tiny shops in the instruments *suq* in Riyadh's al-Hilla district are busy with customers. A university student and a couple of his friends test an electronic keyboard in one store. In other shops, employees and customers try out 'uds and violins, their melodies spilling out and mixing together in the passageway that winds through the market. Business is good, the shopkeepers report. 'Uds and guitars, both acoustic and electric, hang in the windows. Mountains of large frame drums are stacked to the ceilings.

'Uds and guitars are his hottest-selling items. An array of tars and other drums fills most of the shelf space. A young man from a local folk troupe stops in to buy several large tars. He explains that his group is flying to Riyadh the next day to play at an event for a sports team.







Tools of the art (top row, from left): **the *surnai*, the signature double-reed wind instrument of the *laiwa* folk-song tradition; the *batu*, a bowl atop an upside-down metal tray; the *tabl*, a double-headed drum used in eastern Saudi Arabia and the Gulf coast; a display of *qanuns*, or lap-plucked zithers.** Bottom row: **Tars display the name and phone number of Firqat al-Salam of Darin; locally made and imported harp-like lyres called *simsimiyahs*; instruments from Tarek 'Abd al-Hakim's collection.**

The same is true in Jiddah. Samir Muhammad Badawi, who opened his first music shop 30 years ago in the old neighborhood where he grew up, now has five stores throughout the Red Sea city. "My father played 'ud. When I saw it as a child, I loved the instrument. By the time I was 15 years old, I was playing 'ud, violin and accordion," Badawi says. Later he became a schoolteacher, but after work he played at birthday parties and weddings. He set up his first shop as a side occupation, and as the business grew, he was able to retire from teaching. Now his daughter works with him. "She's in charge of importing," he says.

Saudi Arabia's Hijaz region in the west boasts famous song and dance styles such as the majrur and mizmar of Taif and Makkah. The Hijaz, which includes Jiddah, has an old and rich musical culture based on song traditions that have more complex melodies than elsewhere, expressed using instruments such as the 'ud, qanun, nay and, more recently, the violin. The styles of the area reflect its role as a melting pot for Muslim pilgrims from all over the world.

Around midnight, Tarek 'Abd al-Hakim draws on his water pipe and smiles at the roomful of friends gathered at his home north of Jiddah. "Folk music comes from Makkah and Madinah, the Hijaz," he asserts. "Always the Arabs and Muslims came here on the *hajj*, and visited and mixed with our folk musicians. Of course, this was long before airplanes and ships, and they stayed for six months. Naturally, they mixed with us. They took things from us, and we took things from them."

'Abd al-Hakim is entitled to hold a theory or two about Saudi Arabia's rich and varied folk music, particularly in

the Hijaz. In addition to composing the melody of the national anthem, he wrote many songs that became popular throughout the Middle East, most of them steeped in the flavor of Hijazi folk music. He also authored several books on music. Above all, he's a lifelong devotee of Saudi Arabia's rich folk-music and dance heritage.

Born in a village near Taif, 'Abd al-Hakim spent his career in the Saudi military, where he trained the kingdom's first military bands. He was also a key figure in establishing the Saudi Society for Arts and Culture. He toured internationally with Saudi folk musicians and dancers, and in 1981 he won the prestigious UNESCO International Music Prize in recognition of his efforts to promote peace and cultural understanding by bringing Saudi music to a global audience.

The Hijazi wedding song styles of *majass* and *daanah* are specialties of Moustapha Iskandarani, a retired Saudi Arabian Airlines employee who had his own television show about music and later traveled to Morocco, Syria and Iraq to represent the kingdom at music festivals. The majass was sung by a professional singer, a *jassis*, when the family of the groom gathered outside the bride's house before they signed the wedding contract. It praised the groom and congratulated both families. The melodies of daanah songs meander up and down, artfully interacting with a distinct 8/4 rhythm called *shargain*.

"My artistic life began at home," Iskandarani explains as he tunes his 'ud, which was made in Makkah by renowned craftsman 'Abd al-Karim Sufi. "My family is from Makkah. My mother's family was musical. They sang the old styles, the majrur and the daanah. That's how I learned. I listened to them and stored them away, slowly, slowly." Then the family moved to Jiddah, to Bait al-Sha'arawi in the old quarter, and he made friends with many musicians who later became famous, including Mohammad 'Abdu, Sami Ihsan and Siraj 'Umar. "There was music continually around us, with parties and weddings, and I began singing at weddings," Iskandarani says. He has composed several songs himself, using the traditional styles and rhythms of the Hijaz, while adding the sound of a fully instrumented Arab ensemble and sometimes employing electric guitar and keyboards.

After singing a short introductory poem in the improvised style of the majass, Iskandarani launches into his original Hijazi-style composition, "Gharibah Ya Zaman (Strange Times)," with his son Mhanna joining him on drums.

Moustapha Iskandarani, who specializes in wedding-song styles, conjures up celebrations from the past as he plays an old song from the Hijaz, in western Saudi Arabia. "My mother's family sang the old styles," he says. "That's how I learned: I listened to them and stored them away, slowly, slowly." Today he composes new songs in the traditional styles and rhythms of the Hijaz, but sometimes supplemented with electric guitar and keyboards.

Tarek 'Abd al-Hakim brings out an 'ud during a late-night discussion with friends at his home outside Jiddah. Hakim, the dean of Saudi folk-music experts, is a composer and musician who wrote the melody for the kingdom's national anthem. "Folk music comes from the Hijaz [region of Saudi Arabia]," he asserts. "Arabs and Muslims came here on the *hajj* and mixed with our folk musicians. They took things from us, and we took things from them."

Saudi women, too, sing and perform folk music and folk dance to entertain themselves at all-women occasions such as wedding parties. In most Saudi cities and towns, you can find an ensemble or two of women that perform for the wedding night, *haflat al-zaffaf*, a big party for the women of the families of the bride and groom where musical entertainment is a must. They use the same songs and rhythms as the men, but also have some of their own, like the songs used specifically for wedding processions. Even the colorful Taifi majrur and samiri are also performed by women. Such folk and dance traditions from all over the kingdom are featured every year at the Janadriyah festival.

Decades ago, most women's bands consisted of a singer, known as the *mutribah*, who was accompanied by a group of tar-playing drummers. In the cities, some of the singers also played the 'ud and had violinists in their group. Today's urban ensembles usually consist of a singer who plays an electronic keyboard especially designed to play the microtones of Arab music. At her side, she'll have the traditional group of drummers, but the music takes on a more electronic sound, as it's amplified to fill a large festival hall. They perform traditional songs, as well as modern popular Arab songs that they learn from recordings.

Fathia Hasan Ahmed Yehya, known as Tuha, is one of Jiddah's most famous wedding singers and 'ud players. She learned to sing and play from her father and brother. Over the decades, she has composed more than 100 songs and is still actively working on new pieces at her comfortable home studio, which is filled with memorabilia of her performing career. An avid scrapbooker, Tuha shares photos, programs and notices of her many performances abroad, as well as her collaborations with many regional musicians in the recording studio.

Fathia Hasan Ahmed Yehya, or Tuha, one of Jiddah's best-known wedding singers and 'ud players, reminisces in her home about composing music to poetry written by her brother. Left: Before electronic keyboards swept the scene, singers and 'ud players like Tuha led musical ensembles that sang and played at women's parties at which guests also often performed for each other. Such a party is shown in "Dawsari Dance" by Saudi artist Fawzia Abdul Latif.

Saudi women, too, sing and perform folk music and folk dance to entertain themselves at **all-women occasions such as wedding parties.**

Her work is highly influenced by the old Hijazi song styles. "My brother was a poet and musician. He would write lyrics and I would sing melodies," she says. "I perform the traditional styles, the daanah, *hadri* (traditional vocal improvisation) and majass. I've been listening to these songs since I was a little girl. My brother was a great musician, an artist.... I'd start the idea and he'd complete it."

20th-century heyday of Egyptian song star Um Kulthum, this process became a leading art form in Arab popular culture. Poets like Egypt's Ahmad Rami collaborated with the leading Arab composers of the day to create poetic and musical masterpieces just for Um Kulthum's voice.

The practice has remained popular in Saudi Arabia all along. One of Tarek 'Abd al-Hakim's elementary-school

and used the traditional rhythm from the majrur of his hometown. It surprised everyone when "Ya Reem Wadi Thaqeef," a playful song admiring a young girl from Taif, took the Arab world by storm. Soon it was being broadcast throughout the Middle East on Egypt's ubiquitous radio station, Sawt al-Arab, the Voice of the Arabs.

The song likens the girl to a *reem*, a gazelle fawn, of Wadi Thaqeef, a valley

Poets and musicians have been collaborating like this in Arabia for centuries. Ever since pre-Islamic times, singers and reciters helped spread poems among the tribes. This practice found its way to the courts of the caliphs, where celebrated singers set poems to melodies and performed them for private, elite audiences. During the

friends in Taif was a son of King Faisal; he became an accomplished poet and asked 'Abd al-Hakim to compose a tune for a poem he'd written. 'Abd al-Hakim set the verse to a melody that was inspired by the music of the Hijaz

in the Taif area. 'Abd al-Hakim claims that the melody traveled as far as Turkey, Iran and Mexico, where musicians came up with their own versions of the song. Lebanese songstress Najah Salaam, who popularized it, even

Above: **At al-Nakhil, north of Jiddah, 86-year-old Tarek 'Abd al-Hakim sings with the Abu Siraj troupe while images of the late great Egyptian diva Um Kulthum, broadcast on Rotana television, are projected on the screen behind him.** Left: **Drummers from Abu Siraj concentrate on their traditional art while a pop star belts out a song on the muted big screen.**

Left: **A member of the Abu Siraj troupe, sitting cross-legged and wearing the *'ummah*, a traditional headdress of the Hijaz, plays his fully miked and "reverbed" qanun.** Below: **An Abu Siraj singer weaves passion, nostalgia and humor into his songs, welcoming listeners to join in. With equal passion, they do.**

named her daughter Reem in honor of the tune.

This kind of thing still happens. In 2005, a little-known composer from al-Hasa, Naser al-Saleh, got hold of a poem by Mansur al-Shadi, a well-known Saudi poet. He was inspired to write a melody, and later played it for Muhammad 'Abdu, one of the middle generation of Saudi singers who has brought traditional Saudi song styles to wide popularity through similar poetic collaborations. "Al-Amakin (Places)" is a nostalgic song about a man who goes looking for his father in the locales he visited with him before he died. 'Abdu liked it immediately and performed it in Jiddah for a live audience at the Summer Festival. The song was an immediate hit, marking another successful collaboration between musician and poet.

On a warm spring night at the seaside resort of al-Nakhil, north of Jiddah, the local Abu Siraj folk troupe demonstrates song styles from the western region like the mizmar, *khubaiti* and simsimiyah music. This polished group of professional performers has made many recordings in the 25 years since it was founded by a group of university students. Today, the troupe recruits younger members, owns a big sound system and brings a sound engineer to its performances—and even hands out promotional coffee mugs.

The musicians perform on an open-air stage beside the blue waters of the

Creek, an inlet in the Red Sea lined with stylish homes and resorts. A stadium-sized television screen next to the stage is tuned in to a Rotana music-TV channel, but the sound is muted. Tarek 'Abd al-Hakim and his son Sultan are there, adding their comments about Saudi music and its history.

As the wind dies down after dusk, Rotana invites viewers to vote for the top Arab song of all time, using text-messaging. Someone notices that 'Abd al-Hakim's hit, "Ya Reem Wadi Thaqeef," appears on the screen as an early contender, much to the composer's delight. Attendees promptly open their cell phones and add their votes. Over the next half hour, the voting becomes fierce as the lead shifts among a few finalists.

At last it's official. 'Abd al-Hakim's decades-old song, in a folk rhythm of Taif, set to a simple love

poem about a country girl, wins. The composer laughs to see a younger, black-and-white image of himself on the huge screen, playing the 'ud and singing the song. Just then, the Abu Siraj musicians begin a violin improvisation, introducing the next number. They call 'Abd al-Hakim to the stage and hand him the microphone. Beaming, he belts out "Ya Reem," mixing his voice with the chorus, their lively tasfiq, the tinkling sound of the qanun, and the strains of the electric violin. He has proved his point: Traditional Saudi folk music is still relevant in a text-messaging world.

Kay Hardy Campbell (www.kayhardycampbell.com), a former resident of Saudi Arabia and writer for the *Arab News* and *Saudi Gazette*, now lives near Boston, where she plays the 'ud and helps direct the annual Arabic Music Retreat at Mount Holyoke College. **Nicole LeCorgne,** free-lance photographer and percussionist, has been teaching and performing Arab percussion for more than 15 years. She has a master's degree in ethnomusicology and has traveled widely throughout the Middle East. She can be reached at photography@nicolelecorgne.com.

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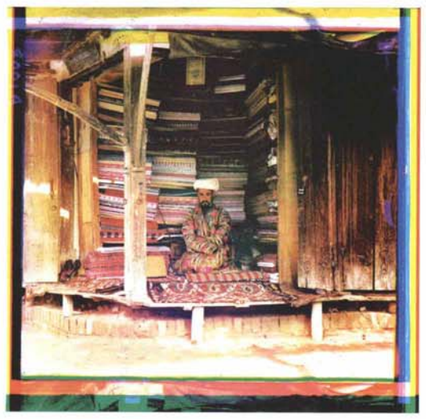
Saudi Arabia's largest oasis: S/O 74, J/A 04
Janadriyah festival: S/O 85, J/F 99
maqam system: J/A 01, S/O 02

Tied with Tradition

WRITTEN BY LUCIEN DE GUISE
IKAT PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE TEXTILE MUSEUM
LOCATION PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE PROKUDIN-GORSKII COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Silk Road is by no means the road less traveled these days.

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the founding of the World Tourism Organization's Silk Road Tourism Project in 1994, there has been a steady rise in the number of visitors to Central Asia. Most come in pursuit of commerce, history, scenery or the romance of bygone empires. Tourists do *not* come, typically, to marvel at local sartorial splendor—but a century ago, before Soviet rule and the advent of the western suit, it was not uncommon for men on the street to compete vigorously with each other in the flamboyance of their clothes.



A textile merchant in his shop in Samarkand, ca. 1910.

The key to Central Asian fashion was silk, traded across Asia for 2000 years. Pliny the Elder got it wrong about the Chinese and their most admired export: "The Seres are famous for the woollen substance obtained from their forests; after soaking it in water they comb off the white down of the leaves." According to legend, silk production outside China began with a princess who smuggled silkworms out when she was sent to marry a Central Asian prince. Her sentiments might have resembled those in the following lines from the third-century Lady Wenji's "Eighteen Refrains to a Barbarian Flute:"

I have left my beautiful country, China,
And have been taken to the nomads' camp.
My clothing is of coarse felt and furs.
I must force myself to eat their rancid mutton.
How different in climate and custom are
China and this land of nomads.

By the 19th century, curiously, the trading positions of Central Asia and China had been reversed, and Chinese buyers sought out silk items made farther west. To add something extra to their best robes, Central Asian artisans of this era perfected one of the most elaborate textile techniques ever devised.

The skill in *ikat* is not so much in the weaving as the dyeing. Depending on how many colors are required, an ikat cloth could require as many as 10 dyeing stages. (See "Making Ikat," page 20.) To viewers in search of the crisp colors and pattern definition that characterize woven and embroidered designs, the results might not immediately be seen as exceptional: "Out of

Strong colors and bold patterns are typical of Central Asian ikats, which were produced by specialized dyers in urban centers for sale to both urban and rural customers.

focus" is a common description. This is, of course, part of the effect, and today, the dreamy, impressionistic look of ikats has become newly appealing. In an age of mechanization, it virtually spells "handcrafted."

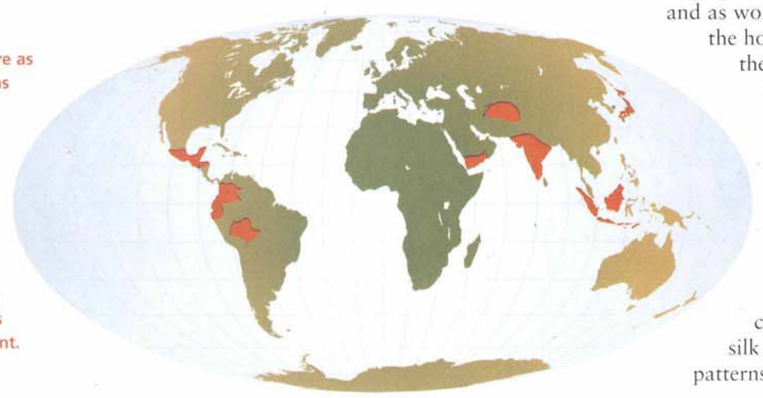
In centuries past, although ikats were widely admired, artisans in few parts of the world had the patience to create them. The main production centers were in pockets of Central Asia, India, Japan, Southeast Asia, parts of the Middle East and—in what scholars believe is a case of "parallel development"—Central and South America. We know less about the history of ikats than might be supposed. No textile can survive more than a few centuries unless buried in a dehumidified environment, and because Muslim funeral practices precluded the use of grave goods, it is particularly difficult to determine when various types of textiles were first manufactured in the Islamic world. Although the oldest surviving examples are from the Middle East, where fragments of 10th-century Yemeni *tiraz* ikats have been found, the earliest ikats were probably from India, where evidence of ikat-type cloths can be seen on the seventh-century Ajanta cave paintings in Maharashtra. It is assumed that the technique spread from there through the pan-Asian trade networks.

The word *ikat* comes, however, not from Central Asia, but from the Malay verb *mengikat*, "to tie." *Ikat* is now the word used worldwide, even though the traditional word in Central Asia was *abrbandi*, which joins the Persian words for "cloud" and "workshop," and in common usage, the term came to refer to both the woven products and the workshops. The region of Central Asia that took *abrbandi* to its greatest artistic height is now mostly within Uzbekistan, a former Soviet republic that has also been known by many names over time, including Transoxiana, Tartary and Mawarannahr, "what is beyond the river." (The river in question is the Oxus, which defines the western side of the region, while the Jaxartes demarcates its eastern edge.) The land itself has never been the reason armies coveted it: Its strategic position astride the world's greatest trade route was what made it worth fighting for.

The varieties of ikat are as different as the climates of hot, humid Southeast Asia and dusty, dry Central Asia. The Malay ikats have designs that are delicate to the point of being almost imperceptible, especially when generations of use have faded them. In Central Asia, the design spirit is as bold as the topography. But unlike the region's vibrant tribal rugs, ikats were the products of the great cities of the region, especially Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. In these cities, the most significant ethnic populations were Uzbeks and Tajiks, followed by dozens of other tribal and regional groups. In many centers, a substantial Jewish population was at the heart of the textile industry.

The ikats produced in the region had an honored part to play in domestic decoration, as wall-hangings that brightened rooms and as women's garments worn in the home. In all its variations, there were different levels of ikat quality. The best used silk for both warp and weft; at the very top was a velvet weave that required an extra set of warp threads to make the pile. The plainest used cotton in the weft and silk only in the warp. The patterns that were dyed and

Attributed to a Yemeni workshop of the 10th century, this *tiraz* fragment is one of the earliest known examples of resist-dye weaving, or ikat.



The varieties of ikat are as different as the regions that produced them. Although Central Asian ikats have been less studied than South and East Asian ones, scholars assume they influenced each other. Ikat in the western hemisphere is a separate development.

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART / ART RESOURCE

LOWER: ISLAMIC ARTS MUSEUM MALAYSIA

Above: Either warp threads alone or only weft threads or, rarely, both warp and weft threads can be resist-dyed to make ikat textiles. In Central Asian ikats, only the warps were dyed, and weavers typically used a satin weave that completely concealed the undyed weft. Right: This 19th-century Malaysian silk ikat sarong shows the gentler color variations that often distinguish Southeast Asian ikats.

woven into the cloths used motifs that date back millennia and often appear also in other crafts, especially jewelry and architecture: the ram's horn, amulet and tambourine are enduring favorites, along with the "tree of life" and the *boteh* (paisley).

Above all, color was the most vital ingredient in the luxuriance of ikat: the more colors, the more prestigious the result. Before inexpensive industrial aniline dyes brightened the look of all textiles in the second half of the 19th century with their harsher colors, the cloths of Central Asia were dependent on pomegranate peel for black dyes, crushed cochineal insects for deep reds, the madder plant for lighter reds and mauves, and other sources for a wide palette of greens, yellows, indigos, pinks and violets, all used extensively by the ikat dyers.

Detail of a silk-warp man's ikat robe, probably woven in Samarkand between 1860 and 1870.

The arrival of aniline dyes brought traditional ways of dyeing to an end and, with them, the elegant ways in which natural colors faded that had been such a source of wonder, particularly in the West. At the same time, the export of textiles to Europe made ikats popular, although Europe never showed the same faddish demand for ikats as it did for Kashmiri shawls. (In Russia, the elite of Moscow and St. Petersburg held parties at which "exotic" garb from Central Asia was the theme.)

Today, over the last decade and a half, as the people of modern Uzbekistan have looked to their past for inspiration and identity, ikat has again become a popular choice. Much of the ikat revival has not involved silk but printed textiles made with acetate threads and aniline dyes. However, in the late 1990's, with support from both local institutions and international cultural organizations, the Yodgorlik Handloom Weaving Mill in the Ferghana Valley, the main textile-weaving area of Uzbekistan, became one of the first to transform itself from a quota-driven Soviet-era mill to an artisanal manufactory using real silk and natural dyes. The result has been ikats that approach those of the 19th century "golden age" in their quality. Other manufacturers who have been reviving the old craft range from cottage weavers to other power-loom factories. Making the colors less harsh has been the greatest step forward, moving past the garishness that characterized the ikat of the 20th century.

This has awakened—following decades of Soviet-style enterprise—a spark of entrepreneurial self-interest. Many producers work in partnership with such non-governmental organizations as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank or Aid to Artisans, which have also helped build distribution networks and organize trade fairs. Most recently, customers are now not just tourists passing through, but on-line shoppers around the world. To cater to modern lifestyles, ikat workshops are no longer producing the voluminous masterpiece robes of 100 years ago: Instead, scarves are the most popular choice these days. Durable and light, they are an ideal mail-order item.

Thanks to this revival, silk ikats have regained much of their former popularity in Uzbekistan. They have become a symbol of cultural identity in a region where "cultural cleansing" was once an official Soviet policy. In Uzbek fashion festivals, ikats now often play a central role.

Other outsiders have noticed, too: Fashion designer Oscar de la Renta recently visited Uzbekistan and filled his fall 2005 collection with skirts and coats that drew from ikats. At the same time, designer Diane von Furstenberg unveiled her own tributes to the region. It's a global visibility that, after decades of neglect, gives a bright future to one of the world's great textile traditions.

The more colors, the more prestigious the ikat.

Above: **Ikat coats like this one were typically worn over layers of other clothing, including a long shirt and baggy pants, and held in place by a leather or embroidered belt with a metal buckle. Some coats were quilted.** Below: **This late 19th-century Uzbek robe was made with silk warp and weft and lined with printed cotton chintz made in England or Russia.**

Making Ikat

There are three main stages to ikat:
dyeing, weaving and the joining of woven strips.

The first entails stretching the undyed warp threads on a frame: The design of Central Asian ikats is created solely on the warp, not on the weft. The next step is to sketch on the threads an outline of the intended patterns. The threads are then removed from the frame, and water-repellent bindings of cotton and wax are tied to the parts of the threads that are not meant to be dyed in the first color. The threads are then immersed in the bath of dye. Afterward, the bindings are removed. The result is threads dyed along some parts of their length only. The dyed sections are now bound with more cotton and wax, and the bundled threads are immersed in a second dye bath. The dyer can, of course, overlap colors to mix them: For example, he could start with yellow, and then, if the second color is blue, he could plan for overlaps that will appear green. This process is repeated as many times as necessary to produce the color pattern the designer seeks.

When dyeing is finished, the threads are taken to the weaving workshops. In comparison to the enormous effort expended on dyeing, the weaving is relatively simple, if laborious. Using foot-operated looms, teams of weavers create lengths of ikat, often more than six meters (19') long, that can then be turned into wall-hangings or clothing.

The final stage creates width: Because the looms produce strips only about 25 to 40 centimeters (10–16") across, piecing them together to create a continuous pattern with minimal waste is the final challenge.

The dyers whose efforts were so essential to the process once occupied one of the lowest rungs on the social ladder. Those who engage in the ikat craft now are admired for a vision and talent that was generally not recognized in the past, even in their own lifetimes.

Above: **Vegetal patterns like the "tree of life" require an additional level of skill in laying out the dyed thread bundles of the fabric's warp.** Below, left: **Ikat dyers dip wrapped bundles of thread into a vat. Only those parts of the threads that have not been wrapped in cotton and wax will take on the color.** Center: **After dying, usually in several successive colors, is complete, the bundles are arranged on the loom and unwrapped to become the warp threads.** Right: **Although the warp is silk, the weaver may use a simple cotton weft or, for a more luxurious fabric, a silk one. He can also add a supplementary silk weft to form loops that are later clipped to make a velvet fabric.**

One of the 148 Central Asian ikats collected over the past 20 years and recently donated to the Textile Museum by Istanbul collector Murad Megalli.

Visions of Ikats

During the late 19th century, ikat dyers were not the only craftsmen who were experimenting with color.

Photography was also being transformed, and among the pioneers of polychromy was Sergei Mikhailov Prokudin-Gorskii, a prolific Russian photographer who included Central Asia in his travels. When a subject as colorful as ikat textiles appears, it is a revelation to see images from an era we know mostly through monochrome brought to dazzling, full-color life.

Although Prokudin-Gorskii was not the first photographer to work in color, there is a richness to his work that is entirely unexpected from the early 20th century. This is partly because the images we see now are not prints from his own time. His photographs were originally projected onto a screen by registering three separate monochrome transparency images, each taken with a different filter of red, green and blue. Precisely aligned and illuminated with a projector, the three images appeared in full color.

Today, digital technology is recreating his photographs under the auspices of the US Library of Congress, which bought them from the photographer's heirs after his death in 1944. The accuracy of the color can be verified by comparing a background feature in the photographs—the tiles on the wall of a building, for example—with the same feature as it is now. The match is almost perfect.

Much admired though silk ikats were, brocade was the material of the ruling class in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among the few easily identifiable images that have come down to us from Central Asia's era of prosperity is Prokudin-Gorskii's portrait of Mohammed Alim Khan, the last amir of Bukhara, wearing striking blue robes of silk brocade. Not long after this photo was made, Alim fled Bolshevik expansion to exile in Afghanistan.

Lucien de Guise (luciendeguise@yahoo.com) is the acting head curator of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (www.iamm.org.my). In addition to writing about art, he has edited the *Malaysia's Best Restaurants* guide since 1993.

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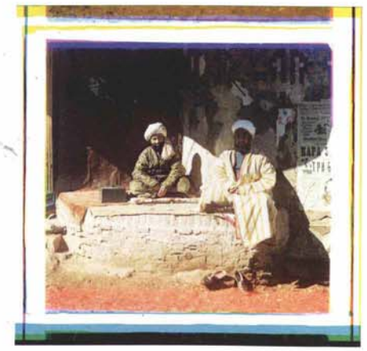
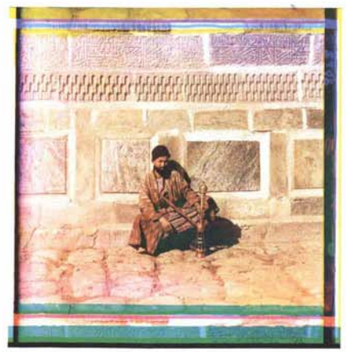
Malaysian textiles (sarongs): M/J 04
Central Asian embroidery (suzanis): J/A 03
Kashmiri *pashmina*: J/A 02

More ikat history: **www.yodgorlik.uz/history.htm**
Bukhara Artisan Development Centre: **www.cango.net.kg/homepages/uz/adc/badc/**
Central Asian Crafts Support Organization: **www.catgen.com/cacsa/EN/**
Uzbek Alive crafts on line: **www.uzbekalive.com**





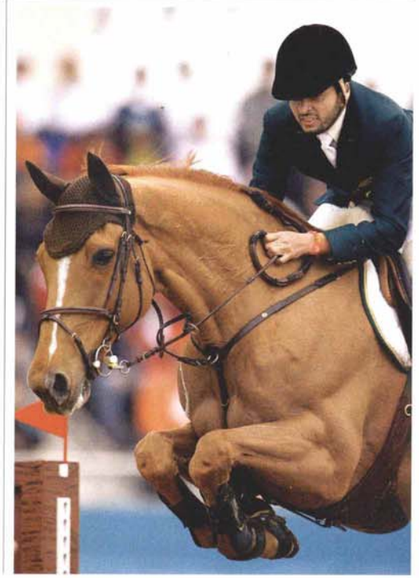
Prokudin-Gorskii's color photos from Samarkand, a few of which show men dressed in ikat robes, date to the early 20th century, probably between 1905 and 1915. This photo of a group of men above **was made in the Registan, the city's central square. The photo of the traders,** far left, **was also made there. Although he did not record the location of the man with a water pipe,** left, **Prokudin-Gorskii framed the photo to include the ornate calligraphic inscription higher on the wall.**

Doha's Grand Games

WRITTEN BY CHAR SIMONS

The biggest gathering of athletes in history. The first major international multi-sport event to be hosted by an Arab country. The world's largest video projection, against a backdrop of dazzling pyrotechnics. All describe the 15th Asian Games staged in Doha, Qatar last December. Like the little engine that could, tiny Qatar put on two weeks of sport with style that will be hard for even the Olympics to top.

"I ALWAYS APPROACH THE ASIAN GAMES AS A SMALL OLYMPICS. A MEDAL HERE IS VERY PRECIOUS."



The Asian Games brought together 12,500 athletes —1500 more than the Olympics—all from the largest, most populated continent on the planet. They competed in 39 sports—11 more than the Olympics.

Bahrain's Ruqaya Al-Ghasara waves a Bahraini flag after winning a gold medal in the women's 200-meter race. Above left: **Iran's Hossein Reza Zadeh lifts 230 kilos (506 lbs) during the weightlifting competitions to win one of his country's 48 gold medals.** Above right: **Khalid Al 'Eid of Saudi Arabia clears an obstacle on his horse Al-Riyadh to secure the gold for his equestrian team.** Opposite: **Spectators arrive at the newly renovated Khalifa Stadium in Doha.** Previous spread: **The opening ceremony featured more than 8000 performers from 20 countries.**

A quadrennial tradition in Asia since 1951, the Asian Games have most often been staged by the athletic powerhouses: China, Japan, Korea and India. The only other Middle Eastern country to host them was Iran in 1974.

Sports are not new to Qatar. The oldest national federations, in soccer and table tennis, were established in the 1960's, before independence from Britain in 1971. Since then, Qatar has transformed itself from a British protectorate noted mainly for pearling into one of the world's most affluent countries.

As part of its quest to diversify an economy based on oil and gas, the Connecticut-sized nation on the Arabian Gulf went after the Games in a big way. With a population the size of Denver's, this entailed hiring expertise from Australia, Europe and North America to help plan the Games while thousands more, largely from South and Southeast Asia, helped build and renovate 44 sport venues, roads and housing for athletes.

"Sport is the shortest way to be part of the world. It's the language between nations. It builds human character and takes care of the human spirit," says Muhammad al Malki, president of the Qatar Sports Press Committee. "We are looking to be part of the world and create friendship with others. There has been no civilization without sport."

The $2.6-billion Asian Games are the biggest international athletic competition ever held in Qatar, but not the first. In its quest to carve a niche as a premier international sports capital, the country recently hosted the West Asian Games, the International Triathlon Union world cup, major championships in soccer, track and field, golf and tennis, and a congress on sports science. And Doha, the upstart capital that pledged —and built—a new $700-million "Sports City," beat out heavyweights Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and New Delhi to host the 2006 Asian Games.

Like other international sporting events, the Games attracted high-caliber athletes, such as Olympic bronze medalist equestrian Khaled Al 'Eid of Saudi Arabia, Olympic gold medal cyclist Zulfiya Zabirova of Kazakhstan, Indian tennis star Sania Mirza and world-record weightlifter Hossein Reza Zadeh of Iran.

"I always approach the Asian Games as a small Olympics. Asia is more than half the population of the world. It is always nice to compete with Olympic champions. A medal here is very precious," said Khazak swimmer Vladislav Polyakov.

The Games highlight the so-called "rice curtain" that separates East Asia and West Asia: China led the medal count with 316, with Japan and Korea trailing distantly at 198 and 193, respectively. Kazakhstan reaped the fourth largest medal harvest at 85. West Asian countries were led by Iran, which finished sixth overall with 48 medals, and Qatar, which finished ninth with 32.

However, this numerical landscape is changing. China fell 18 gold medals short of its Games record of 183, captured in Beijing in 1990. Athletes from Arab countries increased their total medal count to 111, doubling their winnings from the 2002 Asian Games in Busan, Korea.

Of course it is usual for national teams to perform better when the Games are on their own turf and athletes are inspired by the passion of their own fans. But Qatar's success on the field amazed everyone, leaving an inspiring legacy for the whole country and the wider Middle East. Qatar's medals included some of the most prestigious of the Games, such as the men's golds in soccer and equestrian and silver in basketball.

"The victory has a special taste," says Uruguayan-born soccer forward Sebastián Quintana. "It's very important for Qatar, and to win the last gold medal of the Asian Games was something really special for us."

The East–West athletic divide reflects the difference both in resources and in the cultural importance given to athletics. East Asian teams view the Games as a tuneup for the next Olympics. With the absence of some of their top talent, such as basketball's Yao Ming,

TOP: AL BELLO / GETTY IMAGES; ABOVE LEFT: EPA / CORBIS; ABOVE RIGHT: MARWAN NAAMANI / AFP / GETTY IMAGES; PREVIOUS SPREAD: EPA / CORBIS.

PAULA BRONSTEIN / GETTY IMAGES FOR DAGOC

"THE VICTORY HAS A SPECIAL TASTE. TO WIN THE LAST GOLD OF THE GAMES WAS SOMETHING REALLY SPECIAL."

it was also an opportunity for some of their second-tier athletes to compete internationally. Meanwhile, for many West Asian teams, it was a chance for some friendly intra-Arab competition.

"We are all very happy because we broke the Kuwait and Arabian Gulf records, and everybody on the team made new personal-best times," swimmer Marzouq al Salem noted.

For West Asian countries, the Games are also an occasion to develop athletics among women and girls. Throughout the region, greater numbers of women and girls are participating in sports. "We start in the schools and use them as training centers. The parents of the girls are okay with it because sports are part of the schools," explains Ahlam al Mana, head of the Qatari women's teams.

The Games are also an effort to promote a pan-Asian identity and, like the Olympics, to use sport to transcend political, cultural and religious differences. Along Doha's waterfront, a photo exhibit titled "Unity of Asia" called Asia "our common home."

While many sports at the Games, such as basketball, have their origins in the West, others originated in the East and have swept the continent. For example, since taekwondo, a Korean martial-arts sport, was introduced at the Games in 1986, 21 countries have won medals in it. Indeed, spreading

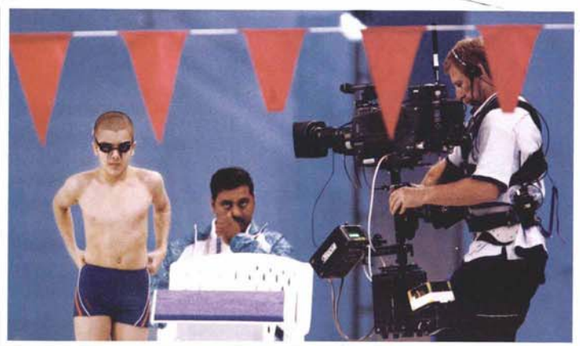
China's forward Zhu Fangyu helps his team beat Qatar in the men's basketball final. Above right: **Li Yanxi of China poses with his gold medal, won in the triple jump. China took 316 gold medals during the Asian Games.** Opposite, top: **After their 1–0 victory over Iraq in the men's football (soccer) final, teammates give Qatar's Khalfan Ibrahim Al-Khalfan a celebratory toss.** Center: **Iraq supporters cheer on their team during the final game.** Lower: **Showing his enthusiasm with an art car, a Qatari man gives the Asian Games a thumbs-up.**

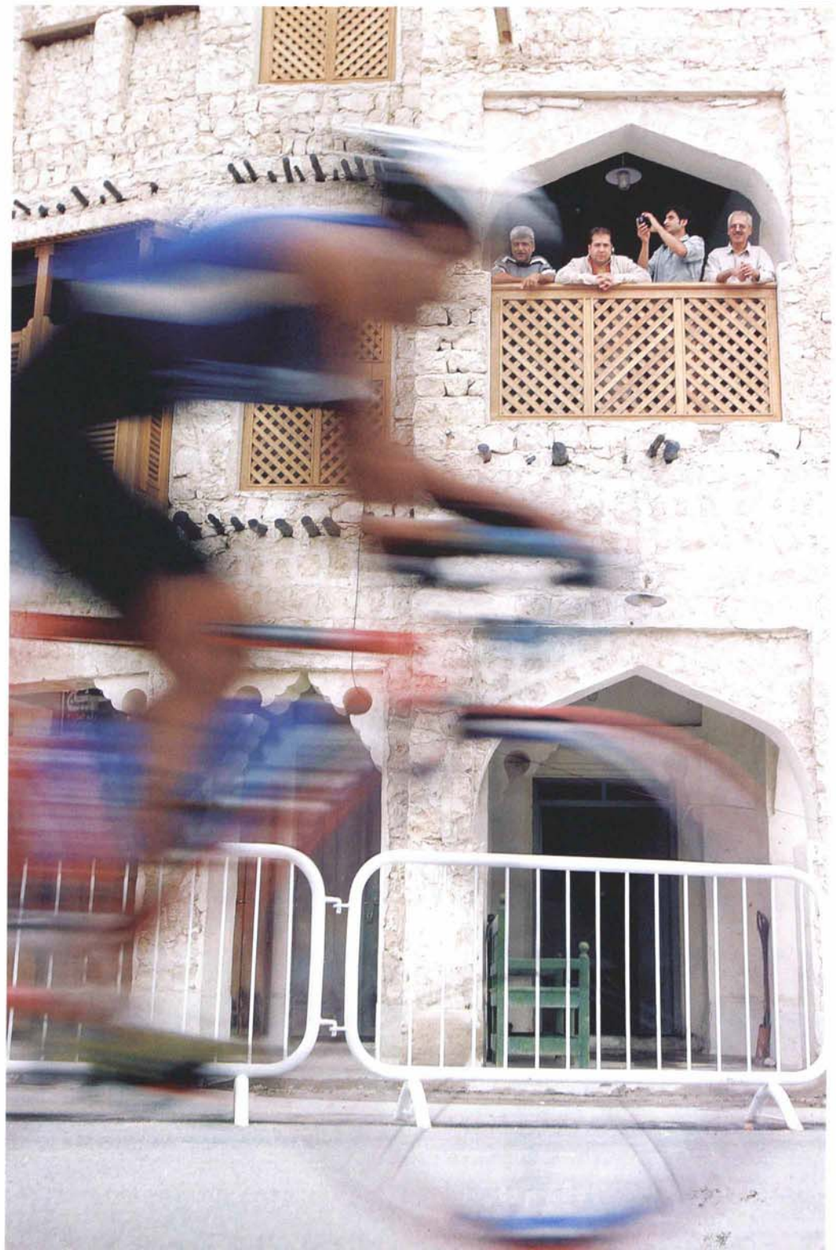
both the medals and the host venues among Asian nations is one of the goals of the Games. Thirty-eight countries medaled at the Qatar Games, and the Olympic Council of Asia has regional competitions, such as the next West Asia Games, planned for 2009 in Yemen and has scheduled the 2010 Asia Beach Games in Oman.

"Allowing smaller countries to host different multi-sport events gives them the opportunity to share the principles of unity and solidarity in the continent, since those kinds of games do not need a huge budget like the Asian Games," says Sheikh Ahmed Fahad al Sabah of Kuwait, president of the Olympic Committee of Asia.

Organizers introduce new sports into each edition of the Asian Games. In Qatar, triathlon, chess and a 120-kilometer (75-mi) endurance equestrian relay race all made inaugural appearances. The former was chosen because it is an Olympic sport, increasingly popular, and has television appeal for the Games. The latter two were selected because of their Middle Eastern roots.

The Asian Games have another similarity with the Olympics: controversy. In addition to the long-standing question of professionals competing against amateurs, the common American and





"SPORT IS THE SHORTEST WAY TO BE PART OF THE WORLD. IT'S THE LANGUAGE BETWEEN NATIONS."

European practice of hiring top-notch athletes and coaches from other countries has begun to spread to those Asian countries that can afford it. For example, Qatar's basketball coach is American Joseph Stiebing, and most of its soccer players are trained in Europe or Latin America.

"It is legal to bring athletes from outside the country," al Malki says to critics. "Much of the world does it. We are a small nation, and to get results we need stars."

Also like the Olympics, the 15th Asian Games had their share of upsets.

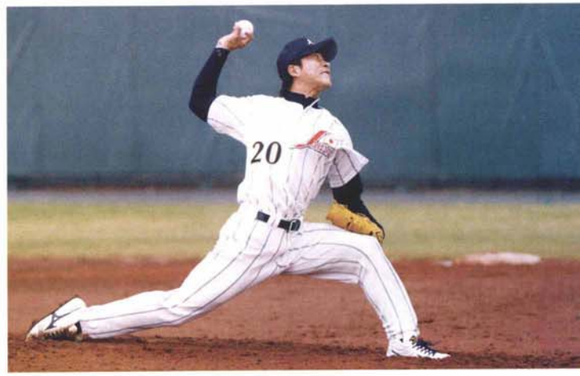
Sri Lankans Athula Russell and Chinthaka Galappaththi face off during the men's rapid chess individual competition, one of several sports first added to these Games. Top right: **The youngest athlete at the Games was 10-year-old Amer Ali of Iraq, who swam the 200-meter individual medley.** Right: **Spectators in the Qatari town of Souqs view competitors during the cycling portion of the men's triathlon.** Opposite, top: **A motionless judge watches as Japan's Yusuke Fukuda and South Korea's Lee Cheon Woong flow through a fencing bout.** Opposite, lower: **Japanese pitcher Satoshi Komatsu pitches to a batter from Korea.**

OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT: STREETER LECKA / GETTY IMAGES FOR DAGOC; OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT: JASON REED / REUTERS / CORBIS; OPPOSITE, LOWER: JEFF GROSS / GETTY IMAGES FOR DAGOC; ABOVE: BOBBY YIP / REUTERS / CORBIS; LOWER: CAREN FIROUZ / REUTERS / CORBIS.

These usually came at the expense of China, which entered the competition with the prospect of medaling in every sport. However, Kuwait beat them at men's handball and Uzbekistan beat them in men's and women's lightweight double-scull rowing.

While sports have become a key part of Qatar's identity, the nation's athletic door did not close when the torch left Doha on December 15 for Ghangzhou, China, where the next Games take place in 2010. Qatar is bidding to host the 2016 Summer Olympics, a quest that will take a combination of world-class facilities, organization, experience and a regional fan base to fulfill. With a vision of that future, Sports City, the main competition venue of the Asian Games, will become a youth sports training academy.

Meanwhile, just as Qatar put its imprint on the Games, the Games transformed Qatar. When the torch arrived in the gleaming skyscrapered capital of Doha after weaving through 15 countries and regions of Asia, the city's Corniche came alive. Throngs of young men and women, many hanging out the windows of honking cars, waved Qatari flags and cheered the flame that ignited the city with the spirit of the Games.



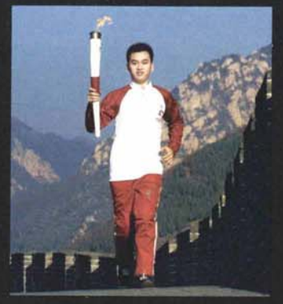
"The city is buzzing and has become more beautiful," says Vibha Nanda of India, who has lived in Doha for three years with her husband, a banker, and their two sons. She and her family have been watching a Syrian dance troupe perform on the Corniche, one of many free cultural performances associated with the Games.

The 15th Asian Games were not just about putting Doha on the map in a sporting sense, but they also let Qatar, acting as flag-bearer for the whole region, do something no Arab country had done on this scale. Now others may follow—perhaps all the way to the 2016 Olympics.

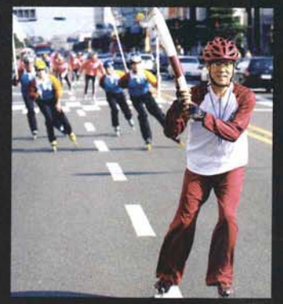
"It's not every day you have the Asian Games on your doorstep," echoes Nanda's husband, Sandeep, as an entertainer on stilts lurches by.

22 Cities In 55 Days

More than 3000 torchbearers carried the flame of the 15th Asian Games over a 50,000-kilometer route through 55 countries to the opening ceremonies in Doha December 1. The torch was shaped like an oryx horn.



CHINA



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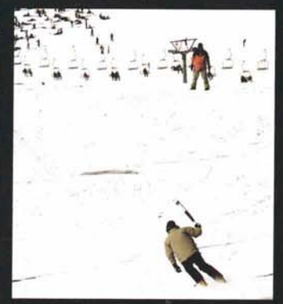

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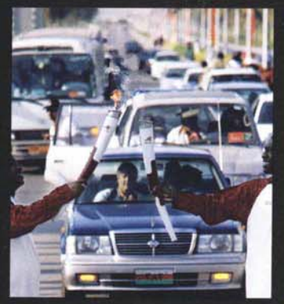

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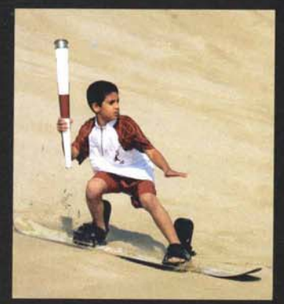

QATAR

QATAR

QATAR

CHINA: STEVE HOLLAND / EPA / CORBIS; SOUTH KOREA: STEVE HOLLAND / DAGOC VIA GETTY IMAGES; IRAN, OMAN: RICK STEVENS / DAGOC VIA GETTY IMAGES; QATAR (HORSE): RICK STEVENS / DAGOC / EPA / CORBIS; OPPOSITE, FROM TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: YONHAP / EPA / CORBIS; CSPA / NEWSPORT / CORBIS; KARIM JAFFAR / AFP / GETTY IMAGES; MANAN VATSYAYANA / AFP / GETTY IMAGES; ROSLAN RAHMAN / AFP / GETTY IMAGES; RYAN PIERSE / GETTY IMAGES FOR DAGOC.

The Greatest Show on Earth

How to hush a crowd of 50,000? Announce they are about to be seen by half the planet. "The TV broadcast is about to begin. Please be sure to be in your seats when Doha goes live to the world," a female voice booms from the loudspeaker at Khalifa Stadium, showplace of the 15th Asian Games.

Indeed, the opening ceremony brings Qatar to much of Asia, if not the whole world, in a dazzling visual and auditory feast of choreography, music and technology. "These Games represent a great opportunity to unify people through sport, to obtain further cooperation and reconciliation, to understand and accept diversity and differences, and to work toward the fundamental principles of sport, which go far beyond the physical," Shaykh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, heir apparent of Qatar and chairman of the Asian Games, tells the crowd.

As the performance, five years in the making, begins, something entirely unrehearsed happens: A torrent of rain blends with the gold- and ruby-colored confetti falling from the sky. Undeterred, the stadium lights up to create a magical fairy tale in which performers present Qatar's desert and maritime cultures. A boy—"The Seeker"—in search of a magical armillary sphere, is carried by a mechanical golden falcon that deposits him on a mountaintop. Here begins his adventure along the Silk Roads, the ancient trade routes that crossed Asia from the Pacific to the Mediterranean, transmitting and transforming culture, commerce, science and religion for millennia.

The tale unfolds, with 8000 performers from 20 countries telling the story of the great regions of the Asian continent and the major eras of civilization, beginning with the era of Arab and Islamic science and mathematics and its advances from the eighth to the 15th century. From there, the journey continues to the Renaissance, Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution and, finally, the Digital Age, where strips of live flame representing oil and gas crisscrossed the stadium floor, warming fans in the uncharacteristically chilly night.

In addition to an estimated television audience of 1.7 billion, the 3½-hour opening ceremony's sold-out crowd includes thousands of Qataris, heads of state from more than a half dozen Asian countries and presidents of such major athletic bodies as the International Olympic Committee and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), governing body of the World Cup.

"Having the Games in Doha is a surprise," says hometown Doha fan Ahmed Saleh, who brought his 11-year-old twin son and daughter to the opening.

The opening ceremony is produced by the same Australian team that created the opening ceremonies for the Sydney Olympics. But tonight's show in the newly renovated Khalifa Stadium is setting new benchmarks for such productions in choreography, storytelling and technology. Engaging 100 artists, musicians and composers from Qatar's cultural community, Games organizers seized the opportunity to promote Qatari and Asian culture and history.

Indeed, music from Japan, Singapore, Lebanon and Qatar is woven throughout the ceremonies, along with dancers and acrobats from Syria, the Philippines, Kazakhstan, China and Japan. With a nod to universal pop culture, Chinese pop star Jackie Chueng performs, as well as Spanish tenor José Carreras, Bollywood actress Sunidhi Chauhan and Lebanese singer Magida Al Roumi.

After the show, the parade of athletes by nation is as colorful as any Olympic procession. Iranian women dress in elegant aqua tunics, pants and headscarves. The Maldives' male athletes cover their heads, but the women do not. China marches in, 713 strong; Korea and Japan have each brought more than 600 athletes. The last and largest of the West Asian delegations to enter the stadium is Qatar, with 360 athletes. They enter the stadium wearing the white and burgundy colors of the country's flag.

The parade of nations sets up a friendly East Asia versus West Asia rivalry that will be one of the themes of the Games. Fans on one side of the stadium cheer wildly at the introduction of West Asian delegations into the stadium, such as Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Iraq. Competing cheers from the other side of the stadium erupt when athletes from China and Japan and a unified Korean delegation make their way around the arena.

For the grand finale, Muhammad bin Hamad Al-Thani of Qatar, on horseback, carries the torch in and up a long, steep flight of stairs to the top of the stadium. The horse, Malibu, struggles to mount the last few rain-slicked steps as a breathless crowd watches. At the top, al Thani touches the torch to the 60-meter (195') cauldron, the tallest ever seen at a major multi-sport event. It rotates dramatically and becomes a giant armillary sphere as an explosion of fireworks fills the night sky.

It's a flame that was carried to Doha by 3000 torchbearers through 15 countries over 55 days. Starting in India, the torch wove through Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan, Korea, China, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

Two weeks of athletic competition are to come, but this night, Qatar clears the first hurdle, staging a breathtaking opening ceremony.

"I think we managed to pull off nothing short of a miracle, given the weather conditions that prevailed," artistic director David Atkins says of the record downpour and the 15- to 20-knot winds that buffeted performers.

This page, from top: **The final torchbearer was Qatar's Minister of Energy and Industry, Abdullah bin Hamad al-'Atiya. Two rain showers failed to put out the spark of the opening. To light the cauldron that burned throughout the Games, Qatari endurance equestrian team captain Shaykh Muhammad bin Hamad Al-Thani rode his horse to the top of Khalifa Stadium. Theatrics at the Games' closing ceremony were no less spectacular: Here, a boy rode a flying carpet in a performance based on "A Thousand and One Nights." China fielded the largest national delegation to the Games, parading into the opening with 713 athletes. In their turn, the 360 athletes representing Qatar walked into the stadium.**

"We've been here planning this for two years, and in that time it's rained twice. During the opening ceremony, it rained four times."

Nonetheless, the dazzling opening of the Games caught the eye of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Committee, which came to Doha for guidance. Members of the International Olympic Committee, which Qatar is wooing in its bid to host the 2016 Summer Olympics, also praised the ceremony, faulting only the weather. Most of all, the opening captured the hearts of viewers and spectators.

Ahmed Saleh, flanked by his twins, beams. "We are very proud of the Games to be here," he says.

Kabaddi, Anyone?

The sweat-tinged air is electrifying. Fans in face paint, waving a sea of flags, create a non-stop din in the 1000-seat stadium filled to capacity. Several hundred more who couldn't get seats spill over into the hallways, watching the match on big-screen TVs.

No, this is not the World Cup final. Not even the Superbowl. It is the gold medal *kabaddi* match between India and Pakistan, one of the biggest fan favorites at the Asian Games.

"I was here three hours before the match to get a seat," says Salahuddin, deputy chief of mission of the Pakistani National Olympic Committee.

So unknown is the game of kabaddi outside South Asia that when I asked a photo-agency editor about assigning a photographer to cover the sport, he replied, "I don't know who Kabaddi is, but we'll do our best to get a picture of him."

Originating in South Asia some 4000 years ago, kabaddi is known as "the game of the masses" due to its simple format and need for virtually no equipment. It is played between two teams of seven; one player repeatedly chants "kabaddi," meaning "holding of the breath" in Hindi, and charges the opponent's court, trying to touch as many as possible. The opposing team tries to catch him, halting the "kabaddi" chant.

Word of the backlot sport is starting to spread. A contingent of US Marines, training with local troops in the Indian state of Karnataka, plays kabaddi in the barracks. Police officers in Toronto are playing it with the city's large Asian community in an effort to improve race relations. In northern England, the sport has been introduced at a correctional facility at the request of Asian inmates. At this edition of the Asian Games, the traditional kabaddi-playing nations—India, Pakistan and Bangladesh—were joined by newcomers Iran and Japan.

Although familiar sports ranging from archery to swimming dominate the Asian Games, more local sports, such as kabaddi, *sepaktakraw* and *wushu*, attract a solid fan base of both the faithful and the curious. "In Pakistan and India, kabaddi games form spontaneously, with everyone in the neighborhood turning out," Salahuddin says, watching his team fall to India, which takes the gold medal.

Another little-known game, sepaktakraw, originated in Central Asia in the 15th century and resembles volleyball played with the feet instead of hands. Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia are the traditional Asian Games powerhouses of both the men's and women's teams. The tongue-twisting name comes from the Malay *sepak* meaning "kick," and *takraw* meaning "woven ball." Using only their feet, three-person teams smash a rattan ball over the net, earning a point if their opponents cannot return the ball without letting it touch the ground.

Wushu, whose name literally means "military art," originated in China during the Zhou dynasty (1122–255 BC) and, over centuries, developed into routines using hands, swords, spears and cudgels involving stances, kicks, punches, balances, jumps and sweeps.

With 11 more sports than the Olympics, some critics claim the Asian Games are getting unwieldy and should drop the lesser-known sports. But tell that to the packed stadium of fans at the India–Pakistan kabaddi final.

Pakistan's Muhammad Akram tries to tag one of his Indian opponents during the kabaddi group match, but India won 31–20 to take the gold. Top right: **Pakistani supporters cheer their team.** Right, upper: **Taiwan's Fan Man Yun competes in *wushu*.** Right, lower: **Facing opponents from Vietnam, Nitinadda Kaewkamsai of Thailand serves during the women's final *sepaktakraw* match.** Opposite, top: **The Athlete's Village housed most of the 12,500 athletes who participated in the Games.** Opposite, lower: **A Qatari fan waves her country's flag during the swimming heats.**

TOP LEFT: PETER ALIF DER HEYDE / EPA / CORBIS; TOP RIGHT: KHALED EL-FIQI / EPA / CORBIS; WUSHU: ZAINAL ABD HALIM / REUTERS / CORBIS; SEPAKTAKRAW: EPA / CORBIS. OPPOSITE, TOP: STREETER LECKA / GETTY IMAGES FOR DAGOC; OPPOSITE, LOWER: JASON REED / REUTERS / CORBIS.

Overheard

"I'll definitely have a glass of hot milk to make sure I get a good night's sleep."
—India's Jameeluddin Mohammed on how he will celebrate after beating Oman in beach volleyball.

"We prepared a freestyle with fairly classical music. Unfortunately, Arab music doesn't fit with the horse's movements."
—Omar Khalid al Mannai of Qatar, commenting on his equestrian performance.

"My fitness was really not good enough. Even if I hit the ball hard, it still came back. But I am 35. It's not bad for an old man, but maybe I should think about playing with the seniors from now on."
—Abdulrahaman Shebab of Brunei on his tennis loss to Japan's Toshihide Matsui.

"Once, we beat Bahrain. It was 15 or 20 years ago."
—Bangladesh soccer captain Arman Aziz, after the team's 5–1 defeat in a preliminary round.

"We didn't have a plan. That was a problem, I suppose."
—Diane Pascua of the Philippines, beach volleyball competitor.

"My opponent was very strong. Because of the height difference, I concentrated more on punching on his stomach."
—Sri Lankan boxer Chamila Prasad, after beating Saudi Arabia's Mohammed Malak al Salem.

By the Numbers

3,000,000,000: Population of countries through which the torch of the 15th Asian Games was carried

1,700,000,000: Estimated television audience for the opening ceremony

800,000: Population of Qatar

160,000: Population in Qatar that is native-born Qatari

50,000: Attendance at the opening ceremony

20,000: Schoolchildren bused to matches at the Games from Qatar schools

19,000: Total volunteers at the Games

15,000: Total number of roses given at Doha airport to each arrival for the Games, from athletes to coaches, trainers, athlete's family members and media

12,500: Athletes participating in the 15th Asian Games

10,000: Costumes used in the opening ceremony

8,000: Performers from 20 countries and regions participating in the opening ceremony

1,300: Accredited journalists representing 110 nationalities

65: Age of oldest athlete, chess player Emiko Nakagawa of Japan

64: Horses used in the opening ceremony

40: Countries and regions participating in the 2006 Games

39: Sporting events at the Games

38: Countries that won medals

28: Sporting events at the 2004 Athens Olympics

25: Millimeters of rain that fell during the opening ceremony (1")

14: Number of Asian Games records set

13: Days of travel by truck for horses to arrive from Khazakstan

12: Millimeters of rain that fall on average during December in Doha

11: Modes of transport for the torch, including camel, horse, wheelchair, inline skates and mountain bikes

10: Age of the youngest athlete, swimmer Amer Ali of Iraq

8: Number of world records set

8: Number of days per year on average during which it rains in Doha

4: Number of days it rained during the 2006 Games

2: Number of Buddhist monks on the Japanese kabaddi team

1.25: Cost in US dollars of a ticket to the men's basketball and soccer matches

1: Number of airport terminals built specially for the Games

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Khaled Al 'Eid: J/F 01
Equestrian endurance race: J/A 00
Olympic Games: N/D 83, S/O 84, M/A 89, J/F 01

WRITTEN BY ALAN PIMM-SMITH

FROM Ar'a·bic TO Eng'lish

How many words in the English language can you think of that are derived from Arabic? The immediate answer is, "Quite a few": mosque *and* minaret, bedouin *and* shaykh, caliph *and* sultan, *to name a few. Whether or not one knows any Arabic, it's safe to assume these words come from Arabic because they refer to Arab things—as, of course, do the words* camel, wadi *and* dhow.

In some cases the English version of the word is as good as identical to its Arabic original, though others diverge in sound or meaning. *Mosque* doesn't sound much like *masjid*, and though we can use *bedouin* in the singular, it is in fact taken from *bidwan*, a plural form of *bedawi*. *Dhow* comes from *dawa*, though if you ask any of your Arabic-speaking friends, you'll find they don't know the word, as it's no longer in common use.

So far, no surprises: All the words mentioned refer to aspects of Arab or Islamic life, so naturally they are expressed in Arabic. But it may come as a surprise to learn that more familiar things, such as common fruits and vegetables, were once equally exotic. The fruits apricots, oranges, lemons and limes, and the vegetables artichoke, spinach and aubergine (eggplant) all have Arabic names, though they no longer taste or sound foreign. *Lemon*, for instance, came into medieval English from Middle French and before that from Middle Latin—with very little change in pronunciation in the process—from the Arabic *laymun*. *Artichoke*, on the other hand, is hardly recognizable as coming by way of Italian from the Arabic *al-khurshuf*.

There are in fact hundreds of Arabic loan words in the English language, though few of them have entered directly. For the most part, they have come disguised as French, Spanish, Italian or Latin words. For the past 1000 years, English has been voracious in its appropriation of foreign elements, and French- and Latin-origin words now account for approximately half the modern English vocabulary. French was the language of the English court, the nobility and parliament for at least 300 years following the Norman Conquest in 1066, and remained the language of the law in England right up until 1731.

In medieval times, then, it was largely through French that Arabic words entered the English language. And perhaps

masjid mosque *dawa* dhow *al-kimya* alchemy

the most noticeable thing about these words is that the majority of them are technical terms relating in particular to mathematics, astronomy and chemistry. The word *alchemy*, which entered English in the 1300's, comes almost unchanged from the Arabic *al-kimya*, which itself is derived from Greek. *Alkali, algorithm, alembic* and *almanac* entered the English lexicon about the same time. The syllable *al-* in these words comes from the Arabic definite article *al* (the). So, for example, *alkali* is derived from *al-qili*, defined as "the ashes of the saltwort plant." An alembic is an apparatus formerly used in distillation and the word comes from *al-inbiq*, the still.

Arab-Islamic civilization was at its height during the Middle Ages, and for 500 years or so Arabic was the language of learning, culture and intellectual progress. Most of the classical Greek scientific and philosophical treatises were translated into Arabic during the ninth century. From this groundwork, Arab scholars, scientists, physicians and mathematicians made great advances in learning that were then passed on to western Europe via the Islamic universities in Spain. For example, we owe the decimal system of computation to Arab mathematicians, based as it is on the Indian concept of zero—a word that, like its synonym *cipher*, comes from the Arabic *sifr*, meaning empty.

Arabic learning was widespread in medieval England from the 11th to the 13th century, and indeed beyond. Abelard of Bath, then one of the foremost scholars in Europe, translated the astronomical tables of al-Khwarizmi from Arabic into Latin in the early 1100's. Two common mathematical terms entered the language in this way: *algebra* and *algorithm*. The latter word is taken from al-Khwarizmi's name itself, while *algebra* comes from *al-jabr*, meaning "the reunion of broken parts"; it's a word that features in one of al-Khwarizmi's mathematical treatises, *Hisab al-Jabr w' al-Muqabala*. Curiously enough, both the Arabic *al-jabr* and the English word *algebra* also refer to the surgical treatment of fractures or bone-setting: The Oxford English Dictionary, which lists definitions according to historical usage, gives the first meaning of *algebra* as "the surgical treatment of fractures" and quotes a citation from 1565: "This Araby worde Algebra sygnifyeth as well fractures of bones, etc. as sometyme the restauration of the same."

One of the greatest contributions made by Arab scholars to the extension of knowledge was their development of the science of astronomy. If you look at a modern star chart, you'll find hundreds of stars whose names derive from Arabic: Altair, Aldebaran, Betelgeuse, Vega, Rigel and Algol, to name a few. The derivation of the last of these is intriguing: It comes from the Arabic *al-ghul*, a word meaning "demon," from which the English word *ghoul* and its adjective *ghoulish* are also derived. Algol was named "the ghoul" by the Arabs because of its ghostly appearance, for, as an eclipsing binary star, it appears hazy and varies in brightness every two days. Beyond star names, many astronomical terms, among them *zenith, nadir* and *azimuth*, also derive from Arabic.

The preponderance of technical and scientific terms entering English from Arabic suggests the superiority of Arab–Islamic science of the time. *Revealing too is that the next broad category of loan words has to do with luxury and comfortable living, including words for foodstuffs, furniture and fabrics.*

The words *talisman* and *elixir* originate in Arabic alchemy, and the word *almanac (al-manakh)* comes from Arabian astronomy. Other technical words include *caliper, caliber, aniline, marcasite* and *camphor*. We weigh precious stones in carats and measure paper in reams thanks to Arabic: *girat* is a small unit of weight; *rizmah* is a bale or bundle. Two other words of interest in this category are *average* and *alcohol*. *Average*, our word for a commonplace mathematical concept, is in fact somewhat obscurely derived from an Arabic word *awariya*, meaning damaged goods. This came about because costs relating to goods damaged at sea had to be averaged out among the various parties concerned in the trade.

As for *alcohol*, this is derived from *al-kohl*, the fine black powder that is used in the Middle East as a sort of medicinal eye shadow. The relationship between the black powder and alcohol as we know it is hardly self-evident, but you

sifr cipher *al-jabr* algebra *sikkah* sequin

can see the connection if you think of the powder—it's typically antimony sulfide—as the essence or pure spirit of a substance. Even as late as the 19th century, the poet Samuel Coleridge, in one of his essays on Shakespeare, could describe the villain Iago as "the very alcohol of egotism."

The preponderance of technical and scientific terms entering English from Arabic during the Middle Ages suggests accurately enough the general superiority of Arab–Islamic civilization in the area of scientific achievement during this period. Revealing too is the fact that the next broad category of Arabic words suggests an advantage in terms of luxury and creature comforts and, consequently, a higher standard of living.

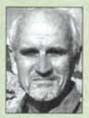
By the time of Elizabeth I (1533–1603), English merchant seamen were discovering the world beyond the boundaries of Europe and bringing back rich and exotic objects, materials and customs from the Middle East and beyond. Significantly, many of the Arabic words that travelers brought back with them at this time suggest a gracious, even luxurious style of living. *Sugar, syrup, julep, sherbet* and *marzipan* are all Arabic in origin, though none of them would have featured on the grocery list of an Elizabethan housewife. *Coffee* comes from the Arabic *gahwah*, which originated in Yemen, and *mocha* from the Yemeni port city. Added to this are the fragrant spices caraway, saffron, and cumin, all of which have Arabic names.

There is a parallel richness suggested by the names of such exotic fineries as sash, shawl, sequin, muslin, mohair, damask and cotton. Of these, muslin takes its name from Mosul in Iraq, where it was made, whereas *sash* is a variation of the Arabic for muslin, *shash*. The fabric damask, as one might expect, comes from Damascus. Even the word *tabby*, which we now apply to cats of a certain pattern, has its origin in a striped silk taffeta that was made in the al-Tabiyya district of Baghdad. The word *sequin* has its origin in Arabic *sikkah*, meaning a minting die for striking coins.

Sofa, alcove, jar and *carafe*, each suggestive in some way of comfortable living, have also been borrowed from Arabic: *sofa* comes from *suffah* ("a long bench"); *alcove* from *al-qubbah* ("the arch"); *jar* from *jarrah* ("an earthen water-vessel"); *carafe* from *gharrafah* ("bottle"). Our vocabulary has also been enriched by the colors crimson, carmine, azure and lilac, all of whose names are derived from Arabic. And as for leisure activities, there are such words as *racket*, as in "tennis racket," from the Arabic *raha*, "the palm of the hand."

The Arabs were always a seafaring and trading people, so it is hardly surprising to find words related to these activities in the store of Arabic loan words. Sailors speak of "mizzen masts" because the word for mast in Arab is *mazzan*. *Admiral*, rather oddly, comes from *amir al-*, a truncated form of *amir al-bahr*, "prince of the sea." *Arsenal* derives from *dar as-sina'ah*, a "house of manufacture," or workshop, and before that from *sina'ah*, meaning "art, craft, skill," whereas *magazine* is borrowed from *makhzan*, "a storehouse." The trade-related word *tariff* is also Arabic in origin.

There are many other interesting words—*adobe, crocus, genie* and *popinjay*, for example—that are all more or less garbled versions of Arabic words. Even the word *garbled* itself can be traced to Arabic, coming as it does from *gharbala* meaning "to sift or select," with reference to spices for sale, and shifting its meaning from there to the idea of mixing and confusing. But garbled or not, the store of words derived from Arabic has greatly enriched the English language.



Alan Pimm-Smith is a free-lance writer who worked as a teacher and journalist in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries for many years. He now lives in Turkey.

Arab–Islamic civilization was at its height during the Middle Ages, and for 500 years or so Arabic was the language of learning, culture and intellectual progress. *Most of the classical Greek scientific and philosophical treatises were translated into Arabic during the ninth century.*

suffah sofa *gharrafah* carafe *makhzan* magazine

WRITTEN BY GARY PAUL NABHAN

Ar'a·bic IN THE Sad'dle

Half a world away from where they originated, Arabic terms for horses, horsemen and the tack that links them have found a new home in the desert Southwest of the United States. These terms came from Arabic into Spanish, and then into American English when the Spanish and the "Anglo" traditions met.

In the early eighth century, a Muslim army of Arabs and North African Berbers conquered much of the Iberian Peninsula. In its south, a region the Arabs called al-Andalus, a Syrian Umayyad prince whose dynasty had been replaced by the Abbasids established a kingdom and a burgeoning civilization around the year 750. In 1492 came two important events: the discovery of the New World—opening a whole new hemisphere to Spanish and Portuguese colonization—and the final expulsion of the Muslims and Jews from Spain, who left a deep and permanent cultural imprint on the Spanish people.

As they colonized the New World, Spaniards—including Arab and Berber refugees—took along their horses, and the Arabic-origin words they brought with them for managing them are now deeply lodged in "cowboy lingo," the vernacular English and Mexican Spanish of the desert borderlands of the US and Mexico.

I began listening to cowboy lingo after I moved to one of the great old ranching communities of the US–Mexico borderlands in 1975. My wife and I now keep horses, sheep and turkeys, and we have frequent contact with working cowboys, ranchers and large-animal veterinarians, all of whom use Arabic-derived terms, introduced into the region more than four and a half centuries ago, as casually and nonchalantly as my children use computerspeak.

For instance, they refer to a rider of exceptional skill as "one damn fine *jinete*," a term that once referred to a fluid style of riding developed in North Africa for the battlefield and which now refers to the rider himself. The word came from the Sonoran Spanish *xinete*, which was in turn derived from the Andalusian *zanati*, an echo of the name of the Zanatah tribe of what is now Algeria.

Sonoran *vaqueros* and the horsemen who've worked with them may still call their saddle an *albardón*, derived from the Iberian term *albarda*, which now means pack-saddle and which came from the Arabic *al-barda'a*. Among the other tack such cowboys use is a leather belt they call an *acion*, from the Arabic *as-siyur*. A whip they call an *azote*—from the Arabic *as-sut*. Ringing straps are called *argollas*, from the Arabic *allgulla*. Perhaps my favorite Arabic-derived tack term is a widely used word for a headstall or rope halter: *hackamore*. It came straight from the Andalusian *jaquima*, which echoes the Arabic *sakima*, something worn on the head.

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There are also many terms for the colors of animals that can be traced back to Arabic origins. Because I am color-blind, it took me a while before I even began to listen to the terms cowboys use for the hide colors of horses, cattle and even sheep. But I could certainly pick out an *almagre*, a rust-colored stallion, and I knew that the term came from the Arabic *al-magra*, "red earth."

The color term that most puzzled me, however, was the use of the name *Alice-Ann* for a sorrel, a horse that is rusty brown from nose to tail. It took me some time to realize that it came from the Arabic *al-azan*, a kind of reddish wood, via the Spanish *alazán*. Recently, I read a limerick by a man named Jac that played on the apparent double meaning of "Alice-Ann":

On the frontier a cowboy's best gal
Was called Alice Ann, and not Sal.
The trick is, of course,
That this friend was a horse
So an Alice could be a male pal.

Gary Paul Nabhan is the author of 20 books, including *Why Some Like It Hot* (Island Press, 2004), on the co-evolution of communities and their native foods, and a forthcoming essay collection from the University of Arizona Press, *What Flows Between Dry Worlds: Culture, Agriculture and Cuisine in Arabian and American Deserts*. He can be reached at gary.nabhan@nau.edu.

ClassroomGuide

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

Class Activities

Theme: Regions

A region is an area—a physical space—that is defined by one or more specific characteristics. A region defines a place based on something that the different parts in that area have in common. For example, the pampas region of Argentina is a fertile grassland that is the heart of Argentina's agricultural economy. That means that, as a region, the pampas is defined in terms of climate and vegetation, as well as economic activity. Regions, then, are really ways of thinking about places.

"Doha's Grand Games" focuses on one large region, and on the smaller regions within it. "Tied With Tradition" and "Saudi Folk Music: Alive and Well" describe regions, too. What characteristic or characteristics define the regions each article is based on? Jot down a few ideas after you've read the articles. Then move on to the activities that will help you think more about regions.

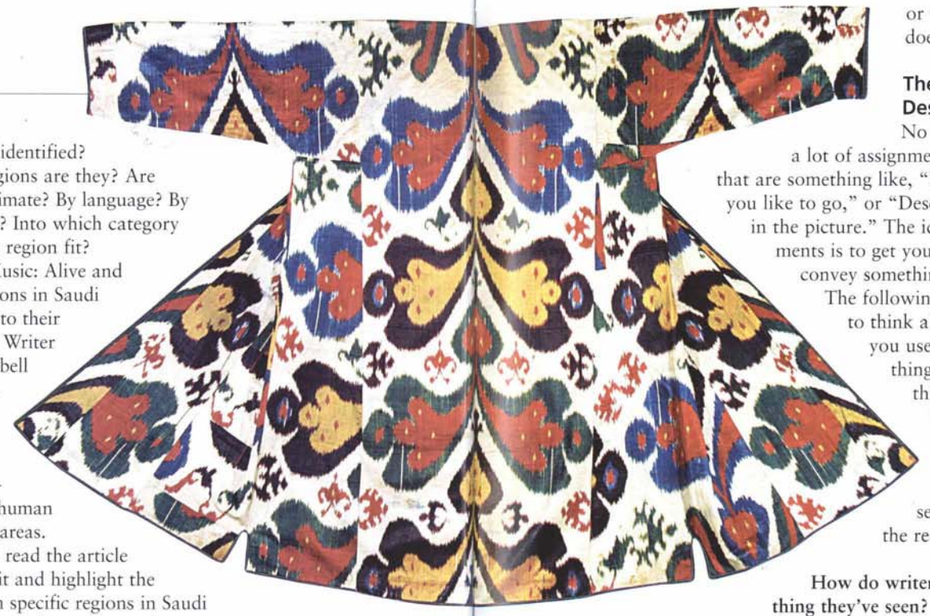
What kinds of regions exist?

There are a lot of ways you can define a region. Some regions are based on physical characteristics such as climate. A desert can be a region, as can a rainforest. But regions can also be based on lots of other characteristics. As a class, brainstorm a list of regions and how they are defined. Start with the region where you live—you probably live in more than one. Then think about other regions, such as the Middle East or Western Europe. Think of kinds of regions—those defined by climate, language, economic activities and so on. How long can you make your list?

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- A region can be defined by human activity. The north-central part of the United States was home to large-scale industrial production until about 50 years ago. Many people now call it the Rust Belt. Why? So much industry has left the region that the metal of heavy industry has—figuratively—rusted away.
- A region can be defined by population density. If you look at a population map of Europe, you will see that Western Europe is more densely populated than Eastern Europe.
- A region can be defined by history. Several countries in Eastern Europe used to be part of the Soviet Union, but are now independent, and they have characteristics in common that result from that part of their past. In fact, their lower population density may be one result of that past. Now, Eastern and Western Europe have more in common—so for some purposes they would be considered one region, not two.
- A region can be defined by cultural factors like language or religion. In most parts of Central and South America, for example, people speak Spanish. But Brazilians speak Portuguese—so in that way, Brazil is a distinct region of South America.

You get the idea. Write the regions on chart paper as people think of them. When you've got a good list, look for patterns. What specific regions have you identified? What kinds of regions are they? Are they defined by climate? By language? By economic activity? Into which category does each specific region fit?



"Saudi Folk Music: Alive and Well" defines regions in Saudi Arabia according to their traditional music. Writer Kay Hardy Campbell explains how traditional music took shape in specific regions based on the location, climate and human activities in those areas.

After you have read the article once, go through it and highlight the parts that mention specific regions in Saudi Arabia and the music that exists in those regions. Campbell sees connections between the music and physical locations; between the music and the climate; and between the music and the economic activities. Identify each kind of connection in the parts of the article you have highlighted.

How can maps help you see and understand regions?

A map is a visual representation of a part of the Earth. A map can help you see regions. Work with a group on this activity, using the map of Saudi Arabia on page 5. (A more detailed map from a reference book or on-line source may be useful as well.) Mark on your map the regions Campbell identifies. What does the map show you? For example, how has the music in Yanbu' been shaped by the town's location on the western seacoast? Use different colors to identify the different regions. Discuss: What did the map help you see or understand that you didn't see or understand as clearly from reading the article?

How do regions change when human activities change?

People define regions, and so regions change over time as human activities and other factors change. For example, during the 1930's, the central part of the United States suffered a major drought. Coming on the heels of decades of bad farming techniques, the drought made the area so dry that the soil itself blew away. People called the region the Dust Bowl. By the late 1930's, the drought had ended, and farming practices have since changed. You can still look at a historic map and see where the Dust Bowl was, but the Dust Bowl doesn't exist as a region in 2007.

Class Activities (cont.)

"Saudi Folk Music" describes changes that are taking place in Saudi Arabia. Some of them have to do with the kinds of work people do. Others have to do with communication technologies, such as cell phones and radios. First, identify the changes the article mentions. How have those changes affected traditional music? Look at your map again. Do you think the regions will still exist in 10 years? Why or why not? What does Campbell think?

Theme: Descriptive Writing

No doubt you've done a lot of assignments over the years that are something like, "Describe a place you like to go," or "Describe what you see in the picture." The idea of those assignments is to get you to use words to convey something that you see. The following activities ask you to think about what words you use to describe something you see—or something you hear. What techniques work for conveying to a reader something that you've seen or heard that the reader may not have?

How do writers describe something they've seen?

Start by describing something you see. Work with a partner on this. Describe to your partner what the sky looks like today. You might say, "It's blue," or "It's blue with some clouds." Those are adequate descriptions, but they don't do a lot for a reader. What kind of blue is the sky today? Is it pale blue, maybe like a robin's egg? Or is it evening, when the sky is more like the color that the crayon box calls "midnight blue"? And are the clouds white and puffy like cotton balls, or streaky, like spilled paint? Or are they dark gray, as if a storm is approaching? With these questions in mind, describe the sky again. Have your partner write down the words and phrases you use.

Look at the words and phrases. What do you notice? Probably you've used similies. That is, you've probably used the word "like" a lot. "The sky is blue like a robin's egg." "The clouds are white like cotton balls." What you've done is describe the sky by comparing what you see to something your partner has probably seen. If you were writing, you'd have compared something you saw to something your reader had probably seen, to help the reader see, in his or her mind's eye, what you saw.

Writers use that trick all the time. In "Tied With Tradition," writer Lucien de Guise has the difficult task of describing colors and color patterns on fabric. Read the article and, as you do, underline or highlight the places where he describes something visual. Discuss with your partner how he helps you see something you were not present to see.

Try it yourself. Choose one of the ikats that appears in "Tied With Tradition." Write a description of it. See how much detail you can describe. You will want to find ways to describe the colors. For that part, use the skills you have learned describing the sky. You will also want to describe patterns. Is there a vertical or horizontal pattern you can see? Is there a central part and other parts that radiate out from it? Do the shapes remind you of something? If so, you could use those shapes as part of your description. You could even stretch a bit, and write about how seeing the pattern makes you feel. For example, does the pattern make you feel peaceful, the way you might feel standing by a lake? Does it excite you, the way you might feel before a big storm?

How do writers describe something they've heard?

How can you describe something you've heard? That's a challenge when you're writing about music, as Kay Hardy Campbell has done in "Saudi Folk Music." Highlight all the places in the article that describe music. For example, on page 4, Muhammad al-Maiman says, "The drums sound like thunder." What other similies appear in the article to describe music?

How else is the music described in the article? What musical terms does Campbell use? How much do those terms help you understand the music she is writing about? Can you hear it in your head? Go to the *Saudi Aramco World* Web site (www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/200702/) and listen to one or more of the traditional Saudi songs there. Does it sound the way you had imagined? Look back at how Campbell described the music. Which descriptions did you find to be particularly helpful? Write your own descriptions for elements of the music. Do you think they would help a reader imagine how the music sounds?

Now try describing music that's more familiar to you. Pick a favorite song. Listen to it, over and over if you have to. What is the rhythm like? What instruments can you hear? How do they sound? What similies can you use to help a reader "hear" the music you're hearing? What other songs can you compare your song to? What musical terms might help your reader?

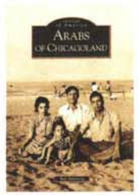
Write a description of the music you've been listening to. One paragraph is enough, but feel free to write more if you want to. Trade paragraphs with your partner, or read your paragraphs to each other. Do you "hear" the music your partner has described? If so, tell your partner what parts of the description worked well. (And think about how you can use those techniques to better describe your song.) If not, tell your partner which parts of the description don't work as well. Ask questions that will help your partner describe the music better. You might say, for example, "Does the guitar sound more like in a folk song, or is it electric?" or "What sounds mark the rhythm? Are they like bells? Or like booms? Or like when you tap your fingers on the table?"

Take your partner's advice and your observations of what has worked well, and rewrite your description. Read it again to your partner. Has it improved?

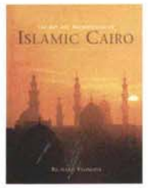
Julie Weiss is an education consultant based in Lowell, Massachusetts. She holds a Ph.D. in American studies. Her company, Unlimited Horizons, develops social studies, media literacy and English as a Second Language curricula, and produces textbook materials.

Suggestions for Reading

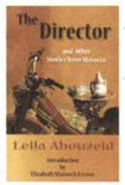
Readers of *Saudi Aramco World* who want to range more widely or delve more deeply than a bimonthly magazine can do will find interesting material, most of it recently published, in this list. Without endorsing the views of any of the authors, the editors encourage varied and omnivorous reading as a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



Arabs of Chicagoland. Ray Hanania. 2005, Arcadia, 0-7385-3417-X, $19.99 pb.
This book celebrates the struggles and achievements of the Arabs who settled in Chicago from the mid-19th century on. Compiled by a Chicago writer whose grandfather emigrated from Palestine in 1926, the slim volume is part photo album, part interviews and part first-person reminiscences. Syrian–Lebanese Christian immigrants arrived first, many earning a living as peddlers; they called their work "knocking on the door of God." Today, some 150,000 Arab–Americans live in Chicago. Profiles and pictures of several dozen—bakers and bankers, realtors and politicians, teachers and journalists—portray the challenges immigrants faced in building new homes while keeping in touch with those they left behind.

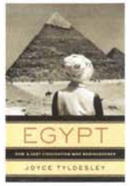


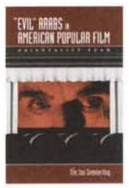
The Art and Architecture of Islamic Cairo. Richard Yeomans. 2006, Garnet Publishing, 1-85964-154-7, £29.99 hb; 2006, Ithaca Press, 1-85964-154-7, $59 hb.
In this volume, as good on history as it is on art, the author covers personalities, ideas, theologies and social conditions as well as dynastic politics, giving unusually broad context to the art. Stylistically, Yeomans is unfashionable: There are no sidebars, no breakouts nor snappy infographics; this is old-fashioned scholarship at its best. An independent scholar and artist, Yeomans notes the "long shadow" cast over Egyptian history by the allure of pyramids and Pharaonic monuments, leading both the West and Egypt itself to "marginalize" the country's 1400-year Islamic period. His chapters follow a logical sequence: Umayyads, Tulunids, Fatimids, Ayyubids, Bahri Mamluks, Burji Mamluks—and if those don't mean much to you now, after a short time with this book, you will understand that they were real people who, in their own messy times, managed to produce art for the ages. And after a long time with this book, you'll be calling Yeomans your mentor and pricing air tickets to Cairo.



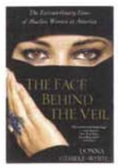
The Director and Other Short Stories from Morocco. Leila Abouzeid; foreword by Elizabeth Warnock Fernea. 2005, University of Texas Press, 0-292-71265-0, $13.96 pb.
These stories, unfolding mainly in post-colonial Morocco, go some way toward refuting the author's contention in the preface that "an Arab writer mainly of short stories is yet to be born." Examining society at a point where tradition and modernity collide, the tales turn maxims on their heads, taking O. Henry–like twists and exposing absurdities like Kafka. The results are both beguiling and bittersweet: the boy who achieves success only *after* he is expelled from school; the trade unionist who fights for workers' rights, then finds himself in old age the victim of his successes; and the innocent wife who is doubly deceived by her sister and her best friend. "Others collect stamps, but I collect words," says a character who might well be the author. "I select them with care, put them down in a dignified hand and handle them with delight like diamonds."

Egypt: How a Lost Civilization Was Rediscovered. Joyce Tyldesley. 2005, University of California Press, 0-520-25020-6, $24.95 hb.
The first Egyptologists, surprisingly, were the ancient Egyptians themselves. As Tyldesley recounts in her enjoyable survey of the personalities who tinkered, plundered and eventually studied and preserved the monuments of Egypt, pharaohs, queens and princes were motivated by *maat*, the royal duty to preserve order, which included caring for the property of their ancestors. Tuthmosis IV, a pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty, for example, restored the Sphinx, erecting the famous "Dream Stele" between its paws to proclaim his good works. Khaemwsat, the fourth son of Rameses II, restored a number of monuments, and Hatshepsut, one of two female pharaohs, restored the monuments of her fathers. Tyldesley, author of books on Nefertiti, Rameses and Hatshepsut, focuses this volume on the personalities of the people who, motivated by history or greed (often both), brought ancient Egypt to light, gradually removing centuries of doubt, conjecture, mystery and, of course, sand. Her brisk, straightforward style paints entertaining and informative portraits of important names in the field, including Carter, Belzoni, Flinders Petrie, Champollion and Mariette, and of current figures such as Zahi Hawass and Kent Weeks. She also uncovers such lesser-known characters as Sarah Belzoni, a remarkable figure in her own right. Even though the ground she covers is familiar, Tyldesley's enthusiasm and wonder shine through in her breezy telling, making the stories of the people who uncovered and recovered ancient Egypt as compelling as the monuments themselves. —KYLE PAKKA

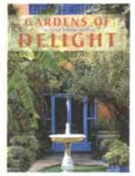




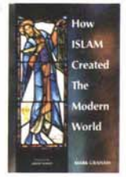
"Evil" Arabs in American Popular Film: Orientalist Fear. Tim Jon Semmerling. 2006, University of Texas Press, 0-292-71341-X, $55 hb; 0-292-71342-8, $22.95 pb.
The "evil Arab" has become a stock character in American popular films, a stereotype that wields considerable power—that is, fills important needs—despite its collapse when confronted with real Arab people. Semmerling shows how American cultural fears, the product of perceived challenges to our national myths, have driven us to create the "evil Arab" other. He draws on Jack Shaheen's groundbreaking *Reel Bad Arabs* (reviewed here in ND01) and goes beyond it, analyzing five films, from "The Exorcist" (1973) to "Rules of Engagement" (2000), as well as CNN's special "America Remembers" (2002), delving into them in fascinating detail, scrutinizing visual tropes and narrative structures to investigate how and why "evil Arabs" serve our purposes.



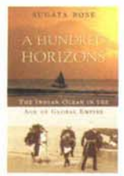
The Face Behind the Veil: The Extraordinary Lives of Muslim Women in America. Donna Gehrke-White. 2006, Citadel Press, 0-8065-2721-8, $22.95 hb.
The *hijab*, or scarf, used by some Muslim women for public modesty, has become one of the most emotionally and politically volatile symbols in today's world. Just as its cloth deflects a physical gaze, its politicization veils the often unstereotypical, even anti-stereotypical, lives of women who wear it. Pulitzer Prize–winning newspaper reporter Gehrke-White, who is not a Muslim, began her first reporting on Muslim issues for *The Miami Herald* shortly after 9/11. Focusing on women, she first became "fascinated" at the variety of their experiences, and her outsider's sympathetic interest grew into admiration and inspiration. She has organized this book as a series of 50 personal encounters that are less about the hijab and more about identity, roles, work, philosophy, faith, struggle and cultural adaptation in homes, schools and mosques. Using a simple, clear and personal style, she provides a candid window into some of America's most frequently misunderstood lives.



Gardens of Delight: The Great Islamic Gardens. Christa von Hantelmann and Dieter Zoern. 2001, DuMont Reiseverlag, 3-7701-7078-4, €34.90 hb; 2005, New Line, 978-1-59764-053-4, $34.95 hb.
Since the earliest times, gardens have been an important feature of Middle Eastern civilizations, which treasure water as a life-giving resource and a symbol of the power and presence of the Divine. Whether in a private home or a public space, the garden is thus a place where nature's creative energy and humankind's inventiveness—both manifestations of a higher order—come together in an ordered sanctuary of sensory and spiritual delight; it is not surprising that gardens play a prominent role in the Qur'an as images of Paradise. This book is divided into four sections, the first devoted to medieval Islamic Spain, gardens from later centuries and contemporary Spanish gardens that reinterpret classic motifs. Subsequent chapters cover the courtyard gardens of Syria and Morocco, respectively, while the last chapter covers the large parks and mausoleum gardens of India and Pakistan. Sumptuous photographs celebrate such famous gardens as those in the Alhambra and Alcázar in Spain, the Azam palaces in Damascus and Hama, and the Al Badi and Bahia palaces in Marrakech, among many others. The section on the subcontinent reveals the mastery of the gardens of the Taj Mahal and the Agra Fort, spaces perhaps overlooked by visitors overwhelmed by the buildings themselves. The featured contemporary gardens from Spain, Morocco and Pakistan demonstrate the timeless appeal of the classic Islamic garden. *Gardens of Delight* is certain to please gardeners and fans of Islamic architecture alike and will no doubt inspire many readers to try and recreate a bit of paradise in their own backyard. —KYLE PAKKA

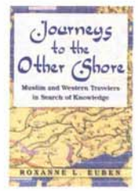


How Islam Created the Modern World. Mark Graham. 2006, Amana, 1-59008-043-2, $21.95 hb.
Who would have thought an Edgar-winning mystery novelist could explain to us in clear, concise language that without Islam, western civilization as we know it might not exist? Underlying that dramatic proposition is an important point: The post-9/11 talk about a "clash of civilizations" misses the reality that Islam and the West developed from essentially the same roots and, despite their rivalry, helped each other in profound ways along the path to "civilization." In fact, the West and Islam can be viewed as merely different faces of the same civilization. Graham draws readers in with his bright, colloquial style and such chapter headings as "Hippocrates Wears a Turban" and "Islam's Secret Weapon." (It's Aristotle.) He explains how Arabic-speaking Muslims not only preserved the scientific and philosophical knowledge of the Greeks but also "made it their own," greatly extending and improving on it. For example, the newly developed concepts of Arab philosopher Ibn Rushd of Córdoba (Averroes) found their way into western universities, where they were viewed as challenges to church orthodoxy and ushered in the beginnings of the scientific method. Muslim thinkers, poets and scientists set the stage for the European Renaissance: Graham points out specific borrowings in Dante's *Divine Comedy* from the works of the great Andalusian writer Ibn 'Arabi, and shows how these intercultural transfers were likely mediated by Dante's mentor Brunetto Latini, who had brought back learning from the legendary libraries of Toledo. And Graham shows more concrete ways in which the West is indebted to Islam: A Mongol invasion of Europe was thwarted when Egypt's Mamluk army defeated the Mongols at 'Ain Jalut, Palestine, in 1260. Imagine how different the West would be today if the Mongols had triumphed! As it turned out, the West never again faced the threat of Mongol invasion after 'Ain Jalut, and the breather this provided gave Europe a chance to absorb what Graham terms "the other great gift of Islam—knowledge." —ROBERT W. LEBLING

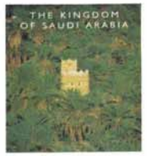


A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire. Sugata Bose. 2006, Harvard UP, 0-674-02157-6, $27.95 hb.
In the 19th century and the first half of the 20th, the Indian Ocean "both was a British lake and it was not," says Professor Bose, a Harvard historian of Indian descent. To outward appearances, the Indian Ocean rim was dominated by British power emanating from colonial India. But a closer look shows that the old "interregional" relationships persisted under British domination and continue to this day. The powerful culture of India exerted its influence from South Africa to Indonesia, diffused by trade and worker migrations. Simultaneously, the transnational fabric of Islam, spread by merchants traveling by sea, blanketed coasts from Zanzibar to Java. These and other indigenous forces, including the perennial Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah, created a regional unity that outlasted the British Empire. Thus it was not surprising that Mahatma Gandhi's own conceptions of Indian nationality should have crystallized during the years he spent amid the Indian expatriate community in South Africa, on the western edge of the Indian Ocean. Or that Indian poet and Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore should visit Baghdad in 1932 and, speaking about the Hindu–Muslim conflict in his own country, would call on his hosts to "resend" to India the universalist message of their Prophet, to rescue India from narrow-mindedness and bigotry. In the end, the British era in the Indian Ocean region may have been, as another Indian historian put it, one of "dominance without hegemony": Fundamentally, the people of the region wrote their own history. Bose conveys this well and with considerable insight. Among other topics, he relates in compelling fashion how Indian Muslim pilgrims managed to make their way to Arabia's holy places each year under the watchful colonial "policing" of the British. This book is nicely illustrated with historical photos that capture the spirit of the times. —ROBERT W. LEBLING

Iraq: A War. Introduction by Chris Hedges. 2006, Olive Branch, 1-56656-648-7, $20 pb.
This modest-looking paperback's 150 pages were selected by the publisher from the archives of 39 Associated Press photographers, part of the team that won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of Iraq. "All are betrayed in war," writes Hedges, a veteran war correspondent for *The New York Times* and others. "I know its seductiveness, excitement, and the powerful addictive narcotic it can become." This betrayal, with its "distortion" of lives, its ability to force us to become what we neither expect nor want, is what this politically agnostic book explores. The images seem deceptively familiar, clicks from the daily war-news beats, but here, remixed into a book, they give pause. They earn a second glance. They take on the weight of newborn history. Page to page, their power builds. A mirror for our time grows faintly apparent. This feels like a draft, "lacking the sweep and depth that will come later, perhaps years from now," says Hedges. But such definition is not this book's point. There are no heroes or villains in these photographs, only the flesh-and-blood people of the history we all are living.

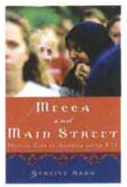


Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge. Roxanne L. Euben. 2006, Princeton UP, 0-691-12721-2, $29.95 hb.
This book explores the similarities and contrasts of travel writing from the Muslim world and the West over the course of centuries. Euben, a political scientist at Wellesley, sets up some interesting pairings: Herodotus's *Histories* with the *Rihla* of Ibn Battuta; Tahtawi's visit to Paris of the 1820's with de Toqueville's *Democracy in America*; and Montesquieu's fictional *Persian Letters* with the *Memoirs* of Sayyida Salme, daughter of the ruler of Oman and Zanzibar. Euben calls travel writing a window on the ways ordinary people make sense of the strange or inexplicable things one encounters in foreign lands. This is often accomplished by means of the "nested polarities" that the traveler takes along: for example, Greek/barbarian, Sunni/Shi'ite, Muslim/Christian or European/Arab. While the traveler often undertakes a journey to see for himself and thus achieve some understanding of "the other," the reader of the traveler's account often learns more about the traveler than about the place he visited. An interesting aspect of this book is its exploration of cosmopolitanism. To the ancients, a cosmopolitan was a "citizen of the world," one who could interact easily with different cultures. Today, the term is sometimes linked with the modern economic phenomenon of globalization. Nowadays, some in the West view Islam as anti-cosmopolitan and intolerant of other cultures. Euben shows that the contrary is true: Islam, reaching from Europe through Africa and the Middle East all the way to Southeast Asia, has encompassed, coexisted with and been enriched by a multitude of diverse cultures, and turns out to be an excellent example of true cosmopolitanism. —ROBERT W. LEBLING



The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. 2006, Al-Turath/Stacey International, 0-9552193-0-6, £39.95 hb.
Readers looking for a detailed picture of Saudi Arabia will find a wealth of information in this richly illustrated volume, which covers the kingdom's pre-Islamic and Islamic history; its regions, cities and institutions; its energy and other industries; and its people. The 11th edition of a book first published two decades ago, its highlights include a variety of sidebars on topics ranging from Islam and the pilgrimage to modern-day tourism and the history of the Royal Saudi Air Force. Photographs spotlight the kingdom's geography, flora, fauna, architecture and society. The chapter on geography and geology features pages devoted to the kingdom's wildlife, and the chapter on cultural heritage includes dozens of pictures of craftwork, from weapons to jewelry. The chapters on industry and development and Saudi society today cover recent economic and demographic changes as reflected in commerce, government, defense, education, health, oil and gas and social activities. The glossary of Arabic words at the end of the book is a valuable feature.

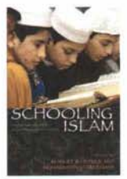
Makers of the Muslim World. Series editor: Patricia Crone. Various authors. 2005–2006, Oneworld Publications. $40 each hb.
Professor Crone is the perfect scholar to edit this timely series of biographies of "the men and women who made the Muslim world what it is today." The Danish-born, British-educated Islamic historian is known for both brilliance and boldness, and demonstrates those traits in this series, expected to comprise 50 volumes; 17 have been published so far. The books are well-structured, clearly written monographs, each running about 160 pages. Useful for scholars and students, they also have another important audience—those with "no prior knowledge of Islam or its history"—who will likely benefit most from the series. The portraits describe their subjects, often in fascinating detail, capture the flavor of their times and highlight the most important issues of the day. Some of the subjects are predictable choices: Besides 'Abd al-Malik, builder of the Dome of the Rock, there are 'Abd al-Rahman III, first Umayyad caliph of al-Andalus; Ibn 'Arabi, one of the most influential thinkers of Islamic Spain; the Abbasid scholar-caliph al-Ma'mun; and the celebrated poets Abu Nuwas and al-Mutanabbi. But many of the personalities are less familiar: Amir Khusraw, the 13th-century Indian poet who synthesized Muslim and Indian culture; Shaykh Mufid, a prominent Imami Shi'ite scholar of medieval Baghdad who introduced rationalism to Imamist belief; and Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi, a leading Indian Sunni Muslim reformer of the early 20th century. On balance, the series pays extra attention to Shi'ites and others of heterodox belief. This makes sense in today's world—one need only look at the political demographics of modern-day Lebanon and Iraq to understand why. The impression we get from these volumes is that Islam is a "big tent" and that diversity is a key aspect of the faith. As the pilgrimage to Makkah demonstrates each year, there is plenty of room in this particular tent for believers of all descriptions and inclinations. —ROBERT W. LEBLING



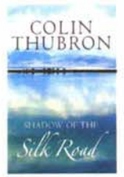
Mecca and Main Street: Muslim Life in America after 9/11. Geneive Abdo. 2006, Oxford UP, 978-0-19-531171-6, $26 hb.
Herself a third-generation immigrant of Lebanese Maronite heritage, Abdo travels through the United States to interview young Muslims—converts, former Black Muslims and second-generation immigrants from Muslim countries—who are forging a new understanding of Islam while straddling the divide between, on the one hand, American secularism and individualism and, on the other, the group norms of Islamic belief and behavior. Seeking relevant yet authentic sources of religious authority, they often create uniquely American Islamic practices, such as blending dissimilar religious traditions inherited from home countries within inter-ethnic marriages. Some American Muslims face problems similar to those in Europe, such as implicit loyalty tests administered by the majority culture; other problems are unique to the US—such as reconciling past differences with Black Muslims and reaching out to Hispanic converts. In this report from the American grassroots, Abdo examines key roles played by the Muslim Students Association on college campuses, by women in mosques and by newly emerging community groups serving cultural rather than purely religious ends. —LOUIS WERNER

Men of Salt: Crossing the Sahara on the Caravan of White Gold. Michael Benanav. 2006, Lyons Press, 1-59228-772-7, $23.95, hb.
While researching camels, Michael Benanav came across a story describing how competition from trucks was threatening the millennia-old "white gold" camel caravan in West Africa. Benanav, a seasoned desert explorer, traveled to Timbuktu and joined a caravan across the Tanezrouft region of the Sahara, known both as "the land of thirst" and "the land of terror." His account of the journey ranks with classic armchair adventures: By the end of the tale, we have reversed our initial impression and realize that, in fact, *we* are the fools for *not* going. One of the last active caravan routes in the Sahara, and one of the most harrowing, the caravan of white gold carries rock salt mined at Taoudenni, 500 miles north of Timbuktu. Benanav seasons his tale, at once harrowing and magical, with historical background on the salt trade and with extraordinary tales of previous adventurers. He has a sharp eye for detail, and, while he interweaves commentary about the current woeful state of Mali's economy and the impact of globalization on the region, these passages do not get in the way of what is essentially a ripping good yarn. His enthusiasm and pluck are matched by the proud and spirited people encountered along the way. We may never make the journey ourselves, but we should be thankful Benanav did: He succeeds in honoring an ancient culture and the generations of people who have traveled a path few of us would choose. —KYLE PAKKA

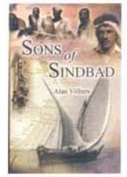
A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954–1962. Alistair Horne. 2006 (orig. ed. 1978), NYRB Classics, 1-59017-218-3, $19.95 pb.
A new, up-to-the-minute author's preface to this indispensable history of the Algerian Revolution (as the Algerians call it), or the Algerian War (as the French remember it), makes it clear why those eight bloody years half a century ago still resound today, both in large conflicts in the Middle East and in such seemingly minor episodes as a World Cup head butt. As finely written as T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Horne's work burrows deep into the war's rough tactics, personal betrayals, frontal assaults and surprise attacks, using key documents—including the organization chart of the FLN's secret cells, pieced together name by name during French Army interrogations—and personal interviews with the conflict's surviving principals. After seeing Pontecorvo's film "The Battle of Algiers," read this book, newly back in print. —LOUIS WERNER



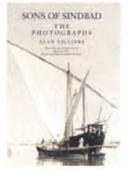
Schooling Islam: The Culture and Policies of Modern Muslim Education. Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, eds. 2007, Princeton UP, 978-0-691-12932-7, $60 hb; 978-0-691-12933-4, $19.95 pb.
Since the Taliban seized Kabul in 1996, the relationship between Islamic education and radical Islam has been debated. Media reports paint *madrasas*—religious schools dedicated to Islamic learning—as medieval institutions opposed to all that is western; others claim that, without reforms, Islam and the West are doomed to a clash of civilizations. Robert Hefner (Boston University) and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (Princeton) bring together 11 internationally known scholars to examine the varieties of modern Muslim education and their implications for national and global politics. The contributors provide new insights into culture and politics in Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Britain and demonstrate that Islamic education is neither "timeless" nor medieval, but rather complex, evolving and diverse in its institutions and practices.



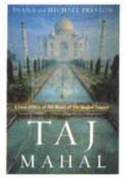
Shadow of the Silk Road. Colin Thubron. 2006, Chatto and Windus, 978-0-7011-7363-0, £20 hb; 2007, HarperCollins, 978-0-06-123172-8, $25.95 hb.
Traveling by bus, truck, car, donkey-cart and camel, Thubron traverses the Silk Road from Xi'an in China to Antakya in Turkey, ancient Antioch. In this masterfully observed tale of his 7000-mile, eight-month journey, he recounts a wealth of information on the history, art and culture of China, Central Asia and Iran. But his latest adventure is at its most compelling portraying the people he meets. Thubron has an uncanny knack for stumbling across vibrant characters and drawing out their life stories: the Buddhist monk in Labrang who wants to escape China to join his brother in Dharamsala; the doctor in Herat struggling to broaden his attitudes toward women; the college students in Tabriz and dreamy rock musicians in Tehran rebelling against Iranian hypocrisy and oppression. And all along this winding road, the self-doubting Thubron constantly wonders about the true purpose of his wanderings and the rootlessness of his own nature. En route, he delivers a highly personal, unsentimental update on the Silk Road today, centuries after the last caravans traveled its forbidding deserts, mountains and steppes. —RICHARD COVINGTON



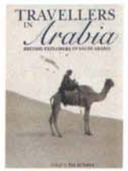
Sons of Sindbad. Alan Villiers. William Facey, Yacoub al-Hijji and Grace Pundyk, intro. 2006 (orig. ed. 1940), Arabian Publishing, 0-9544792-3-8, £25 hb.
This republication of Alan Villiers's classic puts the reader squarely on the deck of an Arab dhow at the end of the era of sail. Ships like this had been plying the waters off the Arabian Peninsula—and voyaging much farther afield—for more than a millennium. The author records the trials and triumphs of the sailors, whose lives were measured by the monsoon winds that carried them on yearlong journeys from Kuwait to Aden and East Africa, then back home. Villiers brought some 20 years of his own sailing experience with him when he embarked on the dhow *Triumph of Righteousness*, but he is awed by the toughness and skills of the men with whom he sails. He also discovers that, despite their hard lives and poor prospects for retirement, his shipmates "have a delight in living we do not even know we lack." This book will grip not only sailors, but anyone interested in fathoming the strength of the human spirit; readers with connections to the Arabian Peninsula will be especially intrigued by his discussions of coastal commerce and society at the beginning of the oil era. Fifty photographs.



Sons of Sindbad: The Photographs. Alan Villiers. William Facey, Yacoub al-Hijji and Grace Pundyk, photo selection and intro. 2006, Arabian Publishing, 0-9544792-5-4, £30 hb.
When Villiers set sail from Aden aboard the *Triumph of Righteousness* in 1939, he took with him 35-mm and large-format still cameras and a 16-mm movie camera to record the voyage. Only a fraction of the hundreds of pictures he shot during his year among the seafaring Arabs was published in the UK and US editions of *Sons of Sindbad* in 1940. From the remainder of the collection, now in the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, comes this striking selection of wonderful photographs. The chapters of this coffee-table volume follow Villiers's route; the captions provide a sensitive, in-depth treatment of his subject.

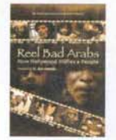


Taj Mahal: Passion and Genius at the Heart of the Moghul Empire. Diana and Michael Preston. 2007, Walker, 987-0-8027-1511-1, $26.95 hb.
The authors, British historians, begin with what everyone knows: Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal as a memorial to his wife, Mumtaz; it's an architectural wonder and a dazzling symbol of great love. They go on, however, to present a lesser-known and much less romantic backstory, tracing the family history of several generations of Mughal rulers, recounting the remarkable life of their courts and presenting the Taj Mahal itself as both a symbol of Mughal power and a tipping point that marks the beginning of the dynasty's decline.



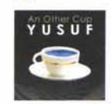
Travellers in Arabia: British Explorers in Saudi Arabia. Eid Al Yahya, ed. 2006, Stacey International, 0-9552193-1-0, $50 hb.
This handsome coffee-table book captures a time when traveling from one coast of the Arabian Peninsula to the other was still an adventure whose outcome was uncertain but whose allure was irresistible. Al Yahya traces the history of the British explorers, men and women, who were drawn to what was one of the last great unexplored regions of the planet. A trio of introductory essays outlines the paths followed by three centuries of the curious, beginning with Joseph Pitts, a cabin boy captured by Algerian pirates in 1678. He was sold into slavery and made the pilgrimage to Makkah with his master in 1680, thus becoming the first Briton to visit the holy cities. The period between the 1860's and 1950's was the golden age of Arabian exploration, and many of the names are well known: W. G. Palgrave, Charles Doughty, Lady Anne Blunt, Gertrude Bell, T. E. Lawrence, Bertram Thomas and Wilfred Thesiger, among others. The book includes these luminaries but also lesser-known figures such as G. Leachman, R. E. Cheesman, A. L. Holt and Gerald de Gaury. It is divided into chapters by traveler, each prefaced with a portrait, a brief biography and description of his or her time in Arabia, and a map. The chapters feature selected photographs by the explorers that capture their travails and challenges; in the case of Doughty and Palgrave, excerpts from their written accounts are featured, while Lady Anne Blunt's vivid watercolor miniatures illustrate her chapter. The large photographs, accompanied by brief but informative captions, create a composite portrait of a country coming of age, from the young Ibn Saud and his brothers and sons, who would shape the destiny of their homeland, to traditional Bedouin and ancient towns and villages such as Riyadh, Jiddah and Hofuf, all on the brink of enormous changes. —KYLE PAKKA

DVD



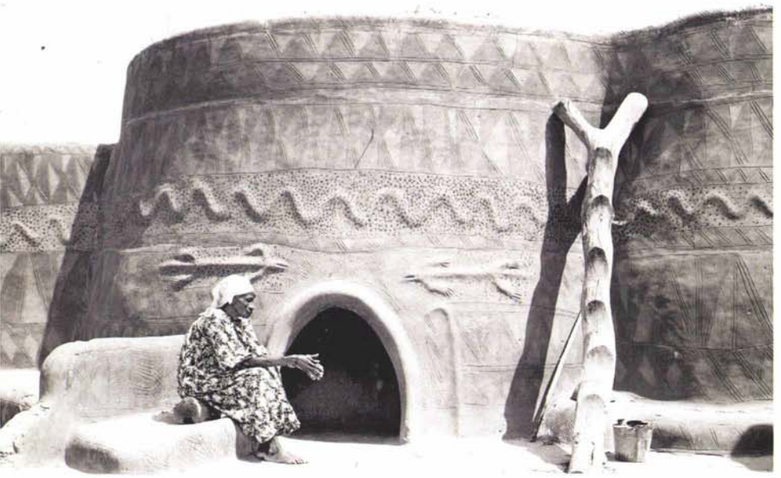
Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People. Jack Shaheen. 2006, Media Education Foundation, 1-932869-00-X, $29.95 (home viewing); $250/$150 (college/high school viewing).
Jack Shaheen is America's leading critic of Arab stereotypes in entertainment media, but he's no wild-eyed pundit—more like Mr. Rogers telling you there's a problem in the neighborhood. In 50 minutes he'll change the way you watch a lot of movies. (Do hear him out before popping for, say, this spring's action-thriller "The Kingdom.") First, he says, there came "Arabland," a "mythical theme park" framed by "ominous music," with an oasis inhabited by foolish, wastrel "pashas on their pasha cushions," surrounded by lovely harem maidens but always casting a shifty eye and/or brandishing a glinting sword at a (blonde) western heroine. In the '70's, the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, the Arab oil embargo and the Iranian revolution raised nightmares in the American psyche that Hollywood soothed with triumphalist action films filled with terrorist Arabs, relentlessly cruel and motivated by unfathomable hate—the modern equivalents of whooping, doomed Indians in westerns. Much of this would be mere silliness, Shaheen argues, if it weren't for the fact that "policy enforces mythical images, and mythical images enforce policy." "The stereotype will begin to change," he says, "when Arabs and Muslims are projected as we project other people—no better and no worse." He points to new, smart films: the moral dilemmas of Palestinian wannabe suicide bombers in "Paradise Now"; the magnanimity of Saladin in "Kingdom of Heaven"; the diversity of Gulf War characters in "Three Kings"; and the mix of unflattering honesty and idealism in "Syriana" (Shaheen was a consultant for these last two), as well as the rise of Arab comedians on television. "We've unlearned our prejudices against many other people," he concludes. "Why not Arabs and Muslims? The key is not to remain silent."

CD



Yusuf. An Other Cup. Polydor, $18.98.
It seems a lifetime—in fact it's almost 30 years—since Cat Stevens recorded an album of secular music. He became Yusuf Islam, possibly the West's most famous Muslim convert, and turned his back on the music business after being one of the most successful artists of the 1970's. Although *An Other Cup* is billed as his first album of new material in 28 years, that isn't strictly true: He revisits one old song ("I Think I See the Light"), goes back to 1968 for the previously unrecorded "Greenfields, Golden Sands" and even offers a cover of "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood." At its heart, this disc is folk-pop of the first order, and some of the touches add glorious filigree to the songs, such as the nearly muezzin-like wail of Senegal's golden-voiced Youssou N'Dour on "The Beloved." There's a warmth to the entire album, even if the songs aren't as always as good as his best material, but there's one striking difference between then and now. Back in the day, Cat Stevens was a seeker, a young man looking for something. Now, Yusuf Islam is someone who's found his path and, instead of questions, this is an album that resounds with answers and a sense of personal certainty—although thankfully without smugness. Yet maybe it was all the questioning that gave an edge to his work. Peace is a wonderful thing, but tension makes for better music. He's certainly made a listenable album, but for someone with a pedigree like his, that's faint praise. The next time will be the test. —CHRIS NICKSON

Events&Exhibitions



Butabu: *Adobe Architecture of West Africa: Photographs by James Morris* presents 50 large-scale images of structures from monumental mosques to family homes. For centuries, complex adobe structures have been built in the Sahel region of western Africa (encompassing parts of Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Togo, Benin, Ghana and Burkina Faso). Made only of earth mixed with water, these buildings display a remarkable diversity of form and originality. Morris photographed these organically shaped, labor-intensive adobe structures, creating both a typological record of regional adobe construction as well as an artist's rendering of West African architecture that reflects the sensuous, surreal and sculptural quality of these distinctive buildings. Several ambitious religious buildings seem to push the physical limits of mud architecture. More humble structures, such as private homes or neighborhood mosques and churches, are highly expressive and stylish, and are often decorated with intricate painting, grillwork or relief designs. These African adobe buildings share many of the qualities now much admired in western architectural circles: sustainability, sculptural form and the participation of the community in conception, fabrication and preservation. ⓘ 310-825-4361, www.fowler.ucla.edu. UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, **Los Angeles,** April 22 through July 15.

The mother of the chief of Tangasoko outside her decorated adobe living quarters. Burkina Faso, 2000.

JAMES MORRIS / FOWLER MUSEUM

<<< Last Call

Persian Visions: Contemporary Photography From Iran presents more than 80 images that provide a revealing view of Iranian life and experience. The 20 artists featured are among Iran's most celebrated; some have lived abroad and returned to view their homeland from a changed perspective. Anti-exotic and specific, these images make up the first survey of contemporary Iranian photography to be presented in the United States. Johnson Museum, Cornell University, **Ithaca, New York**, through March 18.

A Future for the Past: Petrie's Palestinian Collection highlights the extraordinary finds made by the archeologist Sir Flinders Petrie, who spent many years working in the area around modern Gaza in the 1920's and 1930's.The sites he dug include major towns and trading centers which flourished over 5000 years ago. Petrie found beautiful pottery and jewelry and a huge variety of tools. This is the first time that many of these unique artifacts have been on public display. Visitors can see into a "dig house," explore a trench and sit inside a Bedouin tent to watch a short film about life on the dig. Special interactive areas allow visitors to explore what archeology can—and cannot—tell us. Brunei Gallery, SOAS, **London**, through March 24.

The Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind: 50,320 Names is an installation by Khalil Rabah, who mines the interdependent and ever-changing relationship between the public museum and the artist. The Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind is a nomadic museum of the mind that parodies the practice and policies of existing national museums in order to reflect upon the maintenance of memory and recollection. Here, in a gesture of encroachment and annexation, the Museum assumes control of a series of finds made by the British archeologist Sir Flinders Petrie in the area around modern Gaza in the 1920's and 1930's. The anthropological, archeological, botanical and geological specimens evoke the people who might once have owned them; those people have been colonized and their possessions have become scientific, esthetic and imperialist trophies. Alongside the Petrie Collection, the Museum will display its latest project—*50,320 Names*—in which Rabah lists the names of all the buildings on the Registry of Historic Buildings in Palestine. Brunei Gallery, SOAS, **London**, through March 24.

Embroidering Identities: A Century of Palestinian Clothing explores the expression of personal and regional identity through clothing, and shows the beauty, technical achievement and tremendous diversity of the 19th- and early 20th-century garments on display. Until recent years, each region of Palestine had its own style of clothing for women characterized by distinctive patterns of embroidery, appliqués, sleeve design and accessories. The exhibit includes traditional wedding gowns, with their elaborate headdresses covered with coins and silver ornaments, as well as other clothing from Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Jericho, Hebron, Beir Saba' and Gaza. Oriental Institute Museum, **Chicago**, through March 25.

Armenian Photographers View the East. In the second half of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th, many Armenians living in large cities of the Middle East chose photography as their livelihood. Whereas early western travelers in the region photographed mostly archeological remains and biblical sites, the Armenian photographers made their living doing studio photography, often in working-class or lower-middle-class areas. Their images now constitute extremely valuable sociological records of 19th-century Istanbul, Beirut, Damascus, Cairo and Palestine. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, through April 1.

The Vases of the Alhambra: Symbology and Power reunites more than 100 of the magnificent *malic* vessels—whole or fragmentary—that represent the height of the artistic achievement of the Nasrid Dynasty of Spain in the 14th and 15th centuries. These vessels, shaped like winged amphorae, were recognized beyond the Muslim world, and imitations and copies were produced long after the fall of the Nasrids. Palace of Charles V, Alhambra, **Granada, Spain**, through April 6.

Genghis Khan and His Heirs: The Great Mongolian Empire draws upon collections around the world to demonstrate the high level of political organization of empires built on the Eurasian steppes, especially those ruled by the Mongols. The creation of these states depended on the constant exchange of political ideas, economic organization and cultural interaction between nomadic groups on the steppe and the settled societies of China, Iran and Russia. Modern archeological discoveries, including amazing armor and weapons, illustrate the state and military system which Genghis Khan and his heirs supported. The year 2006 marked the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Mongol Empire, part of a long tradition of Eurasian nomadic states whose influence was felt from the Pacific Ocean to Central Europe. Sakip Sabanci Museum, **Istanbul**, through April 8.

<<< Ongoing

Istanbul: City of the Ottoman Sultans includes some 300 masterpieces of Ottoman art, portraits of the sultans, miniatures and paintings depicting important moments in history, tapestries, gifts presented to the sultans, religious reliquaries, marble turbans, mystical objects, highlights of literature and science, beautiful calligraphy, ceramics, water pipes and musical instruments, assembled from the collections of various museums in Istanbul. All these striking objects are to be found in more than 10 structures, representing a bazaar, a mosque and so on, that have been placed inside the majestic medieval church. They are combined with old and new film footage and intriguing musical excerpts. Nieuwe Kerk, **Amsterdam**, through April 15.

Mongolia: Beyond Chinggis Khan celebrates the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Mongol Empire by Chinggis (Genghis) Khan and includes a selection of Mongolian sculptures, paintings, manuscripts and other objects as well as photographs of contemporary Mongolia made by Builder Levy and Elaine Ling. A focal point is a display of Mongolian dance masks, used in the 19th and early 20th century in annual festivals that took place in monasteries throughout Mongolia. Rubin Museum of Art, **New York**, through April 16.

Discovering Tutankhamun: The Photographs of Harry Burton celebrates one of the best-publicized episodes in the history of archeology: the discovery and exploration of the tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun in 1922. Taken by the renowned archeological photographer Harry Burton, who had been "lent" by the Metropolitan Museum to Howard Carter, the photographs document every stage in the process of excavation. From the rock-cut steps leading down to the entrance passage to the first view of the contents of the tomb and the removal of the objects, Burton's images capture thousands of beautifully made and decorated objects found in the tomb. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through April 29.

Napoleon on the Nile: Soldiers, Artists, and the Rediscovery of Egypt focuses on the *Déscription de l'Égypte*, the seminal work that remains the single most important European scholarly study of ancient and modern Egypt. Initiated by young General Napoleon Bonaparte as he invaded Egypt in 1798, and completed in 1829 during the reign of King Charles X, the *Déscription* was among the most significant, and certainly the most tangible, consequences of the French military's occupation of Egypt (1798–1801). Not only did it form the foundation for the modern discipline of Egyptology, but its large and magnificent plate illustrations influenced the course of "Egyptomania" and "Orientalism" in western fine and decorative arts for two centuries. The resulting body of work took roughly 20 years and 2000 skilled draftsmen and typographers to complete. Their 13 volumes of plates, accompanying 10 volumes of text, became a renowned image bank consulted ever since by artists seeking authenticity in their own work. Dahesh Museum of Art, **New York**, through April 29.

Afghanistan, Rediscovered Treasures: Collections from the National Museum of Kabul presents some 220 finds from four major archeological sites: Fulol, Ai Khanum, Tillia-Tepe and Begram. The exhibition brings together representative objects from the Kabul collections, such as Indian ivories, Hellenic bronzes, even glassware that appears to be the oldest known example of Greco-Roman glass. Beyond the unique and exciting story of these rediscovered treasures, the exhibition pays tribute to the history of Afghanistan, from the Bronze Age to the Kushan Empire, and celebrates the continuity, uniqueness and richness of Afghan culture and its many tributary influences. Many of the works on exhibit have been restored, with the aim of later reintegrating them into the Kabul Museum collections. Musée Guimet, **Paris**, through April 30.

Stories in Stone: Conserving Mosaics of Roman Africa presents a selection of masterpiece mosaics from the national museums of Tunisia. They are among the finest of the thousands produced between the second and sixth centuries in the Roman province of Africa Proconsularis, a portion of which is known today as Tunisia. These works, fashioned as pavements for both public buildings and private homes, depict flora and fauna, theater and spectacle, and myths, gods and goddesses. Getty Villa, **Pacific Palisades, California**, through April 30.

East of Eden: Gardens in Asian Art explores garden traditions practiced by Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Persian, Turkish and other cultures as seen through some of the world's most exquisite works of art. The cultivation of gardens has played a central role in the ceremonial, religious and economic life of Asia for centuries, and the exhibition includes some 60 painted screens, hanging scrolls and manuscript illustrations, colorful ceramics, rare lacquered vessels and gold-inlaid metalwork. It coincides with the 2007 National Cherry Blossom Festival. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through May 13.

Louis Comfort Tiffany and Laurelton Hall: An Artist's Country Estate is an opportunity to examine some 250 outstanding works by one of America's finest designers through the home, furnishings and garden he created for himself. The exhibition includes a Steinway piano whose case was designed by Tiffany in 1887 and inspired by ivory-inlaid woodwork from Damascus; Laurelton's central Fountain Court, an homage to the Alhambra; and art objects Tiffany collected from the Islamic world. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through May 20.

Cosmophilia: Islamic Art From the David Collection, Copenhagen explores for the first time the roles that decoration plays in the visual arts of Islam. The lavish use of ornamentation is one of the most characteristic and attractive features of Islamic art, yet one that has never been given its due in a major exhibition. More than 120 of the finest pieces in the unparalleled David Collection (temporarily closed) are organized visually in five sections—figures, writing, geometry, vegetation and arabesque, and hybrids—that together comprise the visual arts of the Islamic lands. The objects range in medium from jewelry to carpets, in date from the seventh to the 19th century, and geographically from western Europe to East Asia; most have never before been displayed in the United States. The exhibition examines the various characteristics of Islamic arts: color, repetition, symmetry, direction, juxtaposition, layering, framing, transferability, abstraction and ambiguity. Catalogue $50. Smart Museum of Art, University of **Chicago**, through May 20.

Cinema India: The Art of Bollywood charts India's historical, political and cultural changes through the eyes of the Bollywood film industry, and features works from pre-independence India to the present day. The exhibition brings together some of the most remarkable examples of Indian cinema art, from large-scale billboards and posters to photo cards, booklets, costumes, original film trailers and excerpts from key films. National Gallery of **Victoria [Australia], Melbourne**, through May 20.

Glass, Gilding and Grand Design: Art of Sasanian Iran. The Sasanian Dynasty ruled Persia for 400 years, from the second century until the Arab conquest in 642. Sasanid art is dominated by the image of the glorious ruler, carved into mountainsides, engraved on precious stones and depicted in the bottom of golden drinking cups—the center of banqueting, hunting and ceremonial scenes and guarantor of the unity of the vast empire. The Sasanian court was one of legendary splendor, and it supported a remarkable flowering of the decorative arts. The exhibition, a much reduced version of one at the Musée Cernuschi in Paris last year, presents about 70 works of art that testify to the diversity and iconographic variety of a culture where hellenistic influences combined with older Iranian traditions. Asia Society, **New York**, through May 20.

Treasures from Olana: Landscapes by Frederic Edwin Church features 18 of the artist's own paintings that he displayed in his carefully devised interiors at Olana. The majority are landscape oil sketches, which illustrate the artist's favorite domestic landscapes and his journeys not only to the Middle East, but also to South America and Europe. During a period of debate regarding the artistic merit of an oil sketch versus a finished painting, Church boldly exhibited these *plein-air* oil sketches as finished works of art alongside his precisely rendered "Great Pictures"—a testament to his belief in the quality of these smaller works. This is the first time they have been displayed together outside Olana. **Princeton [New Jersey]** University Art Museum, through June 10.

Uncomfortable Truths: The Shadow of Slave Trading on Contemporary Art and Design displays new and specially commissioned work to address the ways in which the legacy of slavery informs contemporary art and design. The exhibition commemorates the bicentenary of Britain's abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and features the work of artists from the United States (Michael Paul Britto and Fred Wilson), Britain (Anissa-Jane, Lubaina Himid, Keith Piper and Yinka Shonibare), Africa (El Anatsui, Tapfuma Gutsa, Romuald Hazoumé and Julien Sinzogan) and Europe (Christine Meisner). Victoria & Albert Museum, **London**, through June 17.

RED explores the use and meaning of this potent color in textiles across time and place. From the pre-Columbian high Andes to the 21st-century streets of New York, red textiles are a compelling symbol, representing passion, power, status and human emotion itself. Before the invention of synthetic dyes, achieving this highly evocative color in textiles was no easy task. The difficulty of its production heightened the importance and allure of red cloth, which became a prestige commodity in many societies. The textiles on view illustrate the complex usage of red—not only to denote prestige, but also to celebrate love and beauty, to protect against evil, to promote good fortune and to mark such life cycle passages as marriage and death. The earliest textile in the exhibition is more than 2000 years old. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through July 8.

Treasures of Ancient Egypt presents more than 200 artifacts, from statuary and relief to coffins, funerary art and everyday domestic objects, to shed light on the life of the ancient Egyptians. Art Gallery of **Nova Scotia, Halifax**, through August 19.

Architecture of the Veil: An Installation by Samta Benyahia—the first US museum exhibition by the Algerian artist—takes its theme from the *moucharabieh*, the openwork screens used in Mediterranean Islamic architecture to cover windows and balconies, allowing those inside—typically women—to view the outside world without being seen. The installation provides a beautiful and dynamic exploration of gender as well as the dialectic between interior and exterior, light and shadow, concealment and revelation, and private versus public space. Fowler Museum at UCLA, **Los Angeles**, through September 2.

The Jazira: A Cultural Landscape Between the Euphrates and the Tigris presents the art and culture of the petty princes of the region—the *jazira*, or "island"—in the 12th and 13th centuries. The medieval dynasties of the Zanjids, Artuqids and Ayyubids favored a courtly lifestyle that manifested itself in opulent libraries and artistic production correlated with technical innovation, and featured extensive figurative representation in objects of art and architectural design. The exhibition's 70 objects include masterpieces, either unpublished or barely remembered, that acquire new dimensions in their historical context; they exemplify one little-known but particularly interesting epoch in Islamic culture. Pergamonmuseum, Museum für Islamische Kunst, **Berlin**, through September 2.

Masters of the Plains: Ancient Nomads of Russia and Canada examines two of the world's great nomadic cultures side by side for the first time, providing a unique look at the bison hunters of the Great Plains of North America and the livestock herders of the Eurasian steppes. More than 400 artifacts from Canada and Russia permit exploration of food preparation, sacred ceremonies, art, trade, housing design, modes of travel and warfare in the two cultures, which each took shape some 5000 years ago and lasted into recent times—a longevity that compares favorably with history's greatest civilizations. Canadian Museum of Civilization, **Gatineau, Quebec**, through September 3.

Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs includes 130 works from the Egyptian National Museum and presents a selection of 50 spectacular objects excavated from the tomb of Tutankhamun, including one of the canopic coffinettes, inlaid with gold and precious stones, that contained his mummified internal organs. Additional

pieces in the exhibition derive from the tombs of royalty and high officials of the 18th Dynasty, primarily from the Valley of the Kings. These additional works place the unique finds from the tomb of Tutankhamun into context and illustrate the wealth and development of Egyptian burial practice during the New Kingdom. The exhibition, more than twice the size of the 1979 "King Tut" exhibition, marks the first time treasures of Tutankhamun have visited America in 26 years. Franklin Institute, **Philadelphia**, through September 30.

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

<<March

Elizabeth Ayoub: Venezuelan–Lebanese Songstress blends traditional with contemporary, transporting the listener from traditional Arabic song to Arab-infused Cuban music to country-blues ballads. 7:30 pm. Arab American National Museum, **Dearborn, Michigan**, March 15.

Adnan Charara: JUXTAPOSED features new artwork that explores the challenges of immigrating to the United States and the process of becoming American. Drawing on the firsthand experiences of an immigrant artist, this work reflects the ways in which people retain their traditions while assimilating to a new culture, and the way these traditions contribute to a broader American identity. These themes speak not only to the Arab–American experience, but also to the experiences of most immigrant communities in America. National Arab American Museum, **Dearborn, Michigan**, March 16 through May 31.

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Indigo: A Blue to Dye For spans a long, rich history, from the oldest known indigo recipe, written in cuneiform on a Babylonian clay tablet, through linen and wool burial cloths dyed in Roman Egypt, to Coptic textiles, to a portrait of Qajar Sultan Fat'h 'Ali Shah in an indigo-dyed robe and indigo-stained beard, to domestic textiles and clothing dyed in India and exported to Europe by the East India Company in the 16th through 18th centuries. More recent history is traced through the rediscovery of indigo discharge techniques by William Morris, the manufacture of synthetic indigo in the later 19th century, and the growing popularity of denim jeans. The exhibition also features the work of present-day craftspeople in the UK, Japan, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, West Africa and South America, which illustrates indigo's survival and adaptation to contemporary fashion, and an indigo painting by Palestinian artist Nasser Soumi. The portion of the exhibition on the process of indigo dyeing includes dye blocks and balls, botanical drawings and videos of cloth being dyed in different parts of the world. Whitworth Art Gallery, University of **Manchester [UK]**, through April 15; **Plymouth [UK]** City Museum and Art Gallery, May 19 through September 1.

"Kakkar," textile block-printed and resist-dyed with indigo in Gujarat, India, about 1997, by Ismail Mohammad Khatri.

Egyptian Antiquities From the Louvre: Journey to the Afterlife includes stone and bronze sculpture, illustrated manuscripts, painted chests and mummy cases, *ushabti* figures, reliefs, jewelry, ceramics and fine wood carvings. All of the more than 200 objects illuminate the ancient Egyptians' concern with the afterlife, for which mortal existence was only a preparation, and of whose delights it was a mere shadow. A life lived morally and in accord with the commandments would allow a soul to pass through the final gate from the underworld into the paradise of the Field of Reeds. Art Gallery of South **Australia, Adelaide**, March 21 through July 1; Art Gallery of Western **Australia, Perth**, July 21 through October 28.

Kiran Awuhalia: Pakistani and Punjabi Folk. Classically trained, Awhalia found herself drawn to the *ghazal*, a form of sung poetry that originated in Persia 1000 years ago. She is accompanied by *tabla*, guitar, harmonium and *tanpura* (fretless sitar). 7:30 pm. Arab American National Museum, **Dearborn, Michigan**, March 22.

The Heartland Seminar on Arabic Music offers a five-day residential program focusing on classical Arab music and designed both for participants who want to begin their study as well as for those who seek to improve their skills. The seminar features internationally recognized academics and performers who offer individualized instruction in *qanun*, violin, *ney*, *'ud*, percussion and voice. ⓘ www.heartlandseminar.com. DeKoven Center, **Racine, Wisconsin**, March 25–30.

Venice and the Islamic World, 828–1797 explores one of the most important and distinctive facets of Venetian art history: the exchange of art objects and the interchange of artistic ideas between the great maritime city and her Islamic neighbors in the eastern Mediterranean. Glass, textiles, carpets, arms and armor, ceramics, sculpture, metalwork, furniture, paintings, drawings, prints, book bindings and manuscripts—nearly 200 works of art—tell the story of Islamic contributions to the arts of Venice during her heyday, from the medieval to the baroque eras. (The exhibition's bookend dates are 828, the year two Venetian merchants stole St. Mark's body from Muslim Alexandria and brought it to their native city, and 1797, when Venice fell to Napoleon Bonaparte.) The exhibition opens with a gallery dedicated to the Venetian experience of traveling to and living in Islamic lands. The main body of the exhibition unfolds chronologically, with the earliest Islamic objects to arrive in Venice, often for use in Venetian ecclesiastical settings. Also important were medieval Islamic scientific instruments and manuscripts, far more advanced than anything then available in Europe. The heart of the exhibition is formed of objects from the 15th and 16th centuries, when Venetian interest in the Islamic world peaked, with painter Gentile Bellini's visit to the court of Sultan Mehmet II as a point of departure. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, March 27 through July 8.

Truth Serum Blues: A One-Man Show by Ismail Khalidi uses music, poetry, photography and film to tackle contemporary questions about terrorism, patriotism, loyalty, freedom of speech and freedom of imagination. 7:30 pm. Arab American National Museum, **Dearborn, Michigan**, March 29.

Architectural Textiles: Tent Bands of Central Asia highlights a unique and fundamental weaving: the tent band. The trellis tent has made nomadic life possible across Central Asia for at least 1500 years. An important component of its construction is a woven tent band which girdles the lower part of the wooden roof struts. This critical engineering element provides the tension necessary to brace the roof dome against outward collapse under the load of heavy felts and the force of strong steppe winds. Beyond serving a utilitarian function, tent bands are often elaborately decorated. The exhibition includes approximately 40 tent bands made by different Central Asian ethnic groups. Period photographs of nomadic life and weaving, as well as other supplemental materials, will provide context, and an educational gallery will teach visitors how to "read" a tent band. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, March 30 through August 19.

CVRA AQVARVM IN JORDANIA: The 13th International Congress on the History of Water Management and Hydraulic Engineering in the Mediterranean Region will include presentations on water and its use under arid and semi-arid conditions in the Middle East. ⓘ fahlbusch@fh-luebeck.de. **Petra** and **Amman, Jordan**, March 31 through April 9.

<<April

Persian Visions: Contemporary Photography From Iran presents more than 80 images that provide a revealing view of Iranian life and experience. The 20 artists featured are among Iran's most celebrated; some have lived abroad and returned to view their homeland from a changed perspective. Anti-exotic and specific, these images make up the first survey of contemporary Iranian photography to be presented in the United States. Art Gallery of the University of **Maryland, College Park**, April 4 through May 2; Pacific Asia Museum, **Pasadena, California**, May 21 through September 9.

WHITWORTH ART GALLERY, UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

Marcel Khalifé with Absolute Ensemble presents the composer-singer (and national treasure) accompanied by the ensemble that has made a career out of crossing musical boundaries. Part of the Detroit Symphony's World Music series. 8 pm. Max Fisher Center, **Detroit**, April 5.

Peopling the Predynastic: Recognizing Community Differences in Egypt's Formative Period is the title of a lecture by Jane Hill, who will explore the lives and personae of members of two Upper Egyptian communities and illustrate how the differences in their environment, work, beliefs and status affected their lives and the lives of their descendants under Egypt's first kings. ⓘ 215-898-4890. University of **Pennsylvania** Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, **Philadelphia**, April 21.

<<May

Flesh on the Bone: Reconstituting the People of Ancient Akhmim is the title of a lecture by Dr. Jonathan Elias of the Akhmim Mummy Project, who will discuss forensic analysis of a mummified Egyptian population dating from between 700 and 200 BC. ⓘ 215-898-4890. University of **Pennsylvania** Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, **Philadelphia**, May 5.

Daily Life Ornamented: The Medieval Persian City of Rayy examines the distinctive artistic traditions of this great Islamic city, predecessor of modern Tehran. Rayy was a center of politics and sciences between the ninth and 13th centuries, renowned for its glazed ceramics and its prominent position on the Silk Roads. While documents reveal the personalities and events in the history of Rayy, patterns of its society and culture are brought to life through archeological materials. The city's unique ceramic heritage is revealed through excavations of the 1930's. The exhibition approaches more than 50 objects from this collection as an archeologist would, investigating both ceramic innovations and traditions. The theme of ornamentation acts as a guide toward understanding the city of Rayy as both the source and consumer of beauty in everyday life—illuminating the lifestyles, resources and values of its people. Catalog. Oriental Institute Museum, **Chicago**, May 15 through October 14.

Battle of the Bands: New England *Mehterhane* vs. Connecticut Valley Field Music. Ottoman Janissary bands, or *mehterhane*, had a significant impact on western music for many centuries. The first European marching bands combined several different-sized drums, brass percussion and winds in direct imitation of the Janissary bands. The traditional American fife and drum band is an example of Turkish *mehterhane* influence in the New World in the 18th and 19th centuries. Having an American fife and drum band in this "battle" brings different generations of marching bands onto the same stage in a competition which mirrors the centuries of competition between Ottoman and European civilizations. 8 p.m., $20. Kresge Auditorium, **Massachusetts** Institute of Technology, **Cambridge**, May 18.

Art of Being Tuareg: Sahara Nomads in a Modern World. The elegance and beauty of the Tuareg peoples—their dress and ornament, their large white riding camels, their refined song, speech and dance—have all been rhapsodically described by travelers in Niger, Mali and Nigeria. This exhibition explores the history and culture of the Tuareg through their silver jewelry, clothing, leather purses, bags and saddles, and other highly decorated items. Cantor Center, Stanford University, **Palo Alto, California**, May 30 through September 2.

<<June

The Emperor's Terrapin was carved around 1600 and found on the grounds of the fort at Allahabad in northern India in 1803. It is associated with Crown Prince Selim, later to be the Emperor Jahangir, son of the great Mughal emperor Akbar. "Turtles are marvelous sculptural pieces," said Sir David Attenborough, "and as such clearly inspired the Mughal artist working with a spectacular jade boulder." Horniman Museum, **London**, June 6 through July 29.

Islam: Treasures From the Collection of Nasser D. Khalili presents 300 objects that provide a comprehensive survey of the arts of Islam from the eighth to the late 19th century. Art Gallery of **New South Wales, Sydney**, June 22 through September 23.

Encompassing the Globe: Portugal and the World in the 16th and 17th Centuries brings together approximately 300 extraordinary objects reflecting the unprecedented cross-cultural dialogue that followed the establishment of Portugal's world trading network in the 16th and 17th centuries. Portugal was the first European nation to build an extensive commercial empire, which soon reached to Africa, India, China, Southeast Asia, Japan and Brazil. Portuguese contact with these regions, which had been virtually unknown to Europeans, led to the creation of highly original works of art, some intended for export and others for domestic consumption in their countries of origin. Initially displayed in princely "wonder cabinets" and now scattered throughout the world, the paintings, sculptures, manuscripts, maps, early books and other objects assembled here provide a rich image of a "new world" during its formation. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, June 23 through September 16.

<<July

Edge of Arabia: Contemporary Art in Saudi Arabia and Yemen explores the individual expression of values and beliefs in a climate of change, and features works by 10 leading artists including Ahmed Mater al-ziad Aseeri, Abdulaziz Ashour, Khalid Yosseff, Ayman Yosry Daydban, Fuad al-Futaih, Abdullah Alameen and Amnah al-Nasiri. SOAS Brunei Gallery, **London**, July 11 through September 22.

<<September

Wondrous Words: The Poetic Mastery of Jalal al-Din Rumi is a conference organized by the Iran Heritage Foundation and the British Museum to mark the 800th anniversary of Rumi's birth. ⓘ +44-20-7493-4766, info@iranheritage.org, www.iranheritage.com/rumiconference. **London**, September 20–22.

Impressed by Light: Photographs From Paper Negatives, 1840–1860 demonstrates that calotypes—photographs from paper negatives—flourished rather than failed in Britain after the introduction of glass negatives in 1851. Artists who used the paper negative process did so because they preferred its esthetic qualities, because it offered practical advantages for travel photography in hot climates, or because it helped to distinguish gentleman-amateur photographers from tradesmen. The exhibition is divided into four sections: The Rise of the Calotype, 1839–1851; The Calotype in Great Britain; British Calotypists Abroad; and The Calotype in British India. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, September 25 through December 31.

<<Permanent

Pattern of Beauty: Islamic Decorative Art presents decorative art as a contemplative art form with deeply spiritual potential, mainly expressed in such forms as calligraphy, architecture and pattern. These forms reflect unity and the perfection of the proportion and symmetry of God's creation. Iziko Bo-Kaap Museum, **Cape Town, South Africa**.

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 on the World Wide Web, and our Web site, saudiaramcoworld.com, contains more extensive listings. Readers are welcome to submit information for possible inclusion in this listing.

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