

Cover



The Lebanon Mountain Trail is more than a recreational initiative: its founders hope it will spur national conservation efforts and boost tourism in the 26 towns along which it passes. Several thousand hikers have already sampled its wayside beauty. Photo by Norbert Schiller.

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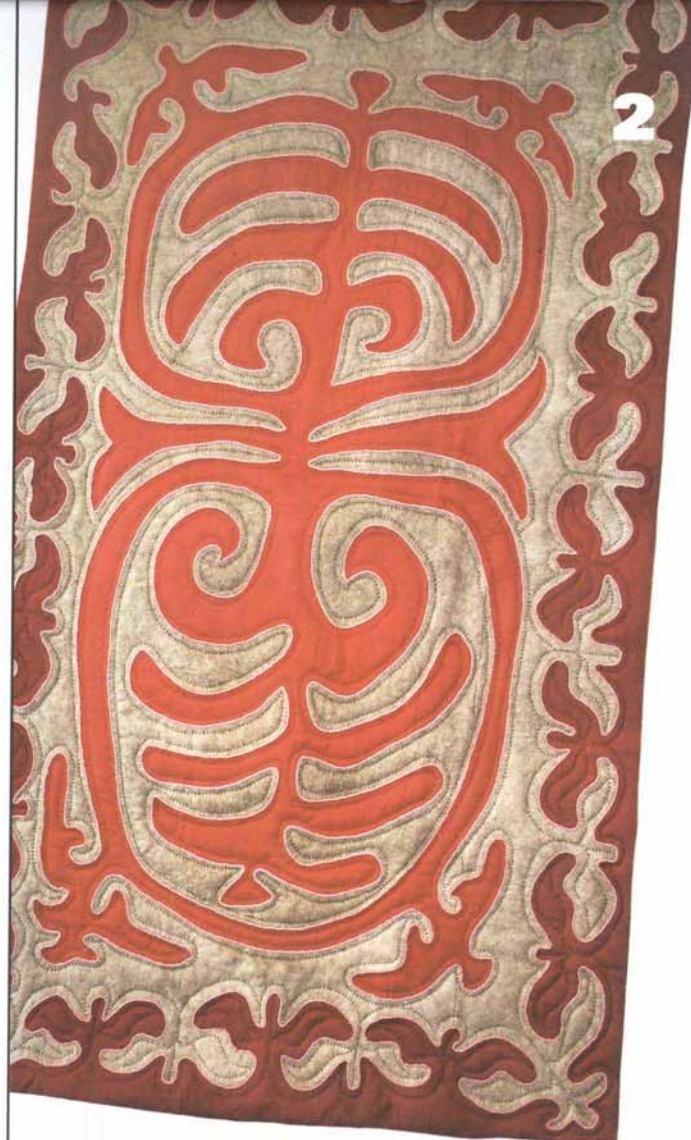
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Back Cover



Alois Musil's dramatic discovery in 1898 of Qasr 'Amra, an eighth-century Umayyad hunting lodge in the Jordanian desert, was notable, but the representational frescoes inside it made Musil first suspect, then celebrated, among Arabists. Painting by Leopold Alphons Mielich, courtesy of the Vyškov Museum.

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



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Shyrdak and the Art of Felt

Written and
photographed by
A. M. Kueppers

The felt rugs known in Kyrgyzstan as *shyrdaks* reflect more than 4000 years of techniques and designs, and the "Golden Hands" women's cooperative is reviving them as both a national symbol and a proud export.

8 From Moravia to Arabia

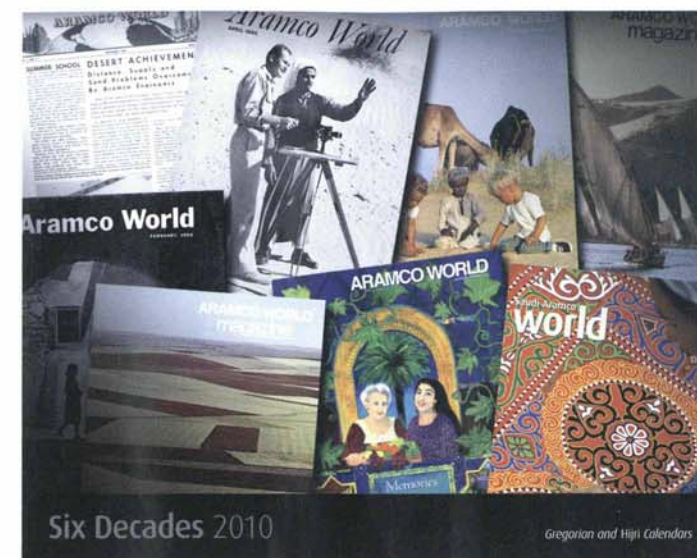
Written by Peter Harrigan

Born a peasant in Hapsburg Moravia (now in the Czech Republic), Alois Musil was not only an honorary Bedouin shaykh and a top orientalist scholar of the early 20th century. He was also a novelist whose friendships in the Middle East guided the arc of a luminous, bridge-building career that now, 65 years after his death, is receiving recognition.



17 2010 Calendar: Six Decades

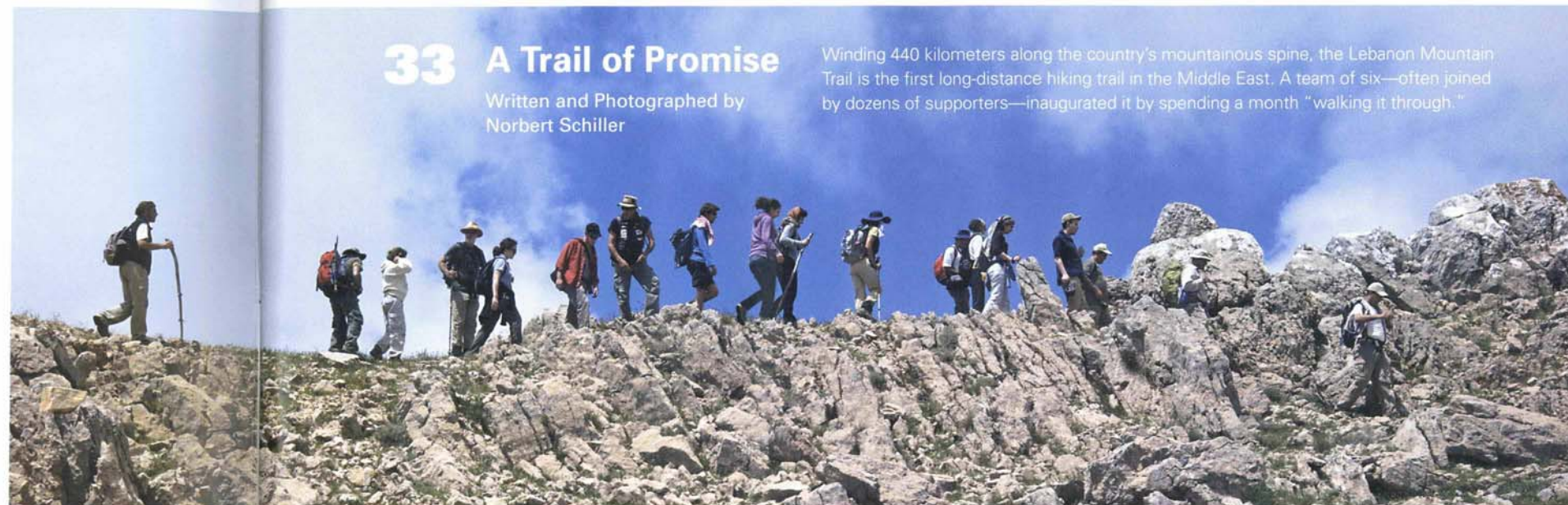
In November 1949, Aramco started a company newsletter "to break down walls of isolation" between its US offices and its Saudi Arabian oilfields. Through each of its six decades, *Saudi Aramco World*—now an international bimonthly magazine—has found new ways to broaden and deepen that intercultural mission.



33 A Trail of Promise

Written and Photographed by
Norbert Schiller

Winding 440 kilometers along the country's mountainous spine, the Lebanon Mountain Trail is the first long-distance hiking trail in the Middle East. A team of six—often joined by dozens of supporters—inaugurated it by spending a month "walking it through."



40 Al-Burdun (The Boardinghouse)

Photographed by Peter Fryer
Written by David Campbell

In the early 20th century, many Yemeni sailors manned British ships, which often called at the English port of South Shields, near Newcastle. Forbidden to lodge with English families, the seamen lived in boardinghouses, a term they Arabized to *burdun* ("boor-doonn"). Today, only two boardinghouses remain, but one of England's earliest Muslim communities is still vital.



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Written by Julie Weiss

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Shyrdak
and the

Art
of
Felt

WRITTEN AND
PHOTOGRAPHED BY
A. M. KUEPPERS



KEREZ ABDIKASIMOVA SITS ON A SMALL WOODEN STOOL IN THE MIDDLE OF HER COURTYARD, WALLED OFF FROM THE MAIN STREET BY WHITEWASHED MUD BRICKS. HER HANDS ARE WRAPPED AROUND TWO THIN METAL RODS AS SHE BEATS OUT AN INSISTENT RHYTHM ON THE MASS OF BLACK WOOL AT HER FEET.

The beating, she explains, separates and cleans the raw wool,

sheared from her family's flock of sheep. The sheep are now grazing in mountain pastures for the summer.

It is the first step toward producing a *shyrdak*, a colorful Central Asian felt carpet, which, thanks to the Altyn Kol women's cooperative, is slowly making its way onto the international market.

Archeologists consider felt rugs to be humanity's first manufactured floor covering, placed on the ground inside yurts and other tents as people journeyed, together with sheep, cattle and horses, across the plains and mountains of the globe.

Today, this ancient craft has all but disappeared, replaced by woven and knotted rugs and, in the last two centuries, by mass-

produced carpets and synthetic floor coverings. But in remote nations such as Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, seminomadic people continue to make felt rugs for their yurts and village homes—and, most recently, for tourists.

"I have been making shyrdaks for 40 years, but originally we just did it for ourselves," 61-year old Abdikasimova tells me in staccato, Kyrgyz-accented Russian. "It's only in the last few years that we have been marketing and selling them as a product."

She is one of the founding members of the Altyn Kol cooperative, formed in 1998 with the help of a pair of Swiss development workers living in Kochkor, a mid-sized town of 16,000 in the center of the country. Kyrgyz

for "Golden Hands," Altyn Kol combines the skills of local shyrdak makers with the business savvy required to market their products in Kyrgyzstan and abroad.

Abdikasimova has retained the stern countenance and military bearing that was required of Soviet schoolteachers. She was one for years, through the days of Brezhnev and Gorbachov and into the early years of Kyrgyzstan's independence.

Her white and silver headscarf, purple embroidered T-shirt and flower-print skirt are common throughout the region, but her dedication to her craft and the high quality of her shyrdaks set her apart.

Abdikasimova sells about 10 large pieces a year at prices that range from the equivalent of \$50 to \$150. Though modest by western standards, the income allows her to take a step up Kyrgyzstan's steep economic ladder.

"I have six children and a pension of about \$15 per month. My husband gets \$20," Abdikasimova says. "Even here, that's not much."

Like all Altyn Kol members, Abdikasimova keeps 70 percent of the retail price from every sale—but if a rug doesn't sell, she gets nothing. This arrangement puts quality

at a premium. Development workers, diplomats and adventurous tourists are the cooperative's principal clients.

While international organizations and foreign embassies set up shop in the capital, Bishkek, shortly after Kyrgyzstan declared independence in 1991, tourists have only been trickling in to Kochkor more recently. They are drawn to the region by the Tien Shan mountains along Kyrgyzstan's western border with China. But inevitably visitors are also enchanted by Kyrgyz culture, much of which reemerged, seemingly unscathed, after 70 years of Soviet rule.

The nomadic Kyrgyz people established themselves in this region long before Genghis Khan swept in from Mongolia in the early 13th century. His forces quickly overwhelmed the local population, which then joined him on subsequent campaigns into China, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

The Kyrgyz slipped into obscurity under Mongol, Timurid and ultimately Russian rule during the next nine centuries, but their nomadic way of life endured until the early 20th century and the sweeping changes that followed the 1917 Soviet revolution.

As a consequence, Kyrgyzstan's highways are dotted with roadside yurts offering fermented mares' milk to drink, and in the summer months the lush valleys of the Tien Shan host shepherds who protect their livestock from a range of wildlife that includes snow leopards, wolves and eagles.

Ignore automobiles and western dress—and the country's near-100-percent literacy rate—and it can seem as if little has changed culturally since the days when the Kyrgyz rode with the khans.

Shyrdaks are among the tangible elements of this resilient culture.

The oldest known felts were found in the 1950's at a tell in Beycesultan, Turkey. Their manufacture, in about 2500 BC, was made possible by a series of innovations that had begun more than 5000 years earlier.

First, humans had to learn how to domesticate plants and animals. In *The Mummies of*

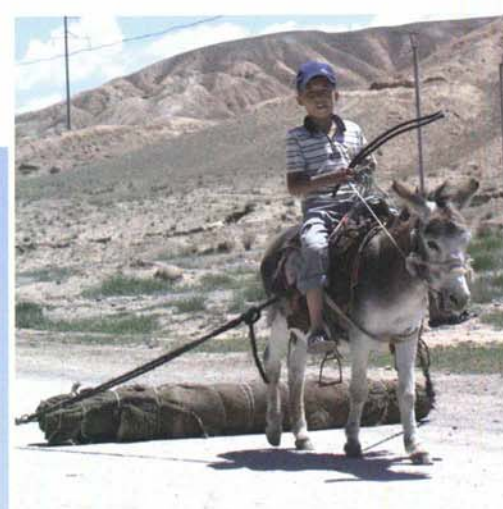
Ürümchi (1999, Norton), Elizabeth Wayland Barber cites archeological evidence that dogs, sheep and wheat were domesticated in Syria by 8000 BC. By 4000 BC, Middle Eastern peoples had also learned how to harvest useful products, such as wool and milk, from their livestock.

"Once they could get both food and clothing from an animal, they were in a position to really exploit the grasslands, so woolly sheep made nomadism possible," Barber says. "Horses allowed such a large community to stay mobile."

Sometime around 3000 BC, humans invented felt. Though little used in the modern world, the textile played a key role in the early Indo-European expansion across the plains of Eurasia.

Previous spread: **Kyrgyz shyrdak designs are as symbolic as they are decorative. The rhombus pattern echoes the diagonal wooden latticework of a yurt interior; the four corners of each rhombus represent the four seasons and the four cardinal directions. The trefoil curls are ram's horns, symbolizing abundance, good fortune and family. Inset: Because it involves bonding fibers rather than weaving them, felting is a simple process. Beating the wool loosens dirt and evens out the fibers. Below, left to right: The wool is arranged on a reed mat and the mat is tightly rolled while hot water, poured from a kettle, softens the microscopic keratin scales on the surface of each wool fiber. The mat is then stepped on and rolled back and forth; it may also be rolled along the road hitched to a donkey. This pressure permanently interlocks the scales, and thus the wool fibers. The resulting felt can be unrolled while still damp; the bonded fibers are virtually inseparable.**

Right: **The heart shape at the center of this shyrdak symbolizes hospitality; it represents the leather bowl in which hosts offer fermented mares' milk (*kumiz*) to guests in a traditional Kyrgyz home. Lower: Sources of wool, meat and milk for the families that live in the yurts behind them, sheep find summer pasture in a meadow outside Kochkor.**





frameworks to produce their famous round tents, or yurts, and they use it for flooring (as rugs), bedding, luggage, saddle gear, hats, cloaks, and other clothing."

Like horses and sheep, felt remains a fundamental part of Central Asian life to this day, although when nomads adopted a more sedentary lifestyle, many cultures switched to weaving and knotting rugs on wooden looms. Others, like the Kyrgyz, continued to travel, rolling and pressing wool into felt on their journeys across the mountains and valleys of the Tien Shan.

Inside Abdikasimova's sunlit courtyard on a scorching hot day in early July, I return to this ancient world.

Together with Mayram Omurzakova, who also serves as Altyn Kol's director, Abdikasimova gathers small bunches of a previously prepared pile of wool and

spreads them neatly across a reed mat like the ones that cover a yurt's wooden frame before the thick layer of felt is placed over them. Just as in the yurt camps of a bygone era, shyrdak-making remains a communal activity. Neighbors stop by to visit, and Abdikasimova quickly cajoles them into helping out.

She briskly assigns her son Bakit, my driver, Maksit, and another neighbor to help her roll up the wool, still on the mat, into a tight cylinder, carefully pouring boiling water onto it. Then they roll and stamp on the rolled-up mat for half an hour, pressing the wet wool into felt.

For larger pieces, it is easier to do this pressing by rolling the mat along a road. Young boys riding donkeys, pulling a rolled-up shyrdak mat, are a common sight along Kyrgyzstan's highways.

"We are used to making bright-colored shyrdaks for ourselves," Omurzakova tells me. "But the Swiss noticed that foreigners wanted more natural colors, so we began making more black and white shyrdaks and also experimenting with natural dyes."

"The Swiss," Walter and Susanne Schlaeppli, were one of the first non-Kyrgyz couples ever to live in the town, a three-hour drive from Bishkek. It was in 1995, just four years after Kyrgyzstan's independence, that they rented a house near Kochkor, where they lived for five years. "We bought a shyrdak for the house in about January 1996," Susanne tells me later by phone. "Word traveled like a fire through the village and across the whole valley: 'The Swiss are buying shyrdaks!'"

Poverty has been rising in Kyrgyzstan since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, with rural areas the hardest hit. World Bank statistics show 35 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and 2008 per-capita gross national income was \$780 a year. One side effect of this change has been a return to a more traditional way of life and a resurgence of Kyrgyz handicrafts.

But uncomfortably, perhaps inevitably, some Kyrgyz looked to the Schlaepplis for instant relief.

"After we bought the first carpet, we wanted to use another to insulate the wall," she recalls. "So everyone thought we would just keep buying them, and every day people stood outside our house with a carpet and a story about a sick daughter or other family problems."

Realizing she could never afford to buy all the shyrdaks, Schlaeppli instead took down every artisan's address.

That spring, together with a small group of local craftswomen, she organized an exhibit at the National Museum in Bishkek, gathering carpets from all the women who had stood on her doorstep that winter.

"The first exhibition was a big success. It was all the foreigners who were buying," Schlaeppli recalls.

Her goal had never been to run a business, so every year she did less and less, allowing the women from Kochkor and other regions to take over.

In 1998, about 200 of the women formed Altyn Kol, and they put Omurzakova in charge. The cooperative now has close to 1000 members. Exhibitions are held twice each year in the National Museum, and Altyn Kol now exports rugs and other felt handicrafts to Switzerland, Austria and the Netherlands.

Marianne Tuerlings, owner of Amsterdam's Shirdak Silkroad Textile, has been selling the felt rugs for the past nine years.

"Only collectors buy the bright, traditionally colored shyrdaks," she says. "But I also have customers who are interested in interior design, and you can combine shyrdaks with furniture of simple design."

Shyrdak exhibitions are held twice a year in the National Museum in Bishkek.

While her neighbors stamp the carpet, Abdikasimova sits down amid her works in progress—a pile of black, gray, maroon, green, red and white felt pieces. She draws shapes on them in white chalk and cuts out the shapes.

"Every shyrdak has a front and a back, and every shape is used twice, the positive and the negative," she says. "Both the design I cut out and also the piece I cut it out from will be used."

All the patterns are symbolic, though interpretations of the signs vary. She holds up a variety of brilliant designs—a red-and-green moon shape, a blue hawk's foot and a black-and-white ram's horn—before stitching a purple crow's-foot pattern into a maroon background.

She returns to the new rug for about 20 minutes, working intently on it, then decides it is time to unwrap the wet felt from the reed mat. Together with another neighbor, Saina Baichekirova, she unties the string holding the coil together and reveals a wet, gray sheet of felt. After it is fully unrolled, the two women crouch down on their hands and knees and rub the textile with their forearms. This further dries and softens the wool—and leaves shyrdak-makers with rug burns on their forearms for the whole summer.

"That's enough," Abdikasimova says. She is now sweating beneath her headscarf. "Now we'll tie it up again, put some more water on it, and then let it dry out."

Over the next month, she will dye the new felt, or perhaps leave it in its natural

color, and cut shapes into it to make another shyrdak. As I say goodbye, Abdikasimova returns to her sewing. I walk out past a curious little girl who's peeking into the courtyard where, one day, she too may continue the craft of making shyrdaks. 🌐

Journalist **A. M. Kueppers** (amkueppers2008@gmail.com) has traveled widely in the former Soviet Union to report for British and North American publications. "Shyrdaks first caught my eye at the central market in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, but as I researched the story, I found out that they are much more than beautiful souvenirs—they are living pieces of the nomadic past."

Altyn Kol cooperative: www.altyn-kol.com
(includes a glossary of shyrdak symbols)
Shirdak Silkroad Textile: www.shirdak.nl

To see more felt designs, visit www.saudiaramcoworld.com

For Further Reading:

Hunters, Herders, and Hamburgers: The Past and Future of Human-Animal Relationships. Richard W. Bulliet. 2007, Columbia UP, 978-0231130776, \$22.50 pb.

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

Kyrgyzstan: J/A 95, M/J 96, M/J 97
Felt-making (photo): S/O 96
Kyrgyz music: M/A 99
Other Central Asian textiles: M/A 07 (*ikat*), J/A 03 (*suzani*)



Trefoil ram's horns make up most of this pattern, which is also bounded on the outer edge by triangles that symbolize Kyrgyzstan's mountains. Top, from left: **After tracing a design in chalk, Abdikasimova cuts it out and sews it to the background. "Every shyrdak has a front and a back, and every shape is used twice, the positive and the negative," she says.**

"It can be made so dense as to be nearly impervious to wind and water, yet it is far lighter than other waterproof materials like wood and metal," Barber writes. "The herders spread great sheets of felt over light

Written by Peter Harrigan

FROM MORAVIA TO ARABIA



Saturday, December 26, 1914: Behind [the Prince] stood the Emir Nawwaf, extending both his hands to me; followed by a long line of my old, loyal friends, all of whom I embraced and kissed before entering the tent. Nawwaf seated me between himself and his father and from all sides there poured upon me greetings and inquiries after my health. Among these good people I felt at home—among brothers.

—Alois Musil, *In the Arabian Desert*

PORTRAIT: VLADIMÍR KOTULÁN / VYŠKOV MUSEUM

LEFT: VYŠKOV MUSEUM; RIGHT: PETER HARRIGAN



“I started out collecting beetles in Czechoslovakia and ended up a professor of Arabic,” says Rudolf Veselý, explaining his career shift from entomologist to orientalist half a century ago. “The adventures of a certain remarkable Austrian–Czech inspired me.” I am with Veselý and his longtime colleague, emeritus professor Luboš Kopráček, in Prague, in the library of the Institute of Near Eastern and African Studies at Charles University, on Celetná Street near the historic heart of the Czech capital. Veselý and Kopráček are sharing their recollections of Alois Musil, explorer, professor, author, prelate, general and honorary tribal shaykh, whose 72-year life ended in 1944. Though Musil was broadly, even spectacularly, accomplished, he remains among the least known of the 19th and early 20th centuries’ explorer-scholars of Arabia and the Levant—though that may be about to change.

Today, even most Czechs are unaware that, in addition to his almost monumental scholarly output, Musil penned more than 20 popular books for young people about desert adventures in Arab lands. Veselý remembers being one of his avid young readers. “I was enthralled by his vivid descriptions and thought, ‘What a region to collect beetles from!’ Then I happened to meet a Czech entomologist who had collected beetles from Palestine,” he recalls. “We collaborated, and I found that, having read Musil’s books, I already knew the areas where he had collected. My interest in the Middle East took off, and I decided to study Arabic.”

Musil’s books similarly inspired Kopráček, especially during the dark days of World War II and the onset of the Communist regime in 1948, when Musil gave his young readers an unbounded world brimming with adventure. Kopráček believes that Musil’s “accurate and culturally sensitive accounts of Arabs...pushed fantasy pictures of the Arab East to the margin”

Opposite: The only extant color portrait of Alois Musil was painted by Svatopluka Součka from a photograph of Musil in the robes of the Bani Sakhr. The painting hangs today in the Vyškov Museum’s Musil Hall. Above, left: Musil traveled with a glass-plate camera, and he made this image of Ruwala Bedouin while the tribe rested in Wadi Sirhan, near the modern border of Jordan and Saudi Arabia. In the center is Prince Nuri ibn Hazza ibn Sha’lan, who became one of Musil’s closest friends. Above: This bust and plaque commemorating Musil as a professor and orientalist hangs on the wall outside the Vyškov Museum.



Musil's portrait of Emir Nawwaf, who, with his father Ibn Sha'an, gave Musil the tribal title "Sheikh Musa Rweili." Right: Musil recorded countless details of daily life, including the making of adobe bricks in Al-Jawf, in northern Saudi Arabia.



VYSKOV MUSEUM (2); OPPOSITE: PETER HARRIGAN / VYSKOV MUSEUM

and "contributed to the growth of sincere interest in Oriental studies among young Czechs."

The professors reel off highlights of Musil's achievements: 21,000 kilometers (13,000 mi) of desert journeys on camelback; more than 50 books, including six illustrated tomes published by the American Geographical Society; some 1200 scholarly articles; more than 500 transcribed, translated tribal poems and songs; thousands of photographs of archeological sites, landscapes, people and Bedouin encampments; topographic maps and surveys of territories previously unseen by westerners; the sensational discovery of Qasr 'Amra, now a World Heritage Site; and—not least—a plant named after him: *Thymus musilis*. They add that if scholastic integrity was the warp of his work, then his respect for Arab people was the weft, and today, Musil's sense of the value of understanding among nations, cultures and religions still feels fresh, even prescient. In a paper published in *Archiv Orientalni*, Kopráček wrote, "Virtually all that [Musil] has written...on various aspects of Muslim culture attests to a great deal of sympathy. Those who remember him confirm that in private conversation also he used to speak well of Islam." Indeed, Musil himself wrote, "I have met people of different professions, nationalities and religions. I considered all to be good, and trusted everyone."

The professors welcome the new interest in Musil, as shown especially by recent international scholars' conferences in Prague and Vienna and the 2008 founding of the Academic Society of Alois Musil. In a more popular vein, the Moravian town of Vyškov, near his birthplace, five hours by train southeast of Prague, celebrates "Alois Musil Days" each year with lectures, reenactments on horseback and plenty of Arab food and music.

It was in a farm cottage that still stands near Vyškov, in the village of Rychtářov, that Alois Musil was born in 1868, the oldest of a peasant couple's five children. He did well in school, studied theology at Olomouc University—where he took an interest in Near Eastern languages and Old Testament studies—and at 23, like many peasant sons in Hapsburg lands, entered the Catholic priesthood. Two years later, in 1895, he received a doctoral degree and left for further studies at

the new École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem (the French Biblical and Archaeological School of Jerusalem). There, during long treks in and around the city, he came to realize that his plans for study in archeology, geology and the origins of monotheistic religions could not be fulfilled without better understanding of the land and people—the topography and ethnography—of the region. In 1897 Musil left for Beirut, where the library at Saint Joseph University was attracting students of the region's history, languages, literature, geography and archeology.

But the lure of the desert meant that Musil frequently skipped lectures. His fascination with field studies caused so much tension in the Catholic hierarchy back home that, after failed attempts to recall him, his financing was withdrawn. Musil turned to other sources for support, first to Vienna's Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften (Imperial Academy of Sciences), which thus became the first of a long list of patrons that eventually included Hapsburg royalty, Bedouin tribal leaders, the first president of Czechoslovakia (and his American wife), Austro-Hungarian and Czechoslovak academics, Ottoman functionaries and a Chicago industrialist.

The year 1898 marked the start of what became the first of Musil's three long phases of travel. He explored the eastern shores of the Dead Sea and the plateau region of Moab as well as Petra, Palmyra, Sinai and Gaza. In Madaba, Jordan's "City of Mosaics," he heard that, in the lawless country to the east, there stood a ruined building filled with magnificent early-Islamic frescoes. The Bani Sakhr tribe, headed that way to raid the Ruwala, offered to take him there.

EQUIPMENT AND OBSERVATION

Musil is characteristically so circumspect when it comes to revealing personal detail in his accounts that one British reviewer wrote in the *Journal* of the Royal Geographical Society that the Czech's "cold and colourless descriptions fall rather flat...without human sympathy, without local colour, and utterly devoid of any atmosphere." But Reynold Nicolson, the eminent professor of Arabic at Cambridge University, disagreed and, in his review, praised Musil's "fine passages of description ... [and] thrilling episodes, admirably related," as "extraordinarily interesting...with pages that abound in realistic pictures of the desert in all its aspects—not without touches of true imagination."

Here is Musil's account of a campfire meal:

The meat I ate was composed of many thin, tough skins superimposed one on another like sheets of paper and tasting something like the meat of a crawfish. At first I abhorred the sight of the lizard, but later, when the vision of it had left my mind, I indulged in the meat with relish. My native escorts ate the cooked meal and bread, and while Tuman [as he referred to his Viennese assistant, Thomasberger] and I ascertained the latitude they finished the lizard."

We also learn that supplies Musil carried included boxes of perfumed soap that he presented to women, noting that the men considered them evil-smelling. For cash to pay guides and buy supplies, he carried Turkish silver *majidis*, Maria Theresa thalers and gold Napoleons. He kept these and other valuables in his saddlebag and slept with them in his round tent. He carried a revolver, carbines and cartridges; his French glass-plate travel camera; a waterproof blanket; squeeze paper, brushes and water for making impressions of rock inscriptions; and photographic supplies. He also had medicines including salicylic powder, sal ammoniac (for snake bite) and iodine.

Tuman looked after the equipment for surveying and observations: a theodolite, a cumbersome plane table, tripods, chronometers, compasses, prismatic binoculars and thermometers. For mapping, Musil would determine latitude astronomically, but calculated longitude using more basic methods:

As we rode on camels only we soon learned the different rates of march per hour across regions of varying physiographic character. We were able to gain from this accurate data on the camels' rates of march when travelling for a considerable distance northward or southward, for then we

could check our estimates of distance by the astronomically determined latitudes. This gave us criteria for plotting the route traverses in an easterly or westerly direction far more accurate than one might believe possible.

Musil also treats his reader to a rare insight into his deductive method for filling in cartographic blanks, using a knowledgeable informant named Faraj. Under canvas and well secluded from distractions of the camp, Musil questioned Faraj closely for a full day:

Having determined the cardinal points exactly, he proceeded to draw in the sand within my tent, hills, valleys and wells, piling up sand for the ridges....He did not show the distances, but was precise in his designation of the representative directions. The map finished, I questioned him as to the distances between the various places. These he explained in terms of daily marches, estimating, for example, whether it would be possible for Arabs migrating from locality A to locality B to reach their destination the same day. At the same time he would take into account whether they were migrating in winter, when they can make at the utmost 20 kilometers, or in summer when they make about 25 kilometers, if they travel from sunrise to sunset.

Musil explains that "a more specific determination of distance or time is unknown to a Bedouin," and he elaborates further the complexities when watering stops at wells were involved, factoring in times of arrival and the implications of resting periods or overnight stays.



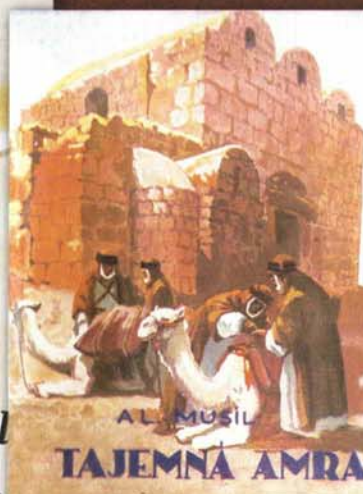
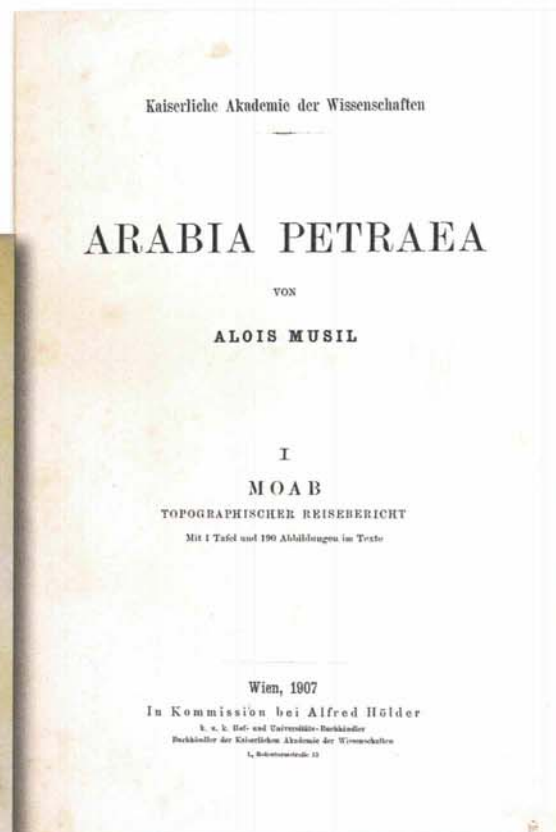
"NOT EVEN MY
PRIESTHOOD OR
MY ACADEMIC
TITLES COULD SAVE
ME FROM
ACCUSATIONS OF
BEING A LIAR,"

What followed was his most acclaimed achievement as an explorer: The modern discovery of the eighth-century Umayyad lodge Qasr 'Amra and the frescoes that indeed covered its plaster walls and triple-domed ceilings.

But his visit was brief: Attack was imminent. "I enter and see remnants of paintings everywhere. I run from room to room; all are painted. I understand the importance of my discovery and thank God," he wrote in *Tajemná Amra* (*Mysterious Amra*), published in Prague in 1932. "I want to take pictures and I take the first photograph. My companion, lying on the roof, shouts, 'Our foes, Musa, our foes.' I hide my camera and we gallop toward the east. Three or four riders pursue us from the north."

"Musa"—as he was called by the tribesmen, who changed "Musil" to the Arabic name for Moses—managed to take fuzzy photographs, but the plates were lost in his flight. Despite the risks he had taken, when he returned to Vienna his report of frescoes that showed a ruler on a throne and Arcadian scenes of plants, animals and hunting provoked incredulity: Representation, his skeptics argued, was an unlikely element of early Islamic art. There were no known references to these frescoes in Arab literature, and no other western travelers who had been in the area had even heard of the site or anything like it. "Not even my priesthood or my academic titles could save me from accusations of being a liar," Musil wrote.

It took two subsequent visits, in 1900 and 1901, and more than 100 photographs, to vindicate his claims and set right his reputation. On the 1901 trip, he was accompanied by



Far left: The popular Czech painter Zdeněk Burian illustrated the cover of Musil's *Syn Pouště* (*Desert Son*), published in Prague in 1933, a year after *Tajemná Amra* (*Mysterious Amra*), whose cover shows the eighth-century Umayyad lodge Musil "discovered" in 1898. Above: *Arabia Petraea*, published in four volumes in 1908, helped Musil win recognition as an explorer, geographer, ethnographer, scientific observer and cartographer.



Alois Musil

SYN POUŠTĚ

KLADATELSTVÍ JIRÍ CHVOJKA • HAVLÍČKŮV BROD

THE AMERICAN CONNECTION

Between 1923 and 1929, Alois Musil made several trans-Atlantic trips to New York while preparing his six-volume *Oriental Exploration and Studies*, published between 1926 and 1928 by the American Geographical Society (AGS), the oldest nationwide geographical organization in the US.

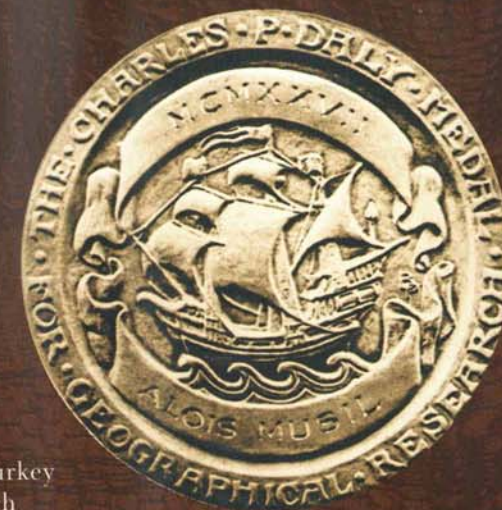
This was made possible by Musil's friendship with fellow Moravian Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, who had become the first president of Czechoslovakia in 1918. The two had known each other in Vienna, where Masaryk, a philosopher, lived with his American wife, Charlotte Garrigue.

It was through them that Musil was introduced to Charles Crane, a Chicago industrialist who in 1914 had sold most of his interest in one of the world's largest manufacturers of plumbing supplies and become a philanthropist. Crane's travels reached from China, Japan, Siberia, Manchuria, the Slavic territories of Europe and the Balkans to Turkey and the Arab world, including Saudi Arabia—where his support for hydrological research helped set the stage for the first discoveries of oil. Crane's son John served as press secretary to President Masaryk, and thus Crane and the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts both became patrons of Musil's work with the AGS.

Musil, however, "did not much enjoy his stay in New York and could not get used to the noise and bustle," says Jana Štelclová, who has read Musil's letters from those years. "During summer he wrote home that he was sleeping out on the bank of the Hudson River to escape the noise and heat of his lodgings."

In 1927, a year before the publication of the final volume of *Oriental Exploration and Studies*, the AGS awarded Musil its Charles P. Daly Medal for "valuable or distinguished geographical services or labors." Its first recipient had been polar explorer Ronald Peary in 1902, but Musil was not the first to receive the medal for work in the Middle East: That distinction had gone to the American soldier and explorer Charles Chaillé-Long in 1909 for his work in Egypt and East Africa.

The first published title in Musil's AGS series was priced at seven dollars. Today, a complete set of the first edition can sell for upward of \$7000. Musil's four *Arabia Petraea* volumes (in German) fetch comparable prices, and the two-volume *Kuseyr Amra*, with the Mielich colored illustrations in Volume 2, is now a rare collector's item.



the Austrian artist Leopold Alphons Mielich, who copied the frescoes, and he also brought back plaster fragments removed from the walls, some of which are now in Berlin's Pergamon Museum.

Back in Vienna from his third visit to Qasr 'Amra, Musil started writing up his journeys. In 1907 the Imperial Academy of Sciences published *Kuseyr Amra* in two lavish elephant-folio volumes. Musil also published maps with some 3000 toponyms from Petra and the surrounding area.

The next year, again under the auspices of the Viennese Academy, Alfred Hölder published Musil's four-volume, 1633-page *Arabia Petraea*, containing ethnological observations, hundreds of illustrations, an extensive bibliography and a map supplement. It was the fruit of Musil's observations made on camel- and horseback as he traveled to Sinai, Aqaba, Gaza, across the plateau of Moab and south to Petra, the Nabataean capital that lends its name to the region of the title.

As well as writing in German, Musil wrote and was published in Czech, English and Arabic. By his own count, he was fluent in 15 modern and classical languages, including Greek, Syriac, Aramaic and Hebrew, and from his long desert journeys he had an intimate grasp of tribal vernacular. His skill came from tireless study and practice, and Musil expected the same from others. Kopráček tells a story of Musil interviewing Anna Blechová, who would become his dedicated personal assistant until his death. "How many languages do you have?" Musil asked Blechová. "Six," was her reply. "Six is not enough," retorted Musil. "You will have to study harder"—but he hired her.

Veselý laughs as he continues the theme: "Musil was a captivating lecturer, a methodical scientist and ethnographer, but when it came to actually teaching Arabic to his students, he was just too demanding. He would chalk up the Arabic alphabet, tell his students to learn what he had written and then leave. Next session he would carry in Arabic tomes and expect students to read from them. No wonder they complained!"

With his first works published, Musil's reputation grew beyond German-speaking continental Europe. He was now recognized as an accomplished explorer, geographer, ethnographer, scientific observer and cartographer. Recognition enabled him to continue to cultivate as patrons an assortment of institutions, intellectuals and luminaries, Catholic clerics, military officials of the Austro-Hungarian establishment and aristocrats of both Europe and the desert.

At 40, he embarked in 1908 on his second phase of exploration. Over the next decade, five journeys would take him into deserts from the Tigris to settled Syria, east to Baghdad and into

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Musil's reputation is enthusiastically promoted in Vyskov by Jana Štelclová, MD, a daughter of Musil's niece Zita Musilová Štelclová. In the town's charming square, the tourist office's window displays an announcement of Dr. Štelclová's public lecture on her great-uncle, to be held in the library as part of the town's annual "Alois Musil Days." It is



easy to find her clinic: Three display windows fronting the square are filled with books, photographs, curios and memorabilia associated with Musil's life, works and desert travels.

"I started to give lectures on Alois Musil once our country opened up after the [1989] fall of communism. I had all this display space, and as I can't advertise my medical practice, I decided in 1996, after the death of my mother [Musil's niece], to showcase his life," explains Štelclová, neatly dressed in her medical whites.

She describes her great-uncle as a modest man. "The pursuit of scientific knowledge, research and writing was his focus, rather than a career. In his books he rarely writes about himself. He leaves personal thoughts mainly to his private letters, and it's here his true character shows," she says, adding that she also learned about his personality from her mother, who was in her 20s when Musil died. He "kept his problems to himself. But wherever he was, he was always willing to help others."

the northern parts of Najd and the Hijaz in what is now Saudi Arabia. Many of the areas were cartographic blanks, never before traversed by occidental explorers.

With a surveying assistant, Rudolf Thomasberger of the Military Geographical Institute of Vienna, Musil sought out the Ruwala tribe in its often-contested domains that now sprawled across the boundaries of emerging states. Just as in his first series of journeys, when he cultivated the friendship and support of the Bani Sakhr, Musil now gained the trust of the Ruwala paramount chief—Prince Nuri ibn Hazza ibn Sha'lan—and formed a friendship that would endure a lifetime and win him the honorary title "Shaykh Musa al-Ruwayli."

During his journey in the winter of 1909, Musil accompanied the migrating Ruwala under Ibn Sha'lan. "A strange dispensation of Allah," Musil commented, "for a Bedouin prince to be riding beside a Czech at the head of a big tribe!" He later wrote that, when he reminded the prince of this, he received Ibn Sha'lan's reply: "Allah has willed it. I never thought I should make friends with a man whose blood is not mine. Do not forget me, Musa, when you ride at the head of your tribe!"

Musil did not forget. The last and crowning title in his series of six English-language volumes, *Oriental Exploration and Studies*, is *The Manners and Customs of the Ruwala Bedouins*. In his six-paragraph preface to the 712-page ethnography, Musil thanks Ibn Sha'lan alongside barons, archbishops and professors.

Despite his own responsibilities for the welfare of his community, Ibn Sha'lan showed remarkable patience toward Musil's constant photographing, surveying and notetaking, and his penchant for spending days writing in his tent, which more than once delayed the tribe's migration. Musil described how, one evening in the prince's tent, dining on hares coursed by a saluki and killed by his falcon, Ibn Sha'lan, in the customary manner, tossed Musil the best pieces of meat. Musil wrote: "When I urged him not to forget himself since he, as our head, must keep himself strong in order to take care of us all, he replied that he cared most for his best freebooter, that is, his brother Musa. He called my scientific expeditions 'raids.'" Since raiding was a favored sport among the Ruwala, the comment revealed both Ibn Sha'lan's wit and his tolerance toward what likely appeared to him to be Musil's noble yet obsessive quest.

Maps were a major fruit of Musil's "raids"—sketch maps, horizon profiles and larger folding maps separately cased are the distillate of his tireless topographical investigations. He and Thomasberger deployed their equipment at regular intervals to establish latitude and to survey from vantage points. Then, to fill in the detail of areas not covered on the ground, Musil would interview guides and those familiar with the territory, crosschecking so as not to rely solely on a single informant. (See "Equipment and Observation," page 11.)

In the desert, Musil was never far from danger, and he was forthright with his companions. Challenged by a youthful chief famous for courage as to whether he had fears rambling alone in the desert, Musil answered, in the presence of other chiefs, "What is fear, O Mamduh? What is the unknown desert? I was roaming through it on a camel's back when you were being carried through it in a saddlebag." The face of his youthful interrogator flushed and he retreated, recalled Musil, explaining for the reader that young boys rode in saddlebags until they were old enough to sit on a camel. Later, Ibn Sha'lan would recognize Musil's courage with lines in an ode composed in his honor:

... a hero who fears not vast deserts

Who is to carry word to countries far and distant

After his adventures with the Ruwala, Musil returned to Europe and took up a professorship at the University of Vienna. But he was soon back in the camel saddle, making good use of his desert connections in what became the third phase of his travels. He set out in 1910 under Ottoman authority to focus on geological and hydrological surveys east of the Jordan River and along the Hijaz Railway. Two years later, in 1912, he again set off from Austria to Mesopotamia, ostensibly on a grand tour and hunting expedition, accompanied by Prince Sixtus Bourbon-Parma, whose sister Zita was later to become the wife of Emperor Charles, the last ruler of the Hapsburg Empire. Sixtus made Musil an honorary general, and on this trip they were in fact searching for mineral deposits and other resources in connection with a planned railroad link from Berlin to Basra. Back in Vienna, Sixtus confessed that he had traveled into the desert with Musil as a prince, but returned as a man. For Musil, friendship with Sixtus became another deeply personal connection: Musil's niece—mother of Jana Štelclová—was named Zita, after Sixtus's sister.

As World War I broke out in 1914, Musil became increasingly embroiled in his sponsors' foreign-policy interests. That year, at the request of Emperor Franz Josef, he undertook a diplomatic mission to Arabia. In 1917, he made his last expedition to Turkey, Asia Minor, Syria and



In 1918, Musil returned to his native village of Rychtářov, to a house he named "Villa Musa," which remained his home until 1938.

Palestine with Archduke Hubert Salvator, a medical doctor and cavalry general in the Imperial Austro-Hungarian Army. Their official purpose was to inspect field medical units and check on the safety of Austro-Hungarian citizens in Ottoman territories. But with the imminent collapse of both the Hapsburg and the Ottoman Empires, there are differing interpretations of Musil's role: One is that he went to dissuade Arab tribes from fighting against the Ottoman occupation; another, more nuanced, view is that he sought to strengthen the Austrian position within the Ottoman provinces as the Turks shed territory and to actually encourage the Arabs in their uprising against the Ottoman occupation (famously aided in the field by T. E. Lawrence). His loyalty, it seemed, was to neither the Germans nor the Ottomans, but to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and specifically to the Hapsburgs.

Although these efforts proved futile, given the outcome of World War I, Kopráček asserts that Musil was ahead of his time, because in addition to being "a tireless driving force in encouraging commercial ties," he was committed to "developing relationships and cultural links between the West and the Arabs based on trust and mutual respect." This, he maintains, was "very farsighted."

In 1918, his desert journeys over, Musil left Vienna, opting for citizenship in the new Czechoslovakia, and with it a new post as professor of Oriental studies and Arabic in the department of philosophy at Charles University, where Veselý and Kopráček work today.

There followed 25 years of prodigious scholarly output, drawing on his journeys as well as Arabic literature and western scholars. Musil made trips to America (see "The American Connection," page 13) to prepare his books in English. It was during this time that he wrote his popular adventure titles in Czech, as well as a scholarly series dealing with the national awakening in the new Arab states. All his writings show a strong anticolonial stance and support for genuine Arab independence and autarky.

By 1938, the area around Musil's home, "Villa Musa," in Rychtářov was occupied by German troops. Musil retired from academia, left his country home and relocated to a small farm near Otrby. There he remained largely secluded, absorbed in studies, writing and tending his smallholding.

"He particularly loved fruit trees and beekeeping," says Štelclová, who, like her great-uncle, spends time gardening when not in her practice or preparing her lectures. "On all his journeys

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PETER HARRIGAN (2)



The Academic Society of Alois Musil was established in 2008, and in April of this year, a plaque was erected (above) on the house in Otrby, near Prague, where Musil spent his last days in 1944. Below right: Few of Musil's belongings survive from his desert journeys, but among the few is his treasured camel saddle, displayed in the Alois Musil Hall at the Vyškov Museum.

He carefully observed desert plants, collected botanical specimens and was concerned about problems of desertification. In his later years he wrote regularly on farming in the Czech agricultural press."

Musil's secretary, Anna Beclová, tracked all the books, journal and newspaper articles and maps that he published, as Musil kept writing until his death. In Beclová's 50-page list of his publications, running from 1896 to 1944, only 1919 lacks an entry: a brief period immediately following the founding of the Republic of Czechoslovakia in October 1918.

Today, nearly 66 years after his death, with attention focused on dialogue between the West and the Arab world, there is new interest in the legacy and work of Alois Musil. In July 2008, Abdullah Al-Askar, professor of history at King Saud University in Riyadh, presented a paper on Musil and cross-cultural understanding in which he argued that Musil should be given greater prominence as a role model for positive dialogue between nations. "Those around him did not have to be replicas of himself and his society before he could see, recognize, talk and be at ease with them," says Al-Askar, who is also a member of the Saudi Majlis al-Shura (Consultative Council). "He wanted what was good for them—self-determination and modernization—first and foremost if not exclusively."

Garth Fowden, author and researcher at the Institute of Greek and Roman Antiquity in Athens, offers another modern perspective in his recent account of research at Qasr 'Amra: "Born a Moravian Czech, and always aware of belonging to a subject people, [Musil] was able to see himself as a devoted Austrian or, once the Austro-Hungarian Empire broke up, a loyal citizen of Czechoslovakia—but above all, and always, as an Arab," he wrote. "And an Arab, for Musil, was one who lived in everyday communion with the realities of human existence, from the struggle for survival in a hard land to the intuition, in the desert's abstract landscape, of God's simplicity."

To Al-Askar this makes Musil not just a "prolific intellectual" to be admired in one of history's spotlights, but a man whose work and attitudes are "of immediate relevance today and into our futures."



Peter Harrigan

(harrigan@fastmail.fm) is a visiting researcher for the "Maritime Ethnography of the

Arabian Gulf and Red Sea" project at the Institute of Islamic and Arab Affairs at Exeter University. For this article, he visited Prague and Moravia in the Czech Republic as well as Jordan, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, remarking that "even using motorized transport, following Musil's 21,000 kilometers of saddleback desert travel would be next to impossible."

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

Ruwala Bedouins: M/J 80, N/D 80, J/A 81
Qasr 'Amra: J/A 80, S/O 90
Excerpt from *In the Arabian Desert*: S/O 67
Charles Crane: M/J 84, J/F 99, M/J 04
Charles Chaillé-Long: N/D 78

For Further Reading:

Oriental Exploration and Studies, Vols. 1-6
Alois Musil. 1926-28, American Geographical Society.
In the Arabian Desert. Alois Musil, abridged by Katherine McGiffert Wright. 1930, Horace Liveright.
"Musil's Fairy Tale Castle" in Qusayr Amra: Art and the Umayyad Elites in Late Antique Syria. Garth Fowden. 2004, University of California Press.

Vyškov Museum: www.muzeum-vyskovska.cz/
Jana Štelclová: www.mudrstelclova.eu/

VLADIMÍR KOTULÁN (2)



Six Decades 2010

Gregorian and Hijri Calendars

Six Decades 2010: *Aramco World*/Saudi Aramco World 1949 – 2009



The story of *Aramco World*—predecessor publication of *Saudi Aramco World*—begins in November 1949 in New York, at Aramco's headquarters, then at 505 Park Avenue. The company was 16 years old; World War II had been over for four years. In Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, oil production was soaring to 40 times its wartime levels. To the Americans, "it was as if a new frontier were opening: Seemingly unlimited resources were being discovered in an unknown land," wrote former *Aramco World* assistant editor Bill Tracy. "Following so closely the horror of two World Wars, the boom was exhilarating, easily understood as a sign of a brighter future."

The company had grown to more than 1000 employees, and every year, more and more of them were moving to work in Dhahran. Before departure, each new employee received a handbook containing not only the company's rules, but also advice to help bridge what Tracy called "the natural but enormous cultural gaps" between America and Saudi Arabia. As the workforce grew, in 1949 Aramco's executives launched a newsletter that, in its opening paragraph, announced its intention to "break down

"Preference for cooperation and ... deep respect for Saudi Arabia's heritage marked Aramco's philosophical break with an era of one-sided resource exploitation in the Middle East."

William Tracy, "*Aramco World Turns 50*," Nov/Dec 1999

walls of isolation so that our people in America will be helped to see beyond their immediate surroundings."

But that first issue lacked something essential—a name on the front page. The winner of the naming contest turned out to be the college-sophomore daughter of Aramco comptroller Bill Trust. Today, Anne Trust Daly is a retired middle-school teacher and mother of five grown children.

"My dad had come home and said that the in-house paper was going to be published and needed some names. And he said, 'If you are interested, it is a fifty-dollar prize.' Well, of course, I was in school, and that sounded really quite good," she recalls from her home in Connecticut. Until this year, when *Saudi Aramco World* contacted her, she had lost touch with the magazine she named. "I'm very impressed with it, and when I was teaching, it would have been a wonderful addition to the information we had in the classroom. At the time, we had nothing to compare with it." ☪



Far left: In this photo published in January 1950—the date of the first issue to carry the name *Aramco World*—Anne Trust receives her \$50 prize from Aramco president William F. Moore. In college and on a tight schedule, "I didn't even consider asking to leave class five minutes early," she recalls. "I had to really tear down there. I was a couple minutes late, and my father was very upset because the president was waiting." Listen to Anne Daly's story at www.saudiaramcoworld.com.



CARL VON HOFFMAN; OWEN OXLEY

Volume 1, No. 1



November 1, 1949

FELLOW EMPLOYEES

For a long time we have wanted a publication for and about the men and women of Aramco's New York and San Francisco offices. This is our first, modest effort in that direction.

Aramco operates over vast distances, making more difficult a proper exchange of news, ideas and information. In the United States we have offices in cities separated by the breadth of the continent. Our oil operations are in far away Saudi Arabia. There are affiliates in dozens of cities throughout the world. We wish to break down walls of isolation so that our people here in America will be helped to see beyond their immediate surroundings, know more of what is going on in other departments and in other centers of company activity.

We hope this publication will enable us to get better acquainted with ourselves.

Cordially,

NAME CONTEST

This publication needs a name. There are 50 bright, new silver dollars for the one who produces the right idea. A contest to select a name will close one month from today. It is open to all employees and their families. The judging will be by a representative committee.

The name should be short. It ought to be descriptive. It would be nice if it were tied into some phase of what we do or where or who we are. We have thought of "Double A", from the company insignia, but somehow that doesn't strike us as quite good enough.

Write your choice of a name on plain paper with your own name and department clearly indicated, and address the envelope to "Contest Manager, Double A." Drop the contribution in the "out" box and the Mail Room will send it on.

Also if you wish to write in any reaction—questions, kicks or comments—send us a note addressed to "Editor, Double A," and follow the same procedure. We guarantee it will be read. If signed, we will acknowledge it. If suggestions are practicable, we'll adopt them.

OIL PRODUCTION

Dhahran reports an average oil production, during September, of 412,223 barrels per day, with the refinery averaging 121,915 barrels for the same period. Saudi Arabia is now the 3th ranking oil-producing country of the world.

BOWLING

Aramco bowlers got off to a flying start a few weeks ago with over a hundred fellows and girls heaving big wooden balls at little wooden sticks. About \$200 is available for individual prizes or an after-season shindig, in addition to the team trophy won last year by Producing.

The Bowling Committee is headed by Personnel's Drew Herbert, Treasury's Ray Cox is V. P., and Comptroller's John Bowler (aptly enough) is Secretary-Treasurer. General Services' Genevieve Deas and P and T's Dick Gollan complete the Committee which has arranged for Tuesday and Wednesday after-work competition.

The girl captains are: Ginny Zinns for General Services; Faith Ludlow for Comptrollers; Julia Kober for Law, Aviation and Government Relations; Betty Calvert for P and T; Helen Bard for Mgt's; Marilyn Freund for Personnel No. 1; Marge Bergman for Personnel No. 2; and Connie Bridgeman for Personnel No. 3.

The fellows have Chet Kemp to captain Producing; J. Geideman for Purchasing, Aviation and Management; Don Padgett for General Services, J. Bowler for Comptrollers; Drew Herbert for Personnel No. 1; George Shaughnessy for Personnel No. 2; T. Gitchell for Personnel No. 3 and Milt Williams for Personnel No. 4.

Team standings will be announced next month.

Patterns of Moon, Patterns of Sun

WRITTEN BY PAUL LUNDE

The *hijri* calendar

In AD 638, six years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Islam's second caliph 'Umar recognized the necessity of a calendar to govern the affairs of the Muslims. This was first of all a practical matter. Correspondence with military and civilian officials in the newly conquered lands had to be dated. But Persia used a different calendar from Syria, where the caliphate was based; Egypt used yet another. Each of these calendars had a different starting point, or epoch. The Sasanids, the ruling dynasty of Persia, used June 16, AD 632, the date of the accession of the last Sasanid monarch, Yazdagird III. Syria, which until the Muslim conquest was part of the Byzantine Empire, used a form of the Roman "Julian" calendar, with an epoch of October 1, 312 BC. Egypt used the Coptic calendar, with an epoch of August 29, AD 284. Although all were solar, and hence geared to the seasons and containing 365 days, each also had a different system for periodically adding days to compensate for the fact that the true length of the solar year is not 365 but 365.2422 days.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, various other systems of measuring time had been used. In South Arabia, some calendars apparently were lunar, while others were lunisolar, using months based on the phases of the moon but intercalating days outside the lunar cycle to synchronize the calendar with the seasons. On the eve of Islam, the Himyarites appear to have used a calendar based on the Julian form, but with an epoch of 110 BC. In central Arabia, the course of the year was charted by the position of the stars relative to the horizon at sunset or sunrise, dividing the ecliptic into 28 equal parts corresponding to the location of the moon on each successive night of the month. The names of the months in that calendar have continued in the Islamic calendar to this day and would seem to indicate that, before Islam, some sort of lunisolar calendar was in use, though it is not known to have had an epoch other than memorable local events.

There were two other reasons 'Umar rejected existing solar calendars. The Qur'an, in Chapter 10, Verse 5, states that time should be reckoned by the moon. Not only that, calendars used by the Persians, Syrians and Egyptians were identified with other religions and cultures. He therefore decided to create a calendar specifically for the Muslim community. It would be lunar, and it would have 12 months, each with 29 or 30 days.

This gives the lunar year 354 days, 11 days fewer than the solar year. 'Umar chose as the epoch for the new Muslim calendar the *hijrah*, the emigration of the Prophet Muhammad and 70 Muslims from Makkah to Madinah, where Muslims first attained religious and political autonomy. The *hijrah* thus occurred on 1 Muharram 1 according to the Islamic calendar, which was named "*hijri*" after its epoch.

(This date corresponds to July 16, AD 622 on the Gregorian calendar.) Today in the West, it is customary, when writing *hijri* dates, to use the abbreviation AH, which stands for the Latin *anno hegirae*, "year of the *hijrah*."

Because the Islamic lunar calendar is 11 days shorter than the solar, it is therefore not synchronized to the seasons. Its festivals, which fall on the same days of the same lunar months each year, make the round of the seasons every 33 solar years. This 11-day difference between the lunar and the solar year accounts for the difficulty of converting dates from one system to the other.

The Gregorian calendar

The early calendar of the Roman Empire was lunisolar, containing 355 days divided into 12 months beginning on January 1. To keep it more or less in accord with the actual solar year, a month was added every two years. The system for doing so was complex, and cumulative errors gradually misaligned it with the seasons. By 46 BC, it was some three months out of alignment, and Julius Caesar oversaw its reform. Consulting Greek astronomers in Alexandria, he created a solar calendar in which one day was added to

Though they share 12 lunar cycles—months—per solar year, the *hijri* calendar uses actual moon phases to mark them, whereas the Gregorian calendar adjusts its nearly lunar months to synchronize with the sun.

It is he who made the sun to be a shining glory, and the moon to be a light (of beauty), and measured out stages for her, that ye might know the number of years and the count (of time). —The Qur'an, Chapter 10 ("Yunus"), Verse 5

February every fourth year, effectively compensating for the solar year's length of 365.2422 days. This Julian calendar was used throughout Europe until AD 1582.

In the Middle Ages, the Christian liturgical calendar was grafted onto the Julian one, and the computation of lunar festivals like Easter, which falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox, exercised some of

the best minds in Christendom. The use of the epoch AD 1 dates from the sixth century, but did not become common until the 10th. Because the zero had not yet reached the West from Islamic lands, a year was lost between 1 BC and AD 1.

The Julian year was nonetheless 11 minutes and 14 seconds too long. By the early 16th century, due to the accumulated error, the spring equinox was falling on March 11 rather than

where it should, on March 21. Copernicus, Christophorus Clavius and the physician Aloysius Lilius provided the calculations, and in 1582 Pope Gregory XIII ordered that Thursday, October 4, 1582 would be followed by Friday, October 15, 1582. Most Catholic countries accepted the new "Gregorian" calendar, but it was not adopted in England and the Americas until the 18th century. Its use is now almost universal worldwide. The Gregorian year is nonetheless 25.96 seconds ahead of the solar year, which by the year 4909 will add up to an extra day. ☪

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Converting Dates

The following equations convert roughly from Gregorian to *hijri* and vice versa. However, the results can be slightly misleading: They tell you only the year in which the other calendar's year begins. For example, 2010 Gregorian includes all but the first 14 days of AH 1431, and it includes the first 25 days of AH 1432.

$$\text{Gregorian year} = [(32 \times \text{Hijri year}) \div 33] + 622$$

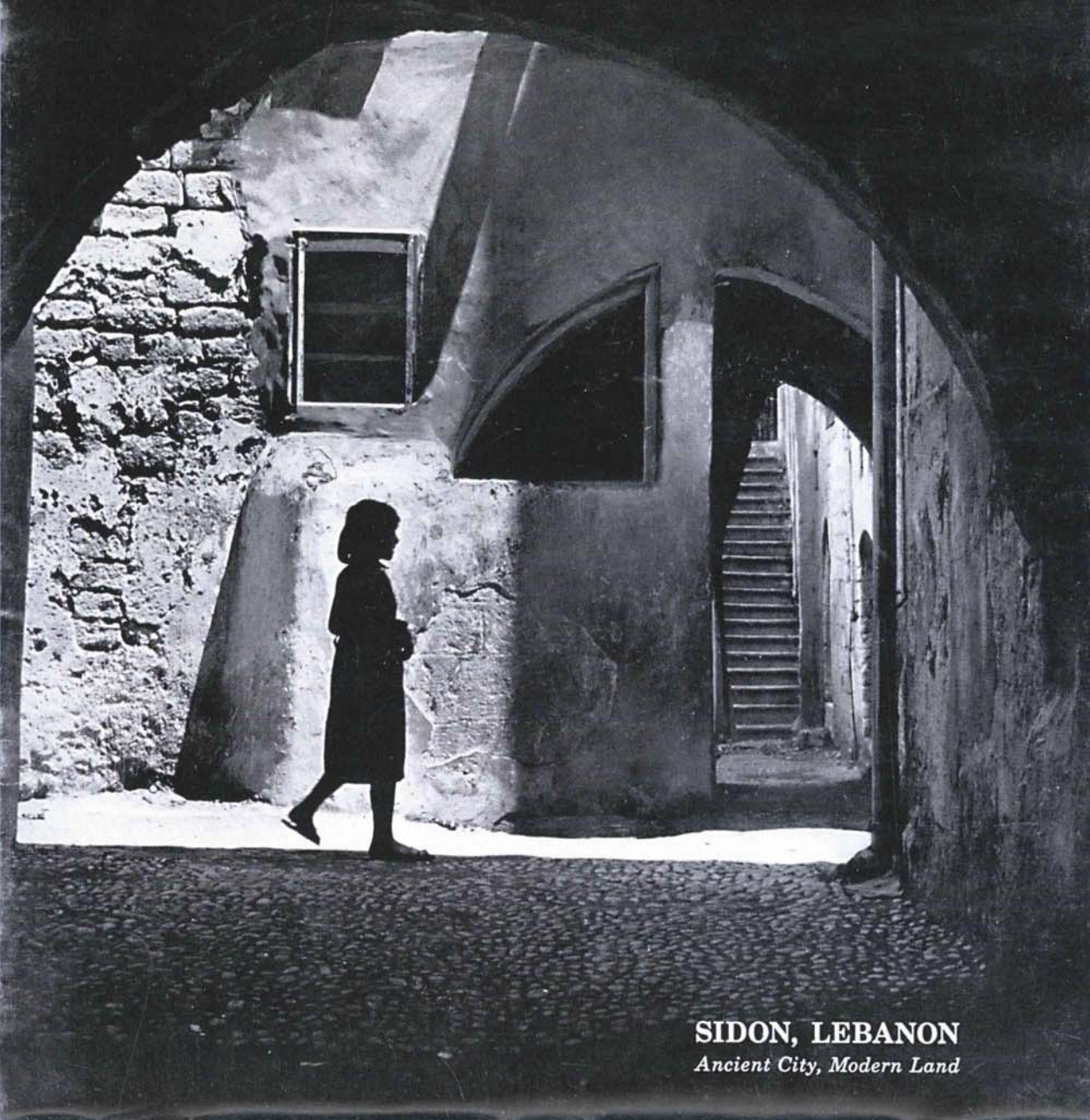
$$\text{Hijri year} = [(\text{Gregorian year} - 622) \times 33] \div 32$$

Alternatively, there are more precise calculators available on the Internet: Try www.rabiah.com/convert/ and www.ori.unizh.ch/hegira.html.

By the early 1950's, Aramco was moving from high hopes to great expectations—and to the realization that a uniquely productive relationship was proving possible between Saudi and expatriate employees. "The Aramco drama shows what happens when two peoples—Arabs and Americans—can work together," the magazine wrote in May 1953. "It is a story of cooperation, mutual understanding and impressive accomplishments against a background of international mistrust [and] antagonism." The newsletter format of *Aramco World* ran until 1952, when the company moved its corporate headquarters to Dhahran and the newsletter expanded into a magazine, though it continued to be published out of New York. Amid mostly company news, the editors commissioned a cultural-affairs column called "Reports from the Field," which later led to the magazine's early feature articles, styled along the lines of *Life*, *Look* and *National Geographic*.

Aramco World

FEBRUARY, 1958



SIDON, LEBANON
Ancient City, Modern Land

"Nobody at the time was thinking in terms of 'cultural diversity.' The Cold War dominated foreign affairs, and even the term 'Third World' was new.... In retrospect, it is remarkable that the foundation of *Aramco World's* inter-cultural approach was so soundly laid so early on."

The teaser for this cover story read: "Sidon, a city of laminated civilizations, is that rare kind of place where you can have your car filled with gasoline at a sparkling new service station while watching archeologists uncover the ruins of an ancient king's stables." Such stories, with their invocation of comfortingly familiar elements, helped employees—and, increasingly, non-Aramco readers—appreciate the richness of history and depth of culture in the unfamiliar places to which their work had taken them. Khalil Abou El-Nasr, who took this photograph, regularly covered Trans-Arabian Pipe Line operations in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. From 1965 until his death in 1977, he photographed 40 articles for the magazine, 10 of them cover stories.

JANUARY
MUHARRAM—SAFAR 1431

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
					1	15
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
30	31					
15	16					

FEBRUARY
SAFAR—RABI' I 1431

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1	2	3	4	5
		17	18	19	20	21
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
27	28					
13	14					

Six Decades 1960's

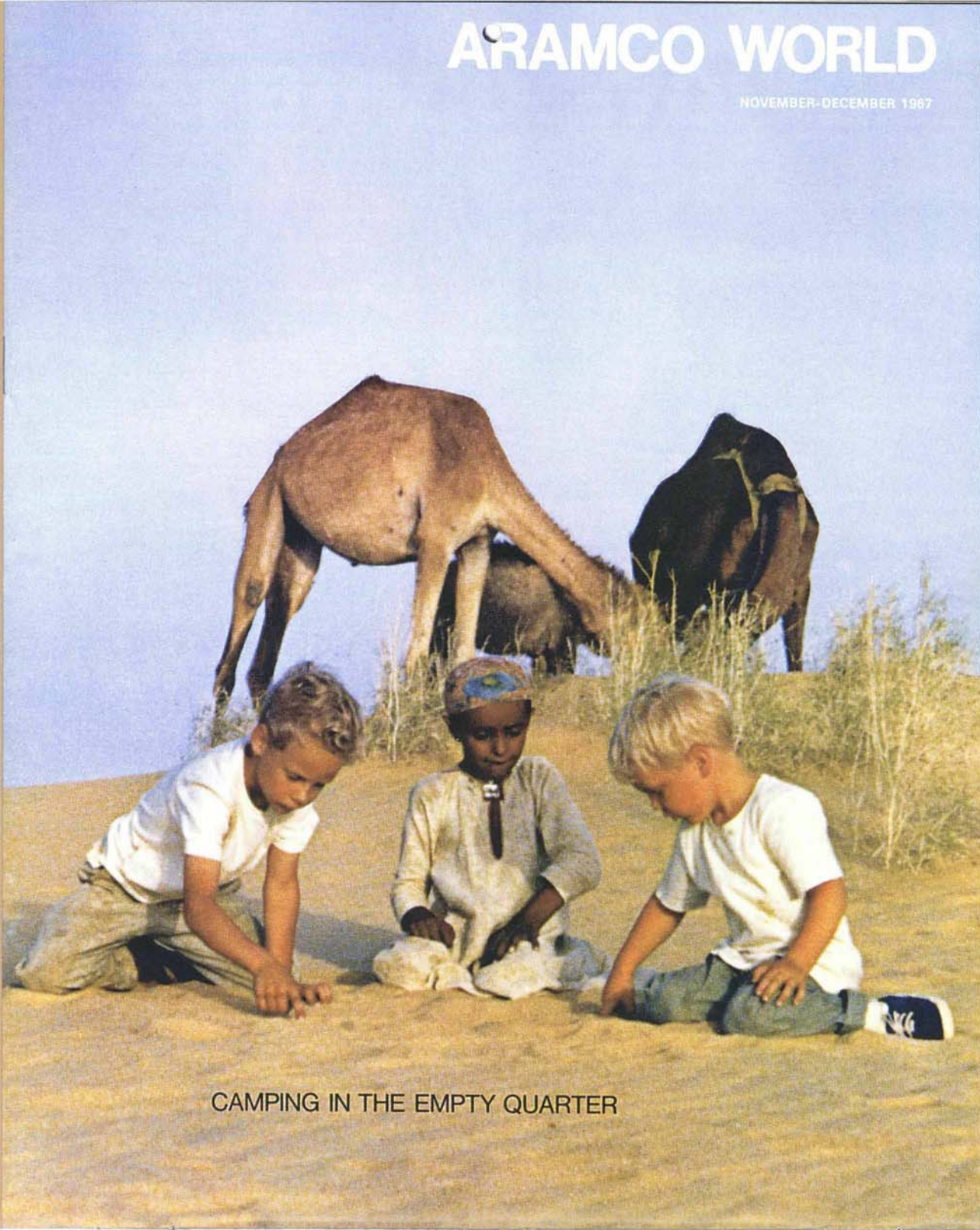
In 1964, the company moved *Aramco World's* offices to Beirut, closer to the heartbeat of the economically booming Middle East and a city brimming with bright reporters, authors, academics and photographers. The company hired as its new editor Paul Hoyer, a news writer who was finishing an international reporting program at Columbia University, to help guide the magazine's new focus on serving a public audience instead of a company one. From this time, the articles reinforced a sense of intercultural relationship by drawing from both interior, indigenous, cultural-insider points of view—with all their pride and affection—as well as exterior, foreign, this-is-all-new-to-me points of view, with all their professional detachment and ability to make broad comparisons. Over the decade, *Aramco World* built a reputation as a source of accurate, positive cultural information, and it developed the editorial approach that remains distinctive today.

ARAMCO WORLD

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1987

"The Middle East was a place where modernity and history mixed at every turn, a place of fascinatingly deep roots and spectacular new, emerging wings."

The caption for this photo reads: "At ages seven and four, Kevin and Riki Mandaville—pictured with a new-found Bedouin friend in this color photograph by Sa'ïd al-Ghamidi—are already learning to love the desert as much as their father, who came to Saudi Arabia at age 13 with his father." As they did for many expatriate families, activities like desert camping brought the Mandavilles in touch with people and places throughout the kingdom, in part thanks to their own and the Saudis' openness to each other. For them and other expatriates, such personal encounters with Saudi culture were deeply formative. In many cases, their adult children and even grandchildren returned to Arabia as "expat" employees in their own right, and today, you can find credits in *Saudi Aramco World's* online index for Kevin and Riki's father, naturalist Jim Mandaville; their uncle, historian Jon Mandaville; and their younger brother Erik.



CAMPING IN THE EMPTY QUARTER

MARCH

RABI' I — RABI' II 1431

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1 15	2 16	3 17	4 18	5 19
6 20	7 21	8 22	9 23	10 24	11 25	12 26
13 27	14 28	15 29	16 30	17 1	18 2	19 3
20 4	21 5	22 6	23 7	24 8	25 9	26 10
27 11	28 12	29 13	30 14	31 15		

APRIL

RABI' II — JUMADA I 1431

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
					1 16	2 17
3 18	4 19	5 20	6 21	7 22	8 23	9 24
Easter						
10 25	11 26	12 27	13 28	14 29	15 1	16 2
17 3	18 4	19 5	20 6	21 7	22 8	23 9
24 10	25 11	26 12	27 13	28 14	29 15	30 16

Six Decades 1970's

From Beirut, the oil-fueled building and economic-development boom was a frequent theme as *Aramco World* covered the rapid changes that swept the Arab world—and deepened and complicated the region’s relationships with the West. The magazine drew heavily on wandering scholars, experienced Middle East news hands and what became a close-knit group of Beirut-based free-lance reporters and photographers, all of whom communicated to the magazine’s readers their ever-unfolding fascination with the region. In 1975, the Lebanese civil war forced *Aramco World* to move, and the company chose The Hague in the Netherlands, base for the subsidiary Aramco Overseas Company. Among those who helped editor Hoyer with the hasty move were regular freelance contributors John Lawton, Paul Lunde and assistant editor Bill Tracy.



“The magazine’s message was not that people are all the same, but that their differences are of mutual interest and their societies interdependent, and that seeking to understand one another is an intrinsically mutually enlightening process.”

In this photo by Nik Wheeler—one of the magazine’s Beirut regulars—ripening grain stripes the floor of Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley. As governments in the region looked at population projections and the limited available agricultural land—only about 20 percent of the Middle East is arable—they teamed up with international experts to introduce new strains and new crops to meet new demands, in the spirit of the “green revolution” then occurring throughout the world. Joseph Fitchett, who later became a Pulitzer-nominated political correspondent for the *International Herald Tribune*, reported in this issue that durum wheats were introduced; corn yields were raised by 70 percent with hybrid strains; ancient millet and sorghum varieties were revived; and new strains of rice, adapted to the region, came into use.

MAY

JUMADA I – JUMADA II 1431

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 17	2 18	3 19	4 20	5 21	6 22	7 23
8 24	9 25	10 26	11 27	12 28	13 29	14 30
15 1	16 2	17 3	18 4	19 5	20 6	21 7
22 8	23 9	24 10	25 11	26 12	27 13	28 14
29 15	30 16	31 17				

JUNE

JUMADA II – RAJAB 1431

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1 18	2 19	3 20	4 21
5 22	6 23	7 24	8 25	9 26	10 27	11 28
12 29	13 1	14 2	15 3	16 4	17 5	18 6
19 7	20 8	21 9	22 10	23 11	24 12	25 13
26 14	27 15	28 16	29 17	30 18		

Six Decades 1980's

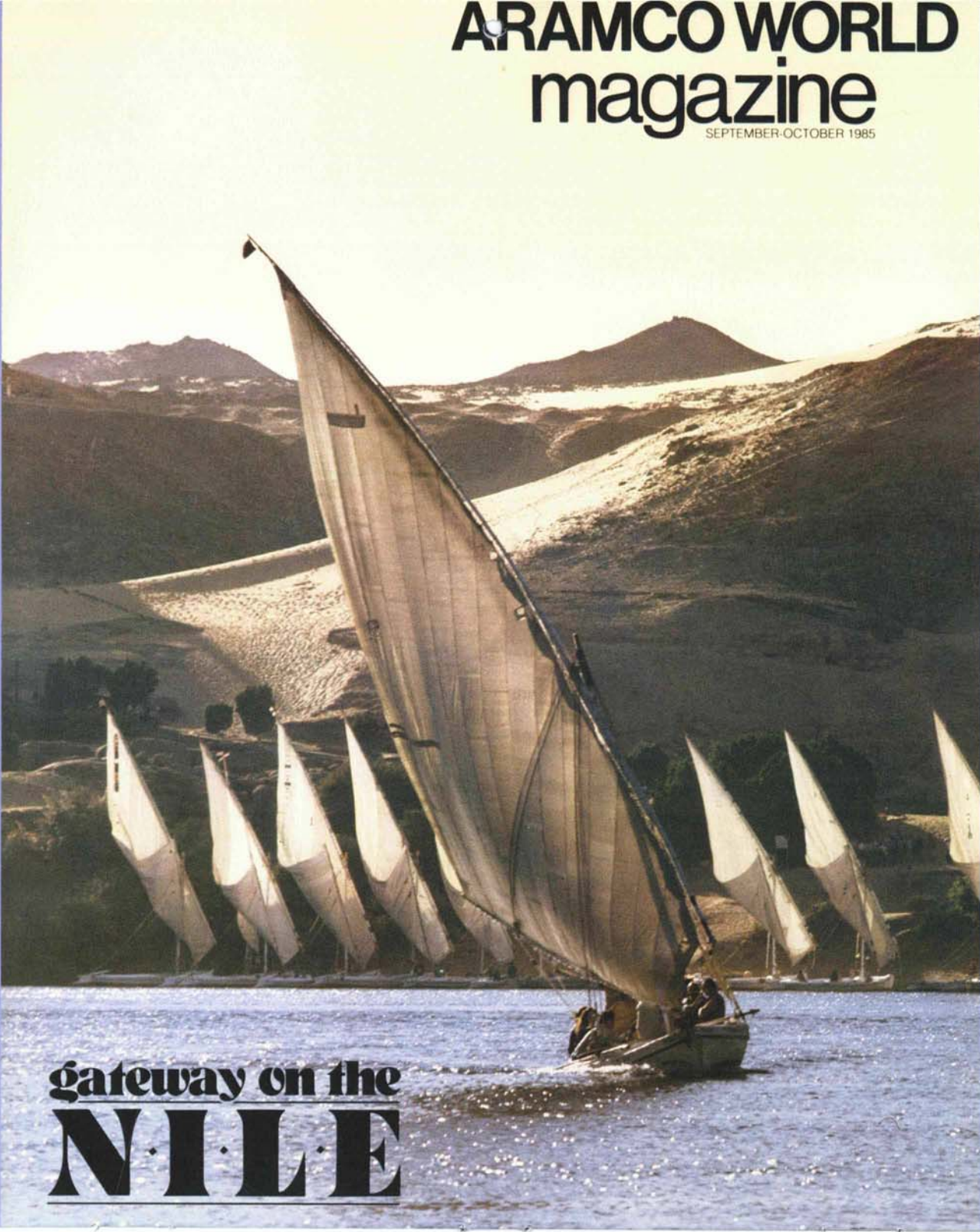
The Europe-based magazine kept its links to the Arab world, thanks to improvements in fax and telephone technologies, and the Amsterdam-London nexus afforded it both a new, wider audience and a deeper pool of free-lance contributors. In 1986, after a 22-year career expressing what Ismail Nawwab, Aramco's manager of public affairs, called "a deep and heartfelt determination to light a candle of understanding that would help illumine the world of Arabs and Islam for the eyes of the English-speaking West," editor Hoyer died. To succeed him, the company tapped Rob Arndt, son of two generations of scholars and linguists with roots in both Germany and Turkey. In the same year, it moved the magazine for a third time, to Houston, where it remains today. As new generations of Saudis rose in the ranks to manage what was now the world's largest oil company, the expatriate workforce declined, and the focus of the magazine turned ever more outward to the public audience, especially to educators in the US.

ARAMCO WORLD magazine

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1985

"By then it was a well-established tradition that *Aramco World* wrote about the oil industry or Aramco itself only when the story was of interest to its general readership."

"A fleet of white-sailed feluccas ferries tourists across the Nile at Aswan, the southernmost city in Egypt and the 'gateway' through which the all-important 'waters of life' flowed out of the Nubian deserts each year to flood and irrigate the Nile Valley." The Nile was just one of the many enduring themes often photographed by John Feeney, a New Zealand-born Canadian filmmaker who had already lived in Cairo for more than two decades when he made this photo. Until his death in 2006, shortly after the American University in Cairo mounted a major retrospective exhibition of his work, he gave both the city he had adopted and the dozens of articles he wrote and photographed for *Aramco World* his minute, loving attention.



JULY

RAJAB — SHA'ABAN 1431

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
					1 19	2 20
3 21	4 22	5 23	6 24	7 25	8 26	9 27
10 28	11 29	12 30	13 1	14 2	15 3	16 4
17 5	18 6	19 7	20 8	21 9	22 10	23 11
24 12	25 13	26 14	27 15	28 16	29 17	30 18
31 19						

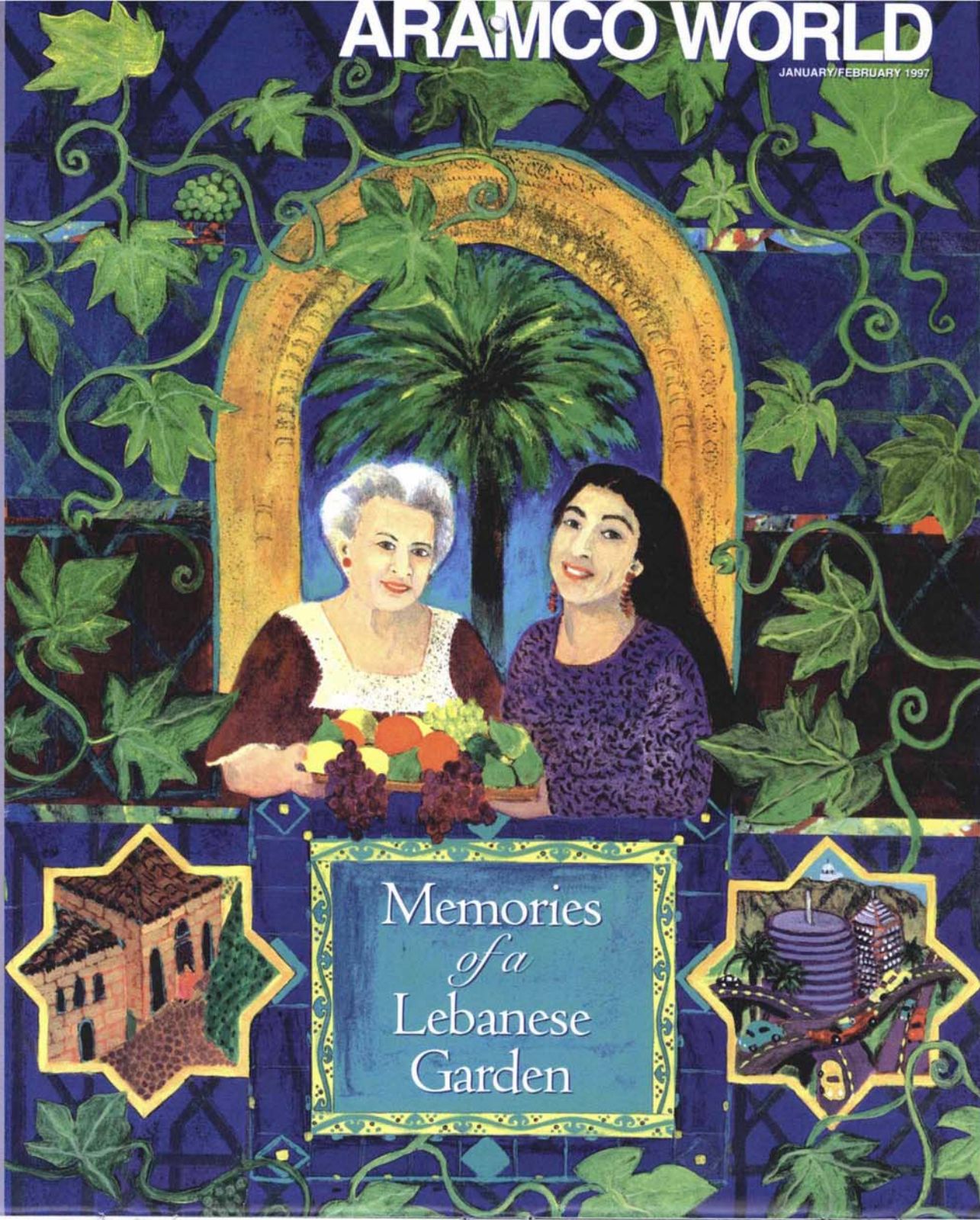
AUGUST

SHA'ABAN — RAMADAN 1431

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1 20	2 21	3 22	4 23	5 24	6 25
7 26	8 27	9 28	10 29	11 1	12 2	13 3
14 4	15 5	16 6	17 7	18 8	19 9	20 10
21 11	22 12	23 13	24 14	25 15	26 16	27 17
28 18	29 19	30 20	31 21			

Six Decades 1990's

As fields of knowledge such as Middle East history, literature and archeology expanded, contributions to *Aramco World's* pages came from increasingly specialized writers, scholars and photographers, broadening and deepening its coverage—notably with a theme issue “The Middle East and the Age of Discovery” published for the Columbus quinentennial in 1992. In 1994, the company contracted for the magazine’s design and printing near its Houston base, and technological advances in those fields helped boost the magazine toward the high visual standards that remain one of its signatures today. Keeping pace with readers’ own growing sophistication, articles became more varied in length, topic and complexity, aided near the end of the decade by the advent of the Internet. Marking its 50th anniversary in 1999, the magazine produced a traveling photo exhibit, “Bridging East & West,” which hung in several dozen venues over the years that followed, and today can be viewed online.



“The degree of public understanding that would constitute a favorable business climate, although greater than in the past, was still lacking in many respects.”

Lebanese-American artist and cook Linda Sawaya placed a portrait of herself and her mother, Alice Sawaya, in the center of a fruitful “garden” that evokes the living culinary tradition she inherited from her family. Her story reached from the cedars of her grandmother’s native village of Douma to the palms of her own native Los Angeles—a family arc common to ever-growing populations of immigrants from Arab and Muslim countries to Europe and the Americas. Her illustrations in this issue used collage and photographic transfers overlaid with acrylic paints. Later, she incorporated them into her cookbook, *Alice’s Kitchen*.

SEPTEMBER

RAMADAN — SHAWWAL 1431

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1 22	2 23	3 24
4 25	5 26	6 27	7 28	8 29	9 30	10 1
11 2	12 3	13 4	14 5	15 6	16 7	17 8
18 9	19 10	20 11	21 12	22 13	23 14	24 15
25 16	26 17	27 18	28 19	29 20	30 21	

OCTOBER

SHAWWAL — DHU AL-QA'DAH 1431

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
						1 22
2 23	3 24	4 25	5 26	6 27	7 28	8 29
9 1	10 2	11 3	12 4	13 5	14 6	15 7
16 8	17 9	18 10	19 11	20 12	21 13	22 14
23 15	24 16	25 17	26 18	27 19	28 20	29 21
30 22	31 23					

Six Decades 2000's

With the July/August 2000 issue, the magazine received a new name and a new design: The *Aramco World* nameplate, set in Helvetica Bold in the upper right-hand corner of the cover since 1964, had become an anachronism for a company that since 1988 had carried the name Saudi Aramco. The decade brought compilation issues, issues in a variety of other languages for international events and unprecedented interest from educators—which led to the introduction of the magazine's "Classroom Guide" department. Over this "digital decade," *Saudi Aramco World* first became available on the Internet in 2001 with PDF scans at www.saudiaramco.com; at the end of 2002, it launched its 40,000-image, free photo archive at www.photoarchive.saudiaramcoworld.com. The next year brought the first Web edition, as well as the full-text archive of back issues indexed at www.saudiaramcoworld.com. Web publishing more than doubled the number of the magazine's readers to roughly half a million worldwide, six times a year, and the Web edition continues the print edition's award-winning traditions.

Saudi Aramco world



The Soul of KAZAKHSTAN

"As interest in Arab cultures and Islam soared after the horrors of 9/11 and the wars that followed, *Saudi Aramco World* was no longer alone as an intercultural voice, yet its point of view—neither entirely western nor entirely Arab—remains unique."

Giving fresh life to the artistic syncretism so characteristic of Kazakhstan and the other lands of Central Asia, Zakiya Akai-Kyzy—a practicing attorney as well as a master embroiderer—patterned her wall hanging, known as a *tuskiiz*, with both traditional Kazakh motifs and designs she saw during a sojourn in Mongolia. From the earliest times, the vitality of trans-continental trade through Kazakhstan and other lands of Central Asia has given its textile artists access to wide ranges of dyes, techniques and stylistic influences. Like many of the magazine's current free-lance contributors, photographer Wayne Eastep, who took this cover shot, has extensive experience in the Muslim world and knows that personal encounters with cultures beyond one's own can be deeply formative experiences.

NOVEMBER

DHU AL-QA'DAH – DHU AL-HIJJAH 1431

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1 24	2 25	3 26	4 27	5 28
6 29	7 1	8 2	9 3	10 4	11 5	12 6
13 7	14 8	15 9	16 10	17 11	18 12	19 13
ʿĪd al-Adha						
20 14	21 15	22 16	23 17	24 18	25 19	26 20
27 21	28 22	29 23	30 24			

DECEMBER

DHU AL-HIJJAH 1431 – MUHARRAM 1432

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1 25	2 26	3 27
4 28	5 29	6 30	7 1	8 2	9 3	10 4
11 5	12 6	13 7	14 8	15 9	16 10	17 11
18 12	19 13	20 14	21 15	22 16	23 17	24 18
25 19	26 20	27 21	28 22	29 23	30 24	31 25

Christmas



A TRAIL OF PROMISE

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY
NORBERT SCHILLER

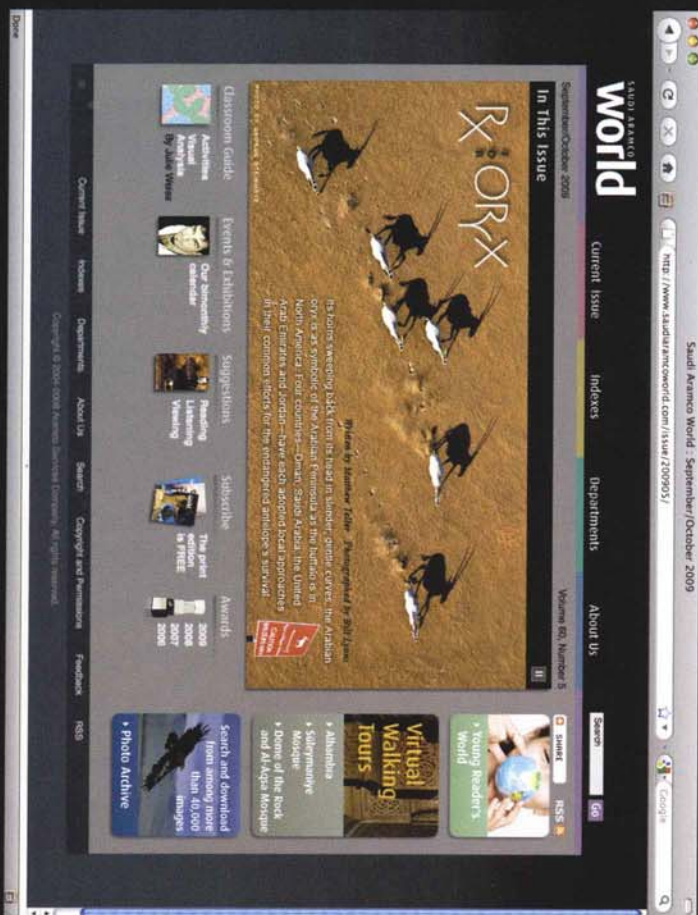


Top: Hikers ascend a ridge near Mt. Lebanon and the Horsh Ehdan Nature Reserve in northern Lebanon. Above: Before setting out on the second of the LMT's 26 stages, the core walk-through team enjoys breakfast in a family-run guest house in the village of Tashea.

For centuries, Lebanon has lured travelers of all kinds, from literary icons to artists and photographers, and the country's mountain ranges have proved especially appealing. The French poet Alphonse de Lamartine, who toured the region between 1832 and 1833, wrote so eloquently about it that there is at least one valley and one spectacular cedar tree in the Chouf Mountains that bear his name. Lebanon also left a deep impression on 19th-century artists David Roberts and William Henry Bartlett, as well as photographers Felix Bonfils and Frances Frith, all of whom produced volumes showcasing the land, its people and its antiquities.

Saudi Aramco World regards "the Muslim world"—an increasingly blurry category—as part of a global "us," not as a "them." Our writers and photographers are in sympathy with their subjects and enthusiastic about them, while simultaneously maintaining a professional critical detachment toward them. Because we do not assume that our readers are either familiar with this point of view or already interested in our subject matter, it is up to our contributors to attract the readers' attention and arouse their interest. The best articles take into account a reader's culturally exterior point of view and bring him or her toward an understanding of an interior angle on the subject. How do the people who live in or work with the place or culture or topic at hand view their history, their experience? Is that similar to, or different from, how outsiders see it? Our contributors show aspects of the subject that casual outside observers might miss. They go beyond the visible and the superficial to make connections, point out implications, give reasons or make clear the historical background using credible—often local—sources.

—Guidelines for Contributors



www.saudiaramcoworld.com

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From Saudi Arabia, send request to Public Relations, Saudi Aramco, Box 5000, Dhahran 31311; from all other countries, send a signed and dated request by mail to *Saudi Aramco World*, PO Box 2106, Houston, Texas 77252, USA, by e-mail to saworld@aramcoservices.com or by fax to +1 (713) 432-5536. No subscription is required to read the online edition at www.saudiaramcoworld.com.

The texts of all back issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World* can be found on our Web site, www.saudiaramcoworld.com, where they are fully indexed, searchable and downloadable. Articles from issues since the end of 2003 include photographs. In addition, many photographs from past issues are available at www.photoarchive.saudiaramcoworld.com, and licensing for approved uses is royalty-free.

A searchable, indexed reference disk containing PDF scans of all print-edition articles, from 1950 to 2007, is also available upon request, without charge, from the addresses above.



www.aramcoservices.com
www.saudiaramco.com



As a photographer, I too find endless visual sources of inspiration in these majestic mountains. It could be an ancient cedar rising beneath a snow-capped summit or a shepherd leading his goats through mist along a rocky plateau, a canopy of cedars or a breathtaking view of the Mediterranean on the horizon.

Last April, I was invited to be part of a team of six hikers to make the inaugural walk-through of the Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT), the first long-distance hiking trail in an Arab country. ("Long distance" is defined as more than 320 kilometers, or 200 miles.) Beginning in the north at Al Qbaiyat, the LMT winds 440 kilometers (272 mi) along the spine of the country, summiting peaks, traversing gorges and sweeping across plains to the southern town of Marjayoun.

The LMT is the brainchild of Joseph Karam, who says he was inspired by childhood walks with his father near his family's ancestral mountain home in Baskinta. Later, when Karam moved to Boston to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he became intrigued by the 3500-kilometer (2200-mi) Appalachian Trail, which runs from Georgia to Maine.

It was in 2002, he says, that "it struck me that the mountains of Lebanon, with their amazing natural and cultural heritage, could be the home of a wonderful long-distance hiking trail." Three years later, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded \$3.3 million to Karam's company, ECODIT—in spite of being, as he says, "somewhat skeptical ... about our ability to deliver on our promises."

But deliver they did, says Karam, "despite a very difficult situation" that included military action in the country in 2006. Community organizations, tour operators, municipalities and government ministries for tourism and the environment all contributed to the success, he says.

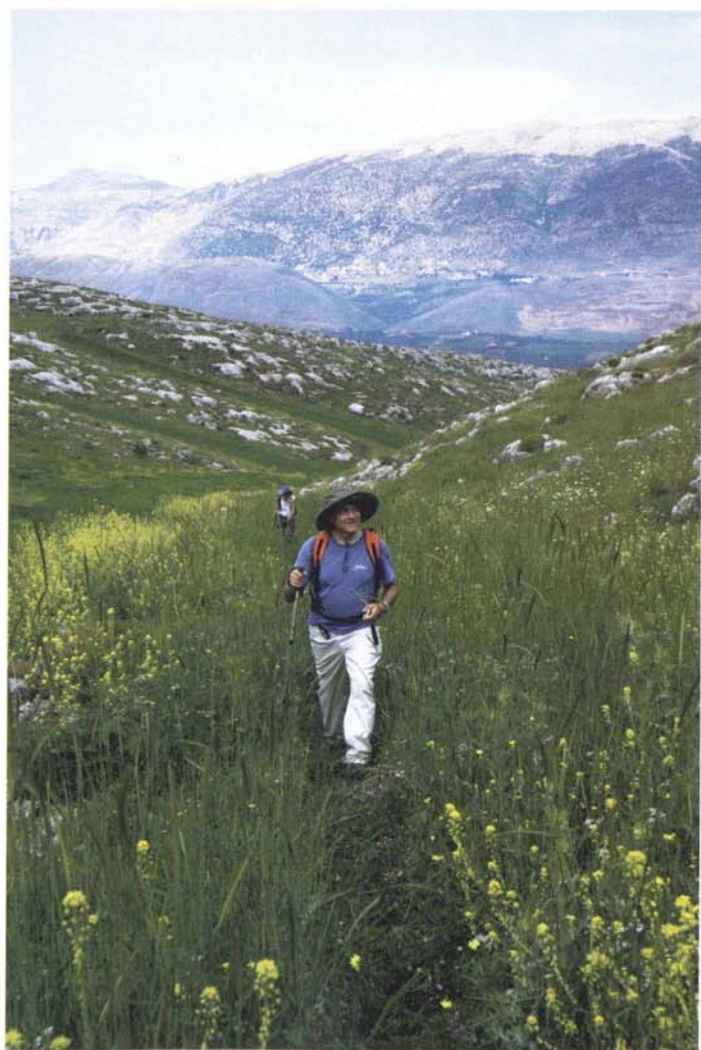
The LMT is divided into 26 segments. Each is a day's hike, between 12 and 24 kilometers (7½–15 mi) long, along combinations of shepherd paths, existing trails, dirt roads and irrigation canals. Though the trail's net elevation change is only 180 meters (600') from one end to the other, hikers climb a total of 22,000 meters (72,000')—roughly 2½ times the height of Mount Everest—and pass through 75 towns and villages if they traverse its full length. Because signage is still rudimentary in places, hikers are encouraged to use local guides, and family-run guest houses, hotels, monasteries and campgrounds offer accommodation at every stage. This, Karam explains, makes the LMT a cultural trail, too: It promotes local cuisines, handicrafts and festivals. The project's hope is that, with economic benefits from LMT-related tourism, villagers will take the initiative to maintain the trail and care for natural surroundings and historical monuments.

Standing at the northern trailhead with my pack on my back, I felt at once burdened and exhilarated by the thought that, for the next 30 days, this path, and my companions, would be my life.

The northern segments pass first through the sparsely inhabited Akkar region and up through the protected forest of the Qammoua

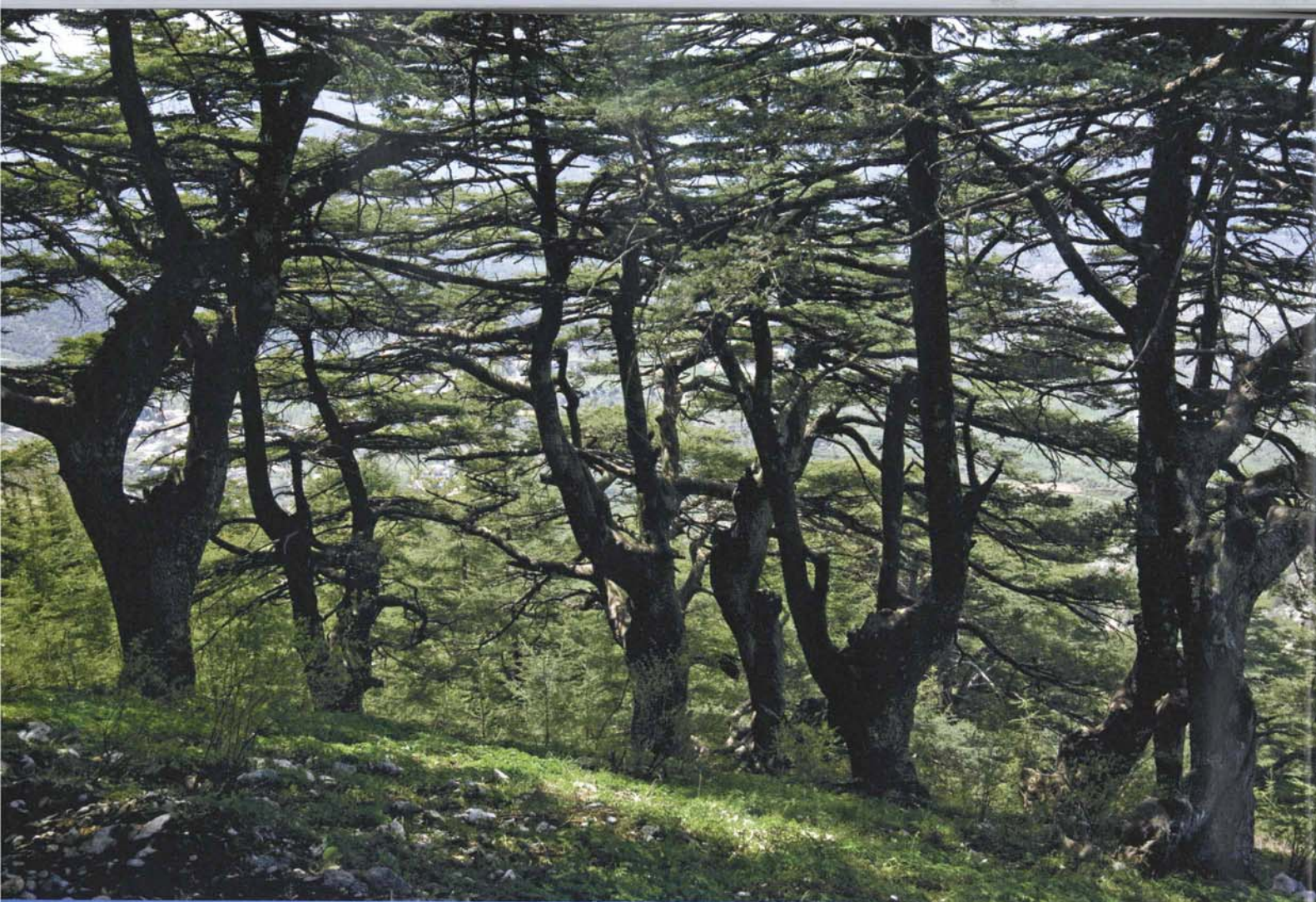
Plateau to the base of the tallest peak in Lebanon, 3083-meter (9900') Qurnat al-Sawda. For five days we hiked through rugged, breathtaking scenery, and each evening we stayed with a Muslim family that received us warmly, often with solar-heated hot water for showers, good food and comfortable beds. The biggest obstacles were steep terrain covered in pine trees, dense brush and frigid, knee-deep rivers.

On the sixth day, we reached the Horsh Ehden Nature Reserve with its protected forest of Lebanon cedars (*Cedrus libani*) and Cilician fir (*Apies cilica*). The towns in this area, inhabited mostly by Maronite Christians, have a history of catering to travelers, pilgrims and sports enthusiasts. The areas around Ehden, Bcharre and Laqlouq are well known for



Right: LMT founder Joseph Karam says he was inspired by both childhood walks near his native Baskinta and his experiences on the Appalachian Trail in the eastern US. Also from Baskinta is mountain guide and elementary-school teacher Carole Akel, top, who introduces hikers to the 24-kilometer (15-mi) Baskinta Literary Trail, which connects to the LMT. Opposite, upper: The core team enjoys a view near Aqoura, and, lower, above the village of Falougha, goats graze along the LMT, which follows centuries-old shepherd paths along more than 90 percent of its length.





MAP COURTESY OF LEBANON MOUNTAIN TRAIL ASSOCIATION

downhill and cross-country skiing as well as hiking. After Ehden, we descended into the gorge of Wadi Qadisha ("Holy Valley"), where some of the earliest Christian monastic communities settled and which is today a World Heritage Site.

As we moved south, some municipalities hosted receptions for us, and we lodged in guest houses and small hotels as well as homes. Because part of our mission on this walk-through was to promote the trail itself, the LMT Association encouraged members of the media and the public to walk with us on weekends and holidays, and so we were joined by an ever-changing entourage of several dozen hiking companions from throughout Lebanon and around the world.



At the edge of one of Lebanon's oldest cedar forests, near the resort town

of Bcharre—the birthplace of poet and philosopher Kahlil Gibran—is the Ecoclub, a lodge run by Joe and Aline Rahme. It stands on property that Aline's father—to the bewilderment of his neighbors—single-handedly reforested over some 20 years. "We hope the LMT will promote much-needed environmental awareness in this area," says Joe.

April in Lebanon is notorious for storms that sweep in without warning from the Mediterranean. For a few days after a stop near the Phoenician temple of Afqa, we were pummeled by wind, rain, hail and snow—snow so heavy that we wondered whether winter had returned. Once the storm subsided, we continued to Karam's hometown of Baskinta. There, we diverted for a day to explore the Baskinta Literary Trail, an offshoot of the LMT whose 24 kilometers (15 mi) feature 22 stops at landmarks relating to Lebanese poets and novelists, including Amin Maalouf, Mikhail Naimy and Abdallah Ghanem.

Farther on, after crossing the Beirut–Damascus highway, we entered the Chouf Mountains, dominated by the Druze, a sect whose roots are in Islam. Since the 19th century, Christians and Druze here have had a volatile relationship

with much bloodshed, but recent reconciliations have brought quiet to the mountains. Ecologically, conservation of fauna and flora in the Chouf has had much success, especially of the Lebanon cedar, a focus since the 1950s. Today, the Chouf Mountains are home to three forests with the highest concentration of Lebanon

cedars in the world. We climbed through one of them, the Chouf Cedar Reserve, as we hiked from the village of Ain Zhalta to the summit of the mountain range, where we could look east across the Bekaa Valley to Mt. Hermon and west to the Mediterranean Sea.

After five days in the Chouf, we reached the town of Jezzine.

Here, because of leftover landmines and unexploded ordnance, ECODET routed the trail westward over the Mount Lebanon range and down into the Bekaa Valley before turning it south again.

Walking across the valley, we found ourselves waist-deep in a vibrant patchwork of red and pink poppies, white and yellow daisies, pale violet cyclamens and other wildflowers. The fields led us to the town of Rachaiya at the base of Mount Hermon. Here, non-Lebanese

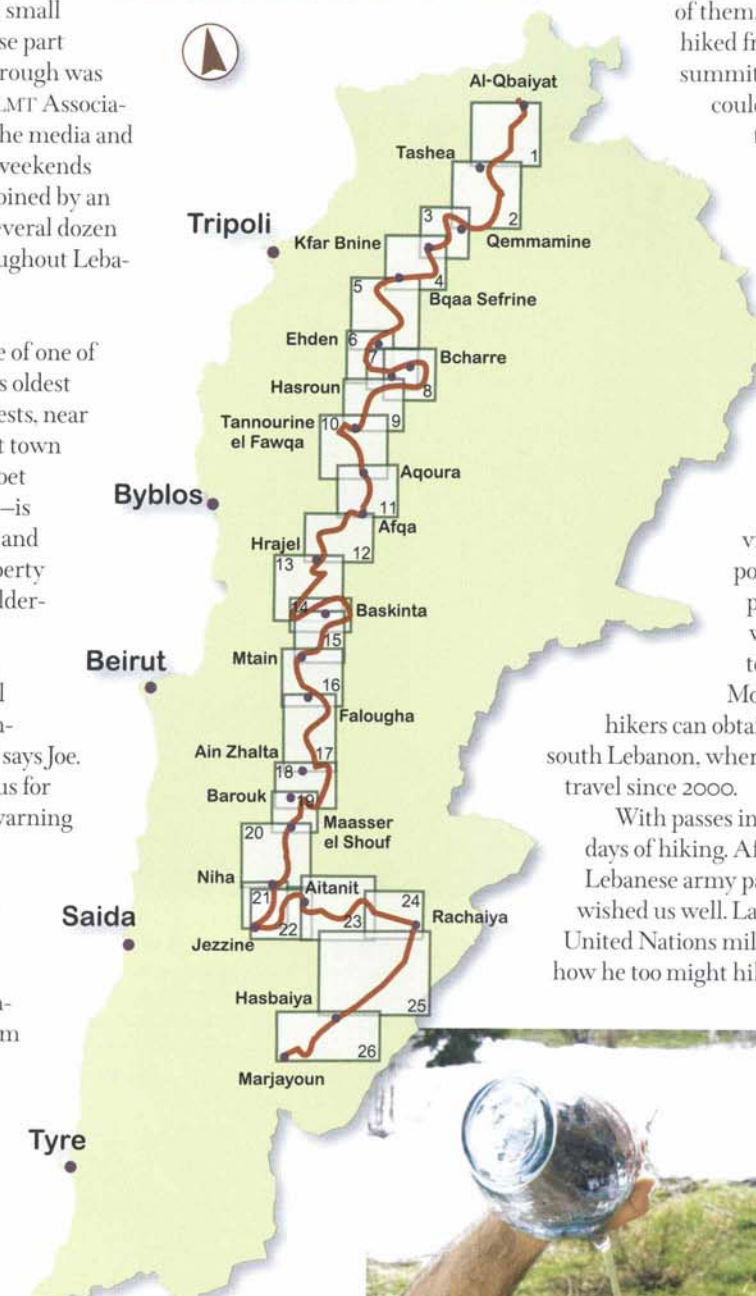
hikers can obtain a military pass to continue into south Lebanon, where there have been restrictions on travel since 2000.

With passes in hand, we set out on our final two days of hiking. After we crossed the Hasbani River, a Lebanese army patrol briefly questioned us, then wished us well. Later, the commander of a French United Nations military contingent was interested in how he too might hike the LMT. Although both encounters

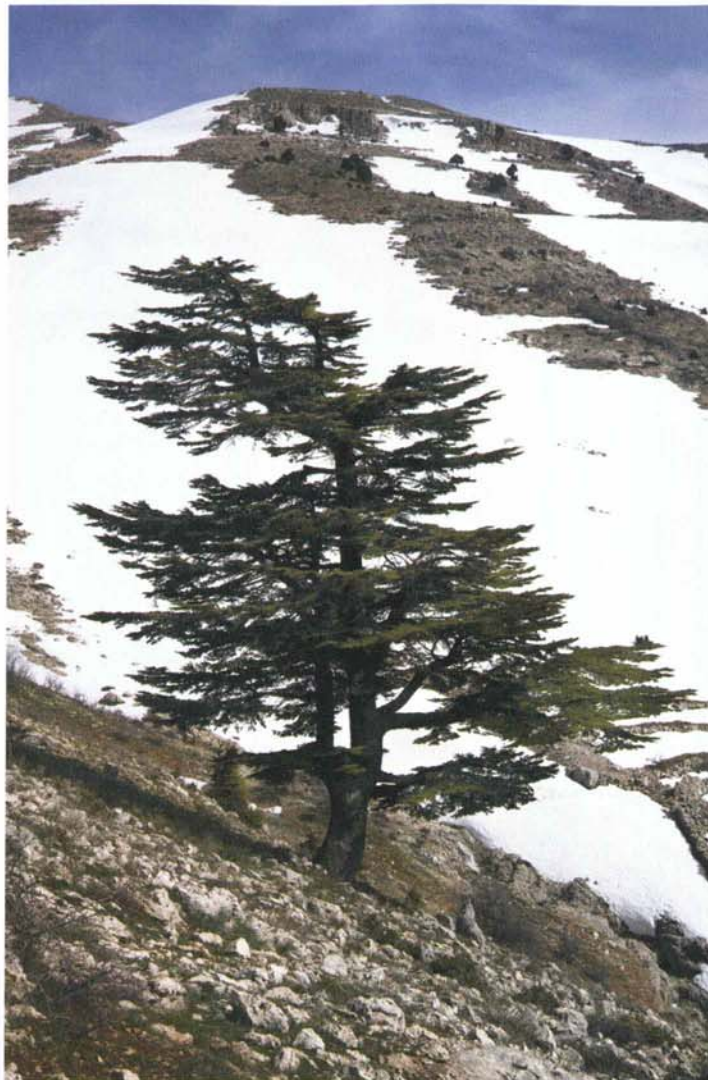
were entirely cordial, they were reminders of southern Lebanon's volatility.

Thirty days after our departure, we reached the trail's end at Marjayoun, the southern provincial capital. Our invigorating feeling of accomplishment, shared by the entire team, was tempered only by regret at damage we had witnessed along the way—unregulated development, illegal quarries, garbage

Lebanon Mountain Trail



Right: **George Sarkis**, a ranger at the Tannourine Cedars Forest Nature Reserve, also owns a guest house sponsored by the LMT. Opposite, upper: **The Chouf Mountains** are home to three forests that have the highest concentration of Lebanon cedars in the world. Lower: **Descending from the Chouf Mountains** toward the village of Aitanit, the trail passes Qaraoun Lake.



dumps and the skeletons of unfinished buildings marred the otherwise breathtaking countryside in some places.

John Kairouz, executive director of the LMT Association, summed up the trail's role as a conservation

catalyst. "The LMT is more than just a trail," he says. "It is more than a sustainable development project, more than a tourist destination or an ecotourism project. It is a trail of promise: a promise that through dedication and love, great strides in the development and protection of the treasures of Lebanon can be accomplished. This project defines a new era in the livelihood of these mountain communities."

In the months since our inaugural walk-through, the LMT Association has counted some 15,000 visitor-days along the trail, and more than a dozen operators now offer hiking and guide services. The old cliché that, in Lebanon, you can ski a snowy slope in the morning and swim in the Mediterranean in the afternoon may still be true, but now, you can do both those things after walking its beautiful mountains for a month. 🌍

Above: In the north, a lone Lebanon cedar stands in stark relief against a snowy ridge; farther south, in the Bekaa Valley, an Anatolian orchid (*Orchis anatolica*) adds color to a rocky meadow. Left: The LMT Association hopes increased ecotourism will lead to stronger enforcement of environmental laws. Opposite, upper: In the Bekaa Valley, hikers walk toward the town of Rachaiya; Mt. Hermon is in the background. Lower: The last stage of the LMT crosses the Hasbani River.



Norbert Schiller (schillernorbert@hotmail.com) has worked for 25 years as a photographer in the Middle East and Africa for agencies and publications including the AP, AFP, EPA, Getty, *Der Spiegel* and the *New York Times*.



www.lebanontrail.org



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Bcharre (Bisharri): M/A 90, M/A 99
Kahlil Gibran: M/A 83, M/A 90
Hiking in Lebanon: M/A 76

David Roberts: M/A 70
William Henry Bartlett: J/A 07
Bonfils, Frith: J/A 89, N/D 83



For Further Reading:

The Lebanon Mountain Trail: Discovering The Road Less Travelled.
Hana El-Hibri; photography by Norbert Schiller. 2009, Turning Point.





Al-Burdun (The Boardinghouse)

Photographed by Peter Fryer Written by David Campbell

In August 1909, when Ali Said opened his boardinghouse for Arab seamen in the Holborn district of South Shields, he connected the northeast of England to colonial trade and labor networks that ran from Europe through Suez to India and beyond. Over the decades that followed, his boarding house and others like it, located down by the River Tyne and known by the names of their owners, began a transformation in the cultural character of the region.

Having settled in the town in 1894, Said and his fellow seamen, numbering only a few dozen in the period before World War I, were part of a growing contingent of Arabs—mostly Yemenis—who worked on British steamships. These seamen were drawn into the British Empire following the 1839 annexation of Aden, at the southwest tip of the Arabian Peninsula in what is now Yemen. The first colonial possession acquired during the reign of Queen Victoria, the Aden Protectorate was established to provide a coaling station for British ships halfway between Bombay and Suez. Run by the British authorities in Bombay,

Aden doubled in size as the rural population of the Yemen highlands was drawn to the improved standard of living that this new colonial center offered. This marked the introduction of an industrial economy in Yemen and established the country's pattern of rural-to-urban migration that continues today.

The growth of the world's fleet of coal-fired merchant ships in the second half of the 19th century required new labor. "Tramp steamers"—ships that plied irregular routes and required crew willing to work for long periods—were unattractive to European sailors. Into this breach

Arab workers willingly stepped. The most common position for them was below decks as firemen, where they shoveled coal into the furnaces. It was the most arduous, grueling job on the ship. In the intense heat and constant noise of the boiler room, according to the British seamen's union leader, one in every 200 firemen went mad.

By 1914, there were several thousand Arab seamen rotating through British ports. Although most were only temporary migrants following work, some settled, and in South Shields—England's fourth-largest port after London, Cardiff and Liverpool—they became one of Britain's first substantial Muslim communities.

Because civic authorities feared cultural mixing, seamen of all nationalities were barred by law from residing in private lodgings with local families. Thus seamen required larger, commercial accommodation, and the boardinghouses that were established to meet this need were organized along ethnic lines. As centers for their respective nationalities, they quickly became not just rooming houses but informal homes, service organizations, financial institutions

"There used to be a lot of cafés in a square half mile around Laygate. The seamen lived in rooms there and they played cards in a big living room. People who didn't live in the houses would come and eat for a price. There was more shipping at that time and the Tyne wasn't the millpond it is now.... Lots of single men who didn't want to cook would meet and eat there. A meeting place for people."

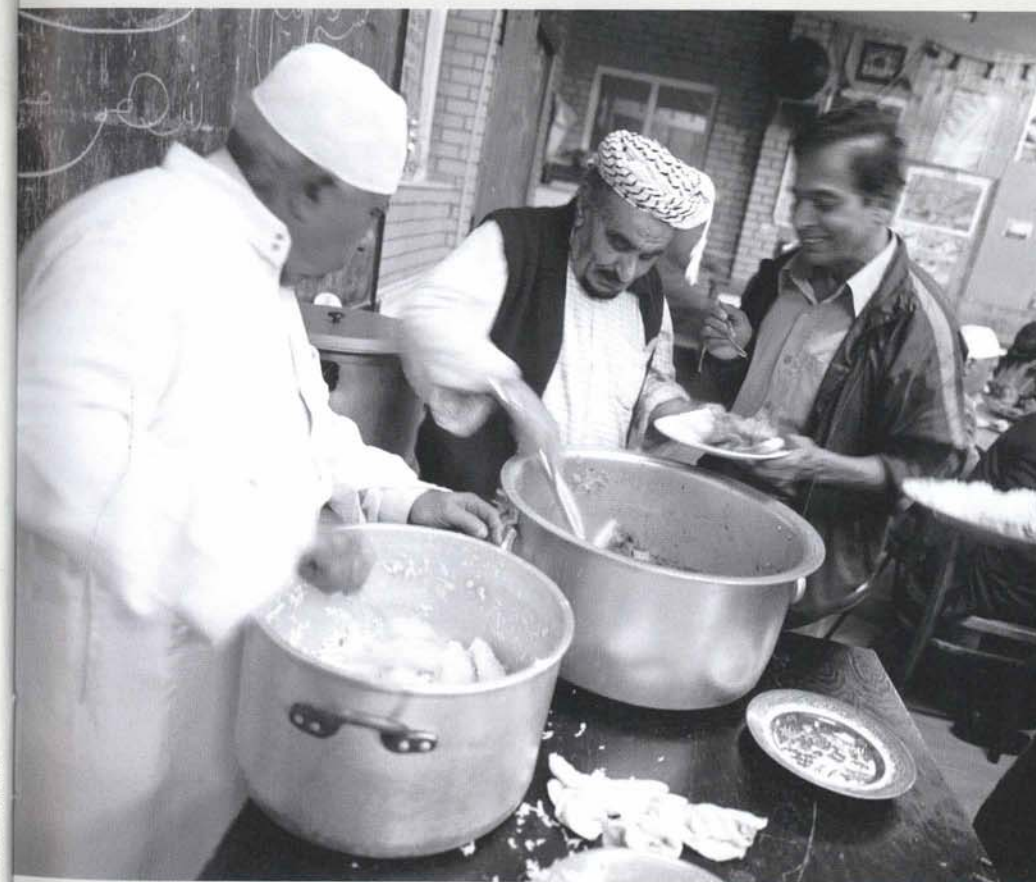
Yussef Abdullah



Abdul Rahman Geddes



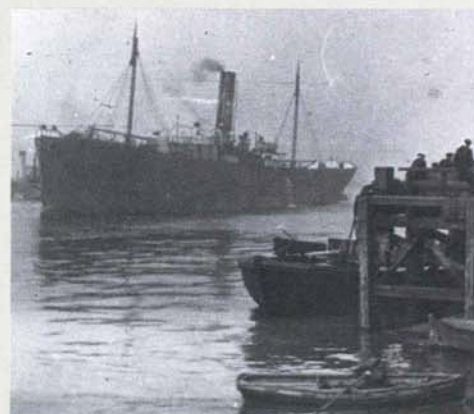
Nasser Abdul Rahman



Top and above: Each Saturday, young and old members of the Yemeni community in South Shields gather to provide a meal for the 20-odd retired seamen. It becomes a time for the community to gather, relax and socialize. Opposite, top left: A boardinghouse in the Holborn district, photographed in 1934. Opposite, lower: Many of the Yemenis were hired as firemen, shoveling coal into boilers below decks.

"I worked on many ships during this time [the 1950s and 1960s] and had many different jobs: fireman, stoking the fires for the boilers; engine man; donkey man; pump man, where you balanced the ship with water as they filled or emptied the hold of cargo....When we got into port, I would sign up on the pool and wait for work."

Nasser Rahman



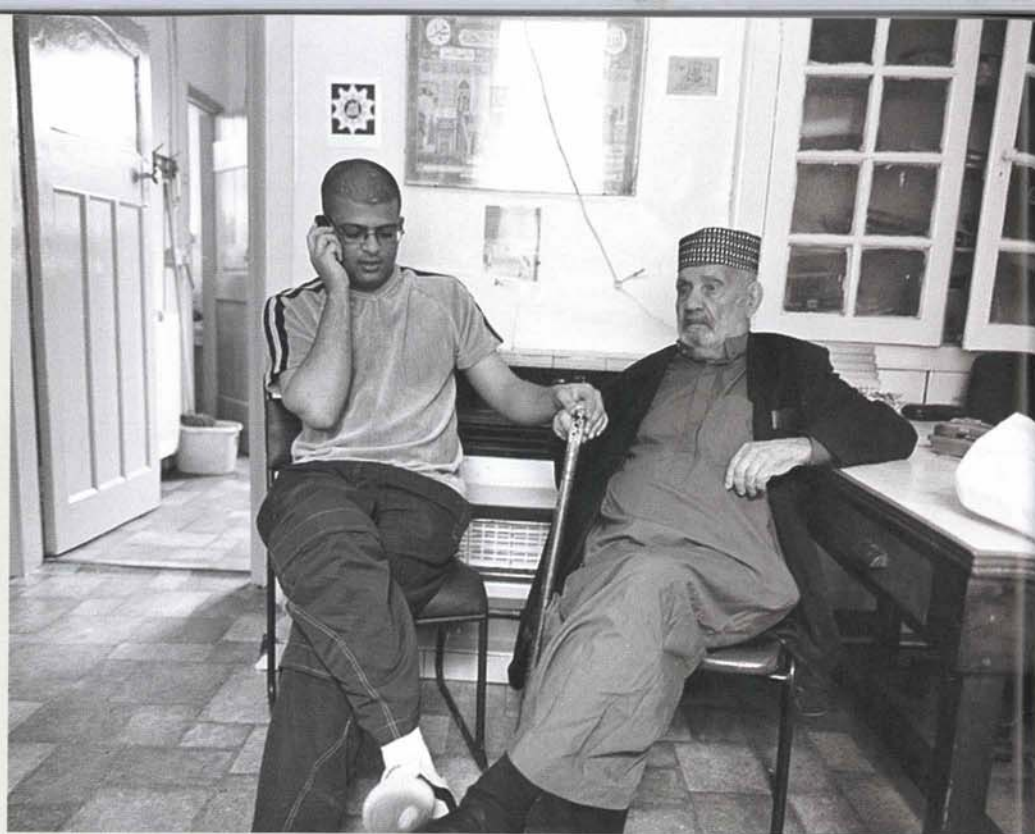
TOP LEFT: J. H. CLEET; LOWER: J. GRIMES

"Obeiya's father used to have a boarding-house off Laygate Lane and Regent Street. You would go through the café to the back where the men would eat. They would load huge pans or trays with aseed just like a huge volcano... There aren't many places that make good aseed now, but it is often eaten by the families in South Shields."

Maureen and Norman Kaier

"The Yemeni seaman to us was the man who was at sea for eight to 12 months and had little contact in bringing up the children. The women tended to do all of this and therefore ran the homes for the best part of the year. There was always a great coming and going of people in the boardinghouse."

Mohammed Hussein



Above: Adnan Sayyadi visits with his grandfather Mohammed Sayyadi in Mohammed's boardinghouse, one of two remaining in South Shields. Right: Norman and Maureen Kaier are among the several thousand residents of South Shields whose families today are of mixed English and Arab heritage. Opposite, top: Ali Ahmed Ali's discharge record, and, lower, the Yemeni seamen's cemetery in South Shields.

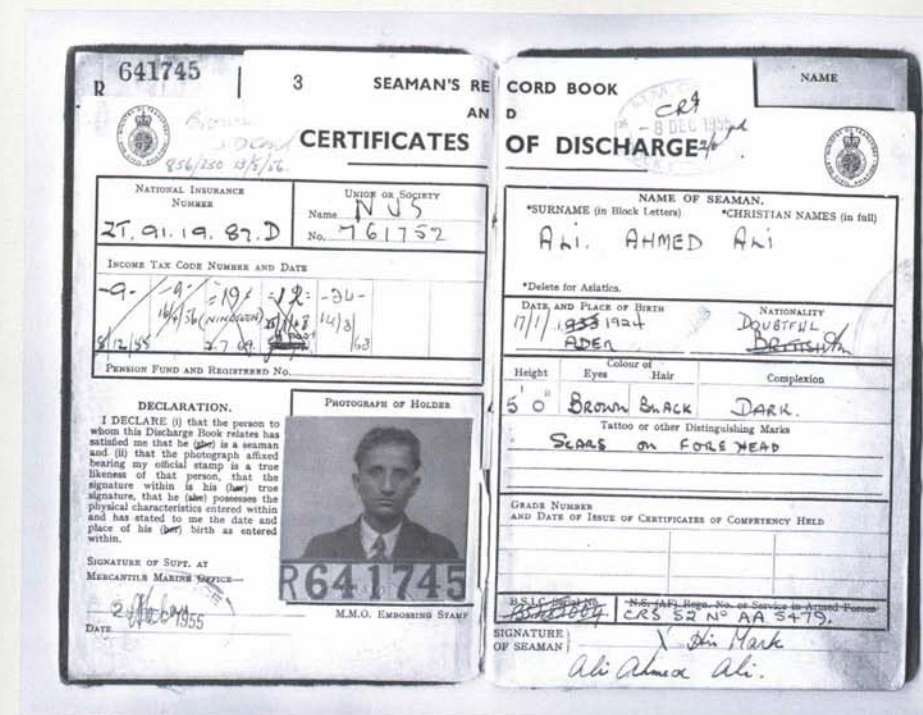
and hubs of the maritime labor network. By 1920, South Shields was home to eight Arab boardinghouses hosting between 300 and 600 seamen at any one time. Today, two boardinghouses still remain, and despite the many transformations of the community and the industry, and despite their declining populations, they continue to play an active role in 21st-century South Shields.

For those who sought maritime work in Aden, residents of the Protectorate were readily employable, as they were legally British subjects. Those who lived beyond the Protectorate had to either bribe local authorities to designate them as Protectorate residents or hope that British immigration controls would prove ineffective. During World War I, the latter turned out to be frequently true, as issues of citizenship were brushed aside in the rush to man the ships in support of the war effort. Being firemen, however, now meant more than working long hours: Because their posts were below-decks, they could only rarely escape from a torpedoed vessel. During what was then

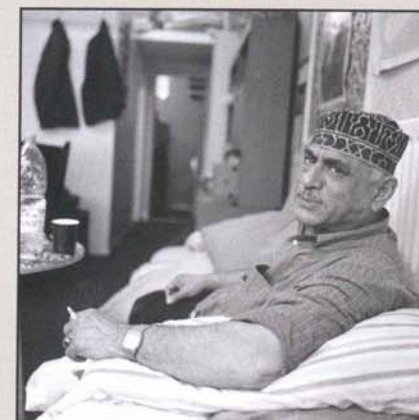


called "The Great War," some 700 Arabs from South Shields lost their lives when their vessels were sunk.

Despite their demonstrated valor, however, the postwar period saw new immigration restrictions on the Arab seamen. Instead of being regarded as returning servicemen or British subjects with rights, they were reclassified as "coloured aliens," barred from receiving welfare and sometimes deported. With a depressed shipping industry and a labor market bloated by demobilized British service personnel, Arab seamen even became the targets of popular hostility. Although South Shields had been known as "the town where colour doesn't count," clashes between Arab seamen and "Britishers" in 1919 and 1930 saw these labor disputes portrayed in the newspapers as "race riots."



Ali Ahmed Ali



Said Muhamed Ghaleb

"I was born in Dahla outside of Aden. I still have a family in Yemen; my wife is there with my seven children. You miss them when you live a life on your own like me. I have a British passport and it feels sometimes that I live in two places. I worked hard for the British both in Yemen as a servant and then on board ships."

Said Muhamed Ghaleb

"We used to live at number 5 Laygate St. Our neighbors were mostly Arab and some Indians, and we all mixed well together. We weren't well off. My dad never forgot the family at home in Yemen—"There's £50; send it home for me." The owners of the boardinghouses and cafés did all of this for the Arab seamen in those days. They were people you could trust with your money."

Maureen and Norman Kaier



The North East, as the region is known in England, has historically been identified as welcoming. Although, in the 2001 census, some 96 percent of respondents defined themselves as "White British"—compared to 87 percent in the rest of England—this homogeneity hides a history of international migration, particularly in the town of South Shields, which was also a major center for immigrants from Scotland and Ireland, as

well as a home for people from further afield—including the Arab seamen. By some estimates, more than one-third of the town's 1911 population was born outside England or born to immigrant parents.

Today, despite the decline of the coal and shipping industries for which they came to work, the Yemeni community of South Shields is neither dead nor invisible. There are around 20 seamen from the older generation still living in the boardinghouses of Mohammed Sayyadi and Muhammed Mohamed, and they remain in South Shields to draw their pensions, which they use to continue to support their families in Yemen. Their place in the region's culture lives through the communities they helped create, the occasional marriage with non-Yemeni locals and their history of transnational relations that dates back to colonial times. ☉



Peter Fryer (peterwryer@hotmail.com) is a freelance documentary photographer whose work over the past 20 years has focused on community and identity in northeastern England, where he lives, and in Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen. He is represented by Panos Pictures of London.



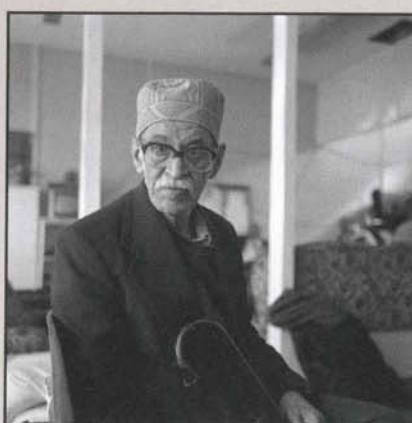
David C. Campbell is professor of cultural and political geography at Durham University in England, where he is also associated with the Durham Centre for Advanced Photography Studies. His web site is www.david-campbell.org.

View the 12-minute documentary film "The Boarding House: The Yemeni Community of South Shields," by Peter Fryer and David Campbell, at www.saudiaramcoworld.com.

Related articles

Yemeni emigrants: M/A 75, J/F 79, S/O 86, M/A 88, S/O 05

Al-Haj Sabahi



Abdul Rahman



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

Julie Weiss is an education consultant based in Eliot, Maine. 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.

CLASS ACTIVITIES

This issue's Classroom Guide focuses on understanding history. You will use the articles to make timelines, and then you will use the data from the timelines to do the kind of analysis that historians do.

Theme: Understanding History

What is chronology? Why does it matter?

History is the study of the past. Time is one convenient unit of measure we use when we study history. One of the first things a historian does is figure out the order in which events happened. This is called chronology. Why is chronology important? Working with a partner, think about something that happened recently where the order of events was important. For a simple example, did you eat the candy before or after your parent told you not to? Did the water boil before or after you put the tea bag in it? More complex sequences include events such as driving a car from one place to another. What needs to happen in order to start the car? Does the driver's foot need to be on the brake *before* the ignition key will turn, or can s/he put it there *after*? Think about the directions to get to your destination. Which happens first, driving half a mile or turning right? Why is the sequence of all these actions important?

With your partner, choose a situation such as driving a car from a specific starting point to a specific destination. List all the steps involved and put them in the order in which the events took place or need to take place. Create a graphic organizer that shows the steps in order. Share your graphic organizer with the class. Discuss: In your scenarios, why was it important to know the sequence of events? In history, why is it important to know the sequence of events? Find examples from a textbook or from your knowledge of history that show why knowing the order of events is important to understanding the past.

In what order did events happen?

"Shyrdak and the Art of Felt" is about women in Kyrgyzstan who make felt rugs that, in the Kyrgyz language, are called *shyrdak*. It is also an excellent example of an author telling readers about a very long history. Read the article. As you read, highlight or underline the parts of the article that tell the history of felt-making, starting with the domestication of sheep in 8000 BC and continuing to the present. Then as a class, use the article—and your markings on it—to make a timeline on pieces of chart paper hung on the wall of the classroom or on a blackboard or whiteboard that is big enough to show the 10,000 years you will be looking

at. Have different students come up to the timeline and add significant events. These include (but are not limited to) humans harvesting wool from domesticated animals (4000 BC); humans inventing felt (3000 BC); and Genghis Khan conquering Mongolia (1200's). You will have long periods of time that the article does not address. Add any events that you think might have affected felt-making, such as the Industrial Revolution. Explain why you think such events belong on the timeline.

What things change over time and what things remain the same?

The timeline shows you the sequence of events that are related to felt-making. One way historians use that information is to look at what things change over time and what things remain unchanged. Studying continuity and change over time is one of the most significant things historians do. Just as your class discussed why chronology is important, discuss why it is important to know what changes and what stays the same. Use examples from your own experience, from news stories, from the articles in *Saudi Aramco World* and/or from your knowledge of history.

Now look again at your timeline and at "Shyrdak and the Art of Felt." The article describes some things—such as governments—that have changed many times over the years. It describes other things—such as the process of making felt—that have stayed the same for a very long time. As a class, decide how you want to show change and continuity on your timeline. Then have individual students come up and add that information.

Look at your finished timeline. You have created it by extracting information from "Shyrdak and the Art of Felt." You have created a visual summary of parts of the article. Now use the timeline to write a one-paragraph summary of the article, using this prompt as a starting point: "The art of felt-making in Kyrgyzstan is much the same as it was thousands of years ago, despite the many changes that have taken place in the region." When you're done, compare your paragraph with other students' paragraphs. If they differ significantly, go back to the article and check to see whether your understanding of the article is accurate. Revise your paragraph if you need to.

"From Moravia to Arabia" is another example of history. Read the article. As you read, highlight the parts that describe Alois Musil's accomplishments. Then make a timeline similar to the one you made from "Shyrdak and the Art of Felt." (Of course,

your timeline will cover a much shorter period of time than the last one.) Use the data from this timeline differently from the way you used data from the last one. Instead of looking for continuity and change over time, look at Alois Musil's accomplishments on the timeline. Working from the article and your

timeline, write a resume for Alois Musil. You can find a model for resumes on the Internet, and many word-processing programs have resume templates. Be sure that the resume has a statement at the top that summarizes Musil's most important qualities and/or achievements. (Hint: Write the statement

after you have completed the rest of the resume.) Obviously a resume is different from a magazine article. Does the resume format highlight anything about Musil more clearly than the article? If so, how does it do that? In what circumstances would one format be better to use than the other? Why?

VISUAL ANALYSIS

Appreciating Magazine Layout

Many people collaborate to put together the pages of a magazine like *Saudi Aramco World*. Writers write articles, photographers take pictures, designers lay out pages and editors make decisions about text, illustrations and layout. Numerous photos accompany the text of "A Trail of Promise." For this exercise, you will look at photos in two ways. First you will study specific photos closely to enhance your appreciation of visual images. Then you will look at which photos appear on which pages, and the photos they share those pages with. You will think about how photos work together in a layout, and how designers and editors decide on their choices.

Let's start with the photos on page 33, the first page of the article. Describe to a partner what you see in the top photo. Here are some questions to guide your description: Start with the subject matter. According to the caption, where was the photo taken? Find and mark the location on the map on page 37. Then look at the composition of the photo—how it's "put together" visually. Does the photo show a large space or is it a close-up? What is in the foreground? What is in the background? What objects do you see? Where in the picture are they? Where are the people in the photo? What are they doing? What colors do you see? Where is the light focused? Where do you see shadows? How do the light and shadow affect you as you look at the photo? What feelings do you have when you see the photo? Now look at the bottom photo on the page. Switch roles. Have the person who listened to the first description take a turn describing this photo. You can use the same questions to guide your description.

Think about why the magazine's editors have chosen to put these two photos on the first page of this article. How is the subject matter related to their placement at the start of the article? In terms of composition, what do the photos have in common? How are they different? Make a

Venn diagram that shows similarities and differences. Discuss with your partner the effect of having these two pictures on the first page. Based on the two photos—their subject matter, composition and placement—what do you expect you will read about in the article? What perspective do you think the writer (who is also the photographer) will take? Why do you think these two photos—which are very different in some important ways—appear on the same page? Look at the photo on the bottom half of page 34. Do you think it would look good on the first page of the article? Why or why not? If it replaced the bottom photo, what effect would that have? What would be lost?

After page 33, the next two pages of the article appear side-by-side for a reader, who is likely to see the two-page spread as one unit. So in addition to studying the photos on each page, you will want to see how the whole spread works together. Look at the photos on page 34. Where were they taken? Find and mark the places on the map. How are the photos on the page alike? What is the focal point of each photo? Why do you think these two photos appear on the same page together? If you were to put different photos on this page, which ones would you choose? Why? If you leave the photos as they are, why would you do that?

Now look at the photos on page 35. Find and mark on the map the places where they were taken. Then look at the composition of the photos. How are they

alike? How are they different? How are they similar to and different from the photos on the left page of the same two-page spread? What effect do the photos on the two pages together have for you as a reader? What questions do they answer about the subject of the article? With your partner, make a list of those questions. See how many you can write down. (Hint: Start simply, with "the five W's"—who, what, when, where, why—and then more questions are likely to come to you.) Then, think about substituting these photos for others that appear with the article. How would using different photos, or different combinations of photos, change the appearance of the spread and the feelings it inspires?



Hanging Fire: Contemporary Art from Pakistan.

Though portrayed in the West primarily as a country struggling with political and social instability, Pakistan also has a vibrant, yet little-known, contemporary art scene that has flourished over the last two decades. This exhibition, the first major US museum survey exhibition of contemporary Pakistani art, explores the seeming contradiction, examining the complex combination of influences informing contemporary artists in the country's urban centers of Karachi and Lahore. Curated by Salima Hashmi, "Hanging Fire" presents 55 works by 15 artists, including installation art, video, photography, painting and sculpture. A number of the works have never been exhibited, in particular a large-scale site-specific painting by Imran Qureshi. The exhibition is accompanied by a full-color, 161-page book addressing Pakistan's political, social, cultural and art history, edited by Hashmi. Asia Society, **New York**, through January 3.

Imran Qureshi painted "Moderate Enlightenment" (right) in 2006 using gouache and gold leaf on layered *wasli* paper. The painting measures 7 7/8 by 5 1/2 inches and is in the collection of Brooke and Daniel Neidich. Qureshi is also a teacher in the miniatures department of Pakistan's National College of Arts in Lahore.



CURRENT November

The Sharjah World Book Fair is a 10-day culture-bridging event that showcases books published by more than 750 publishers from nearly 50 nations. Its goals are to encourage reading, especially among younger people, and to make quality books available at affordable prices. More than 400,000 visitors are expected at the 28th annual fair. **Sharjah, United Arab Emirates**, through November 22.

Photoquai 2009 is a biennial event devoted to photography from the non-western world. In this second edition, the event includes **165 Years of Iranian Photography**, which ranges from the Qajar period to the present day. Photoquai's overall mission is to develop relationships with artists not hitherto known in Europe and to encourage exchanges as well as a convergence of outlooks on the world. The festival features work from South and Latin America, North America, Asia, India, China, Oceania, Africa and the Near and Middle East. Musée du Quai Branly, **Paris**, through November 22.

Samir Sayegh, master calligrapher, returns with a series of paintings in acrylic on canvas, reinterpreting Arabic letters in an avant-garde minimalist and contemporary style. In his continuous effort to transcend the esthetics of Arabic calligraphy into universal forms and signs, he moves beyond the formal boundaries of content and meaning. Agial Art Gallery, **Beirut, Lebanon**, through November 22.

Palestine: Creation in All Its States follows on the IMA's 1997 show "Contemporary Palestinian Artists"—and the selection of Jerusalem as the Arab cultural capital for 2009—to present contemporary artists from Palestine or the diaspora who are working to identify elements of a distinctively Palestinian esthetic through the lens of their uniquely complex historical and political situation. The current exhibition adds depth by allowing comparisons of the work of women artists (Reem Bader, Rana Bishara, Rula Halawani, Mona Hatoum, Noel Jabbour, Raeda Saada, Ahlam Shibli), "grand old men" (Kamal Boullata, Samia Halaby, Laila Shawa, Suha Shuman) and "young lions" (Fawzy Amrany, Hazem Harb, Steve Sabella). Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, through November 22.

Landscape and Light. The work of Ammar Khammash addresses spatial structure, both on the ground in the open landscape and in the painting itself. As nature builds spaces within folds in the land, reflected in rugged topography between horizon and sky, Khammash's work seeks to understand nature and dwell on the issues of spatial perception. He explores the human visual process and its evolution from a survival skill to the more inquisitive philosophical obsession of modern humans, manipulating both the natural landscape and visual possibilities to get closer to the relationship between the human mind and the landscape that shapes it.

Nabad Art Gallery, **Amman, Jordan**, through November 25.

The Third Eye is a group exhibition of contemporary Lebanese artists, including Ziad Antar, Nadim Asfar, Pascal Hachem, Lina Hakim and Joanne Issa, that explores the conceptual development of this young generation whose practice is moving away from overtly political or geocentric statements. Featuring installation, photography and video, these uniquely engaging artworks from the artists' highly personal perspectives employ visual languages of disillusionment and irony. Selma Feriani Gallery, **London**, through November 28.

Abdallah Benanteur: Landscapes of Paradise, Masterpieces From the Eighties. Born in 1931 in Mostaganem, Benanteur is one of the founders of modern painting in Algeria. Growing up, he was enthralled by writing and illuminated manuscripts, by mystical poetry and Andalusian music. During the 1980's, he elaborated on a new landscape, a kind of heavenly garden reconstituted by combining the thousand and one mornings of the world. Here, from one triptych to another, the human figure is no more than a mark, a clue indicating man's coming to grips with the world and its elements. Espace Claude Lemand, **Paris**, through November 28.

Rhythms of India: The Art of Nandalal Bose is the first comprehensive exhibition outside Asia to survey the expansive repertoire of Nandalal Bose (1882–1966), the father of modern art in India. It features close to 100 of Bose's finest paintings, executed in a variety of styles and media, and reveals how Bose contributed to the success of India's nonviolent struggle for independence through his close association with Mahatma Gandhi. The exhibition thus explores the crucial period of India's transition from British colony to independent nation through the lens of the country's premier artist of the time,

and reveals how he laid the foundation for modern visual culture in India. Art Institute of **Chicago**, through November 29.

CURRENT December

The Life of Meresamun: A Temple Singer in Ancient Egypt focuses on the life of a priestess-musician in Egypt—probably Thebes—in about 800 BC. Centered on her coffin, her mummy—recently scanned and "virtually" unwrapped—and her reconstructed face, the exhibit illustrates the duties of a temple singer and explores what her life was like inside, as well as outside, the temple. Her temple duties are illustrated by such ritual objects as a sistrum, an ivory clapper, a harp and cult vessels; the section on her life outside the temple includes an examination of the social and legal rights of women in ancient Egypt and the professions open to them. Examples of domestic objects include dishes, jewelry and cosmetic vessels, while home religious rituals are illustrated by objects related to ancestor cults and fertility. Catalog. Oriental Institute Museum, **Chicago**, through December 6.

Breaking the Veils is a selection of work by 52 well-established female artists—some veiled, some not—from Sudan, Malaysia, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, as well as the Levant, the Gulf states and North Africa. The art, from the collection of the Royal Society of Fine Arts of Jordan, is a visually and intellectually engaging collection designed to challenge tiresome stereotypes and enliven popular and academic discourse on women and the arts in the Islamic world. Yale University Institute of Sacred Music, **New Haven, Connecticut**, through December 11.

Design and Nature is an exhibition of photographs by Dr. Adriana de Miranda of water-wheels, an ancient type of architecture that has played a fundamental role, over the centuries, in supplying and carrying water for irrigation.

Called *norias* in the Middle East, water-wheels use the power of the river itself to raise water to fields at higher elevations. Norias combine design efficiency and respect for the environment, and are also an authentic cultural expression with specific and defined artistic connotations. Brunei Gallery, SOAS, **London**, through December 12.

CURRENT January

Inci Eviner's film "Harem" is based on a series of early–19th-century engravings by German artist Antoine Ignace Melling, who was invited by Sultan Selim III to chronicle the court and city of Constantinople. Eviner replaces the original figures with animations of women performing repetitive, mundane actions. Shown on a continuous loop, the film challenges the western perception of the harem as a place of sexual intrigue and subjugation with an alternative view of it as a place where women are the active subjects. Whitechapel Gallery, **London**, through January 3.

To Live Forever: Egyptian Treasures from the Brooklyn Museum uses some 120 pieces of jewelry, statues, coffins and vessels dating from 3600 BC to the year 400 of our era to illustrate the range of strategies and preparations that the ancient Egyptians developed to defeat death and to achieve success in the afterlife. The exhibition explores the belief that death was an enemy that could be vanquished, a primary cultural tenet of ancient Egyptian civilization. To survive in the next world, Egyptians would purchase, trade or even reuse a variety of protective objects. The exhibition explains the process of mummification, the economics and rituals of memorials, the contents of the tomb, the funeral accessories—differentiated by the class of the deceased—and the idealized afterlife. Exhibits include the vividly painted coffin of a mayor of Thebes, mummies, stone statues, gold jewelry, amulets and canopic jars. Catalog by curator Edward Bleiberg, \$39.95. Chrysler Museum of Art, **Norfolk, Virginia**, through January 3; **Brooklyn [New York]** Museum, February 12 through May 2.

Cultural Exchange on the Northern Silk Road

Exhibits visually stunning objects from the famous Turfan Collection that reveal the links among the oasis towns of the northern Silk Road. These objects include silk fragments with ornamental patterns, fragments of paintings adorned with gold and clay sculptures. The accompanying texts shed new light on the close ties among the various workshops and reveal the cultural exchange that occurred in terms of iconography and style. Staatliche Museen zu **Berlin**, Museen **Dahlem**, through January 3.

Dutch New York Between East and West: The World of Margrieta van Varick

explores the life, times and possessions of a 17th-century New York shopkeeper. Born in the Netherlands, Margrieta van Varick spent part of her life in Malacca (now Malaysia) and arrived in Flatbush in 1686 with an astonishing array of eastern and European goods. A 1696 inventory—the heart of the exhibition—documents her personal and commercial belongings, but no other information about her is known. The exhibition reveals much about van Varick's time and place,

demonstrates ways in which much else about her can be inferred, and examines why various of her possessions, including those from the Muslim East, might have been in the hands of a Flatbush minister's wife and shopkeeper. Catalog. ① 212-501-3011 or programs@bgc.bard.edu. Bard Graduate Center, **New York**, through January 3.

Perspectives: Anish Kapoor. The "Perspectives" series of contemporary Asian art resumes with "S-Curve" (2006) by internationally renowned Indian sculptor Anish Kapoor. Consisting of two two-meter-high, five-meter lengths of highly reflective polished steel, gently curved to create a continuous convex and concave wall, the work recalls the exploration of form that Kapoor most famously presented in "Cloud Gate" in Chicago's Millennium Park. Known for his sublime approach to pure form, space and materials since the early 1980's, Kapoor continues to examine spatial perception and the immateriality of the object through this work. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through January 3.

Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire

features artifacts from the reign of the legendary leader, including a newly discovered mummy and tomb treasures. Genghis conquered an empire three times the size of Julius Caesar's or Alexander's, but also established national parks, a postal system and the concept of international law, and set the boundaries of some modern nations. His empire was the safest and most tolerant of lands. Approximately 200 artifacts are on display, including Mongolian costumes, headdresses and instruments from the National Museum of Mongolian History, and imperial gold, metal ornaments, beads and a tombstone from Russia's State Hermitage Museum. **Denver [Colorado]** Museum of Nature and Science, through January 10.

Grass Roots: African Origins of an American Art features approximately 225 humble but beautifully crafted coiled baskets that teach about the creativity and artistry of Africans in America from the 17th century to the present. The exhibition traces the parallel histories of coiled baskets in Africa and the Americas starting from the domestication of rice in Africa two millennia ago, through the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the Carolina rice plantation, to the present. Fowler Museum at UCLA, **Los Angeles**, through January 10.

Site ("City") recapitulates the stages of Turkish-born Armenian artist Sarkis Zabunyan's half-century career. Now one of the most important actors on the contemporary art scene, Sarkis reinterprets and reconstructs the different periods of his work in an audio-visual feast that begins with his gouache studies on paper from the early 1960's, continues to his neon studies of the 1990's and culminates in his cross-cultural, interdisciplinary work. There is an extensive program of ancillary activities organized by Sarkis to complement the works on display. **Istanbul** Modern, through January 10.

Rajasthan: Kings and Warriors. The "land of kings" in northwestern India was far larger than its current extent

before the arrival of the Mughals in the 16th century. After military conflict was past, however, the noble courts of Bundi, Kota, Udaipur, Jaipur and Jodhpur still had to confront the artistic innovations of the Mughals, and court artists created largely religious paintings that combined their own local style with the more naturalistic style of the Mughals. Museum Rietberg, **Zurich**, through January 10.

Intervention #11: Eylem Aladoğan includes the Turkish–Dutch artist's recent graphic work and an installation created especially for this exhibition. She uses commercial materials and modern techniques in her work, letting her "state of mind" guide her choice of materials and allowing their characteristics and limitations in turn help shape the content of her art. Her work is often multilayered in both materials and in meaning. Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, **Rotterdam**, through January 10.

Persian Visions: Contemporary Photography From Iran presents more than 60 images that provide a revealing view of Iranian life and experience. The 20 artists featured are among Iran's most celebrated and include Esmail Abbasi, Bahman Jalali, Shariyar Tavakoli, Mehran Mohajer, Shoukufeh Alidousti and Ebrahim Kahdem-Bayatvin. Some have lived abroad and returned to view their homeland from a changed perspective. Anti-exotic and specific, these images make up the first survey of contemporary Iranian photography to be presented in the United States. Haggerty Museum of Art, **Milwaukee, Wisconsin**, through January 17; **Cedar Rapids [Iowa]** Museum of Art, February 21 through May 10.

Maharaja: The Splendour of India's Royal Courts opens with the period of chaos and adventure that followed the collapse of the Mughal empire in the early 18th century and closes at the end of British rule in 1947. It explores the extraordinary culture of princely India, showcasing both Indian and western works that reflect different aspects of royal life. The exhibits include paintings, photography, textiles and dress, jewelry, jeweled objects, metalwork and furniture, and are explored within a broader historical context of princely life and ideals, patronage, court culture and alliances. Victoria and Albert Museum, **London**, through January 17.

The World of Islam in the Collection of the Aga Khan Museum exhibits more than 180 works of art in leather, stone, gold, bronze, ivory, glass, ceramic, textile, parchment and paper from the 14 centuries and the vast geographical span of the Islamic world. CaixaForum, **Barcelona**, through January 17.

Ayşe Erkmen: Roommates refers to the room under the museum's glass cupola, where she has inserted a modest but disconcerting element: Swags of blue-gray, amber and gold fabric swoop and step among the steel beams overhead, turning the space's outer skin into a visual topic and creating a transition zone between outside and inside in which her work lives. The Istanbul-born artist lives and works there and in Berlin, and all her work is site-specific. Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, **Düsseldorf**,

through January 17.
At the Court of the Grand Turk: The Captains of Topkapı Palace (part of "Turkish Season at the Louvre") shows caftans, jewelry and accessories worn by members of the Ottoman imperial family. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, through January 18.

From Izmir to Smyrna: The Discovery of an Ancient City (part of "Turkish Season at the Louvre") displays samples of the artistic production of one of the most brilliant cities of the Ionian coast—Smyrna, today's Izmir—and its neighbors, Ephesus and Miletus, illustrating connections among studios that produced stone and terra-cotta sculpture in the region. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, through January 18.

Princely Tombs of Anatolia: Alaca Höyük in the Third Millennium (part of "Turkish Season at the Louvre") demonstrates Bronze Age Anatolia's riches in such raw materials as gold, silver, copper and tin, and the consequent riches that local rulers, such as those of Troy, Arslan Tepe and Alaca Höyük, derived from trade. On display are gold vessels, jewels and bronze standards. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, through January 18.

Falnama: The Book of Omens is the first exhibition ever devoted to a category of extraordinary illustrated texts known as *Falnama* (Book[s] of Omens). Notable for their monumental size, brilliantly painted compositions and unusual subject matter, the manuscripts, created in Safavid Iran and Ottoman Turkey in the 16th and early 17th centuries, remain largely unpublished. Yet the art of divination was widely practiced throughout the Islamic world, and these texts were the most splendid tools ever devised to foretell the future. The exhibition sheds new light on their artistic, cultural and pious significance, displaying some 60 works of art on loan from international public and private collections. Catalog. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through January 24.

Garden and Cosmos: The Royal Paintings of Jodhpur features 56 paintings from India that reveal a unique art tradition of the royal courts between the 17th and 19th centuries. During this period, the region of Jodhpur, in modern-day Rajasthan, produced a distinctive and inventive painting style. Paintings produced for the private enjoyment of the maharaja and his court brought traditional Rajasthani styles together with styles developed in the imperial court of the Mughals. The paintings range from miniatures to monumental artworks depicting the palaces, wives and families of the Jodhpur rulers. Later works depict epic narratives and demonstrate the devotion of Maharaja Man Singh to an esoteric yogic tradition. Jodhpur artists rose to the challenge of creating images for metaphysical concepts and yoga narratives, which had never previously been the focus of the region's court art. Art Gallery of New South Wales, **Sydney, Australia**, through January 26.

Beloved Daughters: Photographs by Fazal Sheikh presents 70 intimate and revealing photographic portraits of women—widows, mothers and children—in India. Sheikh, born in New

York, won a Macarthur Award in 2005. Museum of Photographic Arts, **San Diego, California**, through January 31.

The Two Qalams: Islamic Arts of Pen and Brush. In Arabic, the word *qalam* originally meant the calligrapher's reed pen. Calligraphers were and are esteemed in Islam because their pens write the sacred words of the Qur'an. The attitude toward painters, however, has not always been so positive since their brushes could depict—thus create—human and animal figures, thereby challenging the sole creative authority of God. Persian poets of the 16th century countered this negative perception by describing the painter's brush as a second *qalam*, equivalent to that of the calligrapher's pen. The two *qalams* came together in the vibrant bookmaking workshops of the Islamic courts of Persia and India where calligraphers and painters collaborated to produce a wealth of illustrated manuscripts and elaborate albums filled with specimens of beautiful writing and painting. As seen in the 16th- through 19th-century album pages in the exhibition, the arts of pen and brush often merged with exquisite results. **Philadelphia** Museum of Art, through January.

CURRENT February
The Silk Road: A Trip Through Life and Death tells the story of the great cultural and technological exchanges that took place 2000 years ago along the Silk Roads. Silk and other luxury products were not the only goods traded: Ideas, technologies and religions were also exchanged by merchants, craftsmen and soldiers. Europe learned about silk, paper, printing and porcelain from China; China acquired horsemanship, Buddhism, glassworking and silver- and goldsmithing. Visitors will take part in a historical and geographic voyage: The first dealing with the rise of the Silk Roads, Chinese efforts to control traffic along them and their resurgence in modern times. In the geographical voyage, the visitor will "travel" westward from Xi'an across passes, deserts, mountains and steppes to Kashgar. Musée du Cinquantienaire, **Brussels**, through February 7.

Heroes and Villains: The Battle for Good in India's Comics examines the legacy of heroes and heroines of ancient Indian mythology in contemporary South Asian culture through the comic-book genre, which can be understood as an ongoing dialogue

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between American and South Asian visual culture. The exhibition presents a selection of vintage Indian and American comics and contemporary pencil-and-ink-drawn character explorations from the current Virgin Comic series *Ramayan* and *Devi*, as well as a selection of historical Indian court paintings, underlining the continuity of the heroic narrative tradition in Indian art. Approximately 57 works will be on view in addition to an on-screen display showing the multilayered process of comic-book production. **Los Angeles** County Museum of Art, through February 7.

Textile Tales: Ottoman Textiles in the MAK presents artful embroidery from the 16th and 17th centuries, decorative scarves or turban wraps with intricate embroidery, lavishly patterned silk fabrics and an example of 18th-century silk ceremonial clothing with subtle embroidery. Some of the fabrics for domestic—though not everyday—use, such as napkins, hand towels, sashes, cushion cases, draperies and blankets, have not been exhibited before. Not all the textiles shown originated within the Ottoman Empire: some come from European regions that the dynasty brought under its control for shorter or longer periods, including Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Serbia, Armenia and, very nearly, Austria. Museum für Angewandte Kunst, **Vienna**, through February 7.

Alexander the Great and the Opening of the World: Asia's Cultures in Transition follows the conqueror through Central Asia and focuses on the extensive cultural, economic and social changes unleashed by his passage. The exhibition includes objects lent by Uzbek museums (Samarkand, Tashkent and Termez) and the Tajikistan's National Museum of Antiquity as well as the Louvre, the British Museum and the Berlin Museums. Reiss-Engelhorn Museums, **Mannheim, Germany**, through February 21.

An Enduring Motif: The Pomegranate in Textiles presents a cross-section of textiles from the museum's collection that feature this richly symbolic fruit. Originating in Persia several thousand years ago, the pomegranate has been revered for centuries as a symbol of health, fertility and resurrection. Ancient Egyptians were buried with pomegranates in hopes of a second life. In Greek mythology, the fruit is associated with Persephone. Judaism esteems the pomegranate as a symbol of righteousness and fruitfulness. In Christianity, representations of pomegranates are often woven into fabrics used for church vestments and hangings. Islam's four gardens of paradise—described in the Qur'an—contain pomegranates, and according to Islamic legend, each fruit contains one seed that has descended from paradise. Buddhists view pomegranates as one of three blessed fruits. **Philadelphia** Museum of Art, through February 21.

Breathing Ashes Through Skirmishes and Clashes. Tarek Abu Hageb lives and works in Basel. Known first as a graffiti artist and hip-hop musician, he has created a highly individual style over the last few years through his strong interest in color and form, traditional abstract painting and the use of

divergent techniques. His artistic production confronts the challenges of real life, with figurative scenes invading his compositions. Ramada Plaza **Basel, Switzerland**, through February 28.

Splendor of Damascus: Textiles and Artifacts of Traditional Syria presents colorful, hand-embroidered dresses from late 19th- and early 20th-century Syria, on exhibit for the first time in North America: from elegant gold-embroidered purple velvet wedding attire from Damascus to the colorful, cross-stitched dresses and scarves of rural areas. The exhibit also features antique jewelry, brasswork and inlaid wood furniture of the region, as well as items from the museum's permanent collection. Antiochian Heritage Museum, **Ligonier, Pennsylvania**, through February.

CURRENT March
Arts of Islam: Treasures from the Nasser D Khalili Collection presents nearly 500 objects from the world's most comprehensive Islamic-art collection: manuscripts, paintings, rugs, ceramics and glassware, metalwork, jewelry, lacquerwork and works in wood and stone. The exhibition is organized under three themes: "Faith, Wisdom and Fate" deals with the relationship between art and the sacred; "Patronage" reflects the development of court arts, whose influence spread into broader society; and "A Universe of Forms and Colors" explores the burgeoning of creation for the sake of sensory delight, a foretaste of paradise. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, through March 14.

Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul explores the cultural heritage of ancient Afghanistan from the Bronze Age (2500 bc) through the rise of trade along the Silk Roads in the first century of our era. Among the nearly 230 works on view, all from the National Museum of Afghanistan in Kabul, are artifacts as old as 4000 years, as well as gold objects from the famed Bactrian Hoard, a 2000-year-old treasure of Bactrian grave goods excavated at Tillya Tepe in 1978 and long thought to have been stolen or destroyed, but rediscovered in 2003. Canadian Museum of Civilization, **Ottawa**, through March 28; Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, **Bonn**, June 11 through October 3; British Museum, **London**, Spring 2011.

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

+1-877-888-8587. De Young Museum, **San Francisco**, through March 28.

CURRENT April
Tutankhamun: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs is [another] extensive exhibition of more than 140 treasures from the tomb of the celebrated pharaoh and other sites. It includes his golden sandals, created specifically for the afterlife and found on his feet when his mummy was unwrapped; one of the gold canopic coffinettes, inlaid with jewels, that contained his mummified internal organs; and a three-meter figure depicting Tutankhamun as a young man, which originally may have stood at his mortuary temple. Providing context and additional information are 75 objects from other tombs in the Valley of the Kings, including objects related to Khefren (Cheops), Hatshepsut and Psusennes I. Art Gallery of Ontario, **Toronto**, through April 18.

CURRENT May and Later
The Secrets of Tomb 10A: Egypt 2000 BC introduces the concepts of the afterlife in the Middle Kingdom (2040–1640 bc) by a journey through the remarkable tomb of Djehutynakht and its many objects. In a 1915 excavation, the MFA found, in jumbled disarray, the largest Middle Kingdom burial assemblage ever discovered. The tomb was filled with the funerary equipment of a local governor and his wife, and contained four beautifully painted coffins, one of which may be the finest painted coffin Egypt produced and a masterpiece of panel painting. Additionally, it included Djehutynakht's jewelry, walking sticks, canopic jars and other objects, plus models of what must have been the governor's estate, including some 60 different model boats and two dozen models of daily life, such as individual shops of carpenters, weavers, brick-makers, bakers and brewers. Most of the objects have never been displayed before. Museum of Fine Arts, **Boston**, through May 16.

Arts of Bengal: Wives, Mothers, Goddesses present domestic artifacts made by and for Bengali women during the 19th and 20th centuries, including intricate embroidered quilts called *kanthas*, vibrant ritual paintings and fish-shaped caskets and other implements created in a resin-thread technique. Drawn from a common pool of motifs and ideas that reflect the unique environment of the region, these creations provide a rare view into women's everyday lives and thoughts. Other arts, such as elaborate painted narrative scrolls and souvenir paintings from Kalighat near Calcutta, illustrate women's many roles, both domestic and divine. (A companion exhibition, **Arts of Bengal: Village, Town, Temple**, open from March 13 through July, also showcases works from the Museum's extensive holdings of Bengali vernacular arts.) **Philadelphia** Museum of Art, through July.

COMING November
ReOrient is an annual festival of plays exploring the Middle East that are intended to displace misinformation and encourage understanding. In its 10th-anniversary year, the festival presents "No Such Cold Thing" by Naomi Wallace, "Tamam" by Betty Shamieh, "Coming Home" by Motti

Lerner, "Call Me Mehdi" by Torange Yeghiazarian, "I'm Not a Serial Killer" by Caveh Zahedi, "Abaga" by Torange Yeghiazarian, "A Marriage Proposal" by Yussef El Guindi, "Compression of a Casualty" by Kevin Doyle and "The Monologist Suffers for Her Monologue" by Yussef El Guindi. ① www.golden-thread.org/reorient.htm. Thwick House, **San Francisco**, November 19 through December 13.

Sahra is a gala charity concert celebrating Middle Eastern and North African culture, and helping the region's children, at which more than 100 master musicians and dancers from a dozen countries will perform. Algerian-born recording artist Khaled, originator of the "pop rai" music genre, will perform, as will Assala, considered the successor to the legendary Fairouz. Iraqi Rida Al Abdulla, who has performed professionally from the age of eight, released a fourth album in 2009 that breaks new ground in integrating western and Arab instrumentation, rhythms and production style. Profits from the concert will be donated to charities that work for children in the Middle East and North Africa. For tickets: MGM Grand 800-637-0295 1 or Jarir Bookstore 877.995.2747. MGM Grand, **Las Vegas**, November 21.

COMING December
The Elementary School Level: Content and Strategies for Teaching Arab Studies is the theme of this one-day teachers' workshop conducted by Arab World and Islamic Resources and School Services (AWAIR). The Chicago public school system is one of the growing number where Arabic is offered as a language program beginning at the elementary-school level. There will also be a full-day program for high-school teachers in the International Baccalaureate Schools program. ① www.awairoline.org or awair@igc.org. **Chicago**, December 4.

Enamels of the World, 1700–2000 features some 320 pieces in the inaugural presentation of a remarkable new facet of the Khalili Collections, now best known for their Islamic art. The collection views the subject in a global context rather than within the confines of national boundaries or individual activity, and the overview focuses on enamelwork of the past 300 years, encompassing objects produced in all the major centers of the art, including the Islamic lands. The richness of the collection also ensures that the work of individual enamellers may be studied in detail. Tickets: www.hermitagemuseum.org. State Hermitage Museum, **St. Petersburg, Russia**, December 8 through March 14.

Visions of the Cosmos: From Milky Ocean to Black Hole spans history, geography and religion to examine the ways in which different cultures view their place in the universe. Visitors will encounter eastern and western perspectives of the cosmos, along with photographs representing current astrophysical findings and a virtual trip through the universe. Rubin Museum of Art, **New York**, December 11 through May 10.

Kantha: The Embroidered Quilts of Bengal. Stitching *kanthas* was an art practiced by women across Bengal, a

region today comprising the nation of Bangladesh and the state of West Bengal, India. Lovingly created from the remnants of worn garments, *kanthas* are embroidered with motifs and tales drawn from a rich local repertoire and used especially in the celebration of births, weddings and other family occasions. The exhibition presents some 40 examples created during the 19th century and the first half of the 20th, when this vibrant domestic art flourished, and encompasses works by women of diverse backgrounds—rural and urban, Hindu and Muslim. **Philadelphia** Museum of Art, mid-December through July.

COMING January
Pioneers to the Past: American Archaeologists in the Middle East, 1919–1920 highlights James Henry Breasted's travels through Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine, exhibiting travel ephemera, documents and archival photos, narrated by quotations from diaries. Breasted's goal was to purchase artifacts for his new Oriental Institute Museum and to scout sites for future excavation, but he found himself in the unstable political situation after World War I, when local peoples, under colonial domination, were struggling for independence. The exhibition raises questions about whose history would be written, the role of America in the Middle East and the relationship of the past to the present—all issues still debated today. Catalog. Oriental Institute Museum, **Chicago**, January 12 to August 31.

COMING March
Poetry and Prayer: Illuminated Manuscripts from the Islamic World

presents masterpieces of Islamic manuscript illumination from the ninth to the 19th century created in famed artistic centers in today's Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Egypt and the Indian subcontinent. Characterized by the effects of gold, lapis lazuli and esthetically powerful design, Islamic manuscript illumination enhances the viewer's engagement with the book. The exhibition aims to broaden the perspective on Islamic illumination by considering both religious and non-religious works and to explore the ways in which illumination punctuates various parts of the book, navigating the reader through the pages. Walters Art Museum, **Baltimore**, March 20 through June 13.

COMING April
The Seventh International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, the major international forum for Near Eastern archeology,

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