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For My Children

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"Being both a doctor and a [breast cancer] patient myself, they feel that I understand their feelings. I know what is their agony, and they know that I am telling the truth." Portrait of Samia Al-Amoudi, MD, by Alexandra Avakian / Contact Press Images.

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Back Cover

On hills once quarried by sculptors working for the pharaohs, more than 200 modern artists have contributed to the "sculpture park" of the annual Aswan International Sculpture Symposium. Photo by Richard Duebel.

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.

For My Children

"I had just returned from taking my children to
lunch one day when, by absolute chance, I felt it....
As a woman, a mother and a physician, I began the journey."

— SAMIA AL-AMOUDI, MD

Samia Al-Amoudi, MD, is director of the Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Al-Amoudi Center of Excellence in Breast Cancer in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, where Sara Al-Bassam interviewed her.

Sara Al-Bassam: You are the leading voice in Saudi Arabia, and even in the Arab world, promoting not just awareness of breast cancer, but also open and frank discussion about it. You have done much of this through your column in the newspaper *Al-Madina*, since 2006, the year you were diagnosed with breast cancer. What inspired you to start your column?

Samia Al-Amoudi: I had been writing since I was a student, about women's issues in general. When I got this cancer, I thought it might be good to use my column to write the story of my journey with breast cancer, so I could use it as a tool to spread knowledge, spread the word, break the silence. Once I was diagnosed, my family kept giving me advice not to tell anybody, to try to keep it low-profile. To me, this was surprising, that people deal with cancer in that way. And then I thought, well, cancer by itself is a stress, so I don't need the additional stress of wondering if someone knows about my cancer or not. In addition, it's my responsibility as a woman and as a doctor to try to help women avoid what I have been through.

You spoke to me earlier about how you first discussed your diagnosis with your children by asking them what a friend of yours with breast cancer should tell her kids. How has this affected your family?

First of all, for the children, we think they won't understand, that we don't need to give them this horrible information. And I can tell you from my own personal experience that this is not true. They do understand. They feel, and they hear about it. They understand that something wrong is going on. And if we do not tell them, this might affect them in a very bad way. When I started to talk to my children, some people thought I was not concerned about their feelings. From experience I could tell you, after five years, that my kids are coping very well. And this is because they were informed from the beginning. I was very honest, very clear. I gave them the information gradually, according to their age—Abdullah was 13 and Esraa was nine. To give you an example, demonstrating that they are affected but they do not express themselves like adults, one day Esraa came to me and said, "Do you think when I grow up, I will have breast cancer like you?" It was shocking to me that a nine-year-old girl can feel that way. I had to be honest, without overreacting or exaggerating things. I said, "Listen, Esraa, any woman in the world could have breast cancer, but it is not necessarily true that you will have it. This is one thing. Second thing, now you see what I am doing: I am spending a lot of time outside, working hard, and sometimes I worry I am not spending enough time with you. But you know why? Because, in the future, I want you and your friends to say, 'Oh, I remember that in the past there was a disease called breast

Photographed by Alexandra Avakian / Contact Press Images

"As the saying goes, when you fight, you have to have a weapon. My mother always used to tell me that I needed to be educated because your diploma is your weapon. And in a fight, you also have to have a reason to fight. My two children, Abdullah and Esraa, are my reasons to fight, so I can be there for them on their graduation, so I can be there when they get married. In the picture of us praying, Abdullah is the imam. Thanks be to God, he is almost grown up now, about to graduate from high school. He wants to study medicine. This is his choice. He wants to be a doctor. For us, this is a moment of peace."

cancer, but now it does not exist anymore.'" The support is there, thank God, for me from my family, from my uncle, my mother, my sister.

Your children went on to write their own books about their experiences with you while you were battling breast cancer.

Breast cancer, we always say, is a disease of the family. It's not a disease that affects only the woman. And it depends on the way you react, the way you deal with the crisis. You need to go back and think about it. What are you going to do? Thank God, I always say it is a blessing from God. My reaction at the first second, when I felt the mass, was like that. And I managed to change it so that it has affected my children in a very, very good way. First of all, being a single mother, I started to change in the way I'm raising these two kids. I started to feel I had to prepare Abdullah for being independent so he could take care of himself and his sister, to be responsible. He knows how to go to the supermarket, pay the bills. Maybe if I hadn't got breast cancer, I wouldn't have done this. For Esraa, it is the same thing. So I started to raise them to be independent, to understand that this is life, they have to be strong, and they must have faith in God. Whatever is going to happen will happen. They have to know how to face all these crises. Today it is cancer; tomorrow it is something else. They have a long life, *inshallah*, and nobody knows what they are going to face. I think this has been an advantage to build their personalities in a much stronger way. For Esraa, I feel extremely proud of her. She doesn't have the phobia or the common perception of cancer as a sentence of death. One day I was telling her, "Oh, Esraa, I'm extremely tired. I'm sick, you know. I'm sick." She said, "No, you are not sick, *mashallah* [God keep you], Mama. Now you are not sick, thank God; you are okay. It's a disease, like you say always, like hypertension or diabetes." To me, this is what I wanted her to understand. This is the way I want her to cope with it.

Esraa and all her friends and classmates know, because every day she will take her book. Every day I would give her a pink ribbon or a pink ribbon sticker. I'm focusing on this generation. They talk about breast cancer, so they don't have a phobia of cancer.

Tell me more about how you are focusing on this generation.

It's fantastic. You can't believe it! First of all, Saudi society is a conservative society. It's not easy to talk about delicate, sensitive issues. And I understand that. I respect it fully. But it's our duty

"This is a support group of survivors. I feel that, thank God, we at least managed to encourage women to come and meet with each other, talk to each other. They share their feelings, they share their experience, and they feel more confident when they see that other people have it and have survived. The problem in Saudi Arabia is that they think that cancer is a death sentence. They don't know that there are people who have had breast cancer for five, 10, 15, 20 years. They don't know there are people who are living, working, who are mothers, almost normal. This gives them confidence."

and responsibility to stop and break that wall. When I started to focus and think of approaching schools for eight- to 12-year-old girls, some of the schools refused me. But my objective is not to talk about cancer. I am not giving them scientific talk because they are not in the age group that will be affected. The objective number one is to simply talk about breast cancer, to remove the phobia from the word "cancer."

So I tell these girls they are my ambassadors. I ask them if they understand the word "ambassador." I tell them, "King Abdullah has ambassadors in different countries. Why? Because if he wants to send a message to somebody in the government of England, America or wherever, he will send it through his ambassador. You are our ambassadors because you take the message to your home, and you tell your mom and dad that it is important that you take care of yourself and stay healthy and have the checkup every year. This is the idea. It's a way of empowering women with knowledge. It's a way of focusing on the new generation. One day I had a medical student come up to me and say, "Yesterday you were at my sister's school." I said, "Yes, how did you know?" "I know because my sister is in grade six, and she came home and she told my mother, 'You have to go and have the checkup.'" And I swear by God, I feel that this is the message that I want to achieve. This is my mission. It gives me the happiness of the world, as they say. Girls have a greater impact on their mothers than anybody else. They can touch their feelings in a better way. This is why when we talk about early detection, and why women must have mammograms, I tell women, even if you don't want to do it for yourself, for the sake of your health, do it for your children.

Yet as a doctor and a mother, you did not detect your own breast cancer early, and you have written about how your role as a mother put the well-being of others above your own. How do you tell women that their own health must be a priority?

We mothers have misconceptions about our roles. We think that if we are taking excellent care of our kids, we are doing our job right. I can tell you from my experience that if your child has a low-grade fever, any mother will be willing to rush to the nearest hospital, but for her own fever, she will neglect herself. If her kids are having school exams, she will even postpone an operation. So our prioritization here is not right. What

"I love this picture. Here I'm showing to the young kids, little girls, 'See, this is the breast, and if you put your finger here, you can feel a lump.' It was a very exciting session for them, talking to them and putting the tattoo stickers on. They were fighting to have more than one. When we give them a model to feel in their hand, they will never forget it. It's something exciting for them instead of just talking and explaining. This will stick in their memory in a better way."

"I feel very proud of these three pictures. King Abdullah is the one on the right. He is the greatest advocate for women. The reform that is happening now, and his support for women, is tremendous and amazing. The other two are King 'Abd al-'Aziz Al-Sa'ud and Crown Prince Sultan bin 'Abd al-'Aziz. It's a family that gave a lot to their people. They give a feeling of people who respect their nation."

women need to understand is that when I got sick, I could not care for my kids—because I was sick! So we are trying, I am trying personally, to talk to women. I believe that a live example is the best way. The problem with our ladies is that they don't have real-life examples. Being both a doctor and a patient myself, they feel that I understand their feelings. I know what is their agony, and they know that I am telling the truth because I've suffered. I took the chemotherapy. I know. So the live example is the best thing. But also the media, because there are a lot of women who don't read or write, but most of them have TV. And through telling your story, it has a great impact on women.

How do you reach rural women and women who are not formally educated? I was reading in your brochure about a new mammography vehicle.

Yes, this is the project for the coming year. In 2008 I established the scientific chair for breast cancer research. In 2011 we started the Center of Excellence in Breast Cancer. Now in 2012, hopefully, we will have the funds to have this vehicle so we can reach women in remote areas and women who do not have access to medical care.

You were also talking earlier about a new program for mute and deaf women.

One day I was invited to have lunch with a club for the deaf and mute. There I met HRH Princess Sita bint Abdullah bin 'Abd al-'Aziz Al-Sa'ud. And we were discussing how this group of women is neglected. They aren't getting the health care that they need. It was surprising to me to know that we have over 750,000 men and women with hearing problems. The first thing I did was to learn sign language. They ran a course, here in the Center. And I took this course, committing myself as a doctor, along with my team of administration here. Then we started to change all the signs in the Center to have them in sign language as well as

"This is a picture of the workshop that we did for the deaf and mute. It was in sign language, to train them on self-examination."

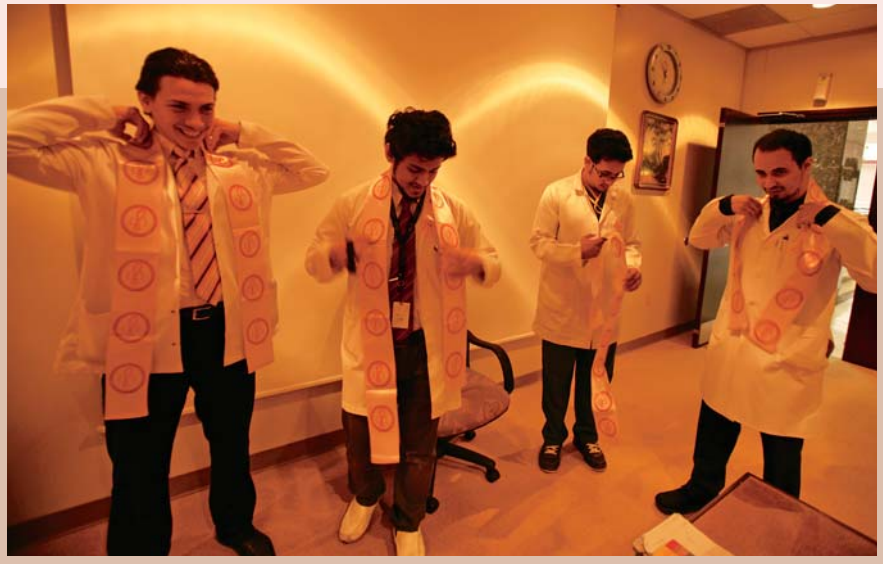
in Arabic and English. That way if a deaf woman comes who doesn't read, she could understand the signs. After that I wrote that book about breast cancer, and thanks to God, this month we issued it in sign language also.

Tell us about the other kinds of support you have, especially international support.

I'm a member in the United States Middle East Partnership, which was launched by former First Lady Laura Bush in October 2007. It's a partnership between the US and different Arab countries. Also, Susan G. Komen from the United States is a partner organization. We have been helped a lot from their experience. I always keep saying that Saudi is a rich country, we have the best technology, and we have the best doctors, but what we lack is the experience of these people. Susan G. Komen is the largest foundation for awareness, education and advocacy, and they've been doing this for the past 25 years. It's not wise to reinvent the wheel. We can learn from their experience and adapt it to be suitable for our culture.

Is there a particular challenge in speaking to Saudi women that you don't see outside Saudi Arabia or the Middle East?

This is a very good question. Yes, because here it is a closed community. It's not easy for women to come and talk about themselves. We do not use the media properly. We don't talk about these sensitive issues. Also, for example, if women admit they have breast cancer, they worry that people will not propose to their daughters. There is a misconception that it will be genetic, a disease in the family. Awareness of the importance of early detection is not yet high. But I can tell you from my



"These are my advocates, called Amoudi's Young Advocacy Alliance. These are the students and young doctors who join us in our conferences, activities, organizations, campaigns. Usually they are the ones who go out to the malls to distribute the flyers and talk to people. We have female advocates also, but I'm focusing on men because men are affected too. Although it is extremely rare, they can have breast cancer. For women, if they are married, their husbands are affected emotionally, psychologically and financially."

Left: "Here I was in the clinic with my own doctor. Breast cancer is a disease that needs meticulous follow-up. It is a disease that can come back, so you must have regular, meticulous follow-up." (Ed. note: To protect her privacy, the woman in the background asked *Saudi Aramco World* not to show her face.)

Right: "This is a picture of a friend of mine, Hannah, a designer. She is the first woman to make a pink-ribbon *abaya*. And since that time I only wear the pink-ribbon abaya as a commitment to the cause. She does the abayas for me."

experience that there is a tremendous change in the perception and the attitude and awareness if you compare it to three or four years back. This change is everywhere now. People talk about it. They see the campaigns everywhere.

You're working on a book about health rights for Saudi women.

Yes, it's mainly for breast cancer patients. The first objective is to empower women so they understand their rights. Breast cancer patients have to have access to care. Then there is a misconception that women must get permission from their male guardians. In Islam, and by law and regulations, even in the Ministry of Health manual itself, as an adult, a man or a woman is in charge of his or her own health and his or her own health care. There is no need for the consent form to be signed by a male guardian. But some doctors don't know that this is not the rule, and many women will not sign by themselves because of the way we have raised our daughters to respect their husbands and their fathers. So it is tradition. It's not something that has to do with Islam or the law. I am trying through this book to empower women and help health providers by clarifying that these are the official documents and rules of Saudi Arabia, and the others are just tradition. It also says in the law that it is fine for her husband to sign, but she has to sign as well.

"I was invited to give a talk to the people in the science part of the mall. Here I'm talking to the supervisor. We try to go everywhere—malls, museums, schools, colleges—all the places we can reach women."

"This is the survivor conference. We invited a group of survivors, and we might give them an abaya as a gift. This is a picture of my lecture to the women. It is a community education program, with the dean, the oncologist. I gave a lecture and he gave a lecture."

Do you think that more women with breast cancer will be cured because of your work?

Unless we get ready, studies have shown that the number of cases is going to increase. But with awareness, the number of cases is not the problem: It is the number of advanced-stage cases. If you have breast cancer that is found early, we can treat it. The success rate is about 98 percent. The taboo? Yes, definitely. The taboo will change, maybe even in this generation.

What would you like to see happen in the future?

I want there to be a day where we have a world free of breast cancer. I would like to see more empowerment of women, and more focusing on the new generation. Maybe I couldn't do much for myself, but I am trying to do a lot of things for my daughter, so she can live in a world free of cancer.

How can people help?

When people like you in the media talk about breast cancer, I think this is the greatest support, by growing the attention to this critical issue. You are increasing awareness.

Alexandra Avakian (www.alexandraavakian.com) became a photojournalist in 1984, and leading magazines have published her work regularly ever since. Her book *Windows of the Soul: My Journeys in the Muslim World* received wide critical acclaim in 2008. She is also a two-time breast cancer survivor.

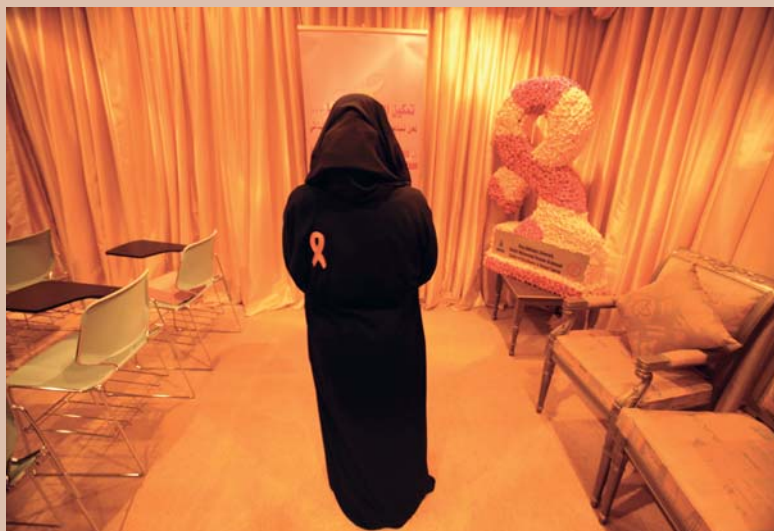
Sara Al-Bassam is a graduate student at New York University's Interactive Telecommunications Program and a former staff writer for *The Arabian Sun* newspaper, published in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia by Saudi Aramco.

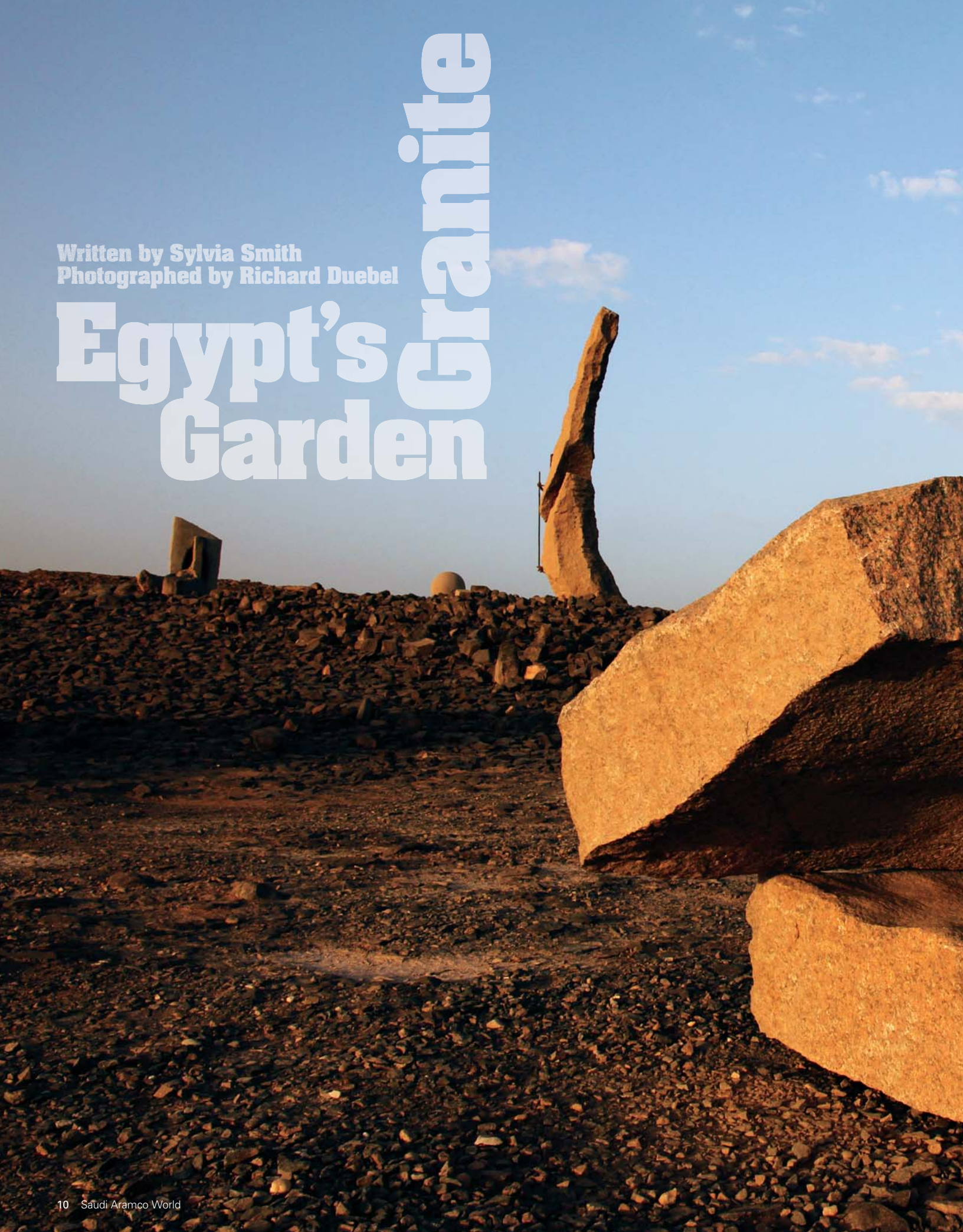
http://alamoudi-breastcenter.kau.edu.sa

"I am touched when I see these posters and craft projects by girls who are nine or 10 years old, and also they are wearing the pink ribbon. They love the idea. Once you send this message, the pink ribbon, they will understand, and they will carry the message home."

"This is a pink ribbon on the abaya. Sometimes people stop me in the mall or in the supermarket and ask me, 'What is that you are wearing?' Sometimes they ask, 'Is it for AIDS?' I say, 'No, the pink one is for breast cancer.' Then they ask, 'Why are you wearing it?' It's a message by itself. It's a commitment. By wearing this I'm spreading knowledge. We deal with a community where there are different origins and different beliefs, attitudes and perceptions. We deal with them because cancer is a human issue. It knows no boundaries."

"This is a very nice drawing by a young lady in the last year of high school. This is our logo. It shows the younger generation holding the mission, carrying our symbol: the pink ribbon."





Egypt's Garden Granite

Written by Sylvia Smith
Photographed by Richard Duebel

Among the sculptures on view in the sculpture park is this one, created by Swiss artist René Kung in 2005.

The quiet in the valley overlooking the water between Egypt's High Dam and Aswan Dam is suddenly shattered as three cranes begin winching and heaving four-meter-high chunks of granite up the side of a hill. Akram El Magdoub, an architect and "land artist" from Cairo, stands watching cranes and men maneuvering the stones onto a ledge. His latest project uses the natural contours of this pharaonic granite quarry to create an open-air museum, a rough-hewn showcase that will highlight half a dozen of what are now more than 200 granite sculptures that have been produced nearby at the annual Aswan International Sculpture Symposium. El Magdoub and his men have to be meticulous in positioning each sculpture. When completed, the "gallery" will stand about 15 meters (48') high, perched precariously on an outcrop.

It is a powerful, even monumental, means of emphasizing the impressive accomplishments of the still little-known symposium, now in its 16th year.

"This installation has a function because the works of other artists are going to be placed inside," he explains. "There is some brickwork so the structure can follow the curved line of the mountain. And we are also using glass." Windows of thick glass are supported by wooden window frames. It is part of an ambitious plan that includes a future visitor center, a shuttle to the site from the center of Aswan and high-quality art publications in an on-site bookshop.

But first, getting tons of granite onto the natural platform

Built along the contours of hills that were once pharaonic quarries, "land artist" Akram El Magdoub's outdoor sculpture museum takes shape piece by piece, below**; meanwhile, in downtown Aswan,** right**, sculptors shape other granite blocks during the annual Aswan International Sculpture Symposium.**

Founder of the symposium in 1996, Aswan-born Adam Henein dedicated this 2009 sculpture to the Egyptian Ministry of Culture. "What we are doing here is continuing traditional sculpture that started centuries ago," he says.

correctly and safely while ensuring that the site retains its rough, rather ancient feel is just one challenge facing El Magdoub's team. The heat is intense, and the men carrying out the work stop for a cup of strong tea. They brew it in an old pot balanced over an open fire burning special twigs that they say gives the tea a unique flavor. Together, they are bringing back granite sculpture to its home: Aswan.

It is an artist, Adam Henein, who is behind this quite literally monumental undertaking. Originally from Aswan, he is now considered Egypt's leading sculptor. He divides his time between the old quarry and an expansive open-air studio in town, where 16 artists are fashioning granite into sculpture.

The symposium is always held in the winter, because that is the only time of year when the heat is bearable. It is difficult to hear what this soft-spoken man has to say in either place—such is the din from cranes, pneumatic drills, hand-held grinders and polishers, diamond cutting wheels and good, old-fashioned hammers and chisels. The air is heavy with the dust that covers everything and has to be constantly brushed away.

"What we are doing here"—Henein lowers his voice under the noise—"is continuing the tradition of sculpture in granite that started centuries ago. It is part of Egyptian heritage, but had gone so completely out of fashion that there were only a couple of competent granite sculptors left when we started this symposium 16 years ago."

Young Egyptian sculptors, he explains, wanted to emulate the West and preferred working in easier materials. "Granite is demanding and difficult, but it is also so rewarding," he adds. Not all of the artists at the symposium are Egyptian, however, and some come from Europe and Asia. Since its beginning with only a few sculptors in attendance, the symposium has grown to become a significant event, and it has established a new school of Egyptian sculptors.

By inviting international artists, Henein says, he allows younger Egyptian sculptors to see new ideas, and the process sets up an international dialogue. To start, each artist is given a cut block approximately three by three by two meters (9 ½' x 9 ½' x 6 ½'). It is these chunks of granite that they are now shaping and sanding and grinding, standing back from time to time to ensure they are creating the desired effect.

Each of the 16 invited artists is given a cut block of granite that measures about three by three by two meters. What they do with it is up to them.

Michael Sprogis, a Canadian living in Paris, cut 170 pieces to create this hybrid of an obelisk, a pyramid and the Eiffel Tower.

The symposium has no theme. Creating anything from a decorative door that opens on hidden hinges to abstract notions of freedom embodied in winged structures that mirror the lateen sails of the feluccas on the nearby Nile, the artists are given technical advice and complete freedom to sculpt what they wish.

"There is a great atmosphere here," says Beata Rostas from Hungary. She is one of three women participating this year. "It isn't all just chipping and grinding. The most fascinating part of the symposium was the visit to ancient sites along the Nile early on in the program." She describes with her face the amazement the foreign artists felt when seeing the Pyramids at Giza and the Sphinx for the first time. "We had to ask what we're doing here in Egypt. Nothing we can do compares with those monuments."

But Rostas admits that everyone is keen to leave a memorable work behind in the sculpture park. Her own bird-like structure is almost complete. Other artists suggest that what is most daunting is that the ancients consciously built for eternity.

Michael Sprogis, a Canadian living in Paris, is creating a 170-piece sculpture that combines obelisk, pyramid and Eiffel Tower. The pieces fit together like a jigsaw puzzle, and each is marked appropriately. He says that what amazes him most is how the ancients "managed to remove such huge pieces of granite. Then how did they get these massive chunks, weighing hundreds of tons, from the quarry down to the Nile?"

But younger Egyptians like Hany El Sayed, who is completely covered in granite dust, believes the strength of the pharaonic artists was that they worked in groups, and they accepted that it would be their children and grandchildren who would complete their sculptures. "It just took a very, very long time," he says.

Nearby, two blocks of speckled black-and-pink stone are being meticulously cut with controlled strength and concentration by Yoshin Ogata, a Japanese artist now in his 60's. He has spent nearly two days fashioning them into a drop of water that will appear to be suspended in midair in the center of a hollow. His work is about stillness and balance, and it is radically different from, say, that of Mohamed El Labban, whose energetic sculpture

Right: **Georges Bahgory (Egypt), 2008.** Far right: **John Gogaberishvili (Georgia), 2010.**

Coated in enough dust to make him appear almost part of his own sculpture, Egyptian Hany El Sayed puts chisel to stone.

juxtaposes flowing lines and sharp angles. El Labban believes that the ability to create art out of granite is in the Egyptian blood. "Aswan was at the heart of the monument industry providing granite for sarcophagi, statues and obelisks," he explains.

Indeed, it was from Aswan that came the materials used in Egypt's best-known tourist attractions. "It was accepted that every work would be a massive undertaking," says Nagui Farid, the symposium's assistant director. It would take hundreds of workers their entire lives to work on a sculpture, and then it would fall to the next generation to continue."

Sometimes, he explains, the granite would split, or a flaw would be uncovered, and then a huge piece would be abandoned, and the whole process would be started again. It was a labor that could end in devastating frustration.

To prove the point, El Labban takes me to a pharaonic quarry a short walk away from the sculpture park. Here, hidden among the rocks, we find lying on its side a not-quite-complete statue of Ramses II.

"This must have taken over a hundred years to get to this stage," he says. "But look here." He points to a long crack. "Something went wrong."

"There was a very different mentality," confides Henein. "We can't expect that from the present generation. Everything is immediate for them. But for the two months of the symposium, we achieve a focus and determination that is missing in other disciplines." The knowledge of how to work granite, he says, is spreading, and galleries in Cairo now sell recent granite works done by artists who gained their proficiency at the Aswan symposium.

Some artists attend for several years in succession. "Our Egyptian sculptors tell me that they feel a lot of connection with this sort of work," Henein says. "I am glad that having foreign artists working alongside our Egyptian sculptors is so appreciated. A great rapport builds up during our time together."

Shards of granite, sediment and debris cover the ground, and at the end of the month, the artists have completed their tasks—some with a great deal of support from assistants. There are different sorts of satisfaction, with some having extracted a hoped-for meaning—or an unexpected one—from this reluctant stone. No one departs without wondering if someday, far in the future, their stone may be viewed as a clue to how people lived, thought and made art in the long-ago 21st century.

Below: **Nathan Dos Amin (Egypt), 2008.**
Left: **Zeinab Salama (Egypt), 2010.**

Richard Duebel (richard.duebel@btinternet.com) is a filmmaker, photographer and art director who has been working in North Africa and the Middle East for more than 15 years. His interests lie in culture, environment and the applied arts.

Sylvia Smith makes radio and television programs from the Arab world as well as reports from Europe and elsewhere that explore connections with North Africa and the Middle East.

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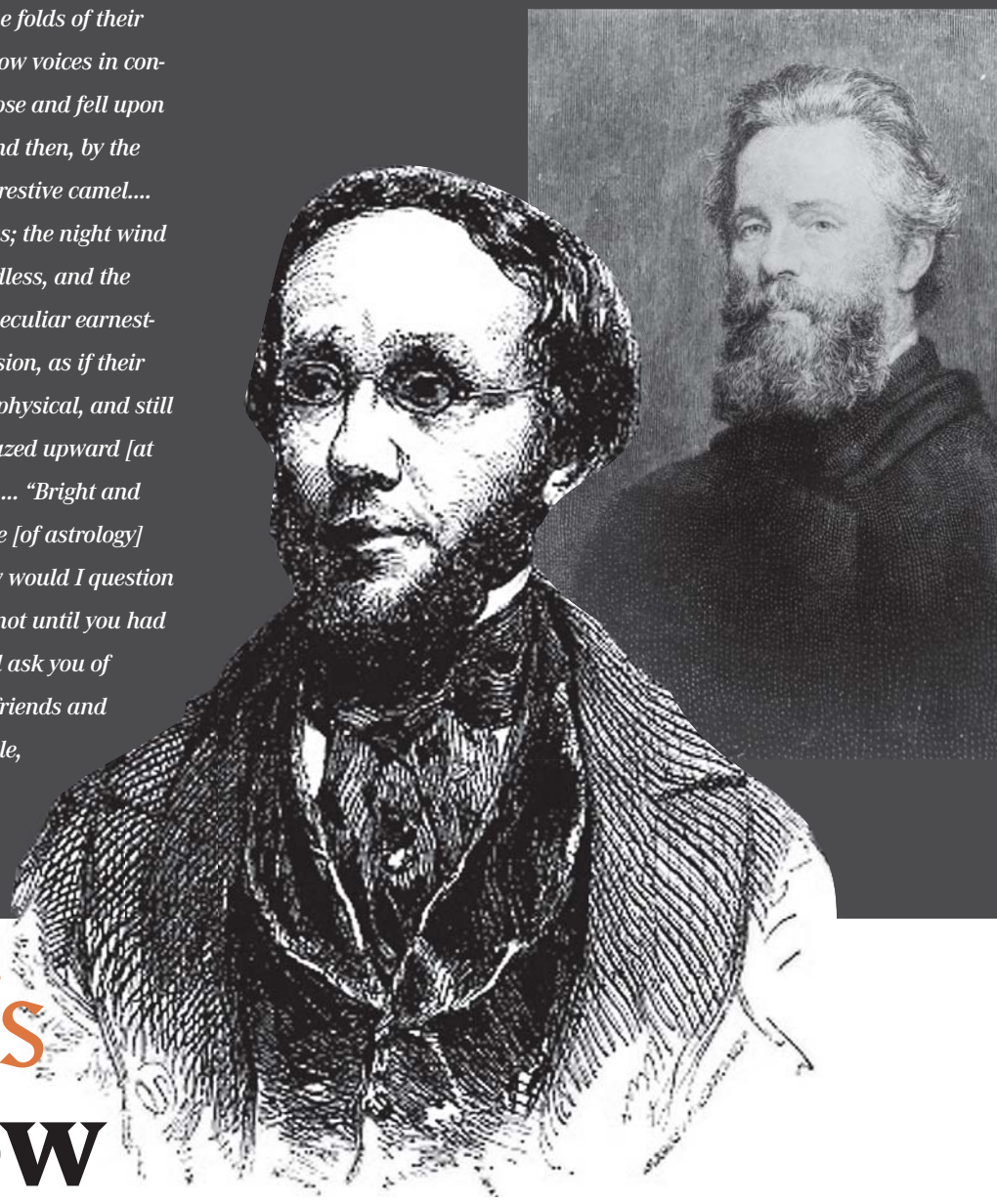
Aswan: S/O 85
Stone sculptor: M/J 10

See more photos and video of the Aswan International Sculpture Symposium at www.saudiaramcoworld.com

Gradually, one after the other, the chattering Bedouins had sunk back on the ground, and wrapping their faces in the folds of their haicks, were resigning themselves to rest.... A few low voices in conversation, in the liquid languages of the Soudan, rose and fell upon the gentle night wind, interrupted, perhaps, now and then, by the deep guttural exclamation of an Arabic voice, at a restive camel....

The noises of the wild bivouac grew less and less; the night wind swept by with a more gentle sigh; the sky was cloudless, and the bright stars peered down like angels' eyes, with a peculiar earnestness and intentness, and with an inquiring expression, as if their wondering owners were trying to pry into the deep physical, and still deeper moral mysteries of this strange world.... I gazed upward [at the stars], steadily, in a deep and absorbing revery.... "Bright and beautiful beings!" I exclaimed, "... Oh! if the science [of astrology] were true, and I were but master of its arcana, how would I question you. I would make you prophesy of the future, but not until you had satisfied me as to the present and the past. I would ask you of other scenes, and fairer lands. I would ask you of friends and above all, I would ask you of Kaloolah. Sweet, gentle, artless Kaloolah!"

–from *Kaloolah*, by William Starbuck Mayo



In Melville's Shadow

WRITTEN BY
ROBERT W. LEBLING

Based on a daguerreotype by Mathew Brady, who later photographed the American Civil War, this portrait of William Starbuck Mayo, above, **appeared in the July 1, 1851 edition of *The International Monthly Magazine of Literature, Art, and Science*.** Top: **This anonymous etching of Herman Melville is based on a painting by Joseph O. Eaton.**

Such were the reveries of shipwrecked American sailor Jonathan Romer, camped for the night with Bedouins in the Sahara, as his thoughts turned to a remarkable princess from a lost African kingdom who would come to have a permanent impact on his life. Yankee hero Romer was midway through his adventures in *Kaloolah; or, Journeyings to the Djébel Kumri*, a novel that topped the best-seller lists in New York and London in 1849.

Kaloolah was a forerunner of the "lost race" novels of H. Rider Haggard and others. It was a surprising first effort–part adventure, part romance, part satire and 100-percent compelling. The book was written in a fresh, direct, unself-conscious style, appealing to readers even today. Billed as the "autobiography of Jonathan Romer," the work was actually penned by a new literary sensation, William Starbuck Mayo, whose star would burn bright and beautiful, like those high above Romer's head in the trackless Sahara, for a handful of years before being eclipsed forever by another New York novelist, the author of *Moby-Dick*, Herman Melville.

But for a time, Mayo, a Manhattan physician whose writings were based on his own travels to Morocco and the Sahara, was all the rage. Literary legend Washington Irving pronounced Kaloolah "one of the most admirable pictures ever produced in this country." Amid a flood of favorable notices, the prestigious *Democratic Review* declared Mayo's novel "decidedly the book of the season, having produced a sensation quite as extended as did the works of Mr. Melville." *Kaloolah*, it said, "has placed Dr. Mayo at once among the most successful of American authors." Everyone who was anyone in New York and London was reading *Kaloolah*.

TOP: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

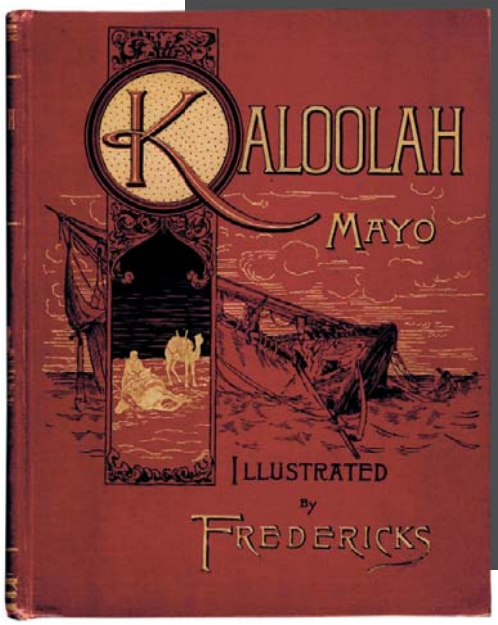
A year later, with the publication of his second novel, Mayo's star rose even higher. Consider the scene in New York on August 16, 1850: "Every where you go, you see people in cars and boat cabins in possession of a couple of books in orange colored binding, as striking as the dress of a Turk would be in [a New York political rally]; they are the bound pages of The Berber!"

Abraham Oakey Hall—lawyer, writer and future mayor of New York—made this observation in his journal about Mayo's *The Berber; or, the Mountaineer of the Atlas: A Tale of Morocco*, which was showing up throughout Manhattan and at nearby vacation spots.

Today, Melville is considered an icon of American literature, and Mayo has disappeared in his shadow. But it was not always so.

In 1850, when Herman Melville was hard at work on *Moby-Dick*, his writing career was on the skids. Following the success of his first novel, the Polynesian romance *Typee*, and a respectable performance by its sequel, *Omoo*, the great man appeared to have, at least for a time, lost his touch. *Mardi*, a more philosophical and symbol-steeped novel also set in the South Pacific, had turned out to be a critical bust.

Washington Irving called Mayo's 1849 best-selling first novel "one of the most admirable ever produced in this country."



Melville was searching for his identity as a writer as he sought to distance himself from the Knickerbocker style, a conservative, somewhat elitist literary approach by writers like Washington Irving that focused largely on New York's past and local traditions. The Knickerbocker writers were steeped in neoclassical traditions of satire and wit, and admired the British leaders of the Romantic movement, such as Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron and Thomas Moore. To a Knickerbocker, writing essays, poems and novels was not the stuff of a career but rather a leisure pursuit, a pastime for literate, well-educated aristocrats. Melville—like fellow American writers Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman—sought to introduce new direction and creativity to his craft—a craft that post-Knickerbocker writers thought should be capable of providing a worthy livelihood.

It was ironic that Melville, the brilliant but struggling full-time novelist, should be upstaged by a new writer who made his living as a doctor. Mayo's success perhaps came from the fact that he did not seek to make writing his career. His goal, as best we can judge, was simply to tell good stories. He wrote plainly, yet vigorously and with humor, about things that were part of his experience. He wanted to share his experiences at sea and abroad. Mayo had learned a great deal about the cultures and societies of "Barbary," or North Africa, and he looked for a way to convey this knowledge to American audiences. He started with short stories and poems. Before long, he was writing novels.

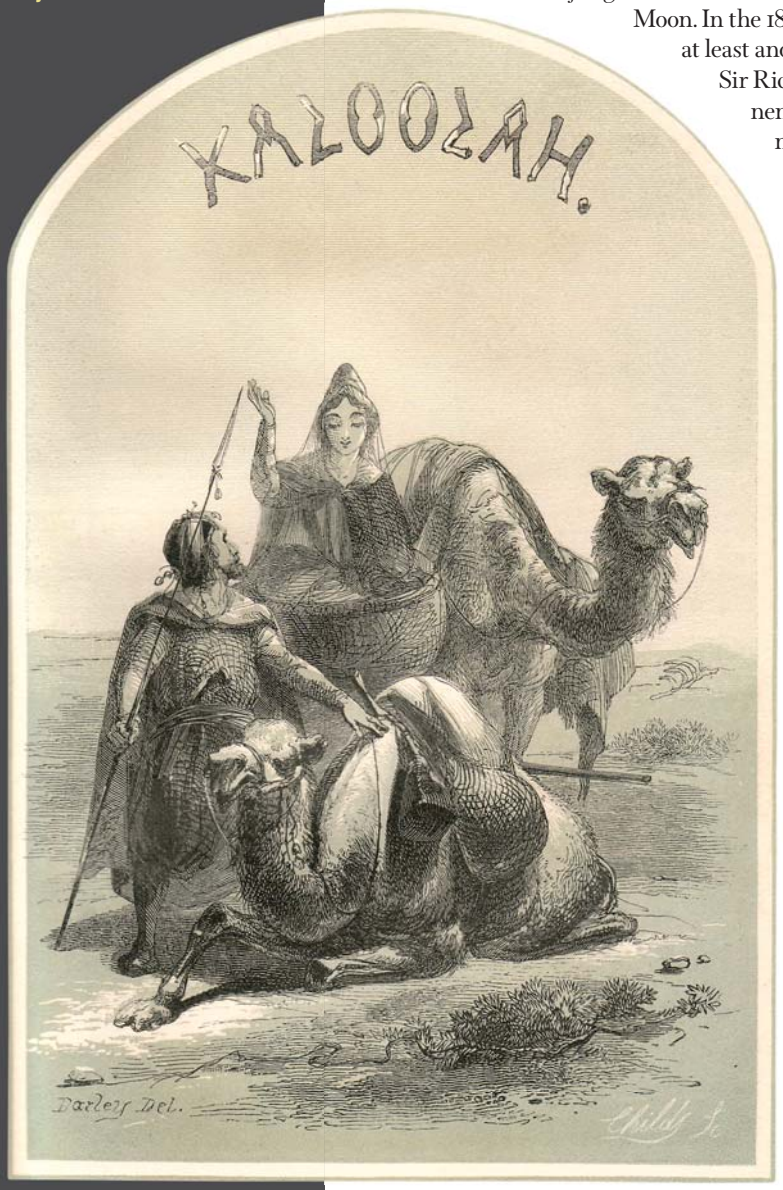
Today, it seems ironic that Melville, the brilliant but struggling novelist, should have been upstaged by a well-traveled doctor.

Mayo was a native of Ogdensburg, a small port city in northern New York, on the St. Lawrence River across from Canada. He was born on April 15, 1812, two months before the outbreak of the War of 1812, during which British troops captured and briefly occupied Ogdensburg. Mayo's father had been a captain in the merchant marine, but had settled at Ogdensburg at the urging of his young wife, Elizabeth Starbuck, who was descended from the whaling and merchant Starbucks of Nantucket, Massachusetts, a family quite familiar with the risks and tragedies of the seafaring life. He set up a boat-building business primarily for the canal and lake trade and helped to raise their four children, of whom William was the eldest.

William grew up in small-town circumstances similar to those of his first novel's hero, Jonathan Romer. He studied classics at the Academy at Potsdam, near Ogdensburg, and soon developed an interest in medicine. After working for two local doctors, he went on to study in New York City, and after graduation worked in city hospitals and private practice. Eventually poor eyesight and a yearning for adventure—characteristics shared by Melville—led Mayo to set aside his promising career in medicine and begin charting plans to explore central Africa. He never made it to the heart of Africa—then still a land unknown to Europeans—but he traveled through Spain and North Africa's "Barbary Coast," and he ventured into the deserts of the Sahara.

Mayo returned to New York with stacks of notebooks crammed with local-color descriptions and accounts of his adventures. He resumed his medical practice with renewed energy, but was consumed with a powerful urge to write about North Africa and the Sahara, and the diverse peoples and customs he had encountered there. In the early 1840's, he began writing sketches, stories and poems—at first anonymously and then under his own name—that captured the flavor of his overseas experiences. Among these

Mayo's literary evocations were based not only on his romantic imagination, but also on his travels to Morocco. These engravings, of Romer and Kaloolah with their camels in the Saharan desert, below**, and a battle between a lion and a serpent,** opposite**, both appeared in the fifth edition, printed in 1854. They were drawn by Felix Octavius Carr Darley and engraved by Benjamin F. Childs.**



were "Don Sebastian: A Tale from the Chronicles of Portugal" (September 1842) and "The Bereber" (November 1842) in the popular magazine *Ladies' Companion*, and "The Bedouin" (March 1844) and "The Captain's Story" (June 1846) in *The Democratic Review*.

In 1849, Mayo brought a 750-page manuscript entitled *Kaloolah* to publisher George Palmer Putnam, at 155 Broadway. Putnam liked the novel, and he thought it would sell, given the public's hunger for adventures set in exotic locales, like Melville's *Typee*. He edited the work down to about 500 pages. Mayo insisted that his name not appear on the title page—perhaps he was uncertain how publication of the book would affect his reputation as a prominent local physician. When the novel proved to be a hit, both commercially and critically, Mayo agreed to have his name added to the title page of the second and subsequent editions—as "editor" of Romer's "autobiography."

Kaloolah was set in the American wilderness, on the high seas, in the Sahara and in the jungles of central Africa, the fabled location of Jabal Kumri, or the Mountains of the Moon. In the 1840's, the center of Africa was still a land of mystery. It would be at least another decade before British adventurers John Hanning Speke, Sir Richard Burton and others would open up the center of the continent and effectively remove it from the exotic speculation of novelists. Mayo's novel recounted the adventures of Romer, a quintessential Yankee hero who survives shipwrecks, slavery and desert hardships to win the heart and hand of the princess Kaloolah. He rescues her from slavery and returns her to the utopian kingdom of Framazugda, a remarkable, progressive civilization built by Yemeni Arabs in the heart of the central African jungle.

Mayo's novel recounted the adventures of Jonathan Romer, a quintessential Yankee hero who survives shipwrecks, slavery and desert hardships to win the heart and hand of the princess Kaloolah.

Kaloolah is in a sense three books. The first part details Romer's years as a rambunctious, inquisitive youth in upper New York state. Aspects of Mayo's own experiences emerge at times from these tales. Romer engages in school pranks, hunts in the forests, encounters American Indians, lives in a cavern in the woods, works for two local physicians and illegally exhumes a body for medical research.

Romer's adventures remind us of Mark Twain's tales *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, written three to four decades later. We have no evidence that Twain (born Samuel Clemens) read *Kaloolah*, but Mayo's novel was published when Clemens was a young printer's apprentice in Hannibal, Missouri, reading voraciously every book he could get his hands on. It is highly unlikely that the young Clemens, who spent many an evening after work at the Hannibal public library, would have passed up a best-selling adventure/romance like *Kaloolah*.

In the second part of the novel, Romer goes to sea, primarily to avoid the legal repercussions of the grave-robbing incident. He survives the capsizing of an American schooner off the Canaries, is forced into service aboard a Spanish slave ship, escapes to an English brig and is shipwrecked again off the western Sahara coast. Mayo's graphic descriptions of the African slave trade, written barely a dozen years before the American Civil War, include grim details of the practice of "loose-packing" versus "tight-packing"

slaves on the decks, and throwing overboard the sick and injured to certain death in the open ocean. It is during Romer's service with the slavers that he meets the princess Kaloolah and her brother, who have been kidnapped and put up for sale in a coastal West African market.

In part three, Romer finds himself captured in the Sahara by a band of Arab Bedouins. He learns their language and customs, and in time gains their trust, sharing some of his medical knowledge, marksmanship and other skills. While traveling with the Bedouins, he once again encounters Kaloolah, still enslaved and serving a family in a caravan. Romer and Kaloolah escape and head across the Sahara on camelback to central Africa, where her mysterious kingdom awaits.

Framazugda, whose origin harks back perhaps to the traveling merchants of ancient Saba (land of the queen of Sheba), is portrayed by the author as an advanced civilization—not a utopia, certainly, but a well-run, compassionate society from which mid-19th-century New Yorkers could take some lessons. Here Mayo the doctor wields his satirical scalpel, advancing his personal interest in public health. Framazugda is a clean society, which places a high priority on the health of its people. At the same time, its inhabitants have a remarkably well-developed sense of smell and, in the words of Kaloolah herself, "could as well do without food as without flowers." Romer speculates that the stenches of New York and of other major western metropolises are one reason why the citizens of such cities have never developed their olfactory capabilities.

After a string of adventures in deserts and jungles, top **and** above**, Romer returns Kaloolah to her native Framazugda, which Mayo portrays as a well-run, compassionate society—one from which New Yorkers could take some lessons.**

Some critics thought Mayo's story had echoes of Melville's *Typee*. But the author of *Kaloolah* showed that his novel had been written before *Typee* was published. Mayo said in a preface to the fourth edition: "It has frequently been the case among the numerous flattering notices, particularly those from the English press, with which *Kaloolah* has been received, that allusions have been made to the works of a distinguished American writer, and the suggestion thrown out that it was intended to be of the class and character of *Typee*. The author himself can perceive no very close resemblance in matter or manner; but whether there is a likeness or not, certain it is, that *Kaloolah* was written before *Typee* issued from the press."

While some have claimed similarities between the princess Kaloolah and Fayaway, the Marquesan "island girl" of *Typee*, Kaloolah is the more developed character by far, voicing strong opinions and taking decisive actions. By contrast, Fayaway remains a two-dimensional island beauty, seldom depicted as a real person. Kaloolah, for example, even shows a determined environmentalist streak, urging Romer not to allow his camel to crop the leaves of a thorny plant encountered in the dunes: "No, no, do not harm it! 'Tis but a mouthful, and existence must be sweet, or it could not cling to life so bravely. Let it live on. Why should we be more cruel than the winds and sands of Sahara?"

Another distinction between the two tales is that Romer opts to marry Kaloolah and spend his life with her in Framazugda, whereas Tommo, the protagonist of *Typee*, abandons Fayaway, leaving her sobbing on the beach as he returns to "civilization."

As far as we know, Melville never explicitly mentioned or commented on Mayo or *Kaloolah*. But historian Cecil B. Eby, Jr., has made a case for the opposite of conventional wisdom: that it was Mayo who influenced Melville, not the other way around. Eby argues that Melville could not have missed reading the one novel to which his own writings were repeatedly compared in reviews of the day, and that *Moby-Dick* may well have been influenced by certain themes developed in *Kaloolah*—for example, Mayo's portrayal of

In 1849, New York publisher George Palmer Putnam, above**, printed four editions of Mayo's novel. Mayo, however, was uncertain of how it would be received by the public, and he allowed his own name to be put on it only after it became a hit—and then only as "editor," to better preserve the illusion that the tale was protagonist Romer's autobiography.**

the Nantucketer as adventurer, his description of whaling as ennobling, even "knightly," and the concept of the whale as a malignant intelligence.

There are a number of intriguing parallels between *Kaloolah* and *Moby-Dick*, along with the obvious differences. When posing as a Bedouin in the Sahara, Romer calls himself Ishmael, the name Melville later chooses for his whaler protagonist. It is also interesting, even if only a coincidence, that Mayo's middle name Starbuck is the name Melville selected for Captain Ahab's first mate.

Kaloolah's Romer traces his line of descent from the Coffins, Starbucks and other families whose names figure importantly in the later *Moby-Dick*. Most of Romer's relatives had spent their sailing careers hunting "the ocean monster" from which alone "the highest honors" could be won. One of his relatives had been "an officer of a ship which was struck and destroyed by an infuriated cachelot, whether by accident or design remains a disputed point amongst whalers." Perhaps even more significantly, we can see a foretelling of Captain Ahab's loss of his leg in the fate of another relative of Romer's, a boatsman hurled into the air by a collision with a pursued whale, who "fell into the whale's mouth, and the teeth of the animal closed upon his leg."

"Both writers," says Eby, "were competing

When posing as a Bedouin in the Sahara, Romer calls himself Ishmael—the name Melville chose for his whaler protagonist in *Moby-Dick*, published two years after *Kaloolah*.

for public favor by writing the same kind of fictional narrative—the pseudo-autobiographical exotic romance—and Mayo's spectacular popular success must have been a bitter pill to Melville."

Historian Perry Miller concludes in *The Raven and the Whale*, a highly regarded cultural history of New York in the years 1833-57, that Melville read, and was disturbed by, *Kaloolah*. During that period, Melville, Mayo and others were essentially warriors contending on the cultural "battleground" on which modern American literature was defined. Miller reminds us that New York at that time was not the premier literary center it later became, calling it "a literary butcher-shop." In those days, the Brahmins of Boston dominated American literature. In addition, the few great writers of whom New York could boast—primarily Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper and transplanted New Englander William Cullen Bryant—were difficult icons to challenge or supplant.

Mayo's book passed through four editions between May and October of 1849. *Kaloolah* appeared in the interval between the publication of Melville's *Mardi* and *Redburn*, covering roughly the same period, and Eby believes it probably "swam into Melville's ken" at about that time.

Literature professor Gerald C. Van Dusen, who wrote a monograph on Mayo, believes Eby "overstates"

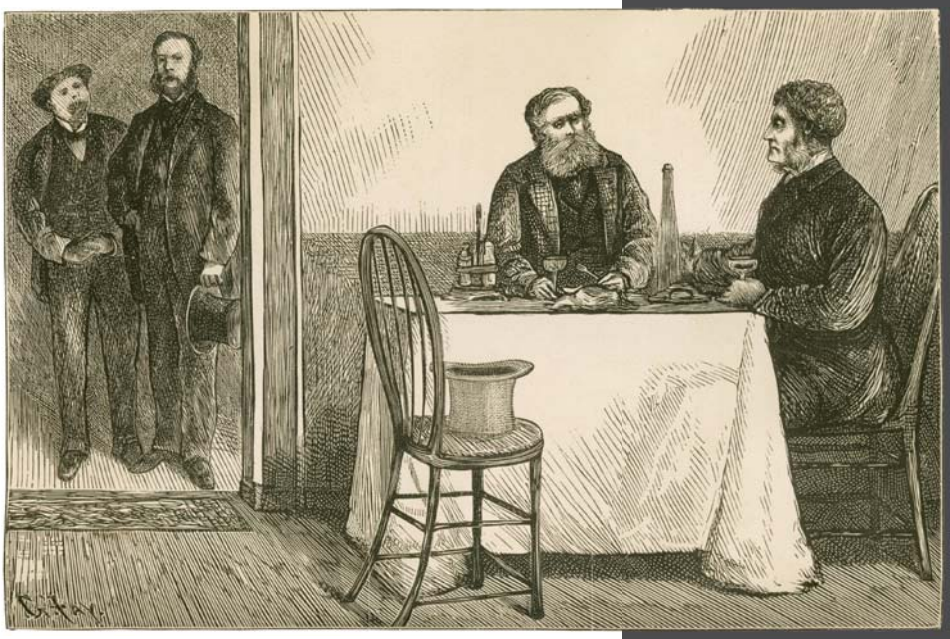
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS; OPPOSITE: COURTESY ROBERT W. LEBLING

Mayo's possible influence on Melville, failing to take into account "the rich body of folk tales and popular adventure novels from which both Melville and Mayo were moving out in new directions." In the 1830's particularly, there had been no shortage of popular maritime tales involving Yankee adventurers, Nantucket whalers and monsters of the deep, and both novelists had certainly swum in those seas. As Van Dusen points out, "It is easy to forget that fully one-third of Cooper's novels—eleven, in fact—were sea novels."

Moby-Dick was published in 1851. Melville earned about $500 from the American edition of the book, and the initial printing of 3000 copies was not sold out in his lifetime. Melville's career began to plummet in the mid-1850's, and when he died in 1891, he was almost forgotten, just like Mayo. Melville never achieved his goal of making a living as a novelist, later earning his bread as a customs inspector for the City of New York. In his lifetime, he earned a total of just over $10,000 from his writing. Fortunately for Melville's reputation, a revival of interest in his work, first among scholars and then among the public, occurred in the early 20th century. *Moby-Dick* is now regarded as his best work, and one of the greatest American literary creations of all time.

In 1850, while Melville was hard at work on *Moby-Dick*, Mayo published his eagerly awaited second novel, *The Berber*, a tale of 17th-century Morocco, which featured three interwoven love stories and a number of sketches of the Berbers, the aboriginal inhabitants of North Africa. Once more drawing on his own Moroccan experiences for context, Mayo writes about twin brothers separated as children, one of whom is raised by Barbary pirates, and their reunion and adventures in the Atlas Mountains.

The novel received mixed reviews but sold very well. *The American Whig Review* thought *The Berber* was probably better written than *Kaloolah*, but not as exciting, not "a true romance." *The New York Evening Post* was particularly pleased by Mayo's true-to-life descriptions of Berber society and customs: "His account of the Berbers ... is minute and to the intelligent reader quite as interesting as the more narrative parts of the work. It is, perhaps, the best evidence of the merit of the book, that the whole first edition was exhausted by orders from the country before the first number had appeared in the city." *The Democratic Review* was also impressed by the ethnographic content of the book, and thought public interest in *The Berber* would be "far superior" to even that of *Kaloolah*.



A year after *Kaloolah*, Mayo published *The Berber*, set in Morocco, but family affairs and business kept him away from writing again until 1873, when he published *Never Again*, a satire on the moneyed classes, of which he was part. It was illustrated with engravings by Gaston Fey, including "Lunch at Delmonico's," below**, which was subtitled "Nothing but ghosts of ideas."**

Publisher George Putnam felt that Mayo had legitimately staked his claim to Africa and should now be working on a third novel set somewhere on that continent. But the doctor's life took a different turn. In the summer of 1851, he married a widowed New York heiress, Helen Stuyvesant Dudley, a descendant of Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch governor of old New York (New Amsterdam). Mayo's marriage to a member of New York's elite led to new social and financial responsibilities, not to mention a substantial income from the Stuyvesant properties. He found himself involved in various projects—mechanical inventions and business speculations—put forward by others in his new social circle, even partnering with an Italian immigrant professor to petition Victor Emmanuel, king of Italy, for rights to drill for oil in the Taro valley of northern Italy. They secured the concession, but apparently never found a drop of petroleum.

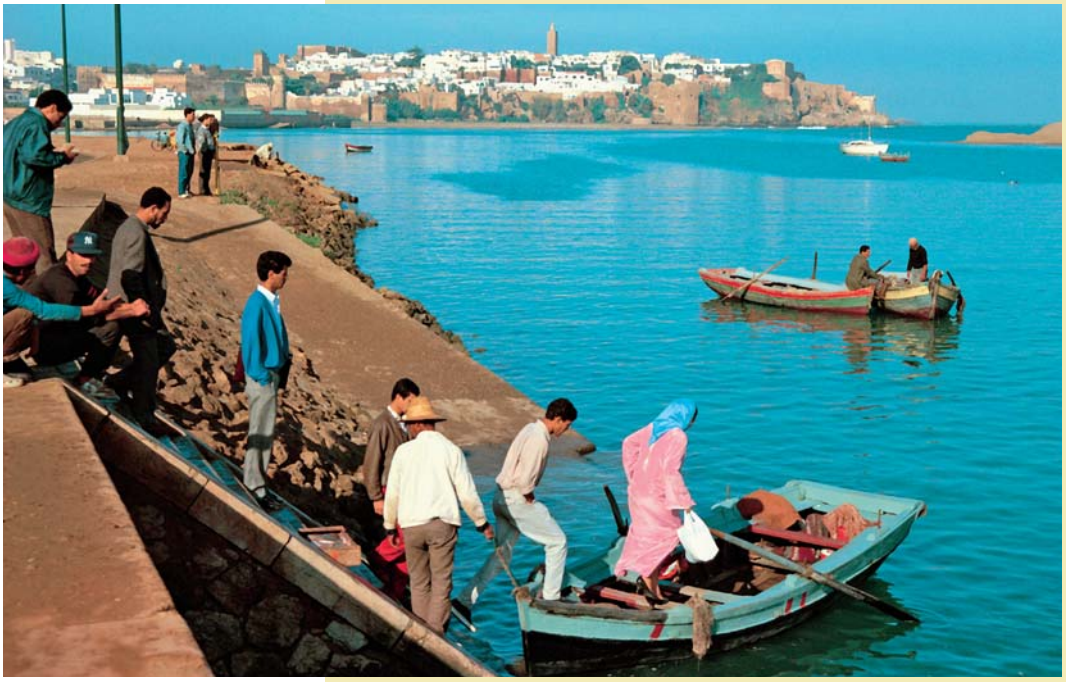
In 1851, George Putnam reluctantly set aside his dream of a third "Africa novel" from Mayo and published a collection of the doctor's short and experimental fiction in a volume called *Romance Dust from the Historic Placer*—an odd title suggestive of the California gold rush of those times. Mayo described this collection, whose title he detested and sought to change, as an effort "to keep afloat in the ocean of print until such time as a bark of more pretension was ready to be launched." That time did not come for many years.

In 1873, after more than two decades of literary silence, Mayo produced his final book, *Never Again*, a satirical novel of manners about the moneyed classes of New York City. By this time, the author had been virtually forgotten on both sides of the Atlantic, but the appearance of *Never Again* returned him briefly to celebrity. Here, Mayo takes on the excesses of America's financial elite, including business speculators (of whom he had been one), while upholding the ideals of the American system. Critics in the US, writing in times of escalating materialism at the outset of the "Gilded Age," generally treated the book harshly.

In his preface to *Kaloolah*, "editor" William Starbuck Mayo explains how the manuscript, purporting to be a young American's account of his travels and adventures, came into his hands. The stout roll of paper was filled with text written in English but with quaint, Tuareg-styled letters. A traveling American merchant tells Mayo in a letter that he acquired the manuscript from a Jewish rabbi in Rabat, who in turn received it from a "Moor of Tafilet," or Tafilalt, a Saharan oasis in southeastern Morocco. The Moor received the document from a "sick man" who had arrived in a recent caravan, with instructions that it be passed to any western commercial agent.

In the merchant's letter, we are told of a curious and comic incident that is almost certainly one of Mayo's own experiences during his travels in North Africa. It involves the legendary Salee Rovers, fierce pirates of the North Atlantic. The Salee Rovers, who operated from the 17th to early 18th centuries, included in their numbers Muslim Arabs and Berbers who had been expelled from Spain, as well as European renegades. From 1619-27, they established an independent pirate republic at Sallee or Salee, now called Salé.

Snipe-Hunting with the Salee Rovers



Adjacent to Rabat, capital of Morocco, the port of Salé in Mayo's time was an infamous pirate base.

"You have heard of Salee, I suppose," the merchant writes, "or rather, of the Salee Rovers, who not many years since swept the Atlantic from Tercera to Teneriffe, and (with a degree of boldness that made them the bug-a-boos of crying babies for miles inland) carried their bloody swallow-tail pendants up the English channel, and even through the intricate passages of the Skagerrack and Cattegat.

"You have heard of these rascals, and of their town...; but perhaps you would have to refer to your geography, or to a gazetteer; for in fact it is situated at the mouth of the Buregreb, exactly opposite the flourishing town of Rabat, and precisely one hundred and twenty miles from the straits of Hercules, down the Atlantic coast of the dominions of Muley Abderhamman."

Salee is described as "a dilapidated town, whose inhabitants have nothing (spinning haicks and tanning goat-skins excepted) to do but to nurse their prejudices and dream of the glorious days when a hundred plunder-laden feluccas and polaccas crowded the now sand-choked harbor."

With his pocket telescope, the merchant studied the walls of Salee: "The distance was so small that I could see every stone of the towers, matchicolated with storks' nests, and every crevice of the dilapidated curtains connecting them. Was it fancy, or did the breeze really waft to my ears a faint echo of the million sighs and groans, that years past, were borne upon every blast of the sea-breeze around those cruel walls?"

The merchant also noticed some long-legged wading birds—snipe—feeding along the beaches of the Buregreb River, just beneath the walls of Salee. He decided to hunt a few for dinner, hiring a rowboat and heading across the river.

"I expected sport, but I must say that I was wholly unprepared for such kind of sport," he says. "It was almost impossible to get a shot at them, they were so tame. No sooner would I succeed in raising a fellow by poking him up with the muzzle of my gun, than, before I could draw trigger down he would pop right at my feet, with an air as much as to say, wring my neck if you please, but don't fire."

Eventually, some birds took wing and he fired. "At the first shot all Salee was alive," he says. A hundred angry men emerged from the Salee water gate and began running toward him.

"Before they could reach me, I picked up my birds, stepped into the boat, and paddled back to Rabat. When all was quiet, I ventured across again, took another shot, stirred up the old pirates' nest, bagged my bird, and made a similar retreat."

He repeated this operation, fleeing each time from the former buccaneers of Salee, half a dozen times in the course of the day.

His hunting adventures ended in disappointment when he learned that his "worthy Jewish host," Isaac Benshemole, was a strict constructionist of Judaic law and would not allow birds in his kitchen that had been improperly slaughtered.

CHRISTINE OSBORN / WORLD PICTURE LIBRARY / ALAMY

A reviewer in the *Atlantic Monthly* chastised Mayo for perpetrating "a false and vulgar libel on American society." By contrast, British assessments of the novel were exuberant. *The London Athenaeum*'s critic compared Mayo to Charles Dickens, declaring, "In future we shall remember the name of Dr. Mayo as that of one of the wittiest of modern writers, and greatest of living masters of human character."

Never Again, according to Prof. Van Dusen, is "a partly serious, partly comic attempt to objectify the New York to which Mayo had come as a young man, and now, after the Civil War, had found disturbingly akin to a valley of ashes, made tolerable by the infinite possibilities of an intensely American dream." Mayo's publisher, George Putnam, pronounced *Never Again* a "fair success" in commercial terms, but Mayo was not sufficiently encouraged by its reception to continue writing professionally. He spent the next two decades living in New York, apparently tucked comfortably into the same social and economic circles he had lambasted in *Never Again*. He died in 1895, four years after the passing of Herman Melville.

It seems unfair to dismiss Mayo as a "Melville imitator" when the opposite might hold more truth.

When the Melville revival, sparked by US critic Carl Van Doren, gained widespread acceptance in the early 1920's, Mayo slipped even deeper into the shadows. *Kaloolah* was transformed from best-seller to literary oddity. Scholars even began to forget what the novel was about. For instance, *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature* (1907-21) transformed Framazugda, the fictional kingdom founded by early Yemenis, into a "black Utopia" and summed up the book as a series of "wild adventures in Africa" spiced with "a strange mixture of satire and romance."

Unlike Melville, who aspired to join the august literary ranks of Irving, Cooper and Bryant, Mayo never sought to be, or considered himself, a "great writer." It is unlikely he will ever be accorded that distinction. But at the same time, it seems unfair of some critics, such as Melville scholar Hershel Parker, to dismiss the author of *Kaloolah* and *The Berber* as a mere "Melville imitator." Mayo's overriding goal was to share with others the adventures and knowledge he had accumulated in his life, particularly in his travels to Spain and North Africa. He was a first-rate storyteller who celebrated life and captured the essence of his times. Perhaps, at the very least, he will be remembered for that.

Below: **Facsimile of a review of *Kaloolah* published in the leading political and literary periodical of the time, *The Democratic Review*.**

NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.

1.—KALOOLAH; or, JOURNEYINGS TO THE D'JEBEL KUMRI. An Auto-Biography of Jonathan Romer. Edited by W.S. Mayo, M.D. George P. Putman 155 Broadway.

This is decidedly the book of the season, having produced a sensation quite as extended as did the works of Mr. Melville, and has placed Dr. Mayo at once among the most successful of American authors. The taste of the public runs decidedly, at the present time, in favor of travels and adventures. It is probable that the wonderful conquest of China, with its hundreds of millions of people, by a few thousand British troops, laying open the secrecy of an empire sealed through tens of centuries, largely contributed to awaken this feeling; and the course of events since, involving the wonderful discoveries in the plains of Assyria, in the valleys of the Nile, the mountains of California and the regions of Central America, exciting the imagination of the contemplative, and the activity of the enterprising, strongly interested the public mind in the localities and manners of remote countries. This chord vibrated fully and deeply in response to Typee, which threw an unexpected halo of romance over the theretofore unattractive islands of the Pacific, follows by the less popular publication of Omoo, with others of a similar stamp, by different authors. The book of Dr. Mayo is inferior to none of these in interest, and superior to all in truthfulness of delineation, and in the power of successfully interweaving the wonderful wish the probable. The story puports to be the adventure of Jonathan Romer, who, descended from a Nantucket whaler, and born in northern New-York, commence his spirited adventures as a hunter amid the verdant hills and degenerate savages of his native states. These earl adventures, although touching on ground already appropriated, loses nothing in the comparison; not does American scenery or its native inhabitants lose aught in his hands, of the interest excited in them by the original pen of Cooper. Some of the American traits are national and no peculiarity is given with more force and truth than the picture of the revival of religion, as it is somewhat impiously called by those who make a trade of divine things. Overzeal in the pursuit of knowledge in his profession of surgeon, brought his studies to an abrupt termination, and sent Jonathan on his travels. Outward bound his schooner was upset, leaving the hero alone on the dismasted wreck. Some of the finest points are made in describing the sensations and shifts of the adventurer under these circumstances. He is taken thence by a slaver, bound into the African rivers for a cargo. Here opens a field altogether new, and the matter is wrought up with great skill. Among the slaves, are discovered and purchased by the hero, two of a white race, which inhabit the unexplored interior of Africa. The female, "Kaloolah" gives her name to the book. The escape from the slaver into the British man-of-war is well-conceived, but justice is not done upon the wretch Monte, with sufficient promptness for the passion of the piece; in fact, the reader has only to infer that an English capture is synonymous with the halter. Separating from his two African companions on the arrival of the man-of-war at Sierra Leone, the hero takes passage in an English brig, which, through the drunken brutality of the captain, is wrecked on the African coast, and our hero, with one surviving seaman, Jack Thompson, taken captive by the Arabs. From them he ultimately escapes into the interior, and on the attack of a caravan by the tribe with whom he becomes allied, he discovers among the captives his Kaloolah once more a slave. Escaping from the tribe with Kaloolah, he discovers and liberates his friend Thompson; and the party, increased by an Irishman, also liberated, proceed towards the native country of Kaloolah; and the adventures of the hero are concluded amid the exciting and altogether new scenery of the interior of Africa. The novelty of the situations, and the power and skill with which they are managed, impart a fascination to the book seldom possessed by the publications of the day. There are some minor points of the story which, had we more space, we should be disposed to criticize, but none which affects its general high character. We are pleased to hear, as an indication of the manner in which our views are sustained by the public, that a few days sufficed to exhaust the first edition, and a new and larger one is rapidly disappearing from the shelves of the enterprising publisher, Mr. Putnam. When such success attends our native authors, the complaint that we have no national literature much be without foundation. The story of dr. Mayo was prepared for, and accepted by Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, but was withdrawn and published by the author in its present shape, in the neat and justly-appreciated style in which Mr. Putnam produces his books.

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KAZAN: BETWEEN EUROPE AND ASIA

Written by Richard Covington
Photographed by Sergey Maximishin

A wedding feast is in full swing in the imam's office of Kazan's Qolsharif mosque, a gleaming white, blue-domed landmark atop the city's citadel. As my interpreter Olga Kassimova and I tuck into round duck pies, called *belish*, and *achpochmak*, triangles of pastry stuffed with chopped meat and potatoes, Rustem Zinnurov, the 34-year-old imam, spells out the Russian city's well-deserved reputation for religious tolerance.

"Muslim-Christian relations here are more than just tolerant," he contends. "They are fraternal." In a city whose 1.2 million inhabitants split about evenly between Tatar Muslim and Russian Orthodox Christian backgrounds, this is no small accomplishment. For example, he says, the Muslim holiday of 'Id al-Fitr, here called by its Turkish name, *kurban bayrami*, is a day off work for the whole city.

The mosque itself, the largest in Russia, has a museum that shows not only Islamic history, science and traditions, but also displays relating to the Bible and the Torah.

An unequivocal sign of the city's fraternal interfaith relations is the mosque's location itself, occupying symbolic pride of place inside Kazan's citadel or kremlin. Listed as a World Heritage site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the kremlin also hosts the gilt-domed Annunciation Cathedral, and it has been a monument to Russian rule since Czar Ivan IV ("Ivan the Terrible") conquered the Tatars in the 16th century. Across town, the Russian Islamic University, founded in 1978 as the country's first institute for advanced Muslim education, provides both religious and secular courses of study.

Founded as a Tatar fortress at the mouth of the Kazanka River on the Volga, Kazan's kremlin was named a World Heritage Site by the UN in 2000. Rising near the kremlin's center, the tiered Söyembikä Tower appears to be flanked on its left by the gold and blue domes of the Annunciation Cathedral, and on its right by the blue dome and slender minarets of the Qolsharif mosque.

Who, then, are the Tatars? Little known in the West, Tatars are a Turkic people, the largest minority in Russia. But there is also a global Tatar diaspora, with communities stretching from Japan to Poland to San Francisco. The Tatar language, written in Cyrillic characters in Russia and Latin and Arabic letters elsewhere, resembles Turkish with some Arabic words and is spoken by some seven million people around the world. Among famous Tatars are the ballet star Rudolf Nureyev, composer Sofia Gubaidulina, Olympic tennis player Dinara Safina and, in Hollywood, actor Charles Bronson.

Converted to Islam in the 10th century by emissaries from the Abbasid caliph al-Muqtadir in Baghdad, the nomadic Tatars were absorbed into the Mongolian Golden Horde, and they dominated Russia for centuries. They owe their name to their reputation as superb horsemen: Tatar means "mounted courier" in Turkish. "Tartar" (with its extra *r*) is a European corruption, probably derived from Tartarus, the abyss of damned souls in Greek mythology, in order to malign the equestrian invaders as barbarian devils.

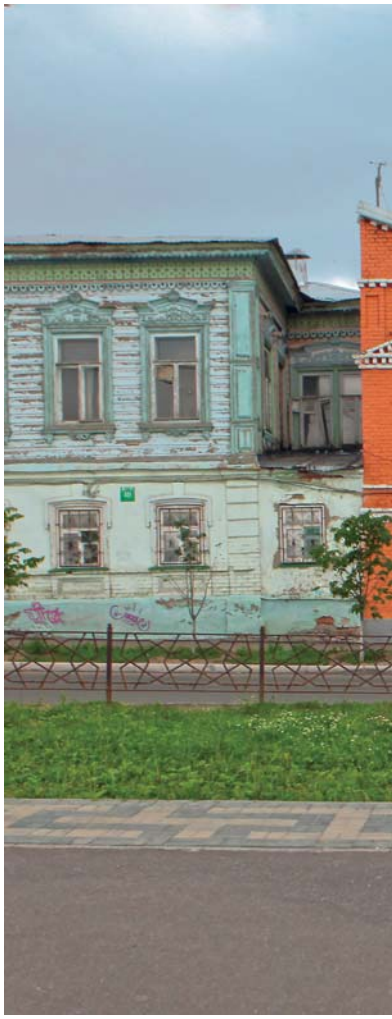
Situated at the confluence of the Kazanka and Volga Rivers some 800 kilometers (500 mi) east of Moscow, Kazan is also the 1005-year-old capital of the Russian republic of Tatarstan. It is rich in oil and natural gas, and quite likely it is also the most unexpectedly vibrant place you've never heard of. Far smaller than Moscow or St. Petersburg, the city boasts a diverse cultural scene that vies with its better-known rivals.

Apart from world-class theater, music and museums, there are international festivals devoted to opera, ballet, Muslim film, live rock bands and hip-hop. Its circus is top in the country, and it's home to Russia's first school for aspiring rock musicians. "Europe-Asia," an annual festival of contemporary music, brings together composers and performers from all over Russia as well as France, the us, China, Mongolia, Tajikistan and other countries. New buildings are sprouting up in preparation for the 2013 Universiade, a sort of summer Olympics for university students that is expected to draw 12,000 athletes from 170 countries to compete in 26 sports.

The city's professional ice hockey team, Ak Bars Kazan, is one of the strongest in Eastern Europe's Kontinental Hockey League, having won the Gagarin Cup in both 2009 and 2010. The team's name refers to an ancient national symbol among Turkic peoples: the winged snow leopard, which appears on the team's jerseys.

As part of the campaign to spruce up Kazan's historical sites, the home where novelist Leo Tolstoy lived with his aunt while he was a university student is being renovated, along with the building where the early-20th-century author Maxim Gorky once worked as a baker. The homes of writers Sharif Kamal and Gabdulla Tukay, known as the Tatar Pushkin, are also being restored to serve as centers for the promotion of Tatar literature. The stately brick house where Lenin lived before he was expelled in 1887 from Kazan University is now a museum recreating the plush bourgeois interior of the onetime home of the budding revolutionary.

If Lenin were to wander Kazan's streets today, he would no doubt be astonished how quickly this city, like much of Russia, appears to have turned its back on the Communist past to embrace capitalist economics. Behind Tatarstan's parliament, construction is under way on apartment blocks embellished with faux–French Renaissance façades. Down the hill, neighborhoods of pastel-colored homes, spreading along the banks of the Kazanka before it flows into the Volga, "are the most sought-after, most expensive houses in Kazan," says my interpreter Kassimova, a 21-year-old education major. In a city where income averages 10,000 rubles (about $325) a month, one of these riverfront homes costs



Enlivening a summer day along Bauman Street, Kazan's kilometer-long, shop-lined pedestrian mall, break-dancers perform in a plaza.

As the 1005-year-old capital of the republic of Tatarstan, Kazan is quite likely the most unexpectedly vibrant place you've never heard of.

Above: **A girl scooters past a café and a mosque in Kazan's *sloboda*, or old district.** Right: **Rustem Zinnurov, imam of the Qolsharif mosque, describes his city's cultural relations as "more than just tolerant. They are fraternal."**

around five million rubles (around $163,000), she says.

At the heart of the city's historic center is Bauman Street, a kilometer-long pedestrian concourse that connects the kremlin to a shopping mall and entertainment complex. Lined with shops, restaurants, cafés and nightclubs, the street is as eclectic as the city itself. Down the way from a French boutique selling pricey jewelry and stores with the latest mobile phones are once-gracious offices of turreted brick that now appear abandoned. Break-dancers and Tatar folk musicians take turns performing in front of the statue of Feodor Chaliapin, Kazan's illustrious operatic *basso*. Halfway between the Dom Tatarskoy Kulinarii restaurant, which serves Tatar specialties in a grand setting, and the ever-busy McDonald's with its tables spilling out onto the sidewalk, there sits a bronze replica of the carriage of Catherine the Great. (The gilt original, with its glass windows and painted sides depicting mythological scenes, rests in the National Museum.)

The 18th-century empress has been much respected here ever since she overturned many of the anti-Tatar measures instituted at the beginning of the 1700's by her predecessor, Peter the Great. Where Peter forced Tatar Muslims to convert to the Orthodox faith, Catherine lifted the ban on stone mosques, and in 1771 she allowed the establishment of two religious schools (*madrasas*). In one oft-repeated anecdote, Orthodox priests complained to her during a 1767 visit that minarets were being erected that rose higher than the church steeples. Her reply, the story goes, was to declare, "My rule is on earth; what happens in the skies is God's concern"—giving tacit permission to let the minarets stand.

Under the Soviets, both Tatar culture and Islam were again repressed along with other regional identities and Christianity. "We were seen as barbarians," explains Guzel Valeeva-Suleymanova, a professor of decorative arts in the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences. In 1974, her father, Fuad Valeev, was exiled as a Tatar nationalist for writing books on Tatar ornaments.

"It was dangerous to promote Tatar arts," she says from her office inside Kazan's kremlin. "The Soviets were completely opposed to the idea that we had our own culture. They wanted to be seen as bringing civilization to us." Even in the late 1970's, when she was studying

for a doctorate in art history at the prestigious Moscow Institute for the Decorative and Applied Arts, she faced discrimination when her research asserting that Tatars influenced Russian decorative arts was met with ridicule. "Russians had to dominate Tatars, even artistically, not the other way around," she recalls."My research was seen as esthetic heresy."

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990's, there was a surge of interest in the Tatar legacy. "Suddenly, we had access to books about the Tatars that had been published abroad," the professor explains. Valeeva-Suleymanova and other scholars were able to begin compiling a truer history of the Tatars, the Golden Horde and the Khanate of Kazan, the last independent Tatar monarchy, which flourished from 1438 to 1552.

"Before *perestroika*, all this history was forbidden, so that's why we are now so concerned about getting at the truth and reclaiming our past," she says. According to her, the Golden Horde, caricatured as a brutal band of marauding Mongols roaring out of the East in the 13th century to swallow Europe, deserves more respect. "It was really a very well-organized and prosperous state," argues Valeeva-Suleymanova. "The Russians called it 'golden' because it was so wealthy."

Below: **Chairman of the republic's Committee on Culture, Science, Education and National Issues, Razil Valeev credits the region's high cultural tolerance to its correspondingly high levels of literacy. "We read many books, including works on Islam, so it's with our eyes, not our ears, that we understand," he says.** Lower: **Guzel Valeeva-Suleymanova is professor of decorative arts in the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences. In 1974, the Soviets exiled her father for writing books on Tatar ornaments. "Before *perestroika*, all this history was forbidden, so that's why we are now so concerned about getting at the truth and reclaiming our past," she says.**

Packed with Tatar treasures and artifacts, the National Museum, the Millennium Museum and the kremlin's Khazine Gallery display extraordinary silver filigree jewelry studded with turquoise, amethyst and other gems; dresses meticulously stitched with floral patterns in silver and gold thread as well as bell-shaped velvet caps with elaborate embroidery. Although both women and men still occasionally don traditional costume for weddings and celebrations such as the June harvest festival of Sabantui, the centuries-old traditions of Tatar decorative arts are nonetheless rapidly disappearing, says Valeeva-Suleymanova.

"These high artisanal crafts are dying because they are too expensive," she laments. During my stay, in fact, a local official publicly protested the influx of Chinese-made imitations of *kalyapush* velvet caps that were selling for a fraction of the price charged by Kazan craftspeople.

In contrast to the discouraging prospects for most Tatar handicrafts, Tatar language and literature appear to be thriving, according to two of the republic's most prolific authors and the director of the Tatar state theater.

Earliest Tatar manuscripts date back more than a millennium, explains Razil Valeev, whose office in the slab-like parliament building overlooks Liberty Square. A soft-spoken member of Parliament who wears as many hats as anyone in Kazan, 64-year-old Valeev is chairman of the parliamentary committee on culture, science, education and nationalities; president of Tatar PEN, an affiliate of the international writers' organization; and poet, playwright and author of musical comedies with some 43 published books and 200 poems set to music.

Valeev credits the region's high cultural tolerance to its correspondingly high levels of literacy. "We read many books, including works on Islam, so it's with our eyes, not our ears, that we understand the religion," he says. "Perhaps that is why we have no fanaticism here."

Nor is there repression, claims Valeev. Unlike PEN's Moscow office, which frequently protests the mistreatment of authors and journalists, the Tatar branch has not been involved in defending writers because, he maintains, they have been free to publish what they like. Instead, the local

PEN has promoted Tatar literature, helping publish 20 books by Tatar authors in English, among them the works of Gabdulla Tukay and anthologies of contemporary poetry and prose by some of its 30 members.

In 1999, Valeev and other parliamentarians drew up a proposal to re-adopt the Latin alphabet for writing the Tatar language, as it had been used for a dozen years from 1927-39, following widespread use of an Arabic-based script. (In 1939 Stalin imposed Cyrillic to force Turkic minorities to write in a script Soviet authorities could read, and pull them from Turkey and the Turkic heritage.) The proposal made sense, Valeev suggests, since the Cyrillic alphabet lacks some letters needed in Tatar, which obliged Tatars to invent their own quasi-Cyrillic combinations to write their own language. "Sending a Tatar text message in Cyrillic is a nightmare," he says, frowning. Nonetheless, Moscow rejected the proposal.

More recently, Tatar—and all 100 or so minority languages in Russia—faces an even more serious challenge. Seeking to increase federal control, in September 2009 the Russian government passed a law limiting the teaching of minority languages in public schools; however, the measure has yet to be enforced.

"It's a barbaric law," protests Tufan Minullin, one of Tatarstan's most popular playwrights. "All the representatives in the Tatarstan parliament are strongly opposed to it, so I don't think it will go into effect." Perhaps, but if it came to a showdown between the republic and Moscow, there is little doubt as to who would prevail.

In the late 17th and early 18th centuries, Czar Peter I forced Tatars to convert to the Orthodox faith. By the 1770's, Empress Catherine II had lifted the ban on stone mosques and allowed the opening of Muslim schools, such as this one attended in the summer by girls.

Despite the city's rapid growth, Kazan's young people are increasingly impatient with Russia's political and economic prospects, and they are looking outside the country for education and contacts—particularly to Turkey. The dramatist cites his own 23-year-old grandson as an example. Although the exuberant, 76-year-old writer has had some 50 plays staged in all 11 of the Tatar theaters across Russia and is one the fiercest advocates for the Tatar language, he admits he is encouraging his Tatar-speaking grandson to continue his studies not in Tatar, but in Turkish and English.

In a playful commemoration of a bygone era, a woman races with water buckets during the annual planting festival known as Sabantui, whose traditions date back more than 1000 years. Left: **This pair of new *ichigi* boots, for sale in an art gallery, displays traditional Tatar motifs produced using a technique known as leather mosaic, which was used as early as 400 BC by Tatar ancestors in the Altai Mountains.**

"The cultural and economic ties between Tatarstan and Turkey are growing quickly," Minullin explains.

Another indicator of emerging links to Turkey and Turkic-speaking regions is the weeklong Navruz International Theater Festival of the Turkic Peoples held in June in the Kamal Tatar State Academy Theater. Bringing together groups from more than 18 countries and regions, the festival presents around two dozen plays.

Overlooking the blue-green waters of Kaban Lake, the theater's modernist concrete building occupies a symbolic position between the old Tatar district and the historically Russian part of the city, with its Italianate and French-influenced architecture. As kayaks and pedal boats glide along the lake and a fountain sprays water high into the air, director Shamil Zakirov gives my interpreter and me a tour of the theater.

A broad-shouldered man of 71 with an elfin grin and eyes twinkling below his traditional *tubeteika* skullcap, Zakirov has run the theater for 26 years, nearly a quarter of its 106-year existence. Inside the airy, glass-fronted lobby, he shows us photographs on display of the troupe's 60 actresses and actors.

They keep busy. The theater stages an astonishing 280 performances a year, says Zakirov, generally playing to large audiences in Tatar, with simultaneous translations into Russian and English through headphones available at each seat. In addition, many in the repertory cast take roles in television and film and also participate in festivals around

Although both women and men occasionally still don traditional costumes for weddings and the June harvest festival Sabantui, the centuries-old traditions of Tatar decorative arts are rapidly disappearing.

the world, from London and Helsinki to Bogotá and Istanbul. "Kazan is becoming a theatrical capital of Russia," marvels Zakirov.

Every year, the theater sponsors a competition entitled "The Modern Tatar Play," which receives around 100 entries from aspiring dramatists. Ten plays are chosen for publication, and two or three of these are given full-fledged stagings. One of the most compelling discoveries so far was "The Mute Cuckoo," a 2006 winner by 41-year-old writer Zhulfat Hakim.

Based on a true story, the play portrays a friendship between a Finnish Tatar soldier and a Soviet Tatar soldier during the 1939 Finnish–Soviet conflict. Despite being on opposite sides, the men are connected by a shared language, songs and childhood memories. The Finnish soldier is imprisoned and later released to return home, but the two men never see one another again. It is only recently, after the opening up of the Soviet Union, that the children of the two soldier-friends meet and recollect the friendship between their fathers.

"It's a story about the conflict of allegiances," Zakirov explains, "how individuals are torn between their ethnic loyalties and their duty to a country." The play proved a hit not only in Kazan, but on tour to Almaty, Baku, Helsinki and London. "Audiences left the theaters in tears," he recalls.

One warm July evening, after an early dinner, I set out on a walk through the old Tatar district to survey the few remaining wooden houses, built by prosperous merchants in the late 19th century. Young couples, families with kids, all generations are out and about, strolling along the lakeside promenade in jeans, T-shirts, light dresses and shorts. Although women dress modestly, few wear head scarves. I'm struck by the wide variety of Kazan's citizens: tall blondes with high cheekbones, women with dark black hair and red hair, Asian faces, and others with a more Mongolian cast.

It's blessedly peaceful away from the ubiquitous music, usually soft rock, that is the constant aural background of Bauman Street and in restaurants everywhere. Facing the promenade are a smattering of wooden houses painted in cheery colors of aqua, bright blue, green and yellow. Some are decorated with finely carved designs, but all appear dilapidated. As the sky turns pink in the dusk, the smell of grilled meat wafts uphill from a lively, open-air restaurant hugging the lakeshore.

Later, I bring up development and preservation with Rozaliya Nurgaleeva, director of the State Visual Arts Museum. She rolls her eyes in frustration. "With the huge construction boom under way, everyone conveniently forgets about preserving old buildings," she says inside her office in the museum, which occupies a palatial 1906 mansion. "The government refuses to learn the lesson that investing in restoration and preservation can have a far-ranging effect on our future as a cultural center. Tourists aren't interested in visiting buildings they can see anywhere else. They're interested in our historic specificity, what we offer that no one else does," continues Nurgaleeva, who trained as an architectural restorationist before becoming an art historian.

With her short black hair and stylish black glasses, the museum director is brimming with ideas to broaden the appeal of

Above: **Showing respect for the Tatar national festival, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev traveled from Moscow to share a Sabantui meal with Tatarstan President Rustam Minnikhanov on June 25.** Right: **Traditional Tatar dances too are part of Sabantui.**

Unlike traditional handicrafts, Tatar language and literature appear to be thriving.

Top: **"I wanted to shake things up," says Rozaliya Nurgaleeva, director of the State Visual Arts Museum, who started by surveying Kazan residents about their art museum.** Above: **Director of the G. Kamal Tatar State Academy Theatre Shamil Z. Zakirov marvels that Kazan "is becoming a theatrical capital of Russia."**

her institution. Its eclectic collection ranges from 13th-century icons to portraits by 19th-century society artist Vladimir Repin, landscapes by Russian impressionists and a stand-out abstract canvas by Wassily Kandinsky, as well as Tatar paintings, glass, carpets and other decorative arts. Despite the wide-ranging holdings, the museum "was truly sleepy," she says. "I wanted to shake things up," she adds with a grin. Her first step was to conduct surveys in supermarkets to find out what Kazan's middle classes knew about the museum. Woefully little, as it turned out.

She launched art competitions, not just in Kazan, but across Tatarstan, and she invited budding artists to visit the museum and send their work over the Internet for evaluation and advice. She organized programs for children to work with painters and psychologists to introduce the youngsters to color, drawing and technique. A course for pregnant women encourages them not only to draw and paint, but to dance and write as well, composing letters to their future children. In addition to exhibit-themed poetry readings, there are now evening jazz concerts that include long intermissions for exploration of the museum's collections. "It's all part of attracting a new public," says Nurgaleeva.

Her ambitions are shared across from the kremlin at the National Museum of Tatarstan, where plans are afoot to turn an entire city block into one of the largest cultural complexes in Russia. According to museum director Gulchachack Nazipova, the 75-billion ruble ($250-million) project will feature interactive exhibitions covering every region of the republic, workshops on fine art and decorative arts, reading rooms, a lecture and concert hall—and a planetarium—and a hotel and a restaurant.

"The idea is to draw families to stay for the weekend in the hotel, eat in the café and restaurant, and have a playground and activities for the children so the whole family can take advantage of the museum," she says, sounding thoroughly entrepreneurial. "We've already started work on the project, but are awaiting more financing, both from the state and private investors," she continues. Her hope is that by combining historic restoration with new construction, the massive complex could serve as an example for future development.

Despite Kazan's museum revival, there are only four or five contemporary art galleries. Nonetheless, the city has produced a number of artists. The 42-year-old painter Alfia Ilyasova, vice president of the local artists' society that comprises some 200 professional members, has devised "Scrolls" as a resourceful solution to the dearth of galleries.

Seated on benches inside the Khazine Gallery, a state-run arts museum occupying a former military school in the kremlin, Ilyasova describes how artists create works on fabric that are then rolled up into transport cylinders and sent to various cities, where the works are displayed in temporary exhibition spaces, complete with catalogues published by the local venues. So far, "Scrolls" has toured Russia and Turkey with financial backing from Türksoy, a cultural organization of 14 countries and regions with Turkic languages that is supported by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Originally launched with a handful of Kazan artists, "Scrolls" now stretches across Russia, Central Asia and the Middle East and has multiplied to embrace some 300 contributors, most from Tatarstan and Turkic-language countries such as Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan—but also a dozen or so from Arab nations like Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

This sort of artistic exchange, independent of state control, was unimaginable during the Soviet period, says Ilyasova, as was religious expression. "My grandmother, who was both a Communist true believer and a secret Muslim, was afraid to wear earrings and other jewelry that had Arabic

lettering," she recalls. With the breakup of the Soviet Union, it became possible to practice Islam openly. Ilyasova's response was to fashion art inspired by Muslim traditions. One such canvas depicts the angel Gabriel appearing to converts in 10th-century Bolghar, the Tatar capital at the time.

In a nearby room, the artist shows my interpreter and me two of her "Scrolls," both dedicated to her ancestors. The first piece is a five-meter (16') roll of burlap inscribed with runic Tatar characters that date from medieval times. "It's a letter from a grandfather to his grandson," she explains, "instructing him to carry on the Tatar heritage for future generations." Hanging from a wall, the companion work is a roll of white cloth that incorporates chain-stitch embroidery decorated with patterns of flowers, fruit and leaves. "It's a homage to my grandmother, who did stitching like this," she says.

It's extraordinary how proud Kazan's residents are of their Tatar identity. It comes across in Ilyasova's evocative tributes to her clan, in poet Valeev's defense of the Tatar language, in theater director Zakirov's promotion of young playwrights and in art historian Valeeva-Suleymanova's love for indigenous decorative arts. Perhaps it's because the Tatars had to fight czars and dictators that they still bristle at being stereotyped as "barbarians," and they cling so firmly to both their culture and their hard-won fraternal relations with their fellow Russian citizens.

Perhaps not surprisingly, according to Valeev, the key to preserving Tatar identity is maintaining strong generational ties. It has always been this way, he says. Under the czars, the Tatars isolated themselves so as not to fall too much under the influence of their Russian rulers. "Each village was like an independent little state and each family shared a small part of that state," he explains. "In this manner, they were able to conserve centuries of heritage."

But these days, Tatars are well aware of the delicate balancing act of their existence, perched between Europe and Asia, borrowing from both. Citing worries about loss of family structure and about Moscow-style unbridled capitalism, the poet-politician argues, "We need to take the example of Asian countries like Japan and South Korea, which have a high standard of living, but have managed to conserve their customs and traditions. Unlike other parts of Russia that are less tolerant and perhaps more corrupt, we need to encourage capitalism with a human face."

With the Qolsharif mosque as its backdrop, a wedding party shows its enthusiasm for the bridal couple's future, top**, while down at the riverfront, another couple shares a quieter moment.**

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From Africa to Asia

"In the Hausa country, all chiefs of any position whatever have Arabic writers for conducting their correspondence. … Zaria at the present day is an exception. The ruler, Aliu dan Sidi, has a personal preference for writing in the Hausa language, using Arabic characters, of course. Hausa so written is locally called Ajami, an Arabic word meaning simply 'foreign.'"

— Frederick William Hugh Migeod, 1913

WRITTEN BY Tom Verde
MANUSCRIPTS Courtesy of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University
PHOTOGRAPHED BY Dick Doughty

When the 19th-century Senegalese religious leader and patriot Amadou Bamba wrote poems urging his countrymen to shrug off French colonial rule, he penned his stirring verse in his native tongue: Wolof.

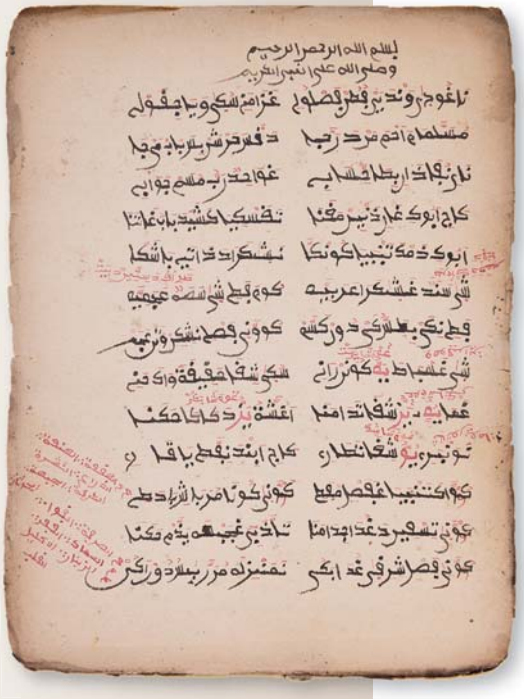
When the Nigerian writer Nana Asma'u composed her elegiac portrait of the Prophet Muhammad in the early 1800's, she did so in what remains West Africa's predominant language: Hausa.

And when the 18th-century court poet Sayyid Aidarusi honored his master with an adaptation of the Arabic epic "Umm al-Qura," he wrote in the prevailing tongue of some 50 million East Africans: Swahili.

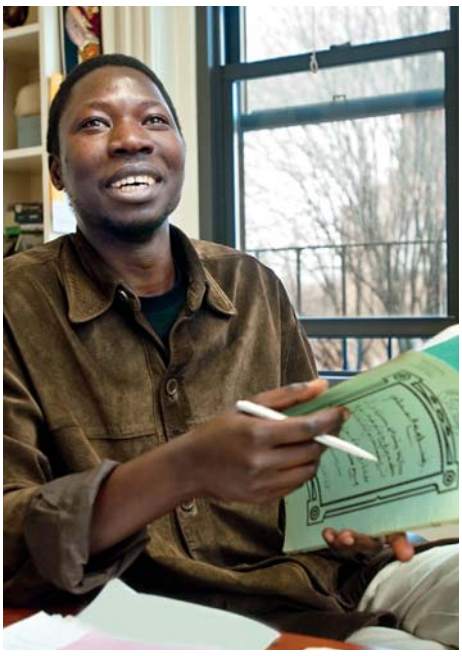
While all three wrote in their native languages, the scripts they employed each bore a close resemblance to Arabic. They were using Africanized versions of the Arabic alphabet, collectively called "Ajami."

Much as the Latin-based alphabet is used to write many languages, including English, Ajami is not a language itself, but the alphabetic script used to write a language: Arabic-derived letters to write a non-Arabic—in this case, African—language.

"Ajami" derives from the Arabic *a'jamiy*, which means "foreigner" or, more specifically, "non-Arab." Historically, Arabs used the word to refer to all things Persian or non-Arab, a usage they borrowed from the ancient Greeks. Yet over the last few centuries, across Islamic Africa, "Ajami" came to mean an African language written in Arabic script that was often adapted phonetically to facilitate local usages and pronunciations across the continent, from the Ethiopian highlands in the east to the lush jungles of Sierra Leone in the west.



"If you go to the Kano Kurri market, in the heart of Kano city [in Nigeria], you will find thousands and thousands of books written in Ajami. They are everywhere," says Abdalla Uba Adamu, professor of science education and curriculum studies at Kano's Bayero University in northern Nigeria, home to the majority of the country's Muslim population. However, Adamu goes on to observe, many of the people reading those books are officially counted as "illiterate" by the Nigerian government, which excludes Ajami from its public school curricula. Though research has shown that as many as 80 percent of the estimated 50 million Hausa-speakers in Africa can read and write Ajami, they are considered "illiterate" because, Adamu explains, in Nigeria and other West African nations, literacy is equated with proficiency in Arabic or one of the Latin-alphabet-based colonial languages, usually French or English. As a result, such surveys overlook tens of millions of Africans whose vernacular may be Hausa, Wolof, Fulfulde or any of nearly two dozen other African languages. "This is a population that



VERNON DOUCETTE / BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Ajami adaptations of Arabic have parallels not only among Asian scripts, but also among European adaptations of the Roman alphabet, observes Fallou Ngom, above right**, assistant professor at Boston University and a 2011 Guggenheim Fellow.** Opposite and above left: **This Ajami manuscript page describes constellations in Hausa, which is spoken by some 50 million people today.**

needs to be recognized," says Senegalese-born Fallou Ngom, director of the African Language Program at Boston University's African Studies Center.

Ngom and Adamu are among those attempting to change this through a combination of activism, education and scholarship. To them, it is galling that the Arabic alphabet was adapted over centuries for use in other parts of the Muslim world, just as the Roman alphabet was adapted for use in, say, German and Turkish, yet Germans and Turks who can read their respective adaptations are considered literate, whereas Africans who read and write Ajami often fall below the official literacy radar.

"The spread and development of Ajami is not, if you really look at it, different from the spread of Latin in Europe," says Ngom. Latin "was a church language, but its letters were adopted for use in French, German, Spanish, English and other languages."

Similar orthographic migrations and adaptations took place throughout the Muslim world. In Pakistan, for example, the literary language Urdu is written in Perso-Arabic, a script adapted from Arabic in much the same way as Ajami. In Malaysia, there is Jawi script; in Iran, Farsi; and up until the early years of the republic in Turkey, Ottoman.

In addition to a kind of literacy enfranchisement, Ngom and others also feel that a wider understanding and recognition of Ajami could shed light on whole new chapters of African history, told from local points of view, which have yet to be examined by scholars outside the region.

Reading in Ajami, "you will learn, for the first time, how people of West Africa perceived themselves in local accounts of history, as opposed to colonial records," Ngom suggests. Indeed, it has been his experience in his native Senegal that colonial-era French and Ajami sources each paint distinct pictures.

"It is like you are looking at two very different accounts of the same events through different pairs of eyes," he says.

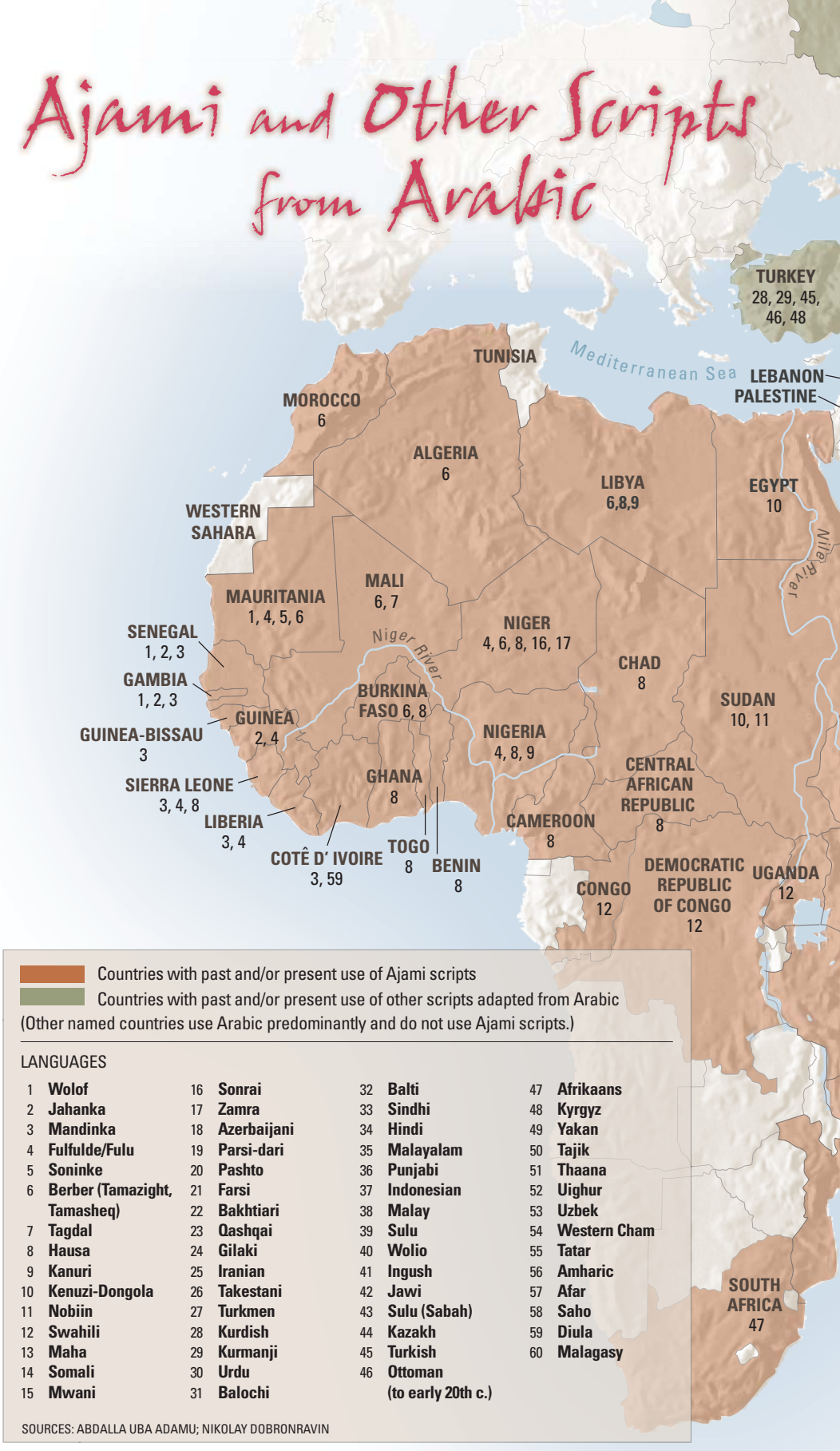
"What the Ajami texts provide us with is access to what Muslims in West Africa hundreds of years ago were thinking and saying in their own vernaculars, using their own idioms," says Bruce Hall, assistant professor of history at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

The story of Ajami is intertwined with the stories of how Islam came to Africa some 13 centuries ago and how European colonization followed a millennium later.

Islam reached Africa first in Egypt, within a decade of the Prophet Muhammad's death in 632 CE. By 750, it had spread over North Africa and across the Mediterranean into the Iberian Peninsula and southern France.

By contrast, Islam came to sub-Saharan Africa more gradually, flowing south along the network of long-established trade routes that tied littoral Mediterranean lands to the Niger Delta in the west and the ports of the Indian Ocean in the east. Traversing these famed, trans-Saharan trade routes on the

Ajami and Other Scripts from Arabic



Countries with past and/or present use of Ajami scripts

Countries with past and/or present use of other scripts adapted from Arabic

(Other named countries use Arabic predominantly and do not use Ajami scripts.)

LANGUAGES

1	Wolof	16	Sonrai	32	Balti	47	Afrikaans
2	Jahanka	17	Zamra	33	Sindhi	48	Kyrgyz
3	Mandinka	18	Azerbaijani	34	Hindi	49	Yakan
4	Fulfulde/Fulu	19	Parsi-dari	35	Malayalam	50	Tajik
5	Soninke	20	Pashto	36	Punjabi	51	Thaana
6	Berber (Tamazight, Tamasheq)	21	Farsi	37	Indonesian	52	Uighur
7	Tagdal	22	Bakhtiari	38	Malay	53	Uzbek
8	Hausa	23	Qashqai	39	Sulu	54	Western Cham
9	Kanuri	24	Gilaki	40	Wolio	55	Tatar
10	Kenuzi-Dongola	25	Iranian	41	Ingush	56	Amharic
11	Nobiin	26	Takestani	42	Jawi	57	Afar
12	Swahili	27	Turkmen	43	Sulu (Sabah)	58	Saho
13	Maha	28	Kurdish	44	Kazakh	59	Diula
14	Somali	29	Kurmanji	45	Turkish	60	Malagasy
15	Mwani	30	Urdu	46	Ottoman (to early 20th c.)		
		31	Balochi				

SOURCES: ABDALLA UBA ADAMU; NIKOLAY DOBRONRAVIN

only creature suited to such a journey—the camel—Muslim merchants came in search of gold, ivory, kola nuts and slaves to exchange for salt, copper and textiles. In Arabic, they called the entire sub-Saharan region *bilad al-sudan*, or "country of the blacks," and the trading cities where they conducted business became synonymous with exotica and riches: Gao, Djenné, Koumbi Saleh and—the most fabled of all—Timbuktu.

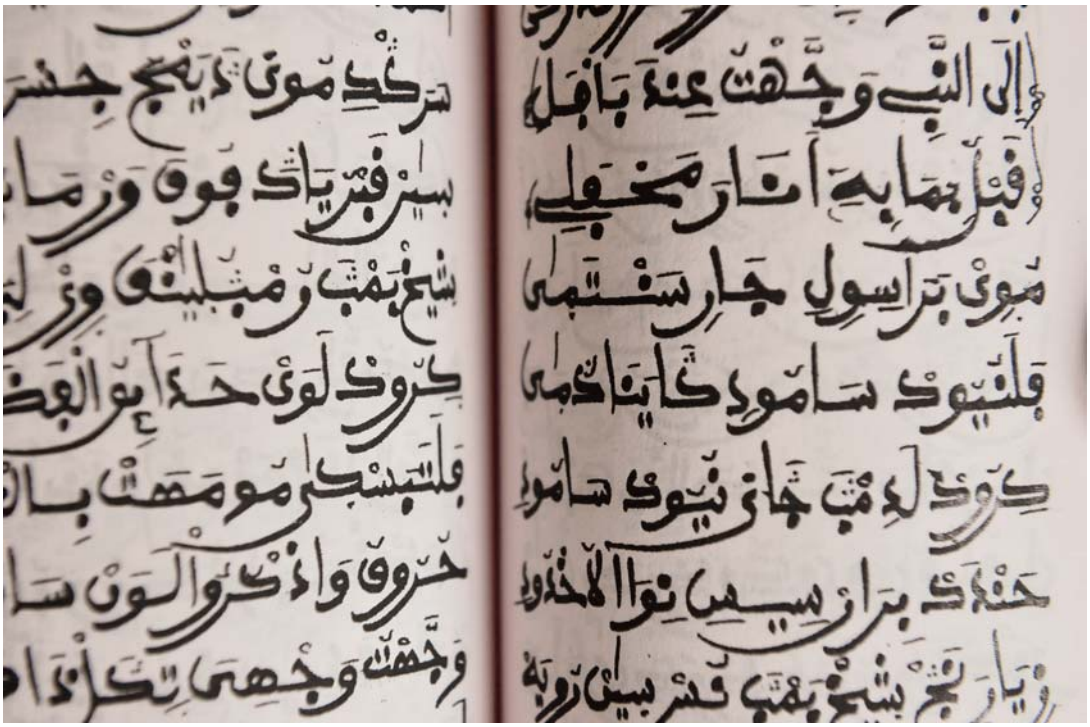
But in addition to salt and silk, these merchants brought with them Arabic writing, language and ideas, most prominently Islam's message of unity through the worship of one God. The earliest urban center to embrace Islam, late in the 10th century, was Gao on the Niger River in Mali. Other kingdoms along the serpentine bends of the great river eventually followed: Takrur (Senegal); Songhay (Mali); Kanem-Bornu (Chad); and Hausaland (Nigeria). By the 11th century, reports of these and other flourishing Islamic cities made their way north to Al-Andalus in southern Spain, to the aristocratic geographer and historian Al-Bakri:

"The city of Ghana consists of two towns situated on a plain," he wrote in his *Kitab al-Masalik wa al-Mamalik* (*Book of Highways and Kingdoms*). "One of these towns, which is inhabited by Muslims, is large and possesses twelve mosques in one of which they assemble for the Friday prayer. There are salaried imams and muezzins, as well as jurists and scholars."

> For members of African societies where oral tradition predominated, Arabic was the first written language to which they had been exposed.

These jurists and scholars, as well as the traders, turned out to be critical not only to the spread of Islam, but also to the eventual development of Ajami.

From its beginning, Islam was a literate religion. *Iqra'* ("read") is the first word of God's revelations to Muhammad that became the Qur'an. Knowledge of Islam meant knowledge of the revealed word of God: the Qur'an. Consequently, wherever Islam went, it established centers of learning, usually attached to mosques, where children learned to read and write Arabic in much the same way that European and American children have



Twentieth-century poet Serigne Moussa Kah of Senegal wrote and published in Wolof. Like other Ajami scripts, Wolof signals unique vowels and consonants by adding dots and other diacritical marks above and below nearly equivalent Arabic letters.

often been taught literacy by using the Bible. Thus, for the members of African societies where oral tradition predominated, Arabic was the first written language to which they had been exposed.

Yet while Arabic was the language of the Qur'an, as well as of the discourses and commentaries of the several schools of Islamic law (*shari'a*), it could not meet every institutional and literary need of the region's powerful and politically complex empires. For example, when a 16th-century ruler of the city-state of Kano signed his name, he could write his given name "Muhammad" in Arabic, but he required a specially adapted script to render his Hausa surname, "Rufa." Likewise, documents pertaining to uniquely African cultural traditions, arts and sciences were also more easily written in a script that could accommodate local vocabularies and pronunciations.

"In traditional medical books, for example, you will often find the text written in two layers of script, Arabic and Ajami," says Nikolay Dobronravin, African studies specialist and professor of world politics at the School of International Relations at Russia's St. Petersburg University. "The main text may be in Arabic, but you usually have commentaries and the names of local plants and local medicines written in Ajami."

The earliest surviving Ajami text is a tomb carving in Gao that dates from the 11th or 12th century. Paper being more perishable than stone, the oldest Ajami manuscript dates to the 16th century: Written in Tamasheq, the language of the largely nomadic Tuaregs, it is a pharmacopeia. Other early documents from the 17th and 18th centuries survive in Wolof, Fulfulde and Hausa.

To accommodate the vocabularies and pronunciations of each language, writers of Ajami modified the Arabic alphabet, often creating new letters.

"Arabic has only three vowels, whereas Wolof has seven," Ngom points out. "Similarly, there are consonants in Wolof that do not exist in Arabic, so what the writers of Ajami did was to add dots above or below letters that were their closest Arabic counterparts."

> Colonial administrators viewed Ajami as nonsense at best and a threat to their authority at worst.

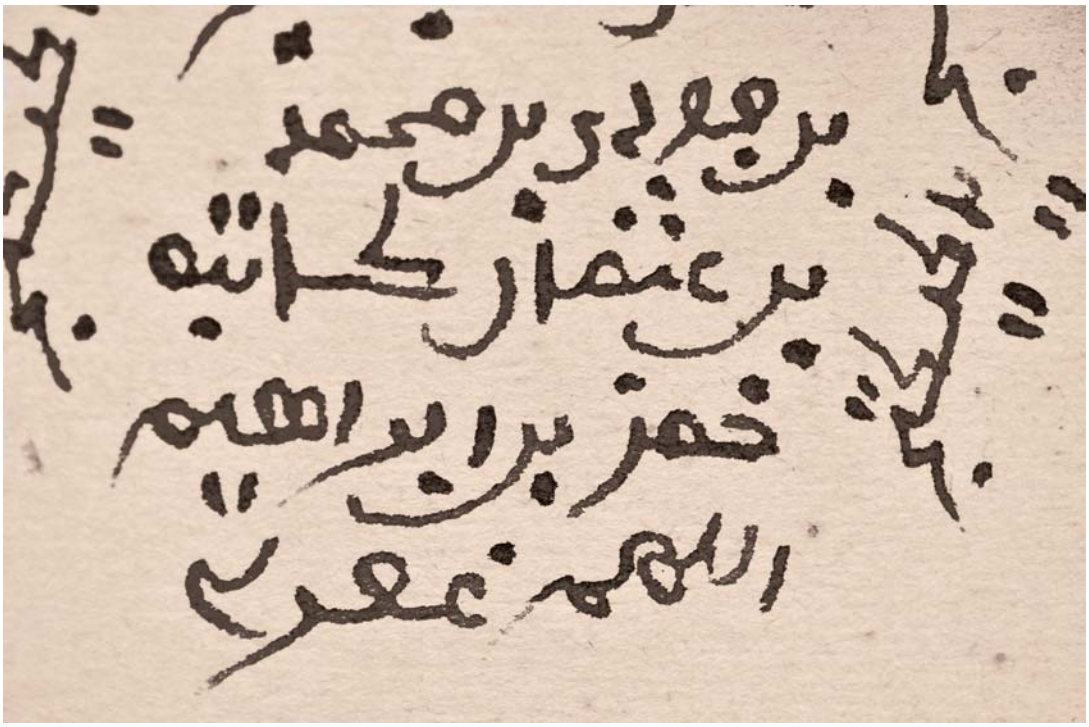
Collectively, all of these adaptations became known as Ajami—the scripts of African medical texts, botanical surveys, works on the occult and astronomy, political, commercial and personal correspondence and religious texts written well into the early 20th century. By this time, however, Ajami began running headlong into the Latin-based scripts of European languages imposed by colonial administrators who viewed Ajami as nonsense at best and a threat to their authority at worst.

"The French were very suspicious of this writing they couldn't read," says Jennifer Yanco, US director of the West African Research Association. "A lot of libraries were burned. So the local people got wise, and they began hiding books within double walls of their mud-brick houses, or they hid them in caves."

In Nigeria, the British governor general from 1914 to 1919, Sir Frederick Lugard, directed that Ajami and Arabic were both to be officially replaced by Hausa written in the Latin alphabet. This became known to locals as *bookoo* (from the English word "book"). In the face of such cultural attacks, Ajami indeed became precisely what the colonial governments feared: a tool of resistance and reform. Writing in Ajami in the late 1940's, Fulani poet Cerno Abdourahmane Bah grimly summarized the frustration of a browbeaten population:

> None of us was consulted about what we had to do.
> They have been led as animals,
> exploited to satisfy every need,
> going up and down,
> without knowing the reason why!

Ajami also served those engaged in internal struggles. During the 17th century, a rising class of Islamic scholars in Hausaland objected to those who professed Islam yet clung to animist beliefs and customs. By the early 19th century, Shehu (Sheikh) Usuman dan Fodio, founder of the Sokoto



This copy of poetry by the early 19th-century Nigerian leader Usuman dan Fodio is written in Fulfulde. "When we compose in Arabic, only the learned benefit," he wrote. "When we compose it in Fulfulde, the unlettered also gain."

Caliphate, emerged as the movement's spiritual and military leader. (His direct descendent, Sultan Muhammed Sa'adu Abubakar, remains the spiritual leader of Nigeria's 70 million Muslims.) A reluctant soldier, the Shehu preferred discourse and poetry as a means of persuasion. Throughout his life, he composed numerous political and religious poems in Hausa and Fulfulde, all penned in Ajami.

"When we compose in Arabic, only the learned benefit," he wrote. "When we compose it in Fulfulde, the unlettered also gain."

Today, many of West Africa's "unlettered" are still reading Ajami—on signs, in shops, in at least one weekly newspaper (Nigeria's *Alfijir*), as well as in locally published books that range from romance novels to religious texts. Nevertheless, Ajami remains a kind of orphaned script, abandoned not only by secular authorities but also by conservative religious ones.

"Starting in the 1700's, the use of Ajami was not approved of by many West African Islamic scholars who associated Arabic with Islam," says Ngom. "They thought it would lead to the dissolution of the language of the Prophet Muhammad, and so writers of Ajami had to defend their use of the script."

Regrettably, says Adamu, the situation has not changed in some places. "In northern Nigeria it is considered prohibited [by religious authorities] to use the Arabic script to write anything secular," says Adamu, pointing out that such is not the case in other Muslim countries. To change this in Nigeria, Adamu has been lobbying for what he terms "the Ajamization of knowledge," which would include the establishment of Ajami departments at universities, the writing of classic Hausa literature into Ajami, the introduction of Ajami as a distinct subject in elementary schools and the development of Ajami word-processing software. He would also like to see more official support, as in neighboring Niger, where the government sponsors the publication of Ajami literature—and Ajami readers are counted among the literate.

Meanwhile, Ngom last year co-authored *Diving into the Ocean of Wolofal: First Workbook in Wolofal* (*Wolof Ajami*), the first book designed to teach students with no previous knowledge of the Arabic script how to read and write Wolof Ajami.

While such efforts are the first steps toward wider legitimacy, there remain other hurdles, such as the question of the script's standardization.

"Ajami is written in many African languages," says Mahamane Laoualy Abdoulaye, visiting professor of linguistics at Abdou Moumouni University in Niamey, Niger. "But even if you take just one, say Hausa, there are various ways to transcribe it using Ajami. In order for it to work everywhere, there will need to be one system of how to write it."

These variations within Ajami-using languages underscore that Ajami scholarship requires multiple skills: not only expertise in both Arabic and Ajami, but also in the particular local African language or languages in which the Ajami texts are written.

Nevertheless, efforts to collect, preserve and publish the Ajami manuscripts that may help rewrite African history continue to gain ground, and Ngom remains undismayed. He proudly associates the script with heritage.

"It is a badge of identity," he declares, emphatically thumping his open palm against his heart. "It is a way of saying, 'You see, I am Muslim, but I am an African Muslim.'"

Freelance journalist and author **Tom Verde** (writah@gmail.com) is a frequent contributor to *Saudi Aramco World*, and his article "Threads on Canvas" (J/F 10) won a 2011 Clarion Award. He holds a master's degree in Islamic studies and Christian–Muslim relations from Hartford Seminary in Connecticut. He has lived and traveled widely in the Middle East.

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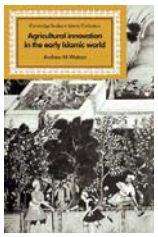
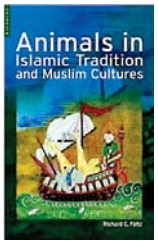
Suggestions for Reading

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



Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World: The Diffusion of Crops and Farming Techniques, 700-1100. Andrew M. Watson. 2008, Cambridge UP, 978-0-52106-883-3, $49.50 hb, $36.99 pb.

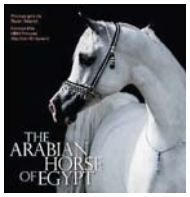
In the four centuries after the early Islamic period conquests, an agricultural advance that was nothing short of revolutionary occurred. Watson describes 18 crops that were successfully spread through the newly Islamicized lands with the help of innovative techniques. From sorghum and sugarcane to some surprises like spinach and watermelon, he talks about the plants' origins and how they proliferated. Watson shows how innovations including creative irrigation technologies, cultivation techniques and land-tenure arrangements sparked extensive social, economic and commercial changes that altered even family sizes and village life. This is an updated edition of a far-reaching, detailed and important seminal study, one of only a few on the topic. Welcomed by historians, it will equally appeal to anyone with serious interest in early Islamic achievements. —GRAHAM CHANDLER



Animals in Islamic Tradition and Muslim Cultures. Richard C. Foltz. 2006, Oneworld, 978-1-85168-398-7, $19.95 pb.

The author—a religion historian, Iran expert and animal-rights advocate—explores the role and treatment of "non-human animals" in Islamic traditions and cultures. This is a useful resource for writings about animals from the Qur'an, traditions (*hadiths*) and works of science and philosophy. Great minds are cited, including Ibn Sina, al-Razi, al-Jahiz, al-Damiri, the Ikhwan al-Safa' (Brethren of Purity), Jalal al-Din Rumi and Ibn Tufail. The book features modern Muslim discussions of animal rights, the role of dogs in Muslim societies and Islamic vegetarianism (as lifestyle option, not requirement). The author finds Islam more sympathetic scripturally to nature and the preservation of living species than some other world faiths. But he is uncomfortable with Islam's "hierarchical perspective" (shared by the Judeo-Christian tradition), giving humans higher ranking than animals. He recommends fresh Muslim interpretations of old notions on animals, which he notes are already taking place on the Internet.

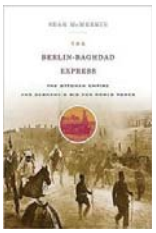
—ROBERT W. LEBLING



The Arabian Horse of Egypt. Nasr Marei. 2010, American University in Cairo Press, 978-977-416-348-7, $39.95 hb.

As the heir to the prestigious Albadeia stud farm near Cairo, and a skilled photographer as well, Nasr Marei proves himself the perfect guide to the history of the Arabian horse in Egypt. With help from equine historian Cynthia Culbertson and Princess Alia Bint Al Hussein of Jordan, who contributes the foreword, Marei traces the Arabian from its origins in ancient times to the early 19th century when large numbers of the finest horses of Arabia were imported into Egypt. Through selective breeding, their descendents inherited the very best qualities of their distinguished ancestors—speed and stamina in abundance, great courage and acute intelligence, not to mention the refined elegance and remarkable grace in motion that are the distinguishing characteristics of the Egyptian Arabian. Thanks to Marei's extraordinary photographs and informative text, no reader will fail to appreciate the unique history, and extraordinary beauty, that have long made the Arabian of Egypt among the most celebrated and sought-after animals in the world.

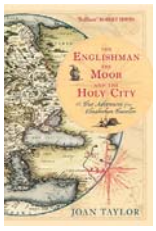
—JANE WALDRON GRUTZ



The Berlin-Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power. Sean McMeekin. 2010, Harvard UP, 978-0-674-05739-5, $29.95 hb.

The post-World War I history of the Middle East has long been told through the lens of triumphal British and French colonialism, but McMeekin reads things a bit differently, as an instance of failed German imperialism. Delving into rarely opened archives in Berlin and Vienna, the author examines how the kaiser's railroad-building efforts through Ottoman lands, including the Hijaz line as well as a projected network through Anatolia to Basra, raced the clock toward completion, pushed along as much by diplomatic legerdemain as by physical spadework, just as the British-backed Arab Revolt ultimately foiled Germany's plans to lead a Pan-Islamic caliphate. This book puts the meat on the bones of John Buchan's classic novel of orientalist espionage *The Greenmantle*, set in the same time and place, and sadly now largely unread.

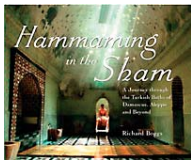
—LOU WERNER



The Englishman, the Moor and the Holy City, The True Adventures of an Elizabethan Traveller. Joan Taylor. 2007, Tempus, 978-0-75244-009-5, $39.95 hb.

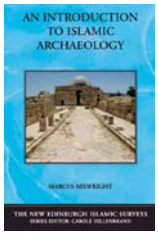
Henry Timberlake, the Englishman, merchant seaman, entrepreneur and adventurer, takes a shipload of goods to Egypt in 1601. Intrigued at the thought of continuing to the Holy Land, he journeys to Jerusalem, but soon finds himself in trouble, mostly because of cultural misunderstandings. The Moor, a pilgrim who befriended Timberlake aboard ship, comes to his aid. How, when and why make for a captivating true story about a relationship between easterner and westerner, Muslim and Christian, at the time of the Ottoman Empire. The author meticulously researched Timberlake (including the account of his travels published in London in 1603) and presents his energetic character and friendship with the Moor in a lively, detailed manner. This delightful book might well be read as a novel, setting an example for overcoming the controversies and explosiveness of the modern world.

—CHARLES BAKER



Hammaming in the Sham: A Journey through the Turkish Baths of Damascus, Aleppo, and Beyond. Richard Boggs. 2011, Garnet Publishing, 978-1-85964-228-3, $60 hb.

Boggs is certainly a dogged bather, or *hammamer*, to use the playful term he coins from *hammam*, the Arabic word for public bath. And his colorful descriptions of the self-cleaning dips he has taken in many of Syria's Mamluk, Ottoman and even a few Roman-era bathing establishments are one part comic soap, one part no-nonsense steam. Wonderfully atmospheric photographs capture the sultry ambiance of mist playing beneath the nearly thousand-year-old domes, of contemplative men at rest and, surprisingly, of occasions for social revelry—card playing, wedding parties and even family meals—often passed in the hottest of the hot rooms. —LOU WERNER



An Introduction to Islamic Archaeology. Marcus Milwright. 2010, Edinburgh UP, 978-0 74862-311-2, £70 hb, £22.99 pb, £50 el.

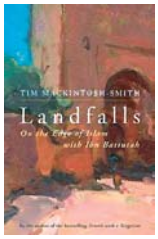
Islamic archeology has only in the past decade found its place as a sub-specialty of the discipline, a development that was long overdue. Now the topic of entire conferences, it still lacks adequate research compendia and books. So Milwright's volume is welcome for both academics and serious amateurs interested in the Islamic past. He covers the field by themes, rather than regionally or chronologically: towns and cities, crafts and industries, and travel and trade, for instance, drawing in detail on hundreds of published excavations. The book's geographical focus is limited to the Mediterranean and South-central Asian regions, at the expense of other Islamic areas like sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent. However, it goes farther than excavation results, talking about the contribution of Islamic archeology to understanding culture. Accounts of people's everyday lives enrich the book, helping draw the discipline out of its traditional oriental studies or art history departments.

—GRAHAM CHANDLER

Istanbulum. Andrea Künzig. 2010, Kehrer Verlag, 978-3-86828-183-5, €36 hb.

Fellow photographer Andrea Künzig possesses a warm soul. It shines through this book of photos, from the front cover of people resting on the Bosporus right to the end. The book, whose title translates as "My Istanbul," is really about the people of the city—the tremendous variety of people who make up this ancient, bustling, dynamic, colorful metropolis. You have to have a sympathetic soul to get as close to people as Künzig did. There are some general scenes showing the waters around the city, but it is the way in which she has captured people, rich and poor, young and old, at work, at play, resting or sometimes just posing for the camera, that makes this book a treasure for anyone interested in Istanbul. Réka Gulvás and Oya Baydar contribute brief essays in English, German and Turkish.

—TOR EIGELAND

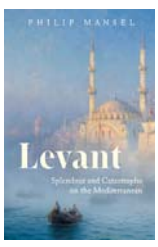


Landfalls: On the Edge of Islam with Ibn Battutah. Tim Mackintosh-Smith. 2010, John Murray, 978-0-71956-787-2, $34.95 hb.

Mackintosh-Smith has spent a quarter of his life retracing the far-flung footsteps of Ibn Battutah through the lands of Islam and beyond, using that great 14th-century globetrotter's *Travels* as both a physical and fanciful point of departure. In this, his third and concluding volume, he takes in Ibn Battutah's remotest destinations—Tanzania, China, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and West Africa—before retiring his walking stick in Andalusia as he searches for the Granadine garden where his fast-tracking forerunner decided finally to stop moving and write everything down. Just as did Ibn Battutah, so too does Mackintosh-Smith describe the odd corners of the world and its unknown cultural pockets with an open mind. But because Ibn Battutah's own narrative was often imprecise or even faulty, Mackintosh-Smith's deceptively erudite talent for toponymic sleuthing and etymological detective work helps him locate what at first glance can no longer be found, and then suddenly is, such as that garden now paved over as a football-stadium car park. —LOU WERNER

Legends of the Fire Spirits: Jinn and Genies from Arabia to Zanzibar. Robert Lebling. 2010, I.B. Taurus, 978-1-58243-632-6, $16.95 hb.

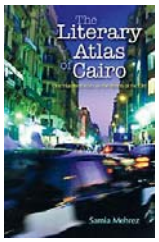
Robert Lebling has produced a comprehensive reference for those seeking information about the *jinn*, or genies. He traces the history of the jinn from pharaonic Egypt and Sumer to the present day, for these supernatural beings still have sway in many Islamic countries and sometimes are named as accomplices by defendants in criminal cases. Lebling examines how different cultures have adopted the jinn and the many adaptations that have been attributed to them. He also explores the influence of jinn legends on Arabic poetry and English 19th-century Arabian Romanticism. Although not intended as a scholarly work, it provides a rich index and appendices that make it easily the most authoritative and accessible recent work on the topic. The book may strike a note with a younger audience fascinated by the occult, but many students of the Middle East, Islam and ancient history should find it a valuable addition to their libraries as well. —STEPHEN L. BRUNDAGE



Levant: Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean. Philip Mansel. 2011, Yale UP, 978-0-30017-264-5, $35 hb.

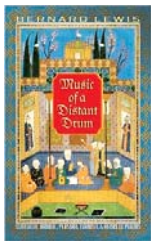
Were Smyrna, Beirut and Alexandria globalized cities before globalization? Or were they volcanos awaiting eruption? A bit of both, argues the eminent historian Philip Mansel in his masterfully vivid and detailed chronicle of politics, religion, intrigue, colonialism and trade in these three crucially important ports. Frequently flouting their Ottoman overlords, the merchants who ran these eastern Mediterranean cities switched identities as easily as they switched languages. Their rulers often saw themselves as Europeans and played an endless series of balancing acts to woo foreign trade and hold imperialist ambitions at bay. Muhammad Ali Pasha, the illiterate soldier who taught himself to read and whom Mansel credits with transforming both Alexandria and Beirut into modern powerhouses in the first half of the 19th century, was a consummate exemplar of the Levantine mentality of putting deals before ideals. Today, writes Mansel, Beirut is the last Levantine city, a place where neither Christianity nor Islam dominates, despite religious polarization.

—RICHARD COVINGTON



The Literary Atlas of Cairo: One Hundred Years on the Streets of the City. Samia Mehrez, ed. 2010, American University in Cairo Press, 978-9-77416-347-0, $39.95 hb.

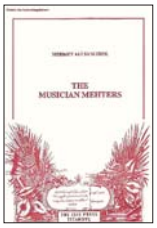
In this ambitious collection, scholar Samia Mehrez has compiled more than 75 literary excerpts from 20th-century Cairo. But as she explains, Cairo is not merely the context for the literature; rather it is alive, "a protagonist whose existence is indispensable for the narratives themselves." The varied narratives here are framed by the academic field of literary geography: How have Cairo's writers understood their city, and how have they represented it in their work? Acknowledging that Cairo has been in a constant state of transformation, Mehrez has gathered written representations of that dynamic city to create a "literary topography" of it. While the subject sounds daunting, the excerpts themselves—representing the work of more than 50 authors—are rich and accessible. And the organization of the collection into sections—Mapping Cairo, Public Spaces, Private Spaces and On the Move in Cairo—each with an introduction by Mehrez, helps the reader explore the deep questions the book raises. —JULIE WEISS



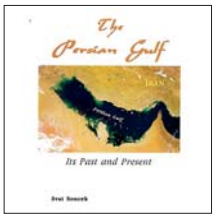
Music of a Distant Drum: Classical Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Hebrew Poems. Bernard Lewis, trans. and intr. 2011, Princeton UP, 978-0-691-15010-9, $17.95 pb.

"Love sits as sultan in my soul," writes Ibn al-'Arabi. "His army has made camp in my heart." This is not the kind of book one expects from a prominent historian. The Princeton professor emeritus has translated 129 short poems from four Middle Eastern cultures—Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Hebrew—that for the most part have never before appeared in English. Lewis explains that poems are historical documents, reflecting not just the state of mind of their writers but also the world and era of their creation. These works were written by men and women, caliphs and commoners, mystics and slaves, from Arab Spain to Central Asia, between

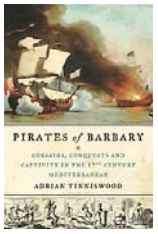
the seventh and 18th centuries. They reflect four separate literary traditions, all deeply influenced by Islamic culture. The poems speak of passion, courage, melancholy, loss and sheer wonder at God's universe. Sometimes it is hard to tell which culture is speaking; at such times, common humanity prevails. —ROBERT W. LEBLING



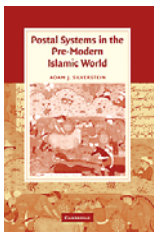
The Musician Mehters. Mehmet Ali Şanlikol. 2011, The Isis Press, 978-9-75428-428-7, $15 pb.
The complex culture of the Ottoman Empire gave rise to many unique music traditions, including the band music of the high-ranking servants known as the Musician Mehters who played in official ceremonial bands, as well as unofficial groups. Known in the West as Ottoman Janissary Bands, these groups played an array of drums, cymbals and trumpets. Over time, the loud oboe-like *zurna* became their signature sound. Musician Mehters played in battle, accompanied official outdoor ceremonies and events like wrestling matches and even announced prayer times in Istanbul. Aimed at readers familiar with Turkish history and Middle Eastern music concepts, *The Musician Mehters* looks at the complex issues surrounding who the musicians were and how their music developed over time. It also discusses how Mehter music influenced military marching bands and European composers. A CD of traditional and modern Mehter music, the latter composed by the author, accompanies the book, bringing this colorful musical tradition to life.
— KAY HARDY CAMPBELL



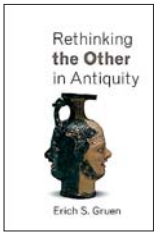
The Persian Gulf: Its Past and Present. Svat Soucek. 2008, Mazda, 978-1-56859-120-0, $45 cl.
Soucek drew on his long intimacy with Southwest Asian history and its sources to produce this intensive scholarly analysis of the sustained transit role of the Gulf in Middle East history. Sometimes favoring Iranian perspectives, he uses the title Persian, rather than Arabian, to name the Gulf, while acknowledging that native maritime Gulf trade was always mainly Arab. Beginning with earliest historical times, Part I emphasizes five themes: the millennia-long transit role of the Gulf and its islands, channeling trade between the Middle East and India and the Orient; the sustained commercial (rather than power-projection) nature of Gulf seafaring, resulting in persistent political land-mindedness among those ruling its shores; the consequent five centuries of naval dominance after 1507 by Europeans, then Americans; the symbiosis between south-coast Arabs and north-coast Persians; and the transformation of the Gulf with the Petroleum Age. His readable account is a major addition to the literature on the region. Part II's concise atlas of the eight countries bordering the Gulf is very useful, and relevant fascinating historical, geographical and linguistic tidbits add interest. In conclusion, Soucek stresses north-coast Iranian heavyweight status but likewise emphasizes south-coast Arab economic power. —COLBERT HELD



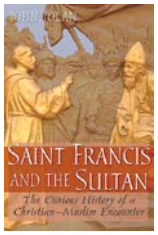
Pirates of Barbary: Corsairs, Conquests and Captivity in the 17th-Century Mediterranean. Adrian Tinniswood. 2010, Riverhead Books, 978-1-59448-774-3, $26.95 hb.
In the early 17th century, the Ottoman fleet competed for dominance in the Mediterranean with navies of European powers. Petty rulers of Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli and other North African ("Barbary") city-states paid lip service to the Ottoman sultan but pursued their own power agendas. In this setting, Barbary pirates forged shifting alliances and captured vessels of many nations, seizing treasure and slaves. The British and others tried to put a stop to the piracy, and their efforts make for fascinating reading. This book is refreshingly written with a strong narrative. Among its surprises: many Barbary pirate captains were Europeans—British, Dutchmen and others termed "renegades" by their own countries. Some became Muslims; others did not. Diversity was the hallmark of these entrepreneurs of discord. Pirate crews were mixed: North Africans, Turks and Europeans. Faith was not a controlling factor; yes, they were in it for the money. —ROBERT W. LEBLING



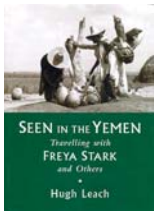
Postal Systems in the Pre-Modern Islamic World. Adam J. Silverstein. 2010, Cambridge UP, 978-0-52114-761-3, $34.99 hb, $34.99 pb, $28 el.
Rulers in the Middle East from pre-Islamic to Mamluk times needed efficient communications to maintain order throughout their lands, compact or vast. The term "postal" here bears little likeness to mail delivery today; rather, it refers to the system of "posts" along routes of travel where runners, mules, horses or camels could stop and refresh or be exchanged for other carriers. Covering 15 eras, this fascinating volume traces postal routes and how commodities, messages and intelligence were transported over them. These were for caliphs and the elite only, however; ordinary citizens had to make their own arrangements. Silverstein integrates the postal processes well with the politics of each era. Although at times academic, the book will be useful for both avid amateur scholars of early communication networks and professionals in the field. Much is entertaining. Its appendix shows typical distances and the times in which they could be covered, e.g., Damascus to Samarra in six days. —GRAHAM CHANDLER



Rethinking the Other in Antiquity. Erich S. Gruen. 2011, Princeton UP, 978-0-691-14852-6, $39.50 hb.
This work challenges conventional notions about how peoples of classical antiquity—Greeks, Romans, Jews—viewed their enemies, adversaries, conquerors and conquests. The traditional view is that the ancients kept their distance from the "Other" through stereotypes, disdain and mockery. Gruen looks at these relationships and discovers surprising results. He examines classical Greek views of the Persians, Egyptians and Phoenicians, the Romans' perspectives on the Carthaginians, Celts, Germans and Jews, and even Greek and Roman opinions of "people of color." While hostile views of the Other of course existed, he finds a surprising amount of tolerance, constructive interaction, even empathy. Some ancients even sought their origins among their enemies. Greeks believed they were parents of the Persians through their legendary ancestor Perseus, and Achaemenid Persians accepted and reshaped the same legend. Gruen delves deeply into a wealth of ancient tales and histories, and draws a vivid portrait of a truly multicultural world.
—ROBERT W. LEBLING



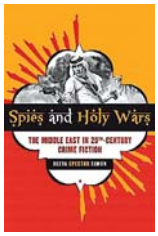
Saint Francis and the Sultan: The Curious History of a Christian-Muslim Encounter. John Tolan. 2009, Oxford UP, 978-0-19923-972-6, $60 hb.
Ever since Saint Francis of Assisi crossed Egyptian enemy lines during the fifth crusade—probably in September 1219—his fruitless attempt to convert Sultan Malik al-Kamil to Christianity has spawned heated, polemical debate and inspired artistic portrayals. Each era sees what it wants to see in this historically resonant encounter, argues John Tolan in this scholarly exegesis of eight centuries of commentary by clerics, philosophers and religious authorities, both Muslim and Christian. Thirteenth-century theologian Jacques de Vitry viewed the adventure as the saint's peaceful alternative to war. Voltaire praised the sultan for laughing off the "fanatic's" offer to test his faith by walking through fire and sending Francis safely home. In the 1960's, Idries Shah, author of books popularizing Sufism, claimed Francis came not to convert the sultan but to learn Sufi principles and dissuade the Crusaders from fighting. For Pope John Paul II, the meeting exemplified ecumenical dialogue. —RICHARD COVINGTON



Seen in the Yemen: Travelling with Freya Stark and Others. Hugh Leach. 2011, Arabian Publishing, 978-0-95588-945-5, $90 hb.
Daily news reports of political unrest in Yemen made the publication of *Seen in the Yemen* particularly timely, with this collection of striking black-and-white photographs and whimsical reminiscences by a former British diplomat providing an informative historic and cultural context. In the mid-1970's, when Hugh Leach was serving in Sana'a, the capital of what was then North Yemen, he was twice visited by the famous Middle East traveler and author Dame Freya Stark, then in her early 80's. They retraced the steps of her 1930's tour of the region, each with a classic Leica camera in hand. Leach later also toured the country with noted Arabist travelers Wilfred Thesiger and Dame Violet Dickson. His dramatic pictures of the land, architecture and people of a now-changed Yemen

reflect his love of what the Romans called *Arabia Felix*, or Fortunate Arabia. He includes a brief essay on its origins in the fourth millennium BCE, and the interactions of its pagan, Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities over time.

—WILLIAM TRACY



Spies and Holy Wars: The Middle East in 20th-Century Crime Fiction. Reeva Spector Simon. 2010, University of Texas Press, 978-0-29272-300-9, $55 hb.

This compelling and enticing work spans nearly a thousand volumes of popular literature focusing on the Middle East. The genre started in 1916 with the appearance of *The Greenmantle*; historian Simon writes of the John Buchan novel and the ensuing "clash of civilizations" played out in the pages of popular fiction, pitting radical Arabs and Muslims against the West. Along the way, we learn about Fu Manchu in Cairo, superheroes and operatives Nick Carter, Mack Bolan, Scot Harvath and others, and publishers who have catered to millions in serialized stories about international terrorism, economic destabilization and the impending apocalypse. The authors of these paperbacks pursued every plot imaginable, seemingly unconcerned about the wave of conflict- and violence-ridden literature they were creating, to make the Middle East a best-seller.

—JONATHAN FRIEDLANDER

The Story of My Life. Fadhma Aith Mansour Amrouche. Caroline Stone, tr. 2009, Hardinge Simpole, 978-1-84382-216-5, £14.95/$25 pb.

The life of Algerian Fadhma Amrouche (1883-1967) spanned the First and Second World Wars and the war for Algerian independence. Born a widow's daughter in the Berber Kabylie region of Algeria, Amrouche was sent to a French convent school. She married an Algerian Christian convert and moved to her husband's ancestral village, following him to Tunis where he worked on the railroad, and eventually moving to Paris. *The Story of My Life*, not meant for publication, is a mother's letter to the two of her eight children who survived past the 1950's. Her son, Jean (d. 1962), was a well-known writer in France and Algeria. Her daughter, Taos (d. 1976), was a novelist and singer of traditional Kabylie songs that originally came from her great-grandmother. Written in an intimate and frank voice, *The Story of My Life* weaves Amrouche's personal memories with the sagas of family members, important family events and details of traditional Berber village life. Caroline Stone prefaces the book with excellent introductions on the Berbers, Christianity in the Kabylie and the Amrouche family.

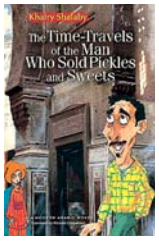
—KAY HARDY CAMPBELL

The Sweets of Araby: Enchanting Recipes from the Tales of the 1001 Nights. Leila Salloum Elias and Muna Salloum. 2011, Countryman Press, 978-0-88150-929-8, $21.95 hb.

Arabs seem to have proven that the combination of syrup, flour and butter has infinite mutations.

The authors tell the tales of 25 sweets, using 10th-century cookbooks, *The Arabian Nights*, their personal stories and colorful illustrations. One wishes more information was provided about the cookbooks and the version/translation of *The Arabian Nights* they used. Much like the sweets in Damascus bakeries—so overwhelming that the options start to run together—so too do the recipes here. However, for those wanting to be transported to the warm aroma of rosewater and butter, this book provides a lovely journey.

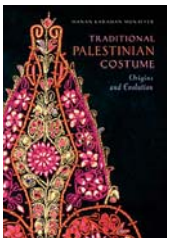
—ALIA YOUNIS



The Time-Travels of the Man Who Sold Pickles and Sweets. Khairy Shalaby. Michael Cooperson, trans. 2010, American University in Cairo Press, 978-977-416-391-3, $24.95 hb.

Flippant Ibn Shalaby travels through Egypt from the year 969 to 1991, when this novel was first published in Arabic. Encountering many historical figures as he tries to find his place in this world—or more specifically in an Egypt in which history has a way of repeating itself—Ibn Shalaby spends most of his time in the Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk periods. Ibn Shalaby's wit resonates with the bitterness and hopelessness of Egyptians prior to this year's revolution. But beware: Readers without a good grasp of Egyptian history will find themselves struggling to understand some of the events to which Ibn Shalaby travels.

—ALIA YOUNIS



Traditional Palestinian Costume: Origins and Evolution. Hanan Karaman Munayyer. 2011, Olive Branch Press, 978-1-56656-825-8, $200 hb.

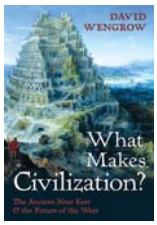
This spectacularly beautiful production is a major contribution to recording a critically endangered costume heritage. Elegantly boxed, with hundreds of splendid photographs, many of them full page, as well as a small selection of old photographs, paintings and prints, and images of jewelry and household accessories, the book is a treasure chest of information. The introduction tells the moving story of Farah and Hanan Karaman Munayyer's determination to do something to preserve their land's threatened cultural heritage. The couple's own extensive collection, augmented by gifts and purchases, now numbers more than 1500 items and forms the core of the Palestine Heritage Foundation that they have established (www.palestineheritage.org). The first section sheds an extremely interesting light on the origins of Palestinian dress, with illustrations that show, for example, parallels between headdresses of the mid-20th century and those from second-century Palmyra, or embroidery designs from Ramallah and mosaics on the floor of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Palestine had an extraordinarily rich and varied embroidery tradition. Not only did each town or tribal group have its own designs and style, but they were constantly evolving. The dresses are stunning with every kind of technique—from counted thread work, to brilliant and modern-looking patchwork effects, to Ottoman-style couching. The book is arranged by major towns and, although older pieces are represented, is largely concerned with the dresses in use at the time traditional Palestinian society was overturned in 1948. Besides being a valuable resource for the history of costume, or the identification of pieces, Nathan Sayers's photographs make the book a wonderful resource for anyone interested in design or tempted to try her or his hand at some of the beautiful cross-stitch patterns.

—CAROLINE STONE

Umm Kulthūm: Artistic Agency and the Shaping of an Arab Legend, 1967–2007. Laura Lohman. 2010, Wesleyan UP, 978-0-81957-071-0, $40 hb.

This is only the second serious book in English on the great Egyptian singer (the other is Virginia Danielson's *The Voice of Egypt*, published in 1997). While Danielson's book was a scholarly biography, this work looks at how Umm Kulthum's reputation has endured and grown from the latter part of her life to the present. After Egypt's defeat in the 1967 Six Day War, Umm Kulthum began a new phase of her career at a time when she might have retired, transforming herself into a living symbol of Egyptian and pan-Arab values. Lohman examines how Umm Kulthum, an independent woman in a traditional society, carefully and shrewdly created and maintained a public image as "the mother of the Arabs" or "the fourth Pyramid," an image that remains strong even today, as her music reaches a new generation of Arab listeners in the age of music videos and remixes.

—EDWARD FOX



What Makes Civilization? The Ancient Near East & the Future of the West. David Wengrow. 2010, Oxford UP, 978-0-19280-580-5, $24.95 hb.

An agreed definition of "civilization" has so far eluded historians, but this compact and eminently readable book goes a long way in describing its genesis in the Near East (the Middle East in modern news parlance). The aim, it seems, is to link the world's first civilizations—Mesopotamia and Egypt—with today's and show there's really little difference. Archeologist Wengrow engagingly describes the cultural foundations of urban life and how it evolved and spread from the Neolithic period. Largely countering Samuel Huntington's famous "clash of civilizations" argument, he vividly presents the interactivity among these early civilizations, such as their extensive trade in exotic materials critical to dealing with their respective gods. Little in the book, however, speaks to "the Future of the West" suggested by the subtitle, leaving readers to draw their own conclusions based on what the author calls their "paradoxical" images of the ancient Near East. Hundreds of suggestions for further reading round out the volume.

—GRAHAM CHANDLER

Classroom Guide

WRITTEN BY JULIE WEISS

FOR STUDENTS

We hope this two-page guide will help sharpen your reading skills and deepen your understanding of this issue's articles.

FOR TEACHERS

We encourage reproduction and adaptation of these ideas, freely and without further permission from *Saudi Aramco World*, by teachers at any level, whether working in a classroom or through home study.

—THE EDITORS

Curriculum Alignments

To see alignments with US national standards for all articles in this issue, click "Curriculum Alignments" at www.saudiaramcoworld.com.

Professional Development Workshops

The Middle East Policy Council, an independent, non-partisan educational organization, offers free Professional Development Workshops to help K–12 educators understand the geographical, political and human complexities of the region and to provide valuable teaching resources. MEPC will design a workshop to give your school, organization or conference innovative tools and strategies for teaching about the Middle East and Islam. For information, e-mail Barbara Petzen at bpetzen@mepc.org with your name, school or organization, phone number, and subject and grade taught. MEPC has also developed a companion Web site, TeachMideast.org, with background essays and lesson plans.

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

We humans have many ways of saying things. Sometimes we say them in words, but there are lots of other ways to say things. The activities in this Classroom Guide will help you explore different ways that we communicate with each other. You will find Visual Literacy activities embedded in them.

Theme: Ways of Speaking

How do you "speak" without talking? Why do you do so?

There are things you say in words and things you don't. For example, when you roll your eyes in response to something someone has said, you're not saying anything in words, but you're communicating a message nonetheless. Think for a minute about this: If you've ever rolled your eyes, what did you mean? Jot down one sentence that puts into words what you were "saying" when you rolled your eyes. (If you've never rolled your eyes, you've certainly seen other people roll theirs. Write a sentence that summarizes what you understood them to be saying.) Now share your sentence with a partner. Discuss with your partner why someone might choose to roll his or her eyes rather than speak the sentence in words.

How do objects "speak"? What do they say?

In addition to facial expressions conveying meaning, objects can communicate meaning too. Have you seen anyone wearing a pink ribbon? The ribbon, in a way, is speaking: It is communicating a message from the person who is wearing it to whomever that person sees. What does it mean to you when you see the pink ribbon? If you saw someone wearing one and didn't know what it meant, would you ask? Why or why not? "For My Children" includes a discussion of pink ribbons. Look at the photos on page 9 and read the captions, in which Dr. Samia Al-Amoudi writes about pink ribbons. How does she describe what the pink ribbon is "saying"?

Think about other objects that convey meaning—such as ribbons of other colors. With your partner, join another pair and brainstorm a list of such objects. Write them in the left column of a T chart. In the right column, write a tweet that expresses what the object is saying. Be specific. For example, for the pink ribbon, don't just write "breast cancer." Write something more thorough (but still brief), such as, "I support research that will end breast cancer," or "I am aware that some women get breast cancer, and I support efforts to find a cure." When you've completed your T chart, discuss, as you did regarding rolling your eyes, why someone might prefer to communicate a message with an object like a pink ribbon rather than to say something in words.

Like pink ribbons, sculptures can communicate meaning. Read "Egypt's Granite Garden." Then look at the photos of the sculptures and read the captions, many of which simply name a sculptor and identify the year in which he or she created the art. Choose one of the sculptures to focus on. Write a few sentences that summarize what the sculpture says to you. Then find another person in the class who has looked at the same sculpture. Read aloud to each other what you have written. Did the sculpture say the same thing to both of you? If not, explain to each other how you "heard" what you did from the sculpture. Does it matter to you that you heard something different than your partner? Why or why not? Have a few pairs share their descriptions with the rest of the class. As a class, discuss differences in how different people understand what a sculpture is saying.

As a way to think more about non-verbal ways of "speaking," look at the photographs that accompany "Kazan: Between Europe and Asia." With your partner, look at facial expressions, gestures, objects and actions in the photos. Discuss what they say to you. Keep in mind that they may communicate different things to different people, which raises the question you also considered when looking at sculpture: How important is it that people accurately receive the message that someone intends? Think again about the example of rolling your eyes. What if you were in a place where that facial expression meant that you were feeling ill? Or maybe it was considered a prayerful expression. Or maybe it had no meaning at all. In a situation in which you were rolling your eyes, how important would it be to you to have someone understand your meaning? How important do you think it is to Dr. Al-Amoudi that people understand what a pink ribbon means? In short, in what kind of situations does accurately understanding the meaning of a gesture or an object matter? In what kinds of situations doesn't it matter? What accounts for the difference?

How do photographs speak?

You've just looked at some photographs to see how expressions, objects and actions convey meaning. If you think about it a little more abstractly, sometimes people use photographs to say things, rather than saying them in words. If you post pictures on Facebook, for example, why do you choose the photos rather than describing some things

in words? Again, think back to the example of rolling your eyes. Are there times when it's better not to say something out loud? Are there some things that are too complicated to say in words, that photos communicate more efficiently? "From Africa, in Ajami" includes photographs of pages written in Ajami. Read the article, underlining parts that describe what Ajami is and what it looks like. Then look at the photos and read the captions. Why do you think the editors of *Saudi Aramco World* decided to include photos of these pages? What, if anything, do the photos convey that the words of the article do not?

When might you prefer not to speak about something? Why?

Read "For My Children." In it, Dr. Al-Amoudi discusses how difficult it was for her to talk with her children about her illness, but that she did so anyway. Think about why it was difficult for her to speak about it, and why she did anyway. Then think about things you find difficult to talk about. In a journal, find a way to express this. You might choose to write about it, but you might prefer to draw, take a photo, or use some other medium. You don't need to show this to anyone.

Theme: Reading, Writing and Speaking

Now that you've thought about different modes of communicating, turn your attention to what is more typically associated with communication: reading, writing and speaking.

What's in an alphabet?

"From Africa, in Ajami" provides a rich example of a written form of communication. Read the article and highlight or underline the answers to these questions: What is Ajami? What analogy does writer Tom Verde use to help readers understand what it is? How did Ajami develop? Where did it develop? How did it spread? Think about who uses Ajami and what they use it for. Write a sentence or two about what you think might make Ajami important.

Why do people have power struggles about a form of script? What is at stake?

The answers you've highlighted are fairly straightforward, and yet there's more to the story of Ajami. Maybe you find it surprising that a form of script can be controversial. After all, how controversial is the English alphabet? Even young schoolchildren see it every day on charts around their classrooms! But Ajami is controversial. Let's take a closer look to find out why. First, look at how you know that Ajami is controversial. Using a different color highlighter or pen, mark the parts of the article that present evidence that shows that some people reject the use of Ajami. Then go through and mark the parts that explain who—past and present—has opposed the use of Ajami, and why. Write a sentence that summarizes their perspective(s).

On the other side of the issue are those who believe that the acceptance of Ajami could empower the people who read and write it. Who are these people? Underline the names and jobs of those who believe that official recognition of Ajami could be important. Then mark their explanations of what that recognition could provide and what it could reveal.

When historians study a time period, they use artifacts, including writings, from that time period. The way they understand the past hinges on what kind of documents they look at. Take the example of the industrial revolution. If you read business documents from early textile mills, you would get a story about industrialization from a businessman's perspective. You might learn about production methods, the cost of materials, the quantity of output and the profits earned. But if you read the diaries of young women who worked at the mills, you would learn about how difficult the work was, how long the workday lasted, how much—or how little—money workers earned, what they did in their spare time, and so on. The documents you read, in other words, shape the story that you learn.

Think about Ajami in that context. What kind of documents—analogous to the workers' diaries—can you imagine might be available in Ajami that are not available in other forms of writing? As a class, brainstorm examples of such documents. Then imagine what kind of information such documents might provide. What kind of story might they tell—and most importantly, how might it differ from the stories people know now?

Why do people have power struggles about a language? What is at stake?

"Kazan: Between Europe and Asia" reports that the Tatar language, like Ajami script, has been the object of power struggles. There are parallels between the experiences of the Tatars and those of Africans who read and write Ajami. Mark the places in the article that show that there are power struggles involving the Tatar language and Tatar culture. With a partner, make a list of similarities between the power struggles in Tatarstan and those regarding Ajami.

Think about other current examples of conflict over language and identity. For example, in the parts of the United States that border Mexico, the use of Spanish in public schools is often controversial. Do some research to find out why. What is at stake when people use a language that is not the officially recognized language in a place? Why does the language people use become important and controversial?

Finally, reflect on what you've learned. What surprised you most about what you've read and done? Why was it surprising? Did it contradict something you thought before? Is it something that had never occurred to you? As a way of concluding these activities, write an email to your teacher answering these questions.

Dream and Reality: *Modern and Contemporary Women Artists from Turkey.*

The works of some 75 artists offer a new perspective on the social and cultural history of Turkey, and in doing so, aim to open a dialogue concerning women artists and female identity in Turkish art. Avoiding an overly simple presention of the artists as individual parts of a gender-focused selection, the curators have brought them together through the originality and diversity of their work. The title comes from the 1891 romance novel *Dream and Reality,* authored jointly by Fatma Aliye and Ahmet Midhat. As a two-part book, the first part (Dream) was written by Aliye, and the second (Reality) by Midhat. Taking this as a point of departure, the exhibition investigates how female artists turn their dreams into reality. In addition to the exhibition, there will be panels, symposia and workshops, and Istanbul Modern Cinema will show a film program presenting the most acclaimed and awarded films of the year by women directors. **Istanbul** Modern, September 16 through January 8.

***In the Armchair,* by Azade Köker. Paper, 2009.**

Current **September**

'Abbas: *45 Years in Photography* features 133 black and white photographs and four audio-visual clips by acclaimed Iranian photographer Abbas Kiarostami. As a member of the Magnum agency since 1981, he has covered important political and social events. Through his photographs, which also depict the Iranian Revolution, he aims to show his dedication to the struggles within different societies of the world. National Museum of **Singapore**, through September 18.

Inside the Toshakhana: *Treasures of the Sikh Courts* brings together some of the finest examples of Sikh art and heritage in public and private collections as a tribute to Punjab's rich artistic traditions. The *toshakhana* (treasury) in question belonged to the one-eyed ruler of Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who amassed a magnificent collection of beautiful objects and works of art—jewelry, paintings, textiles and arms and armor. The exhibition focuses on objects connected with the Sikh court of Lahore generally and Ranjit Singh's toshakhana specifically, which was dispersed a decade after his death. Brunei Gallery, SOAS, **London**, through September 24.

The Golden Temple of Amritsar: *Reflections of the Past* is the first major exhibition documenting one of the world's most beautiful and iconic buildings, both the center of the Sikh faith and a place of pilgrimage for followers of other traditions. On show are original photographs, paintings and engravings, enhanced with extracts from over 70 eyewitness accounts by, among others, European spies, travelers, artists, *memsahibs* and raconteurs who visited the shrine in the 19th century. The exhibition traces the temple's history, beginning with its origins as a place where the Buddha once meditated, to its role as the inspiration behind a guerrilla insurgency that eventually led to the establishment of a Sikh empire in the 18th century. www.soas.ac.uk/gallery. Brunei Gallery, SOAS, **London**, through September 24.

Contemporary Views IV: *Figurative Practices* showcases paintings and sculptures by more than 20 Egyptian artists that reveal each artist's approach to figurative representation. Al-Masar Gallery of Contemporary Art, **Cairo**, through September 25.

The Art of the Writing Instrument from Paris to Persia. Every culture that values the art of writing has found ways to reflect the prestige and pleasure of the craft through beautiful tools. Writing implements such as pens, knives and scissors, as well as storage chests, pen-cases and writing desks, were often fashioned from precious materials: mother-of-pearl, gems, imported woods, gold and silver. Once owned by statesmen, calligraphers, wealthy merchants and women of fashion, these objects highlight the ingenuity of the artists who created them and underline the centrality of the written word in the cultures that produced them. Walters Art Museum, **Baltimore**, through September 25.

Rina Banerjee: *Chimeras of India and the West.* Sensual sculptures made of shells, animal skulls, feathers and Indian fabrics; spectacular installations combining colonial objects and plastic materials found in the streets of New York; dream drawings in exotic colors depicting the body in a trance state—Banerjee's works express the ambiguities of her twofold identity as a product of both East and West, the illusions bequeathed by the past, the contradictions of the post-colonial world and the underside of globalization. Musée Guimet, **Paris**, through September 26.

Out of Place features four artists—Hrair Sarkissian, Ahlam Shibli, Ion Grigorescu and Cevdet Erek—who explore the relationship between dominant political forces and personal and collective histories. The exhibition centers on urban spaces, architectural structures and the condition of displacement. Darat Al-Funun, **Amman, Jordan**, through September 29.

Ramadan Show: *Contemporary and Modern Calligraphy Art* showcases works by numerous Arab artists including Kamal Boullata, Hussein Madi, Omar El-Nagdi and Alaa Ismail. Featured are Boullata's abstract works, which highlight notions of Palestinian identity; the paintings by Lebanese artist Hussein Madi, meanwhile, are inspired by the geometric forms of Islamic art. Madi's joyful experiments in color are joined by the symbolic designs and philosophical investigations of El-Nagdi, alongside the bold textural brush strokes of Ismail. Artspace, **Dubai**, through September 30.

Borusan Museum of Contemporary Art will open in the Perili Köşk, a renovated 1910 building in the Istanbul suburb of Rumeli Hisarı, exhibiting part of the Borusan Holding company's 600-piece collection of works by Turkish and international artists. The building serves as the company's headquarters and will be open to the public on weekends. **Istanbul**, September.

Current **October**

Be Longing features photographs spanning the career of Lebanese artist Fouad Elkoury. Taken in various cities including Beirut, Paris and Cairo, the works provide a pictorial autobiography and regional history across decades. Regardless of the subject, his images convey the passing of time. **Beirut** Art Center, through October 1.

Sajjil: *A Century of Modern Art* is a comprehensive cross-section of art from the Arab world produced over the last 100 years. The exhibition brings together more than 200 artworks from Mathaf's extensive collection, presenting turning points in artistic thought as it evolved in the Arab world during the century leading up to the 1990's, and helping to set Arab modern art in its historical place within a larger art-historical tradition. It also emphasizes the several common moments and concerns that make it possible to talk about a shared identity in the region. Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, **Doha, Qatar**, through October 1.

Kashmir in 19th Century Photography is a contribution to the study of early photography from South Asia and presents a small but impressive selection of the most important

ISTANBUL MODERN / COURTESY OF AZADE KÖKER AND GALLERY ZILBERMAN

studios active in Kashmir, including such great names in early Indian photography as Baker & Burke, Samuel Bourne, William D. Holmes and John Edward Saché. Museen Dahlem, **Berlin**, through October 2.

The Use of the Astrolabe: *A Masterpiece of 16th-Century Illumination* displays a scientific manuscript created between 1555 and 1559 by an unknown master in French court circles. It explains the functions of this ancient instrument according to the teachings of the German astronomer Johannes Stoeffler, presenting a geometry lesson and a visual delight. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, through October 3.

Hussein Madi: *Drawings and Sculptures* exhibits one of the Middle East's leading contemporary artists, with more than 50 solo shows to his name. According to art critic Joseph Tarrab, Madi "denotes an extremely profound intuitive understanding of the artistic and spiritual oriental tradition." Nabad Art Gallery, **Amman, Jordan**, through October 19.

Hamra Abbas: *Cities* combines old works with new and incorporates the media of painting, sculpture and video to explore how religion, sexuality, fear, and economic and political power underpin the Pakistani artist's own quasi-nomadic relationship with Istanbul, London, New York, Sharjah and Thessaloniki—all cities she lived in through a series of artist residencies, long-term projects and exhibitions. Green Cardamom Gallery, **London**, through October 21.

Mummies of the World presents 150 human and animal mummies and related artifacts from South America, Europe, Asia, Oceania and Egypt, showing how science can shed light on the historical and cultural record. The exhibition includes interactive multimedia exhibits that illustrate how such tools as computer tomography, magnetic resonance imaging, DNA analysis and radiocarbon dating allow researchers to deduce facts about the lives, history and cultures of the mummies. Franklin Institute, **Philadelphia**, through October 23.

Nostalgia features Syrian painter Asaad Arabi's latest works, which tackle a venerated subject – Egyptian songstress Umm Kulthum. Renowned for her marathon concerts that were often open to the public, Umm Kulthum was beloved by the masses, making her one of the most popular Arab singers of all time. Arabi approaches this icon with colorful expressionism and rhythmic lines that extract the emotive buoyancy of her songs as he searches for the lost hours of a bygone era. Ayyam Gallery, **Dubai**, through October 27.

Paintings over 50 years, 1959-2009 is a retrospective of Algerian contemporary painter Abdallah Benanteur, who imbues his paintings with calligraphic principles while also maintaining a concise, dense and rhythmic flow. Often incorporating figures that are no more than a mark, he thus indicates the limitations of humans in relation to the world and its elements; he also depicts an abstracted Earth bathed by the rising and setting sun. Espace Claude Lemand, **Paris**, through October 30.

Zaha Hadid: *An Architecture* examines over three decades of the groundbreaking Iraqi–British architect's work through a selection of projects (both completed and in progress), allowing visitors to fully enter the universe of Hadid. A graduate of the prestigious Architectural Association School in London, where she later taught, Hadid typically interlaces taut lines and curves and uses sharp corners and overlapping planes. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, through October 30.

Current **November**

The State: Social/Antisocial? is curated by Rami Farook, who has assembled works from the collections of The Third Line gallery, Traffic and The Farook Collection that continue his conversation on the state of the world today. Artists include Arwa Abouon, Fouad Elkhoury, Shilpa Gupta, Hassan Hajjaj, Ahmed Mater, Hesam Rahmanian, David Shrigley, Tracey Emin, Susan Hefuna, Damien Hirst, Huda Lutfi, Youssef Nabil, Akram Zaatari and Abdulnasser Gharem, and more. Traffic and The Third Line, **Dubai**, through November 3.

Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs presents an array of possessions unearthed from the boy king's tomb, including his golden canopic coffinette and the crown found on his head when the tomb was discovered. The exhibition offers information about the extraordinary discovery of the tomb, the belief system and burial rituals of ancient Egypt, and the results of the latest scientific testing conducted on Tutankhamun's mummy. **Melbourne [Australia]** Museum, through November 6.

Body Parts: *Ancient Egyptian Fragments and Amulets* features 35 representations of individual body parts from the Museum's ancient Egyptian collection, using both fragments of sculptures and objects created as distinct elements to illuminate the very realistic depiction of individual body parts in canonical Egyptian sculpture. Ancient Egyptian artists carefully portrayed each part of the human body, respecting the significance of every detail. **Brooklyn [New York]** Museum, through November 27.

Current **December**

Life and Death in the Pyramid Age: *The Emory Old Kingdom Mummy* places the mummy—excavated at the sacred site of Abydos in Middle Egypt in 1920—in the context of ancient Egypt's mummification and burial practices and the cult of the dead, and explores the social and political changes that marked the end of the Pyramid Age. The development of the site of Abydos and the cult of Osiris is also a focus of the exhibition, with a link to the current excavations at the Middle Cemetery where the Old Kingdom mummy was found nearly a century ago. Carlos Museum, Emory University, **Atlanta**, through December 11.

1001 Inventions: *Discover the Muslim Heritage in Our World* traces the story of 1000 years of science from the Muslim world dating from the seventh century onward, looking at the social, scientific and technological achievements that originated in the Muslim cultural sphere. It features more than 60 exhibits, interactive displays and dramatization showing that many modern inventions, spanning fields such as engineering, medicine and design, can trace their roots back to men and women of different faiths and cultures who lived in Muslim civilizations. California Science Center, **Los Angeles**, through December 31.

Before the Pyramids: *The Origins of Egyptian Civilization* explores Egypt's Pre-Dynastic and Early Dynastic material culture and shows how these early materials shed light on our understanding of later Egyptian culture. The most fundamental aspects of ancient Egyptian civilization—architecture, hieroglyphic writing, a belief in the afterlife and allegiance to a semi-divine king—can be traced to Egypt's Pre-Dynastic era 1000 years before the pyramids were built. The exhibition displays 140 objects, including pottery, stonework, carved ivories and objects from the tombs of the first kings and of the retainers who were buried alongside them. Catalog. Oriental Institute Museum, **Chicago**, through December 31.

Current **January and later**

Global Patterns: *Dress and Textiles in Africa* focuses on the accomplishments of African weavers, dyers, bead embroiderers and tailors, and highlights the continuities, innovation and exchange of ideas that mark dress and textile production in Africa. Throughout centuries, African textile artists seamlessly and joyfully integrated into their visual vocabulary new design elements and new materials such as glass beads, buttons and fabrics that arrived as the result of trade with places as far away as India and Indonesia. Beadwork, *kente* cloth and indigo-dyed cloths called *adire* are among the highlights of the display. Museum of Fine Arts **Boston**, through January 8.

Second Lives: *The Age-Old Art of Recycling Textiles* highlights the ways people in various cultures have ingeniously repurposed worn but precious fabrics to create beautiful new textile forms. Examples include a rare *sutra* cover made from a 15th-century Chinese rank badge, a large patchwork hanging from Central Asia stitched together from small scraps of silk *ikat* and a pictorial *kantha* from India embroidered with threads recycled from old saris. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through January 8.

Of Gods and Mortals: *Traditional Art from India.* In India, art is an integral part of daily life. The importance of paintings, sculpture, textiles and other art forms lies in two basic categories, one related to religious practices and the other to the expression of prestige and social position. This new installation of works from the Museum's collection features some 28 pieces, principally representing the 1800's to the present. Peabody Essex Museum, **Salem, Massachusetts**, through March 1.

Central Nigeria Unmasked: *Arts of the Benue River Valley* reviews the arts produced in the Benue River Valley, source of some of the most abstract, dramatic and inventive sculpture in sub-Saharan Africa. The exhibition includes more than 150 objects used in a range of ritual contexts, with genres as varied and complex as the region itself—figurative wood sculptures, masks, figurative ceramic vessels, and elaborate bronze and iron regalia—and explores the history of central Nigeria through the dynamic interrelationships of its peoples and their arts. National Museum of African Art, **Washington, D.C.**, through March 4.

Zaha Hadid: *Form in Motion* marks the first exhibition in the US to feature the renowned British-Iraqi architect's product designs in a setting of her own creation. Widely regarded as one of the most innovative architects of the 21st century, Hadid was the first woman to receive the renowned Pritzker Architecture Prize. Using complex, fluid geometries and cutting-edge digital design and fabrication technologies, she has advanced the language of contemporary architecture and design. For this exhibition, she has created an all-encompassing environment to display examples of the furniture, objects and footwear she has designed in recent years. **Philadelphia** Museum of Art, through March 25.

Painting the Modern in India features seven renowned painters who came of age during the height of the movement to free India from British rule. To move from the margins of an art world shaped by the colonial establishment, they organized path-breaking associations and pioneered new approaches to painting, repositioning their own art practices internationally and in relation to the 5000-year history of art in India. These artists created hybrid styles that are an essential component of the broad sweep of art in the 20th century. After independence in 1947, they took advantage of new opportunities in art centers around the world, especially Paris, London and New York; at the same time, they looked deeply into their own artistic heritage, learning from the first exhibition of Indian art in 1948 at Raj Bhavan in Delhi and taking inspiration from ancient sites. Peabody Essex Museum, **Salem, Massachusetts**, through June 1.

Coming **September**

Karanis Revealed: *Discovering the Past and Present of a Michigan Excavation in Egypt* is a two-phase exhibition exploring the story of Karanis, a village in the Egyptian countryside southwest of Cairo that was inhabited during Egypt's Graeco-Roman period. Its excavation was initiated by the University of Michigan in the 1920's and 1930's. Part I looks at daily life during the early centuries under the Ptolemaic dynasty, and Part II follows changes that came with the Roman occupation of Egypt and, later, Christianity. The displays include collections of Roman glass, tax rolls on papyrus and the leather breastplate of a Roman soldier. Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, **Ann Arbor**: Part I, September 16 through December 18; Part II, January 27 through May 6.

12th Istanbul Biennial: *Untitled.* The theme "Untitled" refers to the Cuban–American artist Feliz Gonzalez-Torres, the inspiration for this edition of the fair, which explores the relationship between politics and art. Group exhibitions have been arranged in five sections called "Untitled (Passport)," "Untitled (Ross)," "Untitled (Death by Gun)," "Untitled (Abstraction)" and "Untitled (History)." The 45 solo

exhibitions also relate to these sections, but the artists' names will be released only at the opening of the fair, in keeping with its theme. **Istanbul**, September 17 through November 13.

vs. Him is a solo exhibition by multimedia artist Sama Alshaibi, who employs video, photography and sculpture to investigate Middle Eastern masculinities in relationship to, and in contrast with, a female protagonist. Born of Palestinian and Iraqi parentage and exiled to the US at a young age, Alshaibi reflects her own forced migrations and the in-between state of statelessness. Lawrie Shabibi Gallery, **Dubai**, September 19 through October 20.

Golden Nights on the Silver Screen explores musical gems from the classic Egyptian cinema of the 20th century and features live music by the Georges Lammam Ensemble and Middle Eastern dance performances by the Jawaahir Dance Company. Ritz Theater, **Minneapolis**, September 22 through October 2.

Boundaries Obscured features new works by artists including Ahmed Alsoudani, Kevin Francis Gray, Isca Greenfield-Sanders, Jitish Kallat, Eve Sussman, Günther Uecker and Joana Vasconcelos, all of whom respond to the blurring of cultural and geographical boundaries due to technology and globalization. Haunch of Venison, **London**, September 23 through November 5.

Riffs features recent work by Moroccan artist Yto Barrada, whose photographs, films, installations, sculptures and editorial work refer to the socio-political situation of her hometown in Tangier, Morocco. The title of the exhibit refers simultaneously to the musical term and to the Cinéma Rif, home of the Tangier Cinémathèque, which the artist directs, as well as to the nearby Rif mountains, a stronghold of anti-colonial insurgency in Morocco. "I've always been attentive to what lies beneath the surface of public behavior," says Barrada. "In public, the oppressed accept their domination, but they always question their domination offstage." Wiels, **Brussels**, September 24 through December 12.

Ahmad Moualla is a solo exhibition of new large-scale works by the Syrian painter renowned for his drama and color. In this series, he tackles the strained relationship between society and the individual. Green Art Gallery, **Dubai**, September 26 through November 10.

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SAQR is a photographic exhibition by Jordanian photographer Tariq Dajani that portrays the majestic beauty of the Arabian hunting falcon (*saqr*), immaculately capturing its curved beak, deadly talons and piercing eyes. "While the precise origins of falconry are lost in time, the keeping of falcons in the Middle East is as ancient as the emergence of its civilizations," says the artist. "SAQR pays tribute to the traditions and heritage of our region." Jacaranda Images, **Amman, Jordan**, September 20 through October 17.

COURTESY OF TARIQ DAJANI

Your Friends and Neighbours is photographer Jowhara Al-Saud's first solo show in Saudi Arabia. It highlights her images of family and friends, which she manually manipulates through fastidious etchings on negative prints that demonstrate the complex cultural constraints that govern the people of Saudi Arabia. Athr Gallery, **Jeddah**, September 26 through October 19.

"Wonder of the Age": *Master Painters of India, 1100–1900* presents some 220 works selected according to identifiable hands and named artists, dispelling the notion of anonymity in Indian art, which has traditionally been classified simply according to regional styles or dynastic periods. The high points of artistic innovation in the history of Indian painting are demonstrated through works by 40 of the greatest painters, some identified for the first time and each represented by five to six seminal works. Recent scholarship has begun to securely link innovations in style with specific artists and their lineages; together with careful study of artists' inscriptions and scribal colophons, it is now possible to construct a more precise chronology of the development of Indian painting. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, September 28 through January 8.

Coming **October**

Art in Palestine is a group exhibition of recent works by contemporary Palestinian artists Nabil Anani, Tayseer Barakat and Sliman Mansour. Each reflects on the occupation of Palestine, typical iconography related to their culture, as well as current political issues. Anani draws inspiration from the motif of the olive tree while Barakat describes his work as "a mosaic of images" that explore history; Mansour depicts a human silhouette in his paintings to convey the "different states of exhausting anticipation or loss." Meem Gallery, **Dubai**, October 3 through November 1.

In the Kingdom of Alexander the Great: *Ancient Macedonia* retraces the history of Alexander's homeland from the 15th century BCE to the Roman period, presenting more than 1000 artifacts from museums in northern Greece and from French archeological digs, particularly the Portal of the Enchanted Ones, a masterpiece of Greco-Roman sculpture. "People know that Alexander was Greek, but they don't know that he was also Macedonian, or that Macedonia is in Greece," says the Louvre's director of Greek antiquities. "The exhibition presents an opportunity for visitors to rediscover Alexander in the light of his origins." Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, October 3 through January 2.

The Arab Fall reveals a series of globes and two installations representing Arab countries, produced by Lebanese design company Bokja. By presenting the map of the Arab world in colorfully upholstered designs, the globes draw attention to the region as a macrocosm of change. Sultan Gallery, **Kuwait City**, October 4 through October 20.

A Revolution of the Heart and Mind presents work by 10 international artists predominantly from the Middle East. The works on display are made in a variety of media including painting, photography, video and installation with subject matter that expresses a hope for change not rooted in political revolutions but rather in a humanitarian awakening. JAMM Gallery of Contemporary Art, **London**, October 6 through October 27.

To Live Forever: *Egyptian Treasures From the Brooklyn Museum* uses some 100 pieces of jewelry, statues, coffins and vessels dating from 3600 BCE to 400 CE 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. Exhibits include the vividly painted coffin of a mayor of Thebes, mummies, stone statues, gold jewelry, amulets and canopic jars. Frist Center for Visual Arts, **Nashville, Tennessee**, October 7 through January 8.

Istanbul Design Biennial: *Imperfection* explores its subject in urban, architectural, interior, industrial, graphic, fashion, textile and new media contexts. Exhibitions, installations, workshops, seminars and presentations take place throughout the city, making it a place to engage with rapid urban, social and cultural change. This inaugural biennial celebrates Istanbul's distinctive creative qualities while also encapsulating a wider discussion about design in the contemporary world. ⓘ www.iksv.org. **Istanbul**, October 13 through November 16.

Traits d'Union: *Paris et l'Art Contemporain Arabe* is organized by the French publication *Art Absolument*, and it presents work by more than a dozen emerging and established contemporary Arab artists who have a kinship with France and, in particular, Paris. The works use media including painting, sculpture, photography, film and installation. La Villa Emerige, **Paris**, October 15 through November 12.

Vaults of Heaven: *Visions of Byzantium* offers a glimpse into the complex and vivid world of the Byzantine Empire through large-scale contemporary photographs by Turkish photographer Ahmet Ertuğ. The images highlight culturally significant UNESCO heritage sites in present-day Turkey, with a focus on the Karanlık, Tokalı and Merymana churches in the dramatic Cappadocian region of central Anatolia. Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, **Philadelphia**, October 15 through February 12.

Tutankhamun: *The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs* features more than 100 artworks, most of which have never been shown in the United States before this tour. These spectacular treasures—more than half of which come from the tomb of King Tutankhamun—include the golden sandals found on the boy king's mummy; a gold coffinette that held his stomach; golden statues of the gods; and King Tut's rings, ear ornaments and gold collar. Also showcased are objects associated with the most important rulers of the 30 dynasties that reigned in Egypt over a 2000-year span. The exhibition explores the splendor of the pharaohs, their function in both the earthly and divine worlds, and what "kingship" meant to the Egyptian people. Among the highlights is the largest likeness of King Tut ever discovered: a three-meter (10') statue of the pharaoh found at the ruins of a funerary temple. Museum of Fine Arts **Houston**, October 16 through April 15.

Lost and Found: *The Secrets of Archimedes*. In Jerusalem in 1229 CE, the greatest works of the Greek mathematician Archimedes were erased and overwritten. In the year 2000, a team of museum experts began a project to read those erased texts. By the time

they had finished, the team had recovered Archimedes's secrets, rewritten the history of mathematics and discovered entirely new texts from the ancient world. This exhibition tells the story, recounting the history of the book, detailing the patient conservation, explaining the cutting-edge imaging and highlighting the discoveries of the dogged and determined scholars who finally read what had been obliterated. Walters Art Museum, **Baltimore**, October 16 through January 1.

Emirati Expressions showcases works by Emirati artists revolving around the theme of national identity. The artists capture moments, places, people, sounds and mirages that reflect the essences of Emirati expression. The photographs on show have been produced through workshops led by photographer Stephen Shore. Manarat Al-Saadiyat, **Abu Dhabi**, October 19 through January 29.

Gifts of the Sultan: *The Arts of Giving at the Islamic Courts* is a pan-Islamic exhibition spanning the eighth through 19th centuries and including more than 240 works of art from three continents: carpets, costumes and textiles, jewelry and other objects of precious metals, miniature paintings and other arts of the book, mosque furnishings and arms and armor. *Gifts of the Sultan* introduces viewers to Islamic art and culture with objects of undisputed quality and appeal, viewed through the universal lens of gift giving—a practice that proliferated at the great Islamic courts not only for diplomatic and political purposes but also as expressions of piety, often associated with the construction or enhancement of religious monuments. Museum of Fine Arts **Houston**, October 23 through January 15.

God Is Beautiful; He Loves Beauty: *The Object in Islamic Art and Culture* is a three-day symposium whose keynote speaker will be Paul Goldberger, the Pulitzer Prize–winning architecture critic and writer for *The New Yorker*, who will discuss the Museum building, designed by I. M. Pei, as a work of Islamic art in its own right. Other speakers, each presenting a paper on a work of art in the Museum's collection, include curators, art historians, academics, researchers, archeologists, independent scholars and calligrapher Mohamed Zakariya. This fourth biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art is free and open to the public. www.islamicartdoha.org. Museum of Islamic Art, **Doha, Qatar**, October 29 through October 31.

Coming **November**

Patriots & Peacemakers: *Arab Americans in Service to Our Country* tells true stories of heroism and self-sacrifice that affirm the important role Arab–Americans have played in the United States throughout its history, contributing greatly to society, fighting and dying in every US war since the American Revolution, defending the Constitution and supporting the nation's democratic form of government. The exhibition highlights service in the armed forces, the diplomatic service and the Peace Corps. Personal narratives highlight Arab–American men and women of different national and religious backgrounds. Arab American National Museum, **Dearborn, Michigan**, from November 11.

Underground Revolution: *8000 Years of Istanbul* displays finds uncovered in one of the most important archeological excavations of Turkish history: the Yanikapı dig in Istanbul, which revealed Neolithic settlements dating back 8500 years, including a unique collection of 34 sunken ships. As the actual artifacts are too fragile to move, the exhibition presents them through photographs, information panels and digital demonstrations. Istanbul Centre in **Brussels**, November 30 through November 31, 2012.

Coming **December**

Noor-an-Nisa (Light of Femininity) is produced by choreographer and dancer Kristina Koutsoudas, who has combined live dance, music, song, poetry and stories to present traditional arts and culture as well as scenes of women and spirituality in Near Eastern, Middle Eastern and North African cultures. Using 10 dancers and a small classical Arab music ensemble from Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, she draws from Arabic and Persian musical and literary traditions to "portray the intensely spiritual and devoted side of Arabic cultures," she says. The Rothko Chapel, **Houston**, 7:00 p.m. December 2 and 3.

Coming **January**

Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam is a major exhibition that brings to life the history and personal spiritual significance of the sacred rituals that have remained unchanged since the Prophet Muhammad's time in the seventh century of our era. One of the five pillars of Islam, hajj, or pilgrimage to Makkah, is central to Muslim belief: Every Muslim must make the journey at least once in a lifetime if able. With extensive displays of beautiful objects, including historical and contemporary art, textiles and manuscripts, the show also examines the travel logistics involved over history, and how the wider operation of the hajj has changed over time. The British Museum, **London**, January 26 through April 12.

Roads of Arabia: *Archaeological Treasures From the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.* The study of archeological remains only really began in Saudi Arabia in the 1970's, yet brought—and is still bringing—a wealth of unsuspected treasures to light: temples, palaces adorned with frescoes, monumental sculpture, silver dishes and precious jewelry left in tombs. The exhibition, organized as a series of points along trade and pilgrimage routes, focuses on the region's rich history as a major center of commercial and cultural exchange, provides both chronological and geographical information about the discoveries made during recent excavations and emphasizes the important role played by this region as a trading center during the past 6000 years. More than 300 works—sculptures, ceramics, jewelry, frescoes—are on display, dating from antiquity to the beginning of the modern period, the majority never before exhibited. Pergamon Museum, **Berlin**, January through April (tentative).

PERMANENT/ INDEFINITE

Galleries for the Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia comprise a new suite of 15 enlarged, renovated and freshly conceived galleries for one of the world's finest and most encyclopedic collections. Under construction for nearly eight years, the galleries trace the course of Islamic civilizations over 13 centuries from the Middle East to North Africa, Europe, and Central and South Asia. "This new geographic orientation signals a revised perspective on this important collection, recognizing that the monumentality of Islam did not create a single, monolithic artistic expression, but instead connected a vast geographic expanse through centuries of change and cultural influence," says Thomas P. Campbell, director of the museum. As a whole, he adds, the galleries have been redesigned to "evoke the plurality of the Islamic tradition and the vast cross-fertilization of ideas and artistic forms that has shaped our shared cultural heritage." Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, from November 1.

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

Information is correct at press time, but please reconfirm dates and times before traveling. Most institutions listed have further information available at their Web sites. Readers are welcome to submit information eight weeks in advance for possible inclusion in this listing. Some listings have been kindly provided to us by *Canvas*, the art and culture magazine for the Middle East and the Arab world (www.canvasonline.com).

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