

SAUDI ARAMCO

# world

November/December 2012  
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above



Patterned in ochres and trimmed in white lace, old Sana'a, the 2000-year-old capital of Yemen, comprises some 6500 "tower houses" built of mud brick and elaborately decorated with gypsum plaster. Aerial photo by Yann Arthus-Bertrand / Altitude. (Detail of original.)

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**President**  
Ahmed M. Alzayyat

**Director  
Public Affairs**  
Ali M. Al Mutairi

**Editor**  
Robert Arndt

**Managing Editor**  
Dick Doughty

**Assistant Editor**  
Arthur P. Clark

**Administration**  
Sarah Miller

**Circulation**  
Edna Catchings

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Graphic Engine Design

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**Back Cover**



A young female hamadryas baboon perches on a rock near Taif, Saudi Arabia. Although hamadryas baboons also live in East Africa, across the Red Sea, primatologists are not sure whether they evolved on the African or the Arabian side. Photo courtesy nwrc.

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



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**Little Syria, NY**

Written by Louis Werner

From the 1870's to the 1930's, along a few blocks on the West Side of lower Manhattan, immigrant families, merchants, tradesmen, peddlers, laborers—and the first Arab-American novelist—built the neighborhood named after the immigrants' land of origin. All that's left today are three buildings and the memory of the first vibrant hub of Arab-American culture.

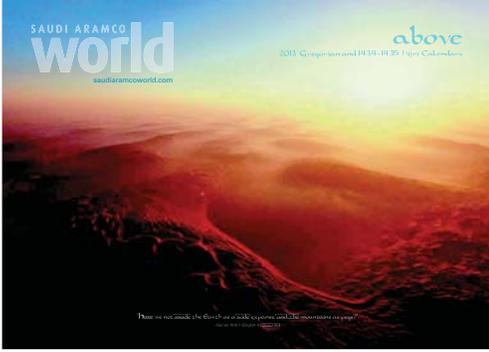
**The Happy Ones?**

Written by Matthew Teller

Photographs courtesy of the National Wildlife Research Center, Taif, Saudi Arabia

Along the mountainous spine of the western Arabian Peninsula, new conservation efforts are aimed at keeping Arabia's only endemic primate wild—the hamadryas baboon.





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Written by Miriam Shahin

Photographed by George Azar

In a refugee camp where overcoming obstacles is almost a way of life, two former Al-Azhar University students in 2008 combined gymnastics with acrobatics to found a performance art team that reaches out to local youth and, this year, joined its first worldwide event, in Milan.



## New Flavors for the Oldest Recipes

Written by Laura Kelley

The world's oldest written recipes come down to us in cuneiform on clay tablets that are mostly from Mesopotamia. Listing only the names of their ingredients, some of which defy easy translation, they present a culinary challenge to chefs, who must interpret them, rather than follow them. Their results might inspire a touch of Nineveh, or perhaps Uruk, in your own kitchen.

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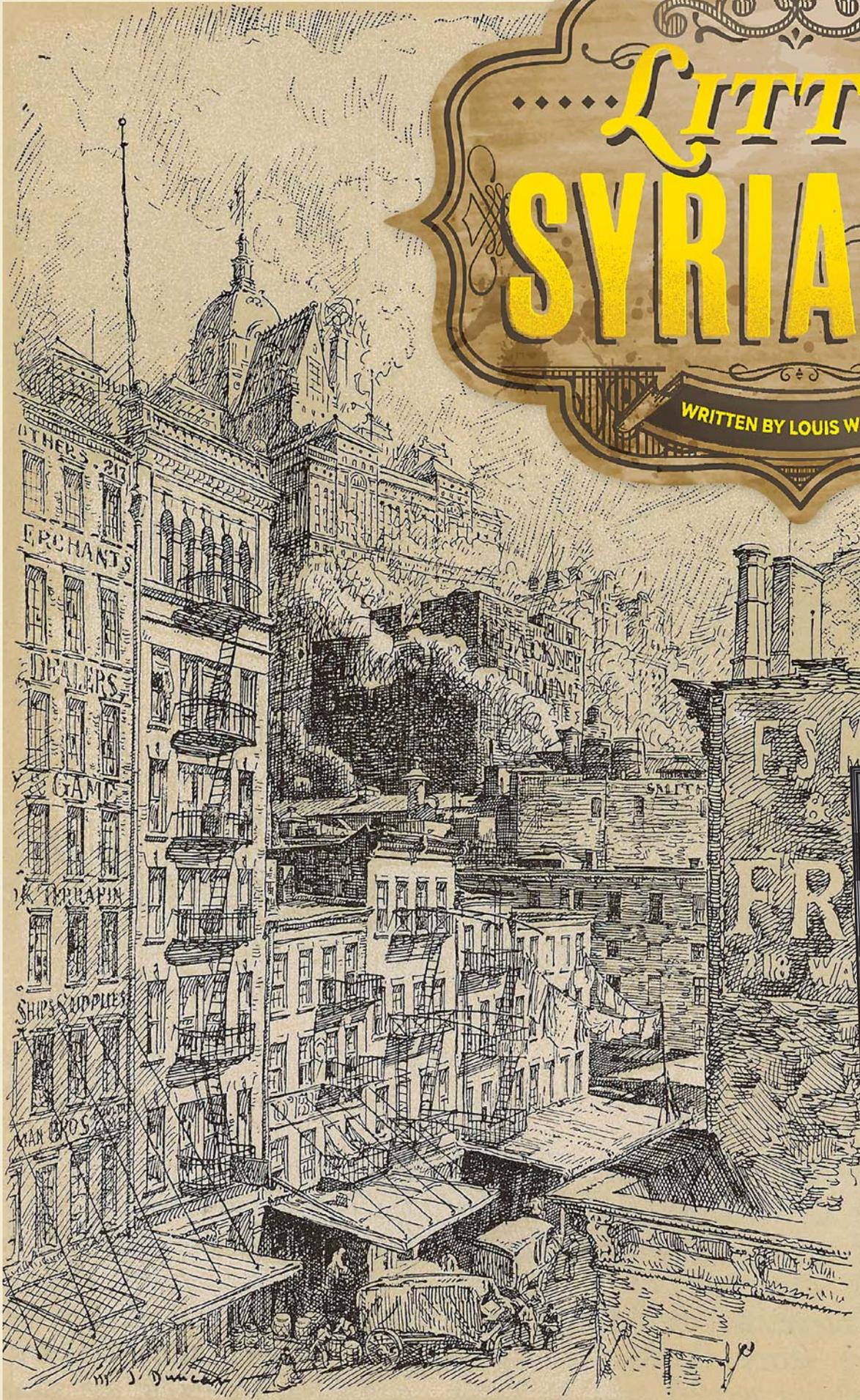
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# LITTLE SYRIA, NY

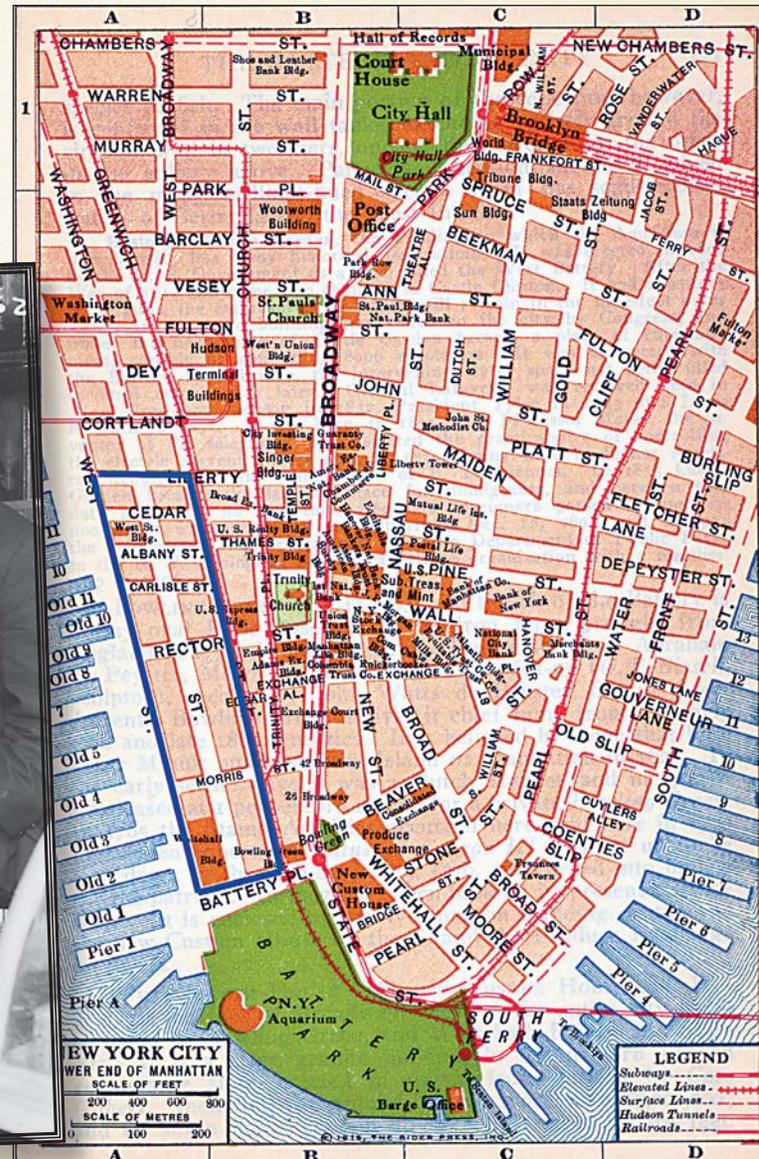
WRITTEN BY LOUIS WERNER



ON NEW YORK'S MANHATTAN ISLAND—an American Indian name meaning “many hills”—on lower Washington Street—named for the first us president—once lived people with Arab names like Sakakini, Khoury and Hawawiny. The great majority of them were Christian immigrants from the lands known today as Lebanon and Syria. They began arriving in the 1870’s from what was then the Ottoman province of Syria, most leaving behind home villages set in mountains much higher than Manhattan’s not-so-hilly terrain.

Right: From Liberty Street south to Battery Place, Washington Street offered Arab immigrants simple lodging and, in this restaurant, below, a taste of home. Opposite: Little Syria lay three blocks south of Washington Market, the city’s largest wholesale food market, depicted in this 1916 illustration from *Harper’s* magazine.

OPPOSITE: NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY; LOWER: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; RIGHT: RANSOM CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS (DETAIL COURTESY ARAB AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM)



The émigrés brought their foods, clothes and traditions—including street peddling—with them. Their neighborhood became known as Little Syria, and for some 75 years, until just after World War II, it was the point—within sight of the Statue of Liberty—where many Arab immigrants arrived in the United States.

Like America itself, Washington Street changed over time. In the late 1940's, the construction of the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel tore through streets to the south, dispersing what was left of a dwindling Arab population and closing the neighborhood's last two Arab restaurants, The Nile and The Sheikh. As Lower Manhattan became a place of elevator-equipped buildings with offices of high finance, so small shops and warehouses closed.

Tenements were torn down. A parking garage—the most hurtful affront to a community that once made its living by ambulatory sales—was built. Then came the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, just a few blocks to the north.

Today there is a newfound awareness of the neighborhood's role in Arab-American history. Descendants of the immigrants whose origin gave the area its name have raised the alarm about losing what is left of its original architecture. A conference on Little Syria at the Museum of the City of New York in 2002 resulted in publication of the book *A Community of Many Worlds: Arab Americans in New York City*. The Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, is planning its own Little Syria exhibition. And, as the most literal symbol



MAIN: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; RIGHT: COURTESY OF CARL ANTOUN (4)

In the early 1900's, New York's pushcart food vendors, below, often could earn double the income of factory workers. Right, from top: Tailors, dry goods merchants and even entertainers were among the many who found niches in and around Little Syria. Lower right: The press often featured Little Syria among the city's "exotic" immigrant scenes.



تحية سلام الى ابناء الوطن الكرام  
 بكم هذا الذي يكون له وصاحبه قد أصبح هو الزبون  
 تجدون كل ما تشتهون من اسرنا اشتريه على اذن  
 اجناسا - انا اكوابت اليستية باوانها كلها الصفا  
 بمحلنا ومعرض كلنا لهواية في كمال في الصنعة  
 الوطنية والفروشات الثابتة من حرير ومشيبة ومخامسة  
 وغرفية - وهذه العظم الصنعة التخرج من اصنافنا للعدة  
 البهيرة - شرفنا الطيرا ونحفظها ما نحن ذاكرين  
 منة الامسار جاهزة للعائرا - طلبية ولعدة كالمزة ليرجان اذلم  
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of this historical rediscovery, the cornerstone of St. Joseph's Maronite Church—which began serving the neighborhood in the 1890's—was found in the rubble of the World Trade Center.

The initial impetus for the first wave of Arab immigration to New York was America's 1876 Centennial Exposition, held in Philadelphia. It drew a number of Arab delegates, and they returned home extolling the new opportunities in the us. In 1890, the Bureau of Immigration hired one Najib Arbeely to help steer his Lebanese countrymen from the immigrant intake centers, New York's Castle Garden and later Ellis Island. As Abraham Rihbany succinctly put it in *A Far Journey*, a memoir of his arrival in 1891, "We landed at Battery Place [Manhattan's southernmost point], explored the dock for our trunks ... and proceeded to a lodging house on Washington Street."

The area saw a dynamic coming and going during those years. From a place of both residence and business for immigrants of all social classes, it slowly sorted itself out as the locus of shops owned by those who sold peddling goods to their less-well-off itinerant compatriots; the latter rented rooms in its cramped tenements between long-distance trips that reached as far as the mining camps of the American West. As the eminent Lebanese-American historian Philip Hitti wrote in his first book, *The Syrians in America* (1924), "Trade takes a man far."

With the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883 and the East River subway tunnel in 1910, the more salubrious outer boroughs became accessible, and those who were able moved their families away from Manhattan, leaving the peddlers



behind. By 1935, Brooklyn's Atlantic Avenue was described as "the new Washington Street."

Accurate numbers of the Arabs living on Washington Street are not available, partly because they were registered as "Syrians" upon arrival but in later census counts were identified as "Turks." One estimate was of 300 families in 1890. In 1904, a newspaper estimated a total of 1300 people. The total number of Arab immigrants admitted to the United States between 1899 and 1907 was

grocery, founded there in 1895. Invoking the metaphor of Aladdin's cave, the reporter was awed by swords and lamps hanging from the ceiling, glass bracelets of many colors and narghiles with their "fixings," yet disappointed to find "no languorous eyes nor red fezzes."

Sahadi & Co. is going strong today on Brooklyn's Atlantic Avenue after a nephew broke away and established a new store there 60 years ago, following his Arab customers.

Current owner Charlie Sahadi remembers his great-uncle Abraham's original grocery, which remained on Washington Street until 1967. "The retail counter sold nuts and dried fruits to a very different clientele from its early days," he says, "yet they still made their own halvah and sesame bars and apricot paste."

Business became an extended-family affair. Charlie's father, Wade, who arrived from Zahle, Lebanon in 1919, became Abraham's traveling salesman, riding the train into the American Midwest to take wholesale orders. Uncles in Lebanon supplied them with the spices and grains unavailable elsewhere, as well as the brass trays, coffeepots and mortars and pestles that Arab cooks insist make all food taste better.

The Arbeely family founded New York's first Arabic newspaper, *Kawkab Amrika* (*Star of America*), followed by another named *Al-Hoda* (*Guidance*), both printed on Washington Street. Marian Sahadi Ciaccia (no relation to the grocer family of the same name), whose father came from Jeita village and whose mother came from Lebanon via the West Indies, remembers delivering *Al-Hoda* to subscribers as a teenager. "It kept me busy after school, and I made a nickel for each delivery," she says. "I couldn't read

**One estimate of the neighborhood's 1890 population was 300 families; in 1904 a newspaper estimated a total of 1300 people.**



Laundry dries on lines outside a lone six-story tenement at 37 Washington Street, dwarfed by the commercial buildings that, by the mid-1930's, were transforming Little Syria.

41,404, and 15,000 more arrived in the following three years. Few of those later arrivals, however, ended up in Little Syria.

One who did not was Salom Rizk. Arriving from the quiet Syrian village of Ain Arab in 1925, he took one look at the city and bought a ticket on the first train to Sioux City, Iowa. "New York was overwhelming," he wrote, "an unbelievable jumble of swiftness and bigness—millions of people, millions of cars, buildings, windows, lights, noises—a great mass of vagueness swimming and spinning in my eyes."

But those who stayed made Little Syria famous. A *New York Times* writer visited in 1899, marveling at the merchandise of the many peddling emporia, as well as Abraham Sahadi's

it but I did speak Arabic with my father. It was like our private language, because Mother didn't speak it very well."

Those who couldn't read Arabic could keep up with local news in the English-language *Syrian World*. Its first issue, in 1926, included a work by the great Lebanese-born poet Kahlil Gibran exhorting cultural assimilation. However, Gibran's invocation of such rarefied authors as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry James in his "Message to Young Americans of Syrian Origin" may have gone over the heads of his readers.

While Arab immigrants could get ahead in America, they faced cultural hurdles. Social reformer Jacob Riis fell into the trap of stereotyping the less favored in *How the Other Half Lives*, his 1890 book on New York tenement life. His chapter on homeless children carries the term "street arab" as its title, now regarded as an ethnic slur.

Syrian-American Alixa Naff, founder of an archive of

Arab–American history at the Smithsonian Institution and author of *Becoming American: The Early Arab Immigrant Experience, 1880–1950*, estimates that a peddler in 1900 would have cleared \$1000 a year, while a factory worker would have earned barely half that. But it was not easy work. Ameen Rihani, who came to Little Syria in 1888 at age 12, wrote about the advantages of a peddling job in his autobiographical novel, *The Book of Khalid*, noting, “We travel and earn money; our compatriots, the merchants, rust in their cellars and lose it.”

Khalil Sakakini came to New York in 1908 and wrote in his memoir of having to move at top speed just to stay in place: “The American walks fast, talks fast, and eats fast.... A person might even leave the restaurant with a bite still in his mouth.”

Yet the pace of life on Washington Street was not all at double time. The restaurant owned by a man named Arta—a non-English speaker described by the *Times* as “fezzed, but all his other garments quite American”—became a coffeehouse during evening hours, its air filled with the clack of dominoes played hard on the table, wafts of pipe smoke and the scents of kibbe, *laban* and eggplant dishes—“tasty and delicate, neither French nor Teutonic”—that sold for 10 cents each.

Such was the setting for “Anna Ascends,” a 1919 Broadway play later made into a silent film by Victor Fleming, better known as the director of “Gone with the Wind” and “The Wizard of Oz.” The plot revolves around Anna, a Syrian girl working in a coffeehouse that she doesn’t know is the front for a gang of thieves. At the end, she finds an American husband and happily assimilates into American culture. Act 1 begins with Anna busy arranging garlic wreaths and cans of olive oil, unmistakable markers of a Middle Eastern immigrant.

Not far from where the fictional Anna might have served coffee stood St. Joseph’s Maronite Church, established in 1891, the home parish of many of the neighborhood’s Syrian Christians. A marriage announcement in the *Times* from 1897 describes the wedding of Miriam Azar, from Jaffa, Palestine, to Touma Elia. Agog with Orientalist fascination, the article tells of the bride hidden by a “veil of curious lace,” while a baby bawled in the church, “presumably in pure Arabic.”

As Arabs left the neighborhood, St. Joseph’s emptied too; it was sold and demolished in 1984. Much of its masonry went as fill into new construction sites near the World Trade Center. Bishop Stephen Hector Doueiri remembers getting a call in October 2002 when he was presiding bishop at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Cathedral in Brooklyn Heights. A broken cornerstone, with three words in its inscription indicating its Maronite origin, had been unearthed by a bulldozer clearing Ground Zero. Would the bishop’s cathedral care to have it to display?

“It was both a big surprise for us and a big honor,” remembers the bishop. “We knew we had once had a humble church near the World Trade Center site, but it had long ago been torn down. And then suddenly we hear that its Latin cornerstone, which had already been moved several times as St. Joseph’s had relocated over the years, had been found.... Truly it was like the fathers of many of our own parishioners—on the move from place to place.”

A happier outcome occurred not far from St. Joseph’s last address at 137 Cedar Street. St. George’s Syrian Catholic parish, established in 1889, built itself a neo-Gothic church at 103 Washington Street in 1925, enlarging a building that had been a boardinghouse, an Arab restaurant, a loan office for recent immigrants and the H&J Homsy—a family name from Homs, Syria—garment factory. Beirut-educated architect Harvey Farris Cassab designed a new terra-cotta facade. After a six-year review, the New



**In the 1940’s, construction of the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel, top, tore through the lower part of Little Syria, further hastening migration to Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, above, which remains a hub of New York’s Arab–American community to this day.**

York Landmarks Commission granted the church building, now under different use, full protected status in 2009.

Carl Antoun is the 20-year-old descendant of Tanios Sadallah, who came to America from the village of Baskinta in 1891 and quickly returned to fetch his family, settling in Little Syria to open a silk-importing business. “I grew up in the borough of Queens and knew nothing of the Lebanese side of my family’s early days,” Antoun says while leading a walking tour of Washington Street. “When I found the old business records, written in Arabic, at my grandmother’s house, I wanted to learn more, which led me here.”

There is not much of Little Syria’s original architecture for Antoun to point out. A new hotel is going up on one side of St. George’s; a community house built by a benevolent society in 1925 and an older tenement building are in danger of being torn down on the other. Antoun’s organization, Save Washington Street, is lobbying to preserve the community house, which served as an

Though the best-known Arab writer in America is Kahlil Gibran, whose 1923 book *The Prophet* has been translated into some 40 languages with an estimated 100 million copies in print, the author of the first Arab novel published in the us was his compatriot Ameen Rihani (1876–1940), whose *The Book of Khalid* celebrated its centennial in 2011.

And while the former is considered an “easy read,” a bit trite and romantic, Rihani’s work is altogether different—so difficult that the novel quickly went out of print and has only recently been republished. Its dense plot as a reverse Orientalist saga set partly in America and partly in the Middle East, its Victorian vocabulary, calling to mind Charles Doughty’s *Travels in Arabia Deserta* and William Kinglake’s *Eothen*, and its winking references to such picaresque models as *Don Quixote* and Voltaire’s *Candide*, all make *The Book of Khalid* a challenge for the modern reader. But it offers a rich reward—and only in part because it was illustrated by Rihani’s dear friend Gibran.

Poet and literary historian Gregory Orfalea calls the book “overblown, using ten cent words the way someone might who pulls carelessly from a thesaurus.” However, he is altogether admiring of its attempt to contain the world within its covers, much as Walt Whitman attempted in *Leaves of Grass*, and he praises “the satiric wisdom that both celebrates and rebukes the immigrant’s fanciful hope, to good effect.”

Rihani came to America as a child in 1888 and worked in his father’s peddling supply store on Washington Street for four years. Taken by the sights and sounds of New York, exposed to book-sellers and stage actors, and hungry for a formal education, he entered law school but soon fell sick and returned to Lebanon to recover. When he came back, he was ready to publish his articles and his translations of poems by the 10th-century philosopher Abu al-Ala al-Marri in the New



York newspaper *Al-Hoda*, which introduced linotype printing to Arabic journalism worldwide.

During his second extended trip back to his ancestral mountain village of Freike, Rihani began to write *The Book of Khalid*, in English. It is based as much on his experience as an impressionable young man in New York as on the principles of self-reliance, rational thinking and superior achievement available to a man who acts alone. Indeed, that is an apt description of the adult Rihani, as his later career as a diplomat for the nascent country of Saudi Arabia, as a travel writer of books in English and Arabic and as a multicultural man of letters in Paris and New York all attest.

A scholar of Arab–American literature, the late Evelyn Shakir, has written that to be accepted in New York intellectual circles, Rihani and his compatriots first had to “dress carefully for their encounter with the American public, putting on the guise of prophet, preacher, or man of letters.” The aim: to become “an Oriental spokesman,” who could legitimately invoke the Orientalist clichés of Eastern mystic, exotic sage and desert denizen, as a character in *The Book of Khalid* says.

The book’s plot, a kind of “vision quest” conducted by Khalid as he grows to manhood, shifts from New York to Lebanon and from Damascus finally to the Egyptian desert, where Khalid mysteriously disappears from the face of the earth. *The Book of Khalid* is structured as a “found manuscript” much like *Don Quixote*, which Cervantes playfully claimed had been copied, translated and edited from a text by its original Arab author Cide Hamete Benengeli. Going one better, Rihani claimed two sources for his book—Khalid’s Arabic autobiography and a French biography written by Khalid’s sidekick Shakib.

Wa’il Hassan, professor of comparative literature at the University of Illinois, sees in *The Book of Khalid* a number of the same ambiguities and hidden messages that the late Edward Said teased out of many classic Orientalist texts—but this from the pen of an Arab. Hassan notes Rihani’s almost comic name-dropping of Arab literary forebears and his Arabic-to-English wordplay and use of untranslated Arabic vocabulary. He calls it more an “Arabized English novel” than an Arab–American one.

# RIHANI

## and The

# BOOK OF KHALID



As a soul-starved immigrant in New York, Khalid falls under the spell of a visionary used-book seller named Jerry, as in the Prophet

Jeremiah, but also remembers he must fill his belly with *mojadderah* (a Lebanese dish of lentils and grains)—a word that comes from the same root as “smallpox.” Rihani plays the English meaning of “sham” off its homophone, the Arabic name for Syria. As Hassan notes, Rihani was writing for a reader who could swim equally well in both languages and cultures—in other words, someone like himself.

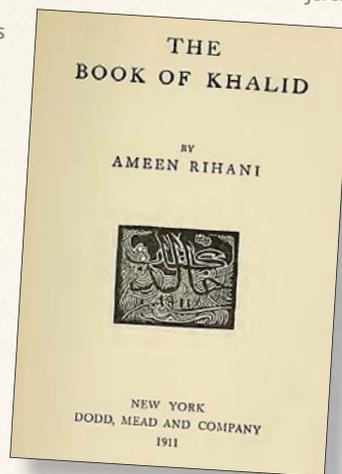
Todd Fine, executive director of Project Khalid, an international initiative to com-

memorate Rihani’s novel, has done the most to bring it back into the public eye. In honor of the centennial, he organized seminars at the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library and the Arab American National Museum. He has arranged for a new printing to be distributed by Random House and has helped two Arab–American congressmen to introduce a resolution honoring the author.

Fine recognizes the irony of his current passion if compared to his past. Though a former assistant to the late Samuel Huntington, author of *The Clash of Civilizations* and theorist of cultural determinism, he now espouses the importance of an Arab author who stands against all this. “To me, Rihani represents everything that can go right when cultures meet,” he says.

This East–West dialogue that Rihani carried out in fiction was nothing less than an attempt at the synthesis of civilizations. As the narrator of *The Book of Khalid* notes, “What the Arabs always said of Andalusia, Khalid and Shakib said once of America: a most beautiful country with one single voice—it makes foreigners forget their native land.”

Did Rihani succeed? One hundred years later, people are still asking that question.





Today, the buildings at 103, 105-107 and 109 Washington Street are all that remain of Little Syria. Carl Antoun, whose great-great-grandfather settled here in 1891, founded Save Washington Street to help protect them.

adult-education school and clinic for new immigrants. Its exterior architecture, an amalgam of American styles called Colonial Revival, symbolized the cultural assimilation that was going on indoors in its English-language and citizenship classes.

Journalist Konrad Bercovici described life in Little Syria in the early 1920's in his book *Around the World in New York*, a study of all the city's immigrant communities. "A descent upon the Syrian quarter is like dream travel," he wrote. Everything there seemed exotic to Bercovici, an immigrant from Romania himself—its coffeehouses, jewelry shops, rug merchants and even the dried roots and fruits on sale "of all kinds that grow one knows not where and are put to one knows not what use."

Of the neighborhood's cramped tenement buildings, he wrote that they had been the prosperous homes of "good Dutch burghers a hundred years ago." For the Syrians, he suggested, they were but "a temporary tent." As usual for outsiders looking in, he confounds their religion. Everything there reminded him of "Moslem fashion"—the floor seating, the dress codes, even the Christian prayer service at St. Joseph's Maronite Church.

Lucius Hopkins Miller, a professor of religion at Princeton University who had taught in the Levant for three years, provided the only objective survey of Little Syria. Of its 454 families in 1904, he counted only one Muslim household, consisting of two individuals. He found that men and women engaged almost equally in peddling work, as in its factory jobs, while men outnumbered women working behind shop counters and women far outnumbered men in at-home sewing jobs.

Because of his fluency in Arabic and his familiarity with the home communities of the émigrés, Miller was able to get a unique insider's view. While social-reformer Jacob Riis decried the state of their housing, Miller agreed with the municipal tenement inspector that

the Arabs maintained higher standards of hygiene than other ethnic groups. But Miller, too, was not altogether free of bias. The peddler's job, he said, "encouraged overreaching and deceit"; jobs in the neighborhood's Turkish-cigarette factories were preferable, he felt, or in factories that made mirrors, suspenders or ladies' housecoats.

Bercovici was perhaps overwriting when he described Little Syria's "kavas [coffeehouses] and bazaars and belly dancing halls, zarafs [loan offices] and their own Arabic newspapers..." and labeled its residents as "a people of a different seed, of an older civilization that has ever been reluctant to the new, distilling a certain pigment into the dull greyness of our modern lives."

Even today, in the shadow of the newly rising World Trade Center, the neighborhood still speaks clearly to those with the time to listen. Says Carl Antoun, the great-great-grandson of one of its earliest residents, "This place is like a history lesson for me. There is much still to learn here." 🌐



**Louis Werner**  
(wernerworks@msn.com) is a writer and filmmaker in New York.



[www.savewashingtonstreet.org](http://www.savewashingtonstreet.org)  
[www.projectkhalid.org](http://www.projectkhalid.org)  
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# THE happy ONES?

“BABOONS ARE NEITHER BEAUTIFUL TO DESCRIBE, NOR GOOD TO EAT. SO THE POETS IGNORED THEM.” —AHMED BOUG

WRITTEN BY MATTHEW TELLER  
PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER,  
TAIF, SAUDI ARABIA

“I was ten years old—I’ll never forget it.” ¶ Ahmed Boug gazes across a hazy desert view from the highlands above Taif, in western Saudi Arabia. ¶ “We’d set off for a camping vacation in Abha, up in the mountains. This was before there was even an asphalt road there. It was wilderness, high above the town. At dawn my father woke us all in a panic: ‘Monkeys!’ he was shouting. ‘Quick, get everything!’ We grabbed what we could. There were about a hundred of them coming through. They stole fruit, food, anything. Later, we went down into the valley to retrieve our stuff—shoes and toys. It was all such a shock for me! That was what sparked my interest in these animals.” ¶ A child’s interest became a professional’s preoccupation.

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The rugged Sarawat Mountains offer ideal habitat to hamadryas baboons. Although some 65 percent remain wild, 35 percent live—and feed—near towns and cities, including roadsides such as those along Highway 15 west of Taif.



Today, as director of Saudi Arabia's National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC), Ahmed Boug is a world authority on the backcountry raiders who so shocked him as a boy—hamadryas baboons.

Unlike olive, yellow, chacma and Guinea baboons, all of which are found only in Africa, *Papio hamadryas* live on both shores of the Red Sea, ranging from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia across the water to the semi-arid mountains of Yemen and Saudi Arabia. *Homo sapiens* aside, they are the Arabian Peninsula's only endemic primate.

Hamadryas need surface water for drinking and rocky slopes, even cliffs, for sleeping. In Saudi Arabia, where they number perhaps 350,000, these conditions prevail in the Sarawat Mountains, north from the border with Yemen for roughly 800 kilometers (500 mi), parallel to the Red Sea coast. It is a narrow corridor: In the deserts east of the Sarawat there are cliffs but no water, and on the coastal plain west of the Sarawat there is water but no cliffs.

Boug's home city, Taif, perches at nearly 1900 meters' altitude (6200') in the Sarawat. It is so suitable for hamadryas that it has become famous for them. Especially around its western outskirts, they cavort by the hundreds across rocky slopes, loiter near parks and cajole leftovers from amused *Homo sapiens*.

Boug drove me out a few kilometers northwest to Al Hada, where Makkah-bound Highway 15 begins its descent off the escarpment in a series of precisely engineered hairpin turns. In a pullout before an epic desert vista, we watched as hamadryas males and females, adults and infants, all bounded over the rocks lining the shoulder and over the four-lane highway, at times appearing to literally dance in the road. Directly beneath a large sign reading *Mammooa rami al-akl lil-haywanat* ("Do not throw food to the animals"), drivers were nonetheless stopping to toss fruit, bread and leftovers out of car windows, drawing clusters of screeching, somersaulting baboons onto car hoods and roofs.

Hamadryas are not lithe, slender tree-dwellers: They are short, stocky and powerful. A full-grown male can weigh in at 30 kilograms (66 lb), and his long, squared-off muzzle opens to bare

LEFT: MATTHEW TELLER



Above: **A family watches cavorting baboons along the roadside.**

Right: **Socially, hamadryas baboons organize into omus (“one-male units”) such as this male flanked by four females.**

five-centimeter (1½”) canines. With a silver mane that fluffs to form a broad cape across his cheeks, shoulders and upper body, and narrow eyes that dart intently beneath prominent brow-ridges, everything about his appearance signals size and strength.

Females are only about half as large, and their short, brown hair lacks the male’s impressive mantle. Socially, the males call the shots, corralling females around themselves in the polygynous building-block of baboon society, the “one-male unit” or OMU, as Boug explains. As we watched the fluster of baboons on the highway shoulder, Boug pointed out several OMUs: In each one, a male controlled two to eight females, plus their infants. There are larger divisions, too, he explained: Two or three OMUs live and feed together as a clan; two or three clans maintain close contact as a band and several bands form a troop that may be composed of a hundred or more individuals who travel en masse from sleeping sites to feeding sites to resting sites and back each day.

Within each group, social order is a mixture of consent and coercion: It’s not uncommon to see a male attempt to prevent a female from straying by hauling her around by the tail. This behavior, Boug adds, is different from that of African male baboons, which fight each



other for females. “It’s an adaptation to the more arid environment here. Herding your females takes less energy than fighting another male to win them back. Conservation of energy is a key priority.”

Despite his expertise, Boug has been working alone for much of the last three decades. Only a handful of scholarly papers have been published on the hamadryas populations in Arabia as compared with African species. It’s as if hamadryas baboons got left behind while human understanding of other parts of the natural world has grown over the last century. Swiss primatologist Hans Kummer has offered a hypothesis about this. A pioneer of hamadryas research, he first worked on Ethiopian hamadryas in the 1960’s. Whereas most mammals entice each other to mate using scents imperceptible to

# Only a handful of scholarly papers have been published on the hamadryas populations in Arabia as compared with African species.

humans, or sounds we do not perceive as sexual, he wrote, baboons are visual animals, and their physical displays and sexual exuberance are understandable to humans as such. What's worse, he added, is that they appear to be half-dressed: the male's mantle covers his shoulders, but—like the female—he is naked from the waist down. Baboons, to some, are simply embarrassing.

In Arab culture, although baboons are mentioned in the *hadith*, or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, they are significantly absent from a rich poetic tradition that otherwise names every kind of wild animal, from oryx and gazelles to wolves and even the universally unpopular hyena. Ahmed Boug—himself a literary scholar and published poet—laughs as he delivers an explanation tantalizingly close to Kummer's. "Baboons are neither beautiful to describe, nor good to eat," he told me. "So the poets ignored them."

That uneasy relationship persists. Only around 65 percent of Saudi Arabia's baboon population is wild; the rest live in and around towns and cities, particularly Taif, which happens also to be the kingdom's top leisure-tourism destination. These baboons are classified as commensal—meaning they "share our table"—which means that, to varying degrees, they rely on human food.

Boug took me to the south side of Taif, to Wadi Liya, where all the elements of a baboon habitat unite. The valley is steep-sided, with rocky cliffs, smaller wadis and springs nearby that channel water to where a dam has created a lake. As well as eating wild acacia fruit and the succulent roots of the prickly poppy (*Argemone mexicana*), the baboons make the short walk every morning to Ruddaf Park, a local picnic area, where they raid the dumpsters and trash bins for human leftovers, gathering as much as possible before the park rangers arrive for work and chase them off.

"Commensalism has been a problem here for a long time," Boug tells me. "But it's grown worse in the last 30 years, as rapid

## CROSSING THE RED SEA

How did African baboons end up in the Arabian Peninsula? Or was it the other way around? It's a question that has taxed primatologists for decades. As Hans Kummer wrote in his 1995 landmark book *In Quest of the Sacred Baboon*, "It is a puzzling situation. The hamadryas must have originated on one side or the other [of the Red Sea]. As yet, we do not know which."

Other mammals present on both shores of the Red Sea differ substantially from one another: Oryx and leopards, for instance, both show marked physiological and behavioral variation between African and Arabian populations. *Papio hamadryas*, though, is essentially the same. This implies a long period of isolation, in which the species evolved to its present form, followed by a relatively recent spread of population to fill the current range.

Kummer favored an African origin, putting forward the intriguing idea that the baboons were transported across the sea by the ancient Egyptians, who are known to have worshiped the animals. (Around 1500 BCE, Queen Hatshepsut is recorded as having sent out an expedition to the "Land of Punt," presumably in the Horn of Africa, which brought back live hamadryas baboons.) Kummer suggested that at some point during the rise of maritime commerce on the Red Sea, baboons simply jumped ship and established pioneer colonies in the mountains above Arabian Red Sea ports.

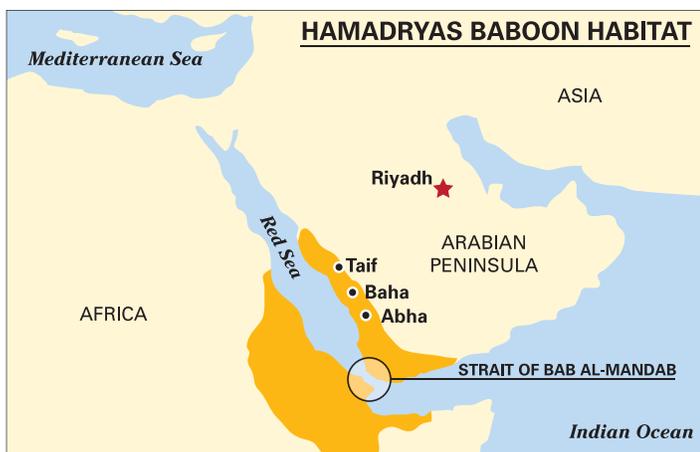
If he is right, the African and Arabian populations of hamadryas would be genetically identical. But he was working from observation, before DNA testing was widely available.

In the laboratories of the King Khalid Wildlife Research Center outside Riyadh, a team working under British geneticist Bruce Winney announced in 2004 that diversity in the mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) of Arabian baboons indicates that colonization of Arabia must have taken place earlier than 20,000 years ago—long before the emergence of human civilizations.

The baboons, therefore, made the journey themselves. But how? Did they migrate slowly northward from Ethiopia into Egypt, traversing the Sinai Desert to enter Arabia from the north? If so, populations at the northern edge of the hamadryas' current range would be genetically closer to African populations than those to the south. But Winney's analysis showed marked genetic diversity between samples taken in both Eritrea and Taif, at the northern limit of distribution on both shores.

So scientists looked south. The Bab Al-Mandab strait, which separates Djibouti from Yemen at the mouth of the Red Sea, is only 30 kilometers (18 mi) wide. During periods of glaciation, global sea levels were much lower, and the strait would have formed a land bridge at several times over the last half-million years, leading Winney and his team to conclude that baboons likely crossed from Africa to Arabia between 130,000 and 440,000 years ago.

Then primatologist Takayoshi Shotake of Kyoto University, working closely with Ahmed Boug in Taif, suggested that, at some point in the distant evolutionary past, an ancestor of the baboon crossed the Bab Al-Mandab strait into Arabia. The hamadryas then evolved its distinctive characteristics in Arabian isolation over hundreds of thousands of years, before crossing *back* into the East African mountains. A genetic difference between African and Arabian hamadryas detected in recent analysis appears to bear this idea out. Shotake's research is still in preparation, and so his hypothesis remains untested, but it offers a tantalizing, intriguing possibility. Far from being a marooned African animal, hamadryas might be Arabian.





**“We have to stop people feeding baboons,” says Ahmed Boug, above. Commensalism—baboons subsisting partly or entirely on human food—is causing social stress. For females, left, commensal overeating reduces birth intervals, contributing to overpopulation. Lower: With food too easily available, baboons’ roaming territory contracts and, like humans, under-exercised baboons develop physical health problems.**

development has overtaken environmental issues.” Four percent of the baboon population—that is, several thousand individuals—are now completely reliant on human food sources.

But, as the drivers at Al Hada demonstrate, it’s not just about raiding: The baboons are being fed. “Some people think monkeys and pigs are people punished by God for disobeying divine law,” Boug says. “They feed them to earn spiritual credit.”

He told me about a local character known for going around town filling sacks with leftovers from restaurants and bakeries and taking it all out to Al Hada for the baboons. I drove out to Al Shafa, a tourist area of amusement parks and picnic grounds in the hills south of Taif, where visitors were buying fruit from roadside stalls and tossing it directly to waiting baboons.

I asked three young men, visiting from the coastal city of Yanbu’, why they did it. “I don’t know,” said one. “I’ve never thought about it.”

“It’s a good thing to do, to get mercy from God,” said another.

At one of Al Shafa’s scenic overlooks, perched before a breathtaking panorama of forested crags and plunging ravines, Suleiman—who was weekendng from the northern city of Hail with his friend Humaid—was setting up a barbecue.

“Feeding the baboons is part of praying and fasting,” he told me. “It’s a good thing to do. And they have nothing else to eat. If they had enough food, they wouldn’t come to us, would they?”

Such well-intentioned but biologically misguided interventions have dire consequences. In the wild, a troop of hamadryas might total 120 animals; however, commensal troops have been counted at more than 800. With less need to search for food, they roam smaller areas—seven or eight square kilometers (3 sq mi), compared with more than three times that in the wild.

This results in crowding, which causes social stress.



## DO BABOONS KEEP PETS?

In 2011, a video was posted on YouTube showing hamadryas baboons in Taif apparently kidnapping feral puppies to raise as pets. It has proved amazingly popular, garnering more than 600,000 views. The three-minute sequence was excerpted from “Animals Like Us,” a multi-award-winning TV series on animal behavior, produced by a French team in partnership with the National Geographic Channel. The YouTube clip shows a male baboon seizing a puppy by the tail, prodding it and dragging it along in the dust; the camera then switches to a scene of adult dogs and baboons apparently relaxing together as a narrator intones, “Kidnapped pups grow up with the baboon family, feeding with them and sleeping together.” Mellow scenes of mutual grooming fade as the feel-good music swells.

Kidnapping has long been understood as a normal aspect of baboon behavior: Males will attempt to seize infant baboons from nursing females as part of a strategy for improving their status within the troop. But why might a baboon kidnap another species? Overlooking its emotionally manipulative music and narration and carefully edited visuals, does this decontextualized video clip *really* show baboons seeking canine companions, and dogs responding to baboons as masters, or is that a case of humans projecting ourselves into the picture?

Symbiosis is familiar across the natural world. But pet-keeping—wherein one species adopts another for no obvious functional reason and takes responsibility for a lifetime of feeding and care—is virtually unknown: Outside captivity, only *Homo sapiens* is known to do it. Koko the gorilla famously kept a kitten, a Kenyan hippo befriended a giant tortoise, and there have been a handful of other cases, but they all occur in artificial environments. In the wild, chimpanzees in West Africa have been observed seizing hyraxes—small rodent-like mammals—for brief periods of play, but they invariably kill them shortly afterwards, in some cases for food.

For this reason, the YouTube clip drew the attention of Hal Herzog, a specialist on human-animal interaction at Western Carolina University. In columns for *Psychology Today* and *The Huffington Post*, he collated multiple viewpoints to explore the possibility that the Taif baboons might be keeping dogs as pets, remaining skeptical while raising questions glossed over in the video:

- How long do the dogs live with the baboons? Is it long-term or temporary?
- Do the baboons get anything from the dogs other than somebody to love and play with? How do the dogs benefit?
- Do the baboons ever kill or eat the puppies?

Answers, so far, remain elusive. John Wells, co-founder of the Saudi Arab American Baboon Research Association—a small volunteer organization based in Jiddah—reacts in similar fashion. “I’m also skeptical,” he told me. “I’d like to see the unedited footage.”

Nonetheless, Wells maintains that the video scenes are not unusual, explaining that he has observed baboons caring for cats. “In Al Shafa, I’ve watched as four female baboons came down a rocky slope to a mewling kitten. Straight away, the mewling stopped and the kitten rubbed up against them. It was playful behavior, bouncing around. Then we saw the males come down the slope and take the kitten with them to drink.”

In his book *Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat*, Herzog asserts that in order to have pet-keeping, there must be culture—that is, social imitation and peer approval. Is a stressful, overcrowded habitat and an overabundance of food prompting Taif’s commensal baboons to keep pets for comfort? Are these animals developing a culture of caring? For now, we can only guess.

As males find themselves unable to keep order in their increasingly oversized OMUS, “floating females” drift away to mate with unattached males, who, in turn, club together to seize more females. The tail-gripping behavior in the commensal troop at Al Hada is stress-induced, Boug says: It doesn’t occur in the wild. Overfeeding is also shortening the interval between births, which compounds the overcrowding. And then there is junk food, which is high in salt, sugar and fat: Commensal hamadryas are showing health problems, including increased levels of intestinal parasites.

The problems spread to humans, too, who can be at increased risk of bilharzia and tuberculosis from nearby baboon populations. Baboons raid farms around Taif, stealing crops and damaging fences and other structures. One troop gained entry to an army base, where it ripped up seating in military vehicles and bit through radar cabling. Traffic accidents are increasing in the area, caused not only by animals on the highway: In 2010 the *Arab News* paper reported claims that a Taif man had died when baboons threw rocks at his truck.

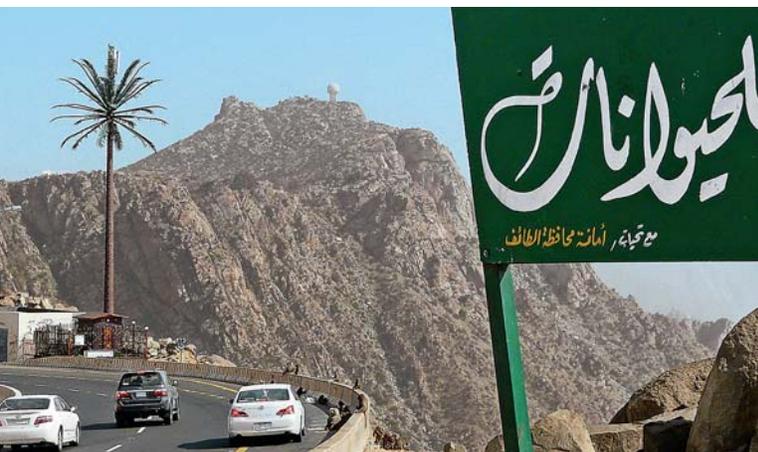
There are, says Boug, simply too many baboons living too close to people. He is clear about why it is happening: a combination of habitat fragmentation through deforestation and overgrazing, and killing by hunters of the baboons’ traditional predators, notably wolves, leopards and hyenas.

Under Boug’s guidance, the NWRC is addressing commensalism and trying to keep baboons wild. In Abha in the late 1990’s, the organization was able to reduce baboon numbers by half with a two-pronged approach: Scientists used “humane culling,” along with vasectomies and hormone implants to bring the birth-rate down, while officials deployed public signage and empowered police to issue fines for roadside feeding. Targeting both human behavior and baboon proliferation is critical.

“If it’s not done as one package, it won’t succeed,” Boug explains. “Just eliminating baboons is not a solution—other wild groups will move in and become commensal. We have to stop people feeding them. And the only way to do that is through public awareness campaigns.”

To do this, the NWRC has funded environmental education in high schools and opened a new visitor center. Boug is organizing a workshop to brief governmental officials in Taif on the issues surrounding baboon commensalism, identifying environmental causes and offering guidance on sustainable solutions. Last August, he attended a global conference that showcased

Below: **Along the road to Taif, the sign translates “Do not throw food to the animals.”**





significant success in a long-running program to control populations of macaques around Hong Kong through contraception and legislative intervention. Pending local government approval in Taif, Boug is ready to implement the same methods in Saudi Arabia. But it will be a long journey.

Back at Al Hada, vehicles are crowding the highway shoulder, seven or eight in a line, their occupants cooing as young baboons stuff their mouths under the gazes of the imperious, silver-caped males. A lone municipal worker in orange coveralls collects discarded plastic bottles and food wrappers.

None of this is particularly new. Merchants and travelers between Taif and Makkah have come through Al Hada since antiquity, and the old stone road over the escarpment still exists alongside the

## HEAVENLY APES?

Hamadryas baboons were revered in ancient Egypt. By the New Kingdom period (around 1500 BCE), baboons were being imported for ritual purposes from Nubia, in the area of modern Sudan, and Punt, assumed to be on the southern shores of the Red Sea. Their exact status in Egyptian religion is not clear, but it seems they were seen both as vessels for the gods to inhabit and as proxy humans: Painted scenes show baboons building boats and taking part in harvesting, and baboons may have been mummified as part of a process of royal reincarnation.

Hamadryas were most commonly associated with Thoth, the scribe of the gods, fount of knowledge and—in Thoth’s depiction as the ape named A’an—the god of equilibrium, the one who seeks balance by weighing the deceased’s heart against the motive force of the universe. Hamadryas abound in ancient Egyptian painting and sculpture, where they are often worshiping the sun in a pose that authors hypothesize derives from a distinctive position adopted by male baboons while being groomed: head back and arms upraised to the sky.

modern highway. Scholar Yaqut Al-Hamawi described Al Hada in 1228, in his *Mu’jam Al Buldan (Dictionary of Countries)*, in which he drily noted the resident baboons. In much the same vein, an Internet search reveals plenty of exasperated comments attached to videos of the baboons’ antics. “I live in Taif,” writes Waleed Gilani. “Every time we go to Makkah or Jiddah these baboons give us a really tough time.... Sometimes we take a different road.”

In formal Arabic, baboons are called *qurud*. Connoting a miser or one who lives on the cheap, the term is derived from a word meaning “unlucky.” Yet in popular speech, most people know the hamadryas either as *sa’dan*, which translates as “the happy ones,” or *rubah*, “those who profit.” As we watch them filch from the well-meaning humans at Al Hada, with sweet-water springs close at hand and the safety of the rocky cliffs as a nighttime retreat, it seems the baboons are happily banking their miser’s profits against an uncertain future. 🌐



**Matthew Teller** (mailto:matthewteller.com) is a free-lance journalist and travel writer based in the UK. He broadcasts for BBC radio and writes on the Middle East for newspapers and magazines around the world. He tweets @matthewteller and his blog is [www.QuiteAlone.com](http://www.QuiteAlone.com).

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roses in Taif: N/D 97  
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 NWRC and oryx conservation: S/O 09

 **In Quest of the Sacred Baboon.** Hans Kummer. 1997, Princeton University Press, 978-0-691-04838-3, pb.

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*above*

2013 Gregorian and 1434-1435 hijri Calendars

"Have we not made the Earth as a wide expanse, and the mountains as pegs?"

-Qur'an 78:6-7 (English by Yusuf Ali)

# From Above

Written by Robert W. Lebling

From earliest times, humans have lifted their gazes skyward, where the gyring of hawks and gulls made us first wonder what the world looks like to a bird. Today, though vistas from airliner windows rarely excite more than a glance, there are still views from above that can fascinate us by revealing the sensual beauty of landforms and the kaleidoscopic patterns of towns and cities, all shaped by nature, history and culture and rarely showing any traces of political borders.

One of the earliest written legends to describe the Earth from above comes from the tablets of ancient Mesopotamia. In it, an eagle carries Etana, King of Sumer, up to heaven:

When he bore him aloft one league,  
The eagle said to him, to Etana:  
“Look, my friend, how the land is now.  
Examine the sea, look for its boundaries.  
The land is hills....  
The sea has become a stream.”

In classical Greek stories, flight was a divine prerogative. Though Hermes, the wing-footed courier, was Olympus’s top-ranking aeronaut, and chariot-driving Apollo captained the daily sun shuttle, all of the Greek deities could take to the air when they wished.

Trespassing fatefully on their prerogative was a legendary duo: the inventor Daedalus and his son Icarus. Their wings of feathers and beeswax were inspired by the eagles that plied the cliffs on the coast of Crete, where they lived in exile. The pair’s aerial escape became a fable about the value of moderation when impulsive Icarus ignored his father’s warning and flew too high, to where the sun melted the wax, and he perished in the sea below.

Legendary or not, Daedalus and Icarus were not the first in their attempt at flight. Around 850 BCE, according to the English tale, King Bladud of the Britons, father of King Leir (Shakespeare’s Lear), is said to have used feathered wings to try to fly over the temple of Apollo in London. He crashed, fatally, but as he was also founder of the spa city of Bath, he has been known ever since as “the flying king of Bath.”

In ninth-century Muslim Spain, another inventor, Abbas ibn Firnas, donned wings to fly from a tower, possibly in Córdoba. Moroccan historian al-Maqqari wrote the only known—and unfortunately secondhand—account. Ibn Firnas glided some distance, al-Maqqari related, but then crashed because, unlike birds, he lacked a tail to stabilize his landing.

Perhaps trying to best both Ibn Firnas and Daedalus, Eilmer of Malmesbury, a Benedictine monk of the 11th century, also attempted winged flight from the tower of Malmesbury Abbey in England. Aloft for 15 seconds—likely entirely descending ones—he landed too hard and broke both legs.

# Patterns of Moon, Patterns of Sun

Written by Paul Lunde

## The Hijri calendar

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

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

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

This gives the lunar year 354 days, 11 days fewer than the solar year. ‘Umar chose as the epoch for the new Muslim calendar the *hijra*, the emigration of the Prophet

*“It is he who made  
the sun to be a  
shining glory, and  
the moon to be a  
light (of beauty),  
and measured out  
stages for her, that  
ye might know the  
number of years and  
the count (of time).”*

—Qur’an 10:5  
(English by Yusuf Ali)

In Renaissance Italy, flight was only one of the many ideas that fascinated Leonardo da Vinci, who studied the anatomy of birds and bats and sketched flying machines that included a kite-like glider, a flapping-winged ornithopter and a proto-helicopter.

It was not until 1782 that the dream of seeing as birds do became possible, and it came over Paris, from the basket slung below the Montgolfier brothers' hot-air balloon. During the French Revolution, balloons became useful for collecting intelligence and providing a broad view of battlefields. With the invention of photography in the early 19th century, another Frenchman, Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, in 1858 became the first to take a camera aloft. And in 1909, just six years after American bicycle-shop owners Orville and Wilbur Wright flew the first "heavier than air" craft—the airplane—Wilbur himself flew over Rome with an early movie camera mounted on his Wright Flyer Model A to produce the world's first in-flight movie.

From World War I to the 1930's, the conjunction of film and views from above gave rise to the industry of aerial mapping, which has proven essential to cartographers, governments, scientists and industries ever since. One eyes-in-the-sky pioneer was an American named Sherman Mills Fairchild, who both adapted aircraft for mapping and produced specialized cameras for the purpose. In 1934, it was one of his Fairchild 71 monoplanes and K-4 aerial cameras that geologists of the California Arabian Standard Oil Co. (CASOC)—forerunner of Aramco and Saudi Aramco—used to produce the first maps of the larger-than-Texas concession area in eastern Saudi Arabia. (See photograph for July/August.)

The next revolution in viewing Earth from above came in 1946, when an American-launched unmanned German V-2 rocket carried a camera up nearly into orbit. Twenty-two years later, astronaut William Anders made what is perhaps the ultimate view from above: As his Apollo 8 spacecraft slipped from behind the barren moon, it was greeted by a cloud-laced, deeply blue, rising planet Earth. It was a sight never imagined in any legend, and it has marked our thinking ever since.

A few years later, in 1972, the US space agency launched Landsat, inaugurating the systematic photography of the Earth by satellite imaging. Improved ever since and now conjoined with the Internet, that technology today allows even personal mobile phones to pull down detailed views of almost anywhere via Google Earth, launched on the Web in 2005.

It would be too easy to say that in the early 21st century our species has reached a kind of pinnacle in its ability to look down as the legendary King Etana and his eagle once did. Our search for new ways of seeing and new points of view never ends. Today's artists in the sky, whose work fills this year's calendar, remind us of the infinite terrestrial mosaics that are appreciated best when viewed from above. 🌐

**Robert Lebling** (lebling@yahoo.com) is a writer, editor and communications specialist. He is author of *Legends of the Fire Spirits: Jinn and Genies from Arabia to Zanzibar*.

On the cover: Sunrise sets aglow a rare fog near Shaybah, in Saudi Arabia's Rub' al-Khali, or Empty Quarter. Comprising an area slightly larger than France and smaller than Texas, it covers much of the south-central Arabian Peninsula.  
Photo by George Steinmetz

Muhammad and 70 Muslims from Makkah to Madinah, where Muslims first attained religious and political autonomy. The hijra thus occurred on 1 Muharram of the year 1 according to the Islamic calendar, which was named "hijri" after its epoch. (This date corresponds to July 16, 622 CE, on the Gregorian calendar.) Today in the West, it is customary, when writing hijri dates, to use the abbreviation AH, which stands for the Latin *anno hegirae*, "year of the hijra."

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

### The Gregorian calendar

The early calendar of the Roman Empire was lunisolar, containing 355 days divided into 12 months beginning on January 1. To keep it more or less in accord with the actual solar year, a month was added every two years. The system for doing so was complex, and cumulative errors gradually misaligned it with the seasons. By 46 BCE, it was some three months out of alignment, and Julius Caesar oversaw its reform. Consulting Greek astronomers in Alexandria, he created a solar calendar in which one day was added to February every fourth year, effectively compensating for the solar year's length of 365.2422 days. This Julian calendar was used throughout Europe until 1582 CE.

In the Middle Ages, the Christian liturgical calendar was grafted onto the Julian one, and the computation of lunar festivals like Easter, which falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox, exercised some of the best minds in Christendom. The use of the epoch 1 CE dates from the sixth century, but did not become common until the 10th.

The Julian year was nonetheless 11 minutes and 14 seconds too long. By the early 16th century, due to the accumulated error, the spring equinox was falling on March 11 rather than where it should, on March 21. Copernicus, Christophorus Clavius and the physician Aloysius Lilius provided the calculations, and in 1582 Pope Gregory XIII ordered that Thursday, October 4, 1582, would be followed by Friday, October 15, 1582. Most Catholic countries accepted the new "Gregorian" calendar, but it was not adopted in England and the Americas until the 18th century. Its use is now almost universal worldwide. The Gregorian year is nonetheless 25.96 seconds ahead of the solar year, which by the year 4909 will add up to an extra day. 🌐

**Paul Lunde** (paul\_lunde@hotmail.com) is currently a senior research associate with the Civilizations in Contact Project at Cambridge University.

## Converting Dates

The following equations convert roughly from Gregorian to *hijri* and vice versa. However, the results can be slightly misleading: They tell you only the year in which the other calendar's year begins. For example, 2013 Gregorian begins in Safar, the second month, of Hijri 1434 and ends in Safar of Hijri 1435.

---

**Gregorian year =**  
[(32 × Hijri year) ÷ 33] + 622

---

**Hijri year =**  
[(Gregorian year – 622) × 33] ÷ 32

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



*"There is no road to be seen in the desert and no track, only sand blown about by the wind. You see mountains of sand in one place, then you see they have moved to another."*

—Ibn Battuta, *Rihla (Travels)*, trans. H. A. R. Gibb and C. F. Beckingham, ca. 1354



Caravan trade routes once laced the vast sand and gravel wastes of the Sahara, which was seen then as joining, rather than separating, the inhabited lands on its "shores." This small group amid dunes near Nouakchott, Mauritania, is likely a tourist expedition: Trade caravans, while now rare, usually comprise dozens if not hundreds of camels, and camel-mounted livestock herders travel with their stock.

Photo by George Steinmetz

# january safar – rabi'1 1434

S M T W T F S

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

	1 19	2 20	3 21	4 22	5 23
	Sultanate of Brunei wins independence from uk 1984		Boxer Muhammad Ali goes to Makkah on Hajj 1972	Burj Khalifa, world's tallest building, opens in Dubai 2010	
6 24	7 25	8 26	9 27	10 28	11 29
			Marco Polo, Venetian merchant to Asia, dies 1324		
13 1	14 2	15 3	16 4	17 5	18 6
			'Abd al-Rahman III becomes caliph of Al-Andalus 929		
20 8	21 9	22 10	23 11	24 12	25 13
British explorer Charles Doughty dies 1926			Caliph 'Umar introduces Islamic calendar 638	The Prophet Muhammad born 570	
27 15	28 16	29 17	30 18	31 19	
				Freya Stark, British explorer born 1893	

2012 DECEMBER

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

The quotations from Arabic literature in this calendar were compiled by Tim Mackintosh-Smith.

# february rabi'1 – rabi'II

S M T W T F S

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

		1 20	2 21		
		India's Mughal classical era begins 1556			
3 22	4 23	5 24	6 25	7 26	8 27
Egypt's singing legend Umm Kulthum dies 1975	Danny Thomas founds St. Jude's for children 1962				
10 29	11 1	12 2	13 3	14 4	15 5
Spain declares Alhambra national monument 1870			Mongols sack Baghdad 1258	President Roosevelt, King 'Abd al-'Aziz meet 1945	'New York Times' Anthony Shadid dies in Syria 2012
17 7	18 8	19 9	20 10	21 11	22 12
Mongol ruler Tamerlane dies 1405					
24 14	25 15	26 16	27 17	28 18	
Traveler Ibn Battuta born in Tangier, Morocco, 1304				Consumer advocate Ralph Nader born 1934	

MARCH

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

The historic dates and anniversaries in this calendar were compiled by Robert W. Lebling.

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*"It is situated upon a great high mound of earth, broad on top. Within this citadel there are markets and the dwellings of the townspeople, and a congregational mosque for their prayers."*  
—Yaqut al-Hamawi, *Mu'jam al-Buldan (Dictionary of Countries)*, 1220



Capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, Arbil (also Irbil and Erbil) is among the oldest continuously inhabited cities on Earth. Layered upon its own ruins, Arbil's central citadel dates back to at least the fifth millennium BCE.

Photo by Georg Gerster / Photo Researchers

# march rabi' II – jumada I

S M T W T F S

Notes:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

					1 19	2 20
3 21	4 22 First commercial flow of Saudi Arabian oil 1938	5 23	6 24 Optics pioneer Alhazen dies 1040	7 25 Louvre announces plans for museum in Abu Dhabi 2007	8 26	9 27
10 28	11 29 Facebook launches Arabic version 2009	12 30	13 1	14 2	15 3	16 4
17 5 Magellan becomes first European to sail east to Asia 1511	18 6	19 7 Explorer and translator Richard Burton born 1821	20 8	21 9 Nowruz, traditional Persian New Year's Day	22 10 Timurid ruler and astronomer Ulugh Beg born 1394	23 11
24 12	25 13	26 14	27 15	28 16	29 17	30 18
31 19 Easter		Arab woman poet al-Mustakfi dies in Córdoba 1091				Aerial mapping of eastern Saudi Arabia begins 1934

## FEBRUARY

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

# april jumada I – jumada II

S M T W T F S

7 26	8 27	9 28	10 29 Istanbul's Topkapı Palace becomes a museum 1924	11 1	12 2	13 3 Emperor Philip the Arab meets Antioch Christians 244						
14 4 Philosopher Ibn Rushd born in Córdoba 1126	15 5 Famed Ottoman architect Sinan born 1489	16 6	17 7	18 8	19 9	20 10 René Caillié is first European in Timbuktu 1828						
21 11 Poet, statesman Muhammad Iqbal dies 1938	22 12	23 13	24 14	25 15	26 16	27 17 Obama compliments "The 99" comic books 2010						
28 18	29 19	30 20	Notes: _____ _____ _____									

## MAY

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



*“In a Garden on high ● Where they shall hear no (word) of vanity ●  
Therein will be a bubbling spring ● Therein will be Thrones  
(of dignity) raised on high ● Goblets placed (ready) ●  
And cushions spread in rows ● And rich carpets (all) spread out.”*

—Qur’an 88:10-16 (English by Yusuf Ali)

Laid out on dramatic display by a merchant in the old city of Marrakesh, Morocco, carpets woven throughout the High Atlas mountains and the surrounding area bear seemingly infinite varieties of colorful, intricate and often locally distinctive motifs. Marrakesh rose as a center of political power and trade in the 11th century, and its traditional craft industries endure today in an economy largely fueled by tourism and global trade.

Photo by Yann Arthus-Bertrand / Altitude

# may jumada II – rajab

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Notes: _____			1 21	2 22	3 23	4 24
_____			Astronomer Ibn Ridwan observes supernova 1006			India's Tipu Sultan dies in battle 1799
_____						
_____						
5 25	6 26	7 27	8 28	9 29	10 30	11 1
	Pope John Paul II visits Damascus mosque 2001			Thutmose III battles Canaanites 1457 BCE		
12 2	13 3	14 4	15 5	16 6	17 7	18 8
Pope Sylvester II, friend of Arab science, dies 1003						Omar Khayyam born 1048
19 9	20 10	21 11	22 12	23 13	24 14	25 15
Atatürk begins Turkish War of Independence 1919					Ibn Sina claims solar transit of Venus 1032	
26 16	27 17	28 18	29 19	30 20	31 21	
	Historian Ibn Khaldun born in Tunis 1332		Ottomans conquer Constantinople 1453		Architect Zaha Hadid wins Pritzker 2004	

## APRIL

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

# june rajab – shaban

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Notes: _____						1 22
_____						
_____						
_____						
2 23	3 24	4 25	5 26	6 27	7 28	8 29
			Headless Pyramid rediscovered at Saqqara 2008	Great Bombay Cyclone drowns 100,000 1882		
9 30	10 1	11 2	12 3	13 4	14 5	15 6
	Alexander the Great, age 32, dies 323 BCE					Assyrians record solar eclipse 763 BCE
16 7	17 8	18 9	19 10	20 11	21 12	22 13
				First Egyptian motion picture in Cairo 1907		
23 14	24 15	25 16	26 17	27 18	28 19	29 20
30 21						
		Kahlil Gibran immigrates to America 1895			Gameen Bank founder M. Yunus born 1940	Volcano threatens Madinah 1256

## JULY

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



*"Though this part of our journey is so dangerous,  
and the goal remote, no roads are without endings. Do not grieve."*

—Muhammad Shams al-Din Hafiz, *Diwan*,  
trans. Robert Maxwell and Mariam Ma'afi, 14th century



Viewed from an altitude of 3000 meters (10,000') in November 1934, the North Jafurah desert near Dammam, Saudi Arabia, took on a sculptural shape beneath the lens of CASOC's survey team. The team produced the first aerial maps of the oil-exploration concession granted by King 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud.

Photo by Russ Gerow / R.T. Gerow Collection / Courtesy Michael Gerow

# july shaban — ramadan

S M T W T F S

	1 22	2 23	3 24	4 25	5 26	6 27
	Harun al-Rashid gives elephant to Charlemagne 802			Saladin defeats Crusaders at Hattin 1187	Algeria wins independence from France 1962	
7 28	8 29	9 1	10 2	11 3	12 4	13 5
			Abbasids defeat Tang China at Battle of Talas 751	Cardiologist Michael DeBaakey dies 2008		
14 6	15 7	16 8	17 9	18 10	19 11	20 12
	Muslims surrender Jerusalem to Crusaders 1099				Arab-Berber army found Al-Andalus in Iberia 711	
21 13	22 14	23 15	24 16	25 17	26 18	27 19
28 20	29 21	30 22	31 23	Notes: _____ _____ _____		
				Swat absorbed into Pakistan 1969		

## JUNE

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

# august ramadan — shawwal

S M T W T F S

Notes: _____ _____ _____				1 24	2 25	3 26
				Romans capture Alexandria, Egypt, 30 BCE		
4 27	5 28	6 29	7 30	8 1	9 2	10 3
			'Id al-Fitr			Egyptologist Edward Lane dies 1876
11 4	12 5	13 6	14 7	15 8	16 9	17 10
	Queen Cleopatra dies by her own hand 30 BCE		Independent Pakistan founded 1947		T. E. Lawrence (of Arabia) born 1888	
18 11	19 12	20 13	21 14	22 15	23 16	24 17
				Abu Bakr, first Muslim caliph, dies 634 BCE		
25 18	26 19	27 20	28 21	29 22	30 23	31 24
	Physician Al-Razi (Rhazes) born in Persia 865	Anglo-Zanzibar War lasts 38 minutes 1896				

## SEPTEMBER

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



*"In one night you journeyed from sanctuary to sanctuary,  
Passing, like the full moon, through bleakest darkness on the way.  
Ascending all night till you came within Two Bow-lengths,  
A point never attained, nor aspired to before."*

—Al-Busiri, *The Ode of the Mantle*, trans. Stefan Sperl  
and Christopher Shackle, 13th century



Sunrise glistens off the cupola that tops the octagonal Dome of the Rock, set within *al-haram al-sharif* ("the noble sanctuary") at the southeast corner of Old Jerusalem, its precincts holy to three faiths. To Muslims, it is from the rock above which this shrine was built that the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven during his miraculous Night Journey (*'isra*).

Photo by George Steinmetz

# september shamwal – dhu al-qa'dah

S M T W T F S

1 25	2 26	3 27	4 28 Astronomer and historian Al-Biruni born 973	5 29	6 30	7 1
8 2	9 3	10 4	11 5 Ottomans defeated in Battle of Vienna 1683	12 6	13 7	14 8 Grateful Dead play at Giza Pyramids 1978
15 9	16 10	17 11	18 12	19 13	20 14	21 15
22 16 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is proclaimed 1932	23 17	24 18	25 19 Orientalism author Edward Said dies 2003	26 20	27 21 Champollion deciphers Rosetta Stone 1822	28 22 President Nasser of Egypt dies 1970
29 23	30 24 Persian poet Rumi born 1207	Notes: _____ _____ _____				

## AUGUST

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

# october dhu al-qa'dah – dhu al-hijjah

S M T W T F S

Notes: _____ _____ _____		1 25	2 26 Saladin recaptures Jerusalem from Crusaders 1187	3 27 Largest falcon hospital opens in Abu Dhabi 1999	4 28	5 29 Apple founder Steve Jobs dies 2011
6 1	7 2	8 3	9 4	10 5	11 6	12 7 Orhan Pamuk wins Nobel for Literature 2006
13 8	14 9 'Id al-Adha	15 10	16 11 Egypt opens New Library of Alexandria 2002	17 12	18 13	19 14
20 15	21 16	22 17	23 18 Architect Hassan Fathy wins Aga Khan Award 1980	24 19	25 20	26 21 Earthquake devastates Constantinople 740
27 22	28 23	29 24	30 25	31 26		

## NOVEMBER

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



*“Though your head may scrape the stars,  
Don’t be deceived in pride. ● You remain the self-same  
handful of dust ● Swept upwards on the wind.”*

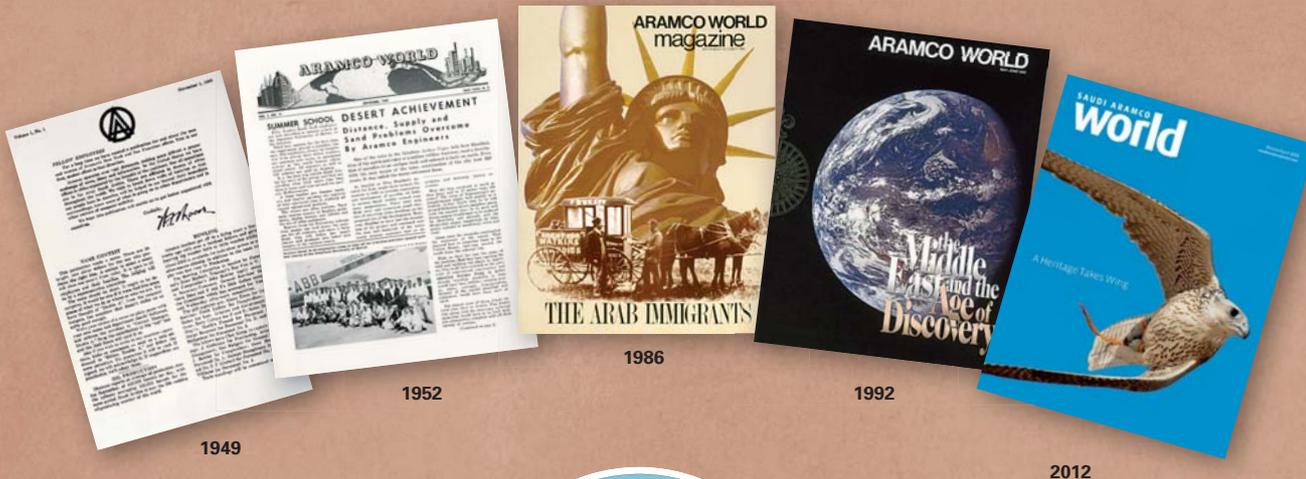
—‘Abd al-Qadir Bidel, *Diwan*, trans. Robert Maxwell  
and Mariam Ma’afi, early 18th century



Low clouds and fog roll across the emirate of Dubai, blanketing all but the city’s skyscrapers, most of which hug the edges of Shaykh Zayed Road. Rising far above its neighbors, the 163-story Burj Khalifa tapers skyward to top out at 830 meters (2723’), making it the tallest man-made structure in the world.

**Photo by Bjorn Moerman**





Subscriptions to the print edition are available without charge to a limited number of readers worldwide at [saudiaramcoworld.com](http://saudiaramcoworld.com)

In November 1949, the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) published the first issue of an interoffice newsletter named *Aramco World*. Over the next two decades, as the number of Americans working with Saudi colleagues in Dhahran grew into the tens of thousands, *Aramco World* grew into a bimonthly educational magazine whose historical, geographical and cultural articles helped the American employees and their families appreciate an unfamiliar land.

The magazine is now published by Aramco Services Company in Houston, Texas, on behalf of Saudi Aramco, which succeeded Aramco in 1988 as the national oil company of Saudi Arabia. In 2000, *Aramco World* changed its name to *Saudi Aramco World* to reflect this relationship.

Today, *Saudi Aramco World's* orientation is still toward education, the fostering of cooperation and the building of mutual appreciation between East and West, but for



A searchable, indexed reference disk containing PDF scans of all print-edition articles, from 1950 through 2010, is also available upon request, without charge, from the addresses at right.

the last five decades the magazine has been aimed primarily at readers outside the company, worldwide, as well as at internal readers. Its articles have spanned the Arab and Muslim worlds, past and present, with special attention to their connections with the cultures of the West.

Subscriptions may be requested on the magazine's website, by email to [saworld@aramcoservices.com](mailto:saworld@aramcoservices.com), or by fax to +1-713-432-5536. Multiple-copy print subscriptions for seminars or classrooms are also available.

The texts of all back issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World* are fully indexed, searchable and downloadable on our website, [saudiaramcoworld.com](http://saudiaramcoworld.com). Articles from issues since 2003 include photographs. In addition, many photographs from past issues are available at [photoarchive.saudiaramcoworld.com](http://photoarchive.saudiaramcoworld.com), and licensing for approved uses is royalty-free.



2011 Gold Eddie Award • 2011 Web Marketing Association WebAward  
2010 Gold Ozzie Award • 2009 Gold Magnum Opus Award



# FREE RUNNING GAZA

WRITTEN BY MIRIAM SHAHIN  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY GEORGE AZAR



On the outskirts of the 14th-century merchant town of Khan Yunis, nestled into its 64-year-old refugee

# FREE RUNNING GAZA

Mohammed Al-Jakhbeer, co-founder of PK Gaza, executes a flip by running up the wall of his family home in Akkad, where graffiti advertise a wedding. Previous spread: Younger members of PK Gaza look on as Al-Jakhbeer, left, and Jihad Abu Sultan, right, leap between rooftops.



camp, lies Akkad, one of the most dilapidated and densely populated neighborhoods in the southern Gaza Strip.

Named for the trading clan that once dominated it, Akkad is one of those places where even aid workers, who now visit the Gaza Strip in increasing numbers, never seem to come. It is hardly on the map.

For thousands of years, small cities like Khan Yunis were central to the trade routes that connected Egypt and Africa to Arabia. It was to Gaza City that the Makkan merchant Hashim ibn ‘Abd Manaf, great-grandfather of the Prophet Muhammad, came to trade; he died there in 497 CE while heading a caravan. To Palestinians who relish their Islamic history, the capital of the Gaza Strip is still known as *Ghazzat Hashim*, “Hashim’s Gaza.”

To the young people who make up more than half of the Strip’s population of 1.7 million, Gaza’s historic role connecting cultures and continents makes up part of an identity intimately tied to the freedom of movement and travel enjoyed by most of the world’s population but routinely, almost universally, denied them today.

It is here in Khan Yunis, in Akkad, that in 2008 Mohammed Al-Jakhbeer and Abdullah Enshasi began practicing “free running.” Jumping from rooftop to windowsill to the ground, running along Akkad’s unpaved, sandy alleys, they found a way to both express themselves and reclaim a sense of freedom in movement.

At the time, Al-Jakhbeer was an avid basketball player studying film editing at Al-Azhar University in Gaza City.

“I was going home, and Abdullah, my best friend, told me he had just seen a video clip on-line about ‘free running,’ which is about

overcoming obstacles. It just sounded like a sport that I would love to practice,” says Al-Jakhbeer, sitting in front of the booth-like shop where his father sells ice cream to the camp’s children.

“We started to practice every day, and our liking for this sport increased. We kept looking at video clips on-line, whenever the electricity worked. We toned our bodies and practiced jumps, rolls and runs daily,” he says.

Intermittent power—most Gazan homes receive electricity only 12 hours a day—is only one of the daily obstacles that Al-Jakhbeer, 24, and Enshasi, 23, face. In the spirit of free running, described by its French founder, Sébastien Foucan, as a self-development discipline that allows practitioners to “follow your own way,” the young men have indeed created their unique way.

“When I was young,” says Al-Jakhbeer, “I could not imagine that anything would dominate our consciousness more than our isolation or the occupation. All of Gaza was a series of obstacles—closures and checkpoints. Today, all and any obstacles are my point of departure. With free running, I overcome.”

He is one of seven children, and his family became impoverished after his father left Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, where he had worked as a plumber. For all the cheerful colors of the ice-cream cones he sells, there is little income, and the family lives mainly on United Nations rations.



**F**ree running is a freestyle street sport that involves overcoming obstacles through agility, strength and flexibility, and getting from one place to another by combining jumping, running, flipping, tumbling and rolling. There are no standard “moves.”

“We approach each obstacle in a different way. We improvise as we move. We look at our object, figure out in our head how to overcome it and develop a strategy, then and there,” explains

Al-Jakhbeer. “Momentum and focus are key.”

Unlike *parkour*, a similar sport that focuses more on speed and efficiency, free running is relaxed and esthetically oriented. Much of it uses body rolls to buffer the impact of jumps and falls on the legs, spine and back. The jumps, Al-Jakhbeer says, are often from challenging heights, which is a way to “free the mind” from mental and emotional barriers.

As the duo began practicing free running in the narrow lanes around their homes, they quickly became neighborhood stars. Young boys followed them in droves, trying to imitate their moves. “We never had any training of our own; we just learned from videos we saw on the net,” says Enshasi. Within

a year they were shooting their own videos and training other kids. Like other free runners around the world, they adopted a name based on the older parlance of parkour, “PK Gaza.”

Using the soft sand dunes for their beginners, they taught groups of boys aged 8 to 16 how to tone their muscles and jump, climb and run.

“My main focus as I grow older is to make sure that PK Gaza continues as an art and sports form in Gaza. I do not want it to die with us. I want it to continue and grow. This is why now I feel our main focus

**“When I was young,” says Al-Jakhbeer, right, “all of Gaza was a series of obstacles—closures and checkpoints. Today, all and any obstacles are my point of departure.”** Top and above right: **Fitness and safe jumping are part of the training PK Gaza offers in Akkad.**

should be on training the next generation,” says Enshasi. “They are young minds and bodies who want to be set free.”

Among their supporters is eminent Gazan psychologist Eyad Al Sarraj, MD. In the often oppressive atmosphere that prevails in the Gaza Strip, he explains, “sports and the arts are important ways for young people to express themselves and an outlet for their frustrations. Many young people in Gaza are angry because they have very few opportunities and are locked in. An art and sports form such as free running gives them an important method to express their desire for freedom and allows them to overcome the barriers that society and politics have imposed on them. It literally sets them free.”

To reach out to both other Gazans and the wider world, Enshasi and Al-Jakhbeer produced annual Gaza parkour and free-running videos, first on their inexpensive mobile-phone cameras, then later on borrowed video cameras. “We wanted the world to know we were here—we were free runners. It took a while, but eventually they reached out to us,” says Al-Jakhbeer.



# DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME

Al-Jakhbeer and Enshasi have filmed hundreds of hours of video footage of themselves and the youngsters they train. Many show the youngsters as well as their trainers suffering bruises, cuts and sprains. ♣ “We don’t have safety equipment like knee guards, helmets or gloves, because we cannot afford them. But we often wrap our ankles and wrists with cotton or elastic strips taken from sheets or other items to protect ourselves,” says Enshasi. ♣ “We have had some close calls,” says Al-Jakhbeer, who always wears elastic wristbands. “Focusing the mind and rolling the body are two important aspects of keeping safe while jumping. This is what we teach our students.”

They first came to international attention when they registered PK Gaza on the Web site of *JUMP* magazine. In June of last year, “Free Running Gaza,” the documentary film that photographer George Azar and I produced, aired globally, and Enshasi and Al-Jakhbeer began to get invitations to competitions around the world.

In February, with sponsorship from the Unione Italiana Sport Per Tutti (“Sport for All”), the two founders and fellow free runner Jihad Abu Sultan made their first crossing outside Gaza to the Italian Free Running and Parkour Federation’s annual event in Milan. From there, they performed also in Rome, Bologna and Palermo, and they met fellow free runners from around the globe, including performers from Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco.

“Those were the most memorable 17 days of our lives. I will never forget them. The other free runners were kind and helpful, and they wanted to hear what we had to say about Gaza. It was so beautiful,” says Al-Jakhbeer.

The most important lesson from the Italian competition, Al-Jakhbeer recalls, “was a piece of advice from the Italian trainer. He said, ‘Think of yourself as a large candle: If you keep a steady course and are in for the long run, the flame will stay alive. If you act erratically and make crazy moves and are in it for only the thrill, your flame will get extinguished fast.’

I thought about it and decided, ‘I intend to keep my flame going.’” 🌐

One of PK Gaza’s favorite practice sites is the beach at Khan Yunis, where Al-Jakhbeer coaches Mohammed Amer, left, and Al-Jakhbeer and Jihad Abu Sultan practice jumps from pilings, below. Opposite: Rail jumping practice and, lower, a head-first flip that will end in a sandy landing.





# FREE RUNNING AND PARKOUR

Free running and parkour are related forms of performance art that involve the overcoming of physical and mental obstacles to get from point A to point B. ¶ Both were first practiced and later developed in urban environments in France beginning in the 1920's, and some draw parallels to eastern martial arts disciplines. Today they are practiced among young people across the globe. ¶ Both include running, climbing, swinging, vaulting, leaping and rolling. Parkour—derived from *parcours d'entraînement*, “training circuit”—focuses on speed and efficiency, whereas free runners focus on the artistry and esthetics of their moves, performing a physical exercise of self-expression and creativity.



Photojournalist and filmmaker **George Azar** ([george\\_azar@me.com](mailto:george_azar@me.com)) is the author of *Palestine: A Photographic Journey* (University of California, 1991) and director of the film “Gaza Fixer” (2007). Together, he and writer and filmmaker **Mariam Shahin** ([shahin\\_mariam@yahoo.com](mailto:shahin_mariam@yahoo.com)) authored and photographed *Palestine: A Guide* (Interlink, 2005). She directed the films “Muslim Berliners” (2007), “Looting the Holy Land” (2010), “Last Shepherds of the Valley” (2011) and, with George Azar, “Free Running Gaza” (2011). Their upcoming documentary is titled “Beirut Photographer.”



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See a video clip of free running in Gaza at [www.saudiaramcoworld.com](http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com).





# New Flavors

Written by Laura Kelley

## for the Oldest Recipes

Take a journey back in time more than 2700 years to a royal banquet in the palace at Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian Empire. As you arrive, the scent of lilies and roses fills the air. Musicians play harps and pipes, sing songs and recite poems. You snack on fresh pistachios and walnuts as you wait for the entrance of the king. The woman next to you stirs, and her red linen tunic crinkles slightly against her fine cotton shawl. Her gold earrings softly jingle as she moves.

With her, you discuss your admiration for King Ashurbanipal, a learned man and, as you see him, a benevolent ruler. He is a generous patron of artists, astronomers and mathematicians in his court. On military and diplomatic missions, he has directed that his envoys collect plants, seeds, animals or anything unusual from the foreign lands they pass through; when they return, their finds have been placed in palace gardens, zoos and rooms filled with curiosities.

He has rebuilt and restored temples and buildings weakened by war or the simple ravages of time. But his greatest achievement by far is the systematic gathering and cataloging of knowledge. The library is a royal archive, but it also contains treatises on medicine, science and divination, collections of folktales—and even some favorite recipes.

Today, a few cuneiform tablets are the principal source of Mesopotamian recipes: the Yale Babylonian recipe tablets, which predate Ashurbanipal's imaginary banquet by a little more than 1000 years. Tablet YBC 4644 has 25 recipes and two others, YBC 8958 and YBC 4648, contain 10 more. In addition to these sources, scholars generally acknowledge that there are two earlier recipes, one from Mari, Syria for a confection known as *mersu*, and the other probably from Uruk, also in Syria, for what has been interpreted as "court bouillon."

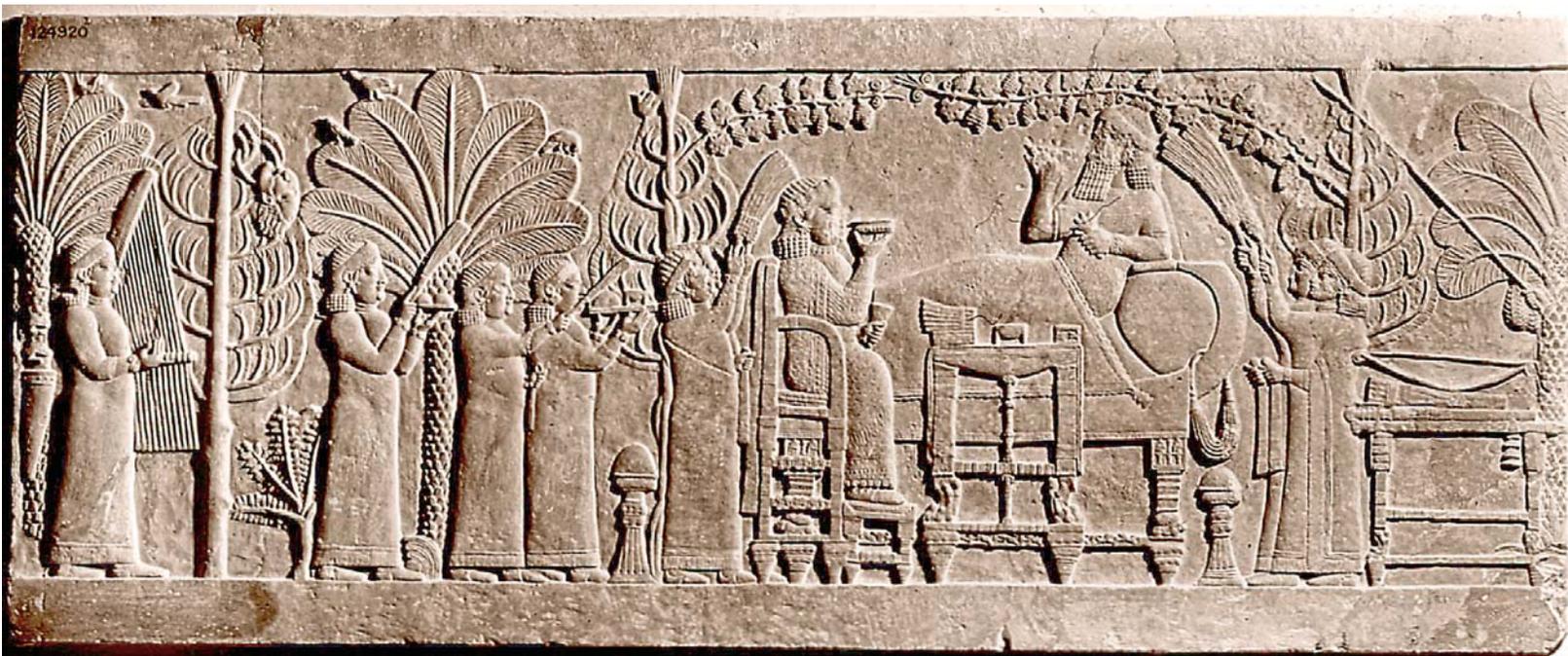
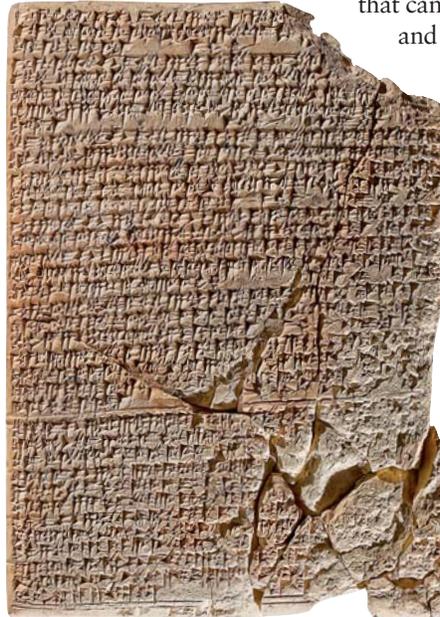
These ancient recipes are a fascinating challenge for modern cooks—not only because they are a window into the food culture of ancient Mesopotamia, but also because they are actually little more than lists of ingredients, usually with scant information on the amounts of ingredients to use, their form, or even how to prepare the dishes. Although difficult for some to navigate, the recipes allow for a great deal of creativity in using what is on hand or in reinterpreting dishes with favorite local and personal flavors. (In medieval Europe, recipes were typically written like this, and outside the industrialized world they still are.)

**The 25 recipes inscribed in cuneiform on both sides of the tablet known as YBC 4644, above, were already 1000 years old when this bas-relief, below, was carved to depict a banquet in the palace of Assyrian king Ashurbanipal. Opposite: Lamb and barley with mint.**

The Yale recipes were first translated by French historian Jean Bottéro and published in 1995 in *Textes Culinaires Mésopotamiens*. (Another book by Bottéro, *The Oldest Cuisine in the World*, was published in French in 2002, in English in 2004 and as a paperback in 2011.) In Bottéro's view, the dishes that can be discerned from the tablets are rich in meat and onions—particularly onions, which he calls the characteristic ingredient of the cuisine. He translated the recipes of YBC 4644 into 25 broths or porridges: 21 were meat- or fowl-based, and four were vegetable-based. All featured onions, garlic and leeks.

When I first read *Textes Culinaires Mésopotamiens*, I remember being disappointed that one of the greatest kingdoms on earth apparently had such dull food. Why, I wondered, when they had contact with civilizations all around western Asia, the Levant and North Africa, possibly even southern Asia, would they eat so many onions? Bottéro himself pronounced the food fit only for his worst enemies. My curiosity was piqued, and I started digging for answers.

Well-known sources, such as the Sumerian and Akkadian lexicon found on the Urra=Hubullu tablets, as well as Assyrian bas-relief wall panels, show a rich culinary culture. Fruits named or shown range from pomegranates and dates to apricots, apples and pears; vegetables include radishes, beets and lettuce. Sheep and goats were both milked and eaten for meat, while other meat came from cattle, bison and oxen as well as from wild game. Wild and domesticated fowl, fish and shellfish of many varieties were enjoyed, as were milk products ranging from butter and cheese to yogurt and sour cream. These sources depict bountiful harvests at home; vibrant foreign trade and the flow of people in and out of the empire brought additional ingredients and culinary knowledge.



My work on these recipes is ongoing. There are several requiring re-analysis, several still to be cooked (such as wild-fowl pies from tablet YBC 8958) and more to be discovered in offering texts. Here are two that worked well for me and that you may find easy to try.

### Hen with Herbs (*Yale Babylonian Collection 8958, Recipe 2*)

Ingredients from the tablet: pigeon, salt, water, fat, vinegar, semolina, leek, garlic, shallots, tulip bulb, yogurt or sour cream, and "greens." As with all Mesopotamian recipes, how these are put together, and in what quantities, is up to you. For this, I substitute Cornish game hen for pigeon.

2 Cornish game hens, cleaned and salted inside and out	½ yellow onion
4 c. water	1 leek, white and green parts, well cleaned
2 c. chicken stock	10-11 garlic cloves, peeled
1 c. pomegranate vinegar	½ c. lightly drained yogurt
3 Tbs. butter	3 handfuls of fresh mint leaves
¼ tsp. asafetida	1 handful of fresh sage
2 tsp. dried mint	Water to moisten herbs
2 Tbs. coriander seed	More pomegranate vinegar to rinse hens
1 tsp. cumin seeds	1-3 tsp. semolina to thicken sauce
1 large Sri Lankan cinnamon stick	
1 handful baby arugula, chopped	

Clean and dry fowl and salt liberally, inside and out. Set aside. Prepare water, stock and vinegar in a large stockpot or kettle large enough to hold the hens. Add butter, asafetida, mint and arugula, and heat over a high flame, stirring occasionally. When the water has come to a boil, add the hens and return to a boil. Reduce heat a bit and cook uncovered over medium heat for 5 minutes. Then reduce heat till liquid just bubbles. Cover and cook for 5 minutes.

In a food processor, pulse together the onion, leek, 6 to 7 cloves of garlic and lightly drained yogurt until it is a small dice or mince. Add it to the water and chickens, and continue to cook for another 5 to 10 minutes; do not overcook. Total cooking time for hens in the pot is 15 to 20 minutes. When done, remove birds from the pot and set aside until cool enough to handle.

Preheat broiler to high. While cooling the hens, take the stock you used to cook the hens and pour it into a clean saucepan. If you are using a cup or two of stock to make couscous, barley or some other grain, do so now and pour off about one-third to one-half of the stock that remains. Heat to a steady low boil, stirring constantly, and cook uncovered to reduce, stirring occasionally.



Pulse the mint and sage (or other herbs you choose) with the remaining garlic in the food processor a few times until nicely minced and add a teaspoon or so of water to moisten them. Divide hens in two, down the spine, by slicing with a large, sharp knife or cleaver. Pour pomegranate vinegar over the hens, inside and out, to wash away herbs from cooking and set aside.

Rub both sides of the hens with the mint and sage herb mixture until an even coating is achieved and set aside. Continue to cook stock until it starts to thicken. Add semolina to facilitate this process; stir until dissolved.

Place hens rib side down on a lightly sprayed baking sheet. Cook under the preheated broiler flame 4 to 5 minutes per side. Watch constantly and be careful not to burn the hens.

Turn baking sheet as necessary to ensure even cooking. When done, remove from heat and let rest 5 to 10 minutes while finishing the sauce.

If desired, strain the sauce. (I did not, preferring a more rustic presentation.) I served the dish in a shallow bowl, adding a layer of roasted barley and herb pilaf and sauce beneath the hen and a bit of sauce on the fowl.

### Roasted Barley and Herb Pilaf (*Yale Babylonian Collection 4644, Recipe 25*)

Ingredients from the tablet: water, fat, roasted barley, mix of chopped shallots, arugula, and coriander, semolina, blood, mashed leeks and garlic.

1 c. whole barley, cleaned	1 handful of baby arugula
2 c. water	2 tsp. semolina
1 c. prepared stock	2 tsp. blood (optional, if available)
2 tsp. of butter	1 leek, white and green parts, well cleaned
1 tsp. salt	4-5 garlic cloves, peeled
¼ tsp. asafetida	
1 tsp. ground coriander	
3 shallots, peeled	

Preheat broiler to the highest setting. Spread the cleaned barley on a baking sheet to form a single layer of grain. Place barley under broiler flame and leave for a few minutes until it starts to smoke and color. Stir lightly and turn pan if necessary

until most barley is tan in color. Be careful not to burn the grain. Properly roasted barley will taste nutty. When done, remove from flame and let cool.

Add water and prepared stock to a medium saucepan. You may season the stock any way you wish, or use the cooking stock from another recipe. (I used the stock from the hen recipe above.) Add butter, salt, asafetida and ground coriander, and continue to heat.

In a food processor, pulse shallots and arugula once or twice. Then add the semolina and blood, and pulse one or two more times. Add this mixture to the heating, water and stir. When just short of a boil, add the barley and stir well. Bring back to a boil. Then reduce heat, cover and cook over a medium-low flame until about three-quarters done—20 to 30 minutes.

As the barley is cooking, pulse leeks and garlic two to four times until minced but not mushy. Add this to the barley and stir once or twice—not too much or barley will be soggy. Partially re-cover saucepan and continue to cook, checking frequently. It should be done or nearly done within 10 minutes.



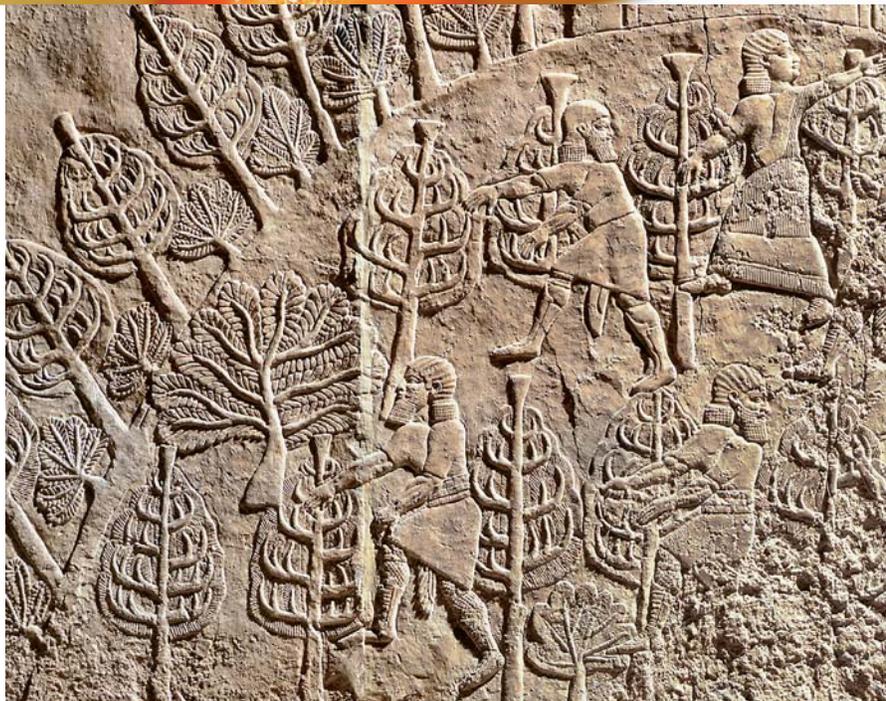
Above: **YBC 4644, Recipe 20**, can be successfully interpreted as a stew made with lamb, licorice, vegetables and juniper. Right: This bas-relief of a harvest scene hints at the energy and deliberate care associated with food harvesting.

Although a pioneer in the interpretation of Mesopotamian cuisine, Bottéro did not claim certainty in many of his culinary translations, and some ingredients he left untranslated altogether. This makes reconstruction of actual recipes extraordinarily challenging.

For example, one of the untranslated ingredients used in almost every recipe is *samidu*. Bottéro assumed that it was in the allium family, which includes onions, garlic, chives and leeks. Looking to modern languages, however, I found that in Hebrew and Syrian, *semida* means “fine meal” and, in Greek, *semidalis* is used to denote “the finest flour.” According to the University of Chicago’s Assyrian Dictionary, *semidu* is also defined as semolina. One ingredient identified; many more to go.

Similarly, several of the recipes feature an ingredient called *kasû*, which was interpreted as dodder, a parasitic weed of the genus *Cuscuta*. Puzzled by the use of a bitter weed in these dishes, I found an alternate meaning in a paper by Near Eastern scholar Piotr Steinkeller, who argued that *kasû* was probably wild licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), and that it was used by the Mesopotamians both in cooking and in making beer.

Also, *mersu* was interpreted as a cake because of the



similarity between that word and *marâsu*, which means “to mix,” and because *mersu* was described as comprised of nuts and dates. Yet there is nothing to imply that *mersu* was a cake, let alone any instructions on how to make it.

## The writers of the Mesopotamian recipes omitted quantities from their lists of ingredients, assuming sufficient skill on the part of the cooks.

Could mersu be something else? A look at modern western Asian and Levantine cuisines hints that mersu could easily have been a date-nut roll, or a beautiful date “candy,” as well. Both sweets are based on pounded dates and chopped nuts or other fruit or nut toppings.

Or, adding only some type of flour, mersu could resemble the modern Iranian dessert *ranginak*, which consists of dates stuffed with pistachios enclosed in a thin crust of dough. Or it could be like the modern Lebanese *ma'moul*, which has a pounded-date center covered in a layer of semolina that is then covered in a layer of chopped pistachios. Looking to non-European cuisines shows us the many possible, culturally plausible variations for mersu other than “cake.”

My current research, and kitchen experimentation by myself and others, is providing some revised interpretations of the Yale tablet recipes. In fact, I don't think that any of the recipes on YBC 4644 represent either broths or porridges; rather, they are

general guidelines for the flavors of dishes that range from stew-like *koreshes*, curries and soups to braised meats and dry pilafs. It all depends on the relative proportions of liquid and solid ingredients. As noted earlier, amounts of ingredients are almost always absent from these recipes, so the exact dish prepared is left up to the cook—who is assumed to have sufficient training to understand and use the recipes in this form.

For example, Recipe 19 on YBC 4644 is for *halazzu*, which is untranslated. I believe it to be a recipe for lamb or beef with carob: Halazzu was proposed as carob by several previous Assyriologists, and substituting “carob” for it in the recipe makes for a delicious stew or sauce. Recipe 20, called “salted broth,” I interpret as mutton with wild licorice and juniper; Recipe 23, for *kanasu*—another term left untranslated—I think is lamb with grain and mint. Lastly, I have found a delicious grain and herb pilaf in Recipe 25 by using the alternative definition of *laptu*, which Bottéro translated as “turnip” without mentioning that “barley” is an equally accepted translation among scholars.

In addition to new interpretations for recipes, I also found a rich source for other recipes in translations of texts about foods prepared as offerings for gods. According to Vanderbilt University scholar Jack M. Sasson, the intimate connection between the Mesopotamians and their deities makes it reasonable to assume a connection between foods offered to the gods and those enjoyed on home tables—or at least those served to the elite, for the elite also ate from the divine table, thus providing an added incentive to delight the palate. For instance, Marcel Sigrist's translations of offerings at the Mesopotamian city of Nippur give several more ingredients for mersu, such as figs, raisins, minced apples, minced garlic, oil or butter, soft or hard cheese, and wine must or syrup. This widens the field of variation for the dish and allows cooks to mix and match combinations of ingredients. Also from the same paper is a recipe for a bread called *ninda-gal* that lists sumac,

Left: Meat with licorice and citron is a recipe from Uruk, Syria, that dates to 400 BCE. Top: Lamb with carob is Recipe 19 on the YBC 4644 tablet.





saffron and onion seeds as ingredients. In addition to being new sources for recipes, these offerings may also provide insight into some of the foods eaten by Mesopotamian people.

Assisted by a small group of chefs and cooks from three continents, I recently explored these and other Mesopotamian recipes. I cooked a lamb and carob stew, lamb chops with carob sauce, hen with herbs (from YBC

8958), barley and herb pilaf and several

mersu variations. Others cooked lamb with grain and mint (substituting barley for couscous or wheatberries, the most likely forms of emmer grain used in the recipe), several variations of lamb with licorice and juniper, and pork tenderloin with licorice and citron.

Above: **A flute player from a stone bas-relief at the palace in Nineveh.**  
Lower: **Mersu, first interpreted as "cake," seems more likely to have been a type of date-and-nut ball.**

So how did these reinterpreted dishes taste? In a word—delicious. The flavors are unusual and complex, but enjoyable, tasting as if they could have been created by a skilled modern chef. Far from being suited to an enemy, these dishes are best shared with a dear friend.

In addition to experiencing new flavors in these Mesopotamian dishes, cooking some of the oldest recipes in the world transports you far, far back in time and opens a window on a wider world. From it, you might glimpse Babylon, Nippur or the palace banquet at Nineveh. 🌐



**Laura Kelley** (laurakelley@silkroadgourmet.com) has long enjoyed food, travel and cultures. She is author of *The Silk Road Gourmet, Vol. 1, Western and Southern Asia*, available at [www.silkroadgourmet.com](http://www.silkroadgourmet.com). Two further volumes are forthcoming.



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Mesopotamian food: M/A 88



**The Oldest Cuisine in the World.** Jean Bottéro. Teresa Lavendar Fagan, trans. 2011, University of Chicago Press, 978-0-226-06734-6, \$17 pb.





## 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

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—THE EDITORS

## Curriculum Alignments

To see alignments with us national standards for all articles in this issue, click "Curriculum Alignments" at [www.saudiaramco-world.com](http://www.saudiaramco-world.com).

**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

Usually in the Classroom Guide, we identify themes that draw the articles together. This time is different. Three articles in this issue lend themselves to different kinds of opportunities, and together they offer three case studies.

### "Little Syria, NY": Case Study 1 — Immigration

If you've studied even a little history, you probably already know that waves of immigrants arrived throughout North and South America over several centuries. And if you follow the news these days, you know that millions of people all over the world continue to immigrate—to move from one country to another, to build new lives someplace else. When you study immigration, there are some questions that you'll see over and over again. "Little Syria, NY" gives you a chance to address them.

#### Why do people immigrate?

The first big question to ask when you think about immigration is: Why? Why do people decide to uproot themselves, leave everything and everyone they know, and move to another country? Working in small groups (to make it easier to have a conversation), discuss the question. If you're an immigrant yourself, or your parents are, share with your group why you moved. If an earlier generation of your family immigrated, talk about why they moved or share what questions you might have about why they did. Draw on your knowledge of current and past immigration, and include "Little Syria, NY" in your discussion. Why did the more than 40,000 people the article describes decide to leave their homelands and come to the United States?

As you talk, write down the reasons you're hearing why people immigrate. Which of the reasons involved people leaving a place because living there was such a negative experience, such as fleeing religious persecution? Which of the reasons have more to do with the promise of what might await them in a new country, from practicalities such as jobs to such wishful thinking as finding streets paved with gold? People who study immigration call these reasons for moving "push factors" and "pull factors." Negative conditions in the land of origin push people to leave, while hopes of a better life pull people to the new country. Sort your group's list into push factors and pull factors. Where do most of the immigrants discussed in "Little Syria" belong? Do some people experience both?

#### What do immigrants find when they arrive?

Another question that inevitably comes up when thinking about immigration is what it

was like in the new country. As you might imagine, many immigrants find both positive and negative aspects to their new lives. Make a T chart with "Positives" heading one column and "Negatives" heading the other. Read through "Little Syria, NY" and find examples of the immigrants' experiences that belong in each column. Look at the finished T chart and imagine that you were one of the people who had immigrated to Little Syria. Think about what your experience might have been like. Make a few notes if you want; you'll have a chance to write about it shortly.

#### How much do immigrants maintain their home cultures and how much do they assimilate to new ones?

A third question in exploring immigration is the question of adapting to the new country. Do immigrants continue to speak their home language, learn the language of their new homeland or a combination of both? Do they dress like they did at home or like their new neighbors? Do they change a name that their new neighbors find difficult to pronounce or do they help their neighbors learn to pronounce it? Every immigrant has faced these questions, as have their children. In "Little Syria, NY," what evidence do you see that people maintained elements of their original cultures? What evidence do you see of their assimilating into American cultures?

Now put it all together. Imagine that you immigrated to New York's Little Syria in the late 19th century. Write a letter to a friend who is still ("back home") in Syria or Lebanon, explaining why you think your decision to come to New York was or was not a good one. Include in your letter all the elements you have discussed here: reasons for moving, experiences upon arriving, and questions of assimilating.

### "The Happy Ones?": Case Study 2 — Unintended Consequences

"The Happy Ones?" is about hamadryas baboons that live in Saudi Arabia. In particular, the article discusses how human beings—just by going about their business—have inadvertently changed nearly every aspect of the baboons' lives, from their social organization down to their very biology. That makes this article about hamadryas baboons a great example of unintended consequences.

#### What does the phrase "unintended consequences" mean?

Before you can begin to think about the unintended consequences of human behaviors on baboons, you need to be clear about what exactly the phrase *unintended consequences* means. Write a definition of *consequences*.

Compare it with the definition that the person sitting next to you has written. Are you both more or less in agreement? If so, do the same with the word *unintended*. When you're done, with your neighbor write a definition of *unintended consequences*, and have pairs share their definitions with the class. Then see if you can come up with examples of unintended consequences, either from your own life, or from a current situation you're aware of or from something you've learned about history. Have volunteers share their examples.

### What have people done that has affected the baboons of Saudi Arabia? What unintended consequences have their actions created?

Go through "The Happy Ones?" with two highlighters of different colors. With one color, mark the passages that describe what human beings have done that has affected the baboons. With the other color, mark the passages that describe what those effects have been—in other words, how the baboons have been affected. When you're done, make a cause-and-effect diagram that shows the human actions as the causes and their impact on the baboons as the effects. Then think about which effects were in fact intended and which ones were the unintended ones.

### Once an action has caused an unintended consequence, what, if anything, should people do?

Once actions have led to unintended consequences, what do you do? Would it be better to do nothing, figuring you'd already caused enough trouble? What if that just makes it worse? Or would it be better to try to correct or improve the situation somehow? (And what if that creates *new* unintended consequences?) Now that you've read about how humans have

affected the hamadryas baboons, what would *you* do? Would you intervene again or not? How? Working with your group, make lists of the benefits and drawbacks of taking action and of not taking action. When you step back and look at your lists, what decision do you come to? Have each group share its analysis of the situation.

Now turn your attention again to the article, which reports that the Saudi Arabian National Wildlife Research Center has already made one decision. It believes people must stop feeding the baboons and that the way to get them to stop is through "public awareness campaigns." What might such a campaign look like? Working on your own or with your group, create a piece to contribute to such a campaign. Your piece can take whatever form you think will be effective. Here are a few ideas: an audio or video public service announcement; a Web site that informs people about the ill effects of feeding baboons and persuades them to stop; a lesson for students in a classroom (you can use the Classroom Guide as your model!); a newspaper ad; a legislative proposal. These are just a few ideas to get you started. Share your final product with the class.

### "Free Running Gaza": Case Study 3 — Dignity in Confinement

If you have ever studied slavery, you probably know that, amid the terrible conditions in which enslaved people were forced to live, they sometimes found ways to maintain their families and retain cultural traditions. In other words, they found ways to hang onto their humanity and dignity in oppressive situations.

The third article, "Free Running Gaza," provides a case study in how people live in

confining circumstances. The article describes a place where 1.7 million people live in a tiny area with very limited access to the world beyond its borders. Yet, as you will see, the people profiled in the article have found ways to live with dignity.

Start with the idea of "obstacles." Read the article, and make a list of all the obstacles it identifies. Then think about what it must be like to live in the Gaza Strip. What would you do if you faced such obstacles every day? Either write your answer or discuss the question with a partner. Then go through the article and circle the parts that describe free running and what Mohammed Al-Jakhbeer and Abdullah Enshasi say that it means to them. How does free running relate to the obstacles they face? Does their way of making sense of their situation make sense to you? Write your thoughts about it in a journal entry as a way to help you think. Don't worry about turning it in or getting a grade. Here are a few thoughts to prompt you.

The obstacles that Al-Jakhbeer and Enshasi face are literal, physical obstacles. How does free running relate to those physical obstacles? How does it help overcome them? Although free running might not literally free them from obstacles, how *does* it free them? What kind of obstacles does free running dismantle? What value do you see in dismantling such obstacles?

Think about an obstacle that you have faced. It can be simple, such as taking a class in a subject you don't like and find difficult. How have you dealt with it? Consider what Al-Jakhbeer says about facing obstacles as a free runner: "We approach each obstacle in a different way. We improvise as we move. We look at our object, figure out ... how to overcome it and develop a strategy, then and there." He emphasizes the need for "agility, strength and flexibility." Try applying this approach to your own obstacle. What would that look like? How might it help?

## ANALYZING VISUAL IMAGES

Now that you've had a chance to work with three case studies, think about how to illustrate them. Start by looking closely at the images that accompany the articles. Then choose one from each article that best exemplifies your case study. Don't read the captions in the magazine. Instead, write your own. In each caption, describe how the image represents the theme you have studied: immigration, unintended consequences or dignity in confinement. Your captions can be up to a paragraph long, so don't be shy about what you include in yours.



**City of Gold:** *Tomb and Temple in Ancient Cyprus* explores the history and archeology of Polis Chrysochous, a town in the Republic of Cyprus that is the site of the ancient city of Marion and its successor city, Arsinoë. The exhibition features 110 objects lent by the Cypriot Department of Antiquities, the British Museum and the Musée du Louvre, including splendid gold jewelry and a rare marble kouros; it marks the conclusion of more than two decades of excavations at Polis by the Princeton Department of Art and Archaeology. Note the related exhibition, **Cyprus Between Byzantium and the West**, below. **Princeton [New Jersey] University Art Museum**, through January 20.

**A faint smile remains on this fragmentary head from a colossal male statue dating from the late sixth century BCE and now in the Museum of Marion–Arsinoë, near Paphos, Cyprus.**



Current **November**

**The Book of Kings.** Shirin Neshat presents a new video entitled “Overruled” and the photographic series “The Book of Kings.” “Overruled” depicts the trial of a poet accused of blasphemy by a judge and jury of patriots, similar to the 10th-century trial of Mansur Al-Hallaj. “The Book of Kings” features black-and-white portraits covered with calligraphic texts and drawings, divided into three groups representing the Masses, the Patriots and the Villains. Galerie Jérôme de Noirmont, **Paris**, through November 17.

**Liverpool Biennial:** *The Unexpected Guest* features works by more than 60 artists displayed throughout the city in Britain’s largest contemporary art festival. Participating Middle Eastern artists include Mona Hatoum, Nadia Kaabi-Linke, Akram Zaatari and Ahmet Öğüt; tours, talks, workshops and films are scheduled. Cunard Building, **Liverpool, UK**, through November 25.

**Shadow of the Sphinx:** *Ancient Egypt and Its Influence* explores the unparalleled impact on the modern western imagination of ancient Egyptian culture: its writing, its art, its religion and its funeral practices. The exhibition presents Egyptian artifacts—jewelry, coffins, portrait masks—together with such European and American objects as paintings, movie posters, porcelain, jewelry and furnishings, all inspired by real or imagined aspects of ancient Egypt. Munson Williams Proctor Arts Institute, **Utica, New York**, through November 25.

**Faces of the Middle East** is a collection of photos by Hermoine Macura that documents people from across the Middle East and examines the region’s common thread of humanity. The photos demonstrate the rich variety of cultures, ethnicities, religions and social groups that compose the Middle East and prove that the region is not in fact a monolithic culture. Macura strives for improved awareness and understanding of the Middle East, and for increased dialogue and appreciation among peoples. Busboys and Poets, **Washington, D.C.**, through November 27.

**The Sultan’s Garden:** *Lecture Series* complements the exhibition below, which continues through March 10. “In the Sultan’s Gardens: Ottoman Gardens and the Decorative Arts,” November 28; “In the Sultan’s Greenhouse: Modern-Day Horticultural Treasures,” December 13; “In the Sultan’s Studios: Recreating Ottoman Textiles,” January 17. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**

**Lasting Impressions:** *Abdulqader Al-Rais* includes both early works by the pioneering Emirati artist as well as his most recent production, which is multi-layered and complex, often drawing on the region’s landscape, heritage and architecture for inspiration. **Sharjah [UAE] Art Museum**, through November 30.

Current **December**

**Rostam 2: Return** is a series by Tehran-born artist Siamak Filizadeh, acquired by the museum in 2011, that relies on

playful consumer and pop-culture iconography. Filizadeh uses images derived from the *Shahnama (Book of Kings)*, a 50,000-couplet poem pivotal to Persian culture and dating back to the first century CE. In his retelling of the classic tale, Filizadeh bypasses its universalities in favor of more specific commentary. Through his skillful blending of anachronistic and contemporary details, he effectively transports the viewer from the mythical realm of Iran’s greatest champion, Rostam, to his own take on the kitsch consumerism and popular culture of present-day Tehran. **Los Angeles County Museum of Art**, through December 2.

**Games of Desire** is a photo-and-video installation that shows the life of aged Laotian women, living in a world hesitating between tradition and globalization, as they sing, court and fidget at weddings, ceremonies and other celebrations. Iranian artist Shirin Neshat explores the agency of women within and beyond society’s prescribed roles. Art Plural Gallery, **Singapore**, through December 15.

**Britain in Palestine** tells the story of what happened to Palestine and its people under the British Mandate, showing how and why Britain got involved there and the impact of British rule upon the country. The exhibition illustrates the experiences of Britons who lived in Palestine as colonial servants, Palestine Police and military servicemen. The reminiscences of these people and their families testify to the profound impression Palestine made on their lives, and to the dilemmas of ordinary people caught up in extraordinary circumstances, displaying photographs, personal testimonies, original documents and poignant personal belongings that have survived from the time. Britain’s authority to rule was derived from a League of Nations mandate, written by the British, which included the controversial Balfour Declaration of 1917 proffering British support for a “Jewish National Home” in Palestine. The ambiguities and contradictions of the mandate fostered antagonism and resentment between Arabs and Jews in Palestine, which finally erupted into a full blown conflict

when the British left in May 1948. The results of this conflict are still with us today. Brunei Gallery, SOAS, **London**, through December 15.

**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 and fighting and dying in every US war since the Revolution. The exhibition highlights service in the armed forces, the diplomatic service and the Peace Corps. Personal narratives tell of Arab-American men and women of different national and religious backgrounds. **Jacksonville, Florida** Public Library, through December 15.

**Zarina:** *Paper Like Skin*, the first retrospective of the Indian-born American artist Zarina (Zarina Hashmi), features some 60 works dating from 1961 to the present. Paper is central to Zarina’s practice, both as a surface to print on and as a material with its own properties and history. Works in the exhibition include woodcuts as well as three-dimensional casts in paper pulp. Zarina’s vocabulary is minimal yet rich in associations with her life and the themes of displacement and exile. The concept of home—whether personal, geographic, national, spiritual or familial—resonates throughout. Hammer Gallery, **UCLA, Los Angeles**, through December 20.

**Mediterranean Dramaturgies** includes four of Turkish artist Kutluğ Ataman’s latest video installations, which revisit the recent history of Mesopotamia. His interest in representation of the individual and the group widens to examine the way a nation forms and stages its own narrative. **Sperone Westwater, New York**, through December 22.

**Khalil Saleeby 1870–1928:** *A Founder of Modern Art in Lebanon* is the first public exhibition of work by the renowned Lebanese artist, drawn from an important private collection of more than 60 paintings by Lebanese modernists that was donated to AUB earlier this year. Saleeby is considered to

be a pioneer in Lebanese impressionist and modernist painting. He trained in Europe under John Singer Sargent before returning to Lebanon to teach; many of his students, such as Omar Onsi and Saliba Douaihi, became renowned names in Arab modernist painting. American University of Beirut Art Gallery, through December 31.

#### Current **January**

**Hassan Khan** features a comprehensive display of works by the Egyptian artist, musician and writer, bringing together works dating from the 1990's to the present day, including early videos and installations not seen before outside Egypt, as well as "Jewel" and "Muslimgauze R.I.P.," both from 2010. SALT, **Beyoğlu, Istanbul**, through January 6.

**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. Pacific Science Center, **Seattle**, through January 6.

**Adel Abdessemed: I Am Innocent** shows 25 of the Algerian-born artist's works created since 1990, including "Telle mère tel fils" (three aircraft fuselages wound together), "Usine," a video showing animals fighting in a pit, and "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?," assembled of some 500 stuffed animals. The works show the radicalism of the violence that inhabits the world, says the exhibition's curator; the artist is quoted as saying, "I don't know anything in life that is not violent. Everything is violent except my soul." Centre Pompidou, **Paris**, through January 7.

**Arab Seasons** by Bokja puts on display furniture and textiles by the Lebanese designers Hoda Baroudi and Maria Hibri, co-founders of the firm Bokja—a Turkic word for the exquisitely worked fabric that a bride's dowry is wrapped in. The firm's reputation rests on their attention to detail and history, their new and vintage shapes and their beautiful textiles. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, through January 13.

**Beauty and Belief: Crossing Bridges With the Arts of Islamic Culture** aims to bridge differences and inspire insight through beauty, and address the question, "What makes Islamic art Islamic?" Tunisia-born project director Sabiha Al Khemir has assembled over 250 works from 40 lenders in the US and nine countries in Europe and the Middle East, including unique manuscripts from the Royal Library in Morocco. The exhibition represents a journey through Islamic culture from the seventh century onward, combining historical and geographic

background with successive sections of calligraphy, figurative imagery and pattern, but it makes a point of touching on the present day, also including works by contemporary artists. **Indianapolis [Indiana]** Museum of Art, through January 13; **Newark [New Jersey]** Museum, February 13 through May 19, 2013; **Portland [Oregon]** Art Museum, June 15 through September 8, 2013.

**Gaze: The Changing Face of Portrait Photography** sheds light on the 160 years of portrait photography through the works of 54 photographers, tracing the social and artistic transformation that has taken place from the emergence of photography to the present. The gaze of the portrait's subject reaches not only the lens of the camera but the future viewer as well. The sitter poses consciously to leave a message to the future from his/her own time. Boundless possibilities for communication and meaning arise from the relationship the subject establishes with future viewers through the photograph. At the point where gazes intersect, the portrait stands at the very center of a network established between different times and spaces; each gaze opens the door for another existence. **Istanbul Modern**, through January 20.

**Diadem and Dagger: Jewish Silversmiths of Yemen** celebrates Yemeni Jewish silverwork dating from the 18th and the 19th centuries, highlighting the ways Jews both shared and contributed to Islamic art and culture while maintaining their Jewish identity. From the revelation of Islam in the seventh century, Jewish and Muslim communities coexisted in Yemen, although few Jews live there today. Yemeni Jewish craftsmen created superb silver pieces characterized by elaborate granulation and filigree for Muslim and Jewish clients: headpieces, bracelets, necklaces and belt buckles as well as *khanjars* (daggers) for the Muslim elite. Many of the 25 objects on display are dated and bear the name of both the Jewish silversmith and the Muslim ruler of the time. Walters Art Museum, **Baltimore**, through January 21.

**Fair Play: Heroes, Athletes and Princes in Islamic Art** highlights sport in paintings and objects from the Islamic world, from the 13th to the 21st century. Football is today the most popular sport in Islamic countries. In the medieval period, however, prominent sporting activities at Islamic courts from Spain to the Indian subcontinent included polo, horse racing, hunting and falconry. Equestrian sports were enjoyed by men and women both as exercise and royal entertainment. They also featured in military training, reaching notable high points in Spain and Egypt between 1300 and 1500. Wrestling, a sport rooted in Persian tradition, was also practiced in medieval times and today is the national sport of Iran and is similarly popular in Turkey. British Museum, **London**, through January 27.

**Central Nigeria Unmasked: Arts of the Benue River Valley** is the first major international exhibition to present a comprehensive view of the arts produced in the Benue River Valley, source of some of the most abstract, dramatic and inventive sculpture in sub-Saharan

Africa. Yet compared to the majority populations living in northern and southern Nigeria, the diverse groups flanking the 650-mile-long river—and their fascinating arts—are far less known and studied. 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 demonstrates how the history of central Nigeria can be "unmasked" through the dynamic interrelationships of its peoples and their arts. Musée du Quai Branly, **Paris**, through January 27.

**Cyprus Between Byzantium and the West** features more than 180 objects, including illuminated manuscripts, icons, sculpture, jewelry, metalwork and ceramics that together shed light on the history and cultures of an island athwart major Mediterranean trade routes, from the fourth century when it became part of the Byzantine Empire to 1570 when the Ottomans conquered it. Occupied in addition by Persian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman overlords at different times, serving as a meeting place of cultures and religions, Cyprus became a rich and unique cultural palimpsest. Among the exhibits are several silver "David plates" depicting scenes from the life of the biblical king, and a 13th-century fresco from the Monastery of Kykkos on Cyprus. Note the related exhibition **City of Gold**, above. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, through January 28.

#### Current **February**

**Maharaja: The Splendor of India's Royal Courts** displays nearly 200 treasures spanning 250 years to trace the shift in political control of India from the early 1700's, as the power of the Mughal Empire waned, through the rise of strong regional powers and colonization by Great Britain, to the emergence of the modern independent nation in 1947. Through paintings, costumes, jewelry, weapons and a golden throne—all objects that the maharajas used, commissioned, collected and loved, and through which they realized their roles as military and political ruler, religious leader and cultural patron—the exhibition explores the concept of kingship in India, and illuminates the world of the maharajas and their extraordinarily rich culture. Field Museum, **Chicago**, through February 3.

**Shadow Sites: Recent Work by Jananne Al-Ani** explores enduring representations of the Middle Eastern landscape. "Shadow Sites II," her most recent video installation, is inspired by both archival photographs and contemporary news reports, and is exhibited alongside a selection of extraordinary original prints by renowned archeologist Ernst Herzfeld (1879–1948). Separated by nearly a century, these works pose fascinating questions about the impact of photography on views of the Middle East. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through February 10.

**Buddhism Along the Silk Road** illuminates a remarkable moment of artistic exchange, drawing together objects from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the western reaches of Central Asia—regions connected in the sixth century

through trade, military conquest and the diffusion of Buddhism. At the root of this transnational connection is the empire established at the end of the fifth century by the Huns, which extended from Afghanistan to the northern plains of India. Over the next century, trade routes connecting India to the western reaches of the Central Asian Silk Road continued to link these distant communities, facilitating ideological exchange. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through February 10.

**Lalla Essaydi: Revisions** brings together selections from the artist's photographic series, her rarely exhibited paintings and a multimedia installation. Moroccan-born, Essaydi now lives in the United States and believes that her work, with its intimate portrayal of Moroccan women, would not have been possible without distance from her homeland. While each work and genre speaks volumes, from the ensemble—subversive and challenging, yet refined—emerges Essaydi's critical reflection on her experience as a liberal Moroccan, Arab, African and Muslim woman living across cultures. National Museum of African Art, **Washington, D.C.**, through February 23.

#### Current **March**

**The Sultan's Garden: The Blossoming of Ottoman Art** chronicles how stylized tulips, carnations, hyacinths, honeysuckle, roses and rosebuds came to embellish nearly all media produced by the Ottoman court beginning in the mid-16th century. These instantly recognizable elements became the brand of an empire that spanned seven centuries and, at its height, three continents, and was synonymous with its power. Incredibly, this revolution in style can be traced to one man, Kara Memi, working in the royal design workshop of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566). His nature-inspired stylized tulips, carnations, hyacinths, honeysuckles, roses and rosebuds immediately gained popularity across a broad range of media, carrying connotations of Ottoman court patronage, luxury and high taste. The floral style continues to embody Turkish culture: Turkey's tourism bureau today markets the nation with a tulip logo. The exhibition unveils the story of this artist's influence and traces the continuing impact of Ottoman floral style through the textile arts—some of the most luxurious and technically complex productions of the Empire. Related lectures: "In the Sultan's Gardens: Ottoman Gardens and the Decorative Arts," November 28; "In the Sultan's Greenhouse: Modern-Day Horticultural Treasures," December 13; "In the Sultan's Studios: Recreating Ottoman Textiles," January 17. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through March 10.

**Light and Shadows: The Story of Iranian Jews** explores the rich and complex history of one of the world's oldest Jewish communities, displaying archeological artifacts, illuminated manuscripts, musical instruments, paintings, photographs, videos and historical documents that showcase a complex story and the beauty of the community's traditions. The exhibition concludes with Hasan Sarbakhshian's photographs of Jews remaining in Iran today. Fowler Museum at UCLA, **Los Angeles**, through March 10.

**Petra:** *Splendor in the Desert* marks the bicentenary of the rediscovery of the long-forgotten “rose-red” Nabataean city by the Swiss adventurer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, alias Shaykh Ibrahim. Now a UNESCO World Heritage site in the Jordanian desert, Petra was the capital of a thriving trading and commercial civilization 2000 years ago, a city built in hidden sandstone canyons whose remarkable architecture testifies to close contacts with Greek and Roman civilizations, and whose highly sophisticated water storage and management systems in one of the world’s driest regions is evidence of a high degree of engineering skill and ingenuity. The exhibition presents the results of recent archeological excavations at Petra along with 150 artifacts lent by Jordanian museums, virtual reconstructions and models that illuminate the Nabataeans’ origins, their history and the writing system. **Antikenmuseum Basel, Switzerland**, through March 13.

#### Current April

**The Antikythera Shipwreck:** *The Ship, the Treasures, the Mechanism* presents the objects recovered in 1900–1901 and 1976 from the legendary shipwreck off the islet of Antikythera, the focus of the first major underwater archeological expedition. The wreck dates from 60 to 50 BCE, though items in its cargo go back to the fourth century BCE. The luxury glassware, the statue of Hermes and other items shed light on trade in the eastern Mediterranean and the taste of the rising Roman elite near the end of the Hellenistic Era and Rome’s democratic period. Most exciting, however, is the so-called Antikythera Mechanism, a device that comprised at least 30 gearwheels as well as dials, scales, axles and pointers. It is the earliest preserved portable astronomical calculator, and displayed the positions of the Sun, the Moon and most probably the five planets known in antiquity. Used to predict solar and lunar eclipses, it showed an accurate multi-year calendar and displayed the dates of the recurring Pan-Hellenic games that took place at Nemea, at Isthmia, at Delphi, at Dodona and at Olympia. National Archaeological Museum, **Athens**, through April 28.

#### Current May and Later

**Darling Hair:** *Frivolity and Tropics* uses the hairdo and hair undone to explore intimacy, social signaling and self-definition. Hair is socially significant in almost every culture, whether hidden or displayed, often linked with intimacy, decency and sexuality,

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**Roads of Arabia:** *Archaeology and History of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.* An eye-opening look at the largely unknown ancient past of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, this exhibition draws on recently discovered archeological material never before seen in the United States. **Roads of Arabia** features objects

excavated from several sites throughout the Arabian Peninsula, tracing the impact of ancient trade routes and pilgrimage roads stretching from Yemen in the south to Iraq, Syria and Mediterranean cultures in the north. Elegant alabaster bowls and fragile glassware, heavy gold earrings and Hellenistic bronze statues testify to a lively mercantile and cultural interchange among distant civilizations. 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. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, November 17 through February 24.

**This above-life-size red sandstone statue of a man, dating from the fourth to third century BCE, was found at Al-’Ula, Saudi Arabia. Now in the Department of Archaeology Museum at the University of Riyadh, it is thought to represent a king of Lihyan. Traces of paint remain on the statue, which shows signs of Egyptian stylistic influence.**

sometimes symbolizing masculine strength, sometimes femininity. Highly constructed, shaved off, colored, covered with ashes or clay, hair can have ceremonial functions and can express individuality or group adherence. The exhibition begins with rivalry among blond, dark or red hair and among straight, curly and frizzy, drawing on a wide range of classical paintings, sculptures and photographs; it continues through the notion of hair as a human raw material, and closes with hair as a symbol of loss, of the passing of time and of illness and death. Musée du Quai Branly, **Paris**, through July 14.

#### Coming November

**Art Istanbul** is dedicated to contemporary Turkish cultures. The first iteration of this new art fair collaborates with commercial galleries, auction houses and public museums. **Istanbul**, November 19–25.

**Love and Devotion:** *From Persia and Beyond* celebrates the beauty of Persian manuscripts and the stories of human and divine love they tell, featuring more than 60 rare Persian, Mughal Indian and Ottoman Turkish illustrated manuscripts from the 13th to the 18th century, as well as related editions of European literature, travel books and maps. These works come from one of

the richest periods in the history of the book and shed light on the artistic and literary culture of Persia, showcasing classic Persian tales and revealing the extent to which Persian language and culture influenced neighboring empires, as well as parallels in the work of European writers dating back to Shakespeare, Chaucer and Dante. Bodleian Libraries, **Oxford [uk]**, November 29 through April 28.

#### Coming December

**Little Syria, New York:** *An Immigrant Community’s Life and Legacy* documents the rich history of New York’s first Arab–American community. From the late 19th century through the mid-20th century, an area of Manhattan’s Lower West Side was the home to a vibrant and productive community of Arab–Americans. Dubbed the “heart of New York’s Arab world” by *The New York Times*, the Washington Street neighborhood was where many participants in the first wave of Arab immigration to the United States got their start. Their experiences, all but lost to living memory, parallel those of other immigrant groups of the Great Migration period. Arab American National Museum, **Dearborn, Michigan**, December 7.

**Amarna 2012:** *100 Years of Nefertiti*, an extensive special exhibition on the

Amarna period, allows Nefertiti’s time to be understood within its cultural-historical context. All aspects of this fascinating period are illuminated and explained—not only the period’s theology and art, but also everyday life in the city, ancient Akhetaton. Founded by the monotheist Pharaoh Akhenaton (Amenhotep IV) to establish a new capital with places of worship for his own “religion of light,” the city was built within three years and populated in the year 1343 BCE. At the beginning of the 20th century, extremely successful excavations took place there under the direction of Ludwig Borchardt, and the finds were shared between Cairo and Berlin. The exhibition illuminates the context of the discovery of the bust of Nefertiti in the workshop of the Egyptian sculptor Thutmose, along with numerous related objects, including even the pigments and tools used by the sculptors. Along with the exhibition’s main focus on archeology, it also critically examines the history of the depiction of the bust of Nefertiti both as an archeological object and as a widely marketed ideal of beauty. Visitors can experience the Amarna period as a social, cultural-historical and religious phenomenon. Neues Museum, **Berlin**, December 7 through April 13.

**Orientalist Paintings** will be auctioned by Artcurial, **Paris**, December 11.

Coming **January**  
**Disappearing Heritage of Sudan, 1820–1956:** *Photographic and Film Exploration in Sudan* documents the remnants of the colonial experience in Sudan from the Ottoman, Egyptian and British periods. This photographic and video project by Frederique Cifuentes explores the mechanics of empire, highlighting colonial architecture, design and construction—official buildings, private residences, cinema houses, railways, irrigation canals and bridges—and the impact they had on Sudanese society before and after independence in 1956. It also helps us understand the ways in which people appropriated and used the buildings after the end of the colonial period. Ori-ental Museum, **Durham [uk]** University, January 17 through April 30; University of **Khartoum, Sudan**, June through December 2013.

Coming **February**  
**Evening Ragas** gathers more than 60 photographic portraits, interiors and landscapes by British photographer Derry Moore that form an inspiring portrait of pre-modern India. Tasveer Galleries, **Delhi**, February 22 through March 5.

Coming **March**  
**Cairo to Constantinople:** *Early Photographs of the Middle East*. In 1862, the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) was sent on a four-month educational tour of the Middle East, accompanied by the British photographer Francis Bedford. This exhibition documents his journey through the work of Bedford, the first photographer to travel on a royal tour. It explores the cultural and political significance Victorian Britain attached to the region, which was then as complex and contested as it remains today. The tour took the Prince to Egypt, Palestine and the Holy Land, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Greece. He met rulers, politicians and other notable figures, and traveled in part on horseback, camping in tents. On the royal party's return to England, Francis Bedford's work was displayed in what was described as "the most important photographic exhibition that has hitherto been placed before the public." Queen's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse, **Edinburgh**, March 8 through July 21.

**Life and Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum.** The two cities on the Bay of Naples, in southern Italy, were buried in just 24 hours by a catastrophic volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 BCE. This event ended the life of the cities but also preserved them until their rediscovery by archeologists nearly 1700 years later. Herculaneum was a small seaside town, Pompeii the industrial hub of the region. Work continues at both sites, and recently uncovered artifacts include such treasures as finely sculpted marble reliefs and intricately carved ivory panels. The exhibition gives visitors a taste of the cities' daily life, from the commerce of the bustling street to the domesticity of the family home, and explores the lives of individuals in Roman society—businessmen, powerful women, freed slaves and children. Thus a beautiful wall painting from Pompeii shows the baker Terentius Neos and his wife holding writing materials to show they are literate and cultured and posed to suggest they are equal

partners. Other evocative items include six pieces of carbonized wooden furniture, among them a linen chest and a baby's crib that still rocks on its curved runners. British Museum, **London**, March 28 through September 29.

Coming **April**  
**Birth of a Museum** displays recent acquisitions intended for display at the forthcoming Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum on Saadiyat Island, ranging from antiquities to paintings to historic photographs, including the oldest photograph known of a veiled woman, a daguerreotype by Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, April.

**PERMANENT / INDEFINITE**  
**Greenbox Museum of Contemporary Art From Saudi Arabia** is a small private collection exhibiting works by artists living and working in Saudi Arabia, including Ahmed Mater, Abdunasser Gharem, Maha Malluh, Reem Al Faisal, Lulwah Al-Homoud and Ayman Yossri Dayban. Open Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, Sunday afternoons and by appointment. Admission €5. Phone 420-92-69 before visiting. Korte Leidse-dwarsstraat 12, **Amsterdam**.

**Feast Your Eyes: A Taste for Luxury in Ancient Iran** displays luxury metalwork dating from the first millennium BCE, beginning with the rule of the Achaemenid kings (550–330 BCE), to the early Islamic period, exploring the meaning behind these objects' overarching artistic and technical characteristics. Highly sophisticated Iranian metalwork, especially in gold and silver, was created in an area extending

from the Mediterranean to present-day Afghanistan. Favored with an abundance of natural resources, the region became known for works ranging in shape from deep bowls and footed plates to elaborate drinking vessels ending in animal forms, largely associated with court ceremonies and rituals. Others objects, decorated with such royal imagery as hunting or enthronement scenes, were probably intended as gifts to foreign and local dignitaries. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**

**The New Islamic Art Galleries** of the Louvre provide a permanent home for the museum's renowned collection of Islamic art, considered the greatest outside the Islamic world. Over 2500 objects, many never on public display before, are shown in rooms totaling 3000 square meters (32,000 sq ft). The galleries present the entire cultural breadth of the Islamic world, from

Spain to India, spanning the seventh to the 19th centuries; their \$127-million renovation was financed by the French state, supplemented by donations from a Saudi prince, the King of Morocco, the Emir of Kuwait and the Sultan of Oman. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, from September 22.

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.

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