The Future of Alexandria Seminar and Exhibition

As part of its mission to promote the urban development of Alexandria and encourage exchange with Mediterranean countries, Alex-Med organized a series of events in March 2008 on the occasion of the visit of Dr Mona Serageldin, the Vice President of the Institute for International Urban Development and adjunct professor of Urban Planning at Harvard University, with an accompanying delegation of high ranking administrators, urban planners and developers from Syria.

Dr Mona Serageldin and the delegation first met the Governor of Alexandria, General Adel Labib, at the Governorate on 26 March 2008, where they were introduced to the development plans and infrastructure projects being undertaken in Alexandria. The delegation was then taken on a tour of architectural Alexandria by Dr Mohamed Awad, architect, historian and director of Alex-Med, who took them along Avenue Fouad I and pointed out the renovation of cultural sites such as the Creativity Center (formerly the Mohamed Ali Club) and Sayed Darwish Theater (formerly Mohamed Ali Theater and now the Alexandria Opera House). They also visited Salah Salem Street (formerly Rue Cherif) and Manasheh Square, as well as the newly renovated Greek Patriarchate.

Later the same day, a seminar and exhibition entitled The Future of Alexandria were held at the Bibliotheca Alexandria’s conference center. These were also attended by the governor of Alexandria, General Adel Labib, Dr Ismail Serageldin, officials from the Municipality, decision makers, specialists in urban planning and architecture, university professors, representatives from civil society, and members of the architecture committee of the Supreme Council of Culture, as well as university students.

Following the inauguration speeches by Dr Ismail Serageldin and General Adel Labib, Dr Mohamed Awad presented the work undertaken by Alex-Med in conserving and developing the city. This was followed by presentations of future urban development projects such as the New Alexandria project: a massive new urban expansion residential mixed-use project to the west of the city presented by Major Ahmed Ali, Dr Abdelmohsen Barrada, Dr Abdallah Abdelaziz, Dr Moustafa Gabr and Dr Yousry Azzam. Other development projects presented included the New Borg El Arab Airport, and redevelopment projects for the port of Alexandria presented by General Saeed Khalaf and General Tawfiq Abou Gendeyrah respectively. Finally, Dr Jean-Yves Empereur highlighted the latest archeological excavations in the city and their contribution to its overall urban development. During the ensuing discussion, questions were also raised about the future of Lake Mariout. The seminar was accompanied by an exhibition of the development projects in addition to Alex-Med’s work in the field.

On the following morning the delegation visited the Villa Antoniadis, where Dr Mohamed Awad presented the project for the renovation of the villa and gardens, which will house the Alex-Med Center as well as museums, ateliers and a guest house. Finally, the delegation visited the port of Alexandria to see the development project being undertaken there.
Graduate Degrees in Hellenistic Studies

On 21 March 2008, the first meeting of the Board of Directors of the Alexandria Center for Hellenistic Studies was held in Athens. This center, the youngest in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, was created in collaboration with the University of Alexandria, and with the Onassis Foundation and the Vardinoyannis Foundation in Greece.

Since its founding by Alexander the Great in 331 BCE, and for a period of over 600 years, Alexandria was the cultural capital of the world, especially during the Ptolemaic period. The Hellenistic period—specifically in Alexandria but also throughout the Mediterranean—witnessed many achievements in all fields of knowledge that have greatly contributed to man’s thought and the progress of civilization.

Despite its importance, however, few academic degrees are granted in the field of Hellenistic studies. Departments are generally specialized in the Graeco-Roman period, with the Hellenistic period forming part of the studies, rather than being a specialization in its own right.

The Alexandria Center for Hellenistic Studies was therefore created to fill this gap and focus specifically on this rich period and its immense contribution to human knowledge. Its establishment in Alexandria, and at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, is therefore most appropriate. The Center will draw scholars from around the world who are keen to obtain accredited diplomas, Masters and Doctorates in Hellenistic studies in particular, from the departments of:

- History
- Literature
- Art, Archeology and Architecture
- Philosophy and Science

The official inauguration of the Alexandria Center for Hellenistic Studies is on the 27 November 2008. Courses will begin on 19 January 2009.

Website: http://www.bibalex.org/HellenisticStudies
Email: Hellenistic.studies@bibalex.org

Buddhist Monks’ search Alexandria for the lost “Indian connection”

As everyone knows, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina receives visitors daily who have come from the four corners of the globe. Some are tourists passing by briefly on their travels through Egypt, some are scholars or scientists attending conferences and seminars, whilst yet others stay for longer periods of research and study. On 21 February 2008 however, a small group of a different kind came to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina on a somewhat more unusual mission. Noticeable for their long, flowing saffron robes, a small group of Buddhist monks had traveled all the way from the Sunnataram Forest Monastery at Bundanoon in New South Wales, Australia. Their mission? To hunt for traces of an Indian presence in ancient Alexandria...

Ancient travelers such as Strabo have born witness to the cosmopolitan atmosphere which reigned in the city two thousand years ago, as people came from far and wide to live, work or study there. In his Life and Fate of the Ancient Library of Alexandria, Mostata El Abbadi states, “there is evidence of there having been contacts with countries as far away as India, such as the exchange of embassies between King Asoka and Philidelphius”. After his conversion to Buddhism, King Asoka is known to make Buddhism a world religion which all nations would adopt. This exchange of embassies between Asoka and Ptolemy Philadelphus meant that Buddhist writings were available in the ancient Library of Alexandria. Professor Abbadi continues, “Not only would Buddhist monks with their austere simplicity be seen in the streets of third-century-BC Alexandria but we are also told that in a royal procession of pomp and circumstance around 270 BC, Alexandrians could view ‘Indian women, Indian dogs and twenty-six pure white Indian cattle’.”

In their present-day quest to find this long lost Indian connection, the group of monks including the abbot of the Sunnataram Forest Monastery, Phra Mana Vithayrambo, visited the Bibliotheca Alexandrina where they met with Sahar Hamouda, deputy director of the Alexandria and Mediterranean Research Center. They also met with archeologist Jean-Yves Empereur, director and founder of the Centre d’Études Alexandrines, but unfortunately neither had come across any material traces of a long lost Indian presence in Alexandria.

2. ibid. p.96.
Fantastic Discoveries: The Tomb of Alexander the Great

Harry E. Tzalas

The mythical, or the fantastic, as an attempt to interpret the remains of the human past have preceded archeology, which, as a scientific discipline, is less than two centuries old. Ignorance, coupled with fertility of mind, has often brought confusion to the uninitiated general public, various ruins being arbitrarily connected to legendary palaces of mythical kings and queens. This tendency, understandable for the "Dark Ages", when knowledge was the prerogative of a few, continued nonetheless into the 19th, 20th and, now, 21st centuries. Tellers of fantastic discoveries are no longer ignorant peasants or illiterate burghers. The new breed is made up of superficially educated persons who have some basic knowledge, who can and often do read history profusely. They tend to interpret arbitrarily the remains of the past. Moved by exaggerated ambition, and because of their lack of scholarly background, they propose naïve interpretations and irresponsible theories formulated in an unscientific manner. Often they resort to lies and hoaxes in their frenzy to have their cause prevail. These lovers of the past and amateur researchers are found at all levels of society.

Alexandria is no stranger to invented discoveries and fanciful interpretations of its past. The Column of Diodotus was known for centuries as "Pompey's Pillar" because, ignorance being prevalent, it was widely believed that the severed head of Caesar's rival had been placed at its top. Until the end of the 18th century, part of the northern fortifications of the city walls was called the Palace of St. Catherine's father: a modest marble pillar in the Church of St. Saba was decreed to have served as the block on which Catherine was beheaded, while an old pupil in the Coptic church of St. Mark was revered as having been used for preaching by the Evangelist himself.

It is however on the alleged discoveries of the tomb of the Great Maceotian, the founder of Alexandria, that we will focus our attention here and, more specifically, on the three most publicized and well-documented stories which have stirred the imagination for the last hundred and fifty years or so. The dates are different, the persons concerned have different occupations and the sites of research vary; but the pattern followed by each of the instigators is the same. An interpreter employed by the Consulate General of Russia in Alexandria in the mid-19th century, an Alexandrian waiter in the mid-20th century, and an archeologist at the end of that same century all share the same belief, with the same insistence and with the same lack of any scientific basis. All three are Greek and each initially believes to be the 'elected one' who will find the 'lost tomb'. As time passes and although nothing substantiates it, the belief becomes certitude. Authorities are persuaded to grant permits for excavations, but the visionary fails to prove his or her case and consequently further authorizations are refused. In despair the searcher claims to be the victim of a plot and is appalled that the authenticity of his or her discovery is questioned. As these cases do not quite fall in the field of archeology, knowledgeable scholars react either with silence or ironic negations, and the confusion remains in the mind of everyday people.

Three Typical Nonsensical Cases

Let me here briefly summarize each of the three fanciful tales related to the supposed discovery of the tomb of Alexander the Great.

1. The Case of Amvrosios Skilitsis

We know practically nothing of this person residing in Alexandria during the mid-19th century and who was attached to the Consulate General of Russia as an interpreter. It is only through the writings of Max de Zoghieb, an Alexandrian scholar, that we know of Skilitsis' claim of having gone down into the vault beneath the Mosque of Nabi Daniel in 1850 whilst escorting some European travelers. He "descended into a narrow, dark subterranean passage and reached a worm-eaten wooden door. Looking through the cracks of the planks he saw a mumified body, head slightly raised, lying in a crystal coffin. On the head, there was a golden diadem. Around were scattered papyri, scrolls and books. He tried to remain longer in the vault, but he was pulled away by one of the [keepers of the mosque] and, notwithstanding his repeated attempts to return, was forbidden all further access to the area of the crypt".

This tantalizing tale conlates details from Strabo (the crystal sarcophagus), Suetonius (the diadem left by Augustus), and Dion Cassius (the secret books gathered there by Septimius Severus). Skilitsis may well have visited the crypt of that mosque, but the fact that he mentions papyri and books is in itself proof that he is fabricating; such material would have certainly perished given the damp climate of Alexandria.

De Zoghieb says that Skilitsis did write a letter to the Consul General of Russia, his superior, and to the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria, his spiritual leader, relating his find. Regrettably such documents were never traced. In concluding, Skilitsis deplores that he was not allowed to further pursue his search and that the authorities of the mosque walled two of the passages depriving him of this extraordinary discovery. I myself have been in this vault many times, and it is true that the walled passages are there obviously obstructed by a structure much more recent than the passage walls, however this may in fact be the only element of 'truth in Skilitsis' story.

2. The Case of Stelios Kounoutsos

Another Alexandrian, Stelios Kounoutsos, a restaurant waiter who for over 30 years claimed to know the location of Alexander's tomb, started his quest in the early 1960s. Through perseverance he succeeded in obtaining permits from the authorities to perform at least six excavations.
Totally versed in archeology and history, and unaware of the topography of the ancient city, Koumoutsos sometimes opened his trenches in areas that had been reclaimed from the sea only a few decades earlier. As it is practically impossible to dig anywhere in the center of Alexandria—except if one opens a trench in what was previously the sea—without finding some ancient structures, Koumoutsos, although searching at random without any preconceived plan, did find some remains of cisterns. This led him to believe that he was on the right path in his search for the tomb. The obstacles lying in his underground course, such as modern foundations, which, if destroyed, would have put buildings at risk, resulted in the authorities putting a stop to his work. After a number of failures, the authorities refused to grant further permits. Koumoutsos became desperate and claimed that there was a plot to deprive him, at the very last moment, of the glory of his great discovery. Driven by a realmania, he resorted to various deceptions, repeatedly trying to get the Greek Ministry of Culture to interfere in his favor with the Egyptian authorities.

He forged a supposedly ancient map showing the position of the tomb in an attempt to prove its authenticity. No scholar took seriously this crude document claimed to belong to a Hungarian versed in the occult. Koumoutsos' lies culminated when, towards the end of his life, he reported to an archeologist working for the Ministry of Culture of Greece that he had seen Alexander in his glass coffin from a hole made in the wall of a subterranean passage. Asked how he could be certain it was Alexander's body and not that of another king or dignitary, he candidly affirmed “that a statue set in front of the door of the tomb bore the inscription MetroS ALEXANDROS [sic].”

One night, in the middle of a clandestine attempt undertaken to dig in the courtyard of the St. Saba Patriarchal Church, Koumoutsos was stopped by a policeman who asked him: “With whose permission are you digging?” In reply, he presented his marriage certificate bearing the patriarchal seal and candidly stated: “I have the Patriarch's authorization.”

Nonetheless, despite their fabricated nature, the stories of both Skillitsis and Koumoutsos have found their way into every study related to the tomb of Alexander the Great.

3. The Case of Liana Souvaltzis

The third case is more complex, as the individual involved is neither a consulate interpreter nor a wailer, but someone who has formally studied archeology. It is true that, once her studies completed in the late 1980s, Liana Souvaltzis had never led an excavation nor presented any paper nor published any contribution to archeology, until the day in 1989 when she decided that she was the elected one who would find the tomb of the Macedonian conqueror... not in Alexandria... but in the western Libyan Desert at the Oasis of Siwa. Since then, she has held the attention of the Greek and international media for over a decade with her fantastic story, which is without any scientific foundation. Ignoring all reliable ancient sources which state that Alexander's mumified body was placed in the Soma in the center of Alexandria, although its original destination was the Oasis of Siwa, Souvaltzis claims without substantiating her assertion that the body was in fact buried in that oasis.

Liana Souvaltzis selected a location known as Deir el Roum or Belaid el Roum some 20km from Siwa. Ancient ruins had been visible and were first reported and drawn in the early 19th century by F. Caillaud and published by E. Jomard. In 1869, the German traveler Rouffs saw the temple and described it in his book of travels, but by 1890 it was reduced to a heap of rubble. Steindorff found it in the same condition. In 1936, an Egyptian archeologist, Ahmed Fakhr, visited what was still visible of this monument that he called the 'Doric temple', publishing his findings briefly in 1944. He also made a sketch-plan of the ancient remains showing the 'Doric temple'. It is obvious that Souvaltzis had access to Fakhr's publication, although she never mentioned this in her reports. The Egyptian archeologist's brief report and sketch of the temple compared with Souvaltzis’s, confirm that this is indeed the same monument. Then, Liana Souvaltzis proceeded in what was to be a lamentable excavation, described unanimously a few years later by the members of the Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt as: "the worst excavation ever made!"

Understanding nothing about the nature of the ruined 'Doric temple', but determined to announce that it was the tomb of Alexander, she declared that the building, which bears not even the faintest resemblance to a Macedonian tomb, was in fact the long lost Mausoleum of Alexander the Great. Souvaltzis did everything possible to make her assertion prevail. lies and hoaxes were presented as facts to the international media. The fantastic reached new found heights, when she presented the macabre remains of a mumified head, claiming it belonged to one of the Macedonian soldiers guarding the tomb. No one knows how this mumified head came into the possession of Souvaltzis, although remains of long-toothed tombs scatter the desert. The fact is that it was presented to the Greek press with a Ptolemaic coin inserted in its mouth. Because of the henna color of the hair, the head was declared to be that of a blond Macedonian guarding Alexander's tomb.

In 1995, Souvaltzis found the broken part of an ancient inscription and presented it in her book on the tomb of Alexander the Great as the incontestable proof that the tomb was indeed Alexander's burial site. It is an inscription made at the time of Servius Sulpicicius Similis, Governor, Praefectus Aegypti
(Prefect of Egypt) under the reign of Trajan, which refers to some building dedicated 'on behalf of the Emperor's good and infinite duration.' The many pieces can be easily assembled and read. Similar to several other inscriptions of this type it starts with the formulaic expression:

ΓΕΝΟΜΕΝΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΝΕΡΟΥΑ ΤΡΑΙΑΝΟΥ
ΕΠΕΚΕΙΝΟΥ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΥ.

Charalampos Kritzas, then director of the Epigraphic Museum of Athens, who was a member of the scientific team delegated by the Ministry of Culture of Greece to investigate Souvaltsi’s alleged discovery, explained that it was an easy matter to read and interpret the inscription which is self-contained and does not at all refer to Alexander or to his tomb as Souvaltsi erroneously claims.

Unable to correctly reassemble the broken parts of the inscription as a whole, Souvaltsi believed that there were three inscriptions. Not a word of what she insists in reading on the stone exists in real fact and one wonders how she proposed to fit such long texts in the limited space of the inscription. I translate the quotation from Liana Souvaltsi’s published book on the tomb of Alexander the Great at Siwa:

1st inscription:

ALEXANDER AMON RA
TO THE RESPECTED ONE I MADE A SACRIFICE WHERE LIES THE RECEPTACLE
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORDERS OF THE GOD I TRANSPORTED THE BODY THAT WAS AS LIGHT AS A SMALL SHIELD
I WHO WAS GENERAL EMPARCH OF EGYPT I WAS ALWAYS HONORED BY COMMON AGREEMENT NOW THAT I AM AT THE LAST OF MY LIFE I DISCLOSE THAT I DID ALL THIS IN HIS HONOR

2nd inscription:

NERVA AND TRAJAN BUILT A SHRINE
AFTER HAVING PERFORMED LIBATIONS ON THE SITE
IN HONOR OF ZEUS AND THE ETERNAL ZEUS
WHO IMPETUOUSLY DRANK THE POISON
INTENDING THE SHRINE TO BE IN PUBLIC VIEW
THE SHRINE WAS BUILT WHEN Sulpicius was THERE WITH ARTEMIDORUS

The third inscription is in fact a very small fragment, which Souvaltsi measures correctly; it is only 33cm x 6cm. It reads ΜΕΧΕΠΙ: the second month of winter, according to the ancient Egyptian calendar (later assimilated into the Coptic calendar), indicating probably the date when this inscription was dedicated. Souvaltsi’s interpretation of these letters is, to say the least, a monument of ingenuity. She declares that these are Greek numerales of the Classical period explaining that the oasis had 400,000 inhabitants, 100,000 of them soldiers among which 30,000 represented an elite guard for the tomb.

The archeological authorities of Egypt have since 1996 refused to grant Souvaltsi any renewal of her permit to dig. Yet far from abandoning her quest, she stubbornly insists that she is the victim of a political plot. Unbelievable as it may seem, in 1997, the matter of Souvaltsi’s excavations was discussed in the Greek parliament, when deputies from different parties asked the Minister of Culture why a Greek archaeologist was not benefiting from the support of the Greek authorities.

The three cases cited above, although certainly not unique, are among the most notable examples of risible theories. Not every researcher has the opportunity of opening trenches; often it is easier to dig in libraries and with the help of a fertile imagination one can even surpass the fiction of Sherlock Holmes. Other incredible stories have recently been written. One claims that Alexander was in fact incinerated and that the golden lamax found in the Royal Tomb at Vergina contains his remains, not those of Philip. Another, even more far-fetched, claims that it was the body of Alexander, rather than Mark the Evangelist’s, which was clandestinely taken from Alexandria to Venice in the 8th century by Venetian merchants and placed to rest in the Basilica of St. Mark. This last tale echoes an earlier theory that the body of Alexander is in fact kept in Corfu in the Church of St. Spyridon.

In such glaringly fanciful cases as the above, some highly publicized, I personally believe that scientists have the obligation to step forward; they need to enlighten the uninformed general public, which for the most part obtains its information exclusively through the mass media, as to where the truth lies. It should also be remembered that most scientific archeological work is carried out with the money of taxpayers, so that they have the right to know the facts.

Further reading

Articles by H. Tzallas:


A leaf from the Alexandria Book of Ptoleos Kouroutos: a near certain forgery

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Thirty years ago, when Ikingy Mariout was only a small bedouin village with a scattering of a few villas—certainly a less mondaine place than the resort of the rich and famous that it has now become—there was an anomaly in the place. It was a ramsacke little shop with a single word painted on it: “Potli”. With a great deal of imagination one comes to realize that this cryptic sign really means “Boutique”. What on earth, one wonders, is a boutique doing in the middle of that desert? Once the irrelevance of the shop itself is clear, the spelling becomes immaterial.

But what about downtown Alexandria, home of the famed ancient library that drew intellectuals, scientists and gifted men from all around the classical world? It is now also home of the new Bibliotheca Alexandrina that is to rival the old one. The signs on the streets are the work of the Governorate and not the fruits of individual enterprise. Not to be outdone by the Mariout experiment, these signs are a bafflement to tourists and locals alike. How in heavens is one supposed to know that “Stad” is Arabic for stadium, written in a different alphabet and language? Or that “Rasat Tinpalooz” is Ras El Tin Palace, once the Alexandria home of the royal family? Then of course there is the wonderful rendition of “Victoria” into “Victoria”. What’s all this fuss about an extra “y”, you may say, and you’re right. The message has come across alright, hasn’t it? Thank God it wasn’t written “Fatoria” as it is usually pronounced. Cleopatra must be turning in her royal grave because she’s now Cleopatra, and poor old Khawaga Glymonopoulou in his because his name has officially become Gleem. Then, every so often, you come across this sentence, written in an undulating form—to imitate waves, one supposes—that says “Alexandria is a love wave on Egyptian land”. Any guess as to what that is supposed to mean? If you’re racing along the Cairo-Alex desert road and suddenly need a public phone, you’ll be in such a hurry you certainly won’t notice that the sign says “Phon”.

On to restaurants, whose menus are a veritable feast of spelling mistakes and twisters. What do you make of this dish on the menu: “Papa”? You really must ask the waiter to affirm that this is “Baba Ghanouj”. In a well-known fish restaurant, the bill you receive has the following typed on it: “Chirmps” (shrimps) and “Mosa” (no, this does not mean banana—it is the misspelt mousse, which is Arabic for sole fish.). Then, in another restaurant, there is this very confusing item “Proti roles” under the heading “Drinks”. To a particularly embarrassing client that asks a lot of questions (you), the waiter explains that it is a dessert like the éclair (and asks you whether you know what an éclair is) that is covered with a chocolate sauce. “So it is something that is eaten, right?” you ask, and the waiter nods a confirmation. “But why is it under Drinks?” you insist. “Because,” answers the waiter, giving you a condescending and sarcastic short laugh, “You can’t have two headings on the menu, one Drinks and the other Eats.” Been properly put in your place, haven’t you?

Each nation has its own way of pronouncing other tongues, so we’re not splatting hairs over whether it is Victoria or Factoria, villa or billa. But why oh why is the whole thing truncated? If you’re told by someone that he’s going to the bridge, how are you to assume that it is not that thing over roads or rivers, or that it is not a card game? How are you to ever figure out that “bridge” is the British Council, abbreviated? There is also the abbreviation of the abbreviation. If someone aspiring young woman tells you that she’s applying for a job at “the double you etch”, you can only pray that the WHO will set her a test that will discover she doesn’t even know the name of the organization she’s hoping to work for.

Just to end this puzzle: if you’re tempted to enter a shop with an alluring name, make sure you know what you’re in for. “Cofer” might seduce you with visions of leopards dishting out gold from their mystical crocks, but more likely than not you’ll come out a lot poorer than when you went in: you’ll have been relieved of a quantity of your hair by the coiffeur whose shop this is. “Jolie Madam” does not sell women’s clothes, or even unisex clothes, but strictly caterers for men only. And “The Scottish House”, famed throughout Britain for its woolens and tartans, serves a different purpose altogether in Alexandria. Appropriately, it sells bikinis.
Alexandria’s Forgotten Architecture: Forts and Fortifications in Alexandria

Yasser G. Aref

By revising local city guides, it was noticed that many sites of architectural and historical importance were not mentioned. When visiting some of these sites, it became clear that they are severely threatened by neglect and deterioration. The purpose of this study is to draw attention to these sites of what could be termed ‘Alexandria’s forgotten architecture’. This study aims to highlight buildings of special significance, raise public awareness among local residents, protect these sites from further deterioration and destruction, and finally promote the sites for cultural tourism. The selected buildings and sites are unique as they are an expression of a community’s culture and they also have many unique attributes and features of Mediterranean architecture. The study will focus on defensive architecture in Alexandria, Egypt.

The Mediterranean has always been a place of tension and conflict between the north and south as well as the east and west. Thus, fortifications and defensive buildings represented an important component of the planning scheme of Mediterranean cities during the 18th and 19th centuries. Alexandria, as the main port and the second city of Egypt, has always been the gateway between Egypt and the Mediterranean region. Throughout its long history, Alexandria was prone to foreign invasion by the Romans, Arabs, French, and the British.

Studying the defensive architecture of the city is important because:

- It represents part of traditional Mediterranean architecture.
- It was built by craftsmen with local materials and expertise.
- It is an expression of a community’s culture.

The defensive architecture of Alexandria consists of the city walls, observation towers and forts. The construction of defensive buildings in Egypt was undertaken during the reign of MohamedAli (1805–1849) to protect his realm against invasion. He planned a major defense project for Alexandria and Rosetta. In around 1840, the French engineer Galice Bey was assigned to construct about 16 forts in Alexandria. This number increased to 25 by the end of MohamedAli’s reign. Moreover, he established an administrative authority responsible for defensive buildings and forts that was called Mawlahat al-Istehkamiat, or the Department of Fortifications. This department hired both foreign and Egyptian engineers.

To defend the city effectively, defensive buildings such as Koussa Pasha, Abukir and Agami forts were strategically located at prominent points along the Mediterranean coast, because attack was expected to come from the sea. Others, such as Kom El Nadaoua and Kom El Dikka forts, were located on hills inside the city as observation points. The map of contemporary Alexandria shows the location of existing forts, towers and walls.

The architectural typology of the forts used to be based on geometrical shapes such as an octagon or a square, with circular towers at the corners, behind which soldiers could hide. The spaces between the thick, high walls were used for accommodation, storage and in some cases water reservoirs. Forts used to have only one gate leading into a courtyard.

With the development of modern weaponry at the beginning of 20th century, traditional defensive buildings were no longer effective. Along with the rapid population growth they posed an obstacle to the development of the city. Therefore, some of these buildings were demolished by city planning officials to make space for urban expansion. Moreover, many of the forts are under the management of the Egyptian Coastguard Forces which places national security issues above the costly need for the conservation of this unique cultural heritage.

Because many forts are located on sites which are now military zones without access to the public, little information is available and very little documentation on these buildings exists. Even their survival is not assured as they can be demolished at any time if the armed forces have a better use for the land occupied by the fort. Moreover, most of these forts are not listed as buildings of special interest. So the truth is that defensive architecture is facing a gloomy future and this type of Mediterranean architecture will eventually vanish unless drastic intervention is introduced and positive action undertaken.

The current condition of some of the defensive buildings is as follows:

- **Military areas with no access**: Abukir, Tawfekeya, Agami, El Shafakhana
- **Tourist/cultural attraction**: Qaitbay, Kom El Nadaoua, El Nahaseen; remains of the city walls and towers
- **Neglected**: El Dikha, El Malaha, El Youssra the observation towers of Abukir
- **Undefined use**: Adda, Koussa Pasha
- **Demolished**: Kom El Dikha, Ras El Tin, El Helaleya, Om Kebeba, Saleh, El Aynab, El Sileileh, El Fanar

Koussa Pasha Fort was constructed during the reign of Mohamed Ali Pasha in Abukir, 23 km east
of Alexandria. The fort is located at the north eastern tip of Abukir Bay on a sandy hill that overlooks the Mediterranean and the bay. The fort was registered as a monument by ministerial order no. 231 of 1992. Its entrance is located to the east side and is approached by a wooden bridge that passes over a water trench. The fort consists of an octagonal vaulted wall enclosing two rectangular-shaped buildings built from white sandstone and with a pitched roof, that were used as soldiers accommodation and as stables for food and gunpowder. Four Armstrong cannons dated 1870 are still remaining in the fort.

Still a military zone, the fort is now occupied by the families of ex-workers of the Coastguard Forces. The building has deteriorated due to erosion and lack of maintenance, as well as the alterations undertaken by the residents that disfigured the authentic and original features of this type of defensive architecture. A conservation plan is needed for this fort and its proximity. The plan should include the following points:

1. The application of the concept of integrated conservation, considering not only the fort building itself, but its wider context, where the fort will be the focal point.
2. A community value analysis showing how the community would directly benefit from the conservation of this building.
3. The preservation plan should be drawn professionally using both a historical approach as well as the technical aspects of conservation.
4. The plan should propose how the use for this fort building is compatible with its physical fabric and its defensive aspect.
5. The plan should consider the economic aspect of conservation to ensure the sustainability of the intervention.

A project could also be proposed to adapt Koussa Pasha Fort into a Military Museum, devoted to the historical battles that took place in Abukir Bay. In August 1798, Abukir Bay was site of the famous Battle of the Nile, between the French and the British. Egyptian naval history could also be displayed at the museum. Activities could include excursions to nearby Nelson Island and underwater diving to view the sunken French fleet of Napoleon, thus providing a unique experience for all visitors, foreign tourists as well as Egyptians. If the project were implemented and traditional defensive architecture is celebrated and embraced, it could be expected that the intervention would be a driving force for the social and economic development of the area, and a development tool for cultural tourism as well as a resource for inter-Mediterranean culture.

An initiative for the promotion of Koussa Pasha Fort as a place of special interest along with other buildings was taken by publishing the Alexandria Cultural Routes; a guide consisting of seven walking tours promoting the sites of the city to tourists.

Alexandria possesses a diverse and rich architectural heritage that is worthy of conservation. Defensive buildings are no exception; they reflect the social, political, economic and technological context of their time. A great effort should be undertaken by local authorities to conserve, protect and promote this heritage.

* This material was presented and published in the First Euro-Mediterranean Regional Conference about Traditional Mediterranean Architecture. Present and Future, which took place in Barcelona from 12–17 July 2007, within the framework of the European Project RehabMed.

1. Rosetta is a city about 65 km east of Alexandria. With the decline of Alexandria following the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in the 16th century, Rosetta boomed and became a major city.
4. This is evident in the records of the Alexandria City Council dating from the 1920s.
5. According to an unpublished and updated report by the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Islamic Archaeology Section. This is evident in the records of the Alexandria City Council around the 1920s.
7. The maps were published by the Alexandria and Mediterranean Research Center (Alex-Med) at the Bilbeiss Institute Alexandria in 2005, as an output of Mediterranean Voices project which is part of the Euro Med Heritage II program funded by the European Union.

The outer walls, ditch and wooden bridge leading to the entrance of Koussa Pasha Fort. A row of gunholes or slits is visible along the walls.
The Colorful Street Traders of Alexandria

Gordon Smith

Sitting in sidewalk coffee shops and walking the streets of old and new Alexandria, I was able to observe the amazing variety of goods and services available from street traders, giving the city a Mediterranean color. Here are some of those who are still around and keeping alive the memorable sights, sounds and traditions so recognizable to all those living in this haunting old city.

Most commonly seen and heard is the early morning bread seller, usually a small boy, walking the streets with a tray made of wicker cane carried on his head laden with bread, shouting "aish" at regular intervals in an almost sing-song voice. The cake vendor, on the other hand, has a stylish glazed container to display his home made goods, whereas the seller of sweet yoghurt with fresh bread fingers carries his 'shop' aloft, carefully balanced on his head, while the candy floss seller walks the streets blowing his horn to attract the attention of children, enticing them with a display of brightly colored sausage-shaped balloons.

Another traditional character is the man wearing old Ottoman-style black baggy pantaloons with a fez band around his waist offering a refreshing licorice drink called "erk-soos". He announces his presence by rhythmically clashing together two small brass cymbals held between his fingers. The milkman rides around the streets on a bicycle, fiercely ringing his bell.

During summer, a common sight is the melon sellers. These fruit come in a variety of shapes and sizes, from the small pale cantaloupe to the huge dark green watermelons. At the same season, green, knobbly cactus-looking fruit called "teenshake", or "prickly pear", appear on street corners.

Later in the year, other small orange fruit known as wild gooseberries become the replacement. Barrow boys of various ages, who are mainly fruit sellers, parade their wares on gaily painted carts drawn by donkeys. Some push their barrow without animal aid—quite a task in summer time for the seller of huge water melons especially. Larger carts driven by sturdy horses are used mainly for transporting heavy goods such as building materials and domestic removal, or sometimes for collecting reusable household rubbish and scrap.

The most fascinating and a real link with nineteenth century street life, is the baked sweet potato seller. Looking rather like long sweats, these Egyptian sweet potatoes are baked in a blackened oven strapped to a hand-driven cart. The oven looks
somewhat like a small version of Stephenson’s early stream engine complete with fire box and chimney (but without the steam). Once cooked and before serving, the potato is cut open and sprinkled with a little salt. Then, usually at night time, in the area of Mansheih district, there is the sweetcorn seller. He grills the corn over charcoal, fanning the embers frantically so as to blacken the surface of the hot corn.

In addition to food and drink, there is a wide variety of items available from itinerant traders. The seller of hardware, plastic flowers and many small household items piles his wares on a large hand-driven cart. The cassette vendor offers his goods—usually recordings from the Koran—from a flat box placed in front of his bicycle, with his cassette player usually playing. An old man sells bamboo panpipe flutes stacked on a box-like cart giving the appearance of a portable church organ. Elsewhere, small boys and poor women sell packets of paper handkerchiefs or tissues. A knife sharpener occasionally arrives with his hand or foot-driven circular grinding stones.

Occasionally a street artist turns up, dressed in a turban and grey gallowabie, wielding a tambourine and two straw-like sticks to accompany his poetic song. Carpet vendors appear in groups of four to six, walk the streets with their rolled-up carpets, and then, like a magician with a pack of cards, they unfold them on the ground to reveal a vivid array of enticing colors and Eastern designs.

And finally, while many in Alexandria slumber, there are the late night garbage collectors. They fill their large dirty canvas bags and quietly load them onto their painted horse-drawn cart, their presence recognized by the gentle tinkle of bells on the horse’s harness as this huge load slowly slinks away.

These are a few of the sights and sounds which we have inherited from the past. But what of more recent ones? These are not quite as exotic-looking... all plastic and metal. Think about it. The spanner-tapping man selling their cylindrical gas bottles from the back of a lorry, or the sound of—often wheel-less—wheeleless bins being dragged along the streets, ready for waste collection, in an effort to keep Alexandria clean.
Réaliser le rêve du « Pharaon du cinéma égyptien »

Une invitation de l'Association des Amis du Musée Shadi Abdel Salam

Au cours de cette dernière décennie, on a pu constater d'importantes réalisations dans le domaine des services sociaux, des œuvres de bienfaisance, ou encore des projets commerciaux et industriels à intérêt immédiat. L'apport dans le domaine culturel demeure toutefois minime ou presque absent. À part l'exemple de Sakiet El Sawâ ou de quelques centres artistiques dispersés çà et là dans les villes et les provinces égyptiennes, la majorité des intellectuels restent dans leur tour d'ivoire, des spectateurs passifs. Soucieux de leur création individuelle, ils ne réagissent guère devant la détérioration culturelle de la jeunesse, qui se fait de plus en plus considérable, de plus en plus dangereuse pour les générations futures. Il suffit de méditer la cause de Shadi Abdel Salam, pour se rendre compte du rôle qu'il reste à faire aux intellectuels, auprès de jeunes Égyptiens, ignorants de leur propre histoire, de leur propre civilisation, source principale de leur véritable identité.

Shadi Abdel Salam, ce noble chevalier polyvalent, ce grand mélomane amateur de la musique classique, doté de toutes les qualités du gentleman-intellectuel, reste, lui, ce fils de la Haute Égypte, qu'une très longue histoire rattachée à ses ancêtres. Il s'ingéniera sa vie durant à réécouter par le biais de son entreprise cinématographique, l'histoire de l'Égypte ancienne. Passionné de sa civilisation millénaire et fier de ses origines pharaoniques, Shadi a travaillé jusqu'à épuisement de ses forces, à communiquer au peuple égyptien, la connaissance de sa glorieuse Histoire.

"C'est l'histoire oublie ou perdue... Les gens observés dans les rues, les maisons, les champs et les usines ont une histoire et ont un jour contribué à forger la vie et même à la créer... Ils ont enrichi l'humanité... Comment les rétablir dans leur mission... comment restituer leur positive et forte contribution dans la vie? Il leur faut d'abord connaître qui ils sont, qui ils étaient et ce qu'ils ont développé. Pour préparer l'homme du futur, il faut rétablir le lien entre l'homme d'aujourd'hui et celui d'hier... Telle est ma cause." 3

Le cinéma devient le moyen d'exprimer sa vision de la civilisation de son pays, d'approfondir sa perception de l'héritage national, de ressusciter l'unité et la pérennité d’une Égypte, existant avant même la première dynastie pharaonique. Tout un concept de vie, toute une philosophie se dégagent donc de sa « cause ».

Le cinéma est le lieu dans lequel se passe le rêve du pharaon que Shadi Abdel Salam a voulu faire rêver le monde. Il a voulu créer un héritage pour l'Égypte, un héritage qui soit unique, qui soit immortel.

“L'Égypte ne reconnaît pas son héritage antislamique, dit-il dans ses interviews, je me bats contre cette rupture. À travers le cinéma, je veux aider les jeunes générations à comprendre leur passé, ce miroir du présent, à retrouver leur identité profonde et l’assurance de leur noblesse... comment être nous-mêmes en refusant une part de notre histoire?”

L'Égyptianité pour Shadi Abdel Salam, semble être à la fois responsabilité et mission. Grâce à une étude minutieuse et une grande authenticité des détails historiques, cette "égyptianité" vitre ardemment, autant dans la totalité de son œuvre qui fait appel à la lecture de "l'Histoire" que dans celle d'autres réalisateurs où il est décorateur en chef, et devient par là même une excellente référence dans le domaine. Raisons d'ailleurs pour lesquelles Roberto Rossellini le choisit pour créer les décors et les costumes de son film, La Lutte de l'Homme pour la Survie, et Kavalerowicz pour son film, Pharaon.

Shadi Abdel Salam n'est donc pas uniquement, tel que plusieurs continuent de le croire, un directeur ou un réalisateur de film, un simple dessinateur de décor et de costume, il est surtout un penseur, un philosophe, habité par une noble mission, un noble projet culturel, celui de renouer les fils souvent distendus entre passé et présent, de travailler à la Renaissance de sa Nation, à la Réurrection de la Civilisation de ses Ancêtres, en vue d'un meilleur avenir d'une Égypte nouvelle, fière de son immortelle identité.

"N'est pas goûter que perdre, tu ne perdras pas. Tu as été appelé par ton nom. Tu as été retrouvé."

Conscients de l'importance vitale d'une tolérance dans notre Égypte actuelle, et témoin d'un fanatisme, allant jusqu'à éliminer du programme de l'enseignement scolaire et universitaire, la culture, l'histoire, et le passé glorieux de nos ancêtres, un groupe d'intellectuels décida de fonder une organisation non gouvernementale: l'Association des Amis du Musée Shadi Abdel Salam.

Présidée par le directeur de décor, le Dr Salah Marei, directeur, ami, et compagnon artistique de Shadi Abdel Salam, et ayant pour un de ses principaux membres, la sœur même du cinéaste, Mme Mohiba Abdel Salam, l'Association est officiellement déclarée au ministère de la Solidarité Sociale, sous le no 2213, en 2008.

Son objectif principal est celui de répondre dans la mesure du possible, au rêve de Shadi Abdel Salam, à son noble projet culturel, celui d’inviter les jeunes générations à la connaissance de la culture égyptienne, à travers les diverses époques ou les divers âges historiques, de les aider à saisir le sens et la portée de cet héritage si prestigieux, afin de pouvoir découvrir leur propre identité.

Dans ce but, l'Association s'est fixé pour rôle principal:

- de donner par l'intervention de grands spécialistes dans la matière, des conférences, de faire des expositions, des ateliers de travail, des manifestations artistiques... ;
- d’encourager, en procurant les documents nécessaires — photocopies, photographies, scénarios de films, interviews radiodiffusées, ou télévisées — les études et les travaux de recherche se rapportant au patrimoine, ceux particulièrement concernant l’art et la cause de Shadi Abdel Salam;
• de mettre à la disposition de la Bibliotheca Alexandrina des bénévoles formés pour guider les visiteurs du Musée Shadi Abdel Salam ;
• de diffuser et revivifier l'idée de la production du film/éve de Shadi Abdel Salam : Alkhator ;
• de restaurer les films du pharaon du cinéma égyptien ;
• de veiller à la maintenance et la préservation du patrimoine artistique de Shadi Abdel Salam, contenu dans le musée : dessins, peintures, livres, disques de musique classique, mobilier…
• de créer un prix annuel au nom de Shadi Abdel Salam décerné à la meilleure œuvre artistique, illustrant la personnalité égyptienne.

Bien qu'enonce jeune, l'Association a déjà réalisé — et continue, certes, à le faire — quelques uns de ses projets :

• Elle a déjà créé un site Internet nourri continuellement d'informations et de tout nouveau sur le monde de Shadi Abdel Salam :
  www.worldofShadi.com
• des conférences sur tous les aspects de la vie et de l'art dans l'Égypte antique, données par des experts d'histoire et d'archéologie : 
  - "La littérature dans l'ancienne Égypte" par Abd El Halim Nour El Din, suivie du film El Fallah El Fas motif ;
  - "L'époque Toutankhamon" par Dr Mohamed Saleh, suivie du film Le Trône de Toutankhamon ;
  - "Le complexe du Sultan Kalaen, étude historique et architecturale" par Dr Gamal Abdel Rehim ;
  - "L'Égyptomanie dans l'Art Copte" par Dr Mokhtar El Kassabani ;
  - "L'Armée dans l'Égypte ancienne" par Dr Abdul Halim Nour El Din, suivie du film Les Armées du Soleil.

• Des témoignages d'acteurs, disculps du film de Shadi Abdel Salam, influencés dans leur carrière par leur vie personnelle ;
  - Le grand comédien Mohamed Sobhi qui parla du "Maire et Min".
  - Le designer de costumes Mme Leila Guirgis. Grâce aux mécénats de l'Association et surtout à l'intervention du directeur de la Bibliotheca Alexandrina, le Dr Ismaïl Serageldin, un fond budgétaire est prévu pour la restauration de La Mome, avec le concours de plusieurs partenaires étrangers spécialisés.

Un deuxième budget fut accordé pour la restauration d'autres courts métrages, par Le fond du développement culturel :
  - Deux jeunes cinéastes influencés par le pharaon du cinéma égyptien, ont produit deux courts métrages, portant sur la vie, l'œuvre et la cause de Shadi Abdel Salam.

Un jumelage ou une coopération avec une organisation internationale présidée par le comte Féderico Dwardal, ayant les mêmes intérêts pour la civilisation antique, fut signé le 17 mars 2007. Dans l'attente de nouvelles réalisations, l'Association accueille cordialement tous ceux et celles qui désirent se joindre à elle, et participer ou assister à ses activités mensuelles.

Dr Shah Mansour
Vice-présidente de l'Association des Amis du musée Shadi Abdel Salam

2 Un centre culturel et artistique fondé au Caire par un groupe d'intellectuels égyptiens.
3 Cité par Magda El Guindy in Ros El Youssif, 31 mars 1983.
4 Traduit de l'arabe par l'auteur.
6 Le Moine, Le Prince, Le Crocodile d'Égypte, Château de la Demeure, Le Prince de la rue, etc.
7 Le véritable génie d'Abdel Salam réside non seulement dans le fait de transposer fidèlement, les événements historiques de son pays, mais reste aussi dans la création de plus de 50 costumes maillot, de costumes féminins pour maîtresses et étudiantes, d'images d'esthétique recherchée.
8 Il s'agit de Mamdouh Essam, étudiant à la Faculté d'Art et d'Arts plastiques de l'Université de l'Université du 6 octobre, et dont le court métrage est trouvé au Département multimédia de la Bibliotheca Alexandrina.
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
قوتات الإسكندرية

يُبِلْغُكَ مَحِبٌ فَهْمِي
قوتات الإسكندرية، ليُفُصِّل وَيُورِدِ، عَلَمً مَّرَأَةً وَمَرْجَأً، لِيُفُحِّضُ وَيُغْفِرُ، وَمَتَّعُةً تَصْلُحًا، لِيُتَّحِثُ، ضِعْفًا وَكَرَمًا، لِيُفُضِّلَ، وَمَجْرَأً وَمَرْجَأً، لِيُفُضِّلَ، وَتَضَلُّعًا وَمَلِكًا، لِيُفُضِّلَ، وَفِضاءً وَشَكُورًا، لِيُفُضِّلَ.

قل بولع، فإنها تجمع بينonor، حاليًا، وتمت النشر في عدد فبراير-أبريل 2008 من مجلة البديلة الأدبية.
Alexandria Lost
Three stories by Alan Smart
Published by Harpocrates Publishing, 2008
Reviewed by Carole Escotley

These three little gems caught me unawares. Upon reading the title on the front cover, Alexandria Lost, I had vague visions of the ancient Ptolemaic city, of long lost temples, libraries and palaces... a lost Alexandria... as was Babylon or Atlantis. Or would it be the evocation of a more recently lost city: a nostalgic journey through the Alexandria of the khedives, the halcyon days of the prosperous cotton boom, when foreigners once again flocked to the city?

In fact, it was neither. Yet, these are tales of loss. The epigraph from the Persian poet Jalaluddin Balkhi Rumi reads: “I keep in myself an Egypt that doesn’t exist”. Well, in this case it is an imagined Alexandria that the characters keep within themselves. And, as they struggle to confront the real city, which is not their Alexandria, they seem to lose their very sense of self.

Each tale evokes a point of personal crisis where the narrative unravels slowly, in delicate brushstrokes. What made Benito choose his isolated existence in an empty storage shed in Al Alamein? Why is the exiled hospital patient so reluctant to return to his new English home, if the Alexandria he left is ‘a fraud’? Why does the recuse Sophie lose her ability to paint and wander the streets of Alexandria “almost invisible” to those around her? Each seems caught between the immediate perception of a meaningless present, and a sudden need to recall repressed memories from the past.

One of the most striking features of Alan Smart’s narratives is his evocative description of sensory perceptions. In the first tale, “Sunstruck”, I was “struck” by the intense physicality of Benito’s daily existence on the edge of the Libyan Desert. Is this survivor from World War II up and out of every sensation? The narration of emergency medical doctor Zina’s scream evokes vivid colors—red and puce—in sharp contrast to the glaring sun of the white desert landscape and the blackness of Benito’s silent room. But her scream also triggers something else, deep within him. Forged to care for this mutilated child, and faced by her unquestioning courage, he too, finds the courage to begin on a slow journey to confront the unspeakable memories which lies buried within him....

Alan Smart’s second story, “...the Alexandria that you are losing”, is also a tale of estrangement. The hero lies in his hospital bed in England, reliving the journey that brought him to this point in time. Why did he leave Alexandria? Rather like Albert Camus’ Meursault, this character one day discovered that he was an outsider in his native city, the Alexandria which he “buried” the day he sold his family villa....

The main character of the third tale, “The Colour of Joy”, is an artist. Unlike Benito’s stark black and white world on the edge of the desert, Sophie’s is a brightly colored world which she has happily recreated in her paintings until the day when the will to paint suddenly leaves her.... Why is it so important for her to rediscover a self-portrait she painted so many years ago? Like Alan Smart’s other characters, Sophie’s quest in search of “her portrait” triggers long forgotten memories from her youth: the young man she had loved and who disappeared forever; her parents’ beach hut in Sidi El Bachir. Gradually, her quest to find the portrait becomes a journey of self discovery.

A critic once said that great literature evokes a myriad of connotations, that, as we read, it should trigger a myriad of other narratives in our heads. And it is an exercise in fragmentary prose, Alan Smart’s tales of loss are certainly no exception. His alienated characters mirror others which we have encountered in other texts, and they provoke resonances in places we do not always care to finger in.... Benito was the war survivor, the half-Egyptian half-English exile who belongs nowhere, and the aged Sophie searching for her lost painting... all three struggle in different ways to find a sense of belonging in a city whose destiny does not embrace theirs, leaving them excluded.
koshari

This traditional Egyptian vegetarian dish is often served in popular restaurants which specialize exclusively in koshari. There exist slight variations but the main ingredients are brown lentils, rice and macaroni, topped with a spicy tomato sauce. Chickpeas are sometimes added. Caramelized onions are generally used to garnish.

INGREDIENTS
- 1 cup brown lentils
- 1 cup Egyptian rice
- 1 cup pasta (elbow macaroni or small shells or a mixture can be used)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 large onions, thinly sliced
- 400gms chopped tomatoes
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- ½ teaspoon red chili pepper flakes, or to taste
- Salt, cumin and black pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons vinegar

DIRECTIONS
1. Fry the onions slices until golden brown and set aside.
2. Rinse and cook lentils in lightly salted water.
3. Cook the rice.
4. Cook the pasta separately.
5. Gently stir together the lentils, rice and macaroni. Add cumin, salt and pepper, and some of the chili. Adjust seasonings to taste.
6. To make the sauce, place the chopped tomatoes in a saucepan. Add the vinegar, garlic, seasoning and remaining chili. Simmer over a medium heat until cooked.
7. Serve the lentils, rice and macaroni in a large dish. Pour the tomato sauce on top.
8. Garnish with the fried onions.

Variant dishes from other parts of the world...

Interestingly, there exist dishes from elsewhere in the world which are similar and even have a similar name. For example, khichri in Pakistan and India is a dish made essentially with rice and lentils. It is sometimes also called khichdi in India, and vegetables such as peas, potatoes and cauliflower are added to it. Another variant, well known in England, is the Anglo-English dish, kedgeree. This dish consisting mainly of boiled rice, flaked fish (particularly smoked haddock) and eggs, is seasoned with curry powder and turmeric. Introduced into Great Britain during the nineteenth century by British colonials living in India, kedgeree is based on a more traditional Indian dish, khichdi, made of rice and lentils rather like Egyptian koshari.

In a local koshari shop, pouring on the spicy tomato sauce
ALEX-MED NEWSLETTER

B r i n g i n g t h e M e d i t e r r a n e a n T o g e t h e r

This newsletter hopes to reach a wide public, both locally and internationally. It brings to you news about Alex-Med and Alexandria, and encourages you to send your contributions. If you would like to send your views, comments or contribute to topics related to Alexandria and the Mediterranean please use the contact details below. Regular sections include an “Alexandrian Artists Corner” where young Alexandrian artists can publish their poetry or display their art; a gastronomical page to illustrate the diversity and similarity of the Mediterranean cuisine; a page on an Alexandrian personage and another on an Alexandrian building or neighborhood, and a page of photography that captures scenes from everyday life in Alexandria. Our mission is to involve you in our activities and in the making of a new Alexandria – one that honors the past, respects diversity and rises to the challenges of the 21st century.

Editor: Carole Escoffey
Graphics: Flora Cavoura and Mina Nader
Photography: Abdallah Daweshtashy
Cover illustrations: Paintings by Shadi Abdel Salam, Onsi Abou Seif and Saleh Marei, from the Shadi Abdel Salam Museum, Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

Contact us:
If you want to be added to our mailing list, please fill in the form and either mail or email it to us. If you would like to send a letter to the editor or to contribute to the newsletter (either an article in Arabic, English or French, or a poem) please send it to:
The Alexandria & Mediterranean Research Center, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Chatby 21526, Alexandria, Egypt, or alex.med@bibalex.org

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