Onassis Foundation  Mediterranean Handicrafts

Isis in the USA  Mario Botta  Hypatia in the Modern World

Hassan Fathy's Unpublished Article  Biennale 2007

Alexandria's Ottoman Heritage  Alexandria's Old Cinemas
Mario Botta’s visit to the Bibliotheca

Edward Lewis

“Work, work and work!” This was the eminent Swiss architect’s response when asked how to get to where he is today. Whilst hard work is an obvious ingredient, it takes a great deal of talent and determination to light up the world of architecture and achieve what he has during his career. Born in Mendrisio, Switzerland, in 1943 Botta has worked worldwide, created inspiring examples of modern architecture and received numerous awards. The Bibliotheca Alexandrina, in collaboration with the International Friends Associations of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, organized a lecture entitled “Recent Projects”, on 13 February 2006 and was a chance for students, professionals and interested members of the public to attend a lecture given by one the world’s leading architects.

Botta has not just contributed with his designs; he has been one of the leading figures in promoting the role of the environment and surroundings when designing a building:

"Each work of architecture has its own ‘environment’, which, for the sake of convenience, may be defined as its territory. Between architecture and territory a constant mutual dependency is established right from the earliest stages of design. The first thing to be done when creating a piece of architecture is to get to know its territory."

Due to this interpretation Botta has often been linked with the Italian Neo-Rationalist movement, the Tendenze, whose philosophies address the issue of reconciling traditional architectural symbolism with modern ideology.

Although his early career saw him work almost exclusively in Ticino, the Italian canton of Switzerland, Botta has worked extensively in Europe, Asia and America and created such impressive buildings as the Theatre alla Scala in Milan, the Museum of Modern Art in Rome, Kyobo Towers in Korea and the TCS Offices in New Delhi, all of which were displayed and commented on during the lecture. In addition to his practical work Botta teaches worldwide giving lectures, seminars and courses in architectural schools including the Architecture Academy Ticino in Mendrisio, which he founded in 1996.

For more information:

www.botta.ch

‘Philosophy in Alexandria’ Conference

Academics from all over the Mediterranean converged on the Bibliotheca Alexandrina for the philosophical conference entitled “Philosophy in Hellenistic Alexandria.” Such a diverse and unashamable subject is hard to present over two days yet the conference managed to cover numerous topics allowing the audience to learn about Alexandria’s strong philosophical history and its far reaching effects.

Alexander the Great’s education and background ensured the city of Alexandria was founded with philosophy as one of its core values. The Library of Alexandria and the Museum encouraged this tradition to flourish and Alexandria’s neo-Platonic and Gnostic schools later heavily influenced significant movements such the Renaissance and Enlightenment of Europe.

In his opening speech Dr Mohamed Awad, Director of the Alex-Med Research Center, highlighted the role of philosophy today and stressed the importance and need "for reason, moderation, tolerance and dialogue between civilizations in these troubled times confronting our present world. Philosophical dialogue is, and will, remain the course to consciousness, enlightenment and reason for a more civilized and peaceful future of our planet.”
The Catalan Library CELEBRATES HER 100 YEARS AT THE BIBLIOTHECA ALEXANDRINA

Ramez Faraq

On the 10th and 11th of December 2005, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina welcomed a delegation of the municipality of Olot on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Maria Vayreda Library, established by the Mayor of Olot in 1905. The objective of the visit was to make a donation of books and documents to the Bibliotheca in celebration of the occasion. The donation was supported by the parliament of Catalonia and the cultural department of Catalonia’s government.

On the margin of the book donation was a cultural event organized by the Institut Ramon Llull and Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània (IEmed) in collaboration with Alex-Med.

The cultural event started on the 10th of December with a roundtable on “Dialogue between Cultures in the Mediterranean Area”. Invited to the discussion were Dr. Sayed Yassin, first director of Al-Ahram Center for Strategic Studies and author of, among other books, Al-Twair al-hadad fii al-alewma (Dialogue of Civilizations in the Age of Globalisation, 2002). Dr. Victor Pallarés, researcher in history of religions at the Sorbonne University and lecturer at the Alicante University attended as did Dr. Ahmed Morsi, professor of Egyptian & Arabic folk traditions at the Faculty of Arts, Cairo University and advisor to the Ministry of Culture. Dr. Josep Garrat, the specialized historian of islamic archaeology in Catalonia and director of cultural activities of IEmed was also present.


The next day, Saturday 11th of December, the Catalan delegation led by H. E. Ms. Caterina Mieras, Minister of Culture of the Catalan Government, donated a series of 150 books on Catalan history and culture to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in an official ceremony.

The Catalan delegation was formed by representatives of the Catalan ministry of culture, the Catalan parliament, Olot city hall, Institut Ramon Llull and Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània.

The donation comprised basic volumes on Catalan culture, including dictionaries, general and thematic encyclopedias, historical essays on Catalan culture, literary work of Catalan classic authors, translated books of Arab authors as well as Catalan music CDs.

The roundtable discussed the shared cultural factors among Mediterranean countries and the cultural, linguistic and religious pluralism that exists in this area. It raised the question of the chances to develop a real dialogue between cultures in the Mediterranean in the present context, bearing in mind the long common historical experiences.

The second roundtable, “The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Mid-term perspectives”, was an assessment of the main results of the Euro-Mediterranean Summit (Barcelona + 10) that took place in Barcelona. Special emphasis was made on the issues that Catalonia and Egypt felt were crucial to their interests and expectations within the Summit. Also, some of the results of the Barcelona + 10 Survey, conducted by IEmed, were presented in the library to an audience for the first time.

The roundtable discussants were Dr. Mohamed Awad (director of the Alexandria and Mediterranean Research Centre of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and head of the Egyptian national network for the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation) and Dr. Gemma Auberell (researcher of political sciences, director of programs at the IEmed and coordinator of Afro/Mediterranean Journal and Anuari de la Mediterrània - Mediterranean yearbook).

In the evening, a poetry reading entitled-half-moon: Invocating the Arabic world and poetry in modern Catalan verse gathered three Catalan poets who read their writings, inspired by the Arabic tradition of lyrical poetry:
Following the announcement in December of Alex-Med's partnership with the Alexandria Governorate (A.G.), another important step was taken with the 'Alexandria City Development Strategy: Creating Tools for Local Economic Development' conference held in the BA in March 2006. The event was initiated by the Alexandria Governorate in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities and Ministry of International Cooperation and included a number of important debates, discourses, presentations and case studies regarding city development. Also present were members of the World Bank who have heavily invested and begun to implement the Alexandria Growth Pole Project.

Among the presentations given in the 'Cluster Development: Channeling the Alexandria Competitive Potential' workshop was the presentation given by Dr. Mohamed Awaad (Director of Alex-Med) entitled 'Cluster Development: Tourism and Heritage'. The presentation focused on Alex-Med's commitment to heritage within a development framework and three examples of proposed development projects regarding the regeneration of Alexandria were outlined:

- **Eastern Harbor Development.**
  The Eastern Harbor has a rich concentration of archaeological remains, including the royal palaces of Cleopatra and the Pharos of Alexandria. Through the construction of an underwater archaeological museum it is hoped to not only allow visitors to see these sunken ruins, but to ensure these remnants of Alexandria's past are not lost forever or destroyed by additional development. A museum dedicated to the Pharos and an eastward extension of the library are also proposed as well as various leisure facilities, such as hotels and parks.

- **Harroya Avenue.**
  Harroya Avenue was formerly the Canopic Way and formed the most important thoroughfare in ancient Alexandria. Many of the old and important buildings of the cosmopolitan era are located on or around this area and the renovation and recording work carried out by Alex-Med was highlighted (including the 'Moont' Project) as future projects. The library's acquisition of the Villa Antiochus and the proposed design and plans for its conversion to a Mediterranean research center were displayed.

- **City Tour Maps.**
  Public awareness of Alexandria's endangered buildings is a priority and this, combined with tourism, prompted Alex-Med to create a series of city tour maps. The collection of seven maps, each with its own theme (Ottoman town, city center, archaelogy, architecture, east of the city, west of the city and a one day tour), guides the visitor around parts of the city that are usually overlooked, thus giving a greater picture of the city and its history.

The conference provided an excellent opportunity for debate and exchange amongst members of both the private and public sectors concerning the development and regeneration of Alexandria, something Alex-Med will be at the center of.
The Rebirth of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate

Ever since the apostle St. Mark arrived in Alexandria in AD 43 bearing the gospel of Christ, Alexandria has been at the center of Middle Eastern Orthodoxy. This position was reinforced by the consecration of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria. The newly restored and visually stunning complex lies directly behind the Evangelismos Church and shares a great deal with its sister building. Both buildings were founded on the same site, both are built on land donated by Michael Tzitzias and both were restored and inaugurated on 2nd April 2008. The Patriarchate was originally used as the Greek Community School forming one of the core Greek institutions of the city and was financed by Michael Tzitzias.

The value of the building regarding Alexandria’s history has been further enhanced with the surprise discovery of a large eastern complex located directly beneath the Patriarchate. It was whilst making a bed for a lift shaft that builders broke through into an extensive underground water system. The eastern, thought to be from the Roman Period, was filled with sand and took six months of excavation before its beauty was fully revealed. Stairs leading to a secret hole in the present day floor enable visitors to walk around the impressive high arches and stone columns. Dr. Awad and his team plan to turn this tunnel into a museum for the Patriarchate and will prove a stunning addition to what is already one of Alexandria’s core institutions.

Alexandria’s Greek community celebrated another historical event as they gathered for the inauguration and 150 year anniversary of the Evangelismos Church of Alexandria. Originally built in 1866, this majestic church celebrates the welcoming of the incarnation, made by angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary (Annunciation) and belongs to the Greek community of Alexandria. Alexandria’s nineteenth century Greek community was already well established due to its strong historical tradition and the influence of the Kavala born Mohamed Ali, whose pro-Greek sentiments led him to encourage Greeks to settle in Egypt. It boasted a community school and hospital but lacked a central church for common worship. A new church was proposed by the community but in order for it to become a reality the then president of the Greek community, Michael Tzitzias, had to rely on private and public donations as well as official permission.

Mohamed Awad sent a letter with a firm approving the church’s construction and asked for “a church as grand in order that I myself will be filled with joy when I look upon it.” The final plan was taken when Tzitzias gave the land that, at that time, was at the edge of the city and on 1st September 1877 the first foundation stone was laid signaling the beginning of construction that was to last almost ten years. The church’s original architect was Emmanouel Plenakis and it displays several fine frescoes designed by Matisse and icons by El-Gurni when he was still signing his work as Theocopoulos. The stained glass windows were brought from Venice and the clock was designed and constructed by Dent of London (now responsible for the famous clock of Big Ben) making it not just a place for worship but a beautiful piece of architecture.

During its 150 year history, the building has been exposed to weathering and everyday use causing structural damage. Restoration was essential and in August 2002 the late Patriarch of Alexandria and Africa, Petros VI, announced a program for the church’s restoration. Backed by large donations from the Onasiss Foundation, the restoration was completed in 2008 and included the architectural guidance of George Tzitzias and Panagiotis Papadopoulos. The Foundation, which regularly makes bequests to scientists, artists and writers, funded a complete overhaul of the basilica to remedy damage incurred at a cost of $500,000,000 thus making it a focal point for Alexandrian Greeks once more. Attending the opening was the head of the Onasiss Foundation, Anthony Papadimitriou (originally from Alexandria), Theodore II Patriarch of Alexandria and Africa, the Archbishop of Zimbabwe, His all-Holiness Bartholomew and various government officials from Greece, Egypt, South Africa and other African nations, including the President of Greece, HE Karolos Papoulias and the Governor of Alexandria, HE General Mohamed Abdallah Salam Vangeli.
« Le souffle de Platon et le corps d’Aphrodite »

Sur les traces d’Hypatie

Carole Escouffey

Pamis tous les noms qu’évoque le vaste mythe fondé par Alexandre le Grand en 331 av. J.-C., mème tous ceux qui ont contribué à faire d’Alexandrie un grand centre de rayonnement hellénistique, il y a un nom de femme qui n’a cessé de fasciner écrivains, poètes et historiens. Nommée diversément « héroïne païenne », « martyre » ou « mythe littéraire », ou encore « première femme universitaire de la tradition occidentale », au fil des siècles Hypatie (v.365-415 ap. J.-C.) est devenue une icône polyvalente. On s’interrogeait à son sujet ? Pourquoi cette femme du monde antique a-t-elle symbolisé, et symbolise-t-elle toujours, des idées aussi diverses ? Sans prétendre répondre en quelques lignes, on peut néanmoins réfracter certains clés qui ont contribué à la légende attachée au nom de cette femme Alexandrine.

L’on discerne un écho de ce portrait dans les paroles du poète Alexandre. Tallâtès... Lui aussi lui son élève, et chantait ses éloges dans cette épopée :

Hypatie, à grande dame, adopte du savoir
d’un haut en ces moments où tu vois grand et clair
Nous dénonçons les dieux et leur divin mauvais.
Je m’imagine, à vingt-sept ans, et cevoir
Brillée au bord des fleurs de la Vierge, stellaire.

Nous savons donc qu’Hypatie fut la fille de Théon d’Alexandrie — un mathématicien, géomètre, philosophe, astronome et membre éminent du Musée d’Alexandrie, le Mousion. Très vite, sous le tutorat de son père, elle-même fillette montra un vif intérêt pour toutes formes de connaissance et devint elle le surpasse et devint à son tour enseignante.

Elle publia un commentaire des Arithmétiques de Diophante, une édition des Tableaux astronomiques de Ptolémée, un commentaire sur les Sections coniques d’Apollonius de Perge. Ses travaux en mathématiques seront, de nombreux siècles plus tard, repris et développés par Desospital, Newton et Leibniz. Selon Synèges de Cyrèse, Hypatie enseignait non seulement la philosophie, l’astronomie, la géométrie et les mathématiques, mais aussi la musique — considérée alors par les Grecs comme la plus haute forme de connaissance. C’est ainsi, par exemple, qu’à la demande de Synèges, Hypatie fabriqua un hydromètre, et qu’elle aida à faire construire un ascobe. Certains historiens vont jusqu’à affirmer que ce fut elle l’inventrice de ces deux instruments, en dehors de l’abondance de preuves conclusives. Il est probable, cependant, qu’elle contribue au développement de l’astronomie.

Les siècles d’Hypatie furent aussi des siècles de révoltes de toutes les sortes : d’Égypte, de Syrie, de Constantinople et ailleurs. Nombre d’entre eux occupèrent plus tard de hautes fonctions dans le gouvernement de l’Empire. D’ailleurs il est à noter que, bien que païenne, nombreux de ces élèves furent chrétiens. Synèges lui-même fut nommé évêque de Plénades. Où l’influence d’Hypatie avait sur ses anciens élèves repartit à travers l’Empire, elle exerça aussi un rôle non négligeable auprès du pouvoir politique. A cette époque, les hommes du pouvoir voulaient souvent écouter aux conseils des philosophes renommés. De surcroit, son vœu de chasteté et sa modestie, contribuèrent également à faire d’elle un modèle de comportement qui s’ajouta à la renommée intellectuelle de la philosophie.

Hypatie vécut à une époque où les tensions politiques et religieuses secouaient l’Empire roman : en 396 le temple de Sérapis à Alexandrie fut pillé et détruit. En 412 la situation s’aggravait dans la cité, attisée par un fort sentiment anti-romain et anti-juif. C’est alors que son influence auprès des hommes du pouvoir ne fut pas sans attirer des soupçons. Réduite par certains pour son soutien du préfet romain de la ville, Orestes, contre les armées de Zénon, la philosophie serait devenue elle-même l’objet de déformations. Ses detracteurs auraient écrit qu’elle était une sorcière, exploitant la crédulité populaire qui distinguait alors peu entre astronomie, mathématiques et philosophie d’une part, et astrologie, sorcellerie et magie de l’autre. Bien que les sources historiques varient sur les détails précis de sa mort, la plus largement acceptée est l’assassinat par une foule violente, traînée dans les rues de la ville et brutalément assassinée, écorchée vive par des coups de poignard. ou par des coups de marteau. ou par des coups de marteau.

Il est curieux de noter que la légende qui se tisse autour d’Hypatie au fil des siècles n’est pas sans rappeler le mythe qui submerge la vie d’une autre Alexandrine dix-huit siècles avant. Quoique ces deux femmes durent aux siècles suivants être à l’origine de tous les genres d’histoires et conte...
pour lui les excès de l'intolérance religieuse. De même Voltaire, un an après la publication de son Traité sur la foi (1761), publia un article dans son Dictionnaire philosophique (1764) où il fait l'analogie entre le sort d'Hypatie et les excès de l'intolérance de son époque. À son tour, l'historien anglais Edward Gibbon, dans son Histoire du déclin et de la chute de l'Empire romain (1776) le tient assassinat d'Hypatie à la fin de la liberté de pensée dans la monde antique.

Pour les écrivains du xixe siècle, la mort d'Hypatie marquait surtout la fin du monde hellénistique et le passage à une autre époque. Charles-Marie Leconte de Lisle, fêté auteur de l'Antiquité, publia en 1852 un poème intitulé Hypatie où il exprime sa nostalgie d'un âge d'or et s'interroge devant l'intelligence et la beauté de cette femme :

"Tu faisais, sur la nuit moite sombre des vieux âges, Resplendir ton génie à travers ta beauté !"

Selon lui, l'assassinat d'Hypatie signale la fin de la culture grecque :

"L'homme en son cœur fougueux il l'a flappée et maudite, mais tu tombas plus grande ! Et maintenant, hélas ! Le souffle de Platon et le corps d'Aphrodite sont jarre à jamais pour les Dieux ceux d'Hellas !"

Pour ce poète, le meurtre de la philosophie déclenche l'ère du silence, de la laideur... un véritable âge des ténèbres :

"(...) limpide lueur est la reine du monde, Et nous avons perdu le chemin de Paros. Les Dieux sont en poussière et la terre est muette : Rien ne parlera plus dans ton ciel désert."

Ensuite en 1868, l'écrivain et homme politique français Maurice Barrès publie dans son roman Sous les masques une nouvelle intitulée Désinsecte- sement où il peint Hypatie sous la forme d'un double nommé Anthémis. Comme Kingsley, Barrès s'attarde à l'étude des faits historiques connus puisqu'il fait coïncider la destruction du Sérapaeum avec la mort d'Hypatie. Dans cette nouvelle, republiée séparément en 1894 sous le titre de La Vierge assassinée, Hypatie est devenue « la vierge du Sérapaeum », l'« auguste vierge », « la vierge du Sérapis » ; encore « la jeune fille » l'on remarquera donc que à Barrès, au contraire de Kingsley, a maintenu ici la chasteté de la philosoph, il l'a par contre beaucoup rejetée, faisant d'elle une sorte de préresse pâmoise, voire d'héroïne romantique :

"Au milieu des fureurs d'un peuple, il y avait une rare dignité dans cette vierge si jeune et si belle, délivrant, comme un tiche filin, l'apathie de la mort."

Or, comme dans le poème de Leconte de Lisle, dans la nouvelle de Barrès la mort d'Hypatie marque la fin de l'hellénisme ; ici la jeune héroïne proclame à ses disciples : « moi, qui suis Hella », et à la fin, le narrateur conclut : "Ainsi mourut pour ses illusions [...] la dernière des Hellènes."

Toutefois, chez cet écrivain français il s'agit de bien plus qu'une nostalgie du monde antique : pour lui, Hypatie incarnait ses propres préoccupations. Comme Barrès, il tenait individualiste, son héroïne lutte pour sa liberté d'expression :

"Je jure, dit-elle, je jure d'aimer les nobles phrases et les hautes pensées, et de dépouiller plutôt la vie que mon indépendance."

Une liberté pour laquelle elle doit faire face à l'ignorance et l'intolérance :

"(...) vous aimez et comprenez trop de choses, que la foule vous hait, comme elle hait le Sérapis pour ce qu'elle ignore."

et en dépit de tout rester fidèle à sa première ambition :

"Ne pas commettre dans l'ordinaire de la vie, tous ces actes de l'inconnaissable, c'est toute la douceur, la noblesse de l'esprit..."

Et c'est enfin au vingtième siècle que l'on entend le nom d'Hypatie prononcé surtout par voix de femmes. En effet, le mouvement féministe semble avoir trouvé en elle le symbole des siècles de répression masculine, et en son martyr, l'ultime acte masculin. Sa rétention au silence aurait marqué l'exclusion des femmes, une exclusion qui culminerait des siècles plus tard avec les chauves aux sourcils.

À l'époque actuelle le nom d'Hypatie est adopté par diverses revues et associations. En 1988, on créa la revue Hypatia : A Journal of Feminist Philosophy publiée par l'Indiana University Press. Selon ses fondateurs, le choix du nom d'Hypatie servirait à rappeller aux lecteurs que bien qu'elles soient souvent les premières philosophes femmes de leurs universités, elles ne le sont pas de l'Histoire.

De même, en 1990 l'on assiste à la fondation du Hypatia Trust1 à Angleterre : une société dont le principal objectif est l'acquisition et la diffusion de documents et œuvres d'intérêt sur les accomplissements des femmes dans tous les domaines. L'on compte parmi les activités de cette société la création de sa propre maison d'édition, Hypatia Publications.

De plus, Hypatie a laissé son empreinte toute récente sur Internet. Le site web The Hypatia Institute2, dédié aux biographies de femmes de science telles Hypatie et Marie Curie, offre de nombreuses ressources pour étudiants, professeurs et scientifiques.
The Contribution of the Mediterranean Countries in the Promotion of the World's Culture

Unpublished article by Hassan Fathy
Courtesy of Naval Haseen

The Mediterranean basin has been the field in which the major part of the world's culture germinated and flourished over the millennia to give form to our modern civilization and culture.

It seems by its geographical position to have worked as a mediator between the cultures of the North and the South, and of the East and the West.

In ancient times we can mention Egypt, Greece and Rome; and in the Middle Ages, Byzantium, Islamic Egypt and North Africa; each having its role in promoting the sciences and the arts that constitute the global body of our modern culture.

In democratic Greece the temple is placed high on the Acropolis, like a piece of sculpture open to the outside and facing the agora by its façade, telling all the people what it is meant to say to them, unlike the Pharaonic temple which is closed to the outside with parts hierarchized with the sanctuaries at the climax where only Pharaoh and the High Priests are allowed to enter. In this way, the Greek architecture is one of façades and the Egyptian is one of space.

If we take the Parthenon and the temple of Ammon in Luxor as an example, we shall find that the symbol of man as microcosm lies behind the architectural design in both, though the two are different in concept. In the Parthenon this microcosmic man is standing and is symbolized by the column carrying the entablature in the façade, while in the temple of Luxor this man is projected on the plan, lying on his back with the geometrical basis ruling his body deliberately applied to the architecture of the temple.

It is hard to believe that the architect conceived this image from high up in the air. The resemblance came from the geometry being true to the living form.

In this way we can say that man acts as a catalyzing agent in the process of harmonizing the specific nature of the environment in each country.

We can name among these sciences and arts in which the Mediterranean countries excelled: astronomy, chemistry, mathematics, geometry, psychology, art, science, politics, art, administration, poetry, architecture, sculpture, painting, philosophy, and so many others.

Being an architect myself, I choose to talk about some of the concepts that ruled the architecture of the Mediterranean in the past which are as valid today as they were yesterday, and which we hope will guide our steps in the search for an architecture for the future, and bridge the gap that lies between archaeology and the living architecture.

Architecture is one of the most important elements of culture. One of the best definitions of culture is that it is the outcome of the interaction between the intelligence of man and his environment in satisfying his needs, both physical and spiritual. We have a tangible proof of the veracity of this definition in the plastic arts. A painter will paint what he sees in his environment as landscape, fauna, flora or human beings, and an architect will try to make his building harmonize with this environment, climate, landscape, building materials, etc., and to satisfy the spiritual and psychological needs of man, and express his aspirations by the architectural form.

The Greek architect chose the leaf of the acanthus, which grows in Greece, for the capital of his Corinthian column, while the Egyptian chose the lotus or the papyrus, which grows in Egypt, for the capital of his column. But, neither the Greek nor the Egyptian architect made his choice just for the form, but for what this form symbolized and did say to him as a link between the earth and the sky.

The symbolism did not stop at the capital and was extended to the whole body of the temple in one way or another according to the specific nature of the environment in each country.
The geometrical basis in the design was not limited to the sacred architecture. Some recent studies have shown that the dimension of the living rooms in the medieval houses of Cairo are ruled by the golden number (\(\phi\)) and by (1) affecting harmony and pleasant rhythm in the process of feeling the space.

This can be proved scientifically by the fact that, psychologically speaking, the eye does not perceive a line instantaneously at one time, but point after point, sending the experience to the brain where the image is perceived; as in music, we hear it note after note and the ear sends the experience to the brain where the melody is conceived.

So by subjecting the dimensions of the lines of the intersection of the planes to harmonic rules we shall have introduced rhythm in the form, or musically we can say.

In ancient times, the Mediterranean architect was more than a technician, and he related his work to the whole body of knowledge about the natural world.

The temple will merge with the other buildings of the city; then the city will become the temple, with every street and building charged with sanctity as man go about their holy purposes.

In its form the city too will comply with the eternal laws of order that govern the universe as did the ancient temple.

When we consider the movement of the sun in orienting our buildings to control insulation, and the wind movement in securing ventilation, we are introducing a cosmic and a geodesic element in our design. When we consider human needs, both scenic and spiritual, we are forcibly relating our building to this cosmic order on a still higher level than that implied by the functional, and we shall be relating it to that inner universe embodied in man as a microcosm.

Today, we shall be approaching this end if we apply our scientific knowledge to the problems of securing the welfare of man, and tend to bring our buildings to the measure of man, not only from the aesthetic point of view, but from the spiritual aspect.

When our buildings and cities are designed to the scale and needs of man as a microcosm, the city will be a projection of this man, and the dwelling and the city will become the temple in man.

In the future, for the holy task of building the city, we need sages who can go beyond where the ancient architects reached. Our modern sage will have to combine the disciplines of architect, biologist, psychologist, astronomer and mathematician as did the ancients, together with modern studies such as sociology, economics, politics, and so on, with the addition of the sensitivity of the artist.

Hassan Fathy was born in Alexandria in the Moharam Bey district in 1900 and graduated from the High School of Engineering, Architectural Section, University of King Fuad I (now Cairo University) in 1926. He devoted himself to housing the poor in developing societies and worked to create an indigenous environment at a minimal cost, and in so doing attempted to improve the economy and the standard of living in rural areas. His best known work is the design and building of the El Glaoua Village at Luxor where he utilized natural resources using mud brick and features of Egyptian vernacular architecture, such as mashrabiyyas, enclosed courtyards, domes and vaulted roofing. He worked with the local people training them to make the materials to construct their own buildings. His work took him to many countries. In 1957 he joined Doxades Associates in Athens and undertook projects for Iraq, Pakistan and New Mexico. Among his awards are the Chairman's Aga Khan Award for Architecture and Gold Medal from the Union Internationale des Architectes. Hassan Fathy died in 1989 but his ideas and vision continue to provide inspiration for architects.
Archeological Alexandria

Chatby Necropolis, Chatby

Pompey’s Pillar, Karmouz

Moustafa Kamel Catacombs, Roushdy

Philoxenite, Borg el-Arab

Ras el-Soda Temple, Bab Sharki

Monastery of St. Menas, Borg el-Arab
Alexandria to host the 13th edition of the BJCEM-Biennale of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean

Alia Elaskalany

Alexandria’s restored historic buildings, its Corniche and new Bibliotheca Alexandrina demonstrate the city’s recent commitment to changing its position and role in the Mediterranean. With this urban renewal has come a cultural renaissance and the renovation of the beautiful Sayyid Darwish Theater (now the Opera House), the National Museum (formerly the Bassil House) and the new archaeological discoveries demonstrate that Alexandria is once again a force in the Mediterranean. In particular, its two themes as an “Innovator in cultural and artistic interaction” and a “Masting point for dialogue and understanding between people” make it an ideal venue for the 15th Edition of the Biennale 2007.

The BJCEM team visited the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in December 2005 to propose the 13th edition of the Biennale 2007. The proposal was successful and it is the first time that this event will take place in a southern Mediterranean city. In its twenty year history, the Biennale has provided young people with a concrete opportunity for dialogue and cooperation through art. Since the first edition in Barcelona in 1985, it has presented almost 10,000 artists and received 2 million visitors. The Governor of Alexandria, His Excellency General Abdiel Sahim Mangoub, has expressed his pleasure that such a Steering Committee of partners, such as the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alex Med, the Alexandria Government, Anna Lindh Foundation and the BJCEM, will organize this international event in the historic city of Alexandria.

Holding the Biennale in a southern Mediterranean city will enhance inter-Mediterranean relations between the North and the South, thus allowing freedom of expression, open dialogue and the sharing of heritage and culture through the unifying action of art. Alexandria, as well as Alex Med has already built some strong relationships with these South Mediterranean countries, especially with its corresponding coastal cities. These ties, and the ties already built up by previous Biennales, will be enhanced through practical networking techniques that will encourage permanent bonds among the participating countries.

Alexandria’s culture and rich heritage offer a variety of arenas for the guest artists working in different fields to display their work. Proposed venues include the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (audio-visual, hall, conference centers and the plaza), Sayyid Darwish Opera House, National and Fine Arts Muscume, Fort Qait Bay, Le Garage at the Jesus Cultural Center, L’Atelier, the English Girls College and much more.

Dr. Ibrahim Spahic, President of the International Association for the BJCEM asserted the need for classes in fields of art, such as painting and sculpture, and a craft fair as an off site program with input from Egypt and the other participating countries.

During the ten day festival proposed between 10-20th of July 2007, Alexandria will receive up to 1,000 young artists from more than forty Euro-Mediterranean countries and the public spaces of the city will come alive with the creations of young artists. The list of art categories for the Biennale is a long one, it includes visual arts, industrial design, photography, graphic arts, architecture, video art, sculpture, comics and cyber art. This is in addition to shows and performances in theater, dance, fashion and gastronomy. Others include readings for narrative texts and poetry.

The Fine Arts Museum

Dr. Yehia Hanem Zaki, Head of the Cultural and Academic Sector in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and Head of the Steering Committee of the 13th Edition of the Biennale 2007, confirmed that dialogue and understanding among people is one of the missions of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Dr. Mohammed Awad, Director of Alex Med and Coordinator of the Organizing Committee, believes that art speaks one language across different cultures and that both the city and artists will benefit from this interaction, a sentiment echoed by Dr. Traugott Schoeffl, Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation.

This edition of the Biennale is foreseen to be quite different from any other as it will offer new ideas and themes. The theme will be “Our Creative Diversity. Culture in Everyday Life: Kairós”. The Greek word Kairós indicates a point in time where change is possible. In addition to the main theme a series of other events will take place including a juried “best show” for the professional workshops or master
How the Pharos came to Washington and
Isis became ‘Liberty’

Robert G. Bauval

In 1777, when the Freemasons in the American colonies sought to form a united Grand Lodge independent from England, they offered the position of Grand Master to George Washington, but he modestly declined saying that he was not qualified for this high office. In 1788, however, he accepted to become Master of the Alexandria lodge, today known as the Alexandria Washington Lodge No. 22, which is situated on the south side of the Potomac River near the city of Washington DC in the district of Alexandria (Virginia). Since 1932 this famous lodge has been engulfed within a huge monument modelled on the ancient Lighthouse of Alexandria in Egypt, the Pharos, and bears the official name of ‘The George Washington Masonic National Monument’. According to Mr. Heime of the firm Heime and Corbett of New York who designed this monument, this ancient design was selected because: ‘...the Pharos was erected to guide the ancient mariners safely to shore; what would be more appropriate than a facsimile of that lighthouse in Alexandria Virginia on top of the highest hill and overlooking the Potomac River?’

The sculptor who made the giant statue was Italian. His name was Auguste Bartholdi. His work was greatly influenced by the ancient sculptor Phidias who made gigantic statues of the ancient goddesses, particularly Athena, the ‘goddess of wisdom’ and Nemesis (another name for Venus), a goddess who held a cup in her right hand. Before becoming the statue of liberty project, Bartholdi was seeking a commission to construct a giant statue of the goddess ‘Istis’, the Egyptian Queen of Heaven, to overlook the Suez Canal. The statue of Isis was to be of ‘a robed woman holding a torch.’

Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi was born in France, at the city of Colmar in Alsace. He had studied in Paris at the prestigious Lyceé Louis Le Grand, and, in 1865, when he was only twenty-one, embarked on a voyage to Egypt with three friends, the Orientalist Léon Gerôme, Auguste Béliè and Narcisse Berchère. There, while visiting the ancient temples of Thebes and Abu Simbel, Bartholdi became enchanted by the gigantic works of the ancient Egyptian sculptors. He spent eight months documenting the giant artworks and on his return to France brought back numerous sketches and photographs. It was during his first voyage in Egypt that Bartholdi met the celebrated French engineer Ferdinand De Lesseps, and thus began a friendship that lasted a lifetime. De Lesseps was at the time negotiating with the authorities in France and Egypt the financing of the building of the Suez Canal that would join the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea and create a direct maritime corridor between the East and West. Bartholdi was so impressed with De Lesseps’ vision that he began to think of a statue of a gigantic woman holding a torch in his place at the entrance to the canal which would represent ‘Egypt Enlightening the East’. At any rate, it seems that Bartholdi did manage to discuss his idea of a giant statue for the Suez Canal with the Khedive Ismail, but nothing came out of it, probably because of the imposing bankruptcy that Egypt was facing due to over-borrowing from European bankers. But not the least bit disheartened, Bartholdi decided to take his project elsewhere. The idea of a ‘Masonic’ monument to commemorate the friendship between France and the United States for the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence was first discussed during a dinner party at the country residence of Edouard de Laboulaye, a professor in law at the Collège de France and an expert on American culture. It seems that Bartholdi simply converted his original project for Egypt and proposed it instead as a ‘Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World’ for New York.

For this purpose the Franco-American Union was created in 1875 in order to raise the necessary funds for the project.

Bartholdi's drawing of the Pharo of Suez, presented to Delessps in 1869.

Not surprisingly, several members of the Franco-American Union turned out to be Freemasons, including Bartholdi’s own cousin, who was the French ambassador to the United States. Other Freemasons who were actively involved in this project were Henri Martin, the comte de Tocqueville and Oscar de Lafayette. Bartholdi himself had been initiated into Freemasonry since 1875 in the Paris Lodge ‘Alexandre-Lorraine’, and was raised as Master Mason in 1880. Although Bartholdi was to be the designer of the Statue of Liberty, the actual task of making it fell on Alexandre Gustave Eiffel, the celebrated French structural engineer who was to design and build the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Eiffel too was a Freemason.

Thus it is quite unlikely whether the face of the Statue of Liberty was in fact modelled on Barthold’s mother. What is perhaps more certain is that the Statue of Liberty was linked to the ‘cult of liberty’ of the French Revolution, where ‘liberty’ was represented by a ‘goddess’ which sometimes was modelled on the Egyptian goddess Isis. Interestingly, according to French Egyptologist Bernard Malinou, Bartholdi referred to the giant statue he designed as the ‘Pharos’ before it was raised in New York, and he had even designed an orthogonal base for the statue, just like the one believed to have been used for the ancient Pharos of Alexandria. Bartholdi certainly has known the association of the Pharos with the goddess Isis.

The very intense ‘Masonic’ involvement in this affair was made publicly evident a century later when, in August 1984, a bronze plaque was fixed at the foot of the statue to mark the centennial of the cornerstone ceremony for the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty It read: ‘At this site on August 5th, 1884, the cornerstone of the pedestal of the statue of Liberty Enlightening the World was laid with ceremony by William A. Brodie, Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York, Grand Lodge Members, Representatives of the United States and France Governments, Army and Navy officers, members of Foreign legations, and distinguished citizens were present. This plaque is dedicated by the Masons of New York in commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of that historic event. August 5, 1884. M.W. Calvin C. Bord, Grand Master of Masons; P.W. Robert G. Singer. Deputy Grand Master; M.W. Arthur Mackworth, Masonic Anniversary Chairman’

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« Artisans de la Méditerranée: un dialogue des civilisations au quotidien. »

De surcroît, ce type d’activité a la particularité de toucher à de nombreux secteurs de la société, jusqu’aux populations les plus pauvres et isolées auxquelles des formations adaptées pourraient redonner les moyens de leur dignité.
Plusieurs projets sont actuellement en cours en Egypte, mis en place par divers programmes et institutions. L’objectif est à terme de diffuser les connaissances et compétences acquises lors des projets et de coopérer au plus près afin d’avérer les initiatives redonner-tées. Très récemment, le Programme Méditerranée de l’UNESCO a voulu rassembler les acteurs de l’artisanat en Egypte et dans le monde méditerranéen, pour les encourager à se connaître, à dialoguer, et à exposer leurs travaux et expériences au cours d’un événement pluriel, composé d’une exposition d’objets d’artisanat, de stands d’artisans en activité, de tables rondes d’experts et de spectacles en soirée, tous destinés à montrer le riche patrimoine de la région.

Le lieu choisi pour l’événement comportait une dimension symbolique certaine et un vrai potentiel de développement dans un avenir proche. En effet, le quartier historique du Fustat au Caire tire son nom des premiers imams musulmans proches de la cité copte établie, et présente par la même des traces visibles de diversité culturelle, au fondement de la cité des arts et de débats, qu’est devenu le Caire. Et c’est une dynamique similaire qui a incité l’UNESCO à convier les membres de son futur réseau à se réunir dans un lieu de Caire historiquement riche et peu fréquenté par les touristes : l’installation récente, au cœur du Fustat, de deux magnifiques ensembles architecturaux cédés à la préservation et la promotion de l’artisanat égyptien. D’un côté, le Caire de Poterie et de Céramique du Fustat, sous l’égide du Ministère de la Culture, développe des activités de formation et tient une exposition permanente d’artisanat égyptien ; de l’autre, le Souk et Fustat, soutenu par le Ministère du Tourisme via son Agence de Développement du Tourisme (TDA), cherche à promouvoir par la vente d’artisanat et mette en lumière certaines activités associatives auxquelles il fournit une vitrine.

Dans un avenir très proche, le site verra également la naissance de la Conférence Nationale de la Civilisation Égyptienne, rejoignant un complexe culturel et touristique destiné à redonner au Caire et à la civilisation égyptienne moderne et contemporaine une meilleure visibilité.

Venus du pourtour méditerranéen, avec leurs expériences et cultures différentes mais complémentaires, les experts ont eu l’occasion de visiter les lieux et les comparer à ce qu’ils connaissent. Une visite particulièrement marquée a été celle du Centre de Poterie du Fustat par Mme Sadika Keeks, artisane et fondatrice du Centre de Réhabilitation des métiers d’Art de la Méditerranée à Tunis. En évoquant les possibilités de soutien et d’échanges d’artisans et d’élèves entre les deux centres, elle a ouvert la voie d’une coopération fructueuse, dans le droit fil de l’esprit de réseau qui encourage le programme Méditerranée de l’UNESCO. De même, la présence de la bibliothécaire Alexiandra, a travers son centre de recherche Alex-Med, et le soutien logistique et médicale du Caire ont rendu l’espoir d’un travail commun dans les années à venir.

Tous les nostalgiques du patrimoine culturel menacé de l’Égypte contemporaine et les admirateurs de l’artisanat vivant sont invités à se rendre dans ce nouveau espace du Fustat, à honorer de leur visite ces femmes, ces hommes et leurs créations qui rendent hommage à la tradition et lui offrent un futur.

Fanny Durville

En Egypte, l’artisanat a connu de nombreuses ruptures. Un patrimoine riche de motifs et de techniques est en voie de disparition dans un environnement économique et social qui ne privilégie plus la qualité et la formation sérieuse aux métiers traditionnels. Pourtant, l’Egypte reste une destination touristique majeure dont les touristes reviennent bien souvent les visites chargées... de bijoux de qualité très discutables, quand ce ne sont pas les fruits d’un commerce d’import de plus en plus financé en provenance de l’Asie. Or, ces objets que les touristes rapportent, et qui « se comportent en ambassadeurs silencieux », selon l’expression de S.E le Ministre du Tourisme égyptien, ne reçoivent pas le porto à l’image du service, mais de manière tout autre, elle qui constitue le tourisme ? Une remarque qui repose la question du ministère égyptien de la Culture, qui entre depuis peu pour une redécouverte de ce savoir et formes occultées qui ont pourtant façonné le paysage égyptien et méditerranéen.
"عابز ارسم اللي أنا حاسه، اللي أنا اعرفه"

زكريا سليمان - الفنان الفطري

محمد خاطف

ينتمي إليه هو نفسه، زكريا الفطري، بأن تكون الفنوات الفاطمية، فما يزال في آخر أيامها، 1970 نفي محرومته، بطلة في جماعة البدنية، لرسالة مبهرة، لم يفتح على أي نفثة من نمذجته، ورغم تلك النعمة، هو أحد الذين أخذوا الله من خلال هذه الحياة، واللي تسامى من حوله، وتوقفت.

بدأ زكريا سليمان رحلة النجاح في عام 1984، عندما أسلم إلى رحلته، له قصر للثقافة، ومتعه彩色 رحلة عبر كل الفن والفنون، التي تذكرها من إحساسه، وعمرًا ملكًا بعد أن يختصره، في بحثه، ويفتح عن دور الفن، ويعزف زكريا أنه كان مخططاً، عندما ضاف وجود الفن، مصممًا في البداية، كإنسان مبتكر، وتم trope، تقدير الثقافة، واعجاباً بجمالات زكريا الذي فر ربيعًا فيني ليا في هيئة من حضور الفن الثابت، شاب.

خلفت رحيل الفنان هزاع سلطان لزكريا الفطري، الذي في الاستمرار، مع أن يظل كتاباً، زكريا، فضحت واحداً مشغلًا بروح الفن، بما معناه، وما يحكيه، فهو قادر بحث أن يأخذنا من خلال تكويناته، مرة أخرى عملية من الفنون، بما يحكيه، إلى حزناً، "الطفلة" و"زعيم أخرى إلينا،

تعزيرى مأساوي، بينما في لونها، "الباباء".

تبنيت زكريا مرجي وأعمال، أنه قد تغلبت في حركة الرسم في المراكز الثقافية والمعرض، والمامات، والأعمال، للمشاركة في "محلل شاب" و"الفنان"، ولكن عليها أنه، قد تم رفع الأسماء، في منهجية نظر، تولّد الفناء، النهوض بمهجة في الحركة الثقافية، و."أخت لجميعها، يد طيوره، مستقبل الحركة الثقافية"، و."عانى الأحبار"، من ويك، و."الباباء"، التي نُكرز، من قبل، و." hiểnى، أن أجاج التحرير، لزكريا الفطري، الذي يظهر في الحركة، في المرة الثالثة، في الساحة العالمية، وإلى الطابة، و." ذكروه"، والموجة المصرية، و." نسخت"، من المركز الثقافي، و." بطليس دولية".

ليست جائزة لوزان هي الوحيدة التي حصل عليها زكريا وان كانت الأبرز، من الجوائز التي حصل عليها زكريا جائزة، تشجيعية في ببليا بورسعيد، ونواب، جائزة تشجيعية من معرض الفن الإسلامي الثاني والثالث، جائزة د. أحمد نوار في معرض آثار، الإسكندرية، الجائزة الأولى في معرض الإسكندرية في عيون أساليبها، جائزة لجنة التحكيم من مساعدة الشباب، جائزة ثانية لجنة التحكيم من مساعدة الشباب من معرض الشبابقاتلية، الإسكندرية 2001، جائزة ثانية لجيل من نابلي بضربة الفن الإسلامي، وغيرها من الجوائز والتشجيعية، والتي أتت بها زكريا استحقاق، لجنة التخرج التي حصل عليها من وزارة الثقافة في عام 1999، وحتى عام 2001، برعى ودعم من الفنان فاروق حسني وزيرة الثقافة المصرية.

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Alexandria’s Ottoman Treasures

Edward Lewis

Alexandria was once described as having more mosques than any other city in Islam. The Muslim traveler Ibn Jubayr, who passed through the city in April AD 1183 on his pilgrimage to Mecca, had visited many cities, seen many unusual and wonderful things, that would have been unheard of by his native town of Granada, particularly in an era when travel was hazardous and either a luxury or enforced. It is not uncommon or unusual that he mentions the number of mirabéis, especially since Islam was still a relatively young religion, but what is striking is the complete reversal in observations regarding contemporary travelers. In 1183 the magnificence of classical Alexandria would have been far more visible than today. The Pharos, Alexandria’s famous landmark and one of the Seven Wonders of the World, was still standing, albeit a shadow of its original self before its final collapse in 1303. The various necropoleis, columns and statues that are now hidden by modern concrete structures or lost to the sea would have very much been part of the everyday landscape and been taken for granted by the city’s inhabitants.

Alexandria, and the Delta region in general, has always been on the periphery owing to the overwhelming weight of Islamic architecture and heritage that survived in Cairo. The mosques of Alexandria or other Delta towns such as Rosetta, beautiful and unique as they are, cannot match the sheer splendor of examples in Islamic Cairo such as Ibn Tulun, El-Hakim or Bab Zuwaila. Alexandria’s Ottoman heritage slides further down the list when you consider Cairo’s pyramids or Upper Egypt’s timeless remains; why focus on conserving Middle Age mosques when there are hundreds more older and visually more impressive monuments requiring conservation? However, on closer examination, it becomes apparent that the two periods, centuries apart and divided by more than just time, are bridged by a unique architectural style. Many of the mosques incorporate classical elements thus demonstrating the continuity of the city and making them invaluable to Alexandria’s cultural heritage.

The Ottoman occupation of Egypt between 1517 and 1805 is not considered Egypt’s most prolific in terms of the arts and architecture. As a province under the Ottoman state many of the skilled and talented architects and craftsmen were taken from Egypt to Constantinople thus Egypt witnessed a period of deterioration. Yet art is never static and various mosques, sabil, palaces, bathhouses, and mosques reflect the architectural development in Egypt under the Turkish rulers, some with stunning results such as the mosque of Suleiman Pasha and mosque of Mohamed Ali in Cairo, both of which display typical Ottoman elements such as the cylindrical or pillared minarets. The prominent Alexandria’s Ottoman mosques, Torba and Shubayri, do not share the scale of the Cairo examples but are as equally valuable in terms of our understanding of Ottoman architecture.

Alexandria’s location regarding the holy city of Mecca and the west made it an ideal location for pilgrims to stop, rest, and recuperate. There was a steady flow of North African and Andalusian communities passing through Alexandria and many decided to permanently settle thus heavily influencing many aspects of the city’s culture. Such an example of Maghrebi influence can be seen in the Torba Mosque. The mosque of Torba lies in the heart of Mokattam amongst the narrow alleys and busy streets that define the area. This impressive mosque gets its name from the family responsible for its construction, the wealthy Moroccan merchant Ismail ibn Abed ibn Saman Torba, who is said to have made his fortune through gold and wanted to honor his family and his religion by creating a place of worship. Built in 1097 AH (AD 1688), the mosque demonstrates the simple yet beautiful styles adopted in Ottoman Delta architecture, the most striking being the red and black “Delta style” (marqua) brickwork that adorns the doorway.

The minaret of Torba Mosque supported by Corinthian columns.

The mosque of Torba.

Today, despite the archeological silence of the city, visitors are attracted by the nostalgia of the “first city of the inhabited world” without being able to reach out and touch it. The lack of physical evidence appears to be the precise reason why it appears to be so many as it excuses the visitor to clothe their own Alexandria as demonstrated by Forscher when he wrote: “I would multiply the height of the Port of Kait Bey by four and envisage the Pharos which had once stood on the same site. At the crossing of the two main streets, I would erect the tomb of Alexander the Great.” Whilst there is an undeniable atmosphere regarding the city and its ancient past, very few visitors to the city are aware of its incredibly rich and unique Islamic architecture that lies in the hoot of the Ottoman Town. These mosques and residential quarters, testament to a period of Alexandrian history that is largely unrepresented, face a number of threats increased awareness, both public and professional, is the key if Alexandria’s more contemporary but equally important history is to be preserved and respected by the present and future.
Whilst the patterns and symmetry are visually impressive, these bricks also serve as practical components. Good quality stone was not readily available in the Delta region and baked mud brick was often preferred due to its cheapness, portability and standard size. The fusion of ancient with more contemporary architecture is evident. As ascending the stairs of the main entrance since the mosque’s minaret is supported by four large granite columns intricately detailed with acanthus leaves. The mosque’s arcade and sanctuary contain a number of ancient columns that are older than the very religion the building serves. As with the mud bricks, the columns are in place for primarily practical reasons, the fact that they are pleasing to the eye can be seen as inessential. Recycling antique stone was common practice and the pillars were conveniently shaped and strong enough to be of great use to the Islamic craftsmen, just as they had been to Christians before them. The mosque is uncharacteristically colorful due to the beautiful ceramics that brighten the main entrance and minbar. The blue, green and orange floral designs are from all over the Mediterranean region including Morocco, Turkey and Italy, demonstrating Alexandria’s wide contacts during the seventeenth century.

Other Alexandrian examples include Shubagui Mosque, also located in Manzhiyah amongst the brightly colored fruit and vegetable stalls of the souk. The mosque shares a similar background to that of Tewarna and its founder was also of Moghreb descent.

An example of the beautiful ceramics in Shubagui Mosque

Architecturally it has the same characteristics, including the red and black bricks and ancient columns, yet the sanctuary is even more colorful than that of Tewarna due to the abundant ceramics that cover the walls and entrance as well as the beautifully painted wooden ceiling. Further afield in Rosetta, the Delta style illuminates the narrow streets of the fishing town through the vivid red and black Ottoman houses and impressive mosques, including Saad Zaghoul and Al-Mahalli.

The actual location of these mosques is not under threat since their role as a place of worship guarantees they are protected. None will go missing overnight but the intricate details that make them unique are in danger of disappearing. The very age of these buildings means they are threatened. Alexandria’s climate favors it, but it is not protected for preserving materials such as wood and mud brick. The Mediterranean air has slowly but surely worn away original features and a great deal of Ottoman masonry suffer from rising damp, especially on the ground floors.

ADecorative Column supporting Tewarna’s minaret

Many of the necessary alterations that have been carried out have been executed without the correct supervision, materials or techniques and go undocumented thus erasing the building’s history. Even simple procedures, such as painting or plastering, can have negative effects if the original scheme is not adhered to and simply covered over in one color. E. M. Forster highlighted such a point when, in this Alexandria, a history and guide, he noted that the Tewarna Mosque was ‘Well worth visiting, in spite of modern plaster and paint.’ In addition, original pieces of the mosque are being replaced without exploring the possibility of restoration. Such an example can be seen in the Ibrani Pasha Mosque where the original wooden doors and hinged system were replaced with new wooden doors despite being in good condition and of significant value. Larger restoration work, such as that needed for windows, minarets or roofs may pose a greater problem and if not completed property can cause much larger problems in the future.

Tewarna’s bronze windows, for example, have been completely removed and the cladding has been filled with rubble. The threat does not only come from within the mosque. Decades of development in Alexandria have meant quick high rise buildings now tower over the mosques encroaching on one of the few remaining historic areas. The digging of these vast foundations does irreversible damage and causes severe weaknesses to the older buildings and their structure.

An example of the beautiful ceramics in Shubagui Mosque

However, there are conservation efforts currently in place. Alex-Med has recently completed a survey of all the Ottoman mosques in the Turkish Town including valuable information that is absent from many books and other sources of information. The book will also contain a number of detailed section drawings and photographs thus creating a thorough documentation of these endangered buildings.

Today, viewing Alexandria from the shore, just as Ibn Jubayr did, there is little evidence to suggest it is a city of minarets, but the few that remain and the surrounding areas remind us that this city’s architectural gems are not only confined to those buildings that have long since disappeared.

It is more mosques than any other city of Islam, so much so that men re-status of their number. Some count more, some less, the latter ranking into the thousands. There are others who give different figures, but wherein they are vast numbers, there being four or five thousand and sometimes they are even larger (Broadhurst 2000). The Travels of an Englishman in Persia (London: Davy & Son, 1824). Forster E.M. (1922) Alexandria A history and a guide. Michael Haag Limited, London. Forster E.M. (1922) Alexandria A history and a guide. Michael Haag Limited, London.

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بُلغ اسمهم عبد المجيد
في نهاية السياق الثاني، كانت هناك فرصة كبيرة...

وانتظره أربعة أيام للتحقق من الأثر ممتعة.

وبذلك، نحن نستطيع أن نقول...

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**ملاحظات**

- يتم ترجمة النصوص العربية إلى الإنجليزية باستخدام خوارزمية.
- النص قد يُحسن أو يُخلط خصائصه وبياناته.
- الطبيعة والتفاصيل غير معروفة.
- قد تكون هناك أخطاء في النص.

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**المصدر**

- المجموعة: مكتبة ميلوث أرسطونيس
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Sham el-Nessim

The annual pharaonic festival of Sham el-Nessim serves as a reminder that Egypt’s heritage is not only defined through its monuments. Literally translating as ‘sniffing the breeze’, this festival falls immediately on the first Monday following the Coptic Easter and celebrates the coming of spring and the passing of winter. Since agriculture was fundamental to the ancient Egyptians’ existence, the harvest is honored and customs and traditions are practiced that would have been performed all over the country thousands of years ago. The surroundings of modern Egypt may be a far cry from those of old but the core traditions of this festival do not appear to have strayed too far from their roots.

The first and most telling sign that Sham el-Nessim is upon us are the large number of crowds picnicking on the grassy green patches around the city. Basking in the Mediterranean sun provides an ideal opportunity to do exactly what the title suggests and smell the rich Alexandrian spring breeze (spare a thought for the Cairoites!) Being in an open and green environment reflects the ancient practice of taking the time to visit the countryside once a year and appreciate its value and contribution to life.

Sham el-Nessim is also celebrated through food, the most well known (and potent) being salted fish, falsoh. This specialty is made by salting and pickling fish (mainly grey mullet, tuna) and the process can take a number of months to complete. Falsoh is considered something of an art form and the recipes are religiously guarded and passed down through generations orally, just as the ancients did before them. Cases of falsoh poisoning are well documented and fatalities are not unheard of (indeed the government has recently set up 48 hour treatment centers especially for Sham el-Nessim and falsoh poisoning). The smell may prompt people to ask whether the fish is as old as the tradition itself, but the fact remains many Egyptians swear by its taste and associate the festival with little else. The link between the ancients and the fish is not only symbolic. When the German Egyptologist Émile Brugsch sent a batch of royal mummies (including Ramses II, Tutankhamun III and Seti I) from Luxor to Cairo in 1861 the customs official kissed the mummies as ‘falseh’ owing to their similarities!

The fish’s significance is not only in its eating; fish offerings were made to ancient Egyptian gods to ensure a good harvest since salted fish symbolized fertility and welfare owing to their abundance in the Nile as a prominent food source.

Other Sham el-Nessim foods include green onions which are supposedly placed under pillows the night before the festival. On awakening in the morning one should crush the onion, smell it and then go outside and ‘sniff the breeze’. Painted boiled eggs also form part of the celebrations and is another tradition thought to be descended from the realm of Horus, Sobek and Anubis. Painted eggs were hung in temples symbolizing regeneration and the cycle of life and are a direct predecessor of modern day Easter eggs.

Sham el-Nessim fell on 24th April this year and is an opportunity for all religions and faiths to escape the ‘office’, find an open space and celebrate the changing of seasons.

Breakfast

Shakshuka
(Fried Eggs with Tomatoes)

This delicious egg dish is quick, simple and a great way to start the day.

Ingredients:

- 3-5 Eggs
- 1 Onion
- 2-3 Ripe Tomatoes
- Cooking Oil
- Salt and Pepper

1. Finely chop the onion and peel and slice the tomatoes.
2. Fry the onion and add the tomatoes. Cook for 10 minutes.
3. Break the eggs onto the onion and tomato mixture.
4. Add salt and pepper.

Labna
(Yogurt Cheese)

Labna originated from the Levant and remains an important dish in Eastern Mediterranean cuisine and of the surrounding countries. Traditionally this dish was made in large quantities (sometimes as much as a whole year’s supply in one batch) over a long period and contains some very basic ingredients that produce the thick and creamy texture. In times gone past, goat’s milk was the primary ingredient and gave labna a distinctively sour taste. It is best served with bread warmed in the oven.

Ingredients:

- 4 Cups of Yogurt
- 1 Tablespoon of Salt
- Olive Oil
- Chessboard Bag

1. Stir the salt into the yogurt and pour into a wet cheesecloth bag. Tie off the opening of the bag and hang for 24 hrs (put a clean container under the bag to collect the whey, which can be used in cooking or for drinking—it is very nutritious).
2. Remove the labna from the bag and place in a jar.
3. Pour olive oil on the top.
ALEX-MED NEWSLETTER

Bringing the Mediterranean Together

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 contribution. If you would like to send your views, comments or contribute to articles 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: Edward Lewis
Graphics: Flora Cavoura
Photography: Abdallah Dawestashy.

Forthcoming events

Cycle de Conférences “Penser la Méditerranée”, la Méditerranée entre les cultures
Lecture: West Hall 3 May 2006, 7pm
De Lesseps: Cet Inconnu, Dr. Ahmed Youssef
Lecture: Coference Hall, 11 May 2006, 7pm
Cycle de Conférences “Penser la Méditerranée”, la Méditerranée en récits
Lecture: West Hall 11 June 2006, 7pm

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:
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