The Hassan Fathi Prize
Award Ceremony, Symposium and Exhibition

Gordon Smith

“Don’t be too proud looking at all this concrete; I cannot leave behind what the Pharaohs did!”

This quotation from Hassan Fathi was delivered by Dr Ismail Serageldin, Director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina on 28 October 2009, during his opening speech for the Hassan Fathi Prize Award Ceremony and Symposium. This prestigious annual award organized by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and the Architectural Committee of the Supreme Council of Culture (Ministry of Culture), took place on 28 October 2009 in the Great Hall in front of a packed audience and was presided by Engineer Salah Hegab, Chairman of the Architectural Committee. Dr Serageldin cited a number of Hassan Fathi’s key sayings including Fathi’s view that builders and architects should study heritage carefully and verify whether new imported materials are indeed better than those left behind, because of the considerable architectural challenges ahead. In conclusion, Dr Serageldin invited Dr El Zeiny to introduce the architects who had participated in the award scheme.

The Architectural Committee had previously met on 24 October 2009 to select the winners. Before announcing the winner, however, the committee wished to congratulate all the architects who took part for “raising people’s awareness of architecture and creating a strong bond between architecture and society, in addition to creating an identity in contemporary Egyptian architecture and protecting the environment”. During the ceremony, the members of the committee were invited onto the stage. It was then announced that the winning project for the Hassan Fathi Award for Architecture 2009 was the Villa El Alayli designed by architects Mohamed Awad and Gamal Samaan. This project had been chosen on account of its design. It was stated that “this unique and simple project recognizes basic architecture and also shows many merits such as balance of the garden and the interior of the house, comfort, all showing an unexaggerated use of design”. In addition to the winning project, three projects were selected by the committee for honorary prizes: the Kafr El Gouna Resort by architects Rami El Dahan and Soheir Farid, the Center of Planning and Architectural Studies by architect Abdel Baki Ibrahim, and the Wadi El Gemal National Park Visitors’ Center designed by Gawad Hashish, Khaled El Hammamy and Ramses Nosphi.

All the members of the jury were then invited to attend the prize giving ceremony. The winner of the award, Dr Mohamed Awad, thanked the committee, adding that the project was the result of 25 years’ work. He explained that there were three basic approaches involved in architectural concepts and approaches: firstly, authenticity and tradition with regards to the yard and front of the house, conserving the identity with Egypt. Secondly, he stressed the importance of the link between the construction team, workshop and site. The third point was not to limit identity to the local level, but to include cross-cultural interaction, involving other cultures.

During the break following the award ceremony, the public was able to visit the exhibition of the submitted projects in the Conference Center. This was followed by the symposium during which nine eminent guest speakers gave their different accounts of the distinguished architect and his legacy. Chaired by engineer Salah Hegab, the symposium covered a range of topics, from Hassan Fathi’s humanism and legacy, to issues concerning the preservation of his heritage.

Nawal Mahmoud Hassan firstly described the home life of Hassan Fathi, how he would welcome all sorts of people, including students, to his seventeenth century house in Cairo. This talk was followed by a lecture by Dr Ali Rafaat on Hassan Fathi’s contribution to local and international trends. He also explained how the great architect had striven to revive building traditions which had died out. Alexandrian born Fathi fought for the conservation of the Alexandria skyline along the Eastern Harbor and Qaitbey Fort area, maintaining the opinion that it should not be spoilt by high rise development. Dr Rafaat also explained that Hassan Fathi often devised his own method and adapted it to an area, for example building a house with natural ventilation to create a cool atmosphere. He also created ‘pop architecture’ a term derived from Architecture for the Poor, because being a revolutionary figure, he defended the rights of poor people to live in a suitable house with sunlight and good ventilation.

Dr Salah Lamei, from the Center for Conservation and Preservation of Islamic Architectural Heritage, then presented an illustrated account of projects undertaken by the German Architectural Institute on Luxor’s West Bank and of projects in Saudi Arabia such as the rehabilitation of Murabba Palace in Riyadh (1998). Dr Lamei explained ‘earth architecture’ and how the use of a modern invention called the digital diagnostic hydrometer can quickly detect by chemical analysis the presence of water in mud brick made of clay and plaster. He also discussed the serious issue of damage to structures such as erosion and decay caused not only by water, but also by insects, soluble salts, and fungal growth.

A description of Hassan Fathi as master and disciple was given by architect Rami El Dahar who related how much he had learnt during his 10 years spent with Fathi, especially with regards to building with brick, but also how Fathi encouraged young architects to introduce domes and archways into projects. He underlined the fact that misconceptions existed concerning Hassan Fathi’s alleged ‘style of architecture’: that Fathi did not in fact have a specific style nor did he imitate any style. Rami El Dahan stressed the fact that Fathi had never stated that works of art from elsewhere should be duplicated in Egypt. El Dahar noted that Fathi was not an architect of the poor, but that he understood their needs. As an architect, Hassan Fathi built for wealthy people.

The prize medal: a Pharaonic symbol of man and the environment

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to alert public opinion and safeguarding the material heritage of Hassan Fathi, especially New Gourna Village.

The final speaker, Dr Tarek Walty, like Dr Nadia Radwan, began by describing in detail the lamentable condition of many buildings in New Gourna Village. He continued his talk by bringing to the attention of all present the devastating redevelopment of Luxor resulting in damage to Hassan Fathi’s work there.
The Hassan Fathi Award for Architecture 2009 was organized by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in collaboration with the Architecture Committee of the Supreme Council for Culture. The theme of this cycle was "Identity in Contemporary Egyptian Architecture". The objectives of this competition are to promote contemporary Egyptian architecture, to encourage and commemorate Egyptian architects, and to eternalize the name of Hassan Fathi, one of the pioneering architects of Egypt. To achieve these objectives, there were several criteria for the submission of architectural projects:

- The project should have been realized.
- The project should be located in Egypt.
- The project should be designed by an Egyptian architect or firm.
- The project should not have already received an award.
- Competitors may submit more than one project.
- The project should reflect aspects of Egyptian contemporary architecture.

The Aga Khan Award kindly supported both the jury composition and the event. The jury was composed as follows:

- Dr. Ismail Serageldin (Chair)
- Dr. Khaled Asfour
- Dr. Rasem Badran
- Architect Salah Hegab
- Dr. Suha Ozkan
- Dr. Salah Zaki
- Representatives of the Society of Egyptian Architects and the Syndicate of Engineers

There were 18 applicants who submitted a total of 32 projects in all. The projects were diverse in terms of size, type and location. The types included residential, touristic, office and religious buildings. The locations of the submitted projects were also diverse, ranging from Cairo and Alexandria, to the Red Sea and Aswan.

The Hassan Fathi Prize for Architecture

The Villa El Alayli (1995)
Designed by Awad & Partners Design & Planning Consultants, Alexandria

On 28 October 2009, the chair of the jury committee, Dr. Ismail Serageldin, announced the Villa El Alayli in Ikingi Mariout, designed and built by Awad & Partners Design & Planning Consultants in 1995, as the winner of the Hassan Fathi Prize for Architecture 2009. Dr. Serageldin presented the winners, architects Dr. Mohamed Awad and Gamal Samaan, with a certificate and medal during an award ceremony held at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

In its "critical regionalist" approach, the concept of the Villa El Alayli attempted to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, while avoiding a reversion to stereotypes or "cut and paste" practices. Tradition thus disguised the endeavors to address the changing needs and new values of contemporary living. Complementing quality living, contemporary convenience and sensitive interaction with the environment, the critical regionalist approach used for the Villa El Alayli satisfied a sustainable and meaningful architecture.

The justifications given by the jury for awarding the prize to the Villa El Alayli were as follows:

- The revival of local identity through the innovative reinterpretation of elements of heritage in the context of a contemporary private residence. This innovation is clearly illustrated in the design of the courtyard and its surrounding spaces.
- Achieving the overall balance between internal spaces and outdoor gardens, designed to complement the overall design philosophy of space.
- Establishing some concepts of sustainability especially those concerned with environmental comfort.
- Avoidance of the intentional overuse of heritage elements for the sake of imposing a local identity on its architecture.
- The excellent architectural vocabulary, precision of details and execution.

The guiding idea behind this project was "tradition reinterpreted". The villa's architect, Dr. Mohamed Awad, adapted a critical regionalist approach while representing a distinctive local identity, symbolizing inherent traditions and, while ensuring a future for the past, celebrated contemporary living and quality in architecture.

A key feature of this project was the central court which plays a central role in the traditional house, and is the focus for socializing circulation and a place for...
climatic comfort. The reinvented court in the Villa El Alayli is an intermediate space of connectivity, grouping integrated diverse space arrangements with multiple associated activities, such as the reception, dining and living spaces. The court of the Villa El Alayli is also open to a variety of external landscapes: an organic cactus desert landscape, a green lawn surrounding the pool and cabana, and a geometrically traced rose garden.

Another key feature of the court in the Villa El Alayli is the diffused top lighting, filtering from a large perforated wooden dome topped by a pyramid glass roof that acts as a collector of sunlight and a natural ventilator. It also protects from environmental hazards during the wet and stormy seasons of Alexandria, thus emphasizing a concept of temporal spaces for climate transition.

The building materials were also significant: cement as a manufactured building material was used to produce bricks, reinforced concrete structures and plastering of the exteriors and interiors, bringing the core and skin of the building into complete fusion. Stones excavated from the site were used to pave the walkways and retain the slopes of garden terraces, further achieving sustainability and compatibility with nature.

Moreover, traditional crafts were celebrated by the use of inlaid marble and wooden lattice mashrabis reinterpreted, thus reintroducing local culture in a contemporary building.

The Honorary Prizes

In addition to the winning project, the jury of the Hassan Fathi Award for Architecture 2009 decided to award three other projects equal honorary prizes in order to encourage Egyptian architects. The three projects chosen were Kafr El Gouna Resort, the Wadi El Gemal National Park Visitors’ Center and the Center of Planning and Architectural Studies.

Architects: Rami El Dahan & Soheir Farid

The jury selected this project because it is unique among other resorts which claim to adopt the “Hassan Fathi Style” by using domes and vaults without however adopting the authentic philosophy of Hassan Fathi. The Kafr El Gouna project adopted an architectural philosophy and ability in design to use heritage elements in a functional way which is in harmony with the surrounding nature and environment, forming an appraisable architectural symphony. The jury was also touched by the fact that this project was initially intended to be hotel staff housing, and ended up becoming a tourist resort.

The village of Kafr El Gouna is located 25 km north of Hurghada. The idea of the village started off as a small residential area to house the staff of the 5 star hotels in the resort. However, instead of designing a group of houses, a new and different proposal was made to create a living and vibrant community with a mix of both permanent and temporary residents. The residential quarter then grew into a major village and gave the resort of Kafr El Gouna a completely new concept.

In addition to 200 residential studios, apartments and villas, Kafr El Gouna comprises many activities and projects including a covered bazaar, a series of restaurants and cafes, an amphitheater, a club house, a museum with an aquarium, as well as three hotels. The vocabulary of domes and vaults was adapted to meet the demands and functions of the buildings. The village was built to reflect a community with different experiences and expressions that are in harmony within the same vocabulary and style. The architecture of Kafr El Gouna has a uniquely traditional Egyptian look that sets it apart from any other project blending the traditional with the functional.
The jury awarded an honorary prize to this project because the building is very simple and in harmony with its surrounding and function. It highlights the fact that architecture can connect to a place and add to it. However, the building does not deal with the challenges and restrictions faced by Egyptian architects in most of their projects that restrain the architects’ imagination. The jury members noted that they would have liked to see the architects’ talent in the area, and to aid in securing the sustainable use of the natural and cultural assets of the region.

The project design was based on three main pillars. Firstly, an atypical design dealt with the project’s components’ spatial program and relations. The second pillar was the formulation of a building technique that reduced cost and environmental impact by using natural local materials. The third pillar was the molding with the first two pillars thus giving the buildings more character and making them blend with their surroundings.

The building is composed of a large corrugated metal roof over a wooden truss-like structure supported by thick stone walls. A second roof made out of modular palm midrib panels and wood beams covers the exhibition spaces. The double roof system allows for the free motion of air dissipating the heat. The building mass shields the outdoor space from the strong prevailing northwesterly winds creating a comfortable shaded area through which visitors can move freely and are kept aware of the surrounding context. Openings are screened with rough tree branches which are used by the local Ababda tribes in their huts.
The Alexandria International Festival 2009, or Alex Fest, was the first of its kind, offering the opportunity to both Alexandrians and visitors to the city to enjoy over 76 events held at a variety of venues during an intense 15 day period.

The festival began on Friday 6 October 2009 with five major events: a Children’s Art Bazaar at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, an Anna Lindh Festival with music, handicrafts and exhibitions held at Qaitbey Fort, a concert of music by the Danish composer Carl Nielson performed by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina’s Orchestra, a concert performed by the Egyptian Musical Youth Society and the Hamburg Children’s Choir at Sayed Darwish Theater, Alexandria’s Opera House, and finally a photographic exhibition on the Life and Works of Guglielmo Marconi was held in the Bibliotheca’s Western Exhibition Hall.

The cultural centers and venues at which the array of events were held included, in addition to the above mentioned, Alexandria Yacht Club, the French Cultural Center, the Suzanne Mubarak Regional Center for Women’s Health and Development, Shallalat Gardens, the American Center, the Russian Cultural Center, the Alexandria Cultural Center for the Arts, Montazah Gardens, Saint Catherine’s Catholic Church, the Swedish Institute, the Hellenic Foundation for Culture, Alexandria Atelier and the Etihad Stadium.

The festival’s sponsors included:
- Alexandria Business Association
- Alexandria Center of the Arts
- Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
- Alexandria Sporting Club
- Alexandria University
- Anna Lindh Foundation
- Bibliotheca Alexandrina
- Egyptian Tourism Authority
- Industrial Modernization Center
- Rotary International
- Suzanne Mubarak Regional Center for Women’s Health and Development

The organizers of the festival hoped that, in addition to contributing to the city’s rich and varied cultural life, Alex Fest 2009 would help to raise the city’s profile within the Mediterranean region, helping to attract both tourists and future business opportunities.
The Egyptian and Japanese Governments agreed in August 2008 to proceed with the establishment of the Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology (E-JUST). An official resolution by the Prime Minister’s cabinet was issued in September 2008 and a bi-national agreement to establish E-JUST was signed on 26 March 2009. The idea of creating a joint university between Egypt and Japan was first introduced in 2003 as one of the projects conducive to the economic and social development of Egypt, which is essential for peace and stability in the region. After a prolonged period of study and analysis, the two countries formally decided in August 2008 to implement the project. The government of Egypt allocated the land and required funds to construct the university in New Borg El Arab city, Alexandria, Egypt. E-JUST will be realized on a partnership basis between the governments of Egypt and Japan.

The proposed vision of the university is to become a world class center of excellence for advanced scientific and technological research with regional and global reach and to become a first rate international academic institution known worldwide for the high standards of its educational system and for the achievements of its research centers.

The mission of E-JUST is to become a model for higher education and research institutions in Egypt by modeling itself on Japanese educational standards, policies and systems. In this regard, E-JUST will foster links of collaboration between Egyptian and Japanese institutions. A major mission of E-JUST is to contribute to the improvement of human resources in the region by providing superior education.

The new campus will reflect innovative design, intelligent buildings, green architecture and energy conservation concepts. The university has been allocated an area of 200 acres to the west of New Borg El Arab City and will target about 3500 students, researchers and faculty members. The new campus will initially be composed of two faculties: the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Business and Humanities. It will also include four centers of excellence: the Nano-engineering Research Center, the Energy Resources and Management Research Center, the Mechatronics/ Electronics Research Center, and the High Tech Training and Continued Education Center. In addition to the academic facilities such as lecture rooms, classrooms, a central library, laboratories and staffrooms, the common facilities of the campus will include an administration building, an auditorium, a technopark and exhibition center, a gallery, a science and technology museum, an innovation center, and community and students services.

The Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology is to be located in the new industrial city of Borg El Arab approximately 53 km south-west of Alexandria and 5 km from the summer Mediterranean resorts along the West Coast. In antiquity, Borg El Arab, or the “Tower of the Arabs”, was located close to the port of Marea on Lake Mareotis, a flourishing port city in the Greco-Roman and Byzantine periods where wealthy Alexandrians had their luxurious summer villas and sailing boats on the lake.
The site of Borg El Arab, extending to the West Coast, is also famous for its ancient temple of Taposiris Magna, known locally as Abu Sir, and its adjacent tower, which is said to have been a small replica to the famous lighthouse of Alexandria, the Pharos. Southwards of Borg El Arab, are the ancient remains of the city of Saint Menas, a site that included a complex of basilicas, residential districts, public baths and shops. An important pilgrimage center in early Christianity, Saint Menas is the only site near Alexandria which is listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Inhabited mainly by Bedouin settlers, Borg El Arab was favored in modern times by British Alexandrians, such as Brinton, Peel, Carver and Bramley. The latter, a British army officer, built a fort-like complex which included a carpet factory to sustain the local Bedouin population and preserve their traditional arts and crafts. New Borg El Arab industrial town emerged from the policies of creating satellite towns following President Anwar Sadat’s Open Door Policy post 1973, for the purpose of creating new centers of human settlement and economic activity outside existing urban centers. The industrial town of Borg El Arab today hosts a population of around 50,000 (2006) and is planned for a future settlement of 500 000 inhabitants.

Educational facilities such as the Mubarak City for Science and Applied Technology, the expansions of Alexandria University and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Borg El Arab, together with the new E-JUST, are expected to create an educational and research milieu, promoting the site with essential economic and social stimuli. The new E-JUST urban and built environments will be responsible for shaping the quality of life on campus and will provide the desired stimulus necessary to promote the process of learning and education. Moreover, it should promote research, interaction and provide services for industry and the surrounding community. While representing state of the art technologies of the twenty-first century, the design concept will also be environmentally friendly and sustainable.

As part of the implementation of the university, an architectural competition in two phases was announced in June 2009. On 14 July 2009, a special orientation seminar was held for Japanese applicants at the Culture Education and Science Bureau, at the Embassy of Egypt in Tokyo, to introduce the project, answer enquiries and give clarifications regarding the submission and competition procedures. Submitted documents for the first phase of the competition were reviewed and evaluated by a bi-national jury appointed by E-JUST. Prequalification documents (75 in total) were received on 30 July 2009. Jury meetings were held on 17-19 August 2009 in Mubarak City for Science and Applied Technologies, Alexandria, to select the shortlisted applicants for the second stage. The twelve shortlisted competitors were invited to visit the site and discuss the terms of reference of the competition on 31 August and 17 September 2009. The final proposals are to be submitted in November 2009, and it is expected that the jury will convene to make their final decision in December 2009.

The campus is intended to serve the university’s educational mission, and promote interaction with the community at large with the provision of services and amenities such as a library, theater, exhibition halls, a club and sport facilities. The technopark and exhibition center, gallery and the science and technology museum are also intended to attract day visitors, especially young people and children. They will exhibit the latest scientific discoveries and technologies.

Additional information and updates can be found on the E-JUST website: http://www.ejust.org/
Qaitbey Fort
Animal Aid Egypt

Who of us does not experience pain and frustration on a daily basis, caused by the suffering endured by the animals on the streets of Alexandria? Who of us does not pray for a means by which their distress could be relieved?

Janet Thomas, an Australian who came to Alexandria for two months was appalled by the condition of our animals, whether on the streets or in the zoo. Somehow, she found a few committed volunteers and together they worked to improve the conditions of the animals in Alexandria Zoo. Their first success was freeing a lone Asian elephant from her day chain, so that she could wander in her enclosure freely, and they also built her a shade canopy and reinforced her night den so that she could not escape. They then moved onto improving the chimpanzee enclosure by working with the keepers to improve the diet of the two resident chimps, providing enrichment in their outside enclosure and campaigning to have their night dens get wooden floors. As soon as she returned to Australia, Janet set up Animal Aid Abroad (AAA) in 2007 to help animals in distress in Egypt and the Nepal. In 2009, Animal Aid Egypt (AAE), was registered as an animal welfare organization #2401.

Now, at last, Alexandrians can turn to AAE for help.

Mission

Animal Aid Egypt (AAE) believes that compassion, kindness and empathy should not be rationed only to humans. An animal feels pain, bewilderment and loss like us. It gives love, loyalty and companionship with unselfish intensity. AAE’s mission is to rescue, rehabilitate and give better lives to the stray, working and abandoned animals in Alexandria, Egypt.

AAE will help any animal in distress or suffering and will work towards educating people on the humane treatment of all animals. AAE’s scope of animals to help includes cats and dogs, working animals such as donkeys, mules, horses and camels, wild animals and farm animals including cows, sheep, goats and pigs, birds and native animals.

Activities

- Providing medical treatment and rescue of injured, suffering and distressed animals;
- Spaying and neutering cats and dogs including stray, street and owned animals. The Animal Birth Control (ABC) program will include vaccinating animals against transmittable diseases such as rabies;
- Providing a mobile clinic service for rescues and medical treatment of equines, camels and farm animals. The mobile clinic will also serve as a mobile educational facility to help and teach equine owners, farm animal owners and people who have pets how to care and treat their animals humanely;
- Providing on-going awareness campaigns and workshops for pet owners and people who have animals, and for the general public;
- Promoting re-homing and adoption of rescued cats and dogs locally and internationally;
- Raising funds to support this small charity organization. Any donations are welcome.

Awareness Campaigns

We believe awareness campaigns are a positive move forward that will lead to the prevention of cruelty and suffering. The awareness campaigns we hold generally revolve around the fact that all animals are sentient creatures and have the right to live free from cruel treatment and unnecessary suffering; animals are capable of feeling and can enjoy a state of well being. We encourage people to care for animals and feel responsible for them.

The Vet Unit

1. Clinic

The AAE clinic was registered in June 2009. It is open from 10 am to 10 pm and is the only veterinary clinic in Alexandria with an X-ray machine. Our aim is to use the funds generated by the paying patients and the X-ray machine to support the equine workshops and provide relief to stray animals. Please help us by bringing your pets to the clinic, rather than asking your vet to make a home visit. If you find an animal in distress on the streets, our vets will come to the site to treat the animal. A number of animals have been saved and are undergoing treatment.

2. Equine Workshops

These workshops are held regularly in underprivileged areas, where the working donkeys and horses can be treated. They are also held at the clinic itself, where queues can now be seen of animals being brought in for treatment and follow up. Treatment and medicine are administered for free.

3. Adoption Program

Through our network, we try to find homes for abused animals that were saved by caring Alexandrians.

The Vet Unit

Sahar Hamouda

Animal Aid Egypt

www.bibalex.org/alexmed/
4. ABC Program

One effective way of solving the problem of stray cats on our streets is to contain their proliferation by an Animal Birth Control program. Two sessions have been conducted so far, in Alexandria Zoo and at the Alexandria Sporting Club.

How can you help?

- Spread the word.
- Use our clinic. Your donations will help us pay for the treatment of poor and stray animals.
- Call the clinic or vets if you find an ill or abused animal on the street.
- Adopt a puppy or kitten through our adoption program.
- Become a member or a volunteer.
- Join us in fundraising activities.

Address: 34 Mohamed El Serafi Street, Sidi Bishr, Alexandria, Egypt.
Phone: (03) 5968639.
Mobile: 0181990663.
Vets: Dr. Mohamed Nagy: 0122564740 – 0177226488; Dr. Bassem Youssef: 01677710814.
Alexandria: Birthplace of the Mediterranean Games
One Sea... One Dream

The Mediterranean Games are a kind of Regional Olympics bringing together athletes from the Mediterranean Basin countries. They consist of several competitions including aquatics, archery, basketball, bowls, boxing, canoe-kayak, cycling, equestrian sports, fencing, football, golf, gymnastics, handball, paralympics, judo, karate, rowing, sailing, shooting, table tennis, tennis, track and field events, volleyball and beach volleyball, weightlifting and wrestling. The objective of these games is to bring together the athletes of the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) of the Mediterranean Basin, in individual or team events under the control of the International Committee of Mediterranean Games (ICMG) and in conformity with the Olympic Charter.

The father of the Mediterranean Games was an Egyptian—Mohamed Taher Pasha (1897–1970)—son of Mustapha Chéïk Bey and Princess Amina Ismail, the daughter of the Khedive Ismail. Taher Pasha, a doctor in political sciences, believed that sport was a means to achieve peace and fraternity. He founded the Egyptian Flying Club in 1931 and served as the President of the International Aeronautics Federation from 1934 to 1947. He was also President of the Egyptian Federation of Fencing from 1936 to 1952.

Taher Pasha was also the chief of the protocol of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Member of the Executive Commission of the IOC from 1952 to 1957. Then, from 1960 to 1964 he was the assistant of Avery Brundage, the president of the International Olympic Committee.

Following the Summer Olympic Games held in London in 1948 shortly after the end of World War II, Taher Pasha wanted to make the competition a symbol of peace in a period clouded by the tension between the great powers. He succeeded to convince the National Olympic Committees of the Mediterranean countries to create the Mediterranean Games. Taher Pasha was certain that sports were an exceptional means to achieve peace and brotherhood.

The first Mediterranean Games took place in Alexandria, Egypt, from 15 to 20 October 1951 in the actual Alexandria Stadium where ten countries participated: Greece, Egypt, France, Italy, Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Malta, Syria, Spain and Turkey. The total number of athletes in 1951 was 734, consisting exclusively of sportsmen. Italy came at the top of the medals’ list with 28 gold medals out of 65, followed by France with 26 gold medals and Egypt in third place with 20 gold medals.

Four years later in 1954, the second Mediterranean Games took place in Barcelona, bringing the number of participating athletes to 1135 men. Feminine participation in the Mediterranean Games started only in 1967, at the fifth Mediterranean Games organized in Tunis, with 38 sportswomen participating.

After the success of the First Mediterranean Games in Alexandria, the next ten Mediterranean Games were held once every four years, twelve months before the Summer Olympic Games, in the following cities: Barcelona (Spain), 1955; Beirut (Lebanon), 1959; Naples (Italy), 1963; Tunis (Tunisia), 1967; Izmir (Turkey), 1971; Algiers (Algeria), 1975; Split (Yugoslavia), 1979; Casablanca (Morocco), 1983; Latakia (Syria), 1987; Athens (Greece), 1991. Then it was decided to move the games to the year after the Summer Olympics: Montpellier (France), 1993 (one year earlier not to overlap with the Olympic Games); Bari (Italy), 1997; Tunis (Tunisia), 2001; Almeria (Spain), 2005 and Pescara (Italy), 2009. Taher Pasha died on 29 January 1970, one year before the Games of Izmir, where the Turkish Olympic Committee rendered him a moving homage.

Today, twenty-three countries participate in the Mediterranean Games: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Croatia, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Monaco, Montenegro, Saint-Marin, Serbia, Syria, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, and Turkey. They are becoming increasingly popular and growing in importance. The last Mediterranean Games were held in Italy, gathering more than 3,000 athletes. Italy currently holds the most Mediterranean Game medals: 1786 in total.

Today, sport has become an ever-expanding global social and business phenomenon. The Olympic motto “Citius, Altius, Fortius...” (Faster, higher, stronger...) raised by the athletes, stands alongside economic interests and agreements covering the major international sporting events.

The flag of the Mediterranean Games consists of three rings symbolizing Europe, Africa and Asia, which are the three continents involved in this competition and which have coastlines on the Mediterranean Sea. The rings form a wavy line in their lower part, as if bathed in the Mediterranean Sea waters. At the closing ceremony of each Mediterranean Games, the flag is transferred to the country chosen to hold the next Games. The 2013 Mediterranean Games will take place in Greece, home of the original Olympics.
Djemil—that was how he and everybody else wrote and pronounced his name, not Gamil. The full name was Djemil Camel-Toueig, embossed on generations of maids’ frilly aprons. The maternal name was Padovani—an upgrading of the more mundane Arabic Bedwani. The last of the truly Alexandrian dinosaurs: that dying breed of cosmopolitans who had given Alexandria its special flavor.

Djemil’s family was originally from Upper Egypt, but laced with some Syrian blood, he looked more foreign than Egyptian. His heavily accented Arabic led many to believe he was a khawaja. When invited to a lecture given by Abdel Rahman El Abnoudi, he retorted, "Qui ça, Abnoubi? Ça ne m’intéresse pas!"

His Arabic words had French suffixes: the chocolate cake for which the Awad household was famous was "tourte Awadienne"; his foul meddames which he cooked over a slow fire for twelve hours was "foul Djemilien"; he took his Turkish coffee "saddousse" (without sugar). People, too, had epithets that stuck to them forever. Samia was Samia Bamia, and fifty-year-old Youssef Mossali was "le petit Moussali".

When he couldn’t remember the name of a particular woman who was wearing a pair of shorts, he described her as "Om Short" and that’s what she went down history as. Another was "la blonde affreuse" and a third was "la pauvre". She wasn’t “poor thing”, because she had no money, but because she had no brains.

Djemil was a small dapper man who took great care over his appearance, for only perfection was allowed around his person. At dinner parties a bow tie was in order. If the occasion was less formal, a foulard was acceptable. He pointed at the shabby people in the streets and remembered with nostalgia the days when the tram comssari was impeccably dressed in a clean uniform and had a shaved chin.

Djemil’s outstanding trait was a huge appetite—for food, for women, for life. At seventy some years, he could go to more dinner parties and stay up later than much younger people. No party or outing was ever complete without him. Despite his severe heart condition, he refused to give up his whiskey, his molokhia dripping with mutton fat, his flamenco dancing, and his constant search for love with the perfect woman. Despite his small size, he was larger than life. His income was never enough for him. As soon as it came, friends were bombarded with flowers and presents. Dinners were given on a daily basis. Maids were clothed in new uniforms. Debts to the pharmacy and grocer and florist were paid. By the tenth of the month he was broke and necessities were bought on credit. And if I shivered in the January cold at night he would cry in concern, "All this beauty and no gallant chevalier to buy you a fur coat? Have men lost their eyesight! Où nous-sommes?! Ah me!" he would continue with genuine sorrow. "If only I had the money, I would buy you the fur coat that you deserve!"

Djemil had a wealth of stories about the scandals of the Alexandrian elite of the forties and fifties that he constantly regaled his audience with and that made him the performer par excellence. And he was a repository of the social history of Alexandria; and knew who each member of each family was, what house they lived in and what house they had moved to, who married who, who came up in the world and who came down. Had he been a writer he would have produced books that would have truly reflected the city and its inhabitants. And he was far from being a mere socialite. Trained in the profession of his father, an auctioneer, Djemil was a connoisseur of art and antiques and was certainly capable of holding an intelligent conversation and understanding high-brow lectures. But his forte was life in its broader aspect. Every detail in it mattered.

When Sham El Nessim came round, his friends groaned. He whipped them into a frenzy of preparation weeks ahead of the event. Throughout all his life, he demanded from them the same amount of love, attention and time that he gave them. They did not always have that kind of time and emotions to return. But when he died, Sham El Nessim ceased to materialize at all, for they did not seem to have the interest and energy that Djemil had had. They had lost their center, and Alexandria became a lot less lively place, and a grayness seemed to settle over it.

* This article was previously published in the Cairo Times 29 October–11 November 1998.

Ératosthène de Cyrène (275–194 av. J.-C.) fut l’un des savants de cette prestigieuse institution : il en fut le troisième directeur et en même temps, un savant encyclopédique. Il fit d’énormes contributions dans nombreux domaines scientifiques et littéraires — mais le projet qui éternisa son nom dans l’esprit des hommes fut devenu la mesure de la circonférence de la Terre. Ératosthène fut le premier savant à effectuer cette mesure avec une marge d’erreur qui ne dépassait pas 1%, si l’on compare sa mesure aux résultats des mesures modernes exécutées à l’aide des moyens les plus évolués.

Denis Guedj, professeur d’histoire des sciences à l’Université Paris VIII, s’est inspiré de la personnalité d’Ératosthène de Cyrène et de son grand projet pour écrire son roman, Les Cheveux de Bérénice, paru chez les Éditions du Seuil en 2003. Il est à souligner d’ailleurs, que Guedj est déjà connu et apprécié pour son talent à expliquer les secrets mathématiques à travers la littérature.

Tout d’abord, le titre de ce roman attire l’attention : il s’agit du nom d’une constellation ainsi que le titre d’un poème célèbre. La constellation Coma Bèrenices, fut découverte au moment où la reine Bérénice II, épouse de Ptolémée III Évergète, avait placé ses longs cheveux sur l’autel de la déesse Isis en offrande pour demander le retour sain et sauf de son mari parti en guerre contre les Assyriens. Lorsque les cheveux de la reine disparurent mystérieusement du temple la nuit suivante, l’astronome Conon de Samos, pour apaiser le roi et la reine outragés, attribua leur disparition à la déesse qui les avait placés dans le ciel créant ainsi cette nouvelle constellation. En outre, cette offrande royale fut aussi éternisée par un beau poème du bibliothécaire pionnier Callimaque de Cyrène. De la sorte, Denis Guedj choisit un mythe pour entrer dans le monde où fut effectuée la première mesure de la Terre.

Guedj commence son roman, qui raconte une phase de l’histoire des Ptolémées, par l’épigraphe : «Ankh, Oudja, Seneb Vie, Force, Santé» selon la croyance des anciens Égyptiens, cette formule en hiéroglyphe, était un souhait pour une vie florissante, prospère et couronnée de santé.

Dès les premières pages du roman, le lecteur est plongé dans un univers où foisonne une richesse de détails historiques évoquant l’Égypte de l’époque. Au cours des siècles, les convictions religieuses et mythologiques des anciens Égyptiens s’entremêlaient avec celles des Ptolémées : ainsi, dans ce roman le célèbre mythe égyptien d’Isis et Osiris côtoie la légende des Cheveux de Bérénice. Guedj remonte le fils du temps pour faire découvrir au lecteur un monde ancien, dominé par des règles peu familières. Il démontre comment un savant à la hauteur d’Ératosthène était le fruit d’une société avide de connaissances, et que son projet de mesurer la Terre n’aurait jamais vu le jour sans l’influence de son entourage scientifique ainsi que le soutien accordé par les rois Ptolémées. Le lecteur découvre aussi la grande beauté exceptionnelle d’Alexandrie hellénistique, ses monuments légendaires tels le Phare, le port, le quartier et le palais royaux, l’ancienne Bibliothèque et le Sôma (la tombe d’Alexandre le Grand).

Ératosthène de Cyrène vécut pendant le règne de trois rois de la dynastie des Lagides: Ptolémée III Évergète, Ptolémée IV Philopator et Ptolémée V Épiphané. Or, bien que Ptolémée III Évergète soit mentionné au début du roman, Guedj focalise son récit sur le règne de Ptolémée IV Philopator pendant lequel la mesure de la Terre fut effectuée. Or, après les règnes de ses trois puissants prédécesseurs — Sôter, Philadelph et Évergète — celui de Philopator marque le début du déchirement de la famille royale : une période de décadence qui précipitera la chute éventuelle de la dynastie ptolémaïque.

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Néanmoins, en fin de compte c’est la science qui triomphe face aux manipulations politiques et aux dédales du pouvoir ; son triomphe symbolise la contribution sans égale des travaux scientifiques achevés au sein de l’ancienne Bibliothèque d’Alexandrie. Ainsi, pour clore son roman, Guedj termine par la remarque suivante : « Cette mesure effectuée plus de deux siècles avant notre ère est attribuée à la Terre une circonférence de 29600 kilomètres. Aujourd’hui, les méthodes les plus précises donnent 40000,07 kilomètres ».10

Finalement, Denis Guedj a su placer Ératosthène dans son contexte historique. À travers son imagination féconde et une documentation rigoureuse, le romancier a recréé les personnages clés d’un monde ancien, il a fait revivre un monde disparu dont la contribution scientifique est toujours parmi nous. Le romancier précise : « L’histoire des sciences est pleine … d’histoires de sciences, dans lesquelles la vérité ne s’oppose pas à la fiction, mais la nourrit, la rigueur ne s’oppose pas à la narration mais la sous-tend ».11

Notes
1 Doctorat ès lettres, Département de Langue et de Littérature Françaises, Faculté des Lettres, Université d’Alexandrie.
5 Denis Guedj, op.cit. p. 150.
6 L’actuel Assouan.
7 Ibid, p. 367.
8 Ibid., Les Cheveux de Bérénice, p. Loc. cit.
10 Denis Guedj, Les Cheveux de Bérénice, p. 373.
في ليلة الرابع من أغسطس 2009 سمح النجوم ل soát لحفل الافتتاح السينمائي المثير في الإسكندرية في بيت السينما الإسكندرية، بقيادة الناقدة والفنانة فريدة المكاوي، بإبراز القدرات الفنية للسينما العربية.

الدكتور إبراهيم سيف، ويلد سيف، الصحفي الأمير أبو زهلا، المصور الدكتور الطيب خليل، الدكتور رفيق الصبان، العامر أحمد حسنين، الناقد أيمن شريف، حضرتهم صفوة من النقاد، وكانت تضم: الأستاذ مجدي النبوي، الرياضي الشهير بировал، والمتربع إبراهيم النجدي، والمخرج أمير خليل.

وتوالت العروض لأكثر من ثمانون فيلم، كلها متحملة للدول العربية، وشارك في هذه المسابقة الرسمية، فيلم (ربيع عقارب) المصدرة من تونس، وفيلم (زنده) المصدرة من فلسطين، وفيلم (نورا) المصدرة من المالديف، وفيلم (سحر) المصدرة من كندا.

وتوزيع الجوائز، وكانت النتائج كالآتي:

- جائزة كمال الملاخ: (كريستين سكوت ثورن) مونتريال، عن فيلم (يا سيدة) روسيا.
- جائزة خاصة: (يوسف هشام) مصر، عن فيلم (لمح البصر).
- جائزة خاصة: (أرسين برتان) تركيا، عن فيلم (تضميد جراح الماضي).
- جائزة خاصة: (ويليام ويلسون) إيطاليا، عن فيلم (فرنسيس).
- جائزة خاصة: (جويو غريب) إيطاليا، عن فيلم ( אנجلو متراقي).
- جائزة خاصة: (أيتنام أمين) إيطاليا، عن فيلم (ةندينتي).
- جائزة خاصة: (دالن ماتانيس) كرواتيا، عن فيلم (كينو ليكا).
- جائزة خاصة: (أدام بلمان) إيطاليا، عن فيلم (أرض لا أحد) المملكة المتحدة.
- جائزة خاصة: (فانيسا فيگاس) إيطاليا، عن فيلم (الغرفة المظلمة) فرنسا.
- جائزة خاصة: (براندو بافي) إيطاليا، عن فيلم (لندن).
- جائزة خاصة: (أزيمه بطرس) إيطاليا، عن فيلم (كل شيء عن الموسيقا).
- جائزة خاصة: (أيتن مند) إيطاليا، عن فيلم (عنادي).
- جائزة خاصة: (رمال المصرية) أيمن خليل، عن فيلم (الميلاد).
- جائزة خاصة: (الغد الميت) صحراوي، عن فيلم (دايم).
- جائزة خاصة: (أوبرا الإسكندرية) حاييم، عن فيلم (العودة).
Molokhia

Molokhia, sometimes referred to in English as Jews’ mallow, is a traditional national dish in Egypt. Although the molokhia plant (Corchorus olitorius) is found and cooked in many parts of the Levant and the Maghreb, its popularity in Egypt is believed to date back to the time of the Pharaohs. Such was the popularity of this dish that during the Fatimid era, the eccentric Caliph Al-Hakim even banned the consumption of molokhia in Egypt as part of his morality drive!

Although better when cooked fresh, the leaves of the molokhia plant can also be used frozen or dried. When chopped, the leaves of this plant produce a mucilaginous substance which gives the molokhia soup its distinctive texture. Molokhia is also known for its nutritious qualities, being rich in iron, vitamin C and antioxidants especially.

Ingredients

½ kilo fresh washed molokhia leaves patted dry
Chicken stock (rabbit stock or meat stock can also be used)
1 finely chopped onion (optional)
1 tbsp tomato paste
several cloves of garlic, minced
1 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp salt
Oil for frying

Preparation

1. Chop the molokhia as finely as possible. In Egypt this is traditionally done with a makhrata—a kind of curved blade with a handle at each end—however this can be done with any good chopping knife.
2. Bring the chicken stock almost to the boil and add the molokhia stirring well.
3. Stir in the tomato paste and onion (optional). Reduce heat and simmer for a few minutes.
4. Melt the butter in a small frying pan.
5. Using the back of a spoon grind the garlic and coriander into a paste. Fry the mixture in the oil for 2 to 4 minutes until the garlic is slightly browned.
6. After the simmering molokhia has acquired the consistency of a thick soup, add the coriander and garlic mixture. Stir well.
7. Serve immediately while hot. Molokhia is usually served with boiled white Egyptian rice, and often with chicken.
ALEX-MED NEWSLETTER

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 a gastronomical page to illustrate 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: Mina Nader
Photography: Abdallah Dawestashy

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