

■ Impressions of Alexandria ■ Shadi Abdel Salam ■



Ramses II ■ Architectural Alexandria ■ Edwar El Kharrat ■

Daphne Du Maurier ■ De Lesseps ■ Brazilian Coffee Stores ■

Loria ■ Life is Hard ■ Desmond O'Grady ■ Muggi ■



وأحلم أحلاماً مضطربة، أحاول أن أقرأ رواية، أو أنتظر صديقاً قبل ميعاده بكثير، أو أقرر، خلال ساعات، هل أذهب إلى سينما، أي سينما، أم إلى قهوة الفريسيكادور أو باستروديس في شارع سعد زغلول، أو سان جيوفاني في ستانلي، لمجرد أنني لا أطيق البقاء بين أربعة حيطان وحدي.

حضور هذا البحر قوي وصوت أمواجه تضرب حجارة الرصيف رتيب وعنيد، نزلت جماعة صاحبة من عساكر الأستراليين، بقبعاتهم العريضة الواسعة، من عربة حنطور وقفت أمام كازينو "زفير"، وهم يصفرون للبنات والنسوان بملاءاتهن المحبوكة على الأرذاف، ويهتفون دون جدية ودون اهتمام تقريباً:

"Come on, Luv," Fantazia "Come on Bint" بامتياز، هي بالتحديد، الاحتفاء بجمال الحياة ومسرات المعرفة، والنشوة بالحب، ووضع المطلق المتسامي، الصحراوي أو الجبلي أي الحار العنيف أو الصخري السامق، في مقاييسه الإنسانية، إن "المتوسطة" لا تروض المطلق الوحشي ولا تدجنه، بل هي تؤنسه، تجعل من ألوهيته وضعا إنسانياً، أي توحد توحيداً كاملاً بين الإلهي والإنساني، هذا هو ميراث الأريثونكسية القبطية الاسكندرانية، في مواجهة صلف الكبرياء الإلهي الجرمانى مثلاً، أو في مواجهة انسحاق البشري الهندوكي مثلاً، في الوقت نفسه.

وإذا كنت أحس أنني - حقاً - حفيد كاليماخوس،

وأبولونيوس، وثيوكرديس، شعراء الموزيون السكندري العريق، فذلك أنني متوسطي وصعيدي في الوقت نفسه، وثني وقبلي معاً، مصري وعربي معاً، ومازلت أحس بالقربي الوثيقة بين اسكندريتي - واخميميتي - بين تامودا (تطوان) وطرابلس، بين تيباسا وتابارورا (صفاقس) بين توجلوس (جسر الماكينة) وأوجستا تورينوريام (تورينو). ما أشد رهبة هذا اليم، وما أقوى دعوته وغوايته، عذوبته لا تضارع. عبق ماء البحر الملح، نفت سمك ذفره يتضوع. الصدفة التي رأيتها، ذات حلم، وردية اللحم، داكنة، حجرية للزوجة، متماسكة وطرية، على شاطئ جسمي الرملي، ما زالت ماثلة، لا تغرق ولا تجف.

على شمالي، وأنا نازل السلالم: ساحة صغيرة أمام كازينو رشدي الخاوي دائماً حتى في عز الصيف، وإلى يميني جدار عال عريض، مصمت، يسحرني، ليس فيه نافذة أو فتحة من أي نوع. في لون الكريم، تنمو عليه وتلتصق به تعاريج نبات داكن الخضرة، نضر، كثير التفاريع. وهواء البحر يسفغني.

أسمع سعف النخيل السلطاني على جانبي محطة الرمل القديمة، يهفهف. مازالت تخايلني حتى الآن. هذه المحطة القديمة، وكشك ناظر المحطة الخشبي المسقوف بالقرميد الأحمر الداكن، فيه دفء كفاءة مفقودة، واحترام الدقة التي ولت زمانها.

أجلس في "كازابلانكا" في الدور الثاني، وراء



النافذة الزجاجية العريضة. الغيم في سماء الصباح البدري ينزل فوق البحر البعيد، أنتظر كقلب واجف أن تعبر نعمتي، أمام المقهى. أنا الآن في السابعة من العمر، مازلت وحدي، في "أبو قير" على سيف البحر، في وسط خليج صغير، مملوء بمياه شفافة بلورية النقاء، تترقق فيها خطوط متعرجة كأنها مرسومة بقلم متحرك رقيق، تذهب وتجي بنعومة بين الصخور الصغيرة اللامعة التي تنحسر عنها المياه فتجف بسرعة ثم تعود فتبتل.

سرعان ما غاب المايوه الأزرق الباهت الذي كانت ترتديه فيكتوريا - كنت أحبها - وكانت ممشوقة القوام جميلة، أنثوية وكأنها ليست من هذه الأرض، أصبحت الآن نقطة بعيدة في البحر الواسع.

كنت ومازلت أذهب، في ماض هذا الحب الذي لم أكن أعرف كيف أحتمله ولا أعرف كيف ينتهي، إلى كازينو كليوباترا، وأقضي ساعات بعد الظهر المبكر أنظر إلى البحر،

ذكريات سكندرية

مقتطفات من رواية أنا والبحر الأبيض المتوسط" لإدوارد خراط"

إعداد راندا أحمد



ليس البحر الأبيض عندي مقابلاً - أو رمزاً أو شفرة - للآم، أو المرأة، لأرتمي في مياهه، ليست أمواجه مما ألقى بنفسي إليها، مطمئناً، ناعم الحس بالراحة والاستسلام.

ومع افتتاني به، وسحره الذي يوقعه بي، فكأنه أب صارم حتى في لحظات هدونه وسجوه مياهه، إنه كيان قلق ومقلق، غاضب حتى في رقرقته الوديعه، عميق لا أعرف - ولن أعرف أبداً - غور أعماقه وما يخفيه تحت صفحته الساكنة أو الجياشة على السواء،

صدمة أمواجه في أحجار الميناء الشرقية البيضاء ما تزال أصداؤها في جنبات روحي، منذ أيام الصبا الباكر، ومازلت أحس رذاذ مائه في الأصباح الشتوية مشرقة الشمس يطرس وجهي ويبلل عنقي المفتوح.

ألوان البحر الأبيض قد أخذت تتخطط، أمام عيني، بنفسجية وزرقاء وبيضاء فضية مشعة، تحت سحاب أبيض تختفي الشمس وراءه، وتضيئه باحمرار سائل مشاع، هدوء البحر عميق، صفحته مبسوطة لا تكاد تترجرج، وشوشة الموج الذي يتفرق، على مهل.

مراكب الصيد الصغيرة بأشرعتها الضيقة تهتز على الموج الذي يكاد يكون مسطحاً، وداكن الزرقة. رأيت الصيادين بالسديري

وكان ألم الحب، والغيرة، والامتهان يعصرني، للألم رائحة المدابغ النفاذة العطنة التي خنقتني، ولم أكن واثقاً أنها سوف تأتي، كنت قد تيفنت الآن أنها لن تأتي، أقف غير مدرك تماماً ماذا يقع لي، تحت سور القلعة القديم بأحجاره الكبيرة الرمادية، يرتفع إلى يساري شاهقاً يحجز انهياراً دائم الحدوث، لا يحجب هذا الانهيار إلا كلماتي التي أخرج بها من قاع البحر، وكأني لا أرى البياعين والصيادين جالسين القرفصاء، أمام مشنات ومغالق وقفف تفيض بالسردين والبوري والمياس والجمبري والكاپوريا، أحاذر أن أدوس على أجسام السمكات الصغار المنفية، مثل كلماتي، مهروسة على الرصيف مسطحة، انبعجت من أبيضها بروزات دمما باهتة عند البطن والرأس المدعون المسوي بالأرض.

كان كل شيء يبدو معادياً، وقريباً جداً مني، كازينو زفير بخشبه الأخضر الداكن وزجاجه المغبش يلوح لي غير بعيد، كذلك مزلقان سكة الحديد وعليه بالخط الثلث الكبير، "ثابت ثابت وشركاه نترات الشيلي الطبيعي". كانت هذه الكلمات تجعلني أحلم باستمرار منذ أن كنت أجي مع خالي حنين الذي أسميه خالي ناتان إلى الكازينو، ونأكل السمك بالليمون والبصل والبهارات في ورقة دسمة طالعة سخنة من الفرن. البيت ذو الشرفات العربية المنمنمة الذي تعرفته، حائلاً وشكله مهجور ولكنه هو، بعد ذلك بأربعين سنة، فندق سي جل - لم يكن عندئذ مطعماً مزخرف الأناقة يرتاده البورجوازيون، بل كان مبنى مصمت الجدران رملي اللون مغويا وغامضاً مغلقاً على أسراره المشبوهة.

على الكورنيش في آخر رشدي باشا، سلام حجرية - أحسها الآن تحت قدمي - منحوتة من البازلت، تنحدر إلى أول شاطئ ستانلي.

واللباس الاسكندراني الأسد الواسع الطيات، ببساطون شباكهم وينفضونها من السردين، فينتابع ويصطدم ويرتطم بخبطات طرية دسمة، ويسقط على الكومة الفضية التي ترتعد مازالت بالحياة، في قاع المركب. ينحني الصيادون ويلقون بالسمكات الصغار إلى البحر، والأولاد بأجسامهم المحروقة يسبحون حول المراكب، منهم العراة تماماً ومنهم من اكتفى باللباس العبك المتهدل.

قلت: "ليس البحر الأبيض، فقط، استعارة شعرية، أو نوستالجيا رومانتيكية، الجوع والفقر والكفاح من أجل البقاء على شاطئه الجنوبي ليس حلماء، وليس هذا الشاطئ فقط، منتجعا للبورجوازيين وأثرياء الخليج وحيثان الانفتاح المصريين، صخرة النوارس من جليمونوبولو إلى المكس، صخرة صلبة مهما كان ترابها من زعفران".

كنت قد أخذت ترام المكس المفتوح من الجانبين،



La Méditerranée en récits*

Thierry Fabre*

Pourquoi la Méditerranée n'est-elle pas une simple « mer avec des poissons dedans » ? Comment se fait-il que notre regard sur cette « mer entre les terres » ne soit pas simplement maritime mais qu'il évoque un fait de civilisation, ou comme le disait Paul Valéry, « une machine à faire de la civilisation » ? C'est sans doute par ce que la Méditerranée est chargée d'imaginaires, qu'elle est faite de récits, qu'elle est devenue, au fil de l'histoire, un territoire d'écriture, un lieu d'inspiration pour les écrivains. Ainsi s'est peu à peu constitué, autour de la Méditerranée, ce que le philosophe Paul Ricoeur a appelé une « identité narrative »... Elle prend corps dans les mots et dans les textes.

J'aimerais explorer le « Musée imaginaire » de la Méditerranée, non à partir de tableaux, comme jadis l'a initié André Malraux, mais à partir de textes. Ce choix de textes est personnel, c'est donc une histoire personnelle et littéraire de la Méditerranée que j'aimerais présenter ici.



La Méditerranée est à mes yeux un songe qui s'écrit, un horizon qui se traverse à partir des mots. Allons sur ce chemin découvrir ce que Predrag Matvejevitich appelle justement un « bréviaire méditerranéen », feuilletons quelques pages de cette Méditerranée en récits à partir desquels se dessinent les fragments de la mosaïque méditerranéenne...

1^{er} fragment. Puisque nous sommes à Alexandrie, j'aimerais commencer par Cavafy et l'évocation de son Ithaque. Cavafy instaure d'emblée un lien avec l'Odyssée, texte fondateur d'un imaginaire de la Méditerranée qui donne tout son sens au voyage :

« (...)
Garde toujours Ithaque dans ton esprit,
C'est vers elle que tu vas.
Mais ne hâte pas ton voyage :
Mieux vaut qu'il dure beaucoup d'années,
Que tu sois vieux déjà en abordant ton île,
Riche de ce que tu auras gagné sur ta route,
Et sans espoir qu'Ithaque te donne des richesses.

Ithaque t'a donné ce beau voyage.
Sans elle, tu n'aurais pas pris la route.
Elle n'a plus rien à te donner. »

2^{ème} fragment: Taha Hussein et sa prière sur l'Acropole. Il renoue avec l'héritage grec dans la culture égyptienne. Cet héritage n'est pas considéré par Taha Hussein comme un corps étranger mais comme une dimension à part entière de cette culture, comme un de ses moments historiques. Taha Hussein donne, sur le plan littéraire, le visage d'un possible syncrétisme entre les différentes strates qui composent la culture égyptienne. C'est un peu comme les portraits du Fayoum qui sont l'expression majestueuse du lien entre art grec et art nilotique. Pour Taha Hussein, il n'y a pas d'extériorité de la culture grecque, il rejette l'idée de tabula-rasa et de jahiliya. Le choix des filiations historiques et des héritages culturels prend une grande



dimension politique, et sans doute plus encore aujourd'hui où le risque du monolithisme identitaire et de l'appartenance univoque ne cessent de s'affirmer...

3^{ème} fragment. A partir de la fameuse rencontre entre Ibn Arabi et Ibn Rochd (Avéroès) en Andalousie. Il s'agit d'une Méditerranée qui allie les deux rives de la connaissance, qui conjugue connaissance visionnaire et connaissance rationnelle. Écoutons un court passage du dialogue entre Ibn Rochd (Avéroès) et Ibn Arabi : « Quelle sorte de solution as-tu trouvée par l'illumination et l'inspiration divine ? Est-ce identique à ce que nous dispense à nous la réflexion spéculative ? » je lui répondis : « Oui et non. Entre le oui et le non les esprits prennent leur vol hors de leur matière, et les nuques se détachent de leur corps. » Avéroès pâlit, je le vis trembler ; il murmura la phrase rituelle : il n'y a de force qu'en Dieu, car il avait compris ce à quoi je faisais allusion ».

4^{ème} fragment. Pour rester en Andalousie, j'évoquerai volontiers la figure de Federico Garcia Lorca, et de ce qu'il appelle le duende, ce sentiment si proche de ce qui en arabe se nomme le tarab !

« La venue du duende présuppose toujours un bouleversement radical de toutes les formes traditionnelles, procure une sensation de fraîcheur tout à fait inédite, qui a la qualité de la rose nouvellement créée, du miracle, et suscite un enthousiasme quasi-religieux. » Et Lorca ajoute : « le duende ne se répète jamais, pas plus que ne se répètent les formes de la mer sous la bourrasque ».

Je pourrais ainsi continuer de fragments en fragments et de textes en récits. Évoquer une Méditerranée sicilienne, avec Leonardo Sciascia et Goliarda Sapienza ; une Méditerranée marseillaise et algéroise, à travers l'héritage des Cahiers du Sud (Jean Ballard, Louis Braquier, Gabriel Audisio), et celui des éditions Edmond Charlot à Alger et la figure de Camus, de Jean Grenier ou de Jean Amrouche, ou plus contemporain évoquer la figure de Jean Claude Izzo et de ses « Marins perdus » à Marseille ; une Méditerranée balkanique, à travers Ivo Andric ou Predrag Matvejevitich, une Méditerranée turque, avec le « Pêcheur d'Halicarnasse » ou Orhan Pamuk, une Méditerranée grecque avec Séféris, Elytis ou aujourd'hui Takis Theodoropoulos ; une Méditerranée juive, dont les diaspora ont irrigué en profondeur les cultures de la plupart des pays méditerranéens, comme par exemple ici en Egypte l'œuvre d'Edmond Jabès ; une Méditerranée arabe et berbère, je pense en particulier à Kateb Yacine en Algérie, à Georges Schéhadé, à Amine Maalouf ou à Elias Khoury au Liban, à Gamal al Ghitany ou à Edouard Kharrat en Egypte...

L'odyssée des textes et des récits serait sans fin et je ne retrouverai de toute façon pas mon Ithaque !

&

En suivant le fil de ces multiples récits qui s'entrelacent, apparaît une mosaïque méditerranéenne. S'agit-il de simples fragments assemblés, disparates, ou tout cela forme-t-il un ensemble ?

La configuration de la Méditerranée change au fil du temps, elle est parfois fragmentée, éclatée, dévastée par l'intensité de la violence et de la haine qui la traverse. Je pense tout particulièrement en ce moment à la violence entre Israël et la Palestine et aux actes militaires d'occupation...

Mais en dépit ou par delà cette violence, la Méditerranée forme aussi un monde commun, elle fait apparaître un « air de famille » dans lequel il est possible de se reconnaître. Un mode d'être au monde méditerranéen se dessine et la littérature nous en fait partager le style, les passions et les rêves.

Appartenance fragile, sans doute, qui ne conjugue jamais l'Un sans le Multiple, ensemble à plusieurs voix qui ne saurait se réduire à une seule. Ainsi parler d'identité méditerranéenne, et donc tout vouloir réduire à l'Un, serait une entreprise particulièrement vaine.

C'est à partir d'un ensemble polyphonique et polychrome qu'il nous faut penser la Méditerranée du XXI^{ème} siècle. Pas une Méditerranée nostalgique, passéiste ou rétrospective, une Méditerranée toujours perdue, prisonnière de sa grandeur passée.

Non, ce qui importe c'est une Méditerranée en prise avec ce que Jacques Berque appelait le « temps du monde », une Méditerranée d'aujourd'hui et plus encore de demain, qui sait faire tenir ensemble les différents fragments de sa mosaïque : sicilienne et andalouse, algéroise et marseillaise, beyrouthine et alexandrine, balkanique et turque, juive, chrétienne et musulmane.

C'est cette Méditerranée là qu'il nous appartient de penser, à partir de la pluralité des strates historiques qui la compose. Une Méditerranée en récits qui donne à notre regard sur le monde l'élan indispensable de l'imaginaire.

* Texte issu d'une conférence donnée à la Bibliotheca Alexandrina le 11 juin 2006, dans le cadre du cycle « Penser la Méditerranée »

*Rédacteur en chef de la revue La pensée de midi, Responsable du pôle Euromed à la Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l'Homme

1 Constantin Cavafy, Ithaque...
2 Ibn Arabi, aux funérailles d'Avéroès, cité par Henri Corbin in « L'Imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn Arabi », Flammarion, 1977, p39-40

The Wandering Irishman

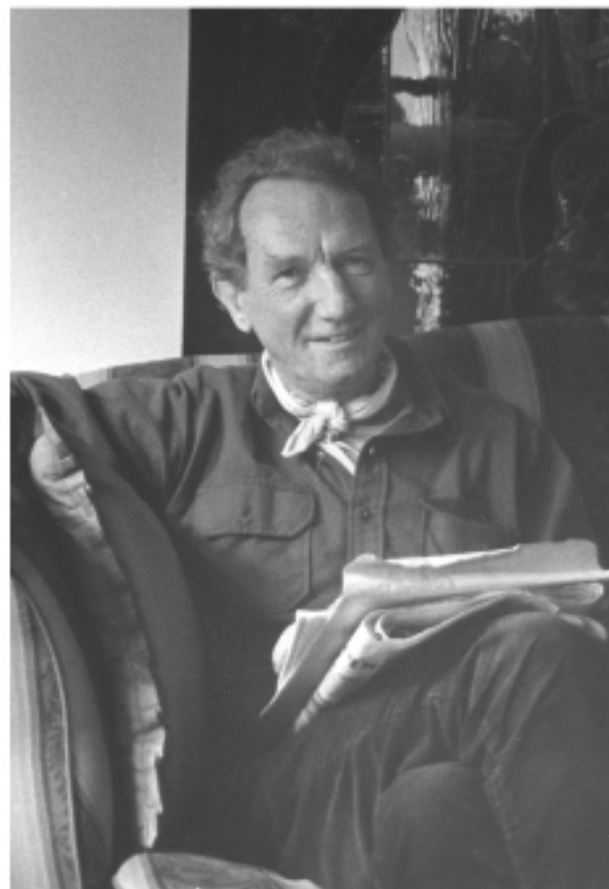
“I felt that this was the city I had been wandering to, seeking, all the time.”

Edward Lewis

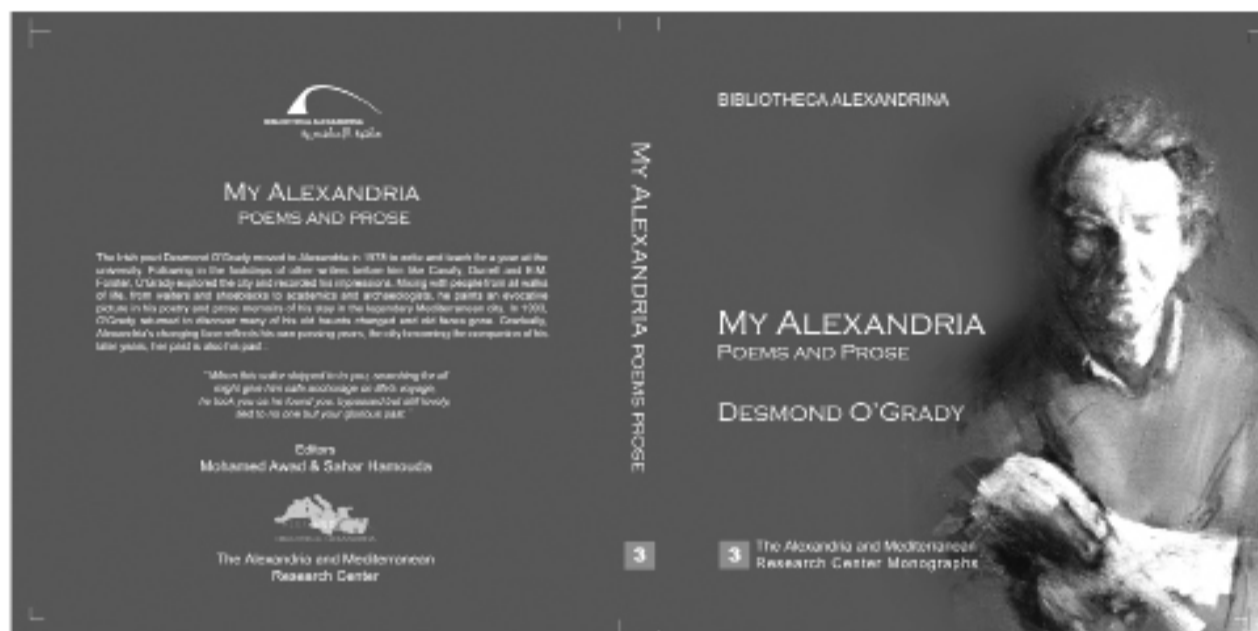
Alexandria will add one more poet to its already impressive list when *My Alexandria: Poems and Prose* by Desmond O'Grady is published by AlexMed as part of its monograph collection. Inspired by Constantine Cavafy and a passion for travel, O'Grady spent two years in Alexandria as a lecturer in the University of Alexandria and recounts his adventures, relationships and impressions of Alexandria through prose and poems. His work presents a unique insight into Alexandria during a period largely unrepresented and, clearly charmed by the city, his poems capture the atmosphere of Alexandria in the 70s, the nature of its inhabitants as well as its physical setting. Yet his image of the city is shattered when he returns thirteen years later to find a tired and much changed setting to the one he had inhabited and come to love just years before.

Desmond O'Grady was born in Limerick, Ireland, in 1935 and spent most of his childhood in West Clare and the Irish-speaking districts of County Kerry. He left Ireland in 1950 to teach in Paris, Rome and America, where he completed his doctorate at Harvard University. He published his first book, *Chords and Orchestration*, in 1956 and has since published and translated extensively. Whilst teaching in Rome he was founding member of the European Community of writers and editor of the *Transatlantic Review* as well as organizer of the first Italian International Poetry Festival.

O'Grady first visited Alexandria in 1978 whilst working at the American University in Cairo as Poet in Residence at the Department of English and Comparative Literature. The city had an immediate effect on the poet and he could not escape the city of Cleopatra, Caesar, Octavian, Cavafy, Tsirkas and Durrell and managed to secure a two year contract teaching at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alexandria. It is within this context that O'Grady relays his life through the series of poems, thirty-seven in all.



Desmond O'Grady at his house in Ireland



Exploring the city as a complete stranger and accompanied by Forster's *A History and Guide*, O'Grady soon finds a rhythm to his new life and establishes strong relations with his Egyptian flat mate and various Alexandrian characters such as a Greek bar tender, a young Scott, an elderly Greek restaurant owner and an up and coming French archeologist. Pastroudis, La Tropicana, the Cecil and Elite all became regular haunts of the poet as he starts to imagine the Alexandria of Darley, Justine and Balthazar. Cavafy's influence on the Irishman is also telling and is a constant theme throughout:

"Now committed to finding Cavafy in Alexandria, I sought him everywhere, and soon he became my constant, if invisible, companion those first couple of months. I saw him everywhere, like a phantom, in the cafes and bars, in the offices of the main streets by day and down the back streets at night."

Yet O'Grady's poems and prose are not confined to ghosts of the past and many of his poems concern everyday characters of the city such as Mr. Moustaches, a shoe shine man who he first meets outside Pastroudis and amazingly meets again when he returns to the same place thirteen years later, although in a very different city.

O'Grady revisited Alexandria in 1993 for the International Cavafy Symposium and was both amazed and ultimately saddened at the changes that had occurred in his absence. His favorite places had all but disappeared and if they had not either been taken over or destroyed then they showed very little resemblance to the establishments he freely frequented a decade earlier. The atmosphere of the city had also dramatically changed and O'Grady finds the new city both hard to comprehend and very disappointing, shown in such poems as 'Aging Siren' and 'Pastroudis Revisited'.

Alexandria will again welcome Desmond O'Grady for the launch of his book and he will no doubt find another city to the one he visited over ten years ago. What he will make of the new city is unknown but what is definite is that the streets, cafes and people will inspire Alexandria's most recent Western poet and the city will once again be at the mercy of his pen.

"There's still some unseen last stop of the night or the life of this wandering Celt to get to yet."

ALEXANDRIA

You, Alexandria, shine now my last city of all, last of the many I've waxed and wasted in, wandering. Some of us go through arrivals, lives, departures while others dread to move for downfall.

Witness of so much dazzle and destruction in wounding and curing time; yet still today sustainer of any prodigal with your achieved, apparently innocent, serenity. I realize now you're the city I've journeyed to all the time. In you I begin again, not end, city of imagination



Constantine Cavafy, the Alexandrian poet who inspired O'Grady

بكل حرية ودون جمارك يقول ديليسيس في مذكراته (صفحات من ٣٠٦ إلى ٣٠٩) "أن الشركة تأخذ من الحكومة المصرية أكثر مما تعطي لها وهي هنا مدينة للوالي بالاعتراف بالجميل". وتكاليف عملية حفر القناة نفسها بلغت ١٤ مليوناً و ٢٣٤٠٠٠ جنيهاً ساهمت فيها مصر نقداً بنحو النصف أو أكثر قليلاً وهو ما يعادل ثمن الأسهم التي اشترتها إضافة إلى التعويضات التي سددتها للشركة للتنازل عن الأراضي وإلغاء السخرة ونفقات افتتاح القناة وغيرها، وكل هذا يجعل جملة المشاركة المصرية في المشروع تصل إلى نحو ١٧ مليوناً من الجنيهات أو ما يقارب ذلك الاختلاف لحساب بين المؤرخين يقدر عبد الرحمن الراجحي ذلك بمبلغ ١٦ مليوناً و ٨٠٠ ألف جنيه.

وكان من الممكن أن تبيع مصر منها نحو عشرين مليون فرنك سنوياً أي نحو ٧ ملايين جنيهاً لو استطاعت الحفاظ على نسبة الـ ٥٩٪ وتكون لها اليد العليا في شئون القناة مالياً وسياسياً وتكون القناة عامل سيادة يساعدها على تطورها اقتصادياً واجتماعياً وبينى منها قوة عظمى. لكن ما يحدث شئ من هذا فهل كان هذا ذنب ديليسيس أو سعيد؟

ستبقى نقطة أخيرة وهي أنه حسب العقد - والعقد شريعة المتعاقدين - فإن ملكية القناة بعد انتهاء الامتياز أي بعد ٩٩ عاماً تعود كاملة لمصر غير منقوصة ومعها كافة المنشآت التابعة لها مقابل تعويض ودي يتفق عليه الطرفين، وحتى لو تم مد الامتياز للشركة فإن فرمان سعيد بتاريخ ٥ يناير ١٨٥٦ يزيد نسبة أرباح الحكومة المصرية الصافية إلى ٢٠٪ بدلاً من ١٥٪ ثم إلى ٢٥٪ إذ مد الامتياز للمرة الثالثة ونكرر هنا أن هذه الأرباح صافية، لمصر ولا علاقة لها بأرباح السهم هنا أو هناك اشترتها مصر.

إذن حسب العقد المبرم بين سعيد وديليسيس كانت مصر مالكة تماماً مادياً وعلمياً وأخلاقياً لقناتها وكانت حرة في التصرف في قناتها بعد ٩٩٪ وحررة في السيطرة على مقدراتها المالية قبل ذلك لو كان قدر لها التحكم في زمام الأمور ولو كان قد قبض لها حكام يعرفون قيمة ما تركه لهم سعيد وديليسيس ولكن لا تغير في التاريخ شيئاً.



ويقول ديليسيس في عبارة خطيرة "أن الامتياز الممنوح للشركة العالمية المزمع إقامتها لشق القناة والانتفاع بها عبر الأراضي المصرية لا ينزع عن هذا الطريق طابعه القومي البحث وهو مالا يجب أن ننساه في قدرة نتحدث فيها عن حيادية توفرها الاتفاقات الدولية.

يجب ألا ننسى أن هذا المبدأ الخطير الذي زرع ديليسيس وسعيد القناة انطلاقاً منه كان هو ذاته الطريق الذي بدأت منه الحركة القومية المصرية كفاحها من أجل الاستقلال بعد ذلك وفي حركة قومية تغذي أبواها الروحيون من الطهطاوي إلى سعد زغلول إلى طه حسين إلى مصطفى كامل على أفكار التحرر الفرنسية. ربما يكون في الجانب المالي لمشروع منح امتياز حفر قناة السويس لب إشكالية القناة لدى المؤرخين في مصر فالاعتقاد السائد لدينا أن سعيد بمنحه الامتياز - بينما لم تكن مصر مستعدة له مالياً - كان السبب الأول في انهيار الاقتصاد المصري وإفلاس الخزينة المصرية بعد افتتاح القناة بأشهر معدودة وهو ما أفضى إلى التدخل الأجنبي ثم الاحتلال الإنجليزي في ١٨٨٢.

والواقع أن هناك تفصيلاً هامة مرت علينا مرور الكرام وهي مسألة توزيع الأرباح بين الدولة المصرية والشركة الفرنسية فقد أصر سعيد وديليسيس على ألا يتجاوز عدد أسهم أي دولة أو أفراد ٥٠٪ من إجمالي الأسهم ضمناً للطابع الدولي للقناة ولكن مصر وحدها كان لها ٥٩٪ من أرباح القناة منها ١٥٪ تصب رأساً في خزانتها لحقوق يسميها ديليسيس "حق أخلاقي" لمصر لأن مصر دفعت من خزانتها بدءاً من لحظة الموافقة على منح الامتياز عام ١٨٥٤ وبدء أعمال الحفر فعلياً عام ١٨٥٩ كل تكاليف دراسات الجدوى وسفر ديليسيس إلى عواصم العالم الكبرى لإقناعهم، ثم تكاليف لجنة المهندسين الدولية الخ... وكان ديليسيس يسجل كل قرش تدفعه مصر في تلك المرحلة. ويعطي في مذكراته إجمالي النفقات المصرية وهي ٧٠٠ ألف فرنك أعطت لمصر الحق في ١٥٪ من أرباح الشركات المباشرة.

إن نسبة الـ ١٥٪ تكشف عن مدى حرص ديليسيس على تعويض مصر ما تحملته منذ بداية المشروع بل أنه يرى أن هذه النسبة لا توفي مصر حقها لأن مصر قدمت للشركة أرض هائلة المساحة وحفرت فيها ترع المياه العذبة القادمة من النيل هذا عدا ضمان الحكومة المصرية للشركة بدخول معدات الحفر والمواد الأولية

وبعد ٤٠ يوماً وجد الثساب الفرنسي نفسه في بلاط باشا مصر العظيم محمد علي وحولته كوكبة من الفرنسيين يحدثون كل شئ في مصر عن الكولونيل سيف أو سليمان باشا الفرنسي إلى لبنان بك ولامبير بك وكلوت بك. ويكلفه محمد علي بتربية ابنه وهو ما حدث قبل أن يفترقا ويقود جيش فرنسا فقد ذهب العز والجاه حتى يعلم بعد سنوات بتولي سعيد الحكم في مصر.

وهاهو ذا مرة ثانية في معية صديقه القديم سعيد ابن محمد علي في صحراء العامرية بالإسكندرية ليلة ١٥ نوفمبر ١٨٤٥ ويفتح صديقه لأول مرة في مشروع حفر قناة السويس وهو نفس المشروع الذي كان يريده نابليون ثم طوي صفحته لأن مهندسيه اعتقدوا أن مستوى البحر الأحمر أعلى من البحر الأبيض، وهو نفس المشروع الذي قدمه السان سيمونيني لمحمد علي ورفضه لأنه خاف على استقلال مصر من طمع الدول العظمى وخاصة إنجلترا، وهاهو سعيد باشا يقبل المشروع - مع بعض الاعتراضات - كما يقول ديليسيس في مذكراته وهنا لا بد من ملاحظة أمرين هاميين.

١. أن هذا الاتفاق بيد أمير يملك ويحكم لكنه يملك، ويحكم بحدود فرضتها وضعية مصر كولاية عثمانية ووضعيتها الاقتصادية التي لا تسمح لها بتمويل مشروع بهذا الحجم بإمكانيتها الذاتية وهو ما لم يكن غائباً عن ذهن الرجلين.



٢. في عقل ديليسيس هذه القناة يجب أن تكون مصرية خالصة بدليل أنه توجه بالمشروع إلى حاكم مصر - مع معرفته المسبقة بإمكانياته السياسية والمادية المحدودة - وكان بإمكانه التوجه مباشرة لإستانبول عن طريق الإمبراطورة أوجيني وكان يمت لها بصلة قرابة، أو أن يتوجه مباشرة للندن ليكون مشروعاً إنجليزياً لن يجرؤ أحد على رفضه ولكن روح العدا والكراهية التاريخية للإنجليز كانت متبقية في روح ديليسيس وهو أكثر من أهائوا فرنسا وأسقطوا نابليون. لقد أراد ديليسيس أن يكون فرمان القناة مصرية أولاً وانطلاقاً من مبدأ "مصرية القناة" الذي تمسك به ديليسيس تفجرت قضية حياد القناة، ففي ذهن سعيد وديليسيس أن القناة مجرد ملاحى دولي محايد، ولكن هذا الحياد لا ينزع عن القناة صفتها المصرية وهو ما يروونه ديليسيس بتفصيل مثير عندما ينقل في مذكراته (ص ٣٧٣) على لسان سعيد طلب الباب العالي أن تتحول ملكية القناة لإستانبول بعد انتهاء امتياز الـ ٩٩ عاماً وهنا كان رد سعيد الساخر بأنه مندهش للطلب العثماني لأنه كان يعتقد أن مصر ليست إلا جزءاً من الإمبراطورية العثمانية.

ديليسيبس .. الذي لا نعرفه

أحمد يوسف

De Lesseps
cet inconnu

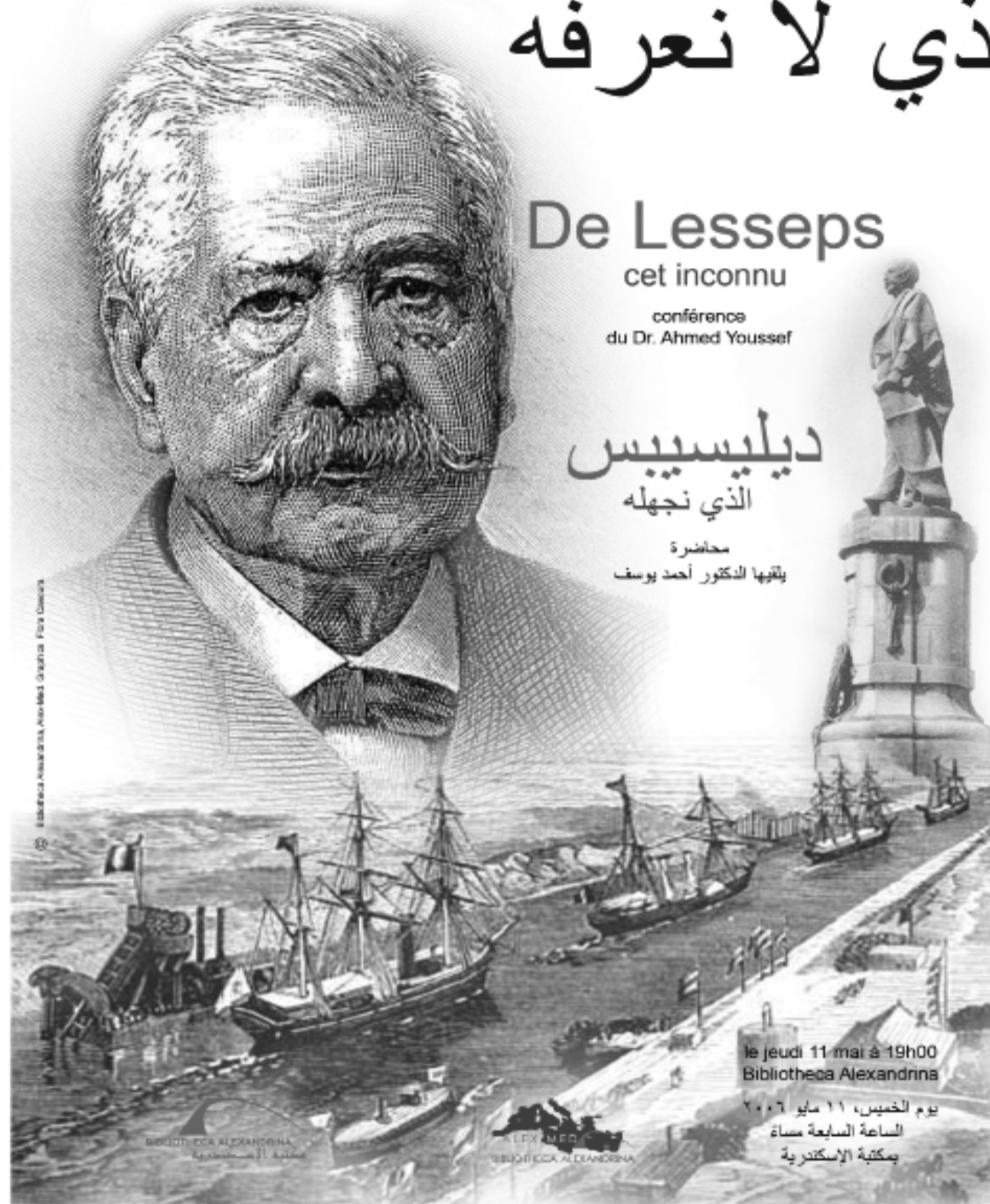
conférence
du Dr. Ahmed Youssef

ديليسيبس
الذي نجهله

محاضرة
بطلبها الدكتور أحمد يوسف

le Jeudi 11 mai à 19h00
Bibliotheca Alexandrina

يوم الخميس، ١١ مايو ٢٠٠٦
الساعة السابعة مساءً
مكتبة الإسكندرية



ودارت الأيام على أسرة ديليسبس بعد سقوط إمبراطورية نابليون الأولى غداة موقعة "وانرلو" عام ١٨١٥ ولم يكن لدى الطفل فرديناند وهو في العاشرة من عمره سوى الاعتماد على نفسه، ومرت سنوات ووجد ديليسبس نفسه مع تصارييف الأيام في عرض البحر أمام الإسكندرية عام ١٨٢٢ ليكون في سن السابعة والعشرين قنصلا مهما مساعدا لفرنسا بالإسكندرية وهو شئ كبير في مدينة بمكاته وحجم الإسكندرية وفي بلد كان حاكمه يثير الدنيا بحروبه فيما سوف يعرف باسم "المسألة المصرية".

وهكذا وجد الابن نفسه على نفس خطوات الأب في نفس البلد، وفي الطريق لكسب صداقة نفس الحاكم، ولكن بينما كان يقضى فترة الحجر الصحي أو الكارانتين - إذ كان المسافرون يجبرون على البقاء لمدة ٤٠ يوما على ظهر السفينة للتأكد من خلوهم من الأمراض - أتى له قنصل فرنسا العام بالإسكندرية الشهير ميمو Mimaut بكتاب وصف مصر ليعينه على قضاء الوقت على ظهر السفينة، وهنا يكتشف فرديناند ديليسبس لأول مرة في حياته شيئا اسمه "مشروع وصف البحرين الأبيض والأحمر" الذي كان يحلم به نابليون. ومن هنا بدأت ملحمة قناة السويس التي ستغير ديليسبس نفسه وتغير مصر وتغير العالم.

وإذا كانت الحملة قد أذكت الروح القومية المصرية وكان بونابرت نفسه أول ضحاياها فإنها لفتت أنظار الانجليز إلى خطورة موقع مصر الجغرافي ومن هنا عملت على أن يتولى أحد المماليك المواليين لها الحكم في مصر.

ولكن فرنسا - وهذه نقطة لا تعلمها كثيرا في مصر - كانت أسرع حيث أوفد نابليون إلى مصر عام ١٨٠٣ مبعوثا شخصيا هو ماتيو ديليسبس أبو فرديناند وكان مقربا لشيوخ الأزهر خاصة علماء الديوان الذي كان نابليون قد أسسه في القاهرة وكان أن التقط أثناء فترة الفراغ السياسي من ١٨٠١ إلى ١٨٠٥ الطابع الخاص الذي يميز الضابط الألباني محمد علي فاقترب منه قبل أن يقربه إليه ثم يقربه من العلماء ودون الخوض في التفاصيل كان محمد علي اختيارا فرنسيا عضده بقوة حماس علماء الأزهر له فإذا ما استدعى نابليون ماتيو ديليسبس حل محله فرنسي آخر هو دوروفيتي وأصبح المستشار الفعلي السياسي والعسكري والإداري لمحمد علي ومن هنا ندرك سر مكاتبة فرنسا لدى محمد علي. وكان آخر ما طلبه ماتيو ديليسبس من محمد علي قبل رحيله هو الأخذ بيد ابنه الوليد فرديناند.

إن ظاهرة اهتمام المصريين اليوم بتاريخ بلادهم إبان العصر الملكي الذي سبق قيام ثورة ٢٣ يوليو، والرغبة في أحقاق الحق والاعتراف بفضل بعض رواده وقواده في إنشاء مصر الحديثة هي ظاهرة تعبر عن نضج عميق في الضمير المصري وهو نضج يدفعنا لفتح ملف فرديناند ديليسبس وإعادة قراءته لمعرفة الحقيقة ورسم صورة للدبلوماسي الذي لولاه لما كانت القناة لأنه يجب الاعتراف بأننا لا نعرف الرجل وأنا نفقّر بشدة لرؤية إنتقادية لمعالجتنا التاريخية لموضوع القناة.

الرجل كانت له ولاشك أخطاء ومصالح شخصية وقناعات فرنسية خالصة وكيف لا تكون له أخطاء وهو مقبل على مشروع يغير وجه الأرض، وكيف لا يكون فرنسيا خالصا وهو الدبلوماسي ابن الدبلوماسية الذي عاش حروب نابليون بانتصاراتها وانكساراتها شرقا وغربا.

ولد فرديناند ديليسبس في ضاحية فرساي الجميلة القريبة من باريس في ١٩ نوفمبر عام ١٨٠٥ لأسرة ترجع جذورها لعدة قرون مضت عمل أكثر أفرادها بالدبلوماسية إلا أنها اشتهرت بمواقفها المؤيدة لنابليون ومن هنا جاءت المصادفة الغربية التي ربطت مصر من ناحية وأسرة ديليسبس من ناحية أخرى.

ففي عام ١٨٠٥ نفسه نبواً عرش مصر محمد علي محمولا على أعناق علماء الأزهر الشريف ليسد المصريون بذلك الفراغ الكبير في السلطة الذي أحدثه رحيل حملة نابليون بونابرت عن مصر عام ١٨٠١ وانكسار الجهاز العسكري المملوكي على يد الفرنسيين وضياع هيبة الباب العالي - ثم إذكاء الروح الوطنية لدى المصريين التي راح نابليون ينفخ فيها فكان إن عادت الهوية المصرية التي كانت قد ذابت في الإمبراطورية الإسلامية العثمانية.



Impressions of Alexandria

The Awad Collection

"Impressions of Alexandria" is a permanent exhibition at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Entrance is free.

Impressions of Alexandria is a collection of original engravings, lithographs and maps that reveal artists' and travelers' impressions of Alexandria from the 15th to the 19th centuries. It also includes rare photographs of the early 19th to the mid 20th centuries, and highlights the cultural life in the cosmopolitan city as portrayed by its prominent writers and artists. The exhibition is therefore a vivid documentation of the "city, half – imagined (yet wholly real)", as Durrell describes it in *The Alexandria Quartet*.

Alexandria As seen by Artists & Travelers

Principal port of entry into Egypt, Alexandria's fabled past attracted many European artists and explorers of the Middle Ages. Though they explored its antique ruins, many were none too impressed by the sorry state of the city. Naive and sometimes even fanciful images from the 15th and the 17th centuries, such as Schedel's *Chronicle of Nuremberg*, evolved to satisfy the curiosity of orientalist travelers while gradually catering to the needs of conquering powers. The 18th and 19th centuries witnessed the detailed accounts of Corneille Le Bruyn (1702) and Frederik Ludvig Norden (1740), alongside the often romanticized visions of Louis François Cassas (1795) and Luigi Mayer (1801).

As Alexandria slipped from the grasp of the Ottoman Empire and into the control of European colonial powers, commercial and political concerns vied with scholarly fascination with Egypt. The 19th century in particular witnessed a surge of interest, and accompanying advances in methods of depiction, from cartography to engravings to newspaper illustrations. Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt (1798-1803) produced the famed *Description de l'Égypte* (1806-1828), a painstaking study of every aspect of the country. Mohamed Ali (1805-1849), the great modernizer of Egypt, commissioned several grand projects that initiated Alexandria's renaissance, as can be seen in Pascal Coste's for the Mahmoudieh Canal (1818) and David Roberts' print of the Egyptian fleet in the port of Alexandria in 1846.

During the second half of the 19th century, pioneers like Mahmoud Bey El – Falaki were commissioned by the Khedive Ismail to rediscover and map ancient Alexandria.



The British Bombardment of Alexandria in 1882 as published by G. W. Bacon of London



Photograph in the Awad Collection showing Ras el-Tin Palace

El – Falaki's book, *Memoire Sur L'Antique Alexandrie* 1872, was accompanied by three maps (one of the ancient city, one of the modern city, and one of its environs) as part of his efforts to reveal the ancient city and document its modern state. The city's golden age glows through images of glittering social events and extensive panoramas, before its destruction during the bombardment and British occupation of 1882, and the preceding incidents. The events of that year were extensively recorded by the a somewhat sensationalist European press, as can be seen in the sometimes lurid depictions on the pages of *The Illustrated London News*, *The Graphic*, *Le Monde illustré*, and *L'illustration*.

Cosmopolitan Alexandria A Photographic Memory

The collection of photographs and postcards captures cosmopolitan Alexandria's belle époque, from the early 19th century to the mid 20th century. Naturally, photographers were drawn to archeological sites, such as Cleopatra's Needles and Pompey's Pillar, and scenic views, such as the Mahmoudieh Canal and its environs.

They also showed a native town with its traditional narrow, irregular street pattern, reduced public spaces and vernacular housing in hybrid Turkish styles. In contrast, a depicted European center developed since 1834 around the "Place des Consuls", reflected in its urban morphology and cultivated high style pro-European architecture, the new "lingua franca" and adapted life styles, similar to those of grand cities in Europe.

Frédéric Goupil-Fesquet took the first photograph in Egypt, indeed in Africa, the very year photography was invented, an 1839 daguerreotype of Mohamed Ali's sumptuous Harem Palace at Ras el-Tin. Maxime Du Camp, who accompanied French author Gustave Flaubert on his 1849 voyage through Egypt, captured the much humbler Khan of the Hôtel d' Orient, while Borgiotti recorded, from start to finish, the momentous removal in 1877 of one of Alexandria's obelisks to London. Another rarity is Pascal Sébah's photograph of the Place des Consuls prior to the mise en place of the statue of Mohamed Ali at its centre in 1871. The Place des Consuls suffered terrible damage during the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882, chronicled by Reiser, Bonfils, and the extensive documentation of Fiorillo in his album, *Ruines d'Alexandrie*.

Photographs post 1882 portray the city's cosmopolitan communities playing a prominent role in its rebuilding. Notable personalities from Greek, Italian and Levantine families built themselves grand mansions and sponsored their communities' schools, hospitals, clubs and welfare foundations. Their glittering social life was captured in photographs such as those of the Skating Rosette, the Shooting Club in Moharrem Bey, concerts at the Ramleh Casino, garden parties at Nouzha and Antoniadis and others such as those of the partners Aziz and Dorés who photographed the famous actress Sarah Bernhardt during her performance at the Zinzia Theater.

The creation of the Municipality of Alexandria in 1890 promoted further the development of the city with such projects as the electrification of the Ramleh Railways in 1904, the landscaping of the urban

spaces and the Municipal parks in 1909, the creation of the Corniche 1905-1927, and the Municipal Stadium in 1927, as represented in popular postcards of the period.

For the majority of the built environment, the hybrid pro-European culture that had emerged since the early 19th century and continued to the mid 20th century, was reflected in the urban and built environments. It was expressed in the eclectic and historic revivalist trends i.e.; neo-classic, neo-gothic, neo-renaissance, etc., and represented the cosmopolitan mix of the Alexandrian society. An architecture "face à l' Orient" provided little opportunity for local expression and identity (i.e. neo-Islamic or neo-pharaonic) yet found some expression in the form of exotic orientalism. Though rather suppressed in the dominant cosmopolitan environs, the local identity was also influenced by the socio-economic and political climates of rising nationalism and pan Arabism.

As Alexandria moved further into the 20th century, architecture shifted towards the more popular Decorative Styles. This is beautifully highlighted in the Art Déco legacy of the French architect Auguste Perret, in the villa Gustave Aghion 1926 and the immeuble Daira Yehia Pasha 1934. The shift towards Early Modern rational architecture is introduced in such examples as the Italian Littorio schools by Clemente Busiri vici in 1931, Cozzika Greek hospital by the Jean Walter 1936 and the Moassat Hospital by Ernest Koop in 1938.

Quita etiam mundi

[A block of dense, illegible text, likely a translation of a historical document or a specific article snippet.]



Hartmann Schedel's Chronicle of Nurembourg giving a brief background of the city's history. First printed by Anton Koberger in 1493.

An Egyptian participation is marked by the contribution of the first generations of Egyptian architects such as Moustafa Fahmy Pasha and Ali Labib Gaber Bey. Local expression inspired by the unspoiled traditional environment, though again expressed in the neo-vernacular trends promoted by the Alexandrian-born architect Hassan Fathy (1900-1989). In his quest for an architecture built for the poor by the poor, compatible with economic needs of society and in harmony with the environment, he encouraged the revival of traditional building techniques and the development of a local architectural language.

alex.med@bibalex.org

Literary & Artistic Alexandria

The mythical city created by its writers and artists – whether they were born in it or were simply passing through – is immortalized in the poetry of Constantine Cavafy (1863-1933), the Greek "poet of the city" par excellence. His poems capture the glory of its Hellenistic past as well as his cosmopolitan city. "The God Abandons Anthony" is perhaps the most oft-quoted poem in Alexandria, while "The City" remains a metaphor of the Alexandria that a person can never escape, no matter how far from it he travels. Among other Greek yet more contemporary writers celebrating Alexandria is Stratis Tsirkas in *Drifting Cities* (1960), and Nobel laureate George Seferis in "Days in June 1941".

British writers who contributed to the making of the Alexandrian literary myth are E.M. Forster in *Alexandria: A History and a Guide* (1922) and *Pharos and Pharillon* (1923), and Lawrence Durrell in the famous and controversial *Alexandria Quartet*, four novels published between the 50s and 60s. The collection displays and original sketch of Durrell by Clea Badaro, an Alexandrian painter whose name figures as the title of the last novel of the Quartet.

Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888-1970) identified with Alexandria's submerged ports, which were discovered by G. Jondet in 1916 and appeared in Ungaretti's poem "Il Porto Sepolto". He is usually liked with two other Italian / Alexandrian writers, Enrico Pea and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, the founder of the Futurist movement whose first manifesto was published in Le Figaro in 1909. Writing in another vein altogether, Fausta Cialente published her trilogy just before World War II. She brings into focus the experiences of Alexandria's pluralist society, but she also sympathizes with the Egyptians and predicts the winds of change that came with the revolution of 1952 and brought to an end Alexandrian cosmopolitanism.

While the foreign writers highlighted the cosmopolitan Alexandria they were familiar with, Egyptian / Alexandrian writers and Artists focused on Egyptian national sentiments and satirized colonialization. The popular vernacular poetry of Bairam el Tonsi (1893-1961), sung by the famous composer Sayed Darwish (1892-1923), accompanied the nationalist movement of 1919. The painter Mahmoud Said (1897-1964) and the novelist Edwar el Kharrat are identified with sensual local scenes, such as the Girls of Alexandria, and the popular districts of Anfoushi and Gheit el Enab. Nobel Prize winner Naguib Mahfouz captures the last moments of interaction between a fading cosmopolitan Alexandria and a rising post-revolution Egyptian city in *Miramar* (1967). Scif Wanli (1906-1979), another renowned painter of Alexandria, painted the Egyptian characters of Mahfouz in the fifties; in 1972 the texts and the paintings were combined and published in one book *Mirrors*. Chafik Charobime rendered the city's seascapes and life by the sea in paintings published in book form in 2002.

The most contemporary Alexandrian writer is Ibrahim Abdel Meguid. His *House of Jasmine* describes an Alexandria totally Arab and Egyptian. However, *No-one Sleeps in Alexandria* (1996) is a return to the Alexandria of Durrell and el Kharrat and demonstrates the hold that this period has over the imagination of writers. This return to the Alexandria of the thirties up to the fifties forms a genre of its own (usually memoirs or autobiographies) that can be called "Alexandria Revisited" or "Nostalgic Literature of Alexandria". Its writers are more often part of the foreign community that had to leave it for one reason or another. Their return to the city – whether physically or through literature – is basically an

attempt to grasp an idyllic childhood associated with a site now vanished. Jacqueline Carol's *Cocktails and Camels* (1960) is the earliest of such works and her words seem to encapsulate the experience of those who left:

There was no place like [Alexandria] on earth, I used to think, and now, looking back, I am quite sure there wasn't.

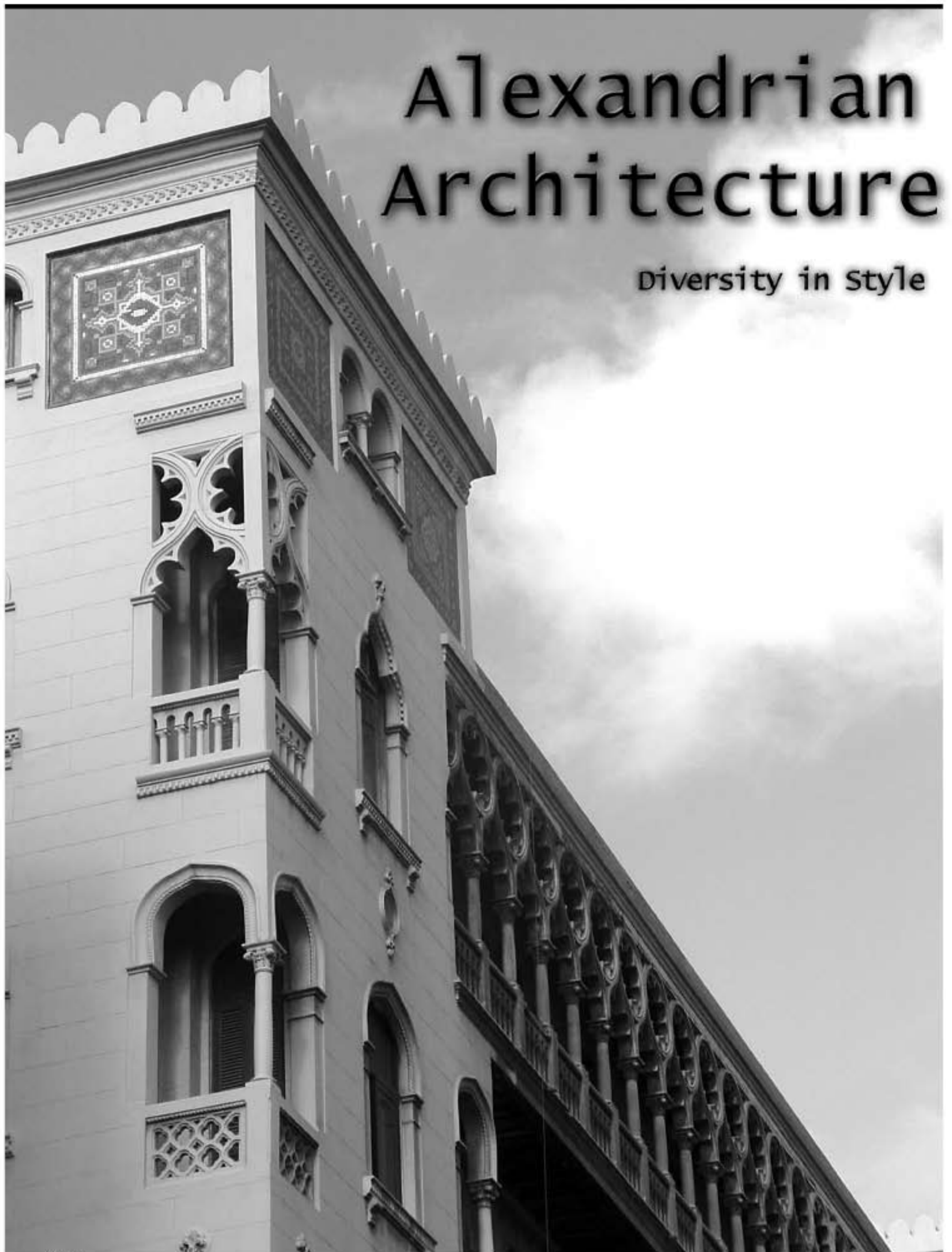
By the mid 1980s the surge of such literature began. Jacques Hassoun, Alexandrian born émigré to France, published the novel *Alexandries* (1985) and wrote the introduction to a collection of photographs of contemporary Alexandria *Alexandrie Revisitée* (1998). A collection of essays and portraits of Alexandrians entitled *Alexandrie et Autres Recits de Jacques Hassoun* was published posthumously in 2001. Harry Tzalas' *A Farewell to Alexandria* (1977) is a collection of short stories set in the 30s and 40s. The title indicates that it is a valediction to the cosmopolitan Alexandria that had fascinated artists and writers. Azza Heikal is perhaps the only Egyptian Alexandrian who wrote nostalgic memoirs. Her *L'Education Alexandrine* (1996), though, was in French. Cairenes, too, continues to be fascinated by the city. Robert Sole, another émigré to France, posits Alexandria as the site of the summer get-away for Cairenes in *The Alexandria Semaphore* (1994). Naguib Mahfouz published Mahfouz at Sidi Gaber: *Reflections of a Nobel Laureate* (2001), in which he uses Sidi Gaber (the train and tram station in Alexandria) as a metaphor for the stop before the last in one's life. Visual aspects of Alexandria had their fair share of publications. Robert Sole wrote the texts for the photographs taken by Carlos Freire in *Alexandrie L' Egyptienne* (1998). Painter Philippe Delord published his water-colour impressions of the city in *Alexandrie sur les Pas de Louis Francois Cassas* (2000), admitting that he was following in the footsteps of the 18th century traveler / artist. A homage to Cavafy is paid by the artist David Hockney in his travel sketches inspired by his visit to the city (2002).

Although all the above-mentioned names no longer live in Alexandria, the link with the city remains strong, even among the Alexandrians who are not artists or writers. Associations have been established all over the world to maintain the link with the modern city. The Amicale Alexandrie Hier et Aujourd'hui (AAHA) is an association of Alexandrians living abroad. Schools like Victoria College, English Girl's College, Saint Marc, and Notre Dame de Sion have active relations with branches in several capitals of the world.

In and effort to preserve Alexandria's Architectural and urban heritage, the Alexandria Preservation Trust was founded in 1985 as a contemporary resource and documentation centre, for the practical purpose of promoting preservation. Other centres of documentation set in Rome and Athens (Bollettino degli Italiani d' Egitto – ANPIE, Hellenic literary and Historical Archive – ELIA), and founded and funded by expatriates, provide additional resources and research facilities that consolidate what is known as "Alexandriism" a phenomenon identifiable with the legacy of the open city and its cosmopolitan culture.

Alexandrian Architecture

Diversity in style





Neo - Renaissance by A.Dresse,
H.Qudienet & R.Lecard



Art Nouveau by M.Cokinos



Neo - Romanico by R.Smith



Neo - Romanico by L.Azema,
G.Parq & J.Hardy



Neo - Islamic by W.Fares



Neo - Baroque by A.Nicohosoff Bey

alex.med@bibalex.org

The Alexandrian Days of Daphne Du Maurier

Harry E. Tzalas*

Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again. It seemed to me I stood by the iron gate leading to the drive, and for a while I could not enter for the way was barred to me. There was a padlock and a chain upon the gate. I called in my dream to the lodge-keeper, and had no answer, and peering closer through the rusted spokes of the gate I saw that the lodge was uninhabited.

No smoke came from the chimney and the little lattice windows gaped forlorn. Then, like all dreamers, I was possessed with sudden supernatural powers and passed like a spirit through the barrier before me.



Daphne and Tommy walking in the gardens of Menabilly, Cornwall.

So begins the best known of Daphne du Maurier's novels, the now classic *Rebecca*. And these opening paragraphs are also the narrative the spectator of Alfred Hitchcock's film hears at the beginning of the movie, when the misty path leading to the mysterious Manderley unfurls its haunting atmosphere of suspense, wrapped in the darkness of a Cornish night.

But neither the reader nor the spectator of *Rebecca* would ever imagine that the famous English writer of Jamaica Inn, Frenchman's Creek and so many other novels, most set in the austere landscape of her beloved Cornwall, had in fact written a large part of *Rebecca* in the brightness and the warmth of Alexandria. The book was published in 1938 and the movie, directed by Hitchcock, came out in 1940. Alexandrians of yesteryear will certainly remember its unprecedented success when first shown at the "Cinema Royal Theater" during the Second World War years. Young Lawrence Olivier gave a great performance as the ever-saddened and mysterious Maximilian De Winter, while resplendent Joan Fontaine, in one of the best roles of her career, plays the "second" Mrs. De Winter, shy and charming in her naivety, who finds herself under the ghostly omnipresence of *Rebecca*.

For sheer entertainment, there are few romances comparable to *Rebecca*. Written with a deep intensity of emotion, it carries the reader headlong in its current to the final climax. As a novel, *Rebecca* won the immediate favor of the reading public and maintained a leading place on the bestsellers lists for several seasons. On the screen, it shattered all existing records for popularity and won almost every award which can be given to a motion picture, including the Oscar for best movie. It brought to its author instant international acclaim and reasonable wealth.

Daphne, the daughter of Sir Gerald du Maurier, a successful London actor – who lent his name to the famous Du Maurier cigarettes – married in 1932, when she was 25, Major Frederick Browning, known as Tommy, a handsome Grenadier Guards officer. The marriage was troubled, not much of a success, and this was due to the difference in characters. Daphne had quickly gained fame, and money, as a prominent writer and for most of the time lived and wrote in the Cornwall, at Fowley, a picturesque little place overlooking a small bay. Later when she had the means to afford it she rented the grand mansion of Menabilly, which would become the inspiration for eerie Manderley.

In early 1936 Tommy's battalion had to move to Alexandria. So in March of that same year, reluctantly, Daphne sailed to Alexandria, with her three-year old daughter Tessa and, Margaret, the nanny, on the S.S. Camaronia. The house the Brownings settled into was located at 13 Rue Jeesop. It must have been a nice house, "an adorable house and garden", as described by the subsequent occupants, the commanding officer who lived in it with his family, after the Brownings left. But Daphne hated the place as much as she dreaded the condition of having to live "cheek by jowl" – as she says in a letter, "with the rest of the officers' wives". It is in that house that she completed the book she had been working on for some years: *The Du Mauriers*, a historical saga of her family.

This was a great time for cosmopolitan Alexandria, a carefree period that was to come to an abrupt end with the Second World War. But it was not felt so by Daphne. We know from her correspondence that she reluctantly went to Alexandria, and did so because she considered it her duty as the wife of an officer. Tommy was busy eagerly planning maneuvers in the desert; he was now the commanding officer. She was often left alone with her daughter, the nanny and Hassan, the housekeeper, who constantly asked for instructions Daphne could not give, being quite inexperienced at running a household.

In July it became a "grind" to write because of the great heat. She made not the slightest effort to learn even the basic words of Arabic and complained that the natives spoke no English. She loathed also the English living in Alexandria; the place was "full of gossips" and the main pastime was cocktails and charades. She however admitted that swimming was pleasant and that on Sundays they enjoyed some cruising on a little boat.

Eventually the book on the Du Mauriers was finished and that was a feat in itself. Daphne was exhausted. She attributed her weakness, her lack of appetite and her extreme pallor to the climate. As it became hotter she lost weight and, having fallen ill, could not eat; a doctor was called and it was in fact confirmed that she was pregnant.



Daphne du Maurier while typing *Rebecca*. Poster for the movie *Rebecca*.



Daphne du Maurier at the time she was working on *Rebecca*.

A trip to Cyprus was arranged in September, which was a welcome change as they stayed at a nice hotel, high in the coolness of the mountains, and visited from time to time the Pierides family, their friends in Larnaca. The Cyprus vacation lasted less than a month and soon she was back in Alexandria complaining. Finding a description in a book of the plant daphne she was struck at how it applied to her: The daphne loves to have its roots in the shade and its head in the sun...it is short-lived in hot dry soil".

On January 1937 Daphne returned to England and in April gave birth to her second daughter. But she was back in Alexandria in July. Again she started to complain bitterly about nearly everything until Tommy decided, in November, to take her for a few days on a trip to the Western Desert. They went as far as the border with Libya. Camping under the stars in the solitude of the boundless desert totally changed her approach towards Egypt and Alexandria. She adored the experience, and said that she could feel the "magic of the East". So when back at Rue Jeesop she started on *Rebecca*, which was to be her masterpiece.

It is difficult to understand how a novel set in the mists of a Cornish landscape was inspired and written under the clear blue Alexandrian sky. By mid-December, when she and Tommy sailed back home she had written less than half of the book. It was to be completed in the Cornwall by the end of April 1938.

During the war and immediately after, Tommy held varied positions that kept him often away from home, so Daphne continued living the life of a recluse dedicated to her writing. She went on to pursue a successful career as a writer, producing another 30 books, most of them novels set in the Cornwall. But none had the success of *Rebecca*, the novel started in Alexandria, inspired by a trip to the Western Desert and her longing for the Cornish scenery.

Daphne du Maurier died in 1989 at the age of 82, still active and alert to the end. The episode of her 15 months in Alexandria remained linked, however, to her most successful novel and to some of the scarce, romantic and happy moments in her married life.

*Harry Tzalas is the author of several novels and short stories including two books set in Alexandria, *Farewell to Alexandria* and *Seven Days at the Cecil*.

For further reading:
Daphne du Maurier, *Vanishing Cornwall*, Penguin Books, Middlesex England, 1986.
Margaret Forster, *Daphne du Maurier, A Biography*, Chatto & Windus Ltd, U.K., 1993.
Daphne du Maurier's, *Cornwall, Her pictorial Memoir*, England, 1995
Every year in May the Daphne du Maurier Festival is held in and around Fowey, Cornwall. Visit www.dumaurier.org

Life is Hard

Sahar Hamouda

Having got fed up with the traffic jams and the hour-long drive to Montazah in summer, the flies and mosquitoes that handed shifts over to each other, and the murky waters of Alexandria's beaches, Mohamed looked for bluer seas. He bought a house in the old Diplomats' Village on the north coast, 40 kilometers west of Alexandria. Mimi, as he was known to his friends, was not originally an ambassador, but he had become one. From May till October he went there on Fridays and Sundays. Here's how a typical day at his beach house went:

The trip out from Alexandria started around noon. With his friend Tarek seated next to him, and the two suffraghis seated in the back, they would pass by Simonds first to collect tinned olives and whatnots. Next, it was Khamos in Chatby for paté and pizza, then it was on to the road. If there were giant shrimps in Mex, a stop was made there. At the Village the suffraghis set about putting the house in order, while Mimi checked on his roses and Tarek made sure the fridge was well stocked with cokes and edibles. Mimi went to his room to change into his swimsuit. The second room was for the female guests, while the third room had been appropriated by Tarek for his own. He sat by the phone and stared inviting people over. "Yes, the sea is very blue today. We are having spaghetti and kofta for lunch – a nice change from last week's kofta and spaghetti. No, there aren't many people today. Only eight." Mimi, bending over his roses in the garden, had no clue how many people were coming, or who they were. Neither had the suffraghis who would be preparing the lunch.

Tarek told the male guests, "You can change in my room." Then they made off to the beach, with their beers and cokes and pizzas, which they consumed as they watched the turquoise sea and pale blue jelly fish. The guests would start arriving around two o'clock. The one who came the least and grumbled the most was Ghali.

He rubbed himself all over with tan oil and lazed in the sun. When the heat got too much for him, he ventured into the choppy waters, then came out and made a feeble attempt at exercise. He abandoned that soon enough, preferring to drink beer and eat the small pizzas instead. Abu Steit, aged ninety and mighty proud of his shock of white hair, which showed no sign of thinning, put on his swimming cap to protect his hair against the salt water and whatever evil might emerge from the water, and dared the waves. Adel, however, in his familiar uniform of safari shorts, cap and sandals, hardly went to the beach. If he did, he would remain hidden within this attire. His feet never left the sandals.



At around five they trooped back to the house to shower. Tarek investigated the kitchen. As they waited for lunch, they fortified themselves with ouzo mezzahs – tarama and salted biscuits and sardine-stuffed olives. Lunch, as Tarek had announced, was invariably pasta and kofta, but there were always all sorts of other things besides. For dessert, there were figs with cream, a mango salad, ice cream ... After lunch, as Mimi took his sacred siesta – regardless of how many guests there might be – Ghali reclined on the hammock, groaning all the while, "Ah, la vie est dure!!"

Half an hour later, Mimi woke from his siesta, yelling at his suffraghis to prepare tea. Huge chocolate cakes would emerge, along with cream caramel, meringue, gateaux. They all had saccharine with their tea, just to watch their weight. After that, they needed to exercise.

Ezzat suggested playing tennis in the courts the Village had so thoughtfully provided. So they got their gear together: shorts, rackets, tennis shoes – all brand names of course. They arranged themselves on the court, recruiting all spare hands (regardless of age or gender) to collect the balls. But oh dear, that wind just blew the balls away and ruined the game.

They really could not play in those wild August gusts. So they strolled along the beach instead, stopping every so often to catch their breath. "La vie est dure," moaned Ghali.

The return to the house was gratefully made. They dropped into the swinging couch and the deep chairs, calling for something to quench their thirst. The drinks were handed round, with a different variety of mezzah: caviar and French cheeses and toasted bread. Tarek, who cherished his beauty sleep, parked his beach bag next to the door, waiting for the first car leaving for Alex to give him a lift. He had a long time to wait – the evening had just begun.

Conversation was the most strenuous form of entertainment, occasionally enlivened by a furious game of backgammon or a more intellectual one of scrabble, though those never really caught on. Eventually a TV and video were introduced, to be resorted to when talking became too tiring. Soon the gathering was reinforced by neighboring ambassadors, who were fleeing their wives and delighted in the change and the drinks. They watched with pleasure as Djemil pursued his favorite hobby of attacking socialism, the revolution and Adel, who tried bravely to defend the cause but could not much hold out against Djemil's oratorical skills. He wilted visibly as Djemil, with a majestic wave of his hand, silenced him with the final condemning statement, "Pah, il est Nasserien!"

Despairing of the longed-for ride back to his bed, Tarek consoled himself with watching football matches. And Ghali displayed his well-known signs of sleepiness: he started scratching his tummy and peeling off his socks. But the weather was so pleasant, the breeze so cool, the company so delightful, and the drive back so dreaded, that he succumbed to his host's pleas to stay for just a little longer. Yes, life was hard and decisions so difficult to make. He helped himself to some more salted almonds – just a few – and allowed himself to be prevailed upon to hold out for half an hour more.

At around 1 am he finally rebelled. While everybody got ready to leave, Tarek went round to inspect the cars and choose the most comfortable. Having made his choice, he settled in and promptly went to sleep. As Ghali got into his car, he vowed never to come again. The day, he exclaimed, had exhausted him.



Shadi Abdel Salam

A Man of Many Talents

Edward Lewis

"First, they [Egyptians] have to know where they came from and what contribution they made. We must form a link between the past and the present Egyptian, in order to attain the Egyptian of tomorrow. This is my cause." Shadi Abdel Salam

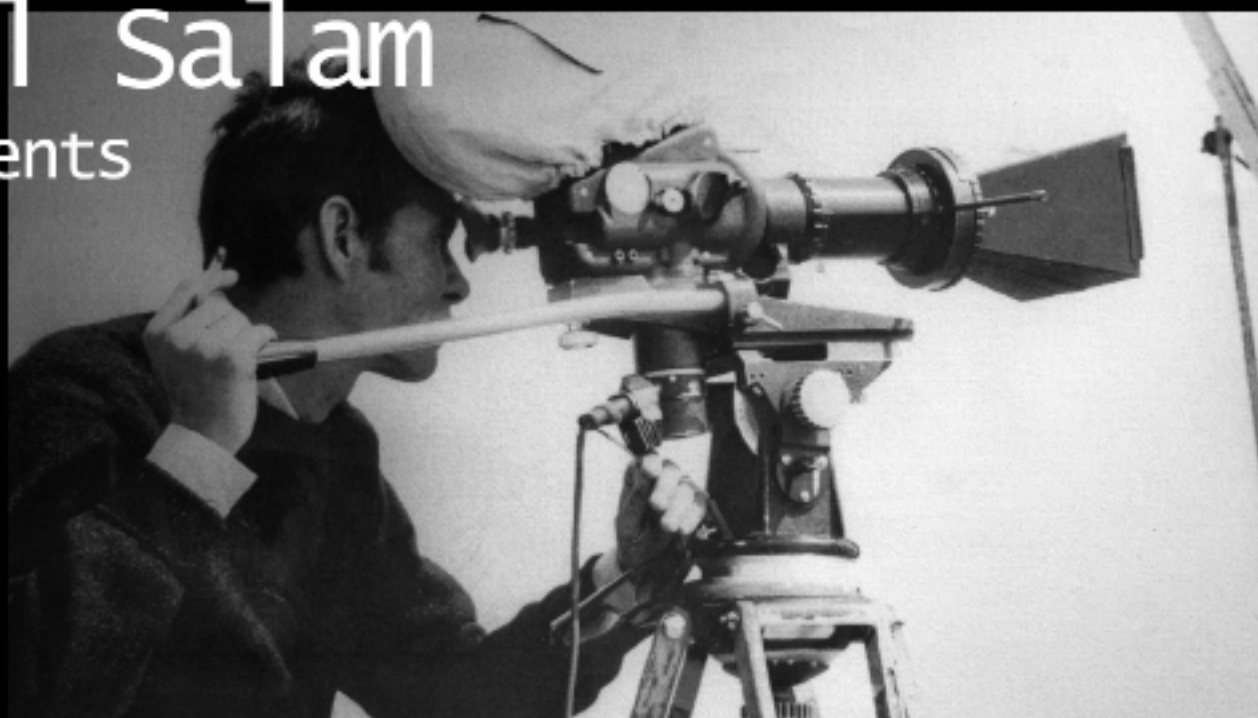
8th October 2006 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the death of one of Alexandria's favorite sons and one of Egypt's most prominent teachers: Shadi Abdel Salam. Throughout his life this artist, director and academic sought to educate the Egyptian people in their own history as only an Egyptian could and bring back a sense of pride to a nation experiencing uncertainty and limited direction. Passionate, driven and incredibly talented, Shadi Abdel Salam dedicated his life to promoting Egyptian culture through cinema. He was both respected and loved in Egypt and Europe and although achieved varying degrees of success in his ultimate goal, continues to inspire and set the standard for future generations of film makers, researchers and artists.



Horemhab as pharaoh. Costume design and drawing by Shadi Abdel Salam

Born in Alexandria in 1930, Shadi spent a great deal of time between Alexandria and the southern Egyptian city of Minya and there can be little doubt that the former site of Akhenaton's royal city, Tell el-Amarna, and its subsequent decline had a profound effect on him and provided much of the subject matter for his early experiments with drawing and painting. In addition, his father's extensive collection of history books fuelled his appetite and proved a valuable companion when he became bedridden for two years whilst studying at the prestigious Victoria College in Alexandria. He completed his secondary schooling in 1948 and at the age of 18 had developed his artistic talents enough to realize that he was extremely gifted, shown by the letter of recommendation written by the school the year he left:

*"Throughout his career at the School, S. Abdel Salam was a quiet, well-mannered boy and during the last few years he took a great interest in Dramatics. Besides his abilities as an actor and Stage Manager, Abdel Salam is a very talented artist and I feel quite certain that he will be very successful if he takes up a career connected with the Film Industry or the theatre."*¹



Shadi Abdel Salam behind the camera

In 1959 he knocked on the door of his neighbor, who happened to be the famous director Salah Abou Seif, and presented himself as someone who wanted to work in cinema. Impressed by his energy and curious about his talents, Abou Seif invited Shadi to accompany him around the studio in order to learn more about the finer details of cinematography. Shadi, realizing that such opportunities do not come around everyday, grabbed it with both hands and, despite being unpaid, turned up daily to the sets. There could not have been a better environment for Shadi to be in and before long he was designing sets, costumes and decorations for films such as Hekayet Hob (directed by Barakat and Helmy Halim). Between 1960-67 Shadi had designed costumes and set decorations for no less than 10 Egyptian films including Wa Islama (1961), Almaz Wa Abdou Al-Hamouli (1962) and Amir Al-Dah'a (1964).

Whilst Shadi's artistic talents were impressive, they would certainly have been of less value if it were not for his extensive reading and research that brought realism to the set and production as a whole. The attention to detail demonstrated in Shadi's costume designs and sets attests to his hundreds of hours spent going through books, manuscripts and archeological reports. He was an extremely well read individual and had a huge appetite for all genres of books, not just historical, with one book in particular having a profound effect on Shadi's outlook, James Henry Breasted's *Dawn of Conscience*. In addition, he enjoyed all types of music and his record collection stretched from Mozart to more extraordinary selections such as Gregorian chants.

European directors soon came to know of Shadi's work and in 1966 he worked on Mankiewicz's epic *Cleopatra* by assisting with the intricate and impressive costumes of Elizabeth Taylor and other well known actors. But it was the Italian director, Roberto Rossellini, who inspired Shadi to stand behind the camera and enter the world of directing. The Italian was incredibly impressed with Shadi's knowledge of ancient Egypt and used him as a consultant for historical and set decoration in the film *La Lotta Dell'uomo per la sua Sopravvivenza* (Fight for Survival). Rossellini was to play a major role in Shadi's future as a director.

Yet it was whilst working on the sets of European directors that Shadi became increasingly aware of historical inaccuracies and the implications this had on the world's view of Egypt and its history. Working for Polish director Kawalerowicz as a consultant for the film *Pharaoh* in 1965, Shadi read the script and was disappointed.

His mind was made up, he wanted to make a film about the real Egypt he knew and loved and, most importantly, it would be written and directed by an Egyptian and targeted at an Egyptian audience.

He started to write the script for *Al-Mumia* (The Night of Counting the Years) in 1965 and this was to be his defining work. Inspired by real events in Upper Egypt, the film focused on grave robbing, dealing in stolen antiquities and the moral questions and implications that such a scenario involves. The screenplay was complete in 1967 and the film two years later, but the production was to hit many problems before finally being released. The largest of these was funding, something that was in short supply in Egyptian cinema during 60s and 70s. Luckily Shadi had kept in contact with Roberto Rossellini who, on reading the script, sent it to the Egyptian Ministry of Culture with a strong recommendation and a request for funding. It was granted and Shadi's first film as a director could now start to be shown to the Egyptian public.



Examples of the elaborate costume designs by Shadi Abdel Salam

Initially it was to prove a demoralizing experience since the film was poorly received by the Egyptian people. Despite all the effort in making a film that was inextricably linked to the Egyptian's roots and making sure it was both accurate and realistic, the people did not associate or understand Shadi's subtle attempts. At first it was a puzzle that neither Sahdi, his fellow professionals or friends could solve until the film became available to a European and greater Western audience. It was a huge success and received glowing reviews as well as winning the prestigious Georges Sadeur Prize in 1970. In addition, it was the only Middle Eastern film to be selected amongst the one hundred films shown at the Centennial of the International Film in 1996. The success and appreciation of the film in the Western world gave the answer Shadi was looking for: ancient Egyptian history was either not taught at all, or enough, in the schools and universities whereas ancient civilization and classics had been a core subject in many schools across Europe and America. It appeared everyone else knew more about Egyptian history than the Egyptians themselves.

It was in response to this lack of knowledge that Shadi embarked on his project to educate the Egyptians on their past. The Ministry of Culture commissioned Shadi to shoot six short documentaries that focused on varying aspects of Egyptian history; Afaak (Horizons), Goyoush Al-Shams (Armies of the Sun),



Queen Tiy wearing the Isis crown

Korsi Tutankhamun (Tutankhamun's Chair), Al-Ahram Wa Ma Kablo (The Pyramids and Before it), Ramsis Al-thani (Ramses II) and Onshoudat Weda' (Farewell Hymn). The films attempted to be accessible to all Egyptians and explain the fundamentals of Egyptian history such as who they were, where they came from and what they achieved. It was in these areas that Shadi believed Egypt could draw strength and look to the future:

"Egypt does not recognize her pre-Islamic heritage. I am fighting to fill this gap. Through cinema, I want to help young generations to understand their past history, mirror of the present; to regain their identity and the assurances of their mobility. How could we be ourselves, when we refuse a part of our history?"
Shadi Abdel Salam shortly before his death in 1986

The notion of looking back at a civilization and using links through its literature, art and culture in order to establish a new direction is not a new one. The British Empire, during the heights of her Imperial rule, used the Roman Empire as a parallel, often incorporating many core aspects of its rule. Latin was introduced into the education system, art was heavily influenced and some late Victorian and Edwardian British administrators, politicians and academics used images of the Roman Empire to help them to define the identity and imperial destiny of Britain.² Yet there is a fundamental difference between Egypt and Britain; Rome's history was not Britain's. Shadi believed that studying the art, philosophy, mythology and language of ancient Egypt would promote and inspire a new and much needed train of thought. Egypt was at a cross roads in her history. She had recently become fully independent, the first time in centuries, but the future seemed uncertain and was faced with two prominent solutions; socialist pan-Arabism and Islamic fundamentalism. Shadi wanted to create an alternative. Egypt's glorious past had been buried under a series of occupations to the point where the only evidence that the Pharaohs had existed were the ruins themselves. Egyptians needed to be connected to their past and Shadi Abdel Salam saw this could be achieved through cinema.

Yet his most ambitious project was never to reach the screen despite seventeen years of research, script writing, planning and unlimited energy.

Inspired by the story of Akhenaton, Shadi set out to deliver an Egyptian epic based on the Pharaoh's life and the events that surrounded it. His costume designs, sets and props were unequalled in terms of detail, accuracy and sheer beauty (many can still be seen in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina today). They were never to reach the set as Shadi died in 1986 at the age of just 56. Egypt was robbed of one its brightest stars yet he had already educated more people in Egyptian history than anyone else. He dedicated his life to the country he loved and its deep and glorious past and was heart broken when he realized that he could not reach everyone with his films or message, but Egypt's 'Renaissance Man' remains one of Egypt's finest directors and a whole lot more.

*"Appeals to the past are amongst the commonest of strategies in the interpretation of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms."*³



- 1 Clement and Hamouda (ed). 2002. Victoria College: A History Revealed. AUC Press, Cairo.
- 2 Richard Hingley. 2000. Roman Officers and English Gentlemen. Routledge, London.
- 3 Edward Said. 1993. Culture and Imperialism. Knopf, New York



Shadi Abdel Salam 1930 - 1986

Shadi Abdel Salam Collection at the Arts & Multimedia Library in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Books
The world of Shadi Abdel Salam. Alexandria: Bibliotheca Alexandrina, 2002.
BA Call Number: 791.430233 W92711 (B3 - Arts & Multimedia library)

الفرعوني المائيق شادي عبد السلام. أعلام السينما 2. القاهرة: الهيئة العامة لقصور الثقافة، 1981.
BA Call Number: 791.43092 (B3 - Arts & Multimedia library)

Thesis
شاهين، سمير. سيد نور شادي عبد السلام كمنصم تذكور و ملابس في السينما المصرية. جامعة حلوان، 1996.
BA Call Number: Thesis 13211 (Clostr.B4)

Videos
عبد السلام، شادي. قلاق. القاهرة: مستشرق لتسمية الثقافية، 1970.
BA Call Number: VHS 754 (B3 - Arts & Multimedia library)

عبد السلام، شادي. الموسىء. القاهرة: شركة القاهرة للإنتاج السينمائي، 1970.
BA Call Number: VHS 683, VHS 1281, VHS 1282 (B3 - Arts & Multimedia library)
وصف المحتوى الفيلم: يوجد بالمكتبة نسخة باللغة العربية ونسخة مژودة بترجمة باللغة الانجليزية و اخرى بالفرنسية.

عبد السلام، شادي. شكوى الفلاح الفصحى القاهرة: وزارة الثقافة المركز القومي للسينما، 1970.
BA Call Number: VHS 755, VHS 1283 (B3 - Arts & Multimedia library)
وصف المحتوى الفيلم: يوجد بالمكتبة نسخة مژودة بترجمة باللغة الانجليزية و اخرى بالفرنسية.





Noureen Ashmawy

محل البن البرازيلي

The Brazilian Coffee Stores A Well Grounded Institution

Located in Salah Salem, the old Sherif Street, in the center of Alexandria's financial district, lies one of the most important establishments of the city. It is where many people gather, whether to socialize or to drink coffee, the most popular coffee shop in Alexandria: Brazilian Coffee.

Coffee plays a very important role in many people's lives, and Alexandria is no exception. One third of the world's population relies on it, thus making it more popular than any other drink and an essential part of daily life. Coffee's effects were first discovered on the continent of Africa, in Ethiopia. It is said that Kaldi, a goat herder, discovered coffee after noticing that his goats, upon eating berries from a certain tree, became so spirited that they did not want to sleep at night. Coffee later crossed the Red Sea to Arabia where it began to develop in earnest. In Arabia, roasted beans were first brewed around CE 1000 and by the 13th century Muslims were drinking coffee religiously for it often kept worshippers awake. Then an Indian pilgrim-cum-smuggler left Mecca with fertile seeds. His beans bore fruit and initiated an agricultural expansion that would soon reach Europe's colonies. The Dutch cleared the initial hurdle in 1616, spiriting a coffee plant into Europe for the first time. Then in 1696 they founded the first European-owned coffee estate, on colonial Java, now part of Indonesia. Amsterdam began bestowing coffee trees on aristocrats around Europe due to its value and stimulating effects. The next significant event occurred when a young naval officer was in Paris on leave from Martinique, a French colony in the Caribbean and requested clippings from his king's coffee plant. Permission was denied but despite this he stole one and headed back to the Caribbean. On the return passage to Martinique, a sprout grew, yielding an extended family of approximately 18 million trees in 50 years.¹ Its progeny would supply Latin America and bring coffee to the masses. By 1800 Brazil's monster harvests would turn coffee from an elite indulgence to an everyday remedy.



Brazilian Coffee on Salah Salem Street



Brazilian shop, although located on Salah Salem, is not the only Brazilian establishment. There is a branch in Saad Zaghloul called Brazilian Coffee Stores and there were two branches in Cairo in the 1920s. The shop's location was chosen because it is situated between twelve banks, making it an ideal place to escape mundane office life. The banks, such as the National Bank of Egypt, Bank Misr, the Central Bank of Egypt and the Land Bank would have provided the shop with an endless supply of caffeine seeking clients. In the 1920's, banks had a crucial role in Alexandria since the city was Egypt's financial capital. Morning, business and post work coffees would have all been consumed in the Brazilian Coffee making it an essential component of Alexandria's financial machine.

Brazilian Coffee is full of original features, taking the visitor back to pre-war Alexandria. Unlike many other new coffee shops, Brazilian Coffee consists of original features such as coffee grinders and display cabinets, causing the visitor to be engrossed in the world of Alexandria in the 1920's. The shop is centered around a long red granite bar lined with high stools on which the coffee faithful perch to drink their espressos, cappuccinos, mochas or lattes. Purple coffee beans and bright green leaves adorn the bar making you aware that this building was originally built for the sole purpose of serving coffee. The Brazilian Coffee logo lies behind the bar on a large mirror and fuses Egyptian and Brazilian icons such as the pyramids and the Brazilian flag. Above the entrance is a large fresco showing Brazilian coffee beans being picked and packed in sacs.

The Brazilian Coffee shop was founded by a Greek owner called Sedaris in 1928 who was also the owner of the famous Alexandria department store, Salon Vert. Coffee shops in Alexandria were places where everyone, no matter what religion, background or denomination could meet and pass the day. Other Alexandrian shops, such as Pastroudis and Trianon, were very much at the heart of the city's social scene, demonstrated by Durrell and the role of Pastroudis in the *Alexandria Quartet*.

As with many truly Alexandrian establishments the advent of Nasser's rule signaled the end of an era. Along with many other foreign communities, Sedaris left the city and needed to sell his business before he traveled to Greece.

In 1954 the shop in Salah Salem, Brazilian Coffee, was sold to Egyptian Mohammed Sobhy, a coffee merchant who realized the shop's potential when Sedaris wanted to sell. In 1959 the branch in Saad Zaghloul was also sold to him making him the owner of both Brazilian establishments, just as Sedaris was before him.

The ownership changed once again in 1990. This time the coffee shops remained in the family and Nadia Mohamed Sobhy, Mohamed's daughter, and her husband, Youssef el-Messiri, took charge of the day to day running and continue to do so today. Youssef, a qualified architect, enjoys the varied clientele and regulars and despite being the owner of a very popular coffee shop refuses to drink a drop! Coffee has spread through the family and their son has recently established a coffee shop in Sharm el Sheikh, using the same unique blend of Brazilian coffee.



The original coffee machine from 1928

The Brazilian Coffee shop has always attracted very popular local figures. Russians, Greeks, Armenians and Italians continue to stop by the shop, to sit at the bar and talk over important issues of the day with a cup of coffee. The shop has remained very popular, attracting many tourists, some of who plan trips solely to drink some of its well-known coffee.

The shop's coffee is mainly imported from Brazil, some from Cuba. It has its own original mix; the branch in Sharm el Sheikh imports the beans and prepares them before they are transported to the branches in Alexandria which then grind and serve them. Most of the machinery is original and has remained in the shop since 1929; including a machine that Youssef el Messiri is very proud of. This bright silver coffee machine is as old as the building itself and instead of electricity is driven by pistons and steam. It has constantly produced excellent coffee for almost eighty years. Youssef regularly receives offers for (one such offer was a swap for three brand new coffee machines) but he refuses each time because it is simply too valuable and as important as the building itself.

Alexandria has witnessed several significant changes since 1928 but the Brazilian Coffee shop continues to be a central part of down town Alexandria. Bankers, taxi drivers, shop keepers, business men and tourists alike continue to get their daily fix just as they did over seventy years ago.

¹ www.nationalgeographic.com/coffee

Changing Faces

Edward Cooper

"Welcome in Alexandria," an Egyptian youth proudly remarks to 84-year old Stanley Bay resident Muggi as she returns home from a day out with friends. The first daughter of an Armenian father and Austrian mother, Muggi's spent her whole life in the city, but it's a frequent comment nonetheless. "People are surprised when I say I'm Alexandrian, I guess because they see so few old, white-haired ladies!" she titters. "The best thing to do is simply say, 'Thank you'."

Talking to Muggi, one of the grand characters of Alexandria, one is transported back in time to a place almost unrecognisable today. Christened Naomi Athanassian, but aptly nicknamed Muggi (from the Armenian word for mouse), her diminutive figure sways in time with a waltz: very real on her radio-cassette, and vivid in her memory too.



Although one could hear exploding bombs 100km away in Alamein, meeting places like the Trianon and Athineos cafés were full of dancing and happiness in 1940s Alex.

"They were crowded every night. Couples queued up," Muggi reminisces. "I was lucky to be in my early twenties." And forty years later, the music played on, with regular dances at the parsonage in Stanley, organised by English priest Howard Levett, now back in England. "He was probably the most popular of men here that I know of. He inspired so much. He helped organise theatre and played the piano. Today, the young don't seem to know how to dance!"

The changes to Alex have, of course, been great for Muggi in her lifetime. She lives firmly for the day, however, and is proud of modern city achievements such as the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. "More classes of people can enjoy Alex now, more people can live comfortably." Inevitably, some things have been lost too, and not only the pavements to cars or sand to concrete. "Like other Mediterranean cities, Alex has an outgoing nature, a glamour, but the number of mixed cosmopolitans is now very low."

Fifty years ago, Muggi rubbed shoulders with the likes of Lawrence Durrell, whose famous novels about the city inevitably featured people she met in social circles. "We knew the same people, so yes I did recognise some people in his books."

Her friendship with Durrell's second wife, Eve Cohen, had begun much before; the two of them attending lessons together at the Scottish Girls' School (now Manar School), near Ramleh station.

But it's typical of the lady, that despite the semi-mythical people who have impacted upon her life, it's the forgotten folk of Alex that move her more: "The manual workers, the refuse collectors, they deserve our admiration most."

Young artists of Alexandria

Une lugubre victoire

Le ciel pleurait; la montagne s'est ébranlée.
Les soldats avec la douleur de la perte sont mêlés.
Perdus dans les ténèbres de l'inconnu... ils tâtonnaient.
Les chevaux couverts de sang, comme des loups, hurlaient.

Les yeux des soldats révélaient un regard de regret assez clair.
A chaque goutte de sang, s'efface leur courage militaire.
La vie humaine, qui était jadis si chère, est devenue, en une seconde,
Des morceaux de chair, dispersés par terre.

Le ciel bleuâtre et brumeux,
Le reflet du soleil sur le sable sinueux,
Apparaissent comme un peintre dessinant d'une plume de feu
Le tableau macabre d'un combat désastreux.

La terre morte, couverte de cadavres blêmes,
Proclame, avec orgueil, sa victoire suprême

Alia Atef El Kholy, née à Alexandrie le 21 septembre 1982, est licenciée de la Faculté de pédagogie, Département de français. Elle enseigne actuellement le français à l'English Girls' College (E.G.C) à Alexandrie.

Solitaire

La solitude me tue,
Me jette dans un volcan,
Qui bout autour de moi
Et je me trouve au fond.
Je crie, au secours!
Personne ne me répond.

Des silhouettes humaines
Agissent autour de moi.
Comme des fantômes elles passent,
Sans que quelqu'un me voit.

Quoi faire pour briser cet enfer ?
Pour casser les barreaux
De cette affreuse prison ?
La solitude me tue,
Me jette dans un volcan.

Loria's Alexandria

Keith Miller

Alexandria has many prominent and ancient sites yet Midan Saad Zaghloul is the true heart of the city, its charm due in no small measure to the architecture and influence of Giuseppe Alessandro Loria.

Loria was born in Mansoura near Alexandria in 1880. After spending time in Italy and Cairo, he returned to Alexandria in 1914 and began working as an architect in the rapidly expanding cosmopolitan city. A decade of looking at buildings in Tuscany and old Cairo was to influence his style and leave an indelible mark on his native city.

Loria's architecture exemplifies cosmopolitan Alexandria, combining the Art Deco style then in vogue with Venetian Gothic elements from his ancestral home; and Arab elements adapted from Alexandrian mosques and the Cairo bazaars.



Bank Misr (1925) in Neo Islamic style influenced by Italian styles

Loria's daughter Marta remembered playing with her on the roof of the building. There are other Durrell connections: Loria designed the atelier in the garden of the Ambron Villa, where Durrell first jotted notes toward his "Alexandria novel." In this atelier Gilda Ambron and Clea Badaro, who was partially a model for Clea Montis in *The Alexandria Quartet*, sketched and painted. When Egyptian artist Effat Nagui rented the villa in the 1960s, she preferred to live in the atelier rather than the main house.

Loria's most famous creation, the Cecil Hotel, is so much a part of the literature and consciousness of Alexandria it seems timeless, almost a character in its own right. It occupies a central place in the *Quartet*, as the location where the narrator, Darley, first sees Justine, and where she first meets Nessim, her husband: "In the gaunt lounge of the Cecil Hotel she would perhaps be waiting, gloved hands folded on her handbag, staring out through the windows upon which the sea crawled and sprawled, climbing and subsiding, across the screen of palms in the little municipal square which flapped and creaked like loose sails."



Cecil Hotel Venetian style (1929)

The Cecil Hotel was commissioned by Albert Metzger, a wealthy German, and was the first hotel along the waterfront. Prior to the 1920s, the littoral was filthy and reeking and the elite chose to build their villas along the Mahmoudieh Canal in Moharrem Bey. But Loria's Moorish-Venetian confection sparked the rush to develop the waterfront, a trend that continues today. The hotel has been restored by the Sofitel group and, while quieter than other Loria designs, its rippling crenelation and pattern of arched windows adds elegance to Midan Saad Zaghloul. The cuboid design with its stylized battlements also nicely echoes Fort Qaitbey across the harbor. Here Churchill and Montgomery stayed during the war, and it has seen a host of elite visitors. It remains the hotel of choice for the historically minded tourist.

Perhaps Loria's second most famous creation, and certainly the most striking, is the Bank Misr on Sharia Talaat Harb. Talaat Harb, the famous economic doyen who commissioned the building, requested that Loria include elements from Islamic

architecture, and this pushed Loria in a new direction. It is a testament to the architect's genius that he was able to incorporate the muqamas (stalactite) vaults and coffered ceilings tastefully, while retaining his signature style. The building is delightful from the exterior, and the interior, with its assiduously restored ceilings and walls, is astonishing in its density of decoration.

The Ambron Villa atelier has had its top floor illegally removed by building contractors and other Loria buildings have been destroyed or are in disrepair. However, his legacy has survived more intact than that of perhaps any other Alexandrian architect. Dr. Awad notes that the restorations have all been private, a testament to the lasting appeal of his designs. Among the buildings that remain are the Campos house at 6 Sharia Neroutsos, the Bank Misr, the Italian Hospital on Sharia Dalal Dessouki (now a military hospital), the Jewish Hospital in Sporting, and several of the prettiest and most exotic buildings along the Eastern Harbor, including the Lido House Hotel, the Majestic, and, of course, the Cecil.

Loria was an interesting combination of fascist and Jew, though he died before the war and so his religious-political make-up was never tried. His ethnic heritage was to cost him some work, though: when Italy invaded Abyssinia, Egyptian Orthodox Christians, who have traditional links with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, withdrew their patronage.

Architecture was Loria's obsession. He worked seven days a week, not taking a day off until the last decade of his life, when he would occasionally make trips into the desert. His daughter Marta described him working late at night under a large lamp on the dining room table. He did this on his last evening, just after he had received a commission to design the National Bank of Egypt in Cairo. At his death in 1937 he was regarded as the premier architect of the city.

Loria's influence may be seen in many buildings throughout the city, not least those designed by his protégé, Ricardo Smith. Smith designed the buildings behind and beside the Cecil, as well as other structures throughout the city. His use of mosaic and neo-Gothic features pays homage to Loria, but Smith's work leans more toward the neo-Romantic. As Dr. Awad points out, the influence of Loria and other Italian architects survives to the present day, and may be seen in such recent structures as the Stanley Bay Bridge, directly derived from the Venetian aspect of Alexandria's architectural history.



Corniche apartment building (1929) in Venetian Neo Gothic, approaching the Palace of Dogs, Venice

The marriage of these disparate styles, which in more recent imitative buildings can be clumsy, becomes in Loria's hands something new and harmonious: a truly Alexandrian architecture. His buildings are fanciful and densely decorated yet never overwhelm the structures or arches and his designs have a curious ability to adapt to the changing city. Neon signs, advertisements and tattered laundry seem to add to the festive nature of his façades rather than cluttering them. Mohamed Awad, the most prominent Alexandrian architect, and director of both the Alex-Med Research Center and the Alexandria Preservation Trust, notes that while most buildings of the inter-war era have been summarily demolished, many of Loria's structures have been restored by private contractors, a testament to his long-lasting appeal.

Loria married into the illustrious Campos family of lawyers and businessmen, and designed their house. His own home and office were at 65 Sharia Fouad, and there he began to hone the style that would make him one of the most sought-after architects of the city. Claude Vincendon, who would become writer Lawrence Durrell's third (and favorite) wife, lived next door at 63 Sharia Fouad.

Dondurma

Turkish Sweets - The perfect way to cool down in the summer

Dondurma Çilekli Strawberry Ice Water

Serves: 6-8

Syrup:

2 cups water

1 cup sugar

2 teaspoons lemon juice

To finish:

2 cups strawberry purée

1 teaspoon strained lemon juice

1/4 cup milk

Red food coloring



1 In a heavy pan combine water and sugar and stir over heat until sugar is dissolved. Add lemon juice and bring to the boil. Boil for 5 minutes, skimming when necessary, and leave to cool.

2 To make strawberry purée rub washed and hulled strawberries through a fine sieve (a generous 3 cups of whole strawberries should yield 2 cups of purée).

3 Combine purée with cooled syrup, lemon juice and milk and stir in a few drops of food coloring. Pour into a freezer tray or loaf cake pan and freeze.

4 Spoon into chilled dessert glasses and serve immediately. If desired, ice can be broken up with a fork before placing in glasses.

Dondurma Limonlu Lemon Ice Water

Serves: 6-8

4 lemons

3 cups water

1 cup granulated sugar

1 egg white

Lemon food coloring, optional



1 Wash lemons well. Peel rind thinly from lemons so that there is little or no pith left on the rind.

2 Put rind in a pan with the water and bring slowly to the boil. Boil uncovered for 10 minutes. Strain into a measuring jug and discard rind.

3 Add sugar to the pan and dissolve over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Bring to the boil on a medium heat for 5 minutes. Leave until cool.

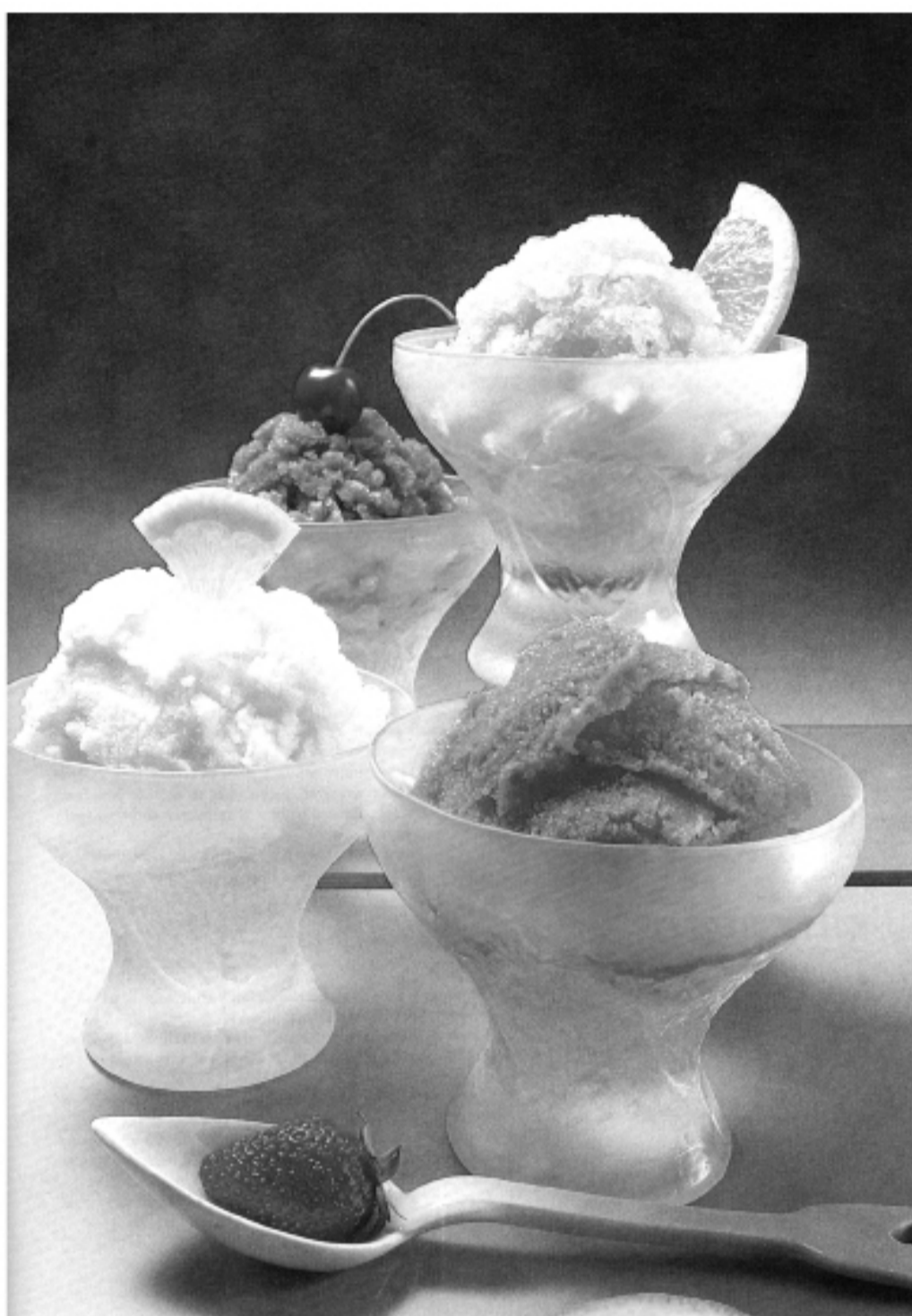
4 Juice the lemons and strain. Measure 3/4 cup juice and add to the cooled syrup. Pour into a bowl and place in freezer. Leave until half frozen, then stir well to break up ice crystals.

5 Beat egg white until stiff. Blend thoroughly into half frozen syrup with a little lemon food colouring if desired. Return to freezer and leave until just firm.

6 Remove from freezer and beat well until smooth and light.

7 Pour into a loaf cake pan, cover with foil and freeze until very firm-about 3 hours or longer.

8 To serve, draw a metal spoon across the dondurma and place the flaky curls into chilled sweet glasses. Alternatively scoop out with an ice cream scoop.



Dondurma Portakal Orange Ice Water

Serves: 6-8

Thinly peeled rind of 2 oranges

Thinly peeled rind of 1 lemon

3 cups water

1 cup granulated sugar

1 cup orange juice

1/4 cup lemon juice



1 Boil orange and lemon rinds in water, strain and measure as in Step 2 of Dondurma Limonlu recipe, and make syrup as in Step 3.

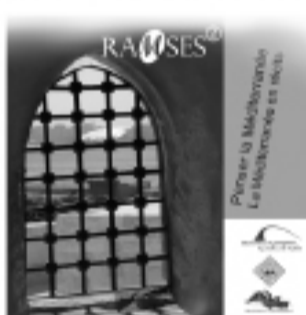
2 Add orange and lemon juice to syrup and pour into a bowl. Freeze for 3 hours until firm. Flake with a fork and pile flakes into chilled sweet glasses.

Note: Orange food coloring may be added to syrup if desired.



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

Editor: Edward Lewis
Graphics: Flora Cavoura
Photography: Abdallah Dawestashy

Forthcoming events

Cycle de conférences "Penser la Méditerranée", la Méditerranée antique
Lecture : West Hall – Bibliotheca Alexandrina Conference Center
4 September 2006, 7pm

Atelier Mémoire en Méditerranée
Discussion : Fourth Floating Room - Main Library
1 – 4 September 2006, 9am – 8pm Daily

Description: Le couple histoire / mémoire est, depuis une vingtaine d'années, au cœur de débats scientifiques, sociaux et politiques, qui culminent en ce moment même, dans la multiplication des revendications et des conflits mémoriels dont l'enjeu est l'affirmation ou la redéfinition d'identités plurielles. Jamais, sans doute, le rôle social et politique de l'histoire, comme mode d'écriture du passé, n'avait de ce fait été posé dans le débat public avec autant d'acuité, comme le montrent en France les prises de position contradictoires de la communauté historique sur les « lois mémorielles » et le débat sur la mémoire coloniale.

Contact us:

If you want to be added to our mailing list, please fill in the form and either mail or email it to us. If you would like to send a letter to the Editor or to contribute to the newsletter (either an article in Arabic, English or French, or a poem) please send it to:

The Alexandria & Mediterranean Research Center, Bibliotheca Alexandrina
Chatby 21526, Alexandria, Egypt.

or
alex.med@bibalex.org



Register with Alex-Med

Name: (First, Father, Middle, Last).....

Title: Mr. Mrs. Ms. Dr.

I.D. number.....

Place and date of issue.....

Address (street, district)

Postal code, city, country

Phone (home)

Phone (office).....

Phone (mobile).....

Fax.....

E-mail.....

Profession.....

Organization.....

