ARAB AMERICANS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES OF CLEVELAND

Mary Haddad Macron

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PREFACE

It is only a coincidence that we are publishing this monograph at a time when the Islamic world is increasingly influencing major international developments. We are hopeful, nevertheless, that during these difficult times we may be able to contribute to a better understanding of the Arab world, of their contributions to world civilizations, and their impact on the development of the American nation in general and Cleveland in particular.

In comparison to other ethnic groups in Cleveland, the Arab American community is not one of our largest, oldest, or best organized. It has, however, and still is asserting a unique and valuable influence on the life and growth of this area. Who can ignore, for instance, the contributions by two of its distinguished members, Congresswoman Mary Rose Oakar and Dr. Donna Shalala, the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The author of this monograph, Mary Haddad Macron, was born in Massachusetts and reared and educated in Cleveland. She is well known to the Cleveland community for her commitment to human rights. Her articles and many other cultural activities are dedicated to the betterment of human experience. This is a work of love for her heritage. It is an expression of her sincere desire that the Arab Americans will continue to cherish and preserve the values that their parents and grandparents brought to America. To Mary for this excellent contribution to our Ethnic Heritage Studies, my sincere "thank you."

A sincere "thank you" also to Sister Mary Loyola Mathia, S.C., former Social Studies consultant for the Catholic Board of Education, who spent many hours and days with editorial help and substantive advice. Her contributions have added immeasurably to the realization of this monograph.

I wish to express also my deep appreciation to Mr. Danny Thomas for generously contributing to this work with an introduction. Mr. Thomas himself is an Ohio man, who has had a long standing interest in the Cleveland Arab community. Similarly, my appreciation goes to Dr.
William Cody for reviewing the manuscript and for the many valuable comments.

Last but not least, my heartfelt thanks to my secretary and assistant. Grace Sechnick, for her patience and perserverance in bringing this work to its successful completion.

Dr. Karl Bonutti
Editor, Monograph Series
Ethnic Heritage Studies
Cleveland State University
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INTRODUCTION

It was not until the bicentennial celebration of this nation in 1976 that most Americans began to proclaim publicly their ethnic backgrounds. The diversity in the cultural heritages of our citizens lay dormant for the most part for almost two centuries.

The Syrian and Lebanese Americans, however, retained their pride in the spiritual and cultural traditions of their ancestors. Under adverse circumstances they continued to maintain these traditions in their family life and in their associations.

Little has been written about the history and experiences of these people after their immigration to this country. The author of this monograph has made a contribution in describing the progress of the Syrian and Lebanese American community in the Cleveland area. These same experiences were similarly reflected in many other communities throughout the land, including my own.

This monograph includes not only the early history of these people from their origins in the Mediterranean. It focuses particularly on their daily lives as immigrants to America -- and on the difficulties they encountered in trying to maintain their traditional institutions in a new land.

The contributions of the Syrian and Lebanese people in the political, educational, professional and business life of America are numerous. These achievements were made despite serious obstacles and prejudices which they faced in the early years. This book offers one profile of that history in the Cleveland area. Hopefully it will encourage others to
expand upon that theme in a broader perspective of this ethnic group in America.

As a person of Lebanese heritage, and especially as Founder of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, I am well aware of the energies and dedication of these people in all aspects of American life. I am extremely proud of their civic and humanitarian activities. It is for this reason that I am pleased to introduce this monograph, which should be valuable in the study of America's ethnic diversity.

Danny Thomas
And let today embrace the past with Rememberance and the future with longing.
Khalil Gibran

A solitary Cedar overlooks the village of Bcharre Birthplace of Khalil Gibran (Cedars of Lebanon are famous since biblical times. They grow in the snow-covered mountains. Today, they are practically extinct -- the 100 left are protected as national monuments.)

FOR THEIR INVALUABLE SUPPORT IN PROVIDING HISTORICAL INFORMATION,
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND
ENCOURAGEMENT, THE AUTHOR OF THIS
BOOK EXPRESSES GRATEFUL APPRECIATION

TO:

Linda George Anter
Anne Shibley Bird
Michael S. Caraboolad
George Caraboolad
Lucille A. Courey
Naissef and Rita Anter Courey
Helenie (Mrs. Khalil) Farage
Lenore Haney Flynn
Henry George
Burt Haddad
Isabel A. Haddad
Josephine H. Haddad
Wedad Mouhaissan Hasan
Barbara (Mrs. Attulah) Jacob
Rose (Mrs. Abdalatlah Suri) Joseph
Carolyn Kaim Koury
Sister Mary Loyola
George & Nora Macron Maloof
James Dodman Nobel
George and Fredericka Parmelee
Jaber & Victoria Ellis Said
Raymond Shibley
Lucretia Stoica

Dedicated with Gratitude and Love

To my father, Michael Elias Haddad, the head of our house, and to my mother, Eugenie (Jennie) Bowab Haddad, who was its tender and courageous heart; to all those loving
parents, grandfathers and grandmothers, uncles, aunts and cousins who yearned and struggled to give today's Americans of Arabic heritage a home in freedom; and to the children dwelling in the "house of tomorrow," who are the fulfillment of the promise.

Mike and Jennie Haddad in Confectionery in Canton, Ohio - 1922. In background at cigarette counter, Joseph and Elias Bowab.

WHO ARE THE ARABS?

The Arabs are not and never have been a single nationality or a single people. This is not to say that they have not had, in their ancient history as well as in the modern day, a nationhood and nations. Indeed, there are
today twenty-two Arab nations, stretching from the Atlantic shores of Morocco to the Persian Gulf, from the Mediterranean to the middle of the Sahara and the Upper Nile. The Arab World crosses the continents of Africa and Asia to the tip of Europe and numbers at least one hundred thirty million of the earth's people.

What then is "Arab" if it is not a single nationality?

The Arab identity, like that of the Jews, is a cultural identity, linking the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa through language, tradition, history, and religion.

We might consider those states which are associated with the League of Arab States to be what is recognized as the Arab World. These are organized into four zones, different in geographic and demographic characteristics, but alike in the language and heritage which binds them. One zone is the Arab East, called Al-Mashraq, which means, simply, "East, where the sun rises." This section embraces Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Palestine. A second zone contains the countries of the Nile—Egypt and Sudan. The Arab West, Al-Maghreb, "land of the sunset," can be considered the third zone. This section includes Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauretania. The fourth zone, the Gulf States, is comprised of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen, people's Yemen, Bahrein, Quatar, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates.
THE ARAB WORLD
PART I

THE ARABS –
THEIR HISTORY AND HERITAGE
Chapter 1

PHOENICIAN TRADE AND TRAVEL

Who are the Arabs? The Arabs and the Arab Americans are those people whose ancestors were the Canaanites, the Phoenicians (the western branch of the Canaanites) the Hittites, Amorites, Ammonites, Moabites, Semites; the Sumerians, Arameans, Chaldeans, Hurrians, Horites and Hyksos; the Philistines, for whom Palestine was named, and the Habiru (Hebrews). These were the tribes who came and went in the earliest days of recorded civilization, established thriving kingdoms and advanced cultures, and built cities in the lands of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Assyria, Palestine, Phoenicia and Syria.

As the peoples of the world today cannot realistically trace their lineage or race to a single source, neither could the ancients of those lands, whose geneology had already become well homogenized by the time the world's oldest city was built, about seven thousand years ago, in that Canaanite land known today as Lebanon. The Egyptians called this city Kupna, the Hebrews said "Gebal" (mountain), and the Greeks came to know it as Byblos, the name it bears to this day.

If we trace modern man's history back to about 5000 B.C., we find that the world was already in a ferment of motion. Shepherds grazed their flocks over as much of the land as they could travel and whole tribes would set forth periodically with their belongings and animals, carts and watering vessels, and their young and their old. Sometimes,
finding brides along the way, they travelled to where the land was greener and set up new tents. Men looked longingly and courageously at the blue seas and wild rivers and set their strength to the building of great ships of cedar, eighty to one hundred feet long, weighing tons; or they made small boats of papyrus and sailed out to conquer an uncharted world.

Merchant caravans plied trade routes, crossing deserts, mountains and plains, carried their art and science to the lands they visited, and brought back to their own people the cultures of other lands. Kings and chieftains crossed swords, signed treaties, exchanged properties, and sent their daughters to each others countries, establishing stronger ties and territorial security through new family relationships.

In the region of Western Asia called the Arab East lay the land of Canaan, that land of milk and honey where the Canaanites dwelt about five thousand years before Christ. Here they built the city of Jericho, and later the city of Damascus. It was in Canaan that the Jebbusites built Al-Salem, the "City of Peace," which was later known as Jerusalem. Tyre and Sidon flourished along the coastal plain of The Lebanon, the "white mountain" of the Phoenicians.

Tyre, which the Phoenicians called Al-Sur, is a symbol of resistance to conquest and oppression. Nebachudnezzer besieged the city for thirteen years and Alexander the Great, unable to defeat it after seven months of constant battle, finally built a great dike over which his armies could pass in order to enter the city. Over the centuries an isthmus has formed where this dike once stood.²

Other Phoenician cities established centuries before the birth of Christ were Acco, Beirut, Smyrna, Arwad and Ugarit. In Ugarit, the present day Ras Shamra, the
Phoenicians devised a cuneiform alphabet of twenty-nine letters. This invention, giving the world a simple form of communication which advanced the progress of commerce and promoted an international exchange of cultures, was perhaps the Phoenicians' greatest contribution to man's history. It was in Ugarit also, during the Assyro-Babylonian civilization of the second millennium, B.C., that a ballad, believed by scholars to be "the oldest song in the world," was first played on a Sumerian lyre, establishing the tonal pattern for western music.\(^3\)

The Canaanite Phoenicians, particularly those inhabitants of Aradus, Sidon, Tyre and Byblos were mariners. They literally sailed the world, charting the uncharted waters, discovering the Atlantic, circling the African continent about 500 B.C. They set course by the stars, developing and refining the sciences of astronormy and navigation.

The Phoenicians were merchants and traders, selling pottery, glass, woven products, paints, varnishes, cedar and wine. From Mediterranean waters they netted a shell fish, the murex, and extracted its essence to make their purple dyes.

During their centuries of travel, they colonized new cities and fathered descendants to populate them. (Legend says that Elissa, sister of the king of Tyre, angered by male domination during the 8th century B.C., crossed to Africa with a party of her supporters and founded Carthage - New City, and a new kingdom). Gaza, Tripoli, Joppa, Ascolon, and Ashdod, Tarsus, Hebron and Samaria were once Phoenician cities.
Following the European coastlines on the Mediterranean, the Phoenicians' "Ships of Tarshish" named for an ore smelting colony in southern Spain, sailed into the harbors of Greece, Italy, Britain and France. The fishing
boats which drift through the locks of Lisbon today, their red sails swooping back from bold broad prows are built in the unchanged style of the Phoenician craft of those ancient centuries. These small but sturdy boats sailed the Baltic, the Red Sea and the Aegean, and found their way to Hippo and Tangiers in Africa, and to the islands of Malta, Rhodes, Cyprus, Minorca and the Canaries.

For centuries the goods from all countries of the known world had floated on the waters of the Mediterranean, the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea and trade served as a bridge for the exchange of arts between east and west. The Phoenician King, Hiram of Tyre, sent cedars and mountain stone from The Lebanon to his friend, the Hebrew King, Solomon of Jerusalem, to build the Temple. In addition, he sent artisans skilled in the crafting of bronze and gold to create the magnificent designs for this wonder that Solomon was raising to the Lord. Solomon, in turn, sent Hiram twenty thousand kors of wheat and twenty thousand measures of pure oil each year for his household. The two kings enjoyed a close friendship, exchanging tests of wisdom and placing bets against each other. The Phoenicians travelled as far as Cornwall for tin. The record shows that Phoenicians travelled, in the years before the birth of Christ, even to the New World. A stone, marking the year 531 B.C., was discovered several years ago on the banks of the Paraiba River along the coast of Brazil, at a point about a hundred miles north of Rio De Janeiro.

Translated in 1967 by Cyrus Gordon, head of the Department of Mediterranean Studies at Brandeis University, the stone indicates that a band of Phoenicians
found their way to the mouth of the river while seeking the rich iron reserves in the province of Minas Gerais.

"We are Sidonian Canaanites," the tablet read, "from the city of the Merchant King. We were cast up on this distant island, a land of mountains. We sacrificed a youth to the celestial gods and goddesses in the nineteenth year of the mighty King Hiram and embarked from Ezion-Geber into the Red Sea. We voyaged with ten ships and were at sea together for two years around Africa. Then we were separated by the Hand of Baal and were no longer with our companions. So we have come here, twelve men and three women, into the "Island of Iron."

Did these ancient Phoenicians reach the new world two thousand years before Columbus? Cyrus Gordon describes the "Hand of Baal" as a Semitic phrase meaning fate or divine will. A similar inscription has been found on Cyprus. Evidence, particularly in recent studies by Barry Fell of Harvard, points substantially to the existence of an active sea traffic between the old world and the new very early in the records of history.

History shows us, however, that the exchange of culture and the inter-relationships of the world’s peoples have developed not only through commerce and trade, but through invasion, war and conquest as well. In the fourth century B.C., Alexander the Great conquered Egypt, Babylonia, Phoenicia, and Syria. A Macedonian, who ruled over Greece added new racial and cultural relationships to these lands. Following the Greek conquests came the Roman invasions and an Empire that flourished half way around the world. The Romans left temples behind in the Arab world, and the ruins at Baalbek in the Lebanon valley
of the Bekaa serve today as a background for an annual international festival of music, dancing and theater. A French writer once said that "if the columns of Baalbek disappeared, there would be less beauty in the world, and less poetry in the skies of Lebanon." In Jordan, the Roman city unearthed at Jerash is among the most complete of the world's archeological discoveries. Called "the town of the lazy generals," it was the Emperor Hadrian's winter resort. Re-living the glory of Rome in Jerash one sees baths, fountains, statuary, a circular forum, three theaters, and the Temple of Artemis, the town's patron goddess.

While the Romans made Jerash their own town, Petra, the rose-red city of the Nabatean Arabs, provides an archeological record of the peoples who conquered it. The Nabatean Arabs built inward into the mountain rock. The beautiful facades of their Temple, El Deir, and the Treasury, glowing pink in the desert sun, lie on the face of the mountains, the rooms themselves penetrating deep into the mountains. When the Romans conquered Petra, they built an Amphitheater which stands out bold and free, surrounded by the cliff side houses and tombs of the Arabs, the building styles of each culture so markedly different, yet each attesting to the creative genius of the men who built them.

**BAALBECK**

*City of the Children of the Sun*

The Acropolis of Baalbeck is the largest and best-preserved corpus of Roman architecture left to us. Its
temples, dedicated to Jupiter, Venus and Bacchus, were built in the second and third centuries of the Christian era. The ruins present a majestic ensemble:
Chapter 2

DEVELOPMENT OF THE EGYPTIAN REGION

Five thousand years before Christ, when the Phoenicians were mapping their sea routes, and the Amorites of Northern Syria and the Semites of Palestine were populating Al-Mashraq, the Arab East, the people of one of the countries of the Nile had already introduced into their economic and social lives a solar calendar of three hundred and sixty-five days.

Kemet, the black land, Egypt, which was also called the gift of the Nile, had a civilization and culture that was contemporary with that of the Arab East, and commerce, cultural exchange and political rivalry was already practiced between the two regions.

The Egyptians were a mixture of several stocks ascribed to the Mediterranean races. Their language was related to the Semitic and the Berber, with some traces of the Galla and Somali dialects.

Agriculture was the foundation of the economic life of Egypt, its fertility depending upon the overflowing of the river, from June to October. Today, the High Dam at Aswan relieves some of the agriculture problems faced by the ancient Egyptians, but even in the present day the natural characteristics of the terrain allow Egypt only about thirteen thousand square miles of arable land. To survive, the ancient Egyptians were compelled to devise intricate methods of irrigating the land on the banks of the Nile by using the river's overflow.
Egyptian Ship on the Red Sea, about 1250 B.C. (From Torr's "Ancient Ships.")

Racial Types . . . From Egyptian Tomb-Paintings (After Champollion.)
Into this Valley of the Nile, the Egyptians brought an ancient glory whose magnificence is discovered and rediscovered each day in modern Egypt. The temples, palaces and exquisite treasures left by a series of ancient dynasties testify to a civilization, which, with China, is the oldest continuous one in history.

The Pharaohs ruled through an elaborate bureaucracy and their reigns were recorded in 280 B.C. by Manethos, a priest, as encompassing thirty dynasties. During these centuries of grandeur, architects designed colossal pyramids, among them one of the great wonders of the world, the Pyramid of Cheops, built during the Old Kingdom. Majestic buildings of marble and granite were built in the Valley of the Kings, at Luxor, Memphis, and Thebes, buildings rich with sculpture and elaborately painted with figures of gods, humans, and animals. The brilliance and light of these paintings remain fresh as archeologists continue to unearth them from the sands of Egypt.

With their furniture, statuary, painting, art objects, jewelry, food and drink, and a boat to carry them through the heavens in the afterlife, kings and nobles were buried in splendor in the pyramids. These monuments were of such great proportions that scientists and archeologists cannot agree on how these feats of architecture and scientific reckoning were accomplished. It is true, however, that as the dynasties progressed, architecture flourished, industrial crafts reached near perfection, the plastic arts were developed, and mining operations were carried out in the Sinai. Hydraulic works were established in the Fayoum (Lake Moeris), and a great group of palaces known as the Labyrinth were built here as well.
The Great Columns at Karnak Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

Architectural Affinity of Pyramids
With a little help from their friends, the more energetic tourists climb the pyramids.

During a period of foreign domination, the Hyksos, a mixed people of Semitic and Hurrian origin from Palestine and Syria introduced the horse into Egypt.

From 1520 to 1480 B.C., a woman ruled Egypt. She was Hatshepsut, the half sister and wife, first of Thutmose II and later of Thutmose III. Hatshepsut was an early feminist. She was strong willed, high spirited and determined to reign equally with, or if she could achieve it, above her husbands. For her the title of queen smacked of consort and she called herself Pharaoh, often wearing an artificial beard into the halls of power. The world is reminded of her in the Temple she built at Luxor, "Der El Bahari."

Monotheism had an early beginning in Egypt. It was first taught and practiced by Amenophis IV who was also known as Ikhanaton. He envisioned a single God for the whole world and saw Him in the sun and its life-giving rays. His wife was Nefertiti, she of the perfect head and profile, whose bust of painted limestone is preserved in the Berlin Museum. Theirs was a short reign of refinement, of peace through diplomacy, of patronage of the arts and education. Ikhanaton's mother was black and the figures of Ikhanaton show him to be more Nubian and broader featured than Nefertiti. A Sculpted head has been found of a little princess whom legend identifies as their daughter. Held by a regal, slim neck, this head is black, small and proud. While not as widely known as her mother, the little princess, who became
one of the black queens of Egypt, is as graceful and beautiful.

While the Pharaohs built temples, palaces and pyramids, fought wars and practiced politics, other men engaged in humbler pursuits. They planted corn and cotton, farmed the delta of the Nile, furthered the sciences and practiced the healing arts. At the same time, they were highly skilled in medicine, both in the art of herbal treatment and in surgery. Archeological evidence indicates that the surgeons were familiar with the techniques of brain surgery.

Other Egyptians followed the stars as the Phoenicians were doing. While they built large ships of cedar imported from Lebanon, they also fashioned smaller boats of papyrus reed, that versatile plant that was pliable enough for manuscripts, yet tough enough to float on unpredictable rivers. How far did these papyrus boats go? Did they merely run errands up and down the Nile, to Memphis, to Thebes, or did they follow all of the great river's nearly four thousand miles, into the Blue Nile, the Black Nile, to Sudan and Ethiopia? Did they visit strange ports, and sail on into strange seas? Did they find their way, as other ancients may have done, into the great Atlantic in their little paper boats?

Some years ago, Thor Heyerdahl built such a boat, christened it Ra, meaning the Sun God, and set out to prove it could be done. Heyerdahl's voyage demonstrated that early Egyptians could have migrated to Central and South America.

If the Egyptians had come to the New World, was it already peopled, or was it a virgin land in which these sailors settled to become the indigenous population? Who are the Incas, the Aztecs, the American Indians? Where did these
ruddy skinned, aquiline featured, long limbed people come from? Are the similarities in art merely an accident of human creativity? There is a striking likeness between ancient Egyptian weaving and a Navajo rug or blanket. The same symbols are found on ancient and new Egyptian arm bracelets and on silver Mexican jewelry. A figure resembling the Egyptian obelisk is prominent in new world metal-craft and embroidery. Is that strong, bird-like figure in North American Indian art the North American Eagle, or Horus, the god of the kings, Horus the Hawk from Egyptian lore?
The Voyage of Ra

"And did those rafts in ancient times drift from Africa to the Caribbean on a friendly stream?"

Voyage of Ra
A link between cultures

Courtesy of the Cleveland Press (4/18/69)