

Chapter 1 : Mosaic Archives © TeachKidsArt

Middle Eastern Mosaic Productions is a South-Florida based performing arts events company co-directed by professional dance artists Majilyn and Roshana Nofret.

Donate Related Story Transcript This is a rush transcript. Copy may not be in its final form. World News from the Middle East. As the aftershocks of the Iraq war continue to reverberate throughout the Middle East, many Americans are curious how developments in the region are being perceived by national leaders and people on the streets of Damascus, Beirut, Jerusalem and Cairo. See what over a quarter of a billion people in the Middle East are watching every day. Hear directly from their correspondents, and discover how they assess the current situation, not on short sound bites but in complete unedited news reports. Thank you for having me. Well, first of all, congratulations on the Peabody Award. Well, I mean, the idea was born after September 11, because what you see on corporate American media is basically sound bites. The Middle East itself is not a monolith. You have over different satellite stations currently operating out of the Middle East. So, what we wanted to do is bring a window to what those folks out there are watching on a daily basis. How do you get it? How do you get these newscasts? Where do you get them from? Many are available on satellite that we receive, just download, you know, from the satellite. Others we have stories with shelf life. We ship over from our recording studio in Cairo. But basically, we have a small team, a hard-working team that monitors that monitor stories on a daily basis and in certain instances, we may have a show just going after one story and comparing how these different networks are reporting it, you know, from Israel to the Lebanese broadcasting, to the Iraqis and so forth. Well, unfortunately, I mean, we do both, but unfortunately, with the events going on in Iraq, this is what has been dominating the news. I mean, we bring social, economical issues from time to time or stories, you know, about woman rights in Saudi Arabia or in Morocco, and so forth. But the show is really driven with the facts on the ground, and recently, as you are all aware, even in the corporate media here, the big story is Iraq or something happens in the Palestine-Israeli issue. Recently the events that were unfolding on the Lebanese front and in Syria, those were what we have been focusing on. Jamal Dajani, tell us the difference. So, for example, the latest killing of the anti-Syrian journalist when he put the key in the ignition of his car in Beirut or, of course, just the latest developments in Iraq, what is different? Well, like you mentioned before, you said there is a war of information going on. And this is actually there is a war of information going on between all these different networks. For example, what you talked about the killing of the journalist in Lebanon, you have a war going on between the Christian-sponsored station like LBC, and Al-Manar, which is financed by Syria and Iran, and the Hezbollah station there, basically putting the blame on each other whether this was, for example, the Hezbollah are saying that this is a conspiracy by the Mossad and the United States to create a civil war in Lebanon and, of course, LBC is focusing on the Syrian involvement in silencing the people that are criticizing the government of Syria. Do you find at the same time, some those who are trying to dispassionately look at the facts and try to better inform their listeners? Yeah, but I do believe like networks like Al Jazeera is really the address. You know, to get some kind of the truth, but we feel also by watching all of these different networks, the truth emerges, which is also interesting. You are talking about all of these different people or different countries trying to advance their points of view, the U. So, are you running Al-Hurra, as well? Well, actually, we monitor Al-Hurra, but believe it or not, Al-Hurra is a one-way station. Well, it is propaganda, but you are paying for it. The American taxpayer is paying for it, but is forbidden to watch it in the U. So what is Al-Hurra saying? What is the view that it is giving, that it is sending to the Arab world? For example, on the occupation? Well, Amy, as you said, the occupation or is it a liberation and so forth. The election is a great thing that happened to Iraq. The Iraqis are free and liberated, and focusing more on the democratization while totally ignoring the agonies of the man on the street, the average Iraqi citizen, and the effects of the occupation on their daily lives. Can you talk about this? The Palestinians are suffering from the physical occupation, the mental occupation, but also the Israelis are suffering from the mental occupation, how to deal with the, you know, with the threats, the daily threats that they have to face or to deal with. You know, we interview a mother that have lost her son, who was in the

Israeli army. If the theme is clearly that the land occupation has led to occupied minds, do you reach conclusions as to whether both sides will have to liberate their minds first before they can deal with the land issue or will the land issue have to be dealt with before the mental occupation can end? Everyone is trapped in their own thinking, whether, you know, from a religious upbringing or whether just from being indoctrinated all of their life of one way or the other thinking about fear and suspicion of the other. Please attribute legal copies of this work to democracynow.com. Some of the work s that this program incorporates, however, may be separately licensed. For further information or additional permissions, contact us.

Chapter 2 : Global Connections . Culture | PBS

Early Byzantine mosaics in the Middle East are a group of Christian mosaics created between the 4th and the 8th centuries in ancient Syria, Palestine and Egypt when the area belonged to the Byzantine Empire.

Books by Bernard Lewis. His most recent book is *The War on Error*. If Bernard is so beloved today by so many, it is because he readily assumed the role of a mentor to the young. He was then sixty, almost two full generations older, but within a month he had set me up with an assistantship, giving me a key to his office at the Institute for Advanced Study and tasking me with cataloguing incoming scholarly offprints. There, working after hours and on weekends, I would sit at his desk, marveling at the sheer volume and variety of the incoming mail and catching glimpses of the correspondence of a scholar with a global reputation. Every few weeks, Bernard would invite me to lunch at the Institute, followed by a vigorous walk in its surrounding woods. Then would come the high point. I recall his taking up a book by Maxime Rodinson, the French former Communist and scholar of Islam whose political opinions were polar opposites to his. Rodinson had inscribed a warm and affectionate dedication. Over the years, I heard many similar stories from other students, dispelling any illusion that I was especially privileged. Still, less than two years after we met, he traveled from Princeton to Washington to attend my wedding, and in a fluent Hebrew hand signed the wedding contract as a witness. His generosity to students and younger scholars assured him a devoted personal following over the course of several generations. About this, I think Bernard would agree—up to a point. In his memoirs, he explained his view of what a historian could contribute to prognostication: He can discern trends. He can look at what has been happening and what is happening and see change developing. From this he can formulate, I will not say predictions, but possibilities, alternative possibilities, things that may happen, things that may go this way or that way, in evolving interactions. Moreover, it was a trend that Bernard had identified even earlier when he insisted that the victory of secular nationalism over Islamic identity might not be as total as some observers believed. Consider, for example, this passage from *The Middle East and the West*, published in at the crest of Nasserism and pan-Arab nationalism, and at the lowest ebb of the Muslim Brotherhood: In recent years, these militant religious organizations appear to have lost ground, and in many countries they have been outlawed or restricted. There can be little doubt, however, that they continue to work in secret, or that they respond to the mood and desires of a great many people among the submerged classes in Islamic society. Even the governments, however modern and secular, have often found it useful or expedient to take account of Islamic sentiments and loyalties. This much is obvious. Of all the great movements that have shaken the Middle East during the last century and a half, the Islamic movements alone are authentically Middle Eastern in inspiration. Liberalism and fascism, patriotism and nationalism, communism and socialism, are all European in origin, however much adapted and transformed by Middle Eastern disciples. The religious orders alone spring from the native soil, and express the passions of the submerged masses of the population. Though they have all, so far, been defeated, they have not yet spoken their last word. The Modernization of the Middle East, a staple of American syllabi for a generation. How is it that Bernard saw beneath the surface, while Lerner, Hourani, and later Said barely managed to scratch it? Again, these were not so much predictions as trend-projections. But one of them broke with the consensus, and might well be considered his parting prediction. There Lewis expressed doubt about the staying power of the United States in the Middle East, and the willingness of Europe to take up the slack. But this did not necessarily mean that the Middle East would become, or would remain, a great-power vacuum: For the moment Russia, crippled by its internal problems, is out of the game. But there can be no doubt that at some time in the near or distant future this will change. A country with the resources and numbers and the scientific and technological sophistication of Russia will not indefinitely remain on the sidelines. Sooner or later Russia will be back, and we do not know what kind of Russia it will be. It may fall subject to some form of totalitarian tyranny, fascist or Communist; it may resume its earlier role as the leader of pan-Slavism or of Orthodox Christianity; it may succeed, after so many failed efforts, in establishing a Russian liberal democracy. It may resume or reject its former imperial ambitions. But this much can be said with certainty: Itamar Rabinovich is too modest. After the war he became more

forthcoming, and was positively liberated after relocating to the United States in the early s. But it was Itamar, a master mentor in his own right, who bound Bernard to Israel by affiliating him with Tel Aviv University. Had she heeded him, perhaps Israel might have been spared the trauma of the October Yom Kippur War. He was among the 3, guests on the lawn that day, and he let the excitement carry him away. So was he wrong? The idea of bringing Arafat from Tunis was mistaken. What was remarkable was his readiness to admit his mistake. Eric Ormsby is a man of letters who shares with Bernard Lewis an appreciation of Islamic sects, fine poetry, and the fecundity of the English language. But he was never one to flaunt his versatility in languages at the expense of precision. In any other language I am restricted and constrained by the limitation of the words and idioms available to me. While his rise to late-life bestsellerdom depended upon timing, he achieved it no less by virtue of his fluid and flawless English style. If Bernard had one complaint about his American readers, it was their lack of appreciation for British irony, in which he reveled. This mastery of extemporaneous speech dramatically accelerated his output after he acquired a dictation device and a budget for transcription. He wrote *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* in longhand. But by the time I met him, in , he was dictating virtually everything. He would stack up the books and articles he needed for a session, mark the relevant pages with bits of paper, and jot down a few words to remind him of the direction he wished to go in. The verbatim transcription would be a perfectly crafted and finished product requiring only minor emendations. Amir Taheri does well to remind us of the profound respect for Bernard among serious scholars from the Middle East in the period before Edward Said published his vicious caricature of Orientalism. Said sought to portray Bernard as disconnected from the Arabs. It was a characteristic fabrication: I myself saw him in Cairo in , when I was researching my thesis. On this centenary, one of those admiring voices is lamentably silent. Suffice it to say that Fouad exemplified the near-awe with which many Arabs and Muslims regarded Bernard, and himself testified to the deep reservoirs of reverence felt for [Lewis] in many Muslim and Arab lands. Countless Arab and Iranian and Turkish readers recognize their tormented civilization in what he has written. They know that he has not come to the material of their history driven by bad faith, or by a desire for dominion. They take him at his word, a man of the Anglo-Saxon world, convinced that the ways of the West today carry with them the hopes of other civilizations. Two summers ago, Fouad passed away at the age of sixty-eight. Had he been with us to offer another tribute on this occasion, it would have surpassed all others; instead, we can only revisit his earlier ones, and mourn the tragedy of a disciple predeceasing his master. An entire syllabus on the history of the Middle East since the advent of Islam could be compiled exclusively from the writings of Bernard Lewis. And, so numerous are the translations of his works, it could be done in several languages. In this respect, he towers above all of his contemporaries and successors and arguably also over his famed Orientalist predecessors, none of whom was trained as a historian. It will be a long time, perhaps generations, before the study of Islam and the Middle East will invite and admit another genius of his caliber. In the meantime, we have his classic works to guide us through this dark age of obfuscation. On his centenary, let us pay homage and offer thanks for the good fortune that has given him to us in such abundance.

Chapter 3 : MOSAIC: World News From The Middle East | Democracy Now!

"Middle East, Mideast or Near East is the area around the south and eastern Mediterranean Sea, both sides of Red Sea and areas across the Gulf; from Iran to Morocco and Sudan to Turkey." This is one of the definitions of Middle East region which is home to ancient civilisations such as Phoenicia, Babylon, Egypt and Persia.

The Madaba region[edit] Upper part of Hippolytus mosaic in Madaba The single most important piece of Byzantine Christian mosaic art in the East is the Madaba Map , made between and as the floor of the church of Saint George at Madaba , Jordan. It was rediscovered in The Madaba Map is the oldest surviving cartographic depiction of the Holy Land. It depicts an area from Lebanon in the north to the Nile Delta in the south, and from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to the Eastern Desert. The largest and most detailed element of the topographic depiction is Jerusalem , at the center of the map. The map is enriched with many naturalistic features, like animals, fishing boats, bridges and palm trees. One of the earliest examples of Byzantine mosaic art in the region can be found on Mount Nebo , a place of pilgrimage in the Byzantine era where Moses died. Among the many 6th century mosaics in the church complex in an area known as Siyagha discovered after the most interesting one is located in the baptistery. The intact floor mosaic in the Byzantine monastery, built on the foundations of an even earlier chapel from the third or fourth century CE, was laid down in circa It covers an area of 9 x 3 m and depicts the monastic pastime of wine-making, as well as hunters, with a rich assortment of Middle Eastern flora and fauna. Its floor mosaic depicts everyday activities like grape harvest. Another two spectacular mosaics were discovered in the ruined Church of Preacher John nearby. One of the mosaics was placed above the other one which was completely covered and unknown until the modern restoration. The figures on the older mosaic have thus escaped the iconoclasts. In the Church of the Apostles even the name of the master mosaicist, Salomios was also recorded from In the middle of the main panel Thalassa, goddess of the sea, can be seen surrounded by fishes and other sea creatures. Native Middle Eastern birds, mammals, plants and fruits were also added. The Church of Prophet Elijah was built in Its carpet-like central panel in the nave framed by a row of medallions depicting native animals. Mosaic was used as a decoration not only for churches but for rich private residences like the Hippolytos Hall and the Burnt Palace both from the early 6th century. They follow the classical Roman tradition with mythological and allegorical scenes like the Four Seasons, Phaedra and Hippolytos, Venus and Adonis, the Three Graces and the city goddesses of Madaba, Rome and Gregoria in the Hippolytos Hall ; hunting scenes, fight of a bull and a lion in the Burnt Palace. The floor of the cruciform main church is decorated with wonderfully intact, multi-colored mosaics with floral and geometric motifs flowers, leaves, scrolls, braided patterns, amphorae without any representations of animals or humans. One large mosaic floor inscription in white letters on a red background says that the presbyter Saba and his wife offered the church to God as an expression of their faith, in the year Floor mosaics were discovered in the th century Church of the Arch, the Church of the Trinity and also the 5th century Rhotorios Monastery with Greek inscriptions. The floor here was covered by a colored mosaic with a frame and cross marks depicted with geometrical designs. According to inscriptions its floor was paved with mosaics during the s. Both churches produced impressive remains of mosaic floors which is not surprising given the fact that Esbus was an ecclesiastical center with its own bishop. The church at Massuh has two layers of floor mosaics. The lower one, from the 6th century, has no iconoclastic damage, while the upper layer, from the 7th century, was systematically altered by iconoclasts. Figures were carefully replaced by crosses, or floral and architectural motifs. Generally wall mosaics have not survived in the region because of the destruction of buildings but the St. On the upper wall Moses is shown in two panels on a landscape background. In the apse we can see the Transfiguration of Jesus on a golden background. The apse is surrounded with bands containing medallions of apostles and prophets, and two contemporary figure, "Abbot Longinos" and "John the Deacon". Jerusalem with its many holy places probably had the highest concentration of mosaic-covered churches but very few of them survived the subsequent waves of destructions. The present remains do not do justice to the original richness of the city. The most important is the so-called "Armenian Mosaic" which was discovered in near the Damascus Gate. It depicts a vine with many branches and grape clusters, which springs

from a vase. The floor is richly decorated with intersecting circles and pictures of fruit, leaves, flowers, and fish. A Greek inscription mentions Simon, who "decorated this place of prayer in honor of Jesus". In the nearby Church of the Agony built originally in the last decades of the 4th century a colorful mosaic floor was discovered in which follows a geometric design. Fragments of a similar geometric mosaic floor were preserved in the Basilica of St. Stephen outside the Damascus Gate which was built by Empress Aelia Eudocia in the first half of the 5th century. Detail of the mosaic floor from the church of Emmaus Nicopolis On the outskirts of Jerusalem in the Monastery of the Cross a section of the elaborate 5th century mosaic floor survived, incorporating pictures of peacocks, plants and geometric patterns. An exceptionally well preserved, carpet-like mosaic floor was uncovered in Bethany, the early Byzantine church of the Lazarium which was built between 380 and 400. Because of its purely geometrical pattern, the church floor is to be grouped with other mosaics of the time in Palestine and neighboring areas, especially the Constantinian mosaics in the central nave at Bethlehem. In during the construction works of the Israeli West Bank barrier in Abu Dis workers damaged the remains of a Byzantine monastery which was subsequently excavated. The monastery church had an elaborate mosaic floor decorated with images of animals including a deer and an octopus. One was decorated with an exquisite mosaic depicting the four seasons but it was defaced during the Arab-Israeli War. The other church north of the wadi was excavated in 1980. Its floor mosaic have octagons with representations of birds, quadrupeds, and scenes from the story of Jonah depicting the prophet being thrown out of the boat or resting. Both were decorated with mosaic floors. In the northern nave of the southern basilica, a nilotic mosaic portrayed birds, animals and flowers. Detail from the mosaic floor of the Byzantine church of in Masada. The monastic community lived here in the 4th and 5th centuries. The monastic communities of the Judean Desert also decorated their monasteries with mosaic floors. The Monastery of Martyrius was founded in the end of the 5th century and it was re-discovered in 1960. The most important work of art here is the intact geometric mosaic floor of the refectory although the severely damaged church floor was similarly rich. They were laid down in the Umayyad era, after a devastating earthquake in 749. Two six pointed stars and a red chalice are the most important surviving features. The church floor was later replaced with rough opus sectile probably by the Crusaders. In two large Byzantine churches were discovered in Khirbet Yattir ancient Iethira in the southern part of the Judean Desert. They belonged to monastic communities and were paved with beautiful mosaics in the 5th and 6th centuries. Two phases can be distinguished in the mosaic floor of Church C. The earlier was decorated with four birds and medallions of vines while the later one was divided into 23 strips which contain magical symbols and holy names. The most important Byzantine mosaics in Samaria were discovered in Shilo where three basilicas were uncovered. The large mosaic floor of the Church of the Ark completed in 400, re-discovered in 1960 contains geometric designs, flora representations and three Greek inscriptions, among them a salute to the residents of Seilun Shilo. One that now belongs to moshav Shavei Tzion was a 4th-century church that stood immediately on the seashore. The main motifs of its carpet-like, decorative floor are red swastikas on white background. The other church is located on a hill called Khirbet Ittaim. The tri-apsidal basilica was built in by the bishop of Tyre and was destroyed in 638 by the Persians. The remarkable mosaic floor has figurative scenes like a hunter attacking a tiger in the south apse, a man with a horse, a sitting man playing a flute and two beautiful peacocks drinking from the fountain of life. In a 6th-century Byzantine church was discovered in present-day Hanita. Among the mainly decorative motifs of its mosaic floor there are two animal scenes: Both are considered a symbol of redemption. Archeological evidences prove that prior to the mid-4th century another small church stood on the site. A mosaic inscription referring to Deacon Conon survived of this building. This church was architecturally complex and elaborately decorated, it was floored with polychrome mosaic of which only very scant remains survived and also had polychrome wall mosaics. Further mosaic-floored Byzantine buildings were located to the south of the church. This evidence indicates that Byzantine Nazareth contained two large churches dominating its centre, with other mosaic-floored and colonnaded masonry structures around them. As such the town had to be an important Byzantine pilgrimage centre. A small portion of its mosaic floor survived. Many rooms and the church itself was decorated with mosaic among them a great zodiac, a circle of 12 figures representing the months, with the sun god Helios and the moon goddess Selene in the centre. Similar mosaic zodiacs were found in contemporary Jewish

synagogues. Other mosaics represent vine tendrils, hunters, animals and birds. There is a 5th-century church located at Kursi on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The site is connected with the biblical Gergesa as the location where Jesus cast a legion of demons from a possessed person. The mosaics visible today include geometric patterns, birds, cucumbers, gourds, melons, and grape clusters. Petra and the desert[edit] Detail from the mosaic floor of the Petra Church Mosaic art also flourished in Christian Petra where three Byzantine churches were discovered. The most important one was uncovered in It is known that the walls were also covered with golden glass mosaics but only the floor panels survived as usual. The mosaic of the seasons in the southern aisle is from this first building period from the middle of the 5th century. In the first half of the 6th century the mosaics of the northern aisle and the eastern end of the southern aisle were installed. They depict native as well as exotic or mythological animals, and personifications of the Seasons, Ocean, Earth and Wisdom. In Mamshit two great churches survived. The Eastern Church or Church of the Martyrs was probably built in the late 4th century and has a geometric floor with crosses. The mosaics of the Western or Nile Church are more elaborate depicting birds, fruit basket, swastikas and flowers. An inscription in a medallion reads: Preserve him and his household.

Chapter 4 : Mosaic | Link TV

In times of war and in peace, from the earliest days of the Roman Empire to our own, Westerners have traveled to the lands of the Middle East, bringing back accounts of their adventures and impressions.

The sheer wonder of this book cannot be overstated. What did the war look like from the point of view of the middle east? But most of the time I was stationed in London, dealing with Middle Eastern matters. Viewed from inside or outside, the Middle East was crucially important. At the meeting point of Europe, Asia and Africa, bounded by the Soviet Union, German-occupied eastern Europe, and the British Empire, owing allegiance to none of these three, wooed intensively by all of them. Though resented at the time "with some justification" as foreign imperialists, I think the Western allies may claim to have rendered some service to the peoples of the Middle East, since without us they would almost certainly have undergone either Nazi or Soviet occupation. Either would have been bad; still worse would have been a struggle between the two over the Middle East. When did you first go to the Middle East, and what made you decide to study the region? I first set foot in the Middle East in the autumn of , and spent about seven months there. I was a graduate student at the time, and the purpose of my visit was to acquaint myself with a region that I knew only through books, to improve my knowledge of its languages, and to collect material for my doctoral dissertation. My interest in the region goes back much further. I think I can date it from the beginning of my thirteenth year, when my parents hired a teacher to prepare me for my bar mitzvah. This involved acquiring a sufficient knowledge of Hebrew to read the required short text without necessarily understanding it and recite it in the bar mitzvah service. At that time, that was about all that was expected. But I had always been fascinated by languages and history, which were my best subjects at school. Here was a new language "Hebrew" to add to the French and Latin I was doing at school, and moreover one which possessed some of the qualities of both, being both classical and modern at the same time. Fortunately, I had a teacher who could respond to my youthful enthusiasm. He instructed me in the language, and at my urgent request, continued to teach me after the ceremonies were completed. From Hebrew I went on to study some of the cognate languages, first Aramaic, and then Arabic. This last opened an entirely new world, and going to university a few years later gave me the opportunity to explore it. I had opted to take an honors degree in history and honors students were asked to choose one regional specialization, in addition to the standard West European history. I chose the Middle East, and this allowed "indeed required" me to continue my study of Arabic. Later, as a graduate student, I added Persian and Turkish. But you also show us many instances of curiosity and fascination, and of cross-cultural pollination. When did middle eastern rulers first enter into relations with the west? What did they think of us? The most important factor in the relationship "and also in the conflicts" between the Middle East and the West has been their resemblances, far more than their differences. Both shared the heritage of antiquity: Roman law and government, Greek science and philosophy, Hebrew religion and scripture, and the more ancient civilizations of the Mediterranean lands and the Middle East. Both were religiously defined civilizations, the one Christian, the other Muslim. Two such religions, two such civilizations, sharing a heritage, a mission, and the same environment, were bound to clash. But even at the worst moments of hostility, they were able to understand each other, to establish a level of communication which would have been impossible for either of them to achieve with the more remote civilizations of the East, in India and China. This facilitated meaningful argument "when a Christian or a Muslim said to each other "you are an infidel and you will burn in hell," each understood exactly what the other meant, because both meant the same thing. Such a remark would have been unintelligible to a Buddhist or a Confucian. This resemblance made for suspicion, rivalry and hostility in the past and still does so to a considerable extent at the present time. One can only hope that it may also provide a basis for better mutual understanding. In this book I have tried to give examples of how Europeans and Middle Easterners, at different periods in their history, saw each other, displaying remarkable similarities, on the one hand in their arrogance and ignorance, on the other in their aspirations. It has become popular in recent years to denounce America and Europe for objectifying and stereotyping the east. You seem in this book to be challenging some of the assumptions

behind these attacks. What did you hope to show us about the relations between the two cultures? There is no lack of such stereotypes in Western writing about the Middle East and also " though this is often overlooked " in Middle Eastern writing about the West. There were also visitors who made an honest attempt to understand an alien culture, and explain it to their compatriots. Some went so far as to learn the languages and to translate some of their writings. This kind of intellectual curiosity aroused suspicion in those who did not share it. I have tried to present a representative selection of these various perceptions. Much has been written of how the West perceived and presented the Middle East. I thought it might be useful to match this with some examples of how the Middle East saw " and sees " the West. You and Edward Said famously locked horns at the time of the publication of his book *Orientalism*, a scathing attack on western portrayals of the east. Is this book an answer to Said? This book is in no sense intended as an answer to anybody. As I said, my purpose is not polemical, but if the reader comes away with a realization that ignorance and arrogance are not the monopoly of anybody, the book will have achieved some of its purpose. From the Hardcover edition.

Chapter 5 : The ethnic mosaic - Introduction to the Middle East

The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last 2, Bernard Lewis was the Cleveland E. Dodge Professor of Near Eastern Studies Emeritus at Princeton University and the author of many critically acclaimed and bestselling books, including two number one New York Times bestsellers: What Went Wrong? and Crisis of Islam.

Introduction to the Middle East Introduction to the Middle East - The Ethnic Mosaic The ethnic and cultural diversity exhibited by nomadic pastoralists is of course reflected in the larger "ethnic mosaic" of the Middle East. It should be noted that Western scholars have, on the whole, overemphasized the sectarian and cultural differentiation in the Middle East, thereby projecting a picture of a highly fragmented society torn apart by opposed primordial loyalties and ancient animosities. The fact is that, when compared with other parts of the world such as Russia, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia, the Middle East exhibits remarkable coherence as a culture area. Various factors account for this coherence. First, Turkey and Iran aside, the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the region are Arabic speakers, who, despite national and regional variations in dialect, share a single standard written version of Arabic, the language taught in school and used over the radio and in the newspapers. Second, the region is predominantly Muslim and has been so for over a millennium. From Morocco to Iraq and into Turkey, the overwhelming majority of the population profess Sunni Islam; the Iranians, by contrast, are on the whole Shia Muslims. Third, the tripartite division of the population into urban, rural, and nomadic segments is a universal feature throughout the area defined here as the Middle East. To claim a relative cultural coherence to the region is not to deny the cultural diversity that exists; in fact, each country in the area contains groups or minorities that are distinct from the larger population in terms of some cultural "marker" that is recognized by themselves and others as the hallmark of their identity. These ethnic or communal markers include religious affiliation, language, tribal membership, racial variation, and local customs. Of these, the two most important markers of ethnic and cultural identity in the Middle East are language and religion. It is important to note that the recognition and acceptance of ethnic and communal differences have traditionally been a fundamental principle of social organization in the Middle East. This is especially the case for communities defined by religion. This tendency persists today; nationalist movements and secular ideologies have failed to completely erode the more narrowly defined identities based on kinship i. Arabic and Hebrew belong to the Semitic Family. Turkic languages include the modern standard Turkish, Azeri, and Turkmen. Arabic is the national language of all the other countries in the region. Persian is written in Arabic characters and its vocabulary includes a large number of Arabic words. Under the Ottomans, Turkish was also written in Arabic characters; following the defeat of the Ottomans in World War I, and as part of the effort to modernize Turkey, a state edict in replaced Arabic with Roman characters. In northwestern Africa especially in the mountainous regions of Morocco and Algeria and in parts of the Sahara Desert, several dialects of Berber are spoken. Berber is an Afro-Asiatic language spoken by the indigenous inhabitants of North Africa and parts of the Sahara. The Kurds, who number an estimated twenty million people, constitute the largest linguistically differentiated "ethnic" group in the Middle East. The large majority of the Kurds are Sunni Muslims, many of whom also subscribe to a Sufi brotherhood, or tariqa; a minority of the Kurds adhere to an extreme form of Shia Islam. The Kurds speak several dialects of Kurdish, an Indo-European language, and inhabit a mountainous area that straddles the national frontiers of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, the former Soviet Union, and Syria. In all of these countries, the Kurds constitute a significant "minority. The Kurds have a long and complicated history of political activism; going back to the s, secular and religious leaders have led movements aimed at achieving national independence or, in some cases, regional autonomy. The relative success or failure of these movements, whether in Iran, Iraq, or Turkey, has varied with the nature of the ruling regime and the geopolitical interests of the world powers. The Berber-speaking groups of Morocco and Algeria, who are mostly rural dwellers living in mountain villages and desert encampments, are Sunni Muslims, like their Arabic-speaking compatriots. Berbers have a strong sense of their own distinct cultural identity, based on their separate language and on their claim to be the indigenous inhabitants of the region, predating the Arab-Muslim invasions of the seventh century. This "ethnic consciousness," however,

remains at the cultural level and does not imply political cleavage. During the many years of French-colonial domination of the region, French policy was to encourage the notion that "Berber" identity and "culture" were distinct from and opposed to that of the urban "Arab" and "Muslim" Moroccan. This attempt to "divide and rule" was not a success, however; in fact, Berbers were in the forefront of the movements for national independence in Morocco and in Algeria. Comment about this article, ask questions, or add new information about this topic:

Chapter 6 : Inspire Bohemia: Tiles, Mosaics and Patterns of the Far East

An entire syllabus on the history of the Middle East could be compiled from the writings of Bernard Lewis. It will be a long time before the field will see another genius of his caliber.

A Muslim Palestinian woman and her children prepare traditional foods in their home during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The Middle East consists of approximately 20 countries, with many different religions and a variety of ethnic and linguistic groups. Given this diversity, we should not be surprised to find a multitude of different cultures coexisting in the region. Stereotypes about the Middle East During the 19th century, translations of the Arabian Nights and archaeological discoveries in Egypt dominated the imaginations of people in the West who had never visited the Middle East. These armchair explorers conjured up competing images of a desert region populated by nomads and camels and, of course, pyramids, but also brimming with all manner of sweet and savory treats in bustling urban bazaars. During the 20th century, stories about the Middle East have tended to focus on oil wealth, territorial wars, and religious conflicts. All of these do exist, but there is much more to life in this area. A common thread that runs through many lives is the importance of family and the values that derive from having a strong extended family: Religion in the cultures of the Middle East The Middle East is the birthplace of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all monotheistic religions that grew from the same tradition. Each religion used the texts from earlier groups, and so they share many rules and beliefs. For example, Islam and Judaism observe the same dietary rules and have a similar focus on religion as a foundation for civil law. All three share a tradition of prophets, from Adam and Abraham to Solomon and Joseph. Jesus is significant for both Christianity and Islam, and Muslims in addition follow the teachings of Muhammad. Religion plays a large part in the rhythm of daily life, not only through prayer and study, but also in determining the end of the work week. Shops in different neighborhoods close down on Fridays for the Muslim holy day, Saturdays for the Jewish Sabbath, and Sundays for the Christian day of rest. Religious festivals and remembrances, like Id al-Fitr the Festival of Fast-Breaking, celebrated at the end of Ramadan , or the Jewish Passover holiday, or Easter Sunday as determined by the Roman or Eastern Orthodox Christian churches, are all recognized as national holidays in different countries. An awareness of God Arabic: Allah is exhibited in common Arabic expressions that are used throughout the region -- even in Turkey and Iran, where Arabic is not the local language. A common response to "How are you? While there are those for whom these phrases reflect the divine, others use them the way many English speakers use "Good-bye" literally, "God be with ye". Religion plays a role in national and international politics as well. Turkey has a Muslim majority, but is officially a secular nation. Other countries in the region identify themselves with a specific religion, mostly Islam. But because the populations of the various groups grew at different rates, this system eventually became less representative of the nation as a whole and civil war broke out. The poor relations between Israel and most of its Arab neighbors are sometimes described in terms of a perpetual religious conflict between Jews and Muslims. This reading, however, is too simplistic. Although control over important historical sites of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is a factor in the disagreements, many of the details that stall negotiations have to do with control of land and access to water resources. Ethnic diversity at the crossroads of civilizations Situated between Africa, Asia, and Europe, the Middle East has been a crossroads for traders, travelers, and empire builders for thousands of years. Africans, Central Asians, and Celts have all added to the ethnic mix. But even as diversity enhances the cultural richness of a society, it unfortunately may also lead to political conflict. The Kurds, for example, do not have their own nation-state, but are instead spread across Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Their political and military attempts to create an autonomous Kurdistan have been strongly resisted by those states. The multiplicity of languages spoken in the Middle East reflects its ethnic diversity. Most of these languages come from three major language "families": A quick examination of these languages reveals the influence they have had on each other. Persian, for example, is written in Arabic script, while Turkish incorporates vocabulary words from Persian and Arabic. Arabic itself is spoken in regional dialectics that are not always mutually understood. Some ethnic and religious communities have preserved "native" languages for religious use, such as Coptic and Greek. Family,

city, and the globe The family is an important part of culture in the Middle East, as is evident in the Arabic honorific names that are often used in preference to given names. In traditional Arab societies the family unit is an extended family -- cousins, grandparents, second cousins, cousins-in-law, nieces, nephews, and more -- all living together. This remains true in rural areas particularly. Migration to the cities has broken up some of these extended families, and the number of people living only with their nuclear family in urban areas is increasing. Two men in Egypt, for example, may share the same language Arabic , religion Islam , and nationality Egyptian , but one may live in an air-conditioned apartment building with his wife and two children and wear a suit to his government job, while the other may live in a naturally cool mud-brick house surrounded by three generations of relatives and wear a traditional robe, called a galabiya, to work a plot of land. These differences are eroding, however, with the introduction of inexpensive cellular phone service and the ubiquity of television. Even some mud-brick houses are now equipped with satellite dishes that bring news, entertainment, and fashions not only from the capital city, but from around the world as well. Not only goods, but culture as well, have been imported from the West. Western books and movies are popular, especially but not exclusively among the urban elite. Today, one might see young people clad in jeans and T-shirts that advertise their fondness for Britney Spears or Titanic walking down the same street as their peers who are wearing traditional hijab or galibiyas. This discussion will require defining that identity to some degree. Will they characterize themselves as Egyptian? Most importantly, in what order would they prioritize these qualities? These are not easy questions, but the encroachment of Western influences requires some answers.

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