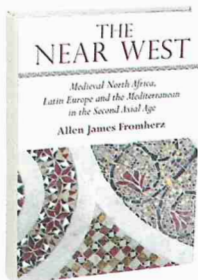




a rebellion against foreign occupation, “a product of Egyptians actively defining and asserting their cultural and national identity.”

Drawing on Arabic primary sources including accounts by “Egyptians who created the dance themselves,” the book takes readers into the Arab-owned, colonial-era entertainment halls where raqs sharqi was presented. We learn that the outfit worn by dancers was not “a Western fantasy costume,” but descended from “an indigenous (though Ottoman-influenced) ... style.” What was seen on stage was not some titillating Orientalist vision, “but hybrid cultural expressions ... embraced as authentically Egyptian.”

—TOM VERDE



The Near West: Medieval North Africa, Latin Europe and the Mediterranean in the Second Axial Age

Allan James Fromherz. 2016, Edinburgh UP, 978-0-7486-4294-6, \$120 hb.

The author argues that North Africa played a key role in the religio-cultural transformation of the Mediterranean region that peak-

ed in the 12th century CE, making the medieval period a pivotal or “axial” era comparable to the mid-first millennium BCE. Fromherz takes a fresh look at a variety of sources, finding—rather than a period of sometimes violent hostility—a fascinating mixing of cultures in art and architecture, music, poetry, medicine and commerce. He builds

his case around four cities—Bèjaïa (today’s Bougie, Algeria), Rome, Tunis and Marrakech—and describes North Africa as “a dynamic republic of letters, words and ideas.” In the form of the Berber Almoravid and Almohad dynasties, North Africa was a dominant player in the history of the Western Mediterranean, as the strict conservatism of the initial rulers gave way to a more tolerant, cosmopolitan worldview.

—ROBERT W. LEBLING

The Salukis in My Life

Sir Terence Clark. 2018, Medina Publishing, 978-1-91148-703-6. \$35 hb.

Although Clark spent most of his long diplomatic career in the Middle East, it was only after he had been named British ambassador to Iraq in 1984 that he and his

wife acquired their first saluki—a sand-colored puppy whose Kurdish owner really didn’t want to let her go. Beautiful, affectionate and born for the chase, Tayra’s hunting exploits introduced Clark to fellow enthusiasts ranging from Bedouin tribesmen to Gulf royalty, all of whom had much to teach him about the saluki breed and its ancient heritage. Clark retired in 1994, but he continued to visit the Middle East to see old friends and their new salukis, as well as participate in conferences dedicated to preserving the breed. A 1999 trip to Iran sparked an interest in the Tazi, or Persian, saluki, and Clark later broadened his conservation efforts to salukis in Russia and China. In this book, he tells of his diplomatic work, his travels and especially the joy that came into the Clarks’ lives when they adopted the first of their spirited, desert-bred salukis.

—JANE WALDRON GRUTZ

