

A PORTRAIT OF LIBYA

BENGHAZI, TRIPOLI, CYRENE, AHLY & BANI WALID

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOHAIL NAKHOODA







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FOREWORD BY AREF ALI NAYED
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SOHAIL NAKHOODA



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KALAM RESEARCH & MEDIA

P.O. Box 78000, TwoFour54, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

www.kalamresearch.com

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Front cover image: Clock Tower, Tripoli, Libya

Page 1 image: Two Tripolitians wearing traditional attire at the Mawlid celebrations

Page 2 image: A Sanusi elder at the Friday prayer in Benghazi

The title page illustration depicts the Silphium plant. Silphium was found only in ancient Cyrenaica and it is now extinct, and was used in antiquity as seasoning, as perfume, as an aphrodisiac, and as medicine.

Photos in this publication were taken with Nikons D300, D700, D800, and D4 and Iphone13 Pro Max.

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Design and typesetting by Sohail Nakhooda

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*So in the Libyan fable it is told that once an eagle,
stricken with a dart, said, when he saw the fashion of the shaft,
'With our own feathers, not by others' hands, are we now smitten.'*

AESCHYLUS

Tragedies and Fragments



FOREWORD

AREF ALI NAYED

Chairman, Kalam Research & Media

A Portrait of Libya is an important body of work showcasing the incredible photographic art of my dear brother and friend Sohail Nakhooda. Focusing on our beloved country, this book consists of moving images from different critical times and places taken during Sohail's multiple stays in Libya.

I met Sohail nearly a quarter of a century ago. I have recently found an entry in my daily journal that said: "Today, I met a brilliant young man named Sohail Nakhooda; I have a feeling that we will work with each other for many years to come." That journal entry proved prescient, and Sohail and I have been working together, in different ways, and on different projects for over two decades now.

During those long years, our friendship, which started with joint scholarly studies in theology and philosophy in Pontifical Rome, has flourished in multiple ways and in multiple contexts. Over the years, Sohail has been a trusted, loyal, compassionate, professional and supportive partner in most of the projects in which I have been involved.

He helped me restore the Uthman Pasha Madrasa in Tripoli, and fully documented it photographically. He supported the establishment of my library and documentary archive in Tripoli, which became the hub for several research students. Sohail also supported several such students academically and psychologically. He introduced me to the work of HRH Prince Ghazi Bin Muhammad of Jordan in the area of inter-faith relations, and together we were involved in several initiatives such as "A Common Word" and the establishment of the Muslim-Catholic Forum. He was the leader of the team that founded Kalam Research & Media (KRM), and still leads this theological think tank today with great vision and commitment. He was a key member of the team that founded the Libya Institute for Advanced Studies (LIAS), and is an inspiration to many of its young women and men. He was a foundational member of the support group that helped the National Transitional Council (NTC)'s Executive Office during the Arab Spring. Furthermore, Sohail supported me with media work and relations during my service as Libyan Ambassador to the UAE, and has

been supporting the envisioning and presentation of LIAS's vision for Libya, called Ihya Libya (Reviving Libya). He even supported my work as Head of Benghazi's great Ahly Football Club.

Sohail has been for all those years a patient and understanding brother and friend on whom I leaned on through all my difficulties, traumas, and ordeals. During our long years together, Sohail has come to deeply understand Libya, its history, spirituality, heritage, tribal relations and, most importantly, the dreams and aspirations of its young women and men. In short, Sohail fell deeply in love with Libya.

His love for our great country has led Sohail to serve it in multiple ways. One of those ways is the service he rendered in capturing and conveying Libya's sublime beauty and spirit through his profound photography.

I am not a professional photographer, and cannot judge his work technically; however, I can judge his work from the impact it has on me and on others around us. The photography of Sohail produces "operational artifacts" that transform their beholder. For me, his photos are powerfully transformative. His love for Libya and his intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic connectivity with its great heritage shines through all his magnificent photographs. His photos also authentically document and archive times and places in Libya that have already changed in multiple ways. Some of his work is already visual history that is very important to preserve and appreciate. The photographic work of Sohail on Libya is work of love, respect, and deep appreciation.

It is with love, respect, and deep appreciation that I present to you, dear reader, the work of my beloved brother and friend, Sohail Nakhoda. To my friend Sohail, I humbly and gratefully say: Thank You!



INTRODUCTION

SOHAIL NAKHOODA

Kalam Research & Media

THE PURPOSE OF PHOTOGRAPHY is to capture a fleeting moment and encapsulate it for posterity. It attempts to capture something of the mood, the fragrance, the colours, the emotions, the rhythm of what we experience before our very eyes and through the totality of our senses, and somehow, to put it into a limiting frame—a composition—in the hope that something of the magic of the experienced moment stays with us.

Although I have known Libyans for a very long time, my first trip to Libya was only until 2010, before the revolution of 17th February 2011. Little did I know back then how pivotal its people would become in my own life and work. I made several more trips to Libya over the last twelve years, some for extended stays, and wherever I went I took my camera with me to document it as much as I could. I wasn't interested in sensational stories or to caricature a people. I was after simple beauty, the aesthetics of ordinary life, and in Libya it was easy because the landscape is filled with the most incredibly hospitable, passionate, brave and compassionate human beings. It was also assisted by a rich and complex cultural and historical tableau that combined Berber, Tuareg, Greek, Phoenician, Vandal, Byzantine, Roman, Arab, Ottoman, Italian—all subtly discernible under the most intense blue skies.

This book is a visual portrait of four locations in Libya—Benghazi, Tripoli, Bani Walid, and ancient Cyrene (in modern-day Shahat)—all very different in history, culture, and temper. Through this collage of images I hope the reader will get a sense of the ephemeral beauty and striking richness of this land. I have refrained from burdening the book with too much commentary because I want the reader to meditate on the images and to let the patrimony of the country convey its essence and speak to the heart of its viewer.

I have added two special sections. One is of the Mawlid of the Prophet Muhammad in Tripoli in 2013. The Mawlid is an important spiritual and celebratory occasion in Libya, and it is celebrated throughout the country. That particular year the more puritanical religious voices in the country called for the mawlid to be banned, but this only angered the Libyan public and as a result record numbers showed up to the celebration—women, men, young and old. The whole day was a venerable manifestation of everything noble that religion teaches: love, piety,

remembrance, service, etiquette, charity, and compassion. I witnessed remarkable faces, resplendent traditional attires, striking colours, and hearts full of love.

The second special section is of the football match between Ahly Benghazi and Ahly Egypt. Ahly Benghazi won the match, and it was a remarkable match against a much more experienced team. Back in 2014 Benghazi was suffering from the threat of extremism, with many of its citizens killed at the hands of terrorists. Libya was suffering enormous political problems since the Revolution of 2011 and the public's spirit was beaten down by the failure of the prevailing political forces. The victory by Ahly Benghazi was therefore symbolically significant: it gave momentary relief to the nation, and the hope and belief that its people could overcome the overwhelming odds it faced

Many Libyans have made this book possible and without their love, friendship, counsel, and constant nagging over the years it would have been very difficult for me to finalise it for publication. I am deeply grateful to Dr Aref Ali Nayed, Aya Burweila, Mahmoud Buhedma, Mohamed Busafita, Sheikh Muhammad Haydara Al-Jilani, Sheikh Muhammad Ajail al-Feituri, Nadia Hashani, Khalil Bunkheila, Hakeem Elgadi, Ziad Ben Shaban, Raja Nayed, Hayes Blanchard, Akram Ben Zahra, Mahmoud Ben Zahra, Abdelmagid Saif Al-Nasr, Omar Nayed, Mohsen Nayed, Magdi Naili, Amin Safi, Khalid Hijazi, Abdelhakim Boubdallah, Ali Hamouda, Nuri Kzuri, Neel Patne, Stephen Hanlon, Job Maats, Faris Zaggoub, Nader Tolba, Nasri Nayed, Mohamed El-Baruni, Waleed Aradi, Tarek Chelali, Ethan Chorin, Dr Sherine Helmy, Haytham Khalil, my colleagues at Kalam Research & Media, the Libya Institute for Advanced Studies, and at Libya's Channel, and to my children Asiya, Muhammad, Mas'ud and Junayd Nakhooda.

This book is dedicated to the late Mohamed Elmsallati (1985–2013), who walked with me many of the streets here in these pages and who opened my love for Libya and its noble people.



A PORTRAIT OF LIBYA

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BENNGHAZI

بنغازي

Benghazi is Libya's second largest city and an administrative, commercial and education centre that lies in province of Cyrenaica. The city was originally founded by the ancient Greeks of Cyrenaica who named it Euesperides, after the mythical garden of Hesperides, and was one of the five cities of the Pentapolis. Ptolemy III named it Berenice, and it eventually came to be called by its Arabic name Benghazi (Bin Ghazi).



A girl from Benghazi who I saw at the dhikr session in the city



Port of Benghazi, view from the rooftop of the Tibesti Hotel





The Tibesti Hotel



The view towards Tibesty Park and the 23rd July Lake



A beautiful local horse at a farm on the outskirts of Benghazi



The horse and the rider





The main road in front of Tibesti Hotel with crowds following a bomb blast



Kids heading to Friday prayers at Martyr's Square



The former Roman Catholic church, Benghazi Cathedral



A man sitting outside his store along airport road



A farm in Benghazi





Prayer beads carried by an elder at Martyr's Square



Lazy Friday morning near the Tibesti Hotel



Lone rider



Kids with attitude heading for the Friday prayer



Rich red farming soil of Benghazi





Men leaving the mosque after Friday prayer



Local children volunteer to clean the streets



A man and his sheep by the roadside



A resident in downtown Benghazi



Preparing Sahlab daily to distribute for free to the people congregating at Martyr's Square in the evening



Residential complex



Worshippers listening to the Friday sermon



Traffic police officer in downtown Benghazi



سَوَاءٌ لِي الْقِيَوْمُ وَلَا أُنَاخِذُهُ سَاءٌ
وَلَا قَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ
ذَٰلِكَ الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ
وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ
كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا
وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ
صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ



Portrait of the Sufi Sheikh Mohamed Bagu



Benghazi skyline with the Benghazi Lighthouse in the background





The Ouzu Hotel



View of the Julyana corniche from the Ouzu Hotel



The Algeria Street Bridge



Scenes near the Corniche

Fishing boats





A meeting of southern tribes





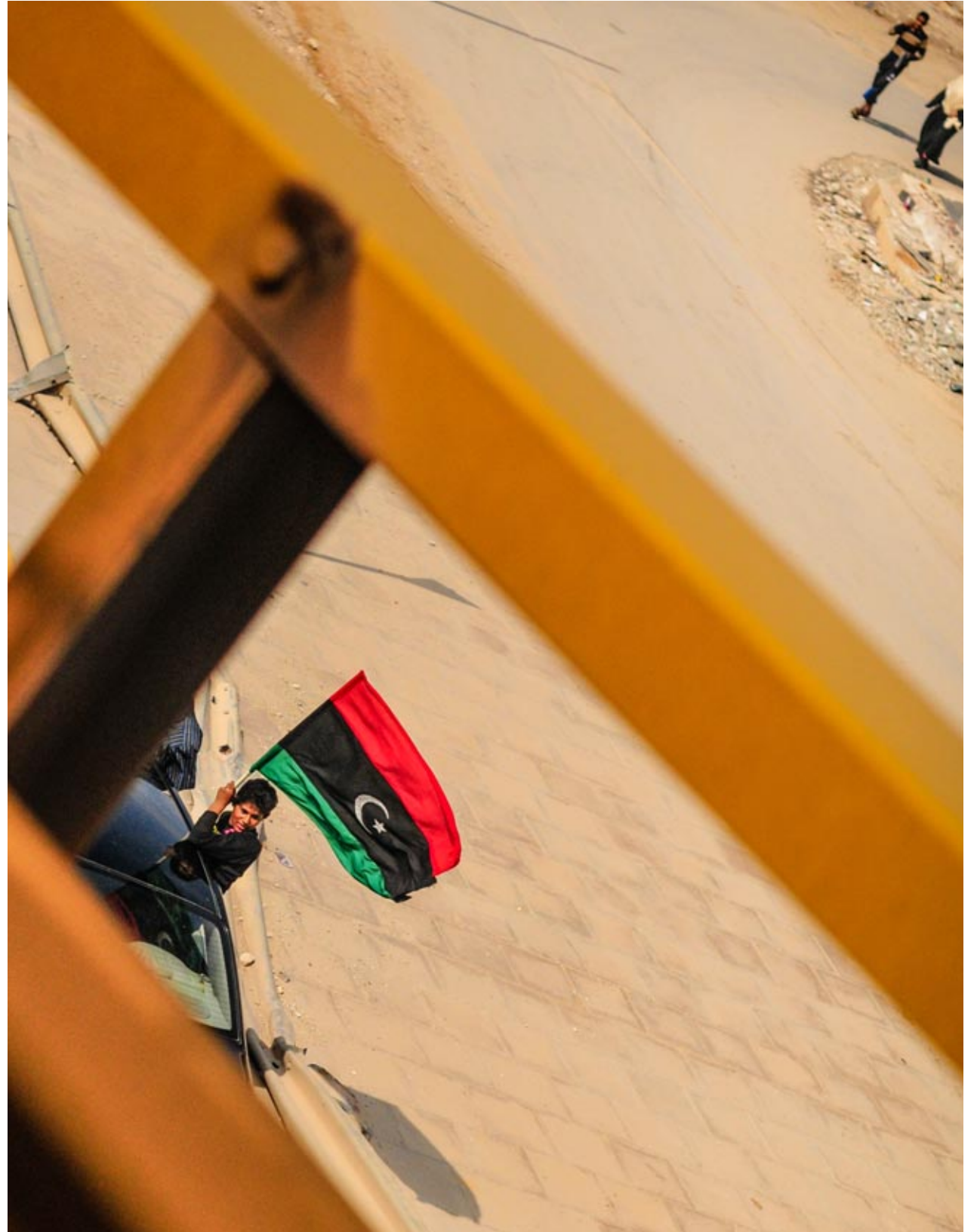
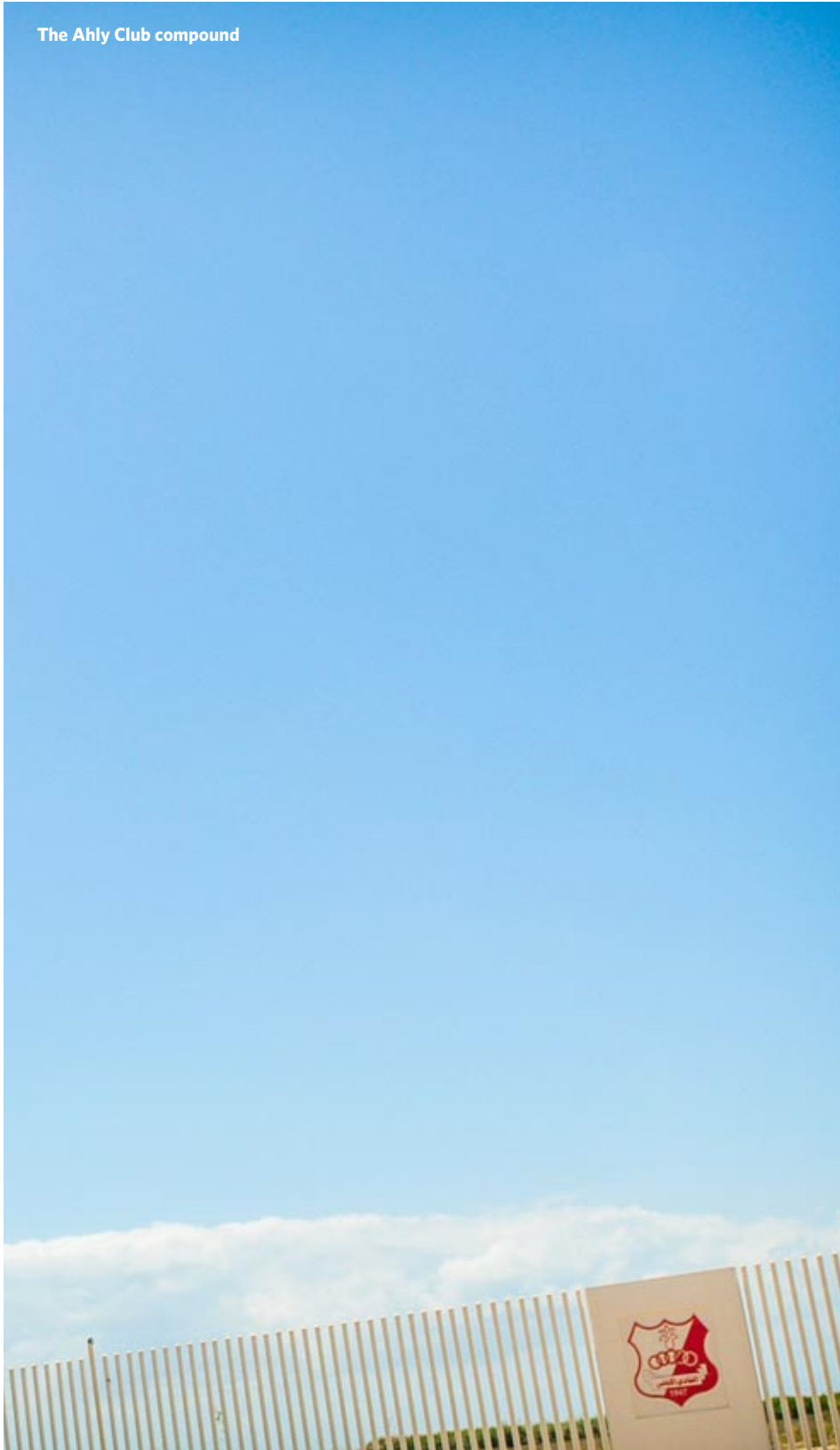
A meeting of southern tribes including the Tebu and Tuareg





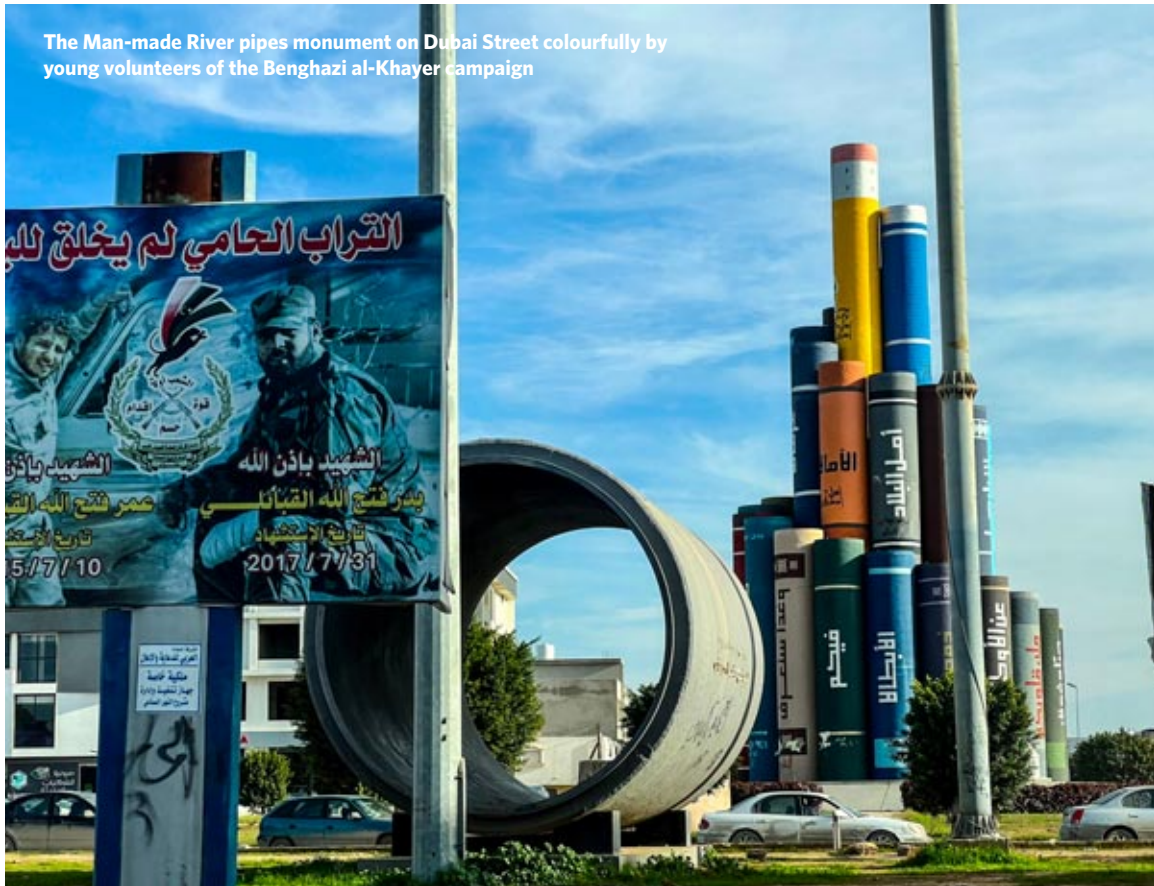
A Sufi gathering at the house of Sheikh Mohamed Bagu

The Ahly Club compound





Libyan oranges are delectable



The Man-made River pipes monument on Dubai Street colourfully by young volunteers of the Benghazi al-Khayer campaign





A peacock for sale



The official hall of the Libyan National Army at Benina International Airport





Sunrise view from the Tibesti with the Islamic Call Society building on the left



Sunset in Benghazi, view from the rooftop of the Tibesti Hotel



Full moon on a lovely evening in Benghazi



Young people performing an impromptu traditional Kishik dance at Martyr's Square

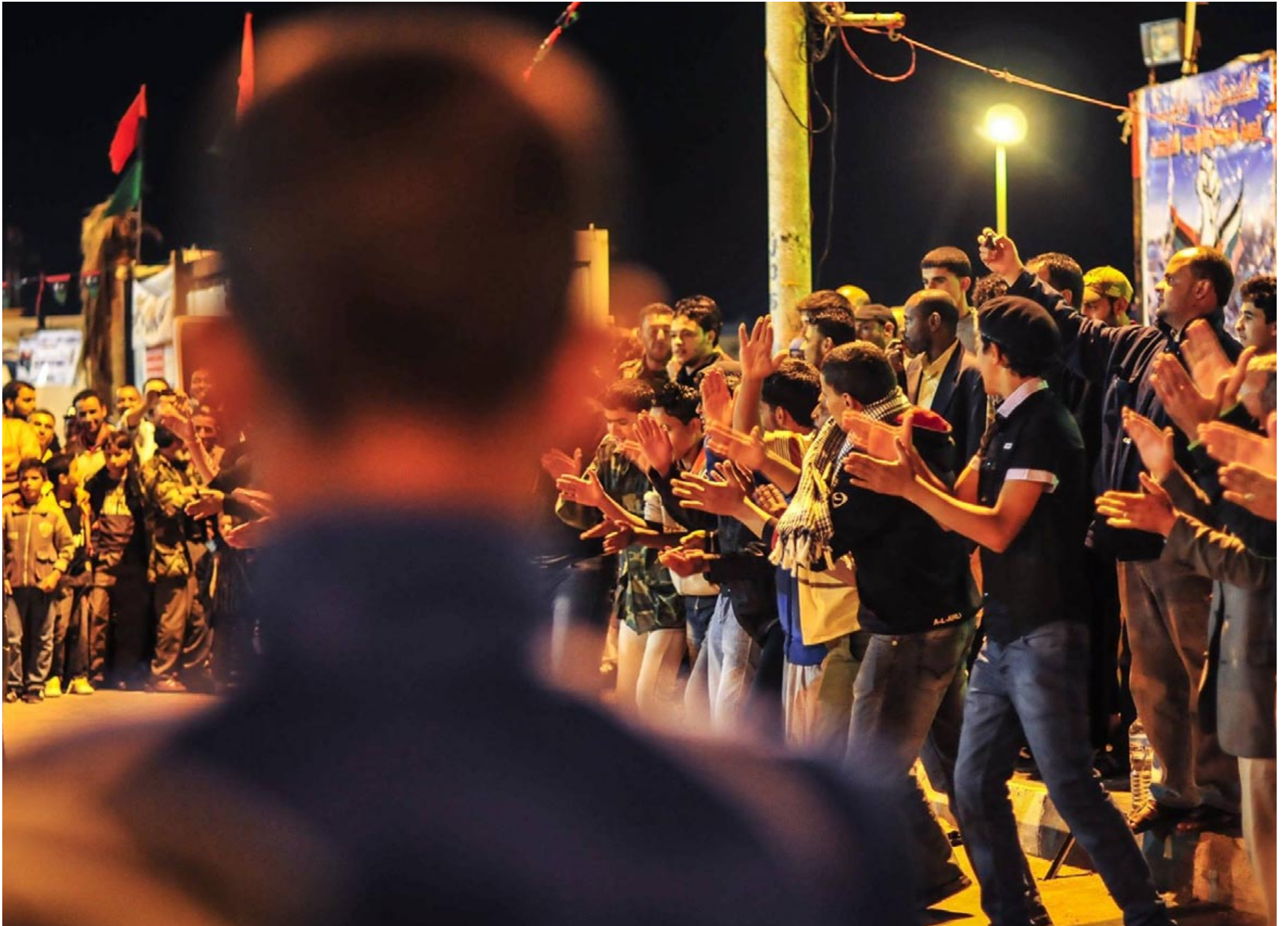


The Kishik is a boisterous dance, performed in unison with singing and clapping, and the lead whistling at regular intervals to maintain rhythm











New coffee shops have opened all over the city with modern decor for a younger clientele





A majestic tree in Benghazi that spreads its branches wide providing much needed shade



New boutiques bring stylish fashionwear for women and men in the city











One of Benghazi's new fish restaurants



A massive tuna and sardines section at a local supermarket



Benghazi Medical Centre,
the city's leading hospital



A book launch event organised by the Tebu Cultural Salon



Meeting of Benghazi's civil society and political organisations





Coffee always tastes better in Libya



A purpose-built wedding hall. The bride and groom at this wedding were from the Maghergha tribe





The new terminal at Benina International Airport




برنامج للطيران
BERNIQ AIRWAYS

جدول الرحلات

أيام الأسبوع	رقم الرحلة	من	إلى	توقيت الإقلاع	توقيت الصبوط	إمن الرحلة
السبت	NB 235	بنغازي	طرابلس	11:45	13:00	01:15
	NB 236	طرابلس	بنغازي	14:00	15:10	01:10
	NB 231	بنغازي	طرابلس	09:45	11:00	01:15
	NB 262	طرابلس	الأبرق	12:00	13:30	01:30
	NB 251	الأبرق	طرابلس	14:30	16:05	01:35
	NB 234	طرابلس	بنغازي	17:05	18:15	01:10
الأحد	NB 231	بنغازي	طرابلس	12:45	14:00	01:15
	NB 232	طرابلس	بنغازي	15:00	16:10	01:10
	NB 261	بنغازي	مصراته	17:30	18:30	01:00
	NB 262	مصراته	بنغازي	19:30	20:30	01:00
الاثنين	NB 231	بنغازي	طرابلس	07:45	09:00	01:15
	NB 232	طرابلس	بنغازي	10:00	11:10	01:10





Sunset in the outskirts of the city



The verdant terrain of Cyrenaica, along the road from Benghazi to the Green Mountains











A prized hunting falcon belonging to a tribe at a farm on the outskirts of Benghazi. This one is great at hunting rabbits.









A view of the beach front at sunrise with a full moon in sight



Three birds against a dramatic sunset overlooking the Mediterranean Sea



A ship approaching the harbour



Sunset views on the Mediterranean Sea







I took these sunset shots over several days, and each time it was a different experience, always dramatic and always deeply moving



The fertile soil of Cyrenaica, from the window of a Spanish diplomatic plane





Where the Mediterranean Sea meets the Cyrenaican coastline



Panoramic aerial view of the city of Benghazi against the shores of the Mediterranean Sea



TRIPOLI

طرابلس

Tripoli is the capital and the largest city of Libya. Founded in the 7th century by the Phoenicians, it was known as Oea in ancient times and one of the original cities (along with Sabratha and Leptis Magna) that formed the African Tripolis, or Tripolitania. The city was conquered by the Arabs in 645 CE, later stormed by Sicilian Normans and then conquered by the Ottomans in 1551 until it fell into the hands of the Italians in 1911, and later to the British—until Libya's independence in 1951.





The two long pillars that flank the seafront entrance to Martyr's Square in Tripoli, or what was previously known as the Green Square. The square was built by the Italians at the site of the Red Castle. On top of the pillars are an iron-cast miniature horse back rider and on the other a wooden ship (see facing page)





Distinctive Italian-era buildings at Martyr's Square, with tall Palm trees. The square is the downtown landmark of the city.

The walls of the Red Castle (*Saraya al-Hamra*). The castle dates back to the Roman and Byzantine times, and the current form was built by the Spaniards of the Kingdom of Aragon in the 16th century CE. It was later expanded and fortified by the Ottomans, and remained as the seat of the ruler until the end of the Karamanli dynasty. The sculpture seen in this photo on the top corner of the wall is of Saint George Bastion, which was added by the Italians during renovation in the 1920s





A tribesman on a visit to Tripoli wearing the traditional Jard. The Jard is a traditional Libyan costume for men and hails from ancient Greece.



The old airport of Tripoli, before it was destroyed in 2014 by invading militias



Old colonnade in the shopping district on Istiqlal Street

The five That El Emad Towers













The Arch of Marcus Aurelius located near the northeastern entrance to the Old Medina of Tripoli. It was built in 165 CE

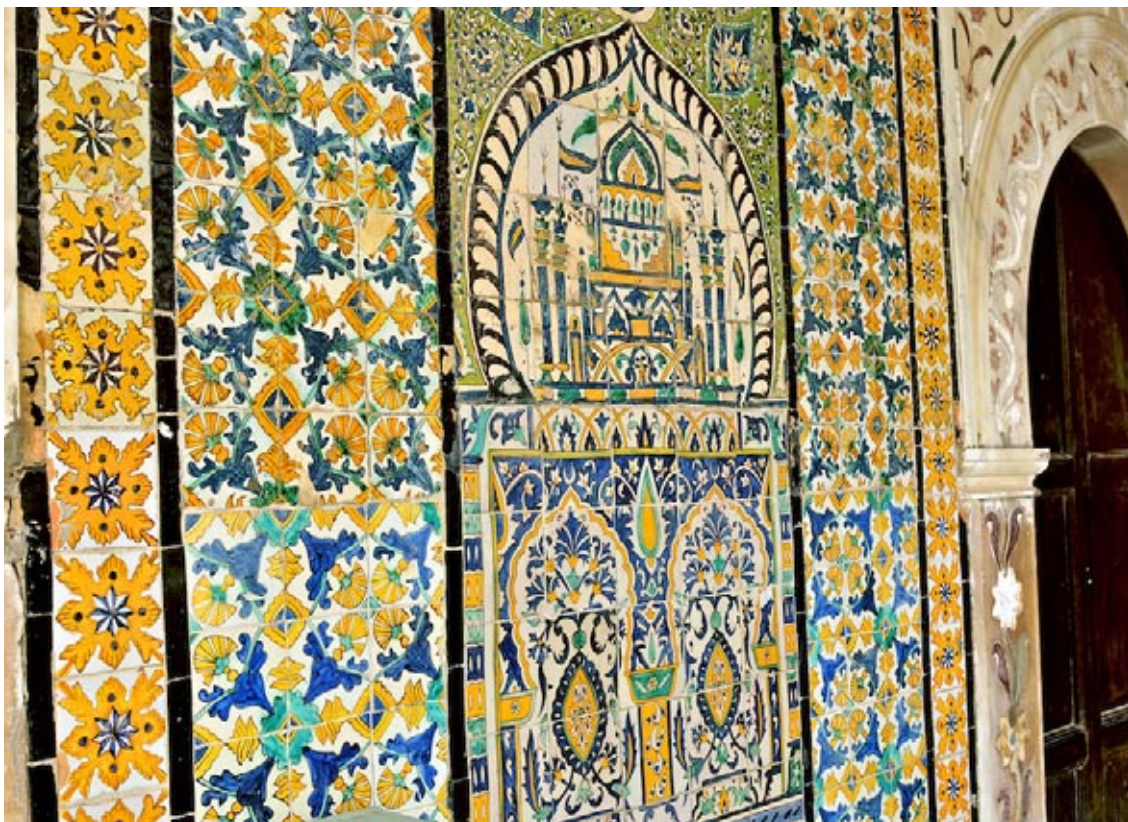




Entrance to the Gurji Mosque in the Old Medina, located directly in front of the Arch of Marcus Aurelius



A worshipper at the Ahmed Pasha Mosque, one of the most important mosques in the Old Medina





The beautiful ceiling of the prayer hall of the Gurji Mosque



The caretake of the Gurji Mosque in the Old Medina



Sidi Abdul Wahab Mosque in the Old Medina





The serene courtyard of the Othman Pasha Madrasa of the Old Medina





(Left) Students and an instructor at the Othman Pasha Madrasa, a haven of peace in the middle of the bustling Medina



فانعم بما تجنيه من زهر المنى
وتمار خلد ما له من زوال
الامام العلامة الفقيه الميرزا الميرزا القوي الذي
الشيخ عمر العربي الجذوري
ولد في سنة ١٢٣٢ هـ الموافق لـ ١٨١٥ م . وحفظ القرآن الكريم
في سن مبكرة . وعنى بطلب العلم فتتلمذ على
فحول على طرابلس في تلكس الكعبة .
وقد اشتغل بالتدريس بكلية احمد باشا
بطرابلس ثم بعد ذلك بالكلية من انشاليدني .
وكان طوال حياته مواظبا على القاء الدروس
بمدرسة عثمان باشا بالمدنية القديمة .
صدا وقد اشتغل رحمه الله بدروس الوعظ
والارشاد في جامع الرشدي وجامع الناقية وجامع الكوفة
وجامع ورغوت باشا برفقة الشيخ المدي البر
شعاليه . وقد اشيع بعده كثير من الناس تلاميذ
الشيخ المصون .
توفي رحمه الله تعالى يوم الاربعاء
٣١ من جمادى الاولى سنة ١٣٩٥ هـ الموافق ١٥ من ايار ١٩٧٥
اجتازه الله عن العالمين واعمله احسن الجاه
آمين

A young girl waiting for her brother at the Othman Pasha Madrasa



The alleyway facing the sea, with the Othman Pasha Madrasa on the left and the Dargut Pasha Mosque on the right



Detail of the ornate water taps for ablution at the Othman Pasha Mosque



Detail of an ancient pillar at the corner of the Othman Pasha Madrasa

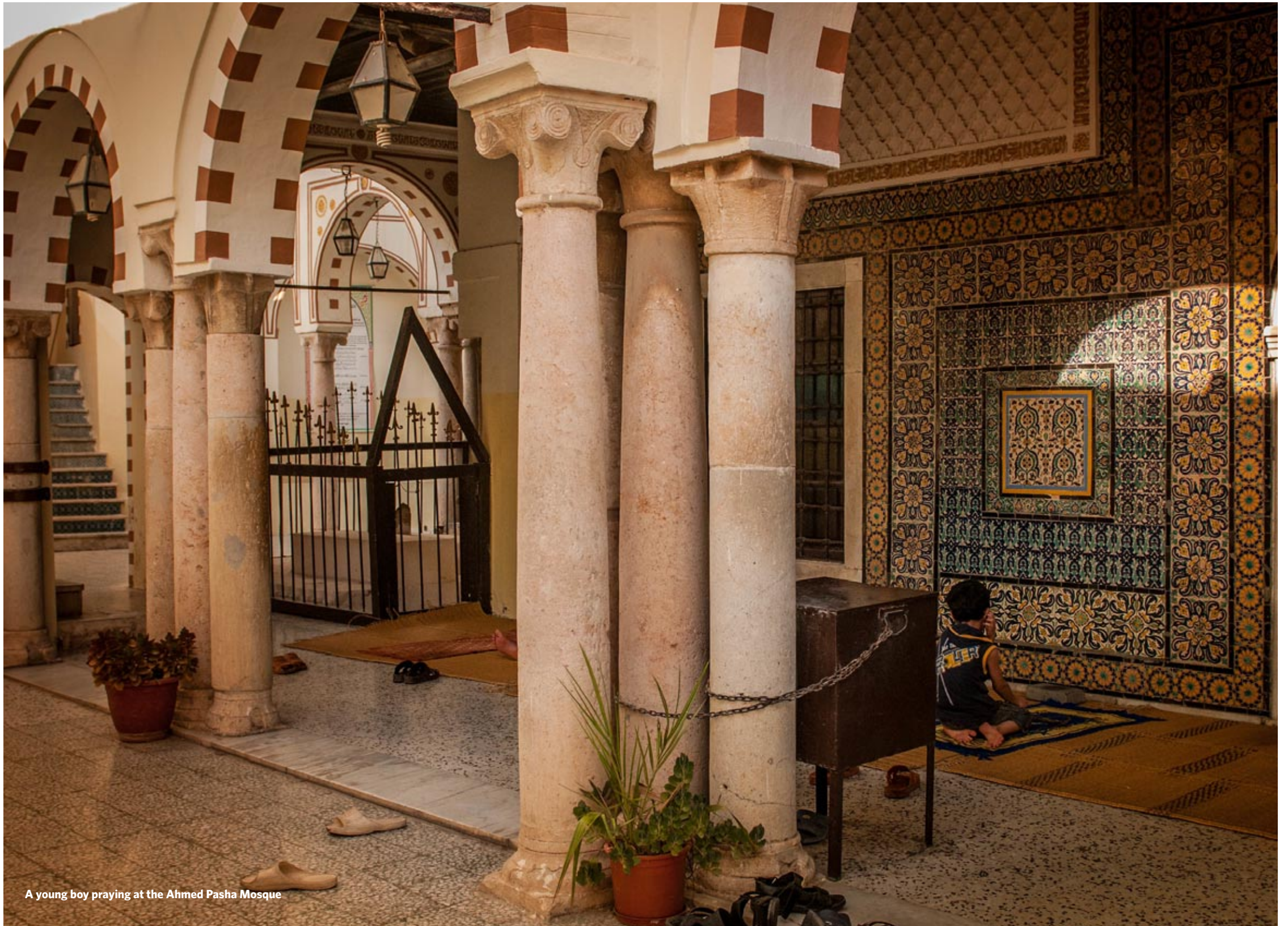


The caretaker of the Gurji Mosque in the Old Medina





The entrance to the Ahmed Pasha Mosque in the Old Medina

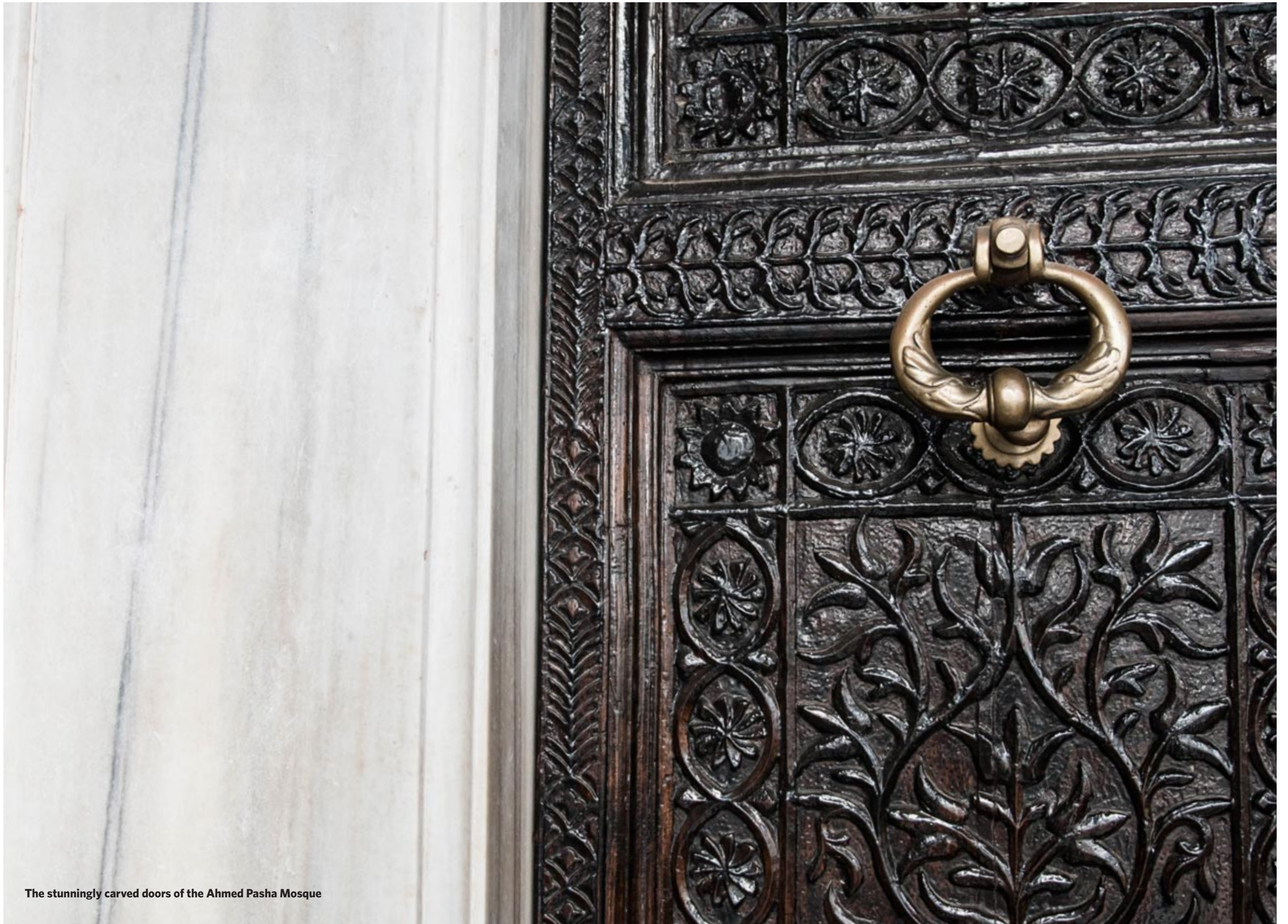


A young boy praying at the Ahmed Pasha Mosque



Intricate tilework of the Ahmed Pasha Mosque





The stunningly carved doors of the Ahmed Pasha Mosque



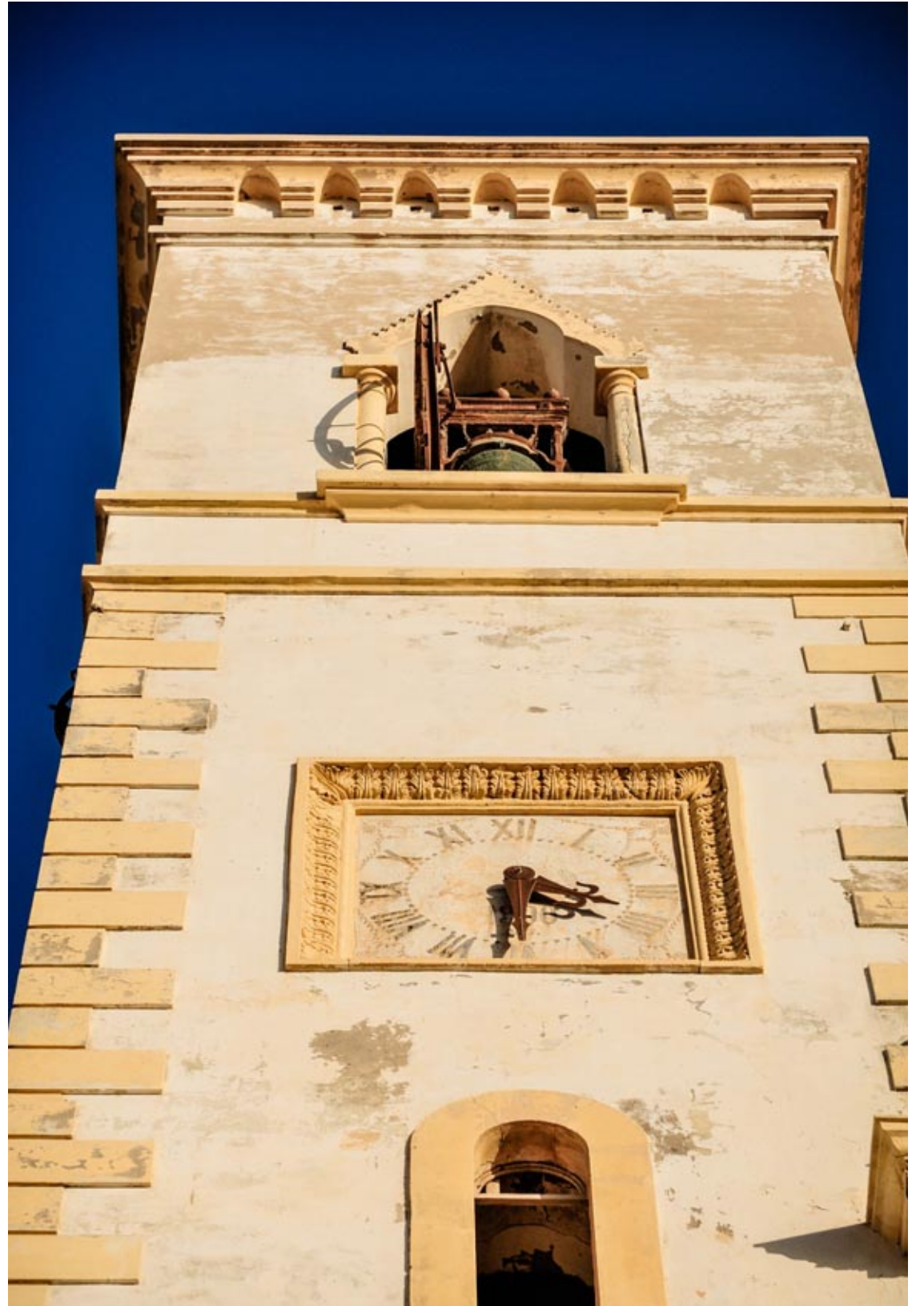
One of the busy entrances to the Old Medina, leading to the alleyway of the Dargut Pasha Mosque and the Othman Pasha Madrasa

The Anglican Church of Tripoli
in the Old Medina



Details of The Anglican Church of Tripoli
in the Old Medina









The Gargaresh sea view



Tripoli Port



The Mosque of Sidi Sha'ab. This and the following photos of the mosque and tomb of Sheikh Abdullah Al Sha'ab—one of the most famous and important Libyan Sufis of the 16th century—were taken in 2010 and 2011. It was a place for prayer, dhikr (remembrance) and the teaching of the Qur'an for kids. When I visited it in 2010 I only saw happy kids learning with compassionate teachers. However, on 25th August 2012 it was completely bulldozed and raised to the ground by the combined teamwork of Salafis and Islamists. It was a tragic day.







Kids learning the Qur'an on the traditional tablets at Sidi Sha'ab



An elderly, beautifully dressed, Tripolitanian elder leaving his home for a walk









A tailor in the Old Medina, working till late



I saw this man three times in the city, in three separate occasions, and each time he had his index finger up. He was repeating the testification of faith unceasingly throughout the day—a man of God





The Gold Souq in the Old Medina



A Tripolitanian merchant



Souq al-Mushir





The Clock Tower



A sweet semolina cake from Libya known as Basbousa



Shorba Libiya, the best soup in the world



Rishdat Kaskas



Rus Bil Bosla with Osban



Grilled local fish

The Libyan Abambar (almond cookie)
is leagues ahead of the Italian Amaretti





The Sfinz, a breakfast favourite in Tripoli with long queues in the morning









The Sidi Muneidar cemetery



Kids rushing home from school

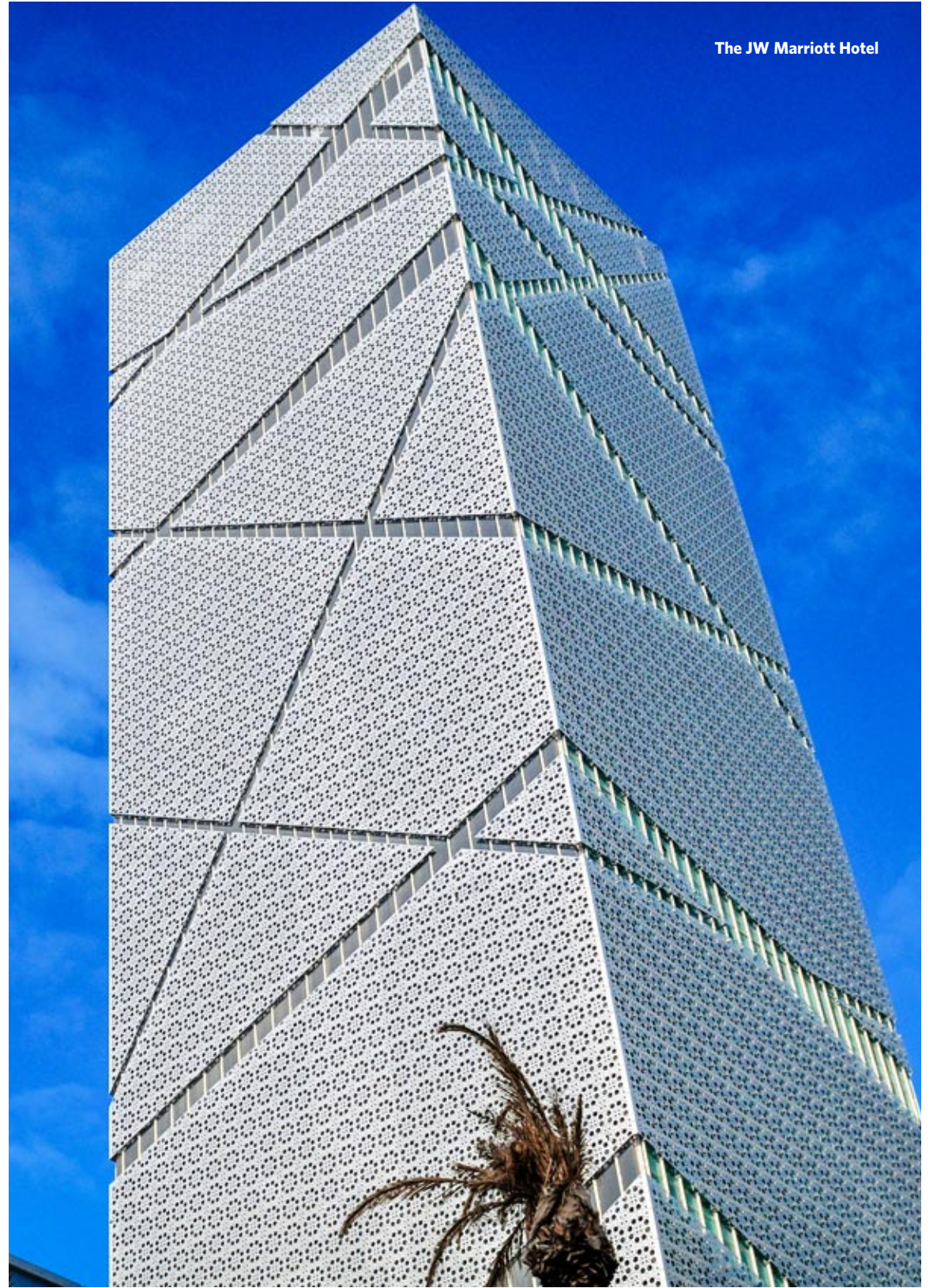
The famous tomb of Sidi Al-Andalusi in Tajoura, named after Sidi Mohamed Al-Andalusi (b. 1490), dates back more than 500 years and is considered a national monument. Like the Mosque of Sidi Sha'ab, this mausoleum was also bombed and destroyed by extremist Salafis on 28th March 2013. I took these photos in 2010-2011.







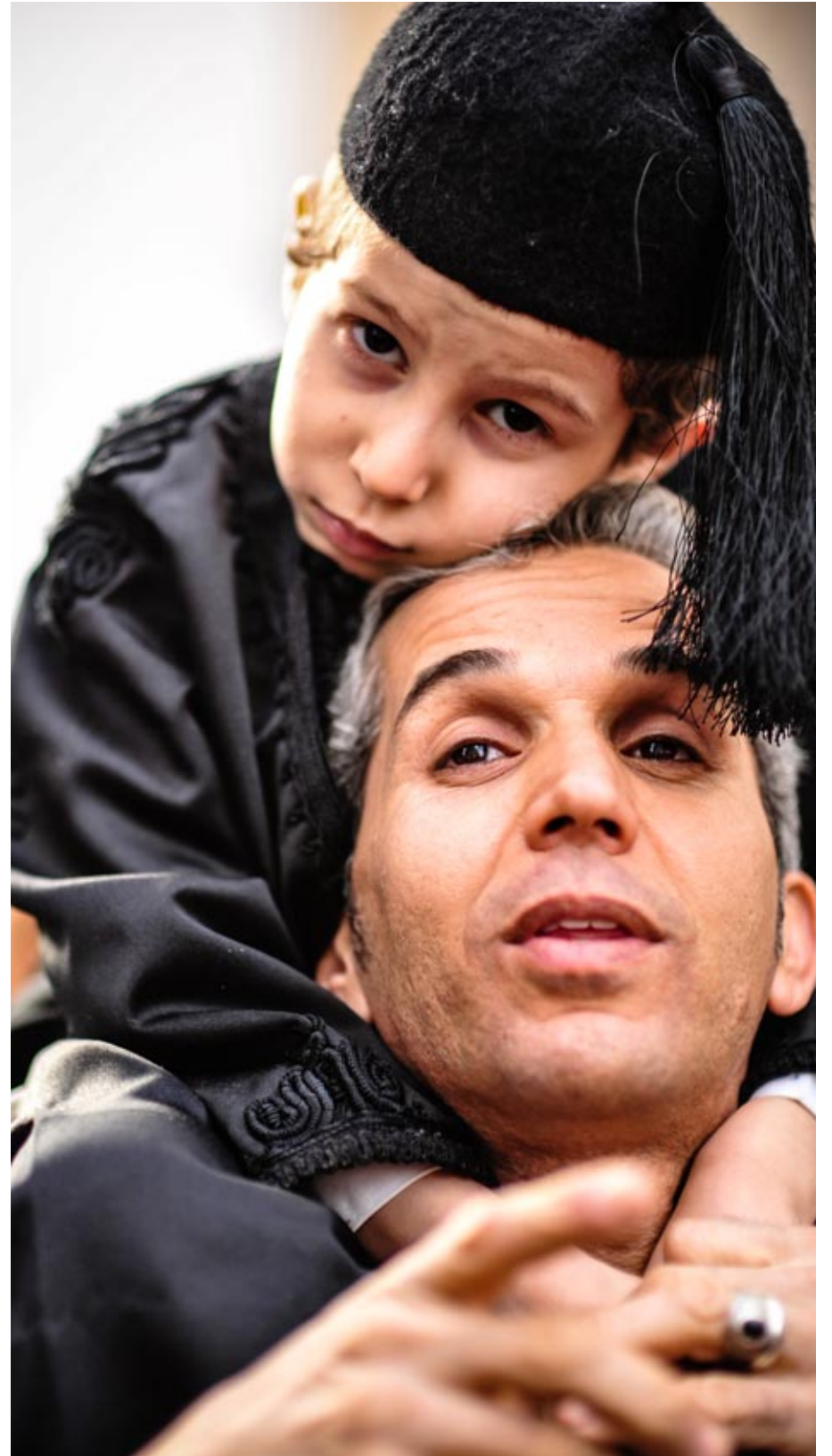
Children performing a play at an auditorian in the Old Medina



The JW Marriott Hotel









The Gamal Abdel Nasser Mosque at Algeria Square, formerly the Tripoli Cathedral



The open courtyard of the boutique El Khan Hotel in the Old Medina

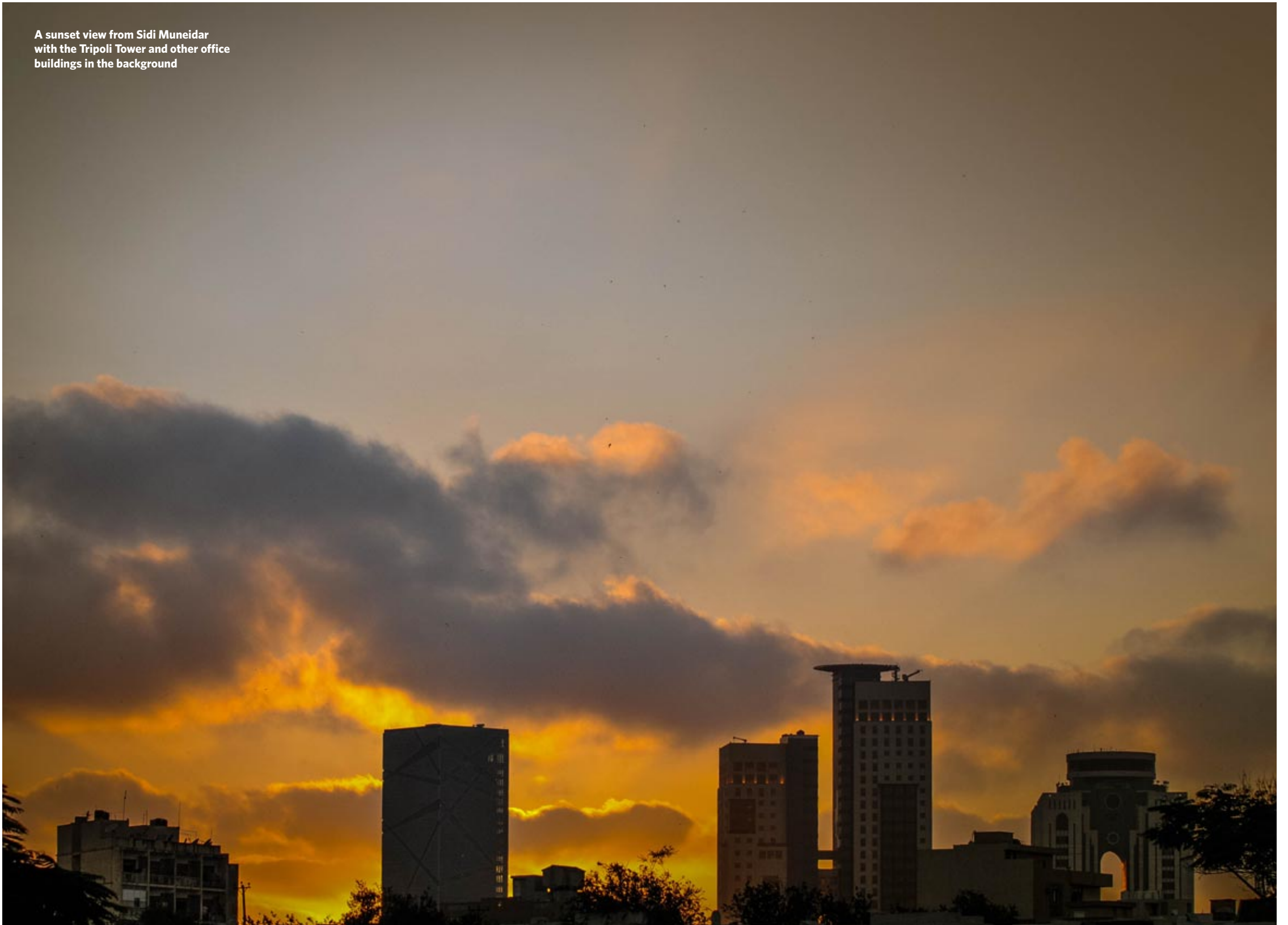


The interior of the boutique El Khan Hotel

A view of the minaret of the Gamal Abdel Nasser Mosque from Haiti Street



A sunset view from Sidi Muneidar
with the Tripoli Tower and other office
buildings in the background





Photos of the Qadiri Sufi Zawiya in the Old Medina





Sheikh Adil Moghrebi from Benghazi, a formidable orator and one of the most important scholars of Sufism, sitting with other scholars at the library of the Othman Pasha Madrasa

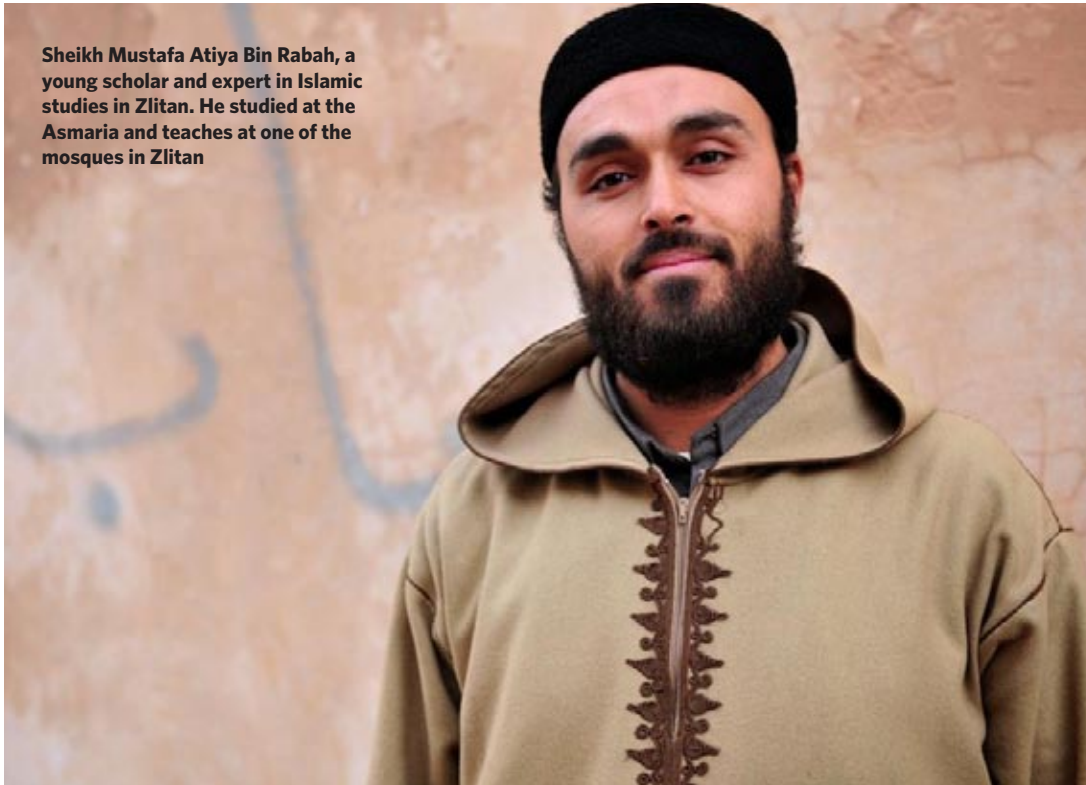


(Left) Sheikh Dr Abdulla Zaydi, an expert Maliki fiqh and theology, from Tripoli's Souq Al-Juma
(Above) Sheikh Abdussalam Bzanti (1940-2018) was one of the most notable scholars of Libya.
He was a teacher of Qur'an, Arabic grammar, jurisprudence, hadith, rhetoric, kalam and logic, at the
Uthman Pasha Madrasa in Tripoli and at other institutions.



Sheikh Abdul Majid Sghair, the head of the Othman Pasha Madrasa

Sheikh Mustafa Atiya Bin Rabah, a young scholar and expert in Islamic studies in Zlitan. He studied at the Asmaria and teaches at one of the mosques in Zlitan

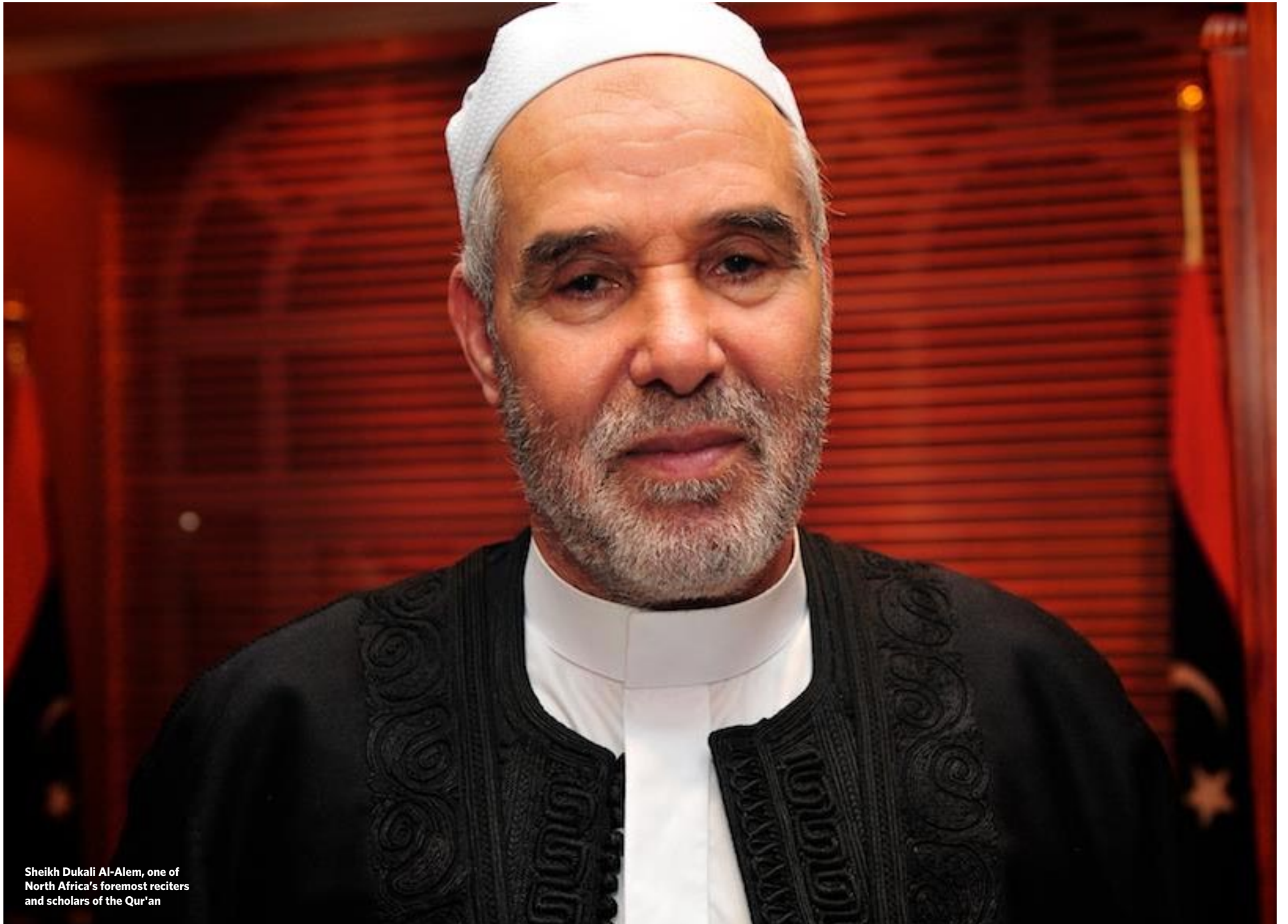


Sheikh Abdulhamid Al-Jehani from Benghazi. A Maliki and a Sufi teacher of the Arusi Sufi Order



Sheikh Abdul Matlub Sirhani from Benghazi. He was trained as a medical nurse and later in the religious sciences. He is a Maliki and belongs to the Issawiya Sufi order





Sheikh Dukali Al-Alem, one of North Africa's foremost reciters and scholars of the Qur'an



Sheikh Mohamed Salem Al-Ajail al-Feituri is a leading scholar in hadith and Maliki fiqh from the famous Asmaria in Zlitan, and one of the directors of the Libya Institute for Advanced Studies (LIAS)

Giant clouds over Tripoli





The minarets of Moulay Mohamed Mosque on Zawiya Street, viewed from a rooftop in Bin Ashur

Photos of the TedXTripoli in 2012 at the Rixos Hotel









Musical performance by traditional musicians from the city at TedXTripoli







دعوة
ضمن نشاطات المركز الوطني للدراسات والبحوث التاريخية
لتبني ثورة 17 فبراير 1950 - 2011 معقد الملتقى السادسة في
المحور الفكري المنبوع (المنشأة الأولى) بعنوان:
تكريات من خلال عشرة الخمسين
ويتمتع فيها
فضيلة الشيخ أ. د. عمر مولود عبد الحميد



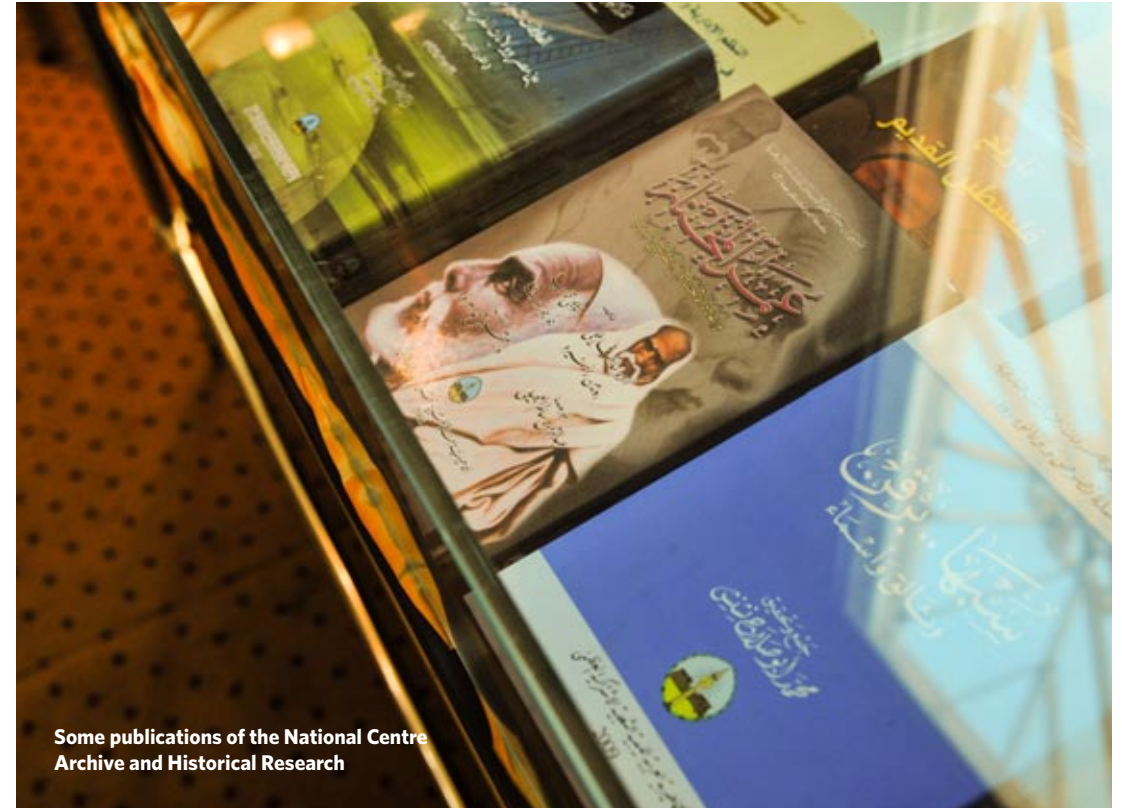
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The auditorium of the National Centre Archive and Historical Research





Dr Mohamed Tahir Jarari, a leading Libyan historian and professor at the University of Tripoli and head of the National Centre Archive and Historical Research



Some publications of the National Centre Archive and Historical Research









The Fergiani Bookstore, one of the most important in the city











A perfume seller at night



The famous Hajj Fathi Café, packed as always with customers, and famous for its Baryoosh (croissant with lots of honey and nuts) served with fresh fruit frappé or date juice



Evening shopping at Mezran Street

MAWLID

مَوْلِد

The Mawlid is the annual celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. It is celebrated across the Muslim world. In Libya the celebration of the Mawlid has a long standing tradition across the country, practiced both by the majority of the Maliki School since ancient times and also by all the Sufi orders of Libya, which include the Sanussi, Qadiri, Esawi, Shadhili, Darqawi, Madani, Rifa'i, and Arusi orders. On the Mawlid day, Libyans dressed in colourful traditional attires, and chant joyous religious hymns with drums and cymbals.

“For those who say this celebration is heresy, we are not doing anything harmful to Islam, on the contrary, we prove to the world that Islam is a religion of love and compassion.”

— AKRAM AL-FEITOURI, Benghazi













The late Sheikh Hmada Al-Wahishi, head of the Isawiyya Sufi Order in Libya. A noble Sufi master who headed the Zawiya at Bab Al-Bahr in the Old Madina

































سيدي محمد بن الامين الزبيدي الشرف الحسيني



سيدي عبد الله بن سيدي الوئيس الزبيدي الشريف



سيدي عبد الرحمن بن سيدي الوئيس الزبيدي



سيدي ابا علي الهدي





















The next sequence of photos is of the reading of the Mawlid of Sidi Ali Siala, known as the Rayhan Al-Arwa', at the Naga Mosque in the Old Madina on night of the Mawlid of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). This happens the night before the procession.

In this photo here you can see, sitting on the left against a pillar, the late Sheikh Mohamed Al-Amin Ahmed Al-Jaafari, a gentle and renowned religious scholar from Tripoli and a Qadiri Sufi master.











CYRENE

شحات

The ancient Greek city of Cyrene, now in present-day Shahhat in Libya, was the capital of the Pentapolis. Cyrene was one of the most important intellectual centers of the classical world, and it gave eastern Libya the classical name of Cyrenaica. It was home to the Cyrene School of Philosophy and the first woman philosopher, Arete. The Cyrene School was a Socratic school founded by Aristippus, who was a disciples of Socrates.

*“He that is backward to share in the pleasant Libyan acres,
Sooner or later, I warn him, will feel regret at his folly.”*

— THE ORACLE AT DELPHI

The ruins of the Temple of Apollo at Cyrene. The story goes that Battus Aristotle in 7th century BCE, who hailed from the ancient island of Thera (modern day Santorini), consulted the Oracle at Delphi because he could not sustain his citizens. The Oracle encouraged people from various parts from Greece, particularly those in the Peloponnese, Crete and the other islands, to settle in Cyrene. The oracle declared that people who would did not settle in delightful Libya, would one day regret it. As a result there was a great rush among the Greek from all parts to head to Cyrene. The rest is history.

*"He that is backward to share in the pleasant Libyan acres,
Sooner or later, I warn him, will feel regret at his folly ... "*
— Oracle at Delphi







The city of Cyrene had temples dedicated to Apollo, Demeter and Zeus, and also to the Ptolemaic ones. The site also had Tombs, Agora, Gymnasium, Acropolis and an Amphitheatre.













The Fountain of Apollo

The Temple of Apollo and the site of the lower Agora, which was a space for assemblies and markets













AHLY

الأهلي

Al-Ahly Benghazi football club was founded in 1947 and is the largest in Benghazi. Its roots are in the Omar al Mukhtar society. It won the Libyan Premier League 4 times, Runner-Up 11 times, and reached the Semi Finals 11 times. Like other Libyan football clubs, Al-Ahly Benghazi plays an important role in the development of professional sports and rehabilitation of youth and local communities. This series of photos were taken in Tunis in 2014 when Ahly Benghazi played Ahly Egypt and won the match.







Dr Aref Ali Nayef, who was at the time the Chairman of Ahly Benghazi Club, with fans of the club ahead of the match.







The Ahly Benghazi squad with their coach Tarek El-Ashry and Dr Aref Ali Nayed ahead of the start of the match against Ahly Egypt.







الأهلي ★ الكلبى
كن تفتنى وحيدا
مايطة مدينة الأبيار



descart



























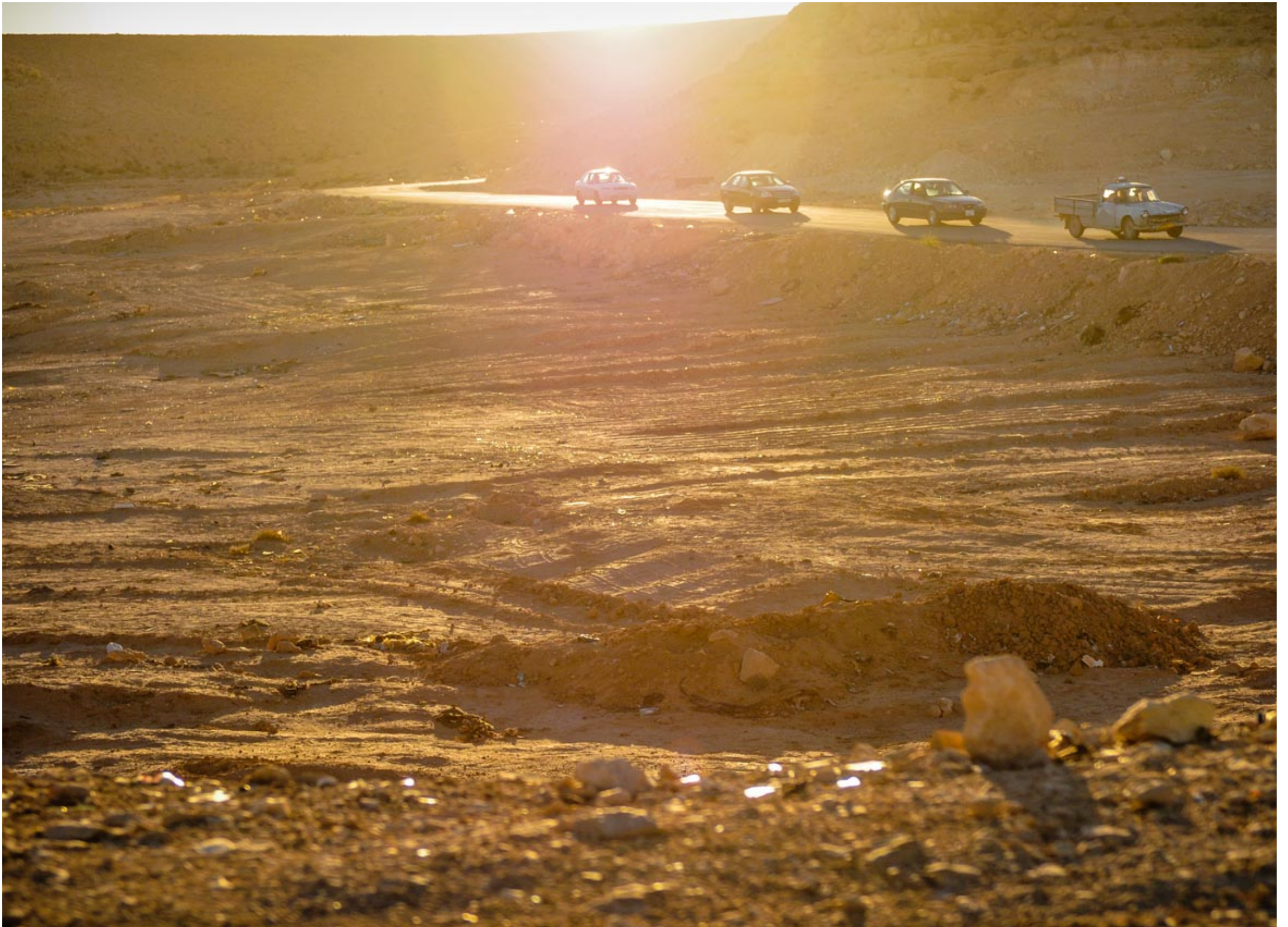


BANI WALID

بنى وليد

Bani Walid is the ancestral home of the Wirfalla tribe, the largest tribe in Libya. It is located approximately 180 kilometres south-east from Tripoli on a high rugged plateau in the desert. It is situated on both banks along the Wadi Merdum. According to a survey conducted by UNESCO, the city of Bani Walid includes more than 4,500 archaeological sites, including the old city of Ben Talis, the old city of Ghirza, and burial obelisks that date back to the 1st and 2nd century CE. The olive trees in the valleys of Bani Walid are some of the best types in the country.









The Old Madina, viewed from Wadi Al-Bilad







Wadi Al-Bilad and the Aburawi Mosque











The Aburawi Mosque













A breathtaking and fiery sunset in Bani Walid



THE PHOTOGRAPHER



SOHAIL YOUNUS NAKHOODA is Executive Director of Kalam Research & Media (KRM), Head of Press and Media for Code on the Road (COR), and Publishing Director of the Libya Institute for Advanced Studies (LIAS). He is member of the Board of Advisors of the Faith Centre of the London School of Economics (LSE) and member of the Board of International Advisors of the Research Institute for European and American Studies (RIEAS). At KRM he is a Co-Leader of the Islamic Analytic Theology project in association with the John Templeton Foundation. He was the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of the award-winning *Islamica Magazine* at the London School of Economics. *Islamica Magazine* won several prestigious awards around the world including three De Rose-Hinkhouse Memorial awards for Excellence for overall periodical and three Best of Class awards by the Religion Communications Council, and was nominated as the Best Magazine for Spiritual Coverage by UTNE Independent Press Awards.

During the period of the Libyan revolution he worked as Secretary of the Libya Stabilization Team and also with the Support Offices of the Executive Team of the National Transitional Council (NTC) of Libya, and he was Private Secretary to the Libyan Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. He was former advisor to HRH Prince Ghazi Bin Muhammad of Jordan; Chief Archivist for “A Common Word” inter-faith initiative; and a former Junior Fellow of the Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute.

He received a BSc in Government from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), postgraduate certificates in Catholic Theology from the St. Thomas Aquinas Pontifical University (Angelicum) in Rome, and an MA in Protestant Theology from the University of Nottingham, UK. He has over 25 years of book and graphic design expertise, and was a finalist in the prestigious British Book Design and Production Awards (2002). He won gold awards from the Calendar Marketing Association of North America for his design work. His research interests span Theology, Inter-faith Relations, Hermeneutics, Philosophy, Media and Typography and Book Design. His photography work has been widely praised and his collection can be found at snakhooda.smugmug.com.

Sohail was born in Mozambique, and has lived in Hong Kong, Portugal, Spain, Ireland, Pakistan, UK, Italy, Jordan, UAE, Egypt, and Tunisia. He is a Portuguese and Jordanian national and also belongs to a Libyan tribe.



“His love for our great country has led Sohail to serve it in multiple ways. One of those ways is the service he rendered in capturing and conveying Libya’s sublime beauty and spirit through his profound photography.”

—DR AREF ALI NAYED, *former Ambassador and Chairman of Kalam Research and Media (KRM) and the Libya Institute for Advanced Studies (LIAS)*

“A *Portrait of Libya* captures the dignity and beauty of an often misrepresented country and people, caught in the eye of a storm. A master of his craft, Sohail Nakhouda uses perturbations of light, weather and time to capture the essential. The images contained in this book are alternately joyful and brooding, studied and disarmingly casual, and swirl with life and color. They remind those who love Libya why they do, and call on those who are seeing it for the first time to look closer.”

—ETHAN CHORIN, *former diplomat and author of Benghazi! A New History of the Fiasco that Pushed America and its World to the Brink*



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