Assyria to Iberia
Written by Richard Covington

It was around 600 BCE when a goldsmith migrated from Phoenicia, along the eastern Mediterranean coast, west to the metal-rich island of Sardinia, and there, he combined and reinterpreted several Egyptian symbols to make this bracelet panel. Both his move and his craft were part of the flow of trade, arts and cultures that defined much in the pre-classical Mediterranean and Near East, which this winter became the focus of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s third exhibition to explore early cross-cultural exchanges.

Sea Change Comes to Bagamoyo
Written by Amanda Leigh Lichtenstein
Photography by Mariella Furrer

Under Arab, Portuguese, German and English rule, commerce and the town’s strategic location on East Africa’s coast made Bagamoyo a leading port from the 1300s to the late 1800s. Now Tanzania has unveiled a 30-year plan to transform the town and environs into the largest seaport the coast has ever seen and link it, once again, to the rest of the Indian Ocean and China.
The Busbecq Letters

Written by Jane Waldron Grutz

Dispatched in 1554 to Istanbul by the Hapsburg archduke to defuse rivalry with the Ottoman sultan, ambassador Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq spent seven patient years securing a treaty and, to the delight of curious Europeans, writing thoughtful letters devoted to his insider’s glimpses of the most powerful empire of his time under its most powerful sultan, Suleiman “the Magnificent.”

Dubai Melting Pot

Written by Felicia Campbell | Photography & video by Celia Peterson

Beyond the shadows of Dubai’s skyscrapers lies working-class Satwa, and along its main drag Al Diyafah, a treasure-trove of restaurants serves up a hemisphere-spanning selection of Asian and Near Eastern home-cooking.

Travelers of Al-Andalus, Part II: Abu Hamid Al-Garnati’s World of Wonders

Written by Ingrid Bejarano Escanilla and Louis Werner

Art by Belén Esturla

Over his 90-year lifetime, this chronicler of fact and unabashed fancy trekked, sailed, caravanned, studied and traded from the far Arab West to the northern- and easternmost reaches of the 12th-century Islamic world.