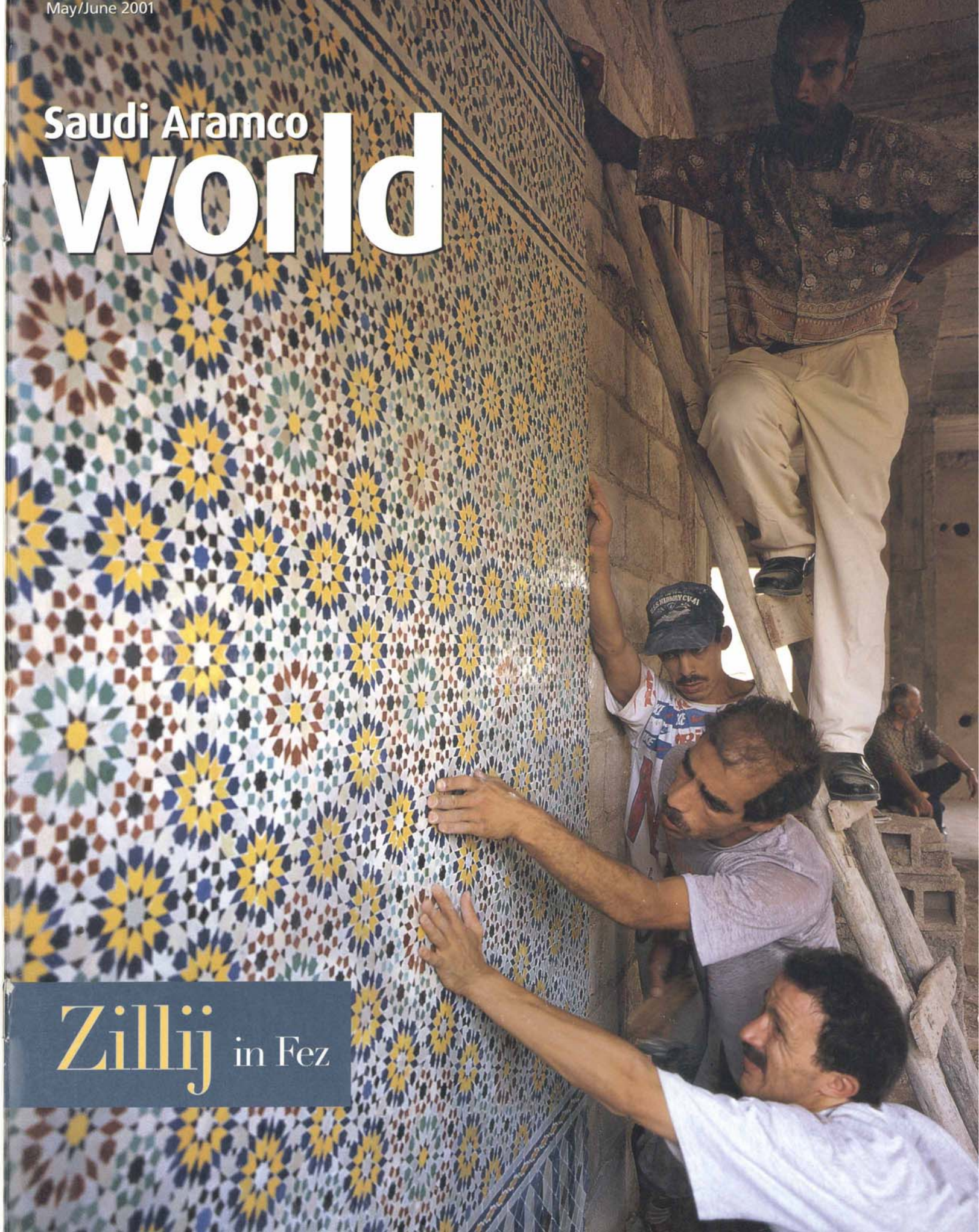
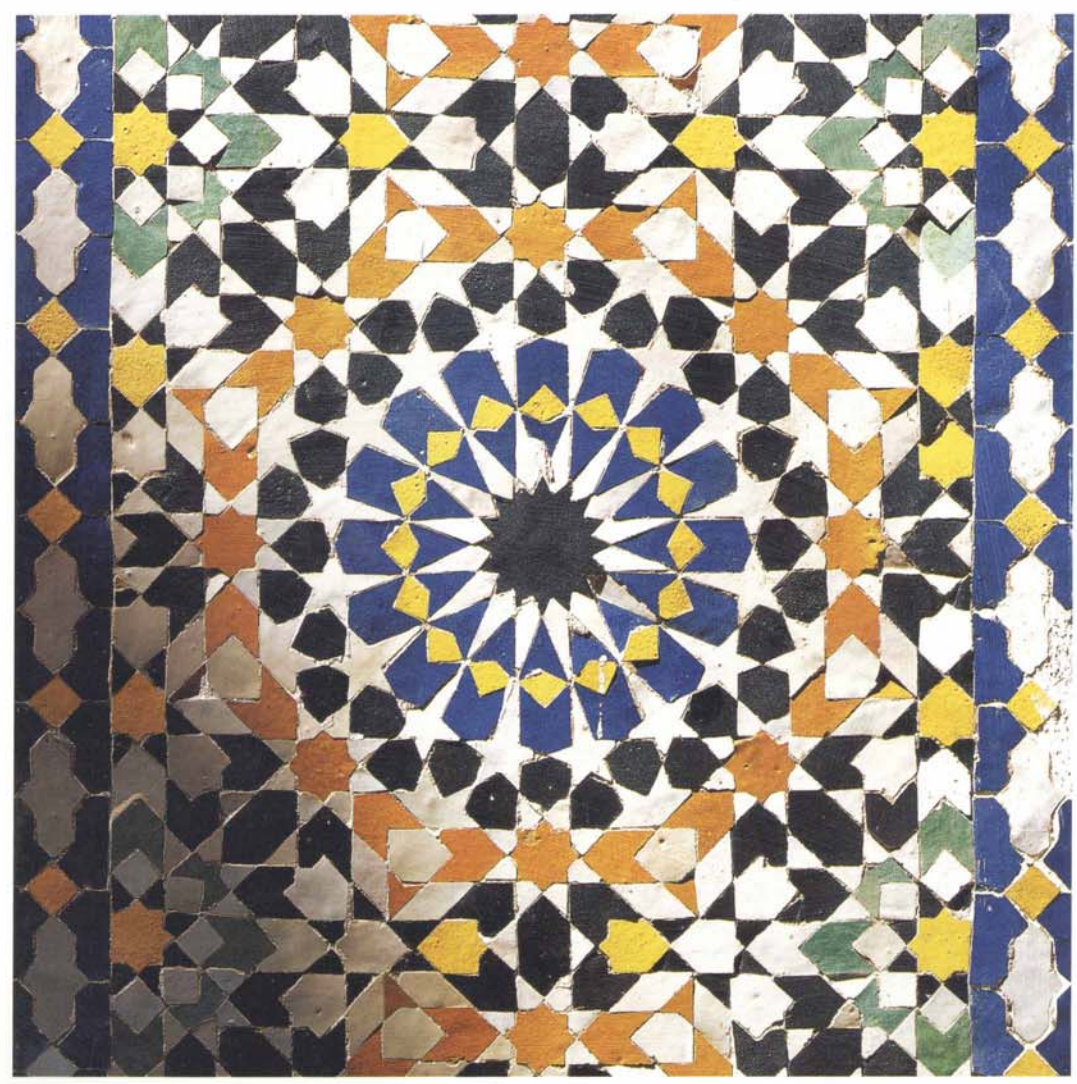
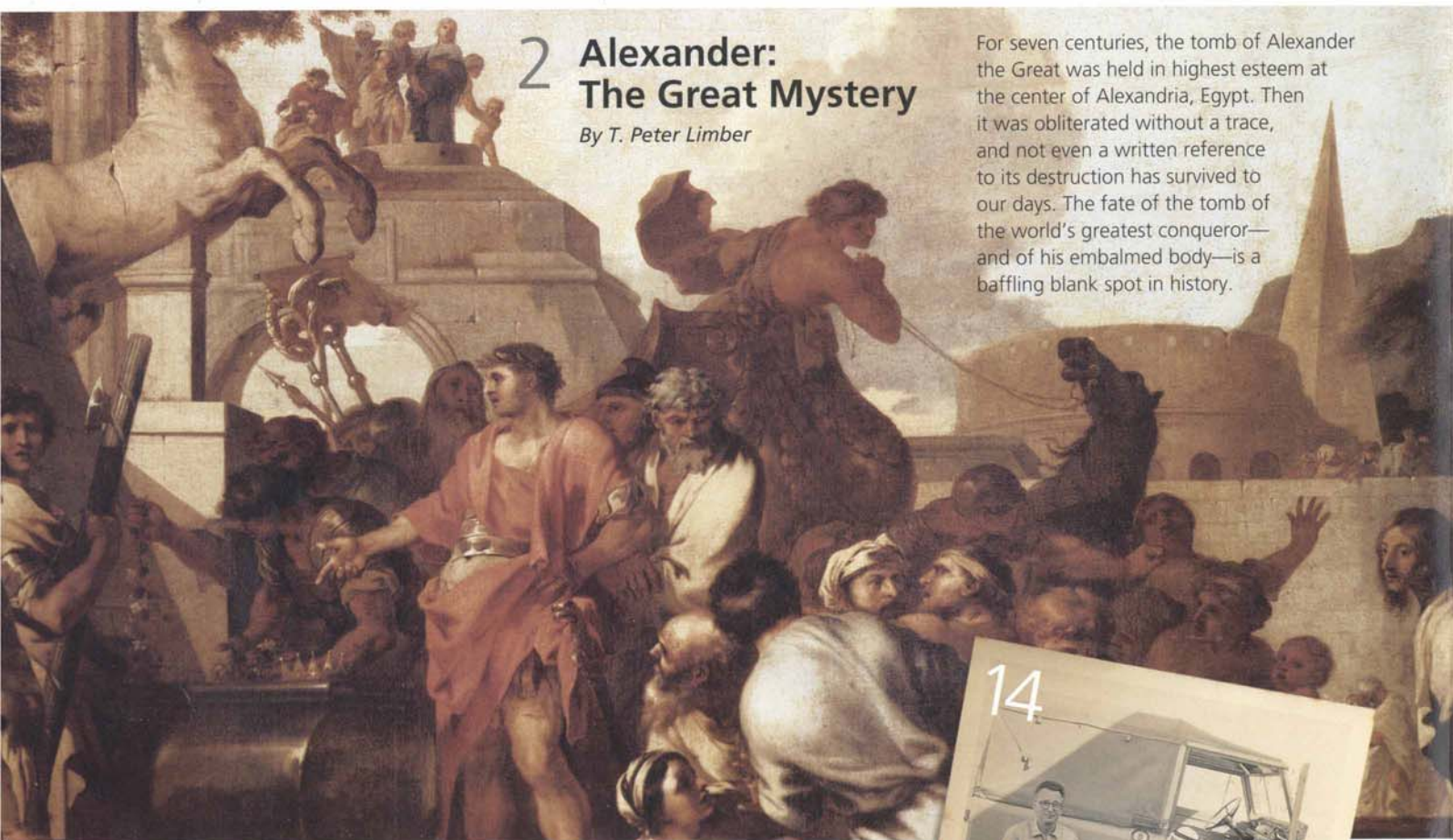


Saudi Aramco world



Zillij in Fez



2 Alexander: The Great Mystery

By T. Peter Limber

For seven centuries, the tomb of Alexander the Great was held in highest esteem at the center of Alexandria, Egypt. Then it was obliterated without a trace, and not even a written reference to its destruction has survived to our days. The fate of the tomb of the world's greatest conqueror—and of his embalmed body—is a baffling blank spot in history.

Well of Good Fortune

By Piney Kesting
Photographed by Elizabeth Carella

From a well filled in some 1900 years ago, a young Saudi handed Tom Barger an inscribed slab—known now as the “Hadrian stele”—that has helped redraw the map of the Roman army’s reach into the Arabian Peninsula. In April, a ceremony in Riyadh marked its return, and that of the rest of the Barger Collection, to Arabia and Saudi Arabia’s National Museum.



2: MUSÉE DU LOUVRE / ART RESOURCE; 14: COURTESY T. C. BARGER COLLECTION

Cover:



Galaxies of eight-pointed stars cover a wall in Fez as panels of zillij tilework are mounted and aligned. This quintessentially Moroccan art form is not created by pressing tiles onto a grouted surface; rather, it is laid out on a dry floor upside-down, each tessera placed in precise contact with its neighbors, the final pattern visible only in the mind of the master zlayji. Photo by Peter Sanders.

Back Cover:



Moroccan zillij emerged in the 11th century, and although it had stylistic cousins throughout North Africa, in Western Asia and especially in Muslim Spain, its kaleidoscopic patterns and brilliant palette were—and still are—unique: Today it is among the most active ceramic arts in the Muslim world. Photo by Peter Sanders.

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Zillij in Fez

By Louis Werner
Photographed by Peter Sanders

The Moroccan city of Fez has been likened to a geode, filled with glittering crystals of art and architecture. Among its brightest refractions are the geometric tile works known as zillij, which grace homes, shops, schools, mosques and streets. Much of the best zillij has been made by members of the last five generations of the Benslimane family, which has recently opened its first branch store—in lower Manhattan.



32

Racing in Rhythm in the UAE

By Carol Flake
Photographed by Lorraine Chittock

Thirty years ago, camel racing was thought to be a way of keeping the “ship of the desert” out of history’s drydock. Now, it is a popular sport in the United Arab Emirates. Champion camels are celebrated in poetry and song, and racing-driven research is bettering camel bloodlines, promising benefits that extend beyond the track.

42 Events & Exhibitions



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ALEXANDER



Alexander's Macedonian veterans—the hard men he had led to victory after victory, the nucleus of his forces—could not believe that their beloved young leader was dying. They demanded, with an insistence that verged on mutiny, to see him themselves.

All day long, grief-stricken soldiers shuffled past in an endless line as Alexander, barely alive, lay on his cot in Nebuchadrezzar's already-ancient palace in Babylon. A slight nod of his head, a movement of his hand or eyes, was all he could manage to acknowledge them, but “he greeted them all,” wrote a chronicler.

THE BIER OF ALEXANDER, FROM THE GREAT MONGOL SHAHNAME, 1328-36, FREER GALLERY, WASHINGTON

BUST OF ALEXANDER AS A YOUTH, ACROPOLIS MUSEUM, ATHENS / ART RESOURCE

THE GREAT MYSTERY

Written by T. Peter Limber

For 12 years Alexander had personally led his men from rugged highland Macedonia, in the north of the Greek peninsula, first destroying rebellious Thebes, then crossing the Hellespont—today's Dardanelles—to begin his revenge on Persia. His troops fought their way across Anatolia, subjugating the great Persian Empire, defeating even the Bactrian armored cavalry, and winning onward, undefeated, as far as the Beas River in India. Alexander had been wounded many times, but nothing, it seemed, could overcome his boundless energy, his iron constitution, and his capacity for quick recovery. Yet now came this fever, which modern doctors believe was typhoid, "complicated by bowel perforation and ascending paralysis." His own doctors had tried every remedy they knew, but without success. During the last 10 days Alexander had grown steadily weaker.

Finally he assembled his closest companions, his eight chief officers, to hear his answer to the inevitable question: To whom would he leave what was now a

Macedonian empire? His answer is still debated. Arrian quotes it as "Hoti to kratisto"—which can mean "to the strongest," "to the best" or "to the most able." If Alexander meant "to the strongest of my generals," he was almost predicting the succession wars that followed. Yet he had already handed his royal ring to Perdikkas, his second-in-command, thus appointing him regent—and certainly Alexander's Bactrian wife, Roxane, was pregnant at the time.

A final ambiguity is that, instead of "Hoti to kratisto," the dying man—he was probably also suffering from pneumonia by then—may well have simply gasped the name "Cratero," referring to his most trusted general, Craterus, whom he had already appointed regent of Macedonia.

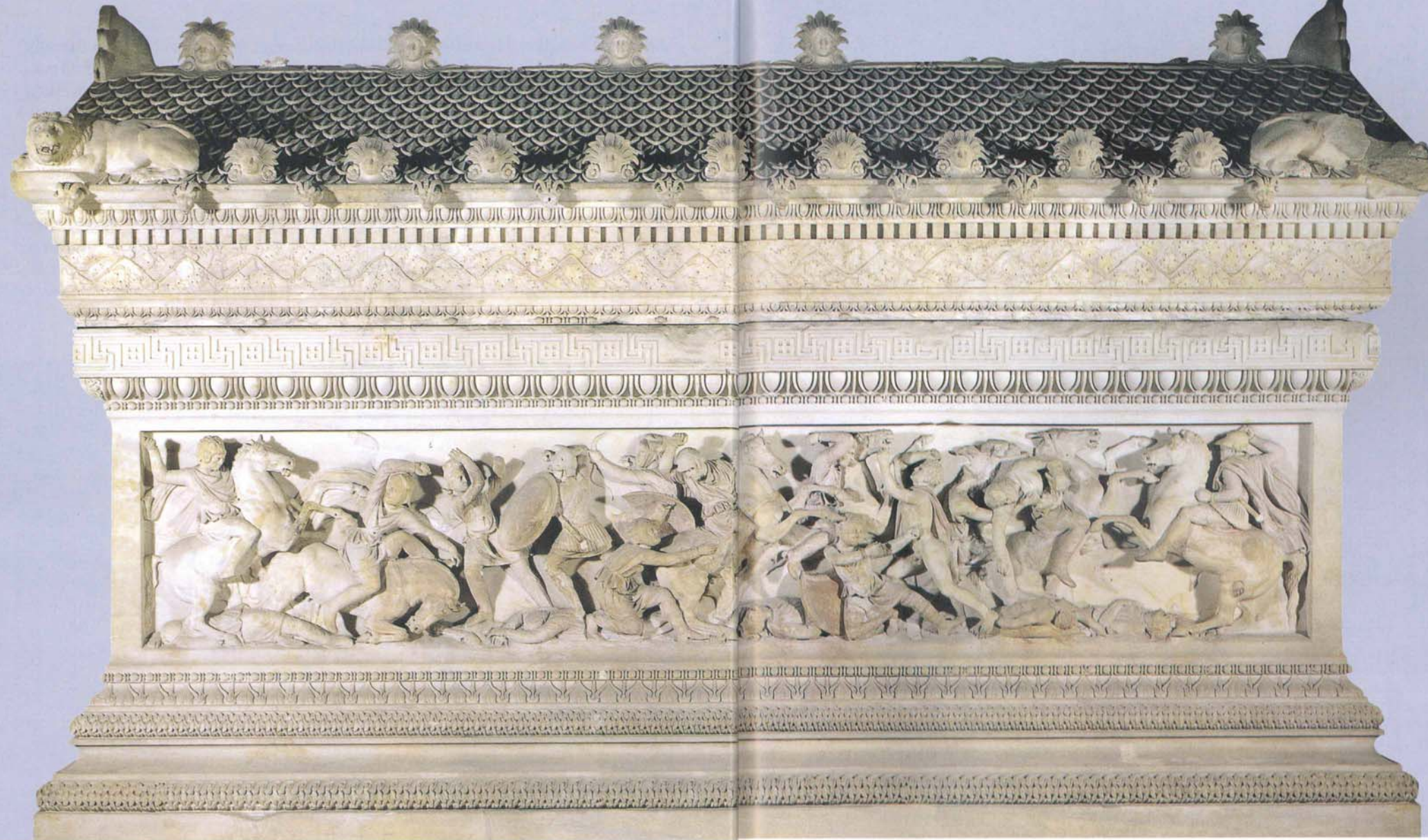
Alexander died at sunset on June 10, in the year we today know as 323 BC. He was 32 years old.

Embalmed and sheathed in gold, Alexander's body was transported more than 3000 kilometers from Babylon to Egypt on a magnificent catafalque drawn by 64 matched mules. The funeral train drew crowds all along its route. The best-known description of the cortege comes from Diodorus Siculus, a Roman historian who drew on eyewitness accounts no longer extant today. Below, André Bauchant's "The Funeral Procession of Alexander the Great," 1940, Tate Gallery, London / Art Resource.

Alexander died at sunset on June 10, in the year we today know as 323 BC.

He was 32 years old.





The marble "Alexander sarcophagus" was found in Sidon, Lebanon in 1887. At first thought to have been intended for Alexander, it was later found to have been made for Abdalonymos, a Phoenecian ruler of Sidon named by Alexander, a few years after Alexander's death. In commemorating the great man's conquests, Abdalonymos, like Ptolemy and his successors, glorified his own name by association—and testified to the conqueror's overwhelming historical impact.

Ptolemy wanted the body for Alexandria,

the better to bring honor to his own domain.

Alexander's eight senior generals agreed to divide his empire among them, each to govern his respective territory as a vassal of the ruling house of Macedonia. As to who would be king of Macedonia, and Alexander's heir, they also agreed that it could only be a blood relative of the conqueror's—which meant, regrettably, either Alexander's mentally handicapped half-brother, Philip Arrhidaeus, or Roxane's half-Macedonian child, if it should be male. (It was.) Perdiccas's regency did not much please those strong-minded leaders, but no other solution was even tolerable to them.

Aristander, Alexander's chief soothsayer, had said that the country in which Alexander was buried would have good fortune, a prediction that increased the rivalry developing among the generals. Alexander himself had made known his wish to be buried at the well-known temple of the supreme Egyptian god Ammon Ra in the remote oasis of Siwa, in the Egyptian-Libyan desert. Alexander had made a crucial visit to this oracular shrine in 331, when he had taken Egypt from the Persians. The temple priests, who said they had foreseen his arrival, had welcomed him as the son of Ammon—a designation that certified his divinity—and, apparently more important, they had given him the answer "that his soul desired" to a personal question, its content never divulged, that he had put to them when he spoke to them alone.

Mindful of Aristander's prediction, Perdiccas, whose long record of loyal service ran back to the days of Alexander's father, Philip II, defied Alexander's wish. Instead

of Siwa, he ordered the body transported to Macedonia for burial at Aegae, in the company of Alexander's royal ancestors. While thus seeming to honor his dead king and his country, Perdiccas's true objective may well have been to settle this politically unstable moment by sending into Macedonia an army which he controlled, under the guise of an escort of honor. He knew that several Greek leaders and generals who opposed the authority conferred upon him had been meeting there.

None of this happened quickly, of course. The preparations for Alexander's entombment had to be appropriate not only for an incomparable military leader and emperor, but in fact for a "god." A funeral pyre in the old style was not for Alexander, whose body was, to his followers, both a sacred relic and a political token of the greatest importance. It was to be preserved. Diodorus Siculus, a Roman historian who wrote during the first century BC, gives the most detailed description. First, Egyptian and Chaldean embalmers worked their skills "to make the body sweet-smelling and incorruptible." Then, further following Egyptian custom, the body, clothed and in armor, was sealed in beautifully formed, close-fitting, heavy sheets of beaten gold, which were shaped so that even the features of Alexander's face were recognizable. None of the ancient historians mentions the use of a stone sarcophagus, though the body had to be safely transported over more than 3000 kilometers (nearly 2000 mi) of rough terrain.

The funeral cart, or catafalque, that was to bear Alexander's body was beautifully

designed, sculptured and decorated, a gold- and jewel-covered extravagance that surpassed anything known in history or legend. It took two years and many skilled craftsmen to prepare it, with cost no object. Sparkling brilliantly in the sunlight, the heavy, roofed funeral carriage was pulled by teams of 64 matched mules. An army of honor guards accompanied it, under the command of a distinguished Macedonian nobleman, one of Alexander's staff officers.

Departing from Babylon, the funeral cortege traveled north a short distance along the Euphrates River, then east toward the ancient Persian city of Opis, then northwest along the banks of the Tigris. Ahead of the procession, road-builders smoothed the way, and thousands of people traveled to gather all along the route to see the magnificent spectacle pass. The cortege proceeded slowly, probably no more than 15 kilometers (9 mi) a day. Its route then skirted the northern edge of the Syrian desert, and headed toward the coast at Alexandria ad Issum (now Iskenderun, Turkey), a city founded by Alexander in 333 to consolidate his victory over the Persians at nearby Issus.

At this point, the procession reached a crossroads of sorts. If it were to proceed to Macedonia, it would have to continue west along Turkey's southern coast, either overland or by ship. If Siwa were the destination, then it would either sail southwest across the Mediterranean to Paraetonium (now Marsa Matruh) on the Egyptian coast, or travel by land down the Palestinian coast to Gaza and then turn west. Travel by sea was easier, but if the intent were to allow the largest possible number of people to see the funeral procession pass, then a land route would be preferable.



A detail from one end of the "Alexander sarcophagus" depicts the conqueror himself in battle. Opposite: Through the early 19th century, this breccia sarcophagus, adapted for use as an ablution cistern in the courtyard of an Alexandria mosque, was also thought to have been Alexander's. With the decipherment of hieroglyphics in the mid-19th century, it became apparent that it had in fact been made for the last native Egyptian pharaoh, Nectanebo II, who fled the Persian invasion of Egypt in 343 BC.

Whatever the aim, it was another of Alexander's generals who determined the direction of the next leg of the long journey. Ptolemy, who had been made governor of Egypt, arrived with a sizable army to meet the funeral procession. In what biographer Mary Renault called "a reverent hijack," he forced it to take the overland route south toward Egypt. And though he may have appeared to be acting to fulfill Alexander's personal wish, Ptolemy had no intention of burying Alexander at Siwa. He wanted the body for his own capital of Alexandria in Egypt, the better to bring honor to his own domain. But as these events took place before a suitable mausoleum—prominently located in the center of the city—could be constructed in Alexandria, Ptolemy brought the body first to the old pharaonic capital of Memphis, where it was to remain for some years.

In Babylon, the reaction of Perdiccas was predictable: When he learned of Ptolemy's coup, he set out for Egypt with an army to punish the hijacker and recover the body. But on the way, some of his officers, bribed by Ptolemy, stabbed him to death. No other attempt was made by any of the other generals to remove Alexander's body from Egypt, and eventually it was transported to the site in Alexandria that Ptolemy had designated as the location of the future royal cemetery of the Ptolemaic line. Within a few years Ptolemy, like each of Alexander's successors, had declared himself king in his own right, and over the next three centuries Ptolemy's descendants succeeded each other. As each died he was buried in the royal cemetery in an opulent mausoleum, near the central tomb of Alexander. Local residents and travelers to Alexandria visited the site, and Alexander's tomb, especially, was treated as a shrine. But it was not to be left untouched.

One of the kings, Ptolemy X Alexander I, who ruled from 107 to 88 BC, was an extremely unpopular monarch whose people revolted and forced him to flee into Syria. Organizing a mercenary army there, he reentered Egypt to regain his throne. But to help pay for these forces, he ordered the gold sheathing to be stripped from the body of Alexander the Great and melted down. The embalmed body itself was



Napoleon, looking for reflected glory,

took what he thought was Alexander's sarcophagus, and the British stole it from him—but it wasn't Alexander's after all.

not otherwise harmed, and remained in its tomb, but public outrage was great.

Alexander's body had been, in A. B. Bosworth's phrase, "the talisman of the Ptolemaic house." As Rome's imperial power grew, its leaders too had not hesitated to invoke Alexander's name and legend for their own purposes, and their admiration of his greatest accomplishment: empire from the Danube to the Ganges. While most of this immense territory remained in the control of Alexander's successors and their descendants for three centuries or so, parts were gradually lost to belligerents to the east. The Romans had taken possession of some areas of western Asia Minor beginning in 133 BC, but their only eastward success came with the annexation of Armenia by the East Roman ruler, Mark Antony, who was subverted by, and finally married, the last of the Ptolemies, Queen Cleopatra VII. In 30 BC, facing defeat by the West Roman emperor, Octavian, the two lovers committed western history's most famous double suicide, Egypt became a Roman province, and Octavian entered Alexandria.

On his first tour the newly won capital, Octavian, who now carried the title of Augustus, visited the tomb of Alexander and left an imperial standard in tribute. Julius Caesar and, very probably, Marc Antony had paid homage there before him. Alexander's body must not have been covered, for Dio Cassius, in his 80-book history of Rome, reports that during his close inspection, Augustus touched or bumped the nose of the mummified corpse and broke off part of it. The tale, however, is somewhat hard to believe. It may have been after this that the coffin was said to have been covered by a kind of crystal—possibly fine, translucent alabaster—to protect it.

In subsequent times, successive Roman emperors likewise traveled to Alexandria, and a visit to the tomb to pay homage to the great conqueror and pagan god became virtually a sacred duty. Though Caligula, who ruled from AD 37 to 41, did not visit Egypt himself, his officers went to the tomb, and as they departed they removed a breast-plate from Alexander's armor. This was brought to Caligula, who wore it on ceremonial occasions. Finally, near the turn of the third century, Septimus Severus ordered the mausoleum of Alexander sealed to prevent further

ISTANBUL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM / ART RESOURCE; OPPOSITE: BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
Hamlet (Act V, Scene 1)

>> *Dead kings are hard to find.*

It is strange that this should be an immutable law of modern archeology. After all, when you consider all the generations of dead kings out there, whole dynasties waiting to be dug up, you would think it virtually impossible to put a shovel in the ground without hitting a royal grave. Since the earliest *lugals* of Babylon and the first pharaohs of Egypt, they lived and died by the thousands, each one burying his predecessor in a millennial procession of mounds and pyramids, crypts and coffins. Even in Egypt, the burial ground of more than 30 dynasties across 30 centuries, a dead king is

covery served only to remind us of the search for the tomb of Philip's son, the vastly more famous Alexander the Great.

Everyone from William Shakespeare to a self-professed psychic archeologist named Stephen Schwartz has wondered where Alexander is, or was. In the 20th century alone there were some 150 officially sanctioned archeological expeditions that searched for his tomb. Since 1805, there have been at least seven announcements of the grave's discovery, two of them in the 1990's. But dead kings, as ever, are hard to find.

One of the seven "finds" occurred in 1850, when an interpreter for the Russian Consulate in Alexandria, one Ambrose Schilizzi, explored the subterranean chambers of the Mosque of the Prophet Daniel. He claimed to have found a regal body with a diadem, surrounded by a papyrus library; unfortunately, no one else ever saw it.

In 1888, Heinrich Schliemann received permission from the Egypt-

Alexandria lies the ancient Silk Road town of Marghilon, where locals claim Alexander was in fact buried, all other evidence to the contrary notwithstanding. There are also persistent rumors that Alexander's body actually lies hidden in a secret cave somewhere in the southern Illinois heartland.

At the risk of losing count of Alexander's supposed coffins, crypts, and corpses, I must add one allegedly found in Egypt by a Greek in 1893, another by a Canadian in 1966, a third by a respectable Italian scholar, and of course the "psychic discovery" of 1979. This last was the achievement of a hapless group led by Stephen Schwartz. In the desert monastery of Saint Makarios they were shown a bag of old bones, and since the skeletons seemed to be short one skull, they concluded that one of the dead must be John the Baptist. They then concluded that Alexander "might" be in the bag, too.

Others have simply claimed special

After working on Adriani's notes for two decades, a colleague this year published his theory.

Equally strange is the story of Stelios Comoutsos, a Greek waiter who has spent his life—when not at work at the Élite Café in Alexandria—searching for Alexander's tomb in Egypt. Comoutsos gained notoriety for his clandestine excavations, inspired by a treasure map inherited from his ancestors. He persisted in his obsession for more than 30 years before retiring to Athens, but he too never found Alexander.

Others have found him more than once. Archeologist Liani Souvaltze and her husband announced her *second* discovery of Alexander's tomb at the oasis of Siwa in January 1995. The news hit networks and the Internet like a Saharan sandstorm, with television reports and front-page coverage in newspapers the next day. The Souvaltzes won the immediate support of the chairman of the Egyptian antiquities organization, who visited the site and deemed it the true tomb of Alexander.

Within days, however, he began to have his doubts. The Souvaltzes, after all, had already cried "wolf" in 1991 when they announced their first discovery of Alexander's tomb at an international archeological congress. That turned out to be a Greco-Roman temple already known to other archeologists. In 1995, a team of Greek archeologists journeyed to Siwa to review Souvaltze's evidence. The archeologist refused to show the scholars all her finds, and what she did show them was clearly Roman, not Ptolemaic. So far, there is no reliable information to confirm her claims.

Dead kings are still hard to find. <<



Dr. Frank Holt, professor of history at the University of Houston, has published numerous books and articles on the life and legacy of Alexander the Great.

DEAD KINGS ARE HARD TO FIND

WRITTEN BY FRANK L. HOLT

downright hard to find: Fewer than one percent of all pharaonic burials have been found intact. As if by a writ of non-habeas corpus, they all seem to have disappeared.

To find *any* dead king is an archeologist's dream. Think not only of Howard Carter's 1922 discovery of King Tut, but also of Heinrich Schliemann and his find in 1876 of the so-called grave of King Agamemnon. And think, too, of Manolis Andronikos, who found the royal tombs of Macedonia in northern Greece in 1977. One of these extraordinary tombs may actually be the grave of King Philip II, the mighty unifier of Greece in the fourth century BC—and yet this dis-

ian prime minister to try his luck in the search for Alexander. Local Muslims, however, refused to let Schliemann dig beneath the Mosque of the Prophet Daniel, so the great archeologist had to leave empty-handed.

In 1960, a Polish archeological team excavated to a depth of about 15 meters (48') alongside the mosque, but found no tomb. Another expedition dug beneath the mosque in 1991, but rival archeologists persuaded religious authorities that every millimeter of the area had already been investigated.

One legend from the Ferghana Valley of Central Asia maintains that Alexander's body never even made it to Egypt. Three time zones east of

knowledge of Alexander's whereabouts. One such person was Howard Carter, the discoverer of King Tut's tomb. As an old man, in 1936, Carter gave the future King Farouk a personal tour of the Valley of the Kings. Carter concluded with an odd reference to the long-sought tomb of Alexander, whose precise location he insisted that he knew, but he vowed never to tell a soul. "The secret will die with me," he said. Three years later, it apparently did.

Professor Achille Adriani, for many years the head of the Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria, died before he could publish his conclusion that the tomb was "right under our noses all the time" in the city's Latin Cemetery.

damage to the famous tomb and corpse. Even so, his son and successor, Caracalla, had it opened again for a look at the remains. In admiration and respect, Caracalla is said to have removed his own purple imperial robe from his shoulders and spread it over the body, and he also left many other precious gifts.

Reverence for the dead Alexander and the safekeeping of his remains might have survived the fourth century if he had been looked upon not as a god, but only as the great mortal leader he had been. By this time paganism was giving way to rising Christianity, which the East Roman emperor Theodosius I (379–395) finally declared the state religion in 392, banning public pagan rites throughout the empire. Alexandria was fast becoming a key Christian center, and though the many pagan temples and shrines in the city were not at first affected, zealots among both groups clashed with increasing frequency. The patriarch of Alexandria at the time was Theophilus, a hierarch of great faith, energy and anti-pagan passion. He enthusiastically directed the conversion of pagan institutions into churches, was instrumental in the destruction, in 391, of Alexandria's great Temple of Sarapis, a pagan shrine which dated back to early Ptolemaic times, and took other steps to speed the conversion of the city to an entirely Christian metropolis.

A number of historians hypothesize that the anti-pagan forces had demolished the tomb of Alexander and destroyed his corpse by 397. There are no direct accounts, and the tomb of Alexander is not mentioned in any of the sources of the time, which are otherwise often quite detailed. Yet we may draw inferences from such documents as the writings of John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople from 398 to 404. Drawing a contrast with the veneration paid the sepulchers of the Christian martyrs, he challenges, "Where is now the tomb of Alexander? Show me! Tell me the day of his death!"

The tombs of the Ptolemies that had surrounded Alexander's were destroyed as well, for they too had been regarded as "gods." On the site, a large church was built dedicated to St. Athanasius, an earlier Alexandrian bishop; in 640, when the Muslim Arabs captured Alexandria, they converted the church into a mosque. In modern times, the building, in a ruinous condition, was demolished, and the Mosque of the Prophet Daniel was constructed in its place, which still stands today. Under it is a series of catacombs which are said to have been thoroughly and officially explored early in the 20th century, and which were probably even more thoroughly and quite unofficially explored over many earlier centuries. The monuments themselves having



Dio Cassius reports that Octavian accidentally broke off Alexander's mummified nose when he visited the tomb, and this was not the conqueror's only post-mortem indignity: Ptolemy X had melted down the body's gold sheathing to pay his mercenary troops, and Caligula's officers later removed a breastplate of Alexander's armor. More often, however, visitors to the tomb left gifts of respect for a great military leader. Alexander's purported divinity, nonetheless, was probably the reason that both his tomb and his body were destroyed without a trace.



[ACTUAL SIZES]
30.5 mm

25 mm

Many portraits of Alexander survive on coins. Shortly after his death, Lysimachos of Thrace struck a silver tetradrachm (top) showing Alexander with the horns of the Egyptian god Ammon. Above: A silver tetradrachm struck by Alexander's mint in Babylon, near the time of his death, shows him as Hercules in a lion-skin headdress.

been pulled down, it is possible—but far from certain—that these catacombs include parts of the foundations of the Ptolemaic and Alexander tombs.

A more recent episode associated with the mysterious fate of Alexander's remains took place in 1798, when Napoleon Bonaparte's armies invaded Egypt through Alexandria. In the courtyard of the mosque that had once been the church of St. Athanasius, standing inside a small open building, was a handsome, heavy sarcophagus carved from a single block of rare, beautiful, dark green breccia. It was decorated, inside and out, with Egyptian hieroglyphics. Although it was being used as a cistern for worshipers' ablutions before prayers, locals referred to it as "the tomb of Alexander." French troops removed it and transported it to the hold of a French hospital ship. It was said that they intended to bring it to Paris, where a monument to Napoleon would be built around it, thus associating the latter with Alexander the Great in much the same way rulers had done since Ptolemy first hijacked the funeral cortege in southern Turkey.

But in 1801, the British invaded Egypt and expelled the French. Antiquaries attached to the British forces knew about the so-called "Alexander sarcophagus" from travelers' writings. They searched for it specifically, removed it from the French ship, and today the sarcophagus is not in Paris, but in London, on display in the British Museum. At first, British scholars rationalized that the hieroglyphic text covering its inner and outer surfaces was attributable to Alexander's role as an Egyptian god, but the decipherment of hieroglyphics a few decades later—thanks to the Rosetta Stone, which had been carried off by the British at the same time as the sarcophagus—made it obvious that it had been carved for the last native Egyptian pharaoh, Nectanebo II, who had ruled from 360 to 343 BC. Historians and archeologists concluded that this sarcophagus had never contained the body of Alexander; that it came to be called "Alexander's tomb" is an example of the great flourishing of legend and false attribution about the conqueror that began even during his lifetime.

One branch of this thicket of association connects the breccia sarcophagus, Nectanebo II and Alexander himself. Alexander's mother, Queen Olympias, had been devoted to the rites of Orpheus and Dionysus, which sometimes featured the presence of large snakes that were believed to represent or embody the gods. It is known that Olympias kept one such snake in her chamber, and after Alexander's birth Olympias was said to have declared that her son had not been sired by his mortal father, King Philip, but by the Egyptian god Ammon, who had taken the form of the snake. For his part, Philip apparently believed this tale and considered his wife an adulteress.

Beginning shortly after Alexander's death, a more fantastic tale began to circulate. According to this story, when Nectanebo II, now said to be an adept of the magic arts, fled the Persian occupation of his country in 343 BC, he went not to southern Egypt but to Macedonia, there to beget an avenger of his country's defeat. Olympias gave him refuge in Philip's court, and, casting her horoscope, Nectanebo predicted that she would give birth to a son, a hero, fathered by Ammon. The pharaoh, who could indeed claim to represent Ammon, fulfilled his own prophesy by seducing the then childless Olympias, and the offspring of their union was none other than Alexander! This is, of course, largely pharaonic propaganda, designed after the fact to bolster the Egyptian spiritual claim to Alexander, for in reality it is not only well documented that Nectanebo never set foot in Macedonia, or anywhere else in Greece, but in 343, when he supposedly went there, Alexander

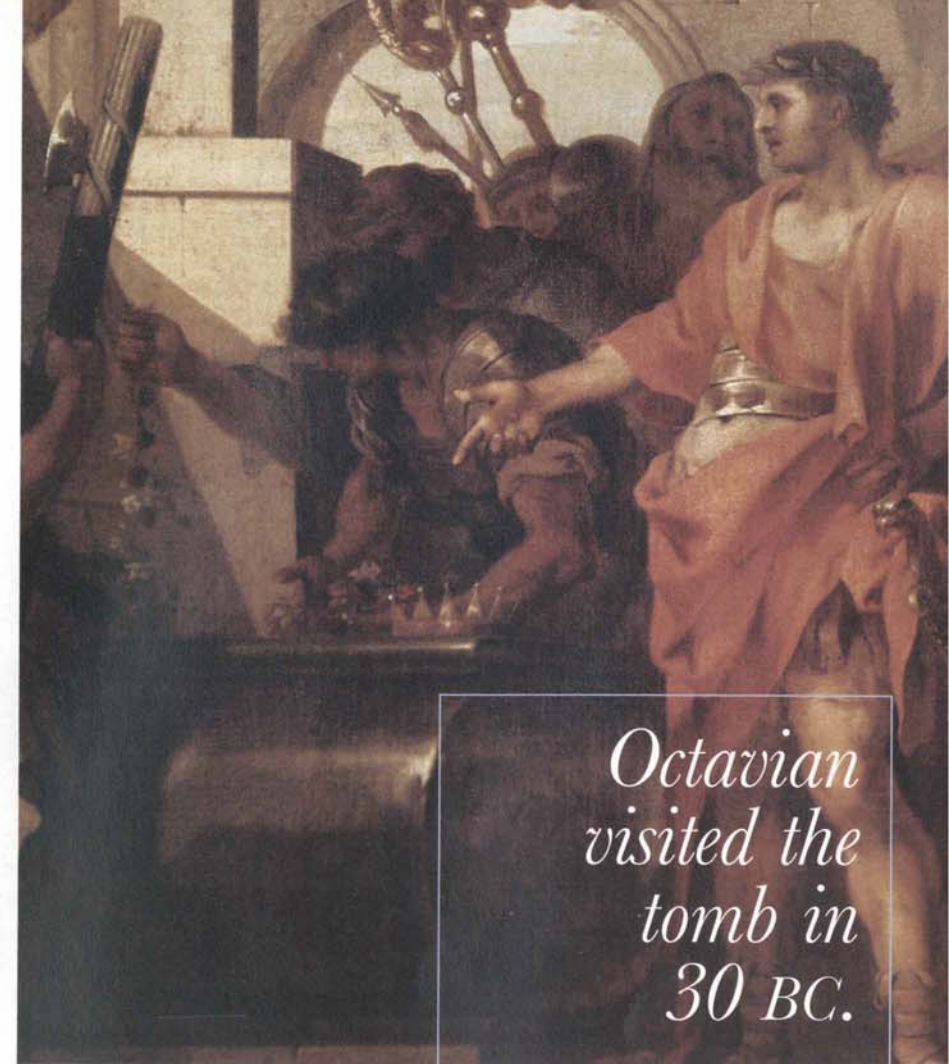
was already 13 years old. Nonetheless, the story may have inspired the connection of the breccia sarcophagus of Nectanebo II with the memory of Alexander.

There exists yet another "Alexander Sarcophagus," a magnificent, monumental work of marble discovered by accident in 1887, in what turned out to be a royal necropolis in Sidon, a city on the Mediterranean in what is today Lebanon. This extraordinary monument, still in nearly perfect condition and now in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, is the work of an unknown Greek master sculptor, carved in the classic Hellenic style from a pure white marble quarried in the Pentelic mountains northeast of Athens—the same material used to build the Parthenon and other famous works of the classical period. Around its perimeter are animated scenes of Alexander himself hunting, and battling the Persians. It has been estimated to date from the last quarter of the fourth century BC, and its intended purpose is unknown. Is it possible it was made to receive Alexander's remains? As a work of art, it is certainly worthy to have been used for this purpose.

But as tempting it is to make the connection, archeologists and historians have concluded that this sarcophagus was more than likely carved for the body of a king of Sidon, Abdalonymos, a few years after Alexander's death. Abdalonymos was a Phoenician who ordered it made to commemorate his close friendship with Alexander, who had had him appointed ruler of the region. In fact, historians now believe that the use of any sarcophagus to carry Alexander's body on that long last trip was unlikely. As the remains were originally to be sent to Siwa, Alexander's body was prepared in the Egyptian manner by Egyptian embalmers. Also, the close-fitted gold sheathing surrounding the body was a style used for royalty, and designed to be seen, not hidden by stone, however beautifully carved.

Few figures in history have been studied more, written about more, or spoken of more than Alexander the Great, whether seriously by scholars, fantastically by unknown compilers of legends, or personally by tribesmen who, even today, claim descent from his Macedonian troops. Some still dream and hope that, somewhere in the catacombs under the Mosque of Prophet Daniel, his remains might yet be discovered. But extensive explorations and excavations have been made in Alexandria, under the mosque and elsewhere, and no trace has been found either of the royal Ptolemaic necropolis or of Alexander's tomb.

The story of what happened to Alexander's remains remains a mystery. 🌐



Octavian visited the tomb in 30 BC.

By AD 397, it was gone, most likely demolished by anti-pagan Christians.

SEBASTIEN HOURDON, "AUGUSTUS BEFORE THE TOMB OF ALEXANDER," MID-17TH C., MUSÉE DU LOUVRE, PARIS / ART RESOURCE
UPPER: AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY; LOWER: FRANK L. HOLT COLLECTION



T. Peter Limber (limberis@att.net) specializes in Greek history. He is working on a historical novel about Alexander and the years after his death, to be called *The Chronicle of Hexadoros*.

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

Siwa: J/F79; S/O88 Sidon sarcophagus: M/A69



At first glance, it looked like a simple piece of sandstone. But there were lines carved into its weathered surface, and they caught his eye.

Written by PINEY KESTING
 Photographed by ELIZABETH CARELLA

That second glance, 36 years ago, led Thomas Barger, CEO of the Arabian American Oil Company, to an archeological discovery that is changing modern understanding of the reach of imperial Rome in Arabia. Recently unveiled as the centerpiece of the Barger Collection in Saudi Arabia's National Museum in Riyadh, the inscribed stele tells a story that began almost 2000 years ago in Bostra, capital of the province of Roman Arabia, and ended last month in Saudi Arabia's capital city.

Barger's chapter of the story began on February 5, 1965, at the end of a seven-day sightseeing expedition he had organized for some 30 people to the Nabataean tombs at Madain Salih in Saudi Arabia's Hijaz Province. The group had just finished a picnic in the shadow of the tombs when Barger and several others wandered over to look at what they knew were Nabataean wells. As two Bedouins accompanying them tossed stones out of one of the wells to

partially clear it, Barger noticed the stele, and arranged to keep it. In a note added to his wife Kathleen's account of the trip, he wrote: "On our last morning, we bought a stone about two feet high and five inches square [60 x 12 x 12 cm] that had been dug up in cleaning out one of the Nabataean wells. It has a Greek inscription carved on it, which I have photographed in various angles of light. As soon as we get the photos back, I shall try to write out the inscription and get it translated."

The following year, Barger submitted a photograph of the stele to *Archaeology* magazine, along with his account of its discovery. When Harvard University historian Glen Bowersock saw the photograph, he realized he could read the text. He contacted Barger. "He seemed very excited," recalls Bowersock, who is now on the faculty of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. Barger sent him more photographs, as well as a rubbing, and the translation was published in a second *Archaeology* article in 1969, which illuminated the significance of the find.

♦ "To [honor] the good Fortune [Tyche] of Bostra / Hadrian, a painter with the Third Cyrenaican Legion, [set this up,] it read. Because the painter/donor of the stele is named for the

emperor Hadrian, who reigned from AD 117 to 138, the stele is believed to date to the second or third century.

"What is so exciting about this stele is that it shows the presence of a legionary force in Madain Salih," says Bowersock. This Nabataean stronghold lies some 500 kilometers (300 mi) farther south than any portion of the Third Cyrenaican Legion, which dominated Roman Arabia from its base at Bostra [south of Damascus], is believed to have been stationed. For some time, archeologists have debated the inclusion of Madain Salih and the northern Hijaz in the Roman province of Arabia: Lacking evidence to the contrary, the province was often asserted to have ended at Aqaba.

"The stele provides powerful evidence that the Hijaz was included in the Roman Arabian province, just as it had been a part of the Nabataean kingdom," explains Bowersock. "In fact, if the occupying army of Arabia was represented by a painter in Madain Salih, then he hadn't wandered across the frontier by mistake. A painter would not go down there [with the legion] to deal with incursions, he would be there because there was a settled legionary presence." Madain Salih had been the southernmost city of the Nabataeans.

In the 1970's, British archeologists found a bilingual inscription in Nabataean and Greek at Ruwwafa, northwest of Madain Salih. The inscription describes how the governor of Arabia supported and approved of the construction of a temple at Ruwwafa. This find and Barger's, Bowersock claims, "seem to put beyond any doubt that this area was indeed part of the Roman province."

Dr. Khaleel al-Muaiikel, chairman of the department of archaeology at King Sa'ud University in Riyadh, offers a clue as to why the stele was found in a well. An invading force would likely destroy or contaminate the water supply of a settlement it had overrun to discourage the inhabitants from returning, often by filling in the wells. "The burying of steles in wells is an ancient practice," he says.

"My dad knew right away that the stone was important," says Timothy J. Barger, who recently edited and published his father's letters from the early years in Arabia as a book, *Out in the Blue*. "He knew the inscription was Greek and he was puzzled that a Greek stone would be found in a Nabataean well." In addition to being "in the right place at the right time," Barger also credits his father's experienced eye as a geologist, coupled with his passion for archeology.

Knowing what he did, Thomas Barger was determined that the stele be preserved as a part of Saudi Arabia's history. When he retired in 1969, he took the stele and nine oth-



TOP: T.C. BARGER COLLECTION; ARTIFACTS: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Well read in history and a fascinated amateur archeologist, Tom Barger and a group of friends (above left) traveled to Madain Salih in 1965. Left: The 50-centimeter (20") "Hadrian stele," found on that trip, is now the centerpiece of the Barger Collection at the National Museum of Saudi Arabia. Above right: Two of Barger's children, Timothy Barger and Annie Barger Hebert, presented the collection in Riyadh. Insets: Two bowl shards and a stone with a South Arabian inscription.



On April 1, the National Museum formally welcomed the Barger Collection. Right: Barger and a dignitary of the Madain Salih area in 1965. Artifacts, clockwise from top left: Sandstone mortar, two pottery jugs (1st and 2nd c. BC), water container with spout.



During the 16 years between Barger's discovery of the artifacts and his passing them to Gavin in 1981, Saudi scholars themselves had begun to focus on the history and archeology of the kingdom, and their careful excavations and publications had enormously increased understanding of the Peninsula's pre-Islamic history. Regional museums and a small national archeological museum had been built, and the nation's interest in its past culminated in the opening of the National Museum in Riyadh in 1999. With that, the artifacts could go home.

On April 1, Annie Barger Hebert and Timothy Barger, along with Gavin, Dr. Roger Fisher of Harvard and more than 100 Saudi scholars and dignitaries, attended a ceremony at the National Museum hosted by Prince Sultan ibn Salman and celebrating the return of what is now called the Barger Collection.

That evening, Saad al-Rashid, Deputy Minister for Antiquities and Museums, credited the collaboration among the Barger family, Prince Sultan, Prince Muhammad ibn Nawaf—Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Italy—Gavin and Harvard University for facilitating the return. "What has happened here tonight," explained Gavin, who also spoke at the ceremony, "is the result of many good people working very hard to fulfill the late Mr. Barger's wish. As these treasures are presented to the future of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, it is very touching to realize that the basic message of this Roman stele is, 'Thank God,' or 'Thanks to divine Providence.' What a fitting inscription for this event!"

"The return of the stele and the other pieces from the Barger Collection has many meanings for us in Saudi Arabia," explained al-Rashid. "It links two institutions—the National Museum and Harvard—and it particularly gives credit to Thomas Barger, a man who loved Saudi Arabia, the land and its people. It may also open the way for other American friends to return artifacts they obtained in Saudi Arabia."

Prior to the ceremony, al-Rashid explained, "What we now have on display in national and regional museums is only a small part of our history. Therefore, any item discovered provides additional knowledge for us."

When the people of Rome celebrated the city's millennium on April 21, AD 248, Emperor Marcus Julius Philippus, an Arab from the western slope of the Hawran region of Syria, presided over those historic ceremonies. Philip the Arab's ascent to the pinnacle of Roman government was the culmination of the relationship between Rome and the Arabs that had begun more than 300 years earlier.

Roman Arabia, which encompassed the Negev region and present-day southern Syria, Jordan and northwest Saudi Arabia, was an essential province for an imperial power operating in—indeed, all around—the Mediterranean Sea. Roman Arabia's ports and interior land routes controlled access to the Mediterranean, its territories secured the southern flank of the Roman provinces of Syria and Judaea, and it dominated the route between Damascus and Aqaba. In addition, the trade routes facilitated essential communication links among urban centers, as well as with outlying nomadic populations. Pompey, Augustus, Trajan, Septimius Severus, Hadrian and Diocletian had all recognized the importance of acquiring this region—but, to do so, the Romans first had to wrest control from the Nabataeans.

The descendants of nomadic Arabs, the Nabataeans moved from a still-disputed point of origin somewhere in the Arabian Peninsula into the Hijaz, the Negev and Transjordan, the region east of the Jordan River. Petra, one of the most dramatic ancient sites in Roman Arabia, was established as their first capital. By the end of the first century BC, during the reign of Caesar Augustus, the Nabataeans had acquired a monopoly over the very lucrative traffic in perfume, spices and incense coming from southern Arabia, India and the Far East, and were also involved in marketing asphalt from the Dead Sea. Trade contacts with the Greeks and Romans left their mark in the dramatic architecture seen in Petra, as well as in the first-century tombs found at Madain Salih in the Hijaz.

In 62 BC, Pompey's military commander in Syria, Aemilius Scaurus, attacked the Nabataean kingdom in Petra, forcing King Aretas III to sign a peace treaty and agree to pay an annual monetary trib-

ROMAN Arabia

ute. Coins minted by Scaurus show Aretas III extending an olive branch in submission.

A Roman incursion into Arabia Felix, the southern part of the peninsula, failed in 26 BC though supported by 1000 Nabataean troops—but the Roman garrison established in Athloulia during that campaign remained the southernmost penetration of Roman power in the east until the early third century of our era.

By the first century, Emperor Trajan recognized that the Nabataean kingdom represented the missing link in a chain of control around the Mediterranean. In AD 106, the Romans conquered the Nabataeans and brought an end to the rule of King Rabel II. Under Roman control, Bostra—Rabel had shifted the Nabataean capital from Petra to Bostra—was renamed Nea Traiane Bostra, after the emperor, and it was there that the base camp of the Third Cyrenaica Legion was established.

For the next five years, Roman legionaries worked to fortify defense boundaries, establish control of the new province, and build the great road from Bostra to Aqaba—the Via Nova Traiana—which ran the length of the province. In 111, Rome publicly announced the successful annexation of Roman Arabia and the completion of the great road, and issued Trajanic coinage advertising the annexation. The new province became Trajan's legacy in the Middle East.

Uncovering the relationship between Rome and the Arabian Peninsula has relied more on the findings of 19th- and 20th-century explorers and archeologists than on the narratives of Roman historians, for they paid little attention to this region. When the Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt located Petra in 1812, he launched a new era in western understanding of the history of the region. His expedition, along with Charles Doughty's 1876 discovery of the Nabataean tombs at Madain Salih revealed that much had survived from Roman and pre-Roman antiquity in the region. More recently, archeological excavations in Saudi Arabia have unearthed further evidence of ancient Rome's presence in the Peninsula, of which the stele found at Madain Salih in 1965 is a fine example.



The southwestern borders of Roman Arabia may have to be redrawn in light of discoveries in the Hijaz.

Faisal al-Muamma, director of the King 'Abd al-'Aziz Library, put the ceremony in perspective. "Twenty or 30 years ago, the country was busy building its infrastructure," he said. "Today, there is a greater interest in the past, and now it's time to take care of our culture and build something for future generations."

"This would have been a wonderful event for my father," commented Timothy Barger, explaining that Thomas Barger would have appreciated the museum's state-of-the-art design and its broad portrayal of Saudi Arabian history. In a sense, he said, the discovery and return of the stele is all a reflection of Tyche. "It was good fortune that my father found and identified the stele, and that it has now been returned. May it continue to be a symbol of the good fortune of Saudi Arabia." 🌐



Piney Kesting is a free-lance writer in Boston who specializes in the Middle East. Elizabeth Carella is a photographer for the Archives for Historical Documentation in Boston.



Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

Thomas Barger: S/O 69
Out in the Blue: M/A 01
 Madain Salih: S/O 65
 Nabataeans: J/A 94, S/O 91, M/A 81, S/O 65

National Museum: S/O 99
 Emperor Marcus Julius Philippus: J/F 00
 Roman Egypt: N/D 98
 Roman Jordan: N/D 85

"The return of the stele and the other pieces links the National Museum and Harvard, and gives credit to Thomas Barger, a man who loved Saudi Arabia."

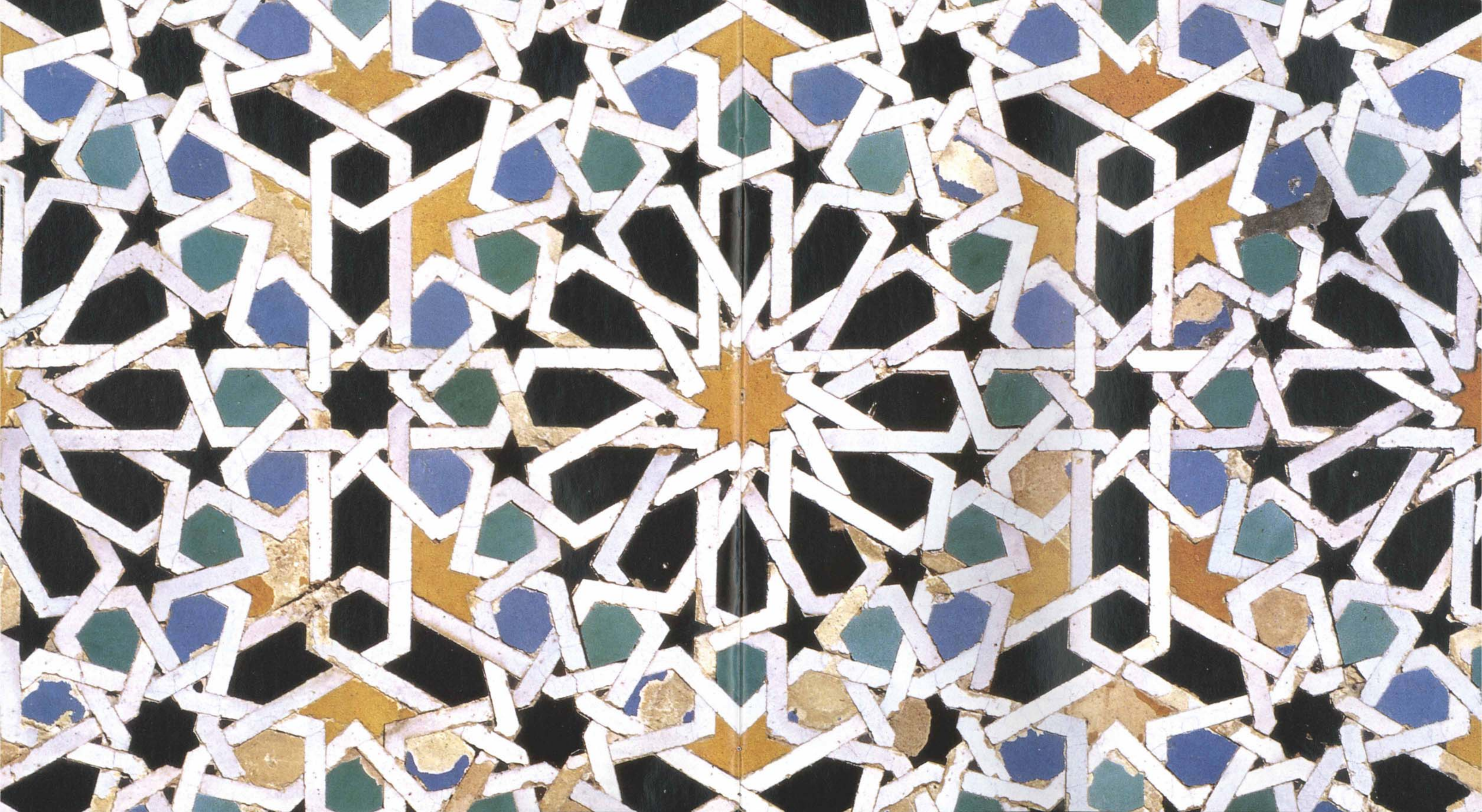
Saad al-Rashid
 Deputy Minister for Antiquities and Museums



er artifacts with him to the United States for safekeeping, until a national museum could be built. His eldest daughter, Annie Barger Hebert, recalls her father talking about the eventual return of the artifacts. "My father admired and deeply respected the Saudis," she says. "We knew it was always his intent to return these objects, once there was a safe and appropriate place for them to be stored and catalogued."

In 1981, Barger turned to Father Carney Gavin, then curator of the Harvard Semitic Museum, for help in securing the artifacts' return. Aware of Gavin's monumental work in preserving and cataloguing the 19th-century photographs known as the Bonfils Collection, Barger entrusted the artifacts to Gavin with the understanding that, when a suitable museum was built in Saudi Arabia, Gavin would return them on his behalf. Barger did this, Gavin says, after being diagnosed with a fatal illness, knowing that he would not be able to accomplish the task himself. "I accepted a charge from a dying man who very deliberately put this upon me, and it is satisfying for me, as someone trained in classical Roman imperial archeology at Oxford, to be involved in the return home of this document," says Gavin, who is now president and curator of the Archives for Historical Documentation in Boston.

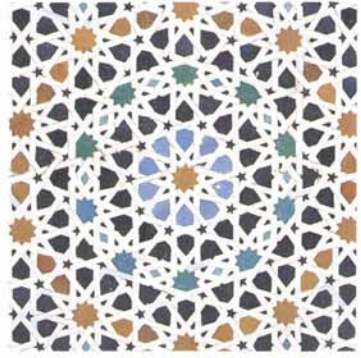
TOP: T.C. BARGER COLLECTION; ARTIFACTS: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SAUDI ARABIA



Zillij in Fez

Written by LOUIS WERNER

Photographed by PETER SANDERS



Zillij is everywhere in Fez. In the madinah it accents the greatest monuments; in the modern city it graces lobbies, café counters and sidewalk planters.



Dressed in a flowing brown *jellaba* and peaked gray *tarboosh*, Abdelatif Benslimane wanders the narrow lanes of Old Fez, his eyes darting from wall to column to fountain, his mouth whispering familiar names. “Fifty points inside eight. Four clasped hands. Spider’s house. Empty and full.”

This is not the secret patter of a mystic, but rather the precise terminology of a master craftsman. Benslimane is a ceramic mosaicist, a *zlayji* in Moroccan Arabic, and these are the names of just some of the many patterns he sees in any short stroll through the old city.

His art of glazed and cut tiles arranged in complex geometries, known as *zillij*, is everywhere in Fez. Its broad range of color, its infinite possibilities of design and its sudden pleasure of discovery—around a corner at eye level or, at a distance, as part of an architectural whole—all contribute to the striking impression the city gives that it wears two faces at once: an ageless beauty masked by a well-worn antiquity.

Titus Burkhardt, a Swiss art historian and one of the first advisors to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the conservation of the old city, compared Fez in its bowl-shaped valley to an opened geode, “brimful of thousands of tightly packed crystals and surrounded by a silver-green rim; this was Fez, the Old City of Fez, in the twilight; the countless crystals now come more clearly into view; one side of them was light, while the other side had become darkened and weather-beaten.”

Burkhardt might have been thinking specifically of the city’s crystal-like *zillij* work, refracting the sun but darkening in the dim, covered *suqs* and lanes. Throughout the *madinah*—which is what Old Fez is called locally, using

the Arabic word for “city”—small mosaic panels and narrow running bands of *zillij* decorate otherwise blank walls. They shimmer, hold the eye, and offer release, creating introspective moments in otherwise boisterous public spaces.

Although *zillij* reached what many consider its apogee in the 16th-century Saadian Tombs in Marrakesh, and a second flowering in the many royal palaces and public buildings built throughout the country between 1961 and 1999 by King Hassan II, it is in Fez that *zillij* is best appreciated as an ever-present adornment of everyday life.

Outside the *madinah*, in the sprawling modern city, it graces apartment building lobbies and office façades, café counters and sidewalk flower planters. In the *madinah* it accents the city’s greatest monuments: the 14th-century Attarine and Bou Inaniyya *madrasas* (Islamic schools), the Qarawiyyin mosque and the tomb of Moulay Idriss II, who founded Fez in the year 809 of the western calendar. Even the donkeys that carry the old city’s burdens drink from *zillij*-faced troughs. And Morocco’s 20-dirham bank note is adorned by a fountain designed by a master *zlayji* from Fez.

Roger LeTourneau, the leading western historian of Fez, said that among all of the city’s various craftsmen, *zlayjis* were most worthy of being called artists, because “their reputation went beyond the city walls. It was not unusual for the sultan or a notable personage from another great Moroccan city to call upon their talent.” And among such *zlayjis*, not a few of them have come from five generations of the Benslimane family.

Top: Radiating from a central 10-pointed star, a *zillij* pattern expands, logically and coherently, toward infinity. Above: Bags of *furmah*, or individually cut tesserae, await placement. As many as 5000 of them may be used in a square-meter panel. Opposite: The

17th-century Nejjarine Fountain, retiled and repaired by two generations of master *zlayjis* of the Benslimane family. Previous and following spreads: *Zillij* patterns, including a *taqshir* calligraphic border, at the Attarine *madrasa* (Islamic school), built in 1325.





“Whenever I walk this way, I bow my head

in respect to the masters who preceded me.”



In the 1920's, at the behest of the newly installed French colonial governor, Abdelatif Benslimane's grandfather Ahmad retiled the well-known 17th-century Nejjarine Fountain, one of the city's best, just outside the Funduq Nejjarine. Abdelatif's father, Muhammad, later repaired Ahmad's jewel, taking apart one by one the mosaic pieces damaged by rough public use and mounting them afresh. "Whenever I walk this way," says Abdelatif, "I bow my head in respect to the masters who preceded me."

His father also repaired Nasrid-era *zillij* in Cordoba and Granada, Spain and worked five years in Paris. Abdelatif worked as his apprentice in three royal palaces, the tomb of King Mohammed V in Rabat, and on the Palais Jamaï Hotel, one of Fez's finest. He died in 1984, while helping make the private home of the pasha of Marrakesh into a modern masterpiece.

Abdelatif, now 67, learned well from his father. Works of his mature hand can be found in places near and far—the entryway and fountain of the Wataniyya Commercial Center on the new city's main avenue, in five-star hotel lobbies throughout the country, and even in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, in the interior of the Zeinab Mosque. His own son, Muhammad, recently opened a shop in New York selling his father's work and his own, designed especially for the North American market: table-tops, small fountains, decoratively edged mirrors and patterned runners for kitchen and bath.

Mosaic work in Morocco is not unique to the Islamic period, and neither is *zillij* unique to Morocco. Not

The universal problem of babies with sticky hands is easily solved in Fez: A mother uses the fountain in the courtyard of the Qarawiyin Mosque. Complex *zillij* patterns based on eight- and 16-pointed stars line the outer basin. Opposite: The Nejjarine Fountain, which still offers water to passersby, uses large star patterns and fills a lower register with a smaller, all-over pattern. Next spread: The design of a *zillij* wall at the Bou Inaniyya madrasa is based on a simple diagonal grid.

far from Fez lie the remains of the Roman city of Volubilis, where intricate marble floor mosaics take on myriad forms.

Beginning in the mid-11th century, North Africa's Almoravid rulers, and later the Almohads, introduced *zillij* to the buildings of their imperial cities in Morocco and Spain. It can still be seen on important dynastic landmarks such as the minaret of the Kutubiyya Mosque in Marrakesh, the Hassan Tower in Rabat and the Giralda in Seville.

Near-cousins of the art form are also found in lands east of the Mediterranean. In the 14th century, Tangier-born Ibn Battuta favorably compared the *zillij* of his homeland to the eastern mosaics called *qashani*. Thirteenth-century Seljuk Turkey and 12th-century Persia knew the beauty of cut tile work in floral patterns, and the Egyptian Mamluks made extensive use of mosaics, marquetry and other patterns in polychrome stone.

About Fez, at the beginning of the 13th century, a survey of the city ordered by the Almohad ruler al-Nasir Muhammad (1199–1213) counted 188 ceramic workshops. In the 14th century, historian Ibn Khaldun noted the desire of wealthy merchants there "to build great houses and decorate them with ceramics, mosaics, and arabesques."

In later years in Muslim Spain, or al-Andalus, *zillij* reached artistic heights that have never been surpassed, evident especially in the Alcazar and Alhambra palaces. As Arab historian Leo Africanus noted, the eventual expulsion of the Muslims from Spain in 1492 benefited Fez: It provided the city with an influx not only of great craftsmen, but also a new class of patrons.

Today, private patronage is still the key to sustaining labor-intensive *zillij*, which—though an unusually expensive art form—is considered indispensable by Moroccans of all social and economic stations. Benslimane's clients range from Shaykh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, president of the United Arab Emirates, who owns several houses in Morocco, to businessmen and countless others of more ordinary means. New

homeowners on even the most limited budgets often yearn for a traditional Moroccan reception room, or salon, which means *zillij* halfway up walls whose upper portions are finished by elaborately carved stucco and topped with an inlaid wooden ceiling—and if they can't afford all of it at once, it is commissioned piecemeal, over years.

A typical job for a *zlayji* starts with a call from an architect whose client has asked for a mosaic panel measuring, let us say, two meters (78") square, to decorate a new home's salon. Any traditional design and color scheme are possible, but the space and its proportions impose certain overall constraints: A 50-point star, for example, needs room for its 24- and 12-point satellite stars, a common Islamic pattern that Burkhardt called "a shimmering planetarium, in which each line starts from a center and leads to a center."

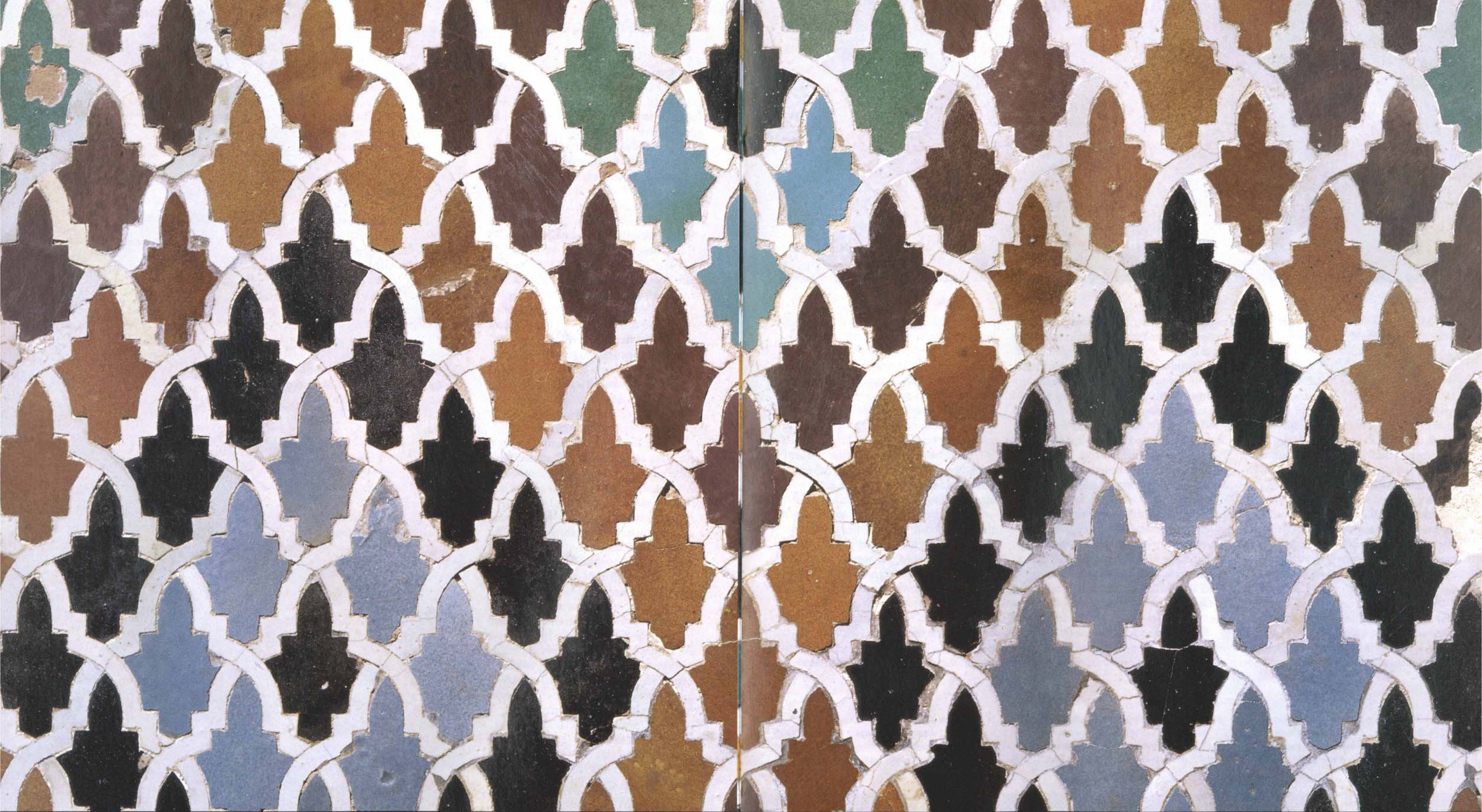
An encyclopedia could not contain the full array of complex, often individually varied patterns and the individually shaped, hand-cut tesserae, or *furmah*, found in *zillij* work. Star-based patterns are identified by their number of points—*itnashari* for 12, *'ishrini* for 20, *arba' wa 'ishrini* for 24 and so on, but they are not necessarily named with exactitude. The so-called *khamsini*, for 50 points, and *mi'ini*, for 100, actually consist of 48 and 96 points respectively, because geometry requires that the number of points of any star in this sequence be divisible by six. (There are also sequences based on five and on eight.)

Within a single star pattern, variations abound—by the mix of colors, the size of the *furmah*, and the complexity and size of interspersing elements such as strapping, braids, or "lanterns." And then there are all the non-star patterns—honeycombs, webs, steps and shoulders, and checkerboards.



Morocco's 20-dirham note shows the Dar al-Sikka fountain, made by a *zlayji* from Fez.





An encyclopedia could not contain the full array of complex,

often individually varied patterns found in zillij work.



The Alhambra's interlocking *zillij* patterns were reportedly a source of inspiration for the tessellations of modern Dutch artist M. C. Escher.

The more commonly used of the 360 different *furmah*, according to one scholar's exhaustive count, run the geometrical gamut from star medallions, which are used as the center of the star patterns, to chevrons and triangles, hexagons and octagons, lozenges and diamonds, and curvilinear and rectilinear strapwork. Organic shapes go by the names of the objects from which they are abstracted—bottlenecks, ducks, combs, bracelets, cups and hands. "There are many, too many for me to remember, but I have almost surely used them all," says Benslimane.

For one of his current private commissions, a wall-mounted fountain decorated with a 24-point star pattern on a square-meter panel (39" square), Benslimane figures about 5000 *furmah* will be

needed, consisting of 32 different shapes in eight colors. He works backward from these numbers to calculate how many square, glazed "mother tiles," each 10 centimeters (4") on a side, he must order from the kiln in order to cut this combination of *furmah*.

The pottery quarter, where smoke always lingers on the slopes of the Fez River below the *madinah*, is located just inside the 18th-century gate called Bab al-Ftuh. Bi-level, beehive-shaped ovens are fueled with *faytour*, or olive pomace, the pits and dry pulpy material left after olives have been pressed for oil. *Faytour* burns at an extraordinarily high temperature. Tiles are molded of a special, fine-bodied clay from nearby Jebel Ben Jelliq, which, after being fired, can be scored and struck to break cleanly along straight lines.

The glaze too contains a key local ingredient. A sandy red soil from Meknes is added to recycled battery lead

and kiln-baked for two days. Then it is milled into a powdered glazing compound and mixed with water and a pigment. Some pigments are made locally, such as green from recycled copper and dark blue and black from mineral ores, while other, modern colors unknown in older work, such as turquoise, rose and yellow, are imported.

The tiles are fired twice, first in the kiln's hotter lower level before being glazed and again in the upper story after one face has been dipped in a color bath. A single finished square costs the *zlayji* about 10 cents, but broken pieces, bought at discount prices, will often suffice when the *furmah* to be cut from the mother tile are small.

The next step is to cut the *furmah*, and this is a two-stage process. Ahmad Burqadi is an independent tile cutter, or *nqaash*, who frequently fills Benslimane's larger orders. His workshop is in the old city's busy Bab al-Khokha

quarter, and on this day he and his assistants are cutting *furmah* called *qamarshun*, whose shape is a Greek cross with tapered ends, that measure about one centimeter ($\frac{1}{8}$ " end to end.

Burqadi uses a finished *qamarshun* as a template to ink outlines onto a square mother tile. Striking it with a chisel-headed hammer against his anvil's steel tongue, he scores lightly along the drawn lines and snaps out the rough shape with his hand. He has cut along sixteen separate edges, and not one has fractured other than where he intended.

He hands the piece off to the finish cutter sitting cross-legged beside him before an anvil with a tongue of terracotta, which provides the softer striking surface required for the finer end-work. The finisher cleans up the shape and bevels the back side so that only the *furmah*'s glazed edges will touch when set against another piece.

Burqadi and his helper can make several hundred of these shapes per day. More delicate *furmah*, such as triangular strapwork pieces, take longer and break more often, so about 80 of these is considered a good day's output. Because many lengths of strapwork are required in any design using that motif, a simple 10-point star pattern—the same one found in the Bou Inaniyya *madrasa*—would today cost more than \$1500 for a single square-meter panel.

The entry wall to the prayer room of the Attarine *madrasah*, built by the Marinid Sultan Abu Said in 1325, displays a *tour de force* of the art of tile cutting. A master *nqaash* has cut the calligraphic word *Allah* (God) less than two centimeters across, the size of a dime, from a green tile, and also a space in which to inlay it within a white tile medallion. The curving

Abdelatif Benslimane's *zillij* fountain outside the new Wataniyya Commercial Center offers its beauty to busy passersby in downtown Fez. Its 24-point central stars are surrounded by eight-pointed satellites.

edges of the inset and its background match perfectly. From that center, the pattern expands infinitely to cover the wall or, potentially, the universe.

The Attarine also boasts fine examples of another specialty of the *nqaash* that is called *taqshir*, or "peeled work," in which glaze is scraped off negative areas of the mother tile to leave behind a shiny pattern in low relief. This serves best to highlight the calligraphic and floral borders at waist height that top off the *zillij* work on walls, most often in black glaze. The effect is striking, as the exposed terracotta base of the tile weathers irregularly, setting off the glistening glaze all the more.

1 "Mother tiles," 10 centimeters square and made of a fine-bodied local clay, are dried in the sun, then carried to the kiln for a first firing.

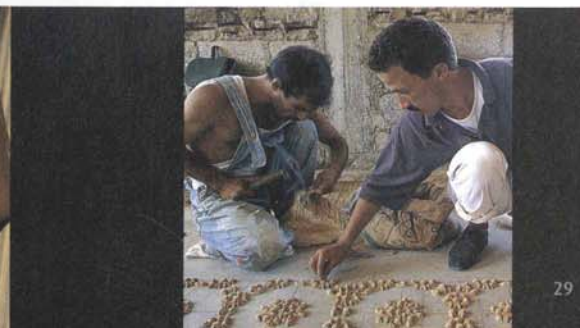
2 The tiles are placed on edge in the beehive-shaped kiln to allow easy circulation of the fierce heat produced by the olive-pomace fuel.

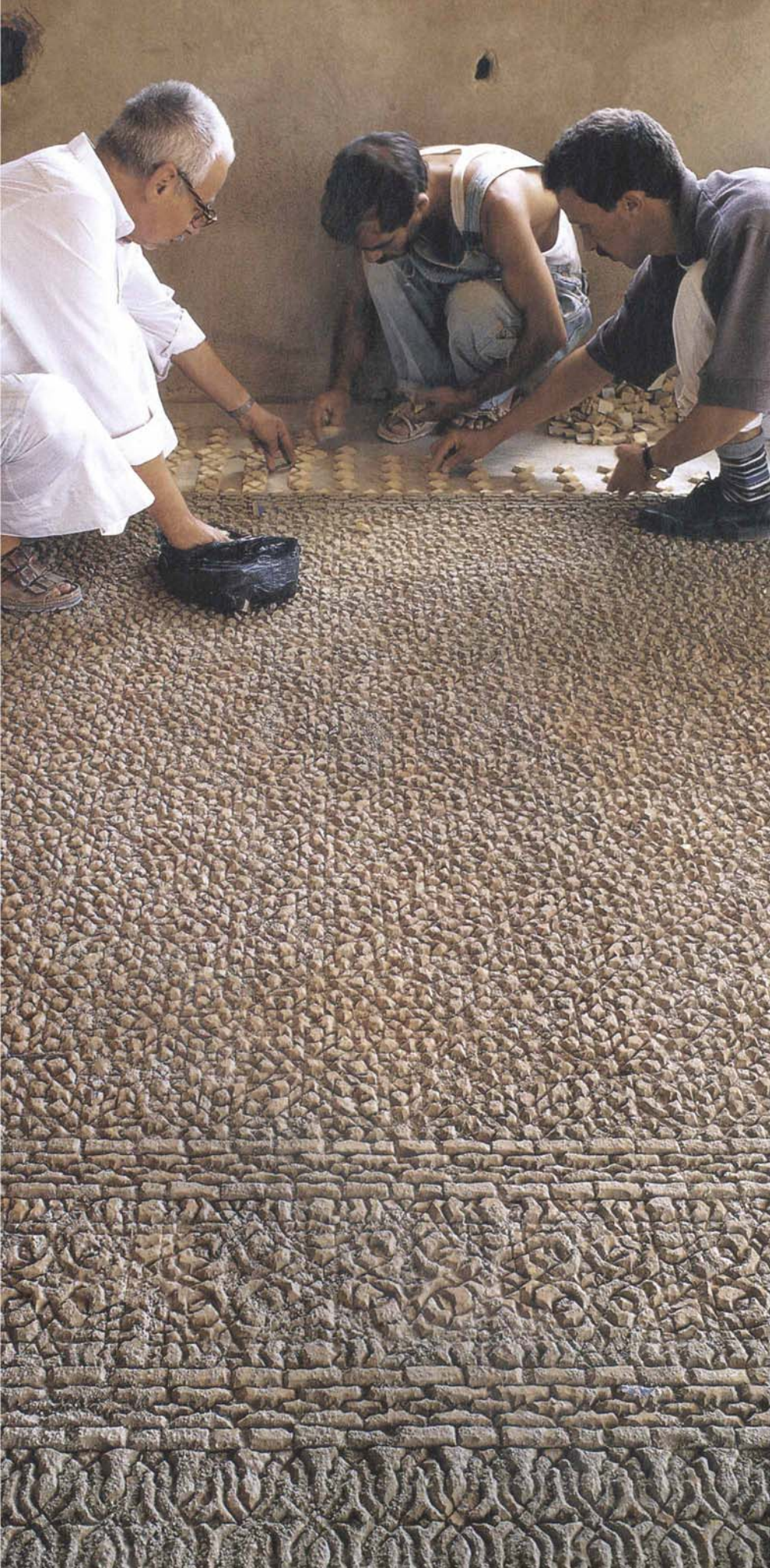
3 One side of the fired tile is glazed, and then it is fired again. Some of the pigments used in the glazes are local and traditional; some are imported.

4 Using a template, the tile-cutter draws each piece on a tile, then scores the glaze with taps of a chisel-pointed hammer.

5 A finish-cutter bevels away the tile body on the back side of the tile so that only the *furmah*'s glazed edges will touch the pieces next to it.

6 Working on the floor, on which he has penciled the main lines of the design, the *fraash*, or layout artist, arranges the *furmah* upside-down.





After the *furmah* have been cut and bagged by shape and color, they are sent to the worksite for mounting. This last stage is the job of the *fraash*, or layout artist. Benslimane's most experienced *fraash* is Muhammad Rashidi, who first apprenticed with his boss at the age of 13 and is now in charge of the wall-mounted fountain project.

Rashidi takes a pencil to draw a partial diagram of the 24-point star pattern on the floor and gradually fills it in, placing each piece glazed-side down. At dead center is the twelve-pointed star medallion. From each of its tips sprout two elongated diamonds, thus giving the pattern its full count of twenty-four. Radiating around this center is a burst of evenly spaced eight-pointed star pieces called *dirhams*.

Starting with the *dirhams*, Rashidi lays out all the *furmah* of each shape and color in turn, slowly connecting the star piece coordinates with interspacing elements until the puzzle is complete. Because the back side of each *furmah* is monochromatic and irregularly beveled, the overall pattern is almost impossible to discern.

On this particular project, Rashidi has been at work for three days. He is

7 Benslimane (left) guides his layout artists. When the panel is finished, the *fraash* will walk on it—carefully—to close any remaining gaps.

8 After a concrete backing seven centimeters thick is poured and has hardened, the panel, now a single unit, can be lifted and installed.

confident that the nearly 5000-piece layout, looking from the blind back side like nothing more than an irregular relief map, is exact in color and design, down to the last fingernail-sized *furmah*.

He laughs when asked why he cannot adhere individual pieces directly to a wall. "Stars are the idealized shapes among all of God's works. Their symmetry is perfect and their spacing is precise. Such perfection is not reached by creating them piece by piece."

After a final firming of the pattern, which he accomplishes by gingerly walking over the layout to push the pieces toward the center, Rashidi sprays a powdery cement over the design. The next day he will apply a seven-centimeter-thick (3") concrete backing that, when dry, will allow the mosaic to be attached to a wall as a single panel. Only then will the brilliance and complexity of the design join the artistic firmament of the *zlayji's* universe.

Benslimane speaks of *zillij* as being more than simply a combination of glaze, tile and concrete. "Truthfulness—*sidq*—is in everything I make," he says. By this, he means being true to his métier and faithful to the traditions of his craft. On one occasion, after a client was late in paying, Benslimane sold his new car to help his assistants—with whom he had just completed a particularly fine piece of work—buy sheep for the

9 The cinder-block wall has been troweled with a layer of plaster, wooden spacers are positioned, and three men tip the heavy *zillij* panel into place.

annual 'Id al-Adha, or Feast of the Sacrifice. To this day he drives the old clunker that replaced that car.

This act of generosity towards fellow *zlayjis* underscores what historian Roger LeTourneau meant when he noted that Fez's craftsmen feel so well compensated by the respect accorded them that they are unashamed of their otherwise modest economic status. "Fez is not," he wrote, "the city of mystery, as has often been said, but rather the city of good sense and good living"—values that are embodied in the art of *zillij*. ☉



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has photographed throughout the Islamic world for more than three decades, and lives near London.

Mosaic House is located at 62 West 22nd Street, New York NY 10010; telephone 212-414-2525.

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

Fez and Funduq Nejjarine: M/J93

Palais Jamaï Hotel: J/A97

Almoravids and Almohads: S/O92; J/F93

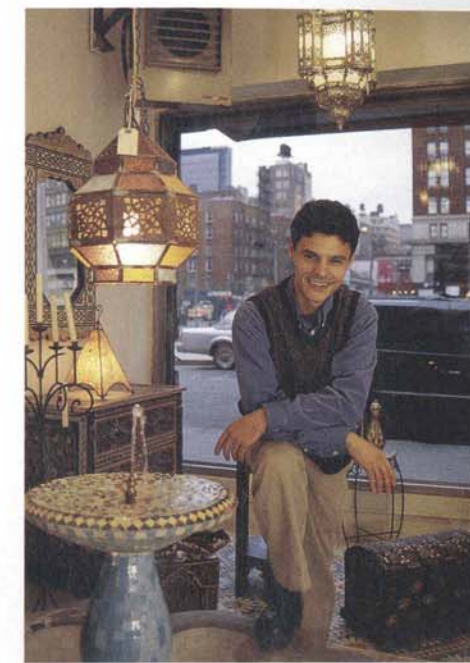
Kutubiyya Mosque: M/J98

Giralda, Seville: J/F93

Alcazar and Alhambra palaces: S/O92; J/F93

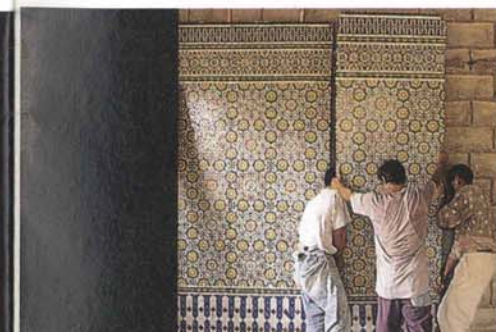
Andalusian craftsmen in North Africa: J/A91

10 Much strength, very delicately applied, adjusts the position of the panel to precisely align the pattern across the seam.



Far from Fez, Benslimane's son Muhammad sells his father's zillij wall decorations, tabletops and fountains—and designs his own—at Mosaic House in New York.

A horseshoe-arch *zillij* panel, designed around a 48-pointed star, is carefully leveled and aligned to become the centerpiece of a fountain in some home in Fez.



RACING IN RHYTHM IN THE UAE

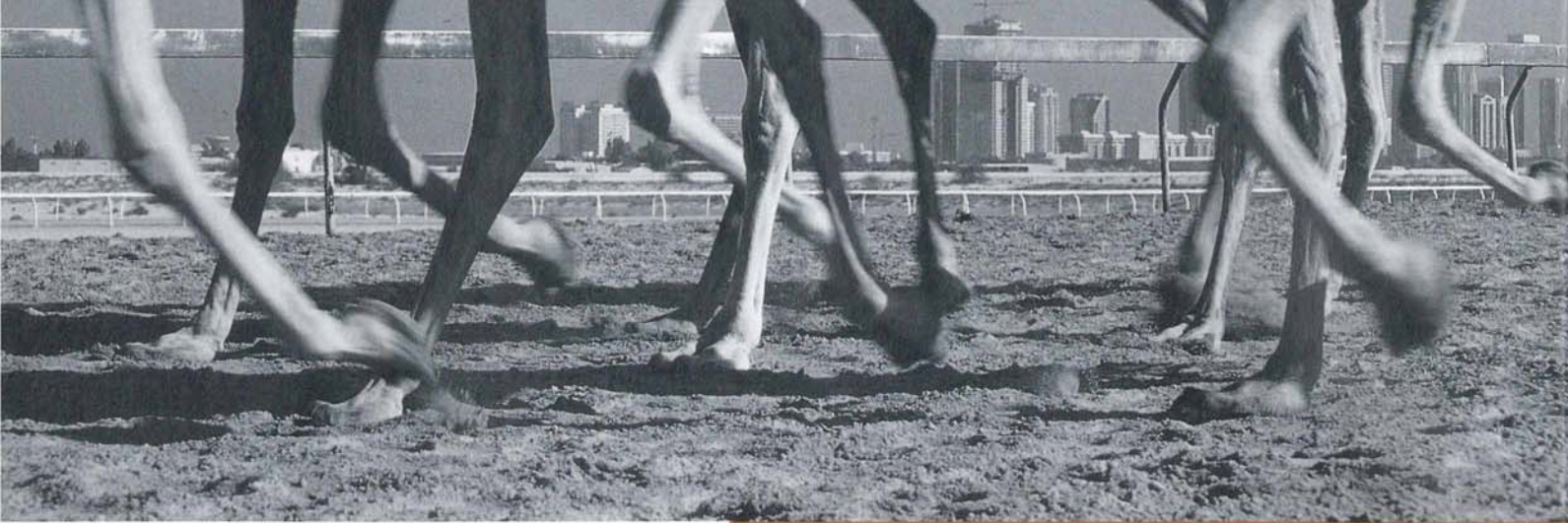
Written by Carol Flake Chapman

Photography by Lorraine Chittock

Ah, but when grief assails me, straightway I ride it off
mounted on my swift, lean-flanked camel, night and day racing,
sure-footed, like the planks of a litter; I urge her on
down the bright highway, that back of a striped mantle;
she vies with the noble, hot-paced she-camels, shank on shank
nimble plying, over a path many feet have beaten.

From Tarafah ibn al-'Abd's, "The Ode of Tarafah"





“Camels are in the same stage as horses....”

NAD AL-SHIBA

Over the eight-kilometer circuit, the rhythm of the camel race unfolds to fill the track's vast space almost evenly, and its roughly 20-minute duration progresses more like a fugue than a fanfare. On occasion, television broadcasters forego live commentary in favor of a soundtrack of Bedouin camel songs. Opposite: Mornings are for practice gallops. Owners and coaches can drive along inside the track to follow their jockeys.



If you drive southwest of Dubai City, past the outermost stretches of ultramodern towers and commercial centers that ring the pale coastal salt flats, you'll come to the edge of the beckoning desert. There, a sign at a roundabout points the way to Nad al-Shiba, the camel racetrack that has become a Dubai landmark. From a distance, the track's distinctive white grandstand could be mistaken for a giant Bedouin tent. On race days during the five-month fall and winter racing season, traffic can get busy on the road to Nad al-Shiba, and the desert around the track fills with camels making their way along sandy pathways to the entrance. Here, camels have the right of way

over the four-wheel-drive vehicles that have largely displaced them as desert transportation throughout the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It is fitting that the UAE's first major camel-racing track was built where the modern city gives way to the desert and the camels can be seen in silhouette against skyscrapers. Here as elsewhere around the Arabian Gulf, camel racing has become a sport where old traditions have taken on modern trappings, where the animal that once appeared in danger of losing its place in an ever-modernizing society is finding a vital new role. “Camels are in the same stage as horses. The only thing keeping them surviving is racing,” says Shaykh

Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, defense minister of Dubai, who has been instrumental in developing camel racing there. The modern sport, he explains, “gives them a modern value. And it gives them a future.” The camel had once provided most of life's necessities for desert nomads: It was a form of transportation, of course, a source of meat and milk, and provided hair to be woven into cloth for tents and storage bags. Its leather was made into sandals, buckets and watering-troughs and its sinews into bowstrings. Its dung was an excellent fuel and its urine had medicinal properties. Equally important, time was measured by the camel's pace and described in terms of its life cycle. Its

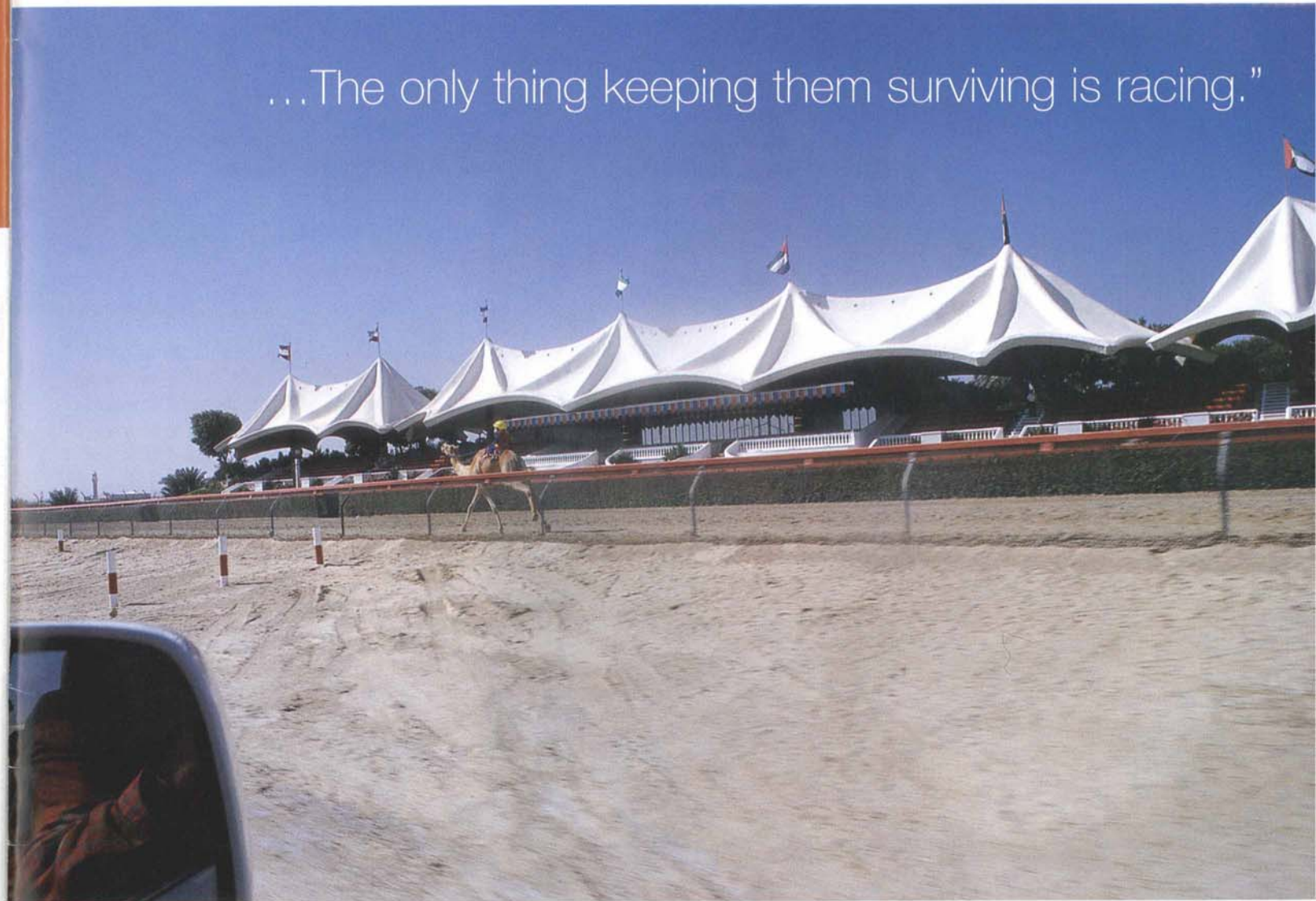
PREVIOUS SPREAD: CAROLINE PENNY / CORBIS; QUOTATION FROM THE SEVEN ODES: THE FIRST CHAPTER IN ARABIC LITERATURE, TRANSL. BY A. J. ARBERRY, © 1957 GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN, LTD.

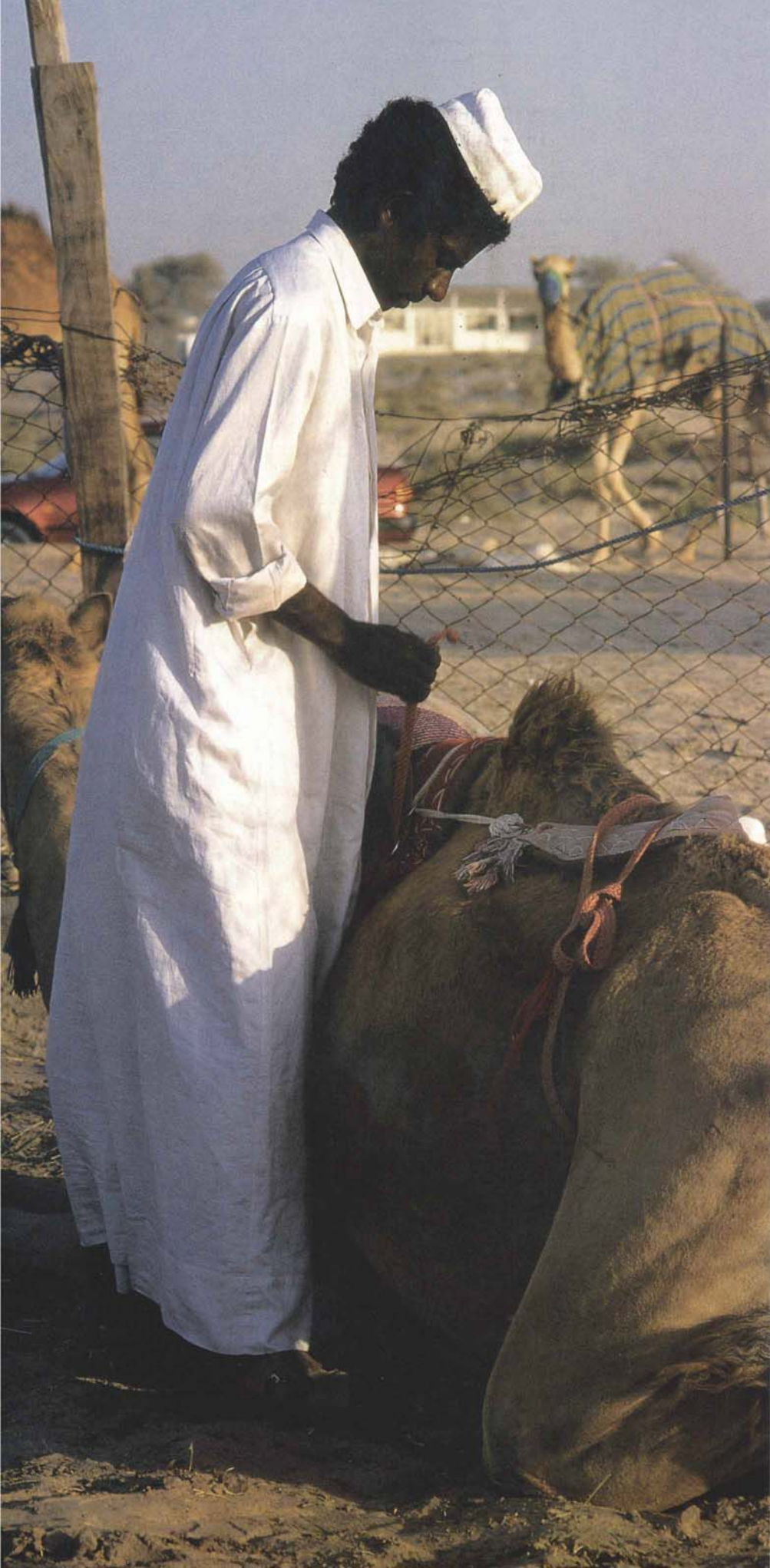
stride provided the meter for the *tagrud*, the marching song Bedouins used in order to artfully while away a long journey. Similarly, a poetic form called the *qasida*, a kind of paean' was originally composed while on camelback, and the poem typically reflected on the glorious ancestry of the camel as well as the honor of its owner. When camel races were held in the desert, *qasidas* were occasionally recited for the winners. And when he was a boy, Shaykh Mohammed once

recalled, his family had actually allowed a particularly favored camel to enter the house. By the 1960's, however, Shaykh Mohammed and many others in the region had recognized that the camel was becoming obsolete. New roads had cut through remote terrain where once only camels had trod, allowing cars and trucks to traverse the desert. Herders who once followed their goats and sheep from watering hole to watering hole on camelback could

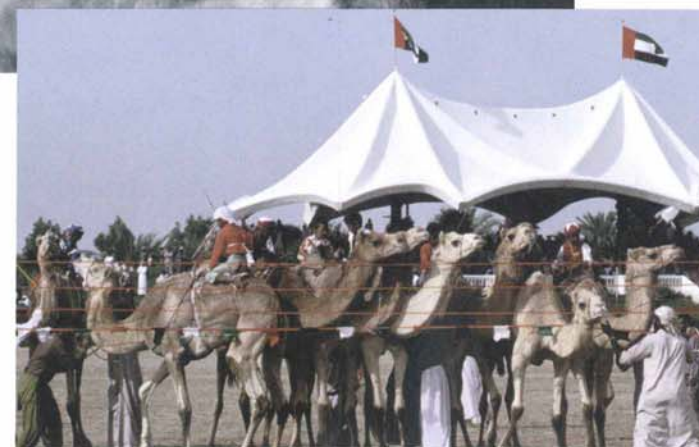
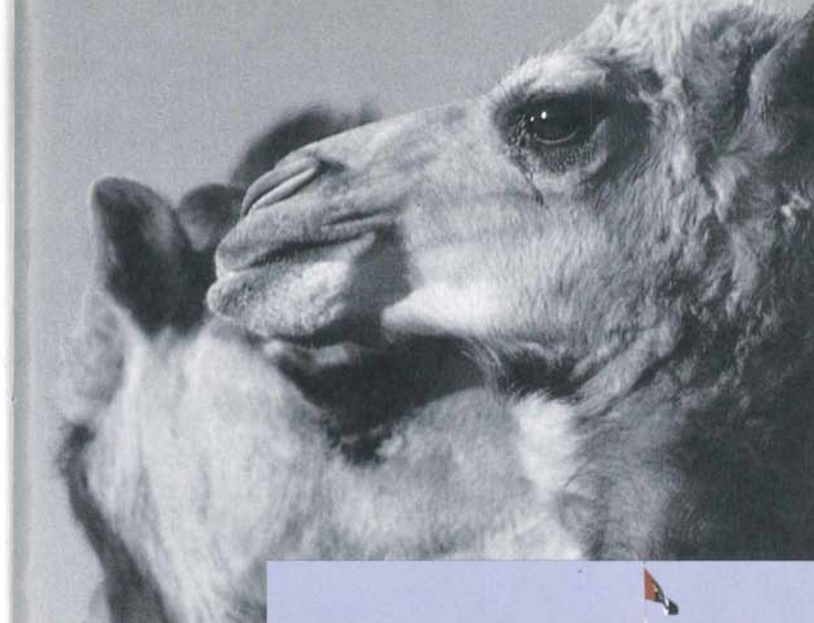
now settle down, for water and forage could be brought in by truck. Permanent homes replaced camel-hair tents. Around the same time, in Saudi Arabia, King Faisal ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz also noted the gradual disappearance of the camel from everyday life, and he endorsed camel racing as a means of maintaining the animal's place in the people's heritage. In 1964, Saudi Arabia sponsored the first major organized camel race in the region.

...The only thing keeping them surviving is racing.”





It took less than a decade for camel racing to become established in the UAE, and by 1990 there were 12 tracks around the country.



Held in the desert near al-Janadriya, now the site of the kingdom's annual heritage festival, the first race took place over a roughly marked 19-kilometer (12-mi) straightaway course in which hundreds of camels participated in a barely controlled stampede.

Over the next years, the sport began to spread around the Arabian Peninsula, with races held on similarly improvised straightaway desert courses. Sometimes the courses would be improved a bit by grading them with bulldozers, which left berms of sand on each side to mark the edges of the track. Since there were no grandstands, spectators would either look for a high dune or hop into a four-wheel-drive vehicle to follow the action alongside the racing camels.

LOWER: K. M. WESTERMANN / CORBIS

During the early 1980's, Shaykh Mohammed's involvement in international thoroughbred horse racing gave rise to the idea that camel racing might benefit from some of the more formal aspects of that sport. A permanent racetrack, he decided, should be among the first improvements. In 1983, once the site at Nad al-Shiba was chosen, he drove out to sketch, in the sand, the rough course of the track, driving his Range Rover in an oval. His chief engineer and crew followed, putting down stakes at frequent intervals. When the odometer indicated eight kilometers (4.8 mi), they stopped. The races would be run counter-clockwise, like thoroughbred races in the United States, but their length would be considerably greater, for the camel's forte is not so much speed as endurance. Most of the races

would be run at eight or 10 kilometers, although a shorter track was also created within the larger one. The new grandstand, constructed of sprayed concrete in the shape of a giant, billowing tent, allowed breezes to pass through, cooling the spectators under its broad shelter.

It took less than a decade for camel racing to become established all around the UAE, and races were generally held on Fridays over a three-month winter season. In late February or early March, the season culminated with big meets in Abu Dhabi and Dubai that featured special races for top camels. By 1990, when I saw my first camel races in Dubai, there were 12 camel tracks scattered around the UAE, and the sport had evolved a number of technical adaptations.

Camels, for example, were too big for the stalls of the standard starting gates used for horses, so engineers devised a starting line made of a retractable cable barrier. The animals lined up at the cable, up to 100 of them across this widest part of the track, and a compressed-air mechanism dropped the cable at the press of a button for a fair, even start. Camels also proved too tall for standard

ADAPTATION

The hump of a camel stores fat, not water, and thus a lean racing camel, opposite, shows little hump at all. Top: Camels are now bred for racing traits. Above: Camels don't fit into the starting gates used in horse racing, and so the starting line at Nad al-Shiba is defined by retractable cables, behind which as many as 100 camels may be positioned side by side.

Until recently, camel physiology was largely a mystery.

horse-track guardrails along the perimeters of the tracks, so those at Nad al-Shiba were raised about 30 centimeters (12") to help keep the animals on course. The rails were also redesigned to be more flexible than those used for horses, because camels unaccustomed to running within the confines of a track tended to gallop right into the rails.

Another adaptation was for the sake of the spectators. Because the camel tracks were so much longer than equine tracks, spectators in the grandstand found it impossible to follow the action all the way around, even with binoculars. So a road was constructed along the outer rail of the track from which remote-broadcast trucks could televise the entire race. The road was also convenient for trainers, who could monitor their animals at close quarters, riding in buses or four-wheel-drive vehicles alongside their entries. The trainers used walkie-talkies to communicate with their jockeys—generally boys of slight build, about 10 or 12 years old—and to give instructions as they devised strategy from the grandstand or from their vehicle. And to make sure the riders stayed on the camels, the jockeys had Velcro patches stitched to the rumps of their trousers that stuck to corresponding patches stitched onto the camels' blanket-style saddles, just behind the hump.

The humps themselves were not a problem for the jockeys: Because camels' humps store fat—not water—lean, streamlined racing camels have very small, almost vestigial, humps. Compared to an ordinary, run-of-the-desert camel, a racing camel looks like

an enormous over-tall greyhound.

This tendency to leanness became more pronounced as, over the years, the animals were selectively bred for racing qualities. Shaykh Mohammed and his brother Hamdan bin Rashid al Maktoum funded research to improve camel breeding as well as racing performance. Until recently, camel physiology has been largely a mystery, from the animal's extraordinary tolerance of heat and its ability to survive on little water, to its reproductive peculiarities. To allow their top camels to reproduce more prolifically, camel owners were

eager to develop scientific breeding programs that would take advantage of modern techniques of artificial insemination and embryo transfer. By the early 1990's, camel racing was beginning to yield its first superstars. Most were females, since males tend to accumulate bulk as they mature and are thus slower, overall, than females.

While some observers feel that the long distance of the camel races eliminates the high drama that characterizes thoroughbred racing, I rather enjoy the

way the action unwinds over a longer period of time. A typical horse race is all crescendo and climax; the camel race, it seems to me, is more like a fugue, building up energy over time with minor modulations and subtle variations. The rhythm of the camel races often seems to follow the repetitive esthetic that informs many of the artistic and architectural forms of Islamic culture. Like a tapestry, a building façade, a musical composition or a long folk tale, a camel race unfolds to fill out, almost evenly, a physical space and time. When the races are televised, the broadcasters sometimes forego live commentary in favor of a soundtrack of traditional Bedouin camel songs, which adds a hypnotic rhythm to the action and also links the moment to the past. This sense of history is amplified further when the races are followed, in some cases, by new, original *qasidas*.

Some races, of course, have more drama than others. I had been particularly fortunate in 1990 to witness a splendid race for older camels in which one of the competitors was a camel named Mahna, owned by Shaykh Mohammed. Mahna, who was then seven years old, was unbeaten in five years of racing, and had been

entered in the Gold Cup, the culmination of the big three-day meet at the end of the season, the Grand Camel Races.

Mahna, as Shaykh Mohammed explained at the time, had been bred from a line of fast, light-boned camels. "Her line was bred to save lives," he said. "The Bedouins used to breed a line of camels to be fast, to be able to run away from danger or to attack." She was descended from two sires whose bloodlines had been particularly treasured by local camel men. "All the poets talk about these lines," said Shaykh Mohammed.

From the beginning of the race, it was clear that Mahna was born to run. She was a true *Camelus dromedarius*, in the sense that the species name derives from the Greek words for "running" and "racecourse." Breaking away from the tightly packed group of 18 other camels, Mahna bounded to the lead, gliding along flu-

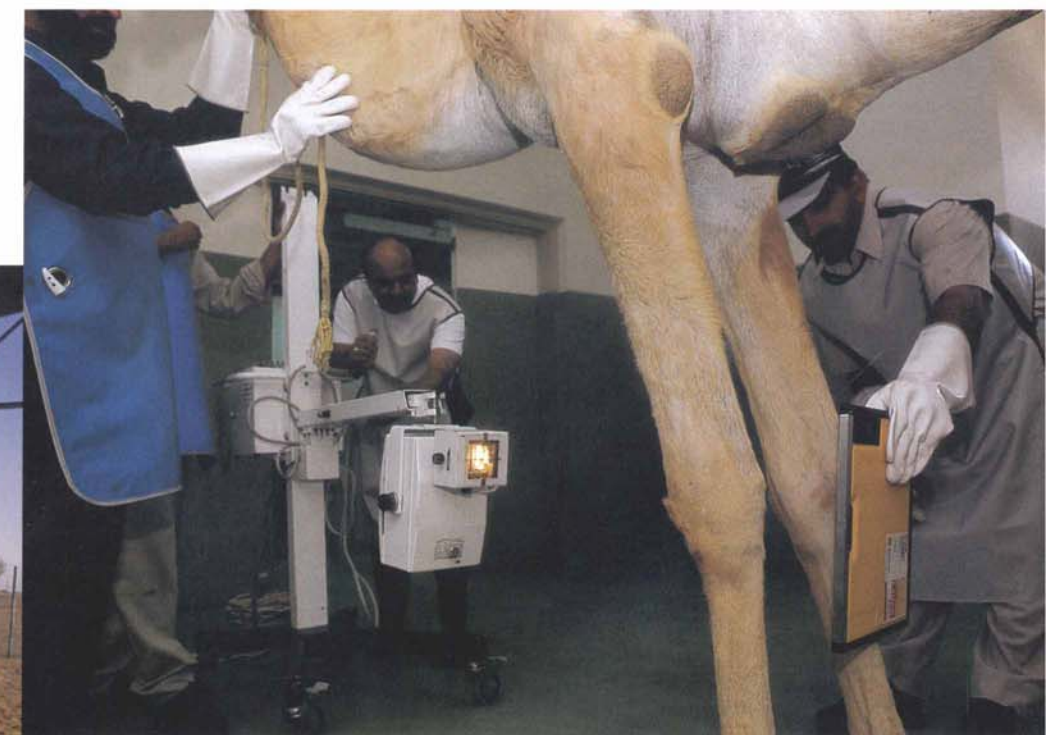
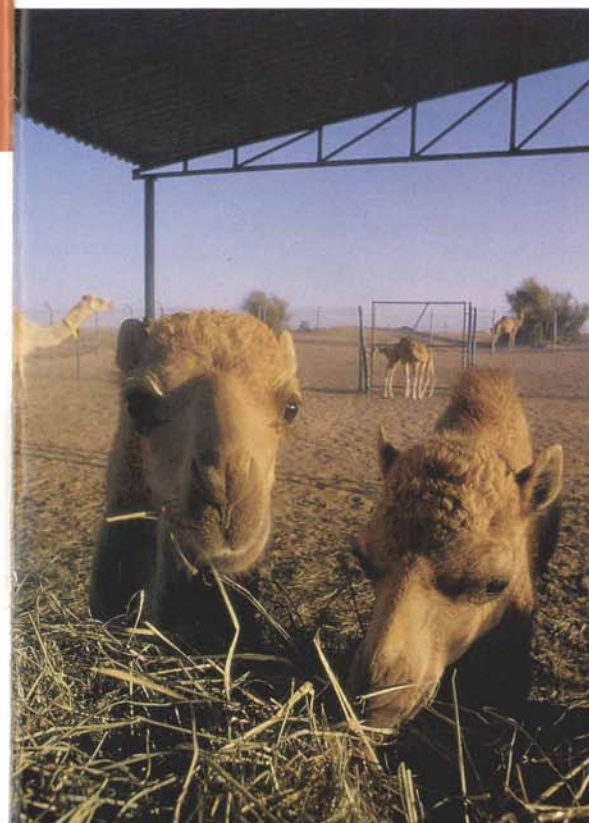
idly. Her action seemed effortless by comparison to many of the other camels I had observed during the meet. One challenger after another came up alongside, only to gradually wilt and fall back. As she approached the top of the final stretch, her lead continued to widen, and she crossed the finish line in a record time. She had covered the 10 kilometers in 17 minutes and 58 seconds. Like a winning thoroughbred, Mahna represented the quintessence of her breed, an animal whose natural strengths had been refined and directed to a specific, new goal: Not just survival, but victory. Watching her run, I realized that while modern camel racing had been established for practical and symbolic reasons, it had begun to take on its own momentum.

When I returned to Dubai recently, I found that camel racing has continued to grow and develop, and that research into the

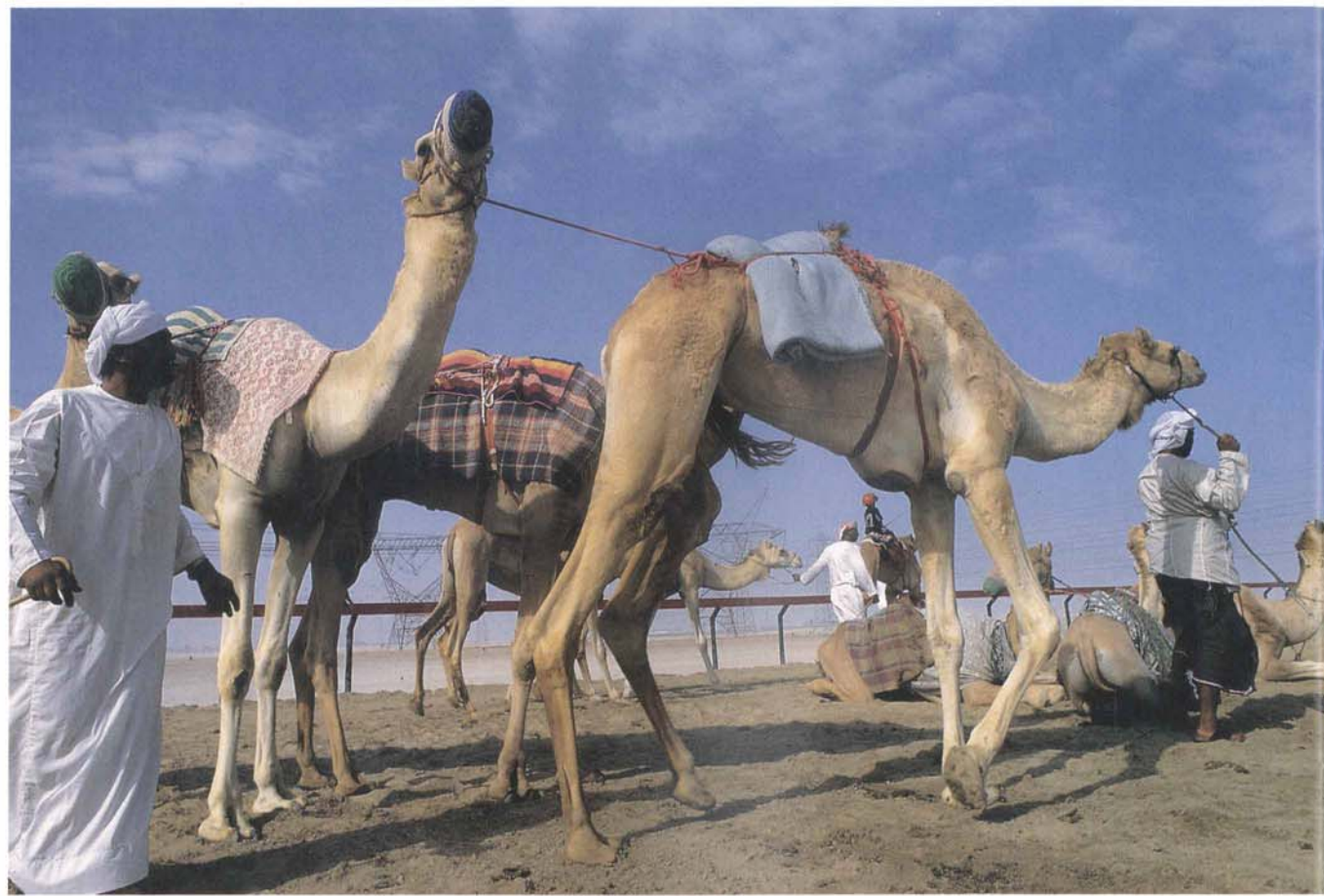


RESEARCH

Advances in artificial insemination and embryo transfer at the Camel Reproduction Center mean that a top racing camel—always a female, as males grow too bulky with age—can be bred without interruption to her career. Opposite: The offspring are raised at the Center on a racer's diet. Opposite, right: A racer's right front knee is x-rayed at the Dubai Camel Hospital.



Mahna represented the quintessence of her breed.



The camel is racing its way around a kind of historical circle,

from necessity to sport, and back again to necessity.



NECESSITY

In parts of the world such as Africa's Sahel, where camels are still crucial to subsistence, the improvement of genetic stocks resulting from research carried out in the UAE is of direct benefit to people.

camel's physiology has progressed. "Racing has become more popular and more commercial," says Dr. Ahmed Billah, veterinary consultant to Shaykh Mohammed. Billah has helped oversee the shaykh's racing operation for more than a decade. "It is as much an industry now as a sport. There are more tracks, more races, more prizes, and more camels. It is more competitive now." There is a greater variety of distances in the races, too, he says, although most are still quite long. The racing season now spans November to March, and besides the 14 major tracks in the UAE as a whole, many towns and villages have built their own local tracks, where the degree of informality varies greatly.

Microchips, too, have become part of the sport. Inserted into the ears or necks of all racing camels, they allow easy identification, help owners and race recorders keep proper records, and ensure that no "ringers"—accomplished camels disguised as newcom-

ers—can be entered in the races. The chips also help the researchers keep track of the performance of animals of different pedigrees to determine which bloodlines are best suited for racing. And now racing camels, like thoroughbreds, are tested for illegal drugs following the races.

More surprising than such technical innovations is the astonishing improvement in race times. In just the past year, says Billah, Mahna's former record has been surpassed by a large margin. In the Gold Cup that was recently run at Nad al-Shiba, the winning camel covered the 10 kilometers in 17 minutes and seven seconds. "In the racing world, 51 seconds is a huge difference," he says.

I was glad to learn, however, that despite such advances, Mahna has not been forgotten. "Every camel that is a champion, her memory stays," says Billah. "There are pictures in the house and sweet memories of the best camels." And then, of course, there are

Mahna's offspring—although so far, Billah says, Mahna has not yet produced a champion to equal her own achievements.

Billah attributes the improvements in race times to training and breeding. "Overall, there are better training regimes, more competition, better feeding," he says. The emphasis on pedigree, he adds, is beginning to pay off. Already, top camels like Mahna do not have to wait for retirement to begin breeding. With the use of modern techniques, they can have their fertilized eggs transferred to surrogate mothers for gestation while they keep on racing.

In order to learn more about breeding improvements, I talked with Lulu Skidmore, another of Shaykh Mohammed's camel consultants, who heads the Camel Reproduction Center at Nakhlee, southeast of Dubai City. Skidmore has been working in Dubai for nine years now on such techniques as artificial insemination and embryo

transfer. One of the main advances made at the Reproduction Center, she says, is learning how to "super-ovulate" the top female camels like Mahna to produce more than one egg at a time, all of which can be fertilized, flushed out of the mother's uterus, and transplanted into the wombs of non-racing camels. "Just learning the camel's basic reproductive cycle," she says, "has been a challenge, because so little was known."

Similarly, the veterinarians and researchers at the Dubai Camel Hospital, a state-of-the-art facility located across from the Nad al-Shiba track, have often had to start from scratch in their attempts to diagnose the problems and diseases of racing camels. "The camels are always teaching me," says Dr. Jahangir Akbar, who heads research at the hospital, where

the operating tables have been modified to accommodate the camel's hump. "Every day there is a new disease, a new problem, and books are not very much help." Often, he says, he and his colleagues begin their research with information gleaned from horses or cows, which they then adapt as best they can to the camel. However, Akbar says he tries to keep treatments simple, so they can be applied by trainers and camel workers in situations far removed from the hospital. "God has made a creature to survive in the rough conditions of the desert," says Akbar. "As much as we can, we try to make things as normal as they are in the desert."

It is not just local camel trainers, however, who have benefited from the work done by Skidmore and Akbar. As a result of research at the hospital and the reproduction center, the UAE has become a nexus of international camel research, a place where experts come from other countries to learn about the latest developments in disease prevention and cure and in fertilization techniques. Camels, observes Lulu Skidmore, can be selectively bred for traits other than speed and racing prowess. The research in the UAE can thus be used, she says, for improving genetic stocks among camels elsewhere in the world, particularly in places where the animal is still crucial to survival, such as Mauritania and the Sudan. "Camel research isn't just for racing anymore," says Skidmore.

Though the racing camel is becoming more and more a luxury and a nostalgic symbol of the Arabian past, the research that it inspires is becoming more important in other parts of the world where the camel still does what camels have always done—help

people survive in the desert. In a way, then, the camel is racing its way around a kind of historical circle, from necessity to sport, and back again to necessity. 🌐



Carol Flake Chapman is a free-lancer living in Austin, Texas who writes frequently about camels and horses. In 1990 she wrote a *qasida* for the camel Mahna on the occasion of Mahna's victory in the Gold Cup in Dubai, and read the poem on UAE television after the race.

Lorraine Chittock (cats@camels.com) rode with Sudanese camel caravaneers to produce her 1996 book *Shadows in the Sand*. She lives in Nairobi, in a house overlooking a game preserve.



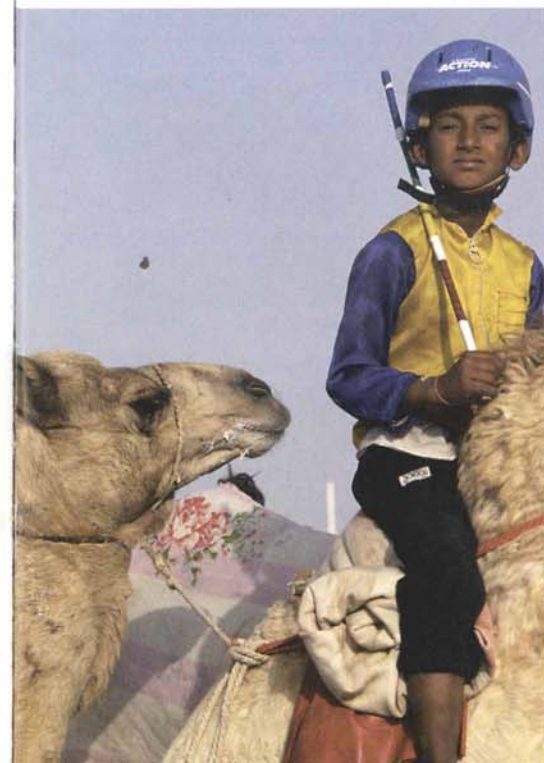
Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

Heritage festival at al-Janadriya: J/F99, S/O85

Camels: S/O97, J/F88, M/A81, M/I73

Bedouin settlement: N/D97

Thoroughbred racing in Dubai: J/A96



OPPOSITE, LOWER: CAROLINE PENN / CORBIS



Treasury of the World: Jewelled Arts of India in the Age of the Mughals

displays some 300 pieces dating from the mid-16th to the early 18th century from the collection of Shaykh Nasser al-Sabah and Shaykha Hussa al-Sabah of Kuwait. In addition to earrings, pendants and bracelets, the show also features a superb collection of daggers with jewel-encrusted scabbards and hilts, as well as bejeweled boxes, cups and gaming pieces. Most of the objects in the exhibition belonged to men, and the elaborately jeweled daggers and swords were entirely functional. One of the highlights of the exhibition is the collection of relief-carved hardstones, including nine Colombian emeralds weighing from 17 to 235 carats. More than 20 of the carved stones display royal inscriptions, the most exceptional being the 249.3-carat spinel ruby known as "The Talisman of the Throne," whose provenance can be traced from the Peacock Throne back to Shah 'Abbas the Great of Iran, whose name is inscribed on it. The exhibition also examines Mughal techniques such as the characteristic *kundan* method of setting stones in pure gold fused at room temperature, gold inlaying of hardstones, and enameling. British Museum, London, May 18 through September 2.

Clockwise: Cameo portrait of Emperor Shah Jahan, 17th c. Gold pendant, set with diamonds, rubies and emeralds, with emerald bead, late 16th-early 17th c. Pistol-grip dagger and scabbard, jade hilt and scabbard fittings inlaid with gold and set with diamonds, rubies and emeralds, mid-17th c. Turban ornament, gold, set with emeralds and diamonds, second half 17th c. Horse-headed dagger-hilt, rock crystal inlaid with gold in *kundan* technique, set with rubies, emeralds and banded agate, late 16th-early 17th c.

Teaching About the Arab World and Islam is the theme of teacher workshops co-sponsored by the Middle East Policy Council in Washington, D.C., and conducted by Arab World And Islamic Resources and School Services (AWAIR) of Berkeley, California. The program is fully funded and workshops can be requested by any school, district, office of education or university. Information: 510-704-0517, awair@igc.apc.org. Sites and dates scheduled include: **Ann Arbor, Michigan**, May 11-12; **Boulder, Colorado**, May 15-16; **West Palm Beach, Florida**, June 21-22.

Lehnert and Landrock in Palestine, 1924-1930 is a selection of 36 black-and-white photographs portraying the mosques, churches, temples, landscapes and people of Palestine. The prints were made from the original glass plates, found in 1982 by Edouard Lambelet, Landrock's grandson-in-law and owner of the legendary Lehnert and Landrock bookstore in Cairo. Sony Gallery, American University in **Cairo**, May 14 through June 28.

Agatha Christie and the East: Criminology and Archeology traces those two strands in the life of the "Queen of Crime," displaying diaries; hitherto unpublished photographs of Christie and her husband, archeologist Max Mallowan; more than 200 artifacts from his excavations in Iraq and Syria; and a compartment from the Orient Express. The exhibition emphasizes Christie's participation in the digs as restorer and photographer. Vorderasiatisches Museum, **Berlin**, May 18 through August 26.

The Arabs: An American Story highlights the history and culture of Atlanta's Arab-American community—more than 15,000 strong—through cultural artifacts and works of art from the local community. Atlanta International Museum of Art and Design, May 18 through August 24.

The Mosque is a 2½-hour workshop whose participants will use models, photographs and the museum's collection to study the architecture and decoration of mosques. Information: +33-1-4020-5209, +33-1-4020-5263. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, May 19 (2:15 p.m.) and June 9 (10:00 a.m.).

The Egyptian Temple: Rites and Architecture is a 2½-hour workshop that uses slides, models and simulations to discuss ancient architects' solutions to the problems of temple construction, focusing particularly on Medinet Habou. Information: +33-1-4020-5209, +33-1-4020-5263. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, May 19 (2:15 p.m.), June 20 (6:30 p.m.) and July 4 (6:30 p.m.).

Gold from Africa presents Ashanti royal gold jewelry, insignia and ceremonial objects, as well as everyday jewelry, from Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. The clarity, simplicity and elegance of the pieces, from a private collection, show a surprising affinity to modern jewelry design, though most of the more than 200 objects on display were created in the last 150 years and one piece dates back 400 years. Photos, cultural material and audiovisual aids provide context. Neue Galerie der Stadt **Linz**, Austria, May 20 through September 30.

Guadamecí: White Leather Embossings by Jorge Centofanti. Embossed mural hangings of a uniquely soft, white sheepskin are an art form that began in Córdoba in Arab Spain in the ninth century, but has been virtually forgotten in modern times. During the past 30 years, however, Argentinian-born Jorge Centofanti has worked in Britain to revive *guadamecí*, so-called after the town Ghadames in Libya, which was known for its production of alum-tanned goatskin. Centofanti exhibits 20 hangings, made using his own original molds that present stories, Arabic calligraphy and symbolic and decorative themes. Canning House, Belgrave Square, **London**, May 21 through June 1.

The Desert is a journey into deserts around the globe, as shown in the works of ten contemporary artists and in vintage pictures, photographs and films. Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, **Seville**, May 22 through July 22.

Current Archeological Research. The 35 lectures in this series, which runs through June 2001, concern discoveries and scholarship in the Middle East and western Asia. Each is presented at noon by a speaker intimately involved in the work under discussion.

- May 23: P. de Miroschedji, "Excavations at Gaza"
- June 7: K. Mysliwiec, "Fefi, a Mysterious Vezir" (Saqqara)
- June 8: F. Villeneuve, "Khirbet Darih (Jordan): A Nabataean City"
- June 21: K. Kohlmeyer, "Archeological Exploration of the Citadel of Aleppo"
- June 22: M. Kervran, "Sehwan Sharif, an Indus City from the Kushan to the Islamic Era" Information: +33-1-4020-5317 or www.louvre.fr. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**.

Dancing on Common Ground: Tradition and Innovation is the theme of the Second International Conference on Middle Eastern Dance, which offers an academic symposium, workshops, and performances by Nagwa Fouad, Mohammed Khalil, Farida Fahmy and others. Information: 714-432-5880, www.occ.cccd.edu/comed/Pages/mideast.html. Orange Coast College, **Costa Mesa, California**, May 25-28.

On the Surface: Late Nineteenth Century Decorative Arts reveals the influence of Orientalism on the surface ornamentation that was so important to the late Victorian era, the aesthetic movement and the early arts-and-crafts movement in America. Designers "embraced perceptions of the 'exotic'" and drew inspiration from Persian, Islamic, Japanese and Greek traditions. On display are tables, chairs and other furniture items, wall-paper, carpets, upholstery, ceramics, porcelain and silverwork—all covered with intricate arabesque marquetry and inlays or embellished with floral or neo-pharaonic patterns. Catalogue. Mint Museum of Art, **Charlotte, North Carolina**, May 26 through August 12.

Gold of the Nomads: Scythian Treasures from Ancient Ukraine presents 165 of the finest gold objects from Scythian graves and burial mounds, many in the "animal style" associated with the Central Asian steppes, and many excavated since 1975 and thus never before exhibited in the United States. The Scythians were a nomadic people who originated in Central Asia in the early first millennium BC and flourished in what is now Ukraine from the fifth to the third century BC. Their arms, horse trappings and other artifacts show Near Eastern and Greek influence, and recently excavated items are causing a reevaluation of the interrelationships among the Aegean world, the Near East, and Central Asia as far east as Mongolia. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, **Kansas City [Missouri]**, May 27 through August 11; Grand Palais, **Paris**, September 25 through December 31.

The Eternal Image: Egyptian Art from the British Museum is the first loan ever of some 150 pieces that span 3000 years of Egyptian history, from a tiny royal portrait in carved ivory to the colossal granite statue of Seti II. Included also are rare wooden sculptures and papyrus paintings. Toledo [Ohio] Museum of Art, through May 27.

Nomad Architecture of the Mediterranean Region presents some 50 items from the collection of Arnaud Maurières and Eric Ossart, who maintain that there is an underlying pan-Mediterranean identity that links them regardless of their exact origin. The tents are organized into five sub-regional groups and accompanied by photographs. Technical analyses of the textiles are included. Catalogue (Spanish and Catalan). Centro de Documentació i Museu Tèxtil, **Terrassa (Barcelona), Spain**, through May 27.

Jerusalem shows lithographs of the city by the renowned early-19th-century artist David Roberts along with contemporary artifacts and symbols of the three faiths that call the city holy. Kirkpatrick Library, Central Missouri State University, **Warrensburg**, through May 30.

50 Years of Aramco World presents 76 photographs that reflect both the magazine's own history as well as the cultural and geographical diversity of

its coverage. Information: 806-742-2974. International Cultural Center at Texas Tech University, **Lubbock**, through June 1. Arab Cultural Festival, **Seattle Center**, July 14-15. University of Washington, **Seattle**, July 27 through August 17.

The Papyrus of Teferouaset: A "Book About What Exists in the Beyond" Written for a Singer of Amon. An intensely focused commentary, explication and decoding of this single papyrus, which dates from between the 11th and eighth centuries BC, by a member of the museum's Egyptology staff. The document was produced by the Temple of Karnak, the all-powerful institution that ruled Egypt, overshadowing the titular Pharaoh, from around 1069 BC onward. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, June 1, 12:30 p.m.

Cairo Carnivale is an annual celebration of music, dance, and cuisine from the Near and Middle East sponsored by the Middle Eastern Culture and Dance Association. Information: www.mecca.org. Rio Hondo College, **Whittier, California**, June 2 and 3.

Contemporary Iranian Art spans the last 40 years, before and after the 1979 revolution, showing work by both expatriate and in-country artists. The media include painting, video, photography and installations; the styles range from calligraphic or abstract to figurative. The exhibition takes as its starting point a moment in the early 1960's when Iranian artists, fully acquainted with Western art, sought inspiration from their own rich cultural heritage to produce distinctive forms of modern art. More recent works by a younger generation explore the tension between modernism and tradition, or look at the paradoxes of contemporary life. The exhibition includes works from private and public collections in and outside Iran, with a substantial group of paintings from the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. Barbican Centre, **London**, through June 3.

Antioch: The Lost Ancient City presents a great city enlivened with the sights and activities of daily life in the second through sixth centuries, revealing the inhabitants' public and private lives. A variety of mosaics, sculpture, frescoes, glass, metalwork, pottery, coins and weights are displayed in their architectural and cultural contexts. The exhibition consists of approximately 160 objects, including some of the finest examples of mosaics from Antioch; it evokes the luxury of the domestic settings of the elite as well as the street life of a polyglot metropolis. Catalogue. Cleveland [Ohio] Museum of Art, through June 3. Baltimore Museum of Art, Sept 16 through December 30.

Antoin Sevruguin and the Persian Image offers a pictorial record of the social history and visual culture of Iran, displaying 50 photographs grouped thematically. Sevruguin, one of the great 19th-century photographers and a visual interpreter between East and West, ran a successful commercial studio in Tehran from the late 1850's until 1934. Sackler Museum, **Harvard University**, through June 10.

Old Photographs of Beirut. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, through June 10.

Syria, Land of Civilizations assembles more than 400 cultural treasures—some never before seen abroad—to present one of the world's oldest cultural centers and explore some of the seminal events that took place there. Mesopotamia, the palace of Mari, the most ancient forms of writing and the earliest evidence of farming, Queen Zenobia and her oasis city of Palmyra, the first great Islamic dynasty in Damascus—all are parts of Syria's legacy. The exhibition also highlights the West's intellectual and scientific ties to Syria. Catalogue. A concurrent exhibition, **Contemporary Syria**, explores everyday life, particularly from the perspective of young people. Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum and Planetarium, **San Jose, California**, June 13 through September 2; American Museum of Natural History, **New York**, October 10 through January 6, 2002.

Pamela Singh, Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, Ketaki Sheth: Three Contemporary Indian Photographers present work including a Bombay tapestry woven of portraits of workers, commuters, street-vendors and school-children; images of Angkor Wat; and photographs taken with a Holga camera, a Chinese-made toy camera prized for its eccentric focus, light flares and vignetting. Sepia International and the Alkazi Collection of Photography, **New York**, through June 16.

Princess Salme—Behind the Veil: The Life and Writings of Sayyida Salme, Writer and Teacher, 1884-1924 explores the extraordinary life of the daughter of the first Omani sultan of Zanzibar. The only personally identified woman in the 19th-century Zanzibari court, Salme broke tradition by secretly teaching herself to write. She traveled in Aden, Syria and Europe, and her ethnographic commentary on 19th-century Europe provides a unique non-European, female perspective. Her writings celebrate her Omani heritage, describe her struggles as a pawn in the diplomatic battles of the time over world trade and the colonization of Africa; and evoke her life as a German citizen during the Franco-Prussian War and World War I. The exhibition displays this pioneering woman's personal possessions, writings and photography, which reveal the rich cultural heritage of Zanzibar, her strong cross-cultural awareness, and her visionary opinions on health care, literacy and education for women. Brunel Gallery, **London**, through June 22.

Caucasian Peoples include Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Georgians and dozens of smaller groups living in remote valleys and mountains between the Black and Caspian Seas. This exhibit, organized in collaboration with the Russian Ethnographic Museum, displays over 850 items, including some from the collection of the Romanovs, which reveal the cultural diversity of the nomadic and settled peoples from the Caucasus and the Crimea. Catalogue. Hessenhuis Museum, **Antwerp**, through June 24.

Treasures of the Golden Horde is a collection of more than 1000 objects spanning the 13th to the 15th centuries and created in the Golden Horde Khanate, the state founded on the western frontier of the former empire of Genghis Khan after his death. The khanate was a combination of nomadic and settled peoples: Mongols, Persians, Polovtsi (Kumans), Volga Bulgarians, Slavs and others. The exhibition features artifacts of gold, silver and other metals, such as bowls, warrior's belts, goblets, horse harnesses, coins, jewelry, breastplates, prayer-book cases and *p'aitzu'*: documents inscribed on metal plates intended to be carried by horse-mounted messengers, but also given by a ruler to honor the recipient. The objects reflect the wide-ranging trade of the khanate with China, northern India, Iran, Asia Minor, Yemen, the Levant and Italy. Catalogue. Hermitage, **St. Petersburg, Russia**, through June 24.

Ancient Astronomy. A seminar on Babylonian and Egyptian astronomy and its mathematical background. Information: +44-20-7323-8382. British Museum, **London**, June 25 through 27.

Sites Along the Nile: Rescuing Ancient Egypt is an exhibition of nearly 600 objects dating from 5000 BC to the seventh century of our era. The artifacts were rescued from looting and flooding by archeological excavation, making this collection a world-class resource. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, **Berkeley, California**, through June 30.

Moons presents the development of human understanding of our satellite, from its first observations to its physical exploration, and explores the many varying representations and explanations of the Moon put forward by ancient and contemporary belief systems. More than 250 objects are displayed, including such scientific ones as instruments and maps and cultural ones such as statuettes, instruments of divination and votive carvings. Photographs, books, interactive displays and film clips present other faces of the Moon. Musée d'Histoire Naturelle, **Lyon, France**, through July 1.

Gold of the Avars presents over 1200 archaeological finds from the civilization of this nomadic central Asian equestrian people, dating from their arrival in Europe in the mid-sixth century to the end of the eighth Century. Castello Sforzesco, **Milan**, through July 1.

The Glory of Ancient Egypt's Civilization displays more than 123 objects selected from the inexhaustible collection of the Egyptian Museum of Cairo and the Luxor Museum. Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art, **Sapporo**, through July 1; Matsuzakaya Arts Museum, **Nagoya**, August through September 9; Niigata Prefectural Museum, September 18 through October 23; Sogo Art Museum, **Yokohama**, November 8 through December 10.

Tutankhamun's Wardrobe is a reconstruction of the fabrics and clothing found in the tomb of the boy-king. Royal Museum of Scotland, **Edinburgh**, through July 1.

Reeds & Wool: Patterned Screens of Central Asia features 19th- and 20th-century screens made by nomadic Kyrgyz women as traditional furnishings for a yurt dwelling. Motifs of Kyrgyz reed screens are similar to patterns seen on flatwoven kilims, mosaic felt rugs, and silk *ikat* fabrics, but are made by wrapping unspun dyed wool around the long stems of *chiy*, a slender, stiff grass native to Central Asia. Headley-Whitney Museum, **Lexington, Kentucky**, July 8 through September 16.

Empire of the Sultans: Ottoman Art from the Khalili Collection explores the influence of the Ottoman sultans over affairs of state and religion with displays of calligraphy, Qur'ans, manuscripts, arms and armor, metalwork, ceramics, textiles and scientific instruments from the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art. Catalogue. Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, **New York**, through July 8; Asian Art Museum of **San Francisco**, July 28 through October 7; Bruce Museum, **Greenwich, Connecticut**, October 27 through January 27, 2002.

The Unknown Paradise: Archaeological Treasures from Bahrain presents nearly 600 objects outlining 4500 years of the history of this past and present center of international trade in the Arabian Gulf. As the bronze-age commercial link among the civilizations of the Indus, Oman and Mesopotamia, Bahrain was the home of the rich and sophisticated Dilmun civilization (2100–1700 BC), whose most important trading commodity was copper. Bahrain enjoyed another, less well-known florescence at the intersection of Hellenic and Parthian culture (300 BC–AD 600), when it was known as Tylos. Landesmuseum für Vorgeschichte, **Dresden**, through July 8.

Asia: The Steppe Route: From Alexander the Great to Genghis Khan displays masterworks of gold and silk traded along the 7000-kilometer length of the Silk Road and preserved in two

Islamic Moorish Spain: Its Legacy to Europe and the West

is the inaugural exhibition of the International Museum of Muslim Cultures, which seeks to illustrate the contribution of Muslims to the development of Mississippi, the South, the United States and the world. It explores the brilliant age of Muslim rule in Spain and Portugal from the eighth to the 15th century, when modern Andalusia was the Islamic province of al-Andalus. Under Muslim rule, an extraordinary mixture of Muslim, Christian and Jewish peoples and cultures flourished in such centers of art and learning as Cordoba and Granada. Their contributions to philosophy, science, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, agriculture, commerce, architecture and the arts were the sparks that kindled the Renaissance in Europe. Islamic Spain's vibrant legacy of tolerance and intellectual achievement is examined through a variety of media: film, art, architectural design, portraiture, maps, agricultural displays and music. In conjunction with the exhibit, the museum is offering a combination teacher-training workshop and live music performance project, designed to educate teachers about this cultural and scientific heritage. Workshops are scheduled for the University of Southern Mississippi and Jackson State University. Information: 601-960-0440, www.muslimmuseum.org. International Museum of Muslim Cultures, **Jackson, Mississippi**, April 15 through October 31.



important collections at either end of the great trade route: the Hermitage in St. Petersburg and the Academy of Sciences in Ulan Bator—including recently excavated items from Inner Mongolia. The exhibition demonstrates the diversity and richness of the Silk Road civilizations, the interactions among them, and the fruitful diffusion of art among European and Asian peoples from the second century BC to the eighth century of our era. Fundación La Caixa, **Madrid**, through July 15.

Strokes of Genius: Contemporary Iraqi Art shows 55 works in varied media, selected by an intercultural curatorial panel and created by 34 Iraqi artists living in that country and in more than a dozen countries abroad. The 34 are among 150 artists, many of them young, who have contributed over five years to produce a book, website and traveling exhibition that highlights both historical roots and contemporary experiences. The book (of the same title) will use reproductions, interviews, essays and biographical sketches to impart a broad understanding of Iraqi art in recent decades. It will be published in September by Saqi Books (ISBN 0-86356-563-8, £17.95 hb). Information: www.strokes-of-genius.com. Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, **Exeter University**, through July 20; Horbath Galleries, **Bath**, August 8 through September 13; Egee Art Consultancy, **London**, October 17 through November 3.

The Strange and the Wonderful in the Lands of Islam evokes the creations of the imagination in the Islamic world, sometimes shared with the West or with China: cosmography, fabulous beasts, fantasy literature, divination and magic. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, through July 23.

The Gods of Ancient Memphis showcases 118 works of Egyptian art including metal and stone statues and statuettes, reliefs, stelae, amulets and jewelry, some never before publicly displayed, some excavated at the site of the ancient Egyptian capital, Memphis. The exhibition presents a lively and multifaceted image of the sacred

world of the Egyptians, and includes among its outreach programs a "scribe's school" that teaches hieroglyphic writing, children's workshops and public lectures. Art Museum of the University of **Memphis, Tennessee**, July 28 through October 4.

Gold: The Mystery of the Sarmatians and the Scythians. Between 1986 and 1990 superb gold and silver objects dating from the fifth to the fourth centuries BC were excavated from burial mounds at Filipovka, a village on the open steppe in the southern Ural Mountains. The Eurasian steppes were inhabited by nomadic tribes during the first millennium BC, and this rich exhibition displays the zoomorphic archaeological treasures from Filipovka in their proper historical and cultural context. The finds, all on loan from St. Petersburg's Hermitage Museum, constitute a new chapter in the history of nomadic art of the steppes. Palazzo Reale, **Milan**, and Scuderie del Castello di Miramare, **Trieste**, through July 29.

From Head to Toe: Selections from the Costume Collection features garments from around the globe: Indian saris and *kom*, Chinese robes, Indonesian sarongs, Central Asian *ikat* robes, as well as three centuries of Japanese kimonos contrasted with four centuries of fashionable Western dress. Boston Museum of Fine Arts, through July 29.

Cleopatra of Egypt: From History to Myth looks at the real-life reign of Cleopatra VII, last of the Ptolemaic line to rule in Egypt, whose liaisons with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, and her suicide in 30 BC upon Octavian's capture of Egypt, have made her an object of fascination ever since. Of Macedonian descent, she was the only ruler of her house to learn the Egyptian language and sacred iconography, and she used them skillfully to political advantage. The exhibit traces representations of her from her own time to the present day. British Museum, **London**, through August 26.

The Pharaoh's Photographer: Harry Burton, Tutankhamun, and the Metropolitan's Egyptian Expedition displays some 60 photographs taken between 1906 and 1936 by members of the Metropolitan Museum's Egyptian Expedition. The exhibition presents these images both in their context as important documents of the museum's excavations and as works of artistic merit that deserve a place in the history of photography. Most are by Harry Burton (1879–1940), the outstanding archeological photographer of his day, who was hired by the museum to photograph the monu-

ments at Thebes. The exhibition covers all phases of Burton's work in Egypt, including selections from his Tutankhamun portfolio and film footage dating to the early 1920's. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, September 11 through December 30.

Women of the Nile explores the essential role of women and their variety of responsibilities in the four primary aspects of Egyptian life: in the home, the temple, the palace and the afterlife. Denos Museum Center, **Traverse City, Michigan** through September 19; Muscarelle Museum of Art, William and Mary, **Williamsburg, Virginia**, October 13 through January 13, 2002.

Ancient Egyptian Records: A Study at Christ's College, Cambridge is a series of four lectures on early rock art, pyramid texts, tomb reliefs and Coptic manuscripts in aid of the Coptic Manuscripts Conservation Project. Cambridge University, **England**, September 22.

Exploring the Holy Land: the Prints of David Roberts and Beyond focuses on the past two centuries, documenting the changes that have occurred in the physical landscape, in the relationships between ancient and contemporary cultures, and in human geography. The exhibition presents lithographs by David Roberts, early photographs by the École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem, modern color photographs of the same locales, and artifacts. Bowers Museum of Cultural Art, **Santa Ana, California**, October 6 through January 9, 2002.

Earthen Architecture: Constructive Cultures and Sustainable Development is the theme of six separate intensive courses in project design and building and conservation techniques, many of which are drawn from traditional methods of the Middle East. Course lengths vary from four days to four weeks, and all instruction is in French. Information: www.craterre.archi.fr. CRATERre-EAG, **Grenoble, France**. Courses end October 26.

Traditional Iran displays paintings—ethnographic portraits, street scenes and cartoons of daily life—along with textiles, brassware, wooden figures and replicas of monuments. Nance Museum, **Lone Jack, Missouri**, through October 31.

Fabulous Creatures From the Desert Sands presents unique woolen tapestries, made some 2000 years ago in Central Asia and notable for their intense colors and mysterious designs. Motifs on these textiles include reindeer-like winged creatures with enormous antlers and modern-looking patterns of stylized plants. Little is known about the significance of these designs or the society that produced them, but obviously textiles were of great importance in their creators' cultural and artistic traditions. The objects in the exhibition were found during excavations in the Taklamakan Desert of northwest China and are presented here to the public for the first time. Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisberg, **Switzerland**, through November 4.

The Collector's Eye: Masterpieces of Egyptian Art from the Thalassic Collections, Ltd. showcases over 175 relics of pharaonic civilization from the collection of Theodore Halkedis, one of the finest private collections of ancient Egyptian art in the world. The collection features a rare statue of the Middle Kingdom pharaoh Amenemhet IV, a red granite bust of an 18th-dynasty queen, jewels, inlays, architectural decorations and objects of everyday use. Catalogue. Michael C. Carlos Museum, **Atlanta**, through January 6, 2002.

Qurna Discoveries: Life on the Theban Hills 1826 is a unique record of the village of Qurna and of the Theban necropolis that has long supported the village economy. A gift of the British Museum, these copies of original images made by British artist and explorer Robert Hays in 1826 include two 360-degree panoramas that show tombs, tomb dwellings and the richness of Qurnawi life, displayed in the Omda (Mayor's) House, **Qurna, Egypt**, permanently.

Saudi Bedouin Jewelry displays more than 100 pieces recently donated by Lewis Hatch and Marie Kukuk that have doubled the collection of the Nance Museum. Information: 816-697-2526. **Lone Jack, Missouri**, permanent.

The Saudi Aramco Exhibit, newly renovated, relates the heritage of Arab-Islamic scientists and scholars of the past to the technology of today's petroleum exploration, production and transportation, set against the background of the natural history of Saudi Arabia. **Dhahran, Saudi Arabia**.

Information is correct at press time, but please reconfirm dates and times before traveling. Most institutions listed have further information available on the World Wide Web. Readers are welcome to submit information for possible inclusion in this listing.

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Geoffrey Bibby, a British pioneer of Arabian archaeology who helped discover the ancient Middle Eastern land of Dilmun, died last February in Denmark, his adopted country. From 1953, Bibby and Danish archaeologist P. V. Glob led expeditions in five Arabian Gulf countries from their base at the medieval fortress of Qala'at al-Bahrain. Their painstaking excavations beneath the fortress revealed remnants of the capital of Dilmun dating back to the third millennium BC and established the Gulf region as an important ancient center of trade and civilization. Bibby's popular book *Looking for Dilmun* (1969) went beyond excavation reports to show how archeology can bring a long-vanished civilization back to life, and inspired archeological interest in many residents of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Arthur Clark's article "Bahrain Through the Ages" in the July/August 1984 issue of *Aramco World* includes information about Bibby's work.

The Armenian-Egyptian photographer Van Leo, some of whose images appeared in Lynn Love's article "The Pictures Between" in our January/February 2001 issue, was honored with an "Urban Heroes" award last December from the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development. "His portraits of film stars, ordinary people and himself form a unique document of the multicultural life of Cairo in the second half of the 20th century," the award citation read. Prince Claus is the prince consort of the Netherlands; the award carried a prize of €20,000 (\$18,400).

Writer Larry Luxner reports that he has received numerous requests from *Saudi Aramco World* readers for information about franchise opportunities with Habib's restaurants, profiled in "Esfihas to Go" in our November/December 2000 issue. Luxner recommends that those interested can visit www.habibs.com (in Portuguese), or write to Habib's owner Alberto Saraiva at diretoria@habibs.com.

The Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre in Ramallah was described in our article "Stirring Up Beauty," in the November/December 2000 issue of *Saudi Aramco World*, as being operated by the Palestinian Ministry of Culture. That is an error: Though founded as a branch of the ministry in 1996, the Sakakini Centre has been independent of that body since 1998. Likewise, the Centre is housed in the home of former mayor of Ramallah, Khalil Salem Salah; the building is not, as we wrote, the former Sakakini family home, which was located in Jerusalem. We regret the errors, and invite readers to learn more about the Sakakini Centre's programs in literature and the visual and performing arts by visiting its website at www.sakakini.org. The website of Riwaq, the Palestinian architectural-preservation organization that renovated the Sakakini Centre, is at www.riwaq.org.

In "Flying the Furrow" (March/April 2001), author Alan McGregor had to leave unanswered the question of whose brilliant idea it had been to plow (or, variously, harrow or paint) a furrow visible from the air to guide pilots along the desert sections of the air route from Cairo to Baghdad after World War I. He described the unknown person as "some now forgotten genius." We have received a letter from Anne Salmond Baker, the daughter of the RAF's wartime commander in the Middle East, in which she states that her father, Major General Geoffrey Salmond (later Air Chief Marshal Sir Geoffrey Salmond), "flew the first flight with General Borton just 2 weeks after the Armistice, in the O/400 with the brilliant Australian Ross Smith as their pilot—and it was then that he thought of the furrows over the desert to mark the route for pilots to follow from the Air. Soon after the Cairo Conference in 1921 he was able to organise Fordson Tractors to mark [the route]." So it appears that the man largely responsible for organizing Britain's commercial air routes across the Middle East was also personally responsible for one of the cleverest operational aspects of the Cairo-Baghdad service.

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