

OMAN AIR  الطيران العماني

WINGS OF OMAN

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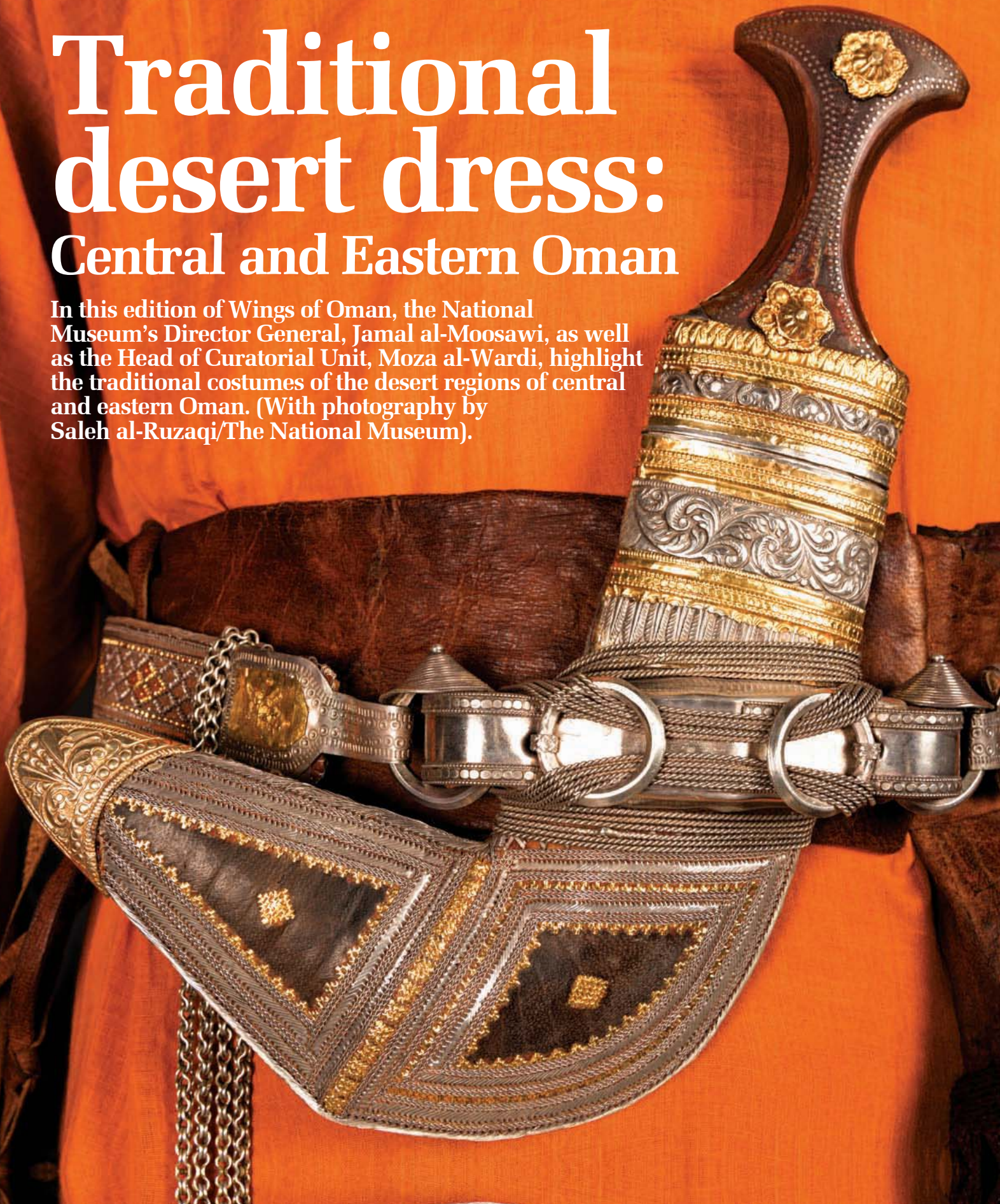
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Traditional desert dress: Central and Eastern Oman

In this edition of Wings of Oman, the National Museum's Director General, Jamal al-Moosawi, as well as the Head of Curatorial Unit, Moza al-Wardi, highlight the traditional costumes of the desert regions of central and eastern Oman. (With photography by Saleh al-Ruzaqi/The National Museum).



The function of costume in Omani society ranges from religious belief and identity to modesty, protection, adornment and ceremony, and strong traditions of regional dress have been maintained for men, women and children. For men, articles of costume have evolved mainly from an original practical purpose and include silver-embellished weaponry and other objects of utility.

Desert dishdashah

In keeping with the Bedouin requirement for practicality, this desert *dishdashah* has been dyed with a mixture of vegetable oil, cloves, cardamom pods and *waris*, an oil-soluble plant pigment derived from the leaves and stems of *Flemingia rodhocarpa* or *Memecylon tinctorium*. The *waris* pigment gives the *dishdashah* its characteristic deep yellow colour, while the oil acts as a barrier against dust and perspiration, and infuses the fabric with a long-lasting, spicy scent.

Sand socks (zarbūl)

Thick sand socks of knitted wool or goat-hair are worn in the desert during the summer months to protect the feet from scorching sand, scorpions, snakes and thorns. Sand socks are also worn in winter as a barrier against the cold. Wilfred Thesiger, recounting details of his travels in Oman between 1945 and 1950, wrote: Beneath my feet the gritty sand was as cold as frozen snow, and described the consequences when the use of sand socks was forsaken: Usually, when they are in the Sands during the winter or summer, Arabs wear socks knitted from coarse black hair. None of us owned these socks and our heels were already cracking from the cold. Later, these cracks became deeper and very painful.



Desert dishdashah
Origin: Eastern Oman
Material: Waris-dyed, unbleached cotton
Period: 15th century AH/early 21st century CE



Sand socks (zarbūl)
Origin: Central Oman
Material: Knitted goat hair
Period: 15th century AH/early 21st century CE

The National Museum: Visitor Information

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The National Museum is open daily from 10:00am 5:00pm (Friday timings 2:00pm 6:00pm). The ticket desk closes half an hour before the Museum's closing times.