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ABU DHABI AUTHORITY FOR CULTURE & HERITAGE

THE INTANGIBLE HERITAGE DEPT

The Project of The Comprehensive Field Survey of The Intangible Cultural Heritage of The Emirate of Abu Dhabi

Inventory Lists

THE FALCONRY

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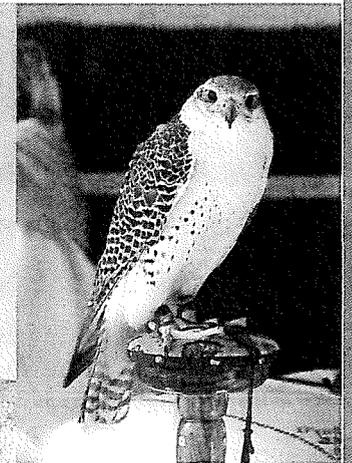
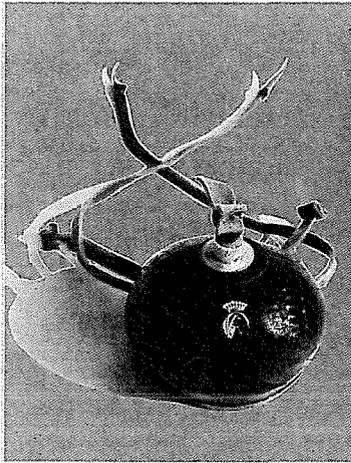
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Inventory Lists

Falconry: A Living Cultural Heritage



“**Falconry** lets our children experience the magic of desert and instills in them the virtues of patience, strong will and brotherhood that are as important today as they have been for generations.»

Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahayan

This paper has two main parts. Part One deals with ‘the cultural heritage of falconry’, describing how it was practiced in the UAE and Arabia and how it involved diverse and large segments of the population. Part Two focuses on ‘the action plan’ which shows how falconry has been transformed as a living heritage culture, practiced in harmony with the world contemporary requirements for safeguarding wildlife and its fragile desert environment. This section also describes how falconry is regarded by the UAE nationals as a significant living component of their national heritage and identity.

Part One:

The cultural heritage of falconry in the UAE

Definition of Falconry: Falconry is a form of hunting – using birds of prey to take wild quarry. The falconer’s vocation is to manage

the falcon in such a way that she will come to accept him as a spectator at her hunting. (Webster College Dictionary)

1. The geography of the region in relation to falconry and the human inhabitants

The main falconry region of Arabia is in the Arabian Gulf and interior of Saudi Arabia. It extends from the United Arab Emirates and up the eastern shores of the Gulf through Qatar and Bahrain to Kuwait, where it gradually diminishes in the north towards Iraq. Southward, it extended from the northern edge of the Empty Quarter to Medina, and scattered pockets existed in Syria and Jordan. Falconry is not practiced in Oman and the Yemen. (Remple and Gross 1993:10)

Techniques and methods of the practice of falconry are dictated and shaped by the terrain, climate and the flora and fauna of the geographical region. These in turn are modified by the local culture and traditions of the people. The limiting factors are climate, topography, floral diversity and density, locally available raptors and local quarry that raptors are willing or able to catch.