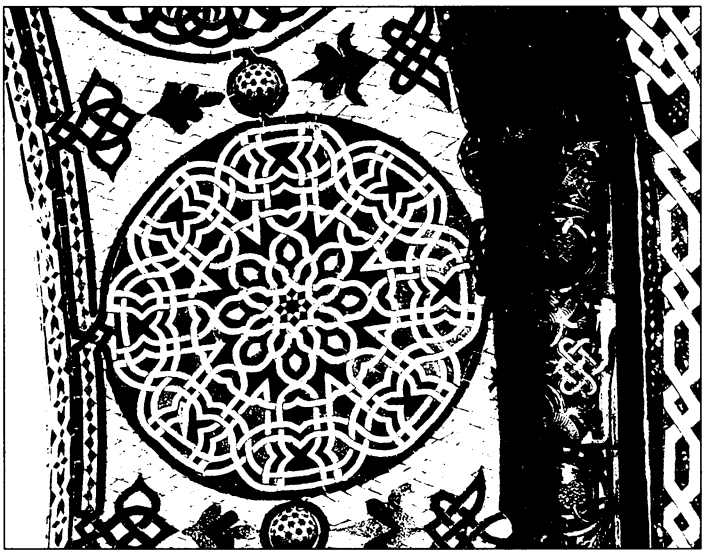
bent backs and dusty lungs. But for me this elation is matched by a tactile melancholy. Why do we have hands if not to use them? Castéra observes that the Moroccan craftsmen seem happy. It is easy to imagine that they would be. How would you feel if your job was creating works of transcendent beauty to grace the public places of your community?

It is trite but true to say that we are the most scientifically and technologically advanced society in the history of Earth. Yet when we look out the window, what do we see? I suppose it depends on your particular window, but my guess is that your view doesn't offer the aesthetic equal of these Moroccan works. If you see human artifice, you likely see linear blocks. I imagine this seems barbaric to someone from Morocco. After all, the mathematics of our art and architecture we teach to ten-year-olds; the mathematics of their decorations, we study in graduate school. It should come as no surprise that the great mathematical designer, M. C. Escher (the official artist of graduate student offices and mathematics departments), made his own trip to Morocco. Perhaps the reason Escher's work seems so surprising lies in our bias—he isn't of the western tradition. But by Moroccan lights his is the logical next step. If you want to understand Escher, call your travel agent or buy this book.



Flowery star. The zellij technique, mosaics of small pieces cut from enameled ceramic tiles, is usually used for geometric designs. The eight-pointed star in this zellij medallion (from an exterior door at the Royal Palace, Fes) incorporates curves with floral ends.

Let's look out the window again. We see our artifice, regular as crystals. We see nature in its glory, the flora and fauna, and the fauna we're most fond of—us. The Moroccan craftsmen cannot represent the human form. But if they tried, we would not have this art; on the large scale, we do not appear algorithmic. However, one of the great technological achievements of the last century is the exponential improvement in our acuity. We can now see the very small. And in the universe of the very small, in the molecules and atoms that are us, we see this same algorithmic magnificence we create for our own pleasure. Thus it seems that the Moroccan artists and craftsmen render us after all. Their work and this book make me wonder: perhaps what exists in our imagination is as wonderful and beautiful as anything nature can create. You pick *Arabesques* up fascinated; you put it down humbled. It is one of the most beautiful books I have ever seen.

NOTA BENE: MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

A Last Hurrah and New Directions

Molecular Cloning
A Laboratory Manual, 3rd ed.
by Joseph Sambrook and David W. Russell

Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, Cold Spring Harbor, NY, 2001. 3 vols., 2288 pp. $295, £231. ISBN 0-87969-576-5. Paper, $195, £149. ISBN 0-87969-577-3.

Nearly twenty years ago, laboratory manuals that touted the words "molecular biology" and "cloning" seemed to hold exclusive keys to the magical world of DNA manipulation. Today, with the completion of the sequencing of the human genome, scientists worldwide are poised to understand the many intricacies of human biology, and never before have they been better equipped for the occasion. The automation of once dreary and repetitive techniques and the ready availability of commercial reagents and kits have changed the focus as well as the nature of research. The third edition of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press's *Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual*, assembled by Joseph Sambrook and David W. Russell, is testimony that accessing appropriate methodologies has evolved with the times. The authors' descriptions of essential techniques for biomolecular research are accompanied by explanations of why they work and how they were developed and have changed with time. The three-volume set, updated and expanded to include new selections on detecting protein-protein interactions and microarray technologies, now has an electronic partner: www.MolecularCloning.com. This fully searchable site, which currently houses abbreviated protocols and bioinformatics resources, is still in its infancy. But Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory promises to expand it to include the rich molecular details of the printed volumes, peer-reviewed updates, and an extensive collection of links to other electronic resources (such as key databases, sequence analysis programs, and reagent information) and sites of particular interest to molecular biologists. Because of the continual evolution of methods and materials, it is likely that this is the last time we will see this classic manual—and perhaps such collections of protocols in general—in printed form. In this postgenomic era of fast electronic access to information, it seems that the movement to the Web now underway was inevitable.

—LISA CHONG

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