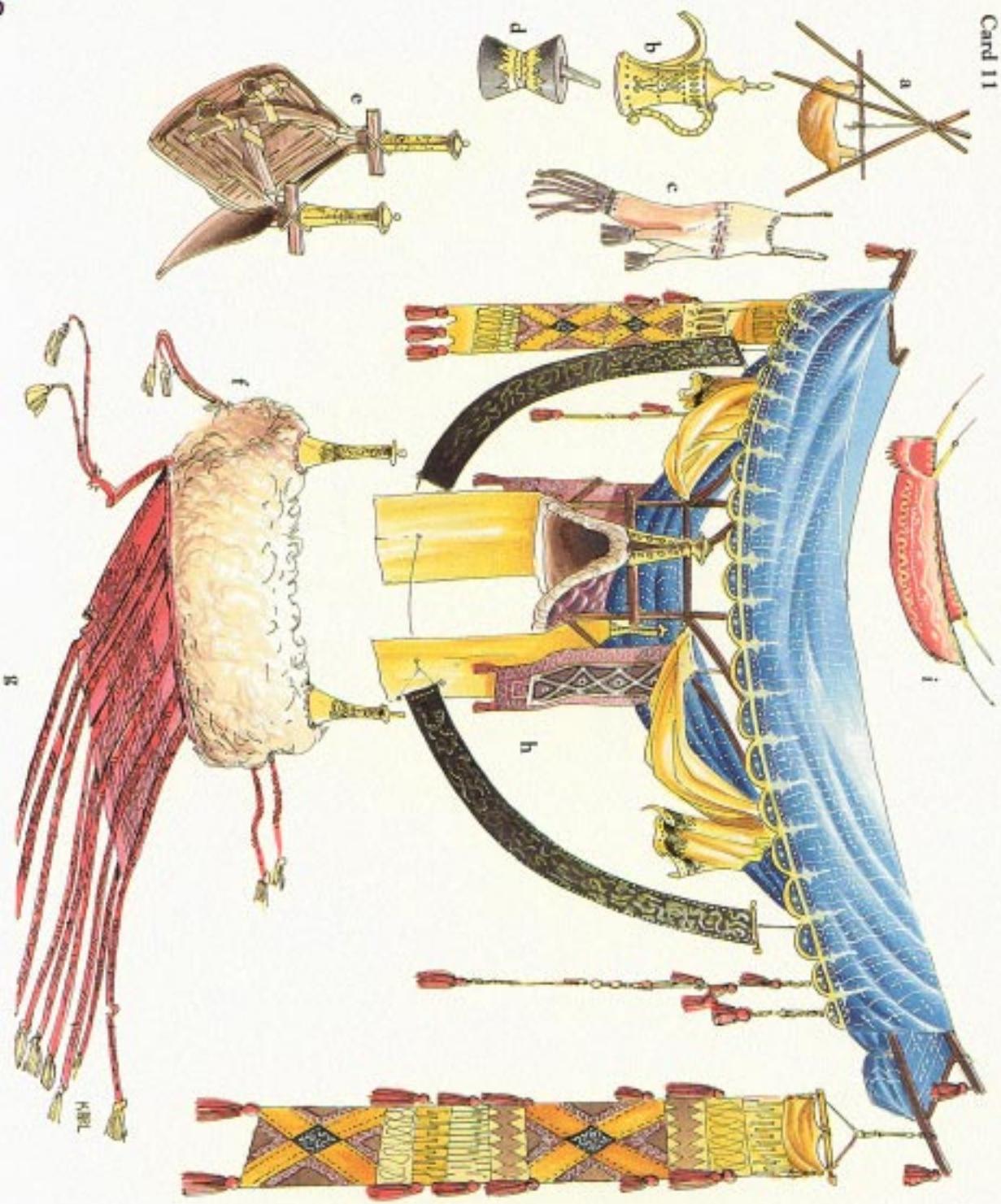


Al-Badian Possessions

Card 11



Al-Badian Possessions

- (a) Tripod with goatskin, used for making *leben*. If camel's milk is used, this is simply a sour milk, since camel's milk cannot produce butter. If sheep's milk is used, however, the *leben* is truly buttermilk—that is, the sour, virtually fat-free drink that remains after the butter has been removed. Camel's milk is more common. Foreigners should beware: those who are not accustomed to it may discover it works surprisingly well as a purgative.
- (b) Coffee pot. This type is common throughout Zakhara. (Near the Pearl Cities, however, a pear-shaped pot is favored.) A true treasure for any man (coffee-making is a host's job), the pot shown here is inlaid silver. Strictly for serving, it is never placed directly on a fire. Al-Badian coffee is very bitter. Though it is not sweetened, it is often flavored with cardamon. Offering coffee is the measure of a good Al-Badian host, who prepares it with great ceremony and flourish, serving the brew in small cups that lack handles.
- (c) Gazelle skin for carrying coffee (typically a man's possession). A waterskin may be more practical, but this decorative bag is equally valued, symbolizing a man's willingness to be a good host.
- (d) Mortar and pestle for grinding coffee berries (a man's possession).
- (e) The wooden frame of a camel riding saddle, typically made of tamarisk. Note the richly detailed pommels. A pack saddle (typically worn by a larger camel) is similar to this frame, but the pommels are very short, and the opportunities for tying down bags are increased. Further, the wooden frame of a pack saddle rests on broad, well-stuffed pads, which help distribute the weight of the load.
- (f) Man's riding saddle for camels, complete with frame (e), a sheepskin cover, and saddlebag. (Only one saddlebag is shown, but another would typically hang from the opposite side.) The saddle fits over the camel's hump, and has two girths—one hanging

- below each pommel. Al-Badian men sometimes ride cross-legged with their feet in front of the foremost pommel. For this reason, two leather pads may be laid over the camel's neck just in front of the saddle, providing a cushion for the rider's legs. While this type of saddle is common, some Al-Badian men consider it too "soft." Such men prefer a saddle that has little more than a pad held behind the camel's hump, on which the rider sits. At the front, or opposite side, of the hump, is the girth and a small wooden pommel and frame, forked to straddle the beast. The pad is secured to the frame with straps extending along each side of the hump. This saddle affords a very bumpy, swaying ride, and it takes additional skill to remain seated.
- (g) Man's saddlebag. The long woolen tassels are strictly decorative.
- (h) Woman's litter. A well-to-do woman (such as a

- sheikh's wife or daughter) can be proud to ride in such a litter while on the march, shielded from the sun (and, if she is modest, the prying eyes of men). The foundation of the litter is a wooden frame, which is covered with soft gazelle skin. The actual seat of the litter is suspended above the saddle proper to ensure a comfortable ride. When not on the march, a woman proudly displays her litter in her tent quarters, where it serves as a symbol of her wealth, stature, and (if she has not purchased the coverings) her skill with a loom.
- (i) A baby's hammock, typically hung near the front of the women's quarters in a tent, where the baby can be watched as well as "displayed." Al-Badia prize their children. When a stranger is introduced to a baby, he or she may press a coin or token into its fist, to bring it good luck. (To avoid any accidental choking, of course, the mother takes the token.)

