

I only met Sheikh Nassser on one occasion at his country house in England, but was impressed with his informality and his knowledge, seeing him excitedly examine some objects brought for him to consider that autumnal Sunday afternoon. And then, in May 2018, I was fortunate to be invited to Kuwait and form some idea of what treasures he had amassed through the years.

On view in the temporary exhibition space in the Historic Americani Hospital Building were the splendid Hellenistic dishes and other silver objects that Sheikh Nasser had collected after his interest had shifted to the pre-Islamic periods of Middle Eastern history.

And at Yarmouk Cultural Centre I had the privilege of inspecting for myself some marvellous Indian Islamic objects, notably the 1,000-mohur of the Mughal emperor Jahangir. Previously, my encounter with this legendary ceremonial medallion was limited to a gilded imitation in the British Museum, not at all the same experience, especially since Sheikh Nasser's 21 centimetre-diameter original weighed a mighty 12 kilograms of solid gold!

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