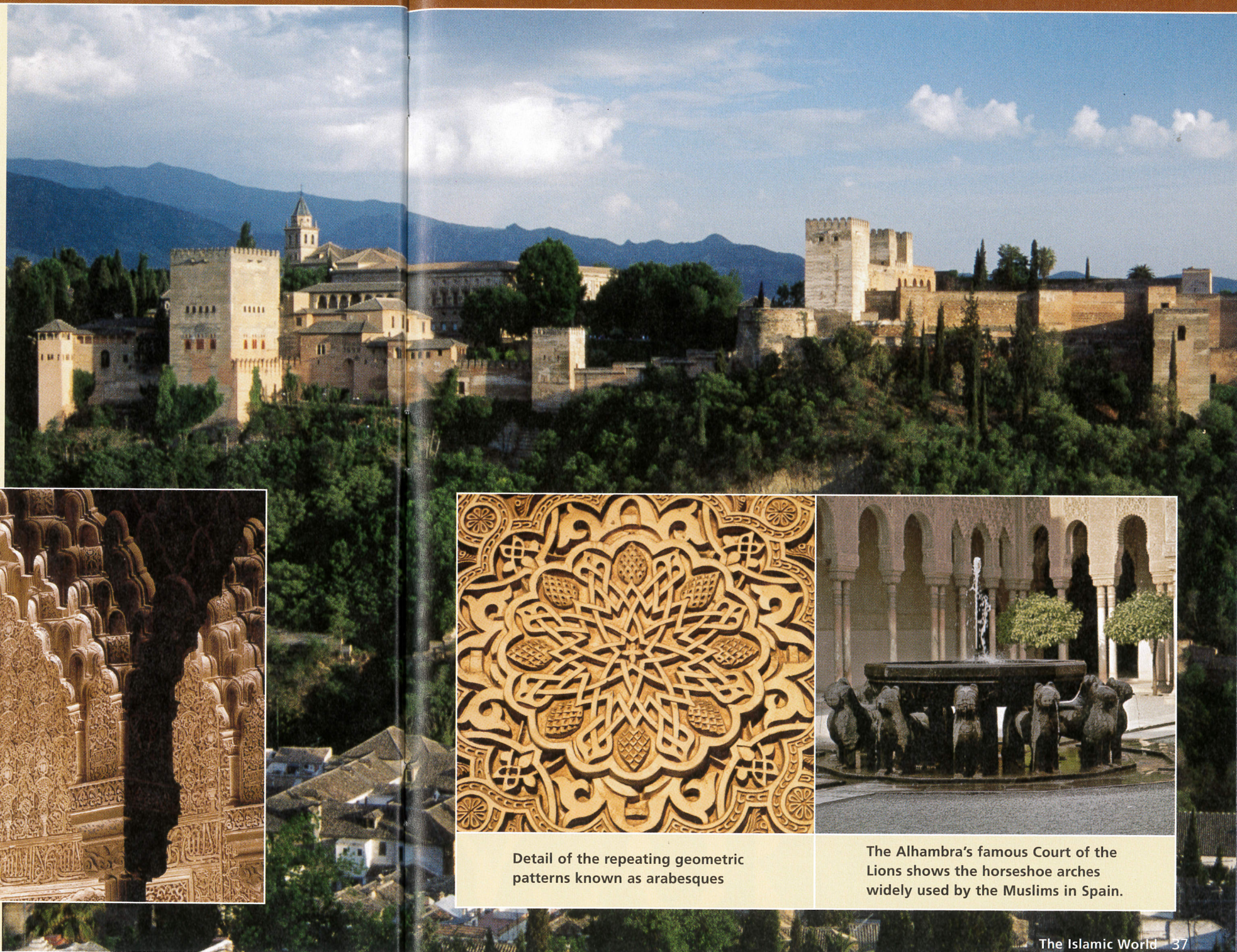


THE ALHAMBRA

A major feature of Islamic architecture is decorative design. Islamic buildings, both mosques and nonreligious structures such as palaces, are often covered in complex patterns carved into stone or glazed tiles. One of the greatest works of Islamic architecture is the Alhambra (Arabic, "Red Palace"). Between 1238 and 1354, the last Muslim rulers of Spain built this fortress on a hill overlooking the city of Granada.

Like many Islamic buildings, the Alhambra is plain on the outside and richly decorated within. The arches and columns of the Alhambra are decorated with intricately carved patterns and calligraphy (below).



Detail of the repeating geometric patterns known as arabesques



The Alhambra's famous Court of the Lions shows the horseshoe arches widely used by the Muslims in Spain.