



COURT AND COSMOS

The Great Age of the Seljuqs



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Sheila R. Canby, Deniz Beyazit, Martina Rugiadi,
and A. C. S. Peacock

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and Renata Holod

THE
MET

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Distributed by Yale University Press, New Haven and London

This catalogue is published in conjunction with the exhibition "Court and Cosmos: The Great Age of the Seljuqs," on view at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, from April 27 through July 24, 2016.

The exhibition is made possible by the NoRuz at the Met Fund.

The catalogue is made possible by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Doris Duke Fund for Publications, and the Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf Foundation.

Published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Mark Polizzotti, Publisher and Editor in Chief
Gwen Roginsky, Associate Publisher and General Manager of Publications
Peter Antony, Chief Production Manager
Michael Sittenfeld, Senior Managing Editor

Edited by Marcie M. Muscat, with the assistance of Harriet Whelchel
Production by Lauren Knighton, with the assistance of Paul Booth
Designed by Steven Schoenfelder
Image acquisitions and permissions by Josephine Rodriguez-Massop
Bibliography edited by Penny Jones
Map by Anandaroop Roy

Photographs of works in the Metropolitan Museum's collection are by The Photograph Studio, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; new photography is by Anna-Marie Kellen unless otherwise noted. Additional photography credits appear on p. 365.

Typeset in Adobe Arabic, ArmenianLS, Catull BQ, Damascus, and Formata
Printed on Satimat 135 gsm
Separations by Professional Graphics, Inc., Rockford, Illinois
Printed and bound by Verona Libri, Verona, Italy

Jacket illustrations: (front) Box with fragmentary combination lock, early to mid-13th century (detail of cat. 168c); (back) Bowl with courtly and astrological motifs, late 12th–early 13th century (detail of cat. 123). Additional illustrations: p. ii: Pierced jug with harpies and sphinxes, 1215–16 (detail of cat. 143); pp. 36–37: Head from a figure with beaded headdress, 12th–early 13th century (detail of cat. 1e); p. 38: Magic mirror of Abu-l-Fadl Artuq Shah, ca. 1220s–30s (detail of cat. 7); p. 72: Tray stand, mid- to late 13th century (detail of cat. 69); p. 166: Astrolabe, 1102–3 (detail of cat. 114); p. 198: Basin with signs of the zodiac, ca. 1240–1300 (detail of cat. 125); p. 250: Mosaic-tile panel with inscription, 1251–53 (detail of cat. 167b); p. 290: Tombstone of the Lady Jalila, 12th century (detail of cat. 197)

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First printing

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The Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10028
metmuseum.org

Distributed by Yale University Press, New Haven and London
yalebooks.com/art | yalebooks.co.uk

Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-1-58839-589-4

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Director's Foreword

The rise and fall of great empires has indelibly shaped the history of the lands stretching from Central Asia to the eastern Mediterranean. While the conquests of Cyrus and Alexander are well known to students of ancient history, those of the medieval Seljuqs have received less attention. Nonetheless, in the 1030s—two centuries before the Mongols began their westward march across Asia, and three centuries before Tamerlane followed suit in Iran, eastern Anatolia, and northern India—the Seljuqs, a Turkish tribal group from Central Asia, moved into Iran and northern Iraq. Their heirs would add Anatolia and parts of northern Syria to the realm, establishing several successor states that competed for control over the area known in ancient times as Northern Mesopotamia and today as the Jazira.

“Court and Cosmos: The Great Age of the Seljuqs” is the first major exhibition to focus on the full breadth of Seljuq art produced in Iran, Anatolia, northern Iraq, and northern Syria. When the Seljuqs arrived in Iran, they encountered a local population that already had a long tradition of artistic production, in various media. However, innovations in materials such as ceramics and the introduction of paper combined with new forms of imagery to create a range of highly decorative utilitarian objects, acquired by a new elite that prospered under Seljuq rule. In Anatolia, encountering a society that after centuries of Byzantine domination was mostly Christian, the Seljuqs built palaces, mosques, hospitals, schools, and fortresses that marked their appropriation of the land and the forms associated with their religion, Islam. Whereas the Seljuq art of Iran is rarely inscribed with the names of rulers, in Anatolia and the Jazira numerous luxury objects bear dynastic inscriptions, another mark of Seljuq domination over subjects who would have spoken Greek or Syriac and practiced Christianity. Even when they held power precariously, the Seljuqs spared little expense in producing impressive illustrated manuscripts and brasses inlaid with silver and gold, all in glorification of their dominion.

The six themes of the exhibition and its accompanying catalogue reflect the preoccupations of the Seljuqs, their successor states, and the people over whom they ruled. Alongside imagery that was shared across the vast Seljuq territories were local preferences that resulted in distinct stylistic differences between Iranian, Anatolian, and Jaziran productions. The works suggest zest for life as well as religious faith, but some also hint at the sectarian divisions that marked the region in the eleventh through thirteenth century. Indeed, the decoration of many Seljuq objects reveals an underlying desire for an orderly life and protection from instability and uncontrollable events. By comparison to the hugely disruptive campaigns of the Mongols and Timurids, the Seljuq conquest built on the existing cultural matrix and led to one of the most highly inventive periods of medieval art in western Asia.

An exhibition of this complexity necessarily relies on the generosity of lenders. The more than fifty private collectors and institutions from across the globe that lent works of art are enumerated, with our thanks, in the accompanying list of Lenders to the Exhibition. Those whose loans were especially significant in number include Sheikh Nasser and Sheikha Hussah al-Sabah; the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha; the Musée du Louvre, Paris; the David Collection, Copenhagen; the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin; the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London; the Keir Collection, on long-term loan by Ranros Universal S.A. to the Dallas Museum of Art; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The exhibition includes several objects that have never before been seen in the United States, among them the earliest copy of the *Shahnama*, the Persian national epic, from the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze; and a group of thirteen works from museums in Turkmenistan. We are grateful to the United States embassy in Turkmenistan for its efforts on our behalf.

The exhibition is made possible by the NoRuz at the Met Fund. We are extremely grateful to Museum trustee Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani and his wife, Sharmin, for their steadfast leadership of the NoRuz at the Met Benefit and for their enthusiastic support of this exhibition. Indeed, the realization of this project is a testament to their and the NoRuz at the Met Committee's unwavering dedication to the Museum. In addition, we extend our thanks to the American Institute of Iranian Studies for its thoughtful generosity in the early planning stages of this project; The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Doris Duke Fund for Publications, and the Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf Foundation for their commitment to this catalogue; the Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute and the Soudavar Memorial Foundation for their contributions to the symposium held in conjunction with the show; and the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art for its support of the exhibition's educational programs. At the Metropolitan Museum, I thank Sheila R. Canby, Patti Cadby Birch Curator in Charge, and Assistant Curators Deniz Beyazit and Martina Rugiadi, all in the Department of Islamic Art, for preparing both the exhibition and the publication. Their efforts shed new light on one of the great cultural and artistic legacies of the medieval Islamic world, at a time when that legacy is in peril and its preservation has never been more critical.

Thomas P. Campbell

Director, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Acknowledgments

Like all large exhibitions, “Court and Cosmos: The Great Age of the Seljuqs” has taken a number of years to evolve from a wish list to a reality. This actualization is the sum of many parts—individual and institutional lenders, book and exhibition designers, photographers and editors, scholars in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia, and colleagues at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, both within the Department of Islamic Art and across the Museum. We are enormously grateful to all the people who have been so generous with their time, information, and expertise, and for the abiding support of our Director, Thomas P. Campbell. We also owe a great debt of gratitude to the NoRuz at the Met Fund, which is the exclusive supporter of the exhibition, and to The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Doris Duke Fund for Publications, and the Marshall and Marilyn R. Wolf Foundation for their commitment to this catalogue.

In North America we would like to thank Henry Kim and Filiz Çakır Phillip at the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto; Ute Wartenberg Kagan, Elena Stolyarik, Michael L. Bates, and Peter Donovan at the American Numismatic Society, New York; Caitlin McKenna at the Brooklyn Museum, New York; Karol B. Wight at the Corning Museum of Glass, N.Y.; Sabiha Al Khemir and Tricia Dixon at the Dallas Museum of Art; Roy Davis and Cecily Langdale, New York; Dr. Rina and Dr. Norman Indictor, New York; Gudrun Bühl, Elizabeth Williams, and Marta Zlotnick at Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C.; Linda Komaroff at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Laura Weinstein at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Dilys Blum, Sara Reiter, Kristina Haugland, Felice Fischer, Hiromi Kinoshita, Melissa Meighan, and Darielle Mason of the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Karin Ruehrdanz, Lisa Golombek, and Robert Mason of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; Sarah Berman and Lauren Barach at the Seattle Art Museum; David McKnight and Abby Lang of the University of Pennsylvania’s Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts, Philadelphia; Renata Holod and Anne Brancati at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia; Amy Landau at the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore; and David Sensabaugh and Lynne Addison at the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

In Europe we extend our thanks to Mina Moraitou at the Benaki Museum, Athens; David Lordkipanidze and Irina Koshoridze of the Georgian National Museum, Tbilisi; Francesca Leoni at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford; Alasdair Watson and Bruce Barker-Benfield of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford; Venetia Porter, Ladan Akbarnia, and Jonathan Tubb of the British Museum, London; Victoria Avery at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, with Helen Loveday in London;

Tim Stanley, Miriam Rosser Owen, Moya Carey, and Victor Borges of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Nasser David Khalili and Nahla Nasser of the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London; Ina Sandmann of the Sarikhani Collection, Oxfordshire; Elaine Wright of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin; Richard and Glen de Unger of the Keir Collection; Cesare Pesini at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City; Stefano Casciu and Davide Gasparotto, both formerly at the Galleria Estense, Modena; Massimo Medica and Mark Gregory D’Apuzzo at the Museo Civico Medievale, Bologna; Luca Bellingeri of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, as well as his former colleagues Maria Letizia Sebastiani and Mario Vitalone; Paolo Galluzzi and Giorgio Strano of the Museo Galileo–Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza, Florence; Gabriella Di Flumeri at the Museo Nazionale d’Arte Orientale “Giuseppe Tucci,” Rome; Andreina Draghi at the Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia, Rome; Kjeld von Folsach and Mette Korsholm of the David Collection, Copenhagen; Rifat Sheikh al-Ard, Bashir Mohamed, and Debra Noël Adams of the Furuṣiyya Art Foundation; Maximilien Durand at the Musée des Tissus et Musée des Arts Décoratifs de Lyon; Eric Delpont of the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Yannick Lintz, Gwenaëlle Fellingier, Charlotte Maury, Annabelle Collinet, Carine Jurine, Héléne Bendejacq, and Delphine Miroudot at the Musée du Louvre, Paris; Annie Vernay-Nouri of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris; Annette Krämer, Bekhruz Kurbanov, and Inés de Castro of the Linden-Museum Stuttgart; Jürgen Wasim Frembgen at the Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich; Stefan Weber, Julia Gonnella, and Gisela Helmecke at the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; Christine Waidenschlager of the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; Christoph Rauch of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin; Stefan Heidemann, formerly of the Orientalisches Münzkabinett, Universität Jena; and Wolfgang Meighörner of the Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck.

In the Middle East and Central Asia we are grateful to Sheikh Nasser al-Sabah, Sheikha Hussah al-Sabah, Salam Kaoukji, Deborah Freeman, Katie Marsh, and Sophie Budden (formerly) of the al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyya, Kuwait; Leslee Michelsen, formerly of the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha; the Ministry of Culture of Turkmenistan and participating museums: the Museum of History and Local Lore of Mary Province, the Museum of Kone-Urgench State Cultural and Historical Park, and the State Museum of the State Cultural Center of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat; and Maya Meredova, Maren Payne-Holmes, and Nargizid Metyakubova at the United States

embassy in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, together with their former colleague Michael L. Cavey. We especially appreciate the many efforts made by Ms. Meredova on behalf of the Metropolitan Museum for this historic and unprecedented loan from Turkmenistan's museums.

The catalogue benefited immeasurably from the contributions of guest authors A. C. S. Peacock, Renata Holod, and Pinar Gokpinar-Gnepp. Marcie Muscat steered the book through the editorial process with as little pain inflicted on the authors as possible, a testament to her great skill, while Lauren Knighton oversaw its production with care and patience. Josephine Rodriguez-Massop and Jane S. Tai worked assiduously to acquire the images in the catalogue, while Anna-Marie Kellen in The Photograph Studio worked against the clock to provide photographs of objects in the Museum's collection. Steven Schoenfelder designed the book, and Penny Jones refined the notes and bibliography. Mark Polizzotti, Gwen Roginsky, Peter Antony, and Michael Sittenfeld all contributed to the catalogue's successful production.

Christopher Noey and Paul Caro produced several films for the exhibition, evoking the context in which Seljuq art was made. Sree Sreenivasan and his team in the Digital Department have ensured the dissemination of information about the exhibition on the Museum's website. Likewise, Staci Hou and Nina Diamond are responsible for the audio guide. Katherina Weistroffer has enhanced the interpretation of these works with her elegant exhibition design, aided by graphic designer Mortimer Lebigre and advised by Michael Langley. At the Met we are further grateful to Linda Sylling and Patricia Gilkison for keeping an eagle eye on the budget, as well as to Aileen Chuk for tackling the most complicated loans with aplomb. Jennifer Russell and Martha Deese have remained similarly positive and supportive throughout. Jean-François de Lapérouse, Vicki Parry, Mark Wypyski, Florica Zaharia, Janina Poskrobko, and Yana van Dyke have stabilized and restored many of the objects from the Met on view in this exhibition, while Federico Carò, Elena Basso, and Parviz Holakooei contributed their considerable scientific expertise.

Our colleagues in the Department of Islamic Art, Curator Navina Najat Haidar and Associate Curator Maryam Ekhtiar, have shown remarkable patience as we have focused on the art of the Seljuqs to the exclusion of other periods and schools of Islamic art. Abdullah Ghouchani and Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow Alzahraa K. Ahmed have read many difficult inscriptions on the objects in the show, lending insight into their significance in the Seljuq period. Maryam Ekhtiar provided elegant translations

of the Persian inscriptions. Research Assistant Michael Falcetano wrote the entries on textiles and has demonstrated his exceptional computer skills in keeping track of objects, photographs, and myriad other details connected with the loans and catalogue production. In addition, he has engaged in a free exchange of ideas and information on the Seljuqs and their archaeological remains. Our colleagues outside the Museum who have generously shared information, images, and bibliography are too numerous to name. They are cited throughout the catalogue and form the intellectual foundation of this effort. Many of them attended a workshop held at the Metropolitan Museum in 2014 that functioned as the kickoff for the publication and inspired us with new thinking on the subject of the Seljuqs and their legacy.

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Lenders to the Exhibition

- The Aga Khan Museum, Toronto
The American Numismatic Society, New York
The Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology,
Oxford
Benaki Museum, Athens
Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City
Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze
Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford
The British Museum, London
Brooklyn Museum, New York
Chester Beatty Library, Dublin
The Corning Museum of Glass, N.Y.
The David Collection, Copenhagen
Roy and Cecily Langdale Davis
Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection,
Washington, D.C.
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Furusiyya Art Foundation
Gallerie Estensi, Modena
Georgian National Museum, Tbilisi
Rina and Norman Indictor
The Keir Collection, on long-term loan by Ranros
Universal S.A. to the Dallas Museum of Art
Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London
Kunstgewerbemuseum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin –
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and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania Libraries,
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Linden-Museum Stuttgart
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Musée de l'Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris
Musée des Tissus et Musée des Arts Décoratifs de Lyon
Musée du Louvre, Paris
Museo Civico Medievale, Bologna
Museo Galileo – Istituto e Museo di Storia della
Scienza, Florence
Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale "Giuseppe Tucci,"
Rome
Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia, Rome
Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich
Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu
Berlin – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
The Museum of History and Local Lore of
Mary Province, Turkmenistan
Museum of Islamic Art, Doha
The Museum of Kone-Urgench State Cultural
and Historical Park of Turkmenistan
Orientabteilung, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin –
Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz
Orientalisches Münzkabinett, Universität Jena
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto
al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah,
Kuwait
The Sarikhani Collection, Oxfordshire
Seattle Art Museum
The State Museum of the State Cultural Center of
Turkmenistan, Ashgabat
Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology
and Anthropology, Philadelphia
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven

Preface

A set of questions precedes the planning and conceptualization of any large exhibition. Why does this type of art or historical period matter? Why is the study relevant now? *Court and Cosmos: The Great Age of the Seljuqs* sets out to demonstrate the abiding impact that the Seljuq invasion and domination of Iran, Anatolia, the Jazira, and Syria had on the art and architecture of these regions from the eleventh to the early fourteenth century. Even after the Seljuqs were eclipsed politically in Iran in the late twelfth century, the art they had favored continued to be produced under their Khwarazm Shah victors. While one could quibble that the art could not be Seljuq if their dynasty was no longer in power, we argue that the twenty-five years after the end, in 1194, of the Great Seljuq dynasty in Iran marked a continuation of the styles and techniques in various media that had been established during Seljuq rule. Likewise, through their architecture and luxury objects, the Seljuqs of Rum and their atabegs and successors in Anatolia, the Jazira, and Syria had a lasting impact on the art of those areas until the early fourteenth century. Their distinctive choice of iconography is found on all forms of the visual arts associated with them, revealing the strength of their cultural contribution.

This catalogue and the exhibition it accompanies focus on the artistic innovations of the Seljuqs and how their arts differed in the eastern and western parts of their realm. Rather than chart the stylistic progression in different media, *Court and Cosmos* examines Seljuq imagery and its relation to the lives of the ruling sultans and their local subjects—Persians, Armenians, Kurds, Arabs, and others. It questions whether the particular form of shared rule of the Great Seljuqs contributed to a dynastic outlook in which the individual identity of a ruler was less important than that of his family. The interaction of science, a field in which significant advances were made during the Seljuq era, and a belief in supernatural forces is another intellectual and emotional current characteristic of Seljuq art. Finally, the Seljuqs' embrace of Islam and resulting patronage of sacred books and buildings parallel the adoption and development of distinctive ornamental forms. In the funerary arts as well, a variety of tomb markers and cenotaphs reveal the calligraphic and sculptural proficiency of the artists who specialized in these monuments to the dead. Whether or not the artists themselves were Turkmen Seljuqs, the arts as they existed during the period of the Seljuqs are distinct, and worthy of our attention. In an age when their monuments are being wantonly destroyed in Syria and Iraq, *Court and Cosmos* offers a relevant reminder of their contribution to the cultural heritage of much of western Asia.

Sheila R. Canby

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The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*

Note to the Reader

The system of transliteration of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish is based on a simplified version of that used in the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, with Persian following the Arabic transliteration. *ʿAyn* and *hamza* are marked but, except when quoting a source or citing a title, we have omitted macrons, dots, hooks, and other diacritical marks. Initial *hamza* is dropped. The Persian silent “h” (ه) is transliterated as “a,” as is the Arabic *ta marbuta* (ة). When an Arabic, Persian, or Turkish word is found in *Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary* with a standard English spelling, this form is used. Place names are spelled according to English standards.

Dates are given in the Gregorian calendar unless an object carries a precise Hegira date, in which case dates are given in both eras. References to the Qur’an follow the numbering used in the Egyptian standard edition of 1924, which has been widely used in the Muslim world. English translations of the Qur’an are taken from Arthur J. Arberry’s *The Koran Interpreted* (New York, 1996). It is worth noting that the verse numbering in Arberry’s translation often differs from that in the Cairo volume, which was based on an edition of the Qur’an first published by Gustav Flügel in 1834 (*Corani textus arabicus*; Leipzig, 1834).

Unless otherwise indicated, inscriptions in Persian were read and translated by Abdullah Ghouhani and Maryam Ekhtiar, Associate Curator, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Arabic inscriptions were read and translated by Alzahraa K. Ahmed, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Throughout the catalogue, dimensions are given in the following sequence: height precedes width precedes depth. When necessary, the abbreviations H. (height), L. (length), W. (width), and Diam. (diameter) are given for clarity. Unless otherwise specified, given diameters are the maximum, and dimensions for manuscript illustrations are for a single folio. If an Arabic, Persian, or Turkish word appears without an adjacent parenthetical translation, the reader is encouraged to consult the Glossary at the back of the book for further explanation.

IN MEMORY OF CLIFFORD EDMUND BOSWORTH (1928–2015)

The Great Age of the Seljuqs

A. C. S. Peacock

The eleventh-century invasion of the Seljuq Turks marks a decisive rupture in the history of the Middle East. Sweeping away or mutilating existing states, both Muslim and Christian, the nomadic Turks founded an empire that at its height stretched from the borders of modern western China to the eastern Mediterranean. The invasions brought with them the first waves of Turkish populations to settle in the Middle East, ultimately laying the foundations for the emergence of modern Turkey as well as for the substantial Turkish-speaking populations that exist today in Iran, Iraq, and the Caucasus.

Alarm at the Seljuq advance into Anatolia and Palestine played a part in provoking the Crusades. Contemporary Christians regularly portrayed the Seljuq invasions as a sign of divine disfavor, but Muslims also viewed their new overlords in similar terms. As one hadith that circulated in the Seljuq empire put it, “God said, ‘I have a host whom I have called the Turks and whom I have set in the East; when I am wrath with any people I will make them sovereign over them.’”¹ With the traditional distaste of sedentary peoples for the nomads, mingled with fear and awe, one Muslim contemporary is said to have described the Seljuqs as “a people completely attached to warfare and its practice. . . . The Seljuqs wander about like desperadoes and outcasts despite the extensiveness of their territories, careless of whether they suffer destruction or death. . . . They have horsemen who boldly face death. They are scarcely to be considered human beings.”²

Yet the Seljuq empire – named after the dynastic ancestor, a Turkish chief named Seljuq who died around the year 1000 – had distinguished antecedents. The Seljuqs originated in the Eurasian steppe, which stretches from the northern shores of the Black Sea to Mongolia and has given rise to numerous empires. The steppe has an exceptionally low population density, with few towns, and its peoples are typically nomadic pastoralists, dwelling in tents and migrating with their flocks, sometimes great distances, to secure the pastureland on which their livelihood depends (figs. 1, 2). These nomads, mostly ethnically Turkish or Mongolian, had been famed since antiquity for their military prowess. Periodically united by charismatic leaders, such as Attila the Hun in the fourth century, Genghis Khan in the thirteenth, and Tamerlane in the fourteenth, they from time to time burst upon the settled world to their south and west – Central Asia, China, Europe, and the Middle East. The origins of the Turkish group to which the Seljuqs belonged, called the Oghuz, can be traced to the Gök Türk Empire, which extended



Fig. 1. View ca. 1986 of Nomads washing clothes and dishes in a stream with Mount Ararat in the distance, modern Turkey



Fig. 2. View ca. 1987 of nomadic Torkashvand on their way to their winter camp near Pol-e Dokhtar, Lorestan province, Iran

from Mongolia to the Black Sea in the sixth and seventh centuries. The Seljuqs also vaunted their origins in another of these steppe empires, that of the Khazars, who considered themselves successors to the Gök Türks.³

This consciousness of their Turkish identity contributed to the distinctive synthesis that the Seljuqs created between the traditions of the steppe, with its long imperial political culture, and the civilization of the lands they conquered, itself a blend of Iranian and Islamic traditions. The empire founded by the descendants of Seljuq in Central

Asia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, known as the Great Seljuq Empire, lasted just over a century, from about 1040 to 1157, but dynasties with origins in it continued to rule in parts of Syria and northern Iraq until the thirteenth century, in Anatolia up to the beginning of the fourteenth century, and even in some areas of the southeast of modern Turkey to the early fifteenth century. These later states – the Artuqids, the Zangids, and the Seljuq Sultanate of Anatolia—shared similar features in political organization and culture. Each was ruled by a Turkish military elite and had a population composed of nomadic Turks living alongside peasant farmers and sedentary city dwellers of a wide range of ethnic and confessional origins. All had similar dynastic and administrative structures in which power was rarely held by a single individual but rather was usually shared among several members of a ruling family based in different territories.

The age of the Seljuqs was marked by broad social, religious, and artistic change. Islam was shaped by increased conversion, the spread of characteristic institutions such as the madrasa (religio-legal college), and the growing popularity of Sufism, the mystical approach to the faith. Literature flourished, and some of the most famous Persian poets, ‘Umar Khayyam, Nizami, and Rumi, enjoyed the patronage of their Turkish overlords. Beginning in the twelfth century, investment by both provincial courts and middle-class consumers encouraged a flowering of artistic production that led to a period of great innovation in art and architecture. The Seljuqs and their successors thus shaped not only the politics and demographics but also the artistic and cultural legacy of the Islamic world.

THE ORIGINS AND RISE OF THE SELJUQS

The antecedents of the Seljuq dynasty lie shrouded in obscurity.⁴ According to tales that circulated at the court in the late eleventh century, Seljuq was the son of a chief in the service of the Khazars, the Turkish empire that dominated the northern steppes between the Black Sea and the Aral Sea from the seventh to the tenth century. As the Khazar state collapsed in the late tenth century, Seljuq’s father broke with the Khazar ruler and Seljuq—accompanied by a small band of men and his camels, horses, and sheep, the typical possessions of the nomad—migrated to the town of Jand in the west of modern Kazakhstan, a distant outpost of the Islamic world on the edge of the steppe. There he and his followers embraced Islam and in due course found employment in the armies of the Samanid state, the ethnically Iranian dynasty that dominated Islamic Central Asia (roughly modern Uzbekistan, southern Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and eastern Iran). As Seljuq and his band of followers met with military success, more and more Turks were tempted to join them, and became known as Seljuqs after their leader. Most Seljuqs belonged to the western Turkish nomadic confederation known as the Oghuz (in Arabic and Persian, Ghuzz); Oghuz converts to Islam, however, tended to be called Turkmen. Both Oghuz and Turkmen—the terms are often used interchangeably—imply specifically nomadic Turks in contrast to some sedentary groups of Turks who lived in the towns of Central Asia and on the peripheries of the steppe.

This semilegendary account drawn from the anonymous *Maliknama* (Book of the king), which is preserved only in a much later Persian version, cannot be corroborated, but none of it is improbable. Across the Eurasian steppe numerous other nomadic Turkish groups were undergoing similar experiences of migration, conversion, and employment in military service in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Central Asia—at this time one of the centers of Islamic civilization, and home to an emergent Iranian-Islamic cultural synthesis—witnessed a series of destabilizing migrations of Turks from the steppe, the effects of which were felt as far west as the Byzantines' Balkan territories, to which some groups of Oghuz migrated. The causes of this upheaval are unclear. It has been postulated that climate change played a part, making the nomads' traditional pastures unviable, but this has not yet been proven.⁵

Renowned for their military prowess, nomadic Turks had been recruited into Muslim armies since the eighth century, often as slaves; part of their attraction was that, in theory, as an alienated group without any links to the society around them, they would owe total loyalty to their master—even if in practice it did not always work out that way. Turks formed a component of armies in most parts of the eastern Islamic world even before the eleventh century, and some of their commanders rose to prominence, founding dynasties of their own. A group of the Samanids' Turkish slave soldiers set up their own regime in what is now Afghanistan, founding the Ghaznavid dynasty based at Ghazna, south of Kabul, and threatening their former masters. Meanwhile another group of migrant steppe Turks, known as the Qarakhanids, eventually succeeded in toppling the Samanids in 999, and the Samanid domains were henceforth divided between the two new Turkish empires—the nomadic Qarakhanids in the east and the Ghaznavids, of military slave origins, in the south and west. After the fall of the Samanids, in the first decades of the eleventh century, descendants of Seljuq seem to have been employed by both the Qarakhanids and the Ghaznavids as soldiers, but both states grew increasingly wary of them, concerned by the destabilizing potential of their ability to mobilize nomadic support. At the same time, a fierce struggle for leadership seems to have broken out among Seljuq's descendants, out of which his grandsons Tughril and Chaghri eventually emerged supreme.

The event that led to the foundation of the Great Seljuq Empire appears to have been an act of desperation more than anything else. Forced out of their encampments around Bukhara by the Qarakhanids, and harassed by other nomad enemies in their pastureland of Khwarazm, Tughril and Chaghri in 1035 led their followers southward across the great Karakum Desert, which comprises much of modern Turkmenistan, to the foothills of the Kopet Dağ mountain range. Here a string of towns marked the limits of urban Islamic civilization on the border between the steppe to the north and the Iranian world to the south, the vast region known as Khurasan, which included eastern Iran, northern Afghanistan, and southern Turkmenistan. Khurasan was the jewel in the crown of the Ghaznavid state, its richest and most sophisticated province and one of the most culturally and economically advanced centers of the Islamic world. Yet within five years, the entire region had fallen to Tughril and Chaghri and their nomadic forces.⁶

Contemporary Ghaznavid chroniclers put the blame for this disaster firmly on their ruler, Sultan Mas'ud, who was depicted as devoted to pleasure and heedless of the threat posed by the Seljuqs. Yet it is easy to understand the Ghaznavids' insouciance, at least initially. Tughril and Chaghri had, after all, just been chased out of Bukhara and Khwarazm. The same Ghaznavid chroniclers stressed the ramshackle nature of the Seljuq forces, portraying them as a ragtag band of half-starving desperadoes. Despite Khurasan's importance, the Ghaznavids' strategic interest lay more in India, against which they launched more or less annual campaigns that brought back vast amounts of wealth from plunder; Ghazna, their capital, was much closer to India than to Khurasan. Yet the easy victory Mas'ud anticipated never materialized: the cumbersome Ghaznavid military found it difficult to challenge the Seljuqs, who were lightly armed and highly mobile, easily able to avoid defeat by slipping away into the desert. Perhaps the most important factor in the Seljuqs' success, however, was the cooperation of local elites in many of the key cities of Khurasan. Sick of Ghaznavid misrule, which was notorious for its heavy taxes, oppressive spy network, and periodic religious intolerance, many Khurasanis decided the Seljuqs offered a welcome respite. By 1040, a last Ghaznavid attempt to recapture the province was repulsed by Chaghri at the Battle of Dandanqan, and the major towns of Khurasan were in Seljuq hands.

THE GREAT SELJUQ EMPIRE, 1040–1157

No sooner had Tughril and Chaghri consolidated their empire than they divided both their existing and expected future conquests. Most of the territories already under Seljuq control went to Chaghri, who made his capital the oasis city of Merv, not far from the site of his victory at Dandanqan. Tughril was allotted the lands of Iran and Iraq to the west, as yet unconquered. This east-west division continued in some form for most of the Great Seljuq Empire's existence and was characteristic of steppe empires where sovereignty was seen as resting more with the ruling clan as a whole than an individual. Similar arrangements can be observed among the Seljuqs' Turkish contemporaries, the Qarakhanid dynasty, and their predecessors, the Gök Türks. We know very little about Chaghri's rule in eastern Khurasan, for it was Tughril who was the focus of medieval historians. Gradually conquering Iran over the following decade, Tughril swapped his customary title of amir for the greater honor of sultan, indicating his aspirations to be regarded as an Islamic monarch. In 1055 he seized Baghdad, the seat of the Abbasid caliphs, the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad whose exalted lineage had allowed them to claim suzerainty over the entire Islamic world. By the eleventh century, however, this claim was largely theoretical, with the caliphs themselves controlled by the military elites who had seized power over Iraq, of which the Seljuqs were merely the latest incarnation. By the time of his death, in 1063, Tughril was thus ruler of a vast swath of land comprising roughly the modern territories of Iran and Iraq.⁷

Tughril owed his success as much to the acute political divisions among his enemies as to his military superiority. The ethnically Iranian Buyid dynasty, which enjoyed

nominal suzerainty over much of Iran and Iraq, was divided into rival branches in different provinces, all vying with one another and with local strongmen for superiority.⁸ Tughril's forces were often invited in by local elites who sought to use Turkish military power to gain the upper hand in their own disputes. As a result, the Seljuq conquest constituted a gradual infiltration whose effects were probably at first barely perceptible. Usually, established local dynasties were left in place, subject to payment of a suitable tribute to the Turks, who generally retained existing bureaucrats as tax collectors and administrators. Hence, the Great Seljuq Empire came to comprise a bewildering variety of vassal dynasties.

Thus, despite the nomads' reputation for violence, the Seljuq conquests were often effected peacefully and with the acquiescence of the local population—or at least their elites. Even Tughril's capture of Baghdad was arranged in advance with the caliph's vizier (chief minister); the latter preferred the rule of the Turks, who at least nominally adhered to Sunnism and thus recognized the Abbasids as legitimate successors (*khalifa*, i.e. caliphs) to the Prophet Muhammad and the Muslim community. In contrast the Buyids as Shiites rejected the Abbasid claim to the caliphate. This is not to say the Seljuq conquests were accomplished without disruption. On occasion, Tughril did besiege cities that did not willingly come to terms, most notably Isfahan, and his armies still largely comprised marauding bands of Turkmen who were not easily controlled. Tughril's relationship with these nomads grew strained as it became increasingly difficult to reconcile his traditional role as a Turkmen chief, leading his followers to pasture and plunder, with his new title of sultan, symbolizing his ambition to be seen as a ruler in the Irano-Islamic tradition. Regular campaigns with Christendom on the empire's frontiers in Anatolia and the Caucasus served in some measure to meet the nomads' need to plunder and to distract them from raiding inside Tughril's newly acquired Muslim territories. Even so, several Turkmen revolts broke out against Tughril and his immediate successors, and these posed a greater threat to the new dynasty than any external opposition. A tension between mutual sentiments of interdependence, antipathy, and loyalty characterized relationships between the Turkmen and Turkish rulers throughout the age of the Seljuqs.

After Tughril died without progeny, the eastern and western halves of the empire were unified under Chaghri's son Alp Arslan (r. 1063–73), an exceptional arrangement that continued under Alp Arslan's son Malik Shah I (r. 1073–92). The reigns of these two sultans are thus commonly considered the apogee of the Seljuq sultanate. Alp Arslan spent most of his decade as sultan on campaign, pushing the borders of the Great Seljuq Empire farther into Central Asia, Syria, and, most famously, into Anatolia with his great victory at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, where he took captive the Byzantine emperor Romanus Diogenes.⁹ This relentless expansion continued under Malik Shah, who extended the empire's territories from Palestine to Central Asia, where the Turkish Qarakhanid state was reduced to vassal status. The Arab historian Ibn al-Athir (d. 1233) recounts that the famous vizier and Khurasani bureaucrat Nizam al-Mulk, chief minister to both Alp Arslan and Malik Shah, forced an unfortunate Byzantine ambassador

who had been dispatched to Iran to accompany Malik Shah on his campaigns across Asia as far as Kashghar in what is now China:

And Nizam al-Mulk took him with them to Transoxiana, and he was present during the conquest of that land, and when he reached Kashghar, Nizam al-Mulk gave him permission to return to his land, saying, "I would like the chronicles to mention of us that [the ambassador of] the Byzantine king brought his tribute (*jizya*) and sent it as far as the gates of Kashghar, so that he would inform his master of the extent of the sultan's realm, and his awe of him would increase."¹⁰

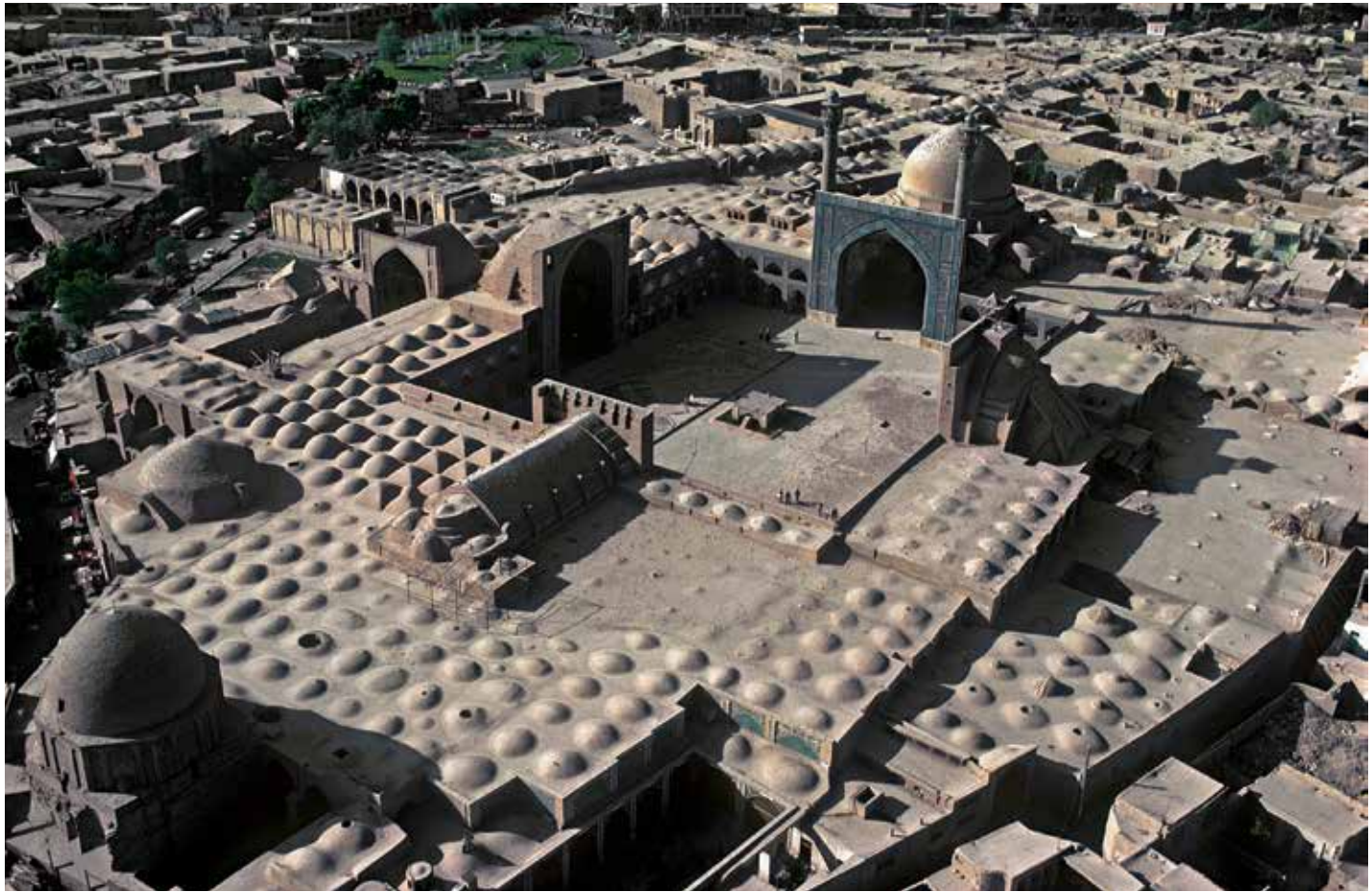


Expeditions as far south as Yemen and as far west as Cairo were launched, although these areas were never incorporated into the empire. Such campaigns were often headed by the Turkmen who had served in the vanguard of Seljuq expansion. Now, however, the Seljuq armies also employed other types of troops, including the slave soldiers favored by other Middle Eastern states, signifying the dilution of the Turkmen's military role.

The empire began to change in other ways under Malik Shah. Because Tughril and Alp Arslan had spent so much time on campaign, they effectively had no formal capital. Malik Shah, however, adopted a more sedentary lifestyle, turning the western Iranian city of Isfahan, where he spent almost half his reign, into the center of the Seljuq realm and putting the dynasty's mark on it through extensive building works (figs. 3, 4).¹¹ In contrast to his predecessors, Malik Shah was much more unambiguously an Islamic sultan than a Turkmen chief. This transformation is commonly attributed to Nizam al-Mulk. Especially under the comparatively youthful Malik Shah, the vizier acquired vast authority over not only bureaucratic matters but also religious and even military affairs. Contemporaries called him "the man who built the Seljuq state"; one chronicler remarked that his position "was not just [that of] a vizierate, it was above the sultanate!"¹² Nizam al-Mulk's power owed much to the vast network of patronage that he controlled, ensuring that senior positions throughout the empire went to his Khurasani allies and his own descendants. For many of the Seljuqs' subjects in western Iran and

Fig. 3. North domed hall of the *masjid-i jami'* in Isfahan, commissioned by the vizier Taj al-Mulk (A.H. 481/A.D. 1088–89)

Fig. 4. Aerial view of the *masjid-i jami'* in Isfahan. The four *iwans* and north and south domed halls were added in the Seljuq period (late 11th–early 12th century)



the Arab lands, the empire seemed as much Khurasani as Turkish, and they bitterly resented their domination by the Khurasani elites.¹³

Posterity has bequeathed an image of Nizam al-Mulk as the ideal vizier, owing primarily to his own treatise, the *Siyasatnama* (Book of governance), a masterpiece of medieval Persian prose, which purported to advise Malik Shah how to run an empire on the traditional Irano-Islamic model espoused by earlier Khurasani dynasties such as the Samanids and the Ghaznavids. Yet even in the field of bureaucracy, where Iranians are thought to have predominated, the Seljuq system was quite distinct from its antecedents, introducing new offices and practices reflecting the Seljuqs' Turkish heritage. The dynastic insignia consisted of a stylized bow and arrow known in Turkish as a *tughra*, a symbol of authority on the steppe, which was inscribed on both coins and documents.¹⁴ One of the most senior bureaucratic offices of state was the *tughra'i*, responsible for affixing this seal to documents—a completely new position invented under the Seljuqs. Another innovation was the office of atabeg, a Turkish word denoting the guardian of a prince; atabegs tended to be senior amirs (Turkish military commanders), who were given charge of a prince's training in the arts of war and rulership, but the title was also held by Nizam al-Mulk himself.¹⁵

Even where older local institutions continued with the same names, their function often changed considerably under the Seljuqs. The Seljuq political system was thus rather



Fig. 5. Alamut Valley, Daylam province, Iran

more Turkish and less Iranian than Nizam al-Mulk suggested. Unfortunately, most surviving contemporary sources were written by members of the Persian-speaking bureaucratic classes, who stressed the Iranian and Islamic aspects of Seljuq rule, which they saw as rooted in the practice of prestigious earlier dynasties, and drew a veil over the (to them) alien Turkish, steppe elements. Thus, although Turkish, Iranian, and Islamic elements coexisted, both in terms of institutions and personnel, it can be hard to appreciate fully the Turkish contributions. As a contemporary Turkish proverb put it, “A Turk is never without a Persian, just as a cap is never without a head.”¹⁶

Nizam al-Mulk’s ascendancy under Malik Shah marked the beginning of a process in which the sultan’s powers would become increasingly circumscribed by court factions. Even though in the latter part of his reign the sultan seems to have turned against his vizier, he was not able to dispense with Nizam al-Mulk entirely. Malik Shah’s successors would be weaker still, beholden to competing factions of bureaucrats and amirs who used succession disputes among four rival candidates for the sultanate to enhance their own power, resulting in civil war (1092–1104). As in other Islamic monarchies of the period, there were no fixed succession arrangements. In theory any male member of the Seljuq family could become sultan. Efforts by rulers to designate a successor during their lifetimes were rarely respected after their death. As a result, there was a wide pool of candidates who could credibly claim the sultanate, and the bureaucratic and military factions that held sway at court preferred to support youthful, inexperienced candidates who could be manipulated easily. It is symptomatic of the shift in power in the Great Seljuq Empire that although Turkmen forces were employed by various sides in the civil war, the Turkmen themselves do not seem to have played a significant role in the jostling for power.

Distracted by the internecine fighting, the contenders for the sultanate paid little attention to the arrival of the Crusaders on the periphery of their domains and their

Fig. 6. Aerial view of the medieval Seljuq city of Merv and its citadel, Shahryar Ark. The ruins of the palace can be seen at front center of the walled area of the citadel.

seizure in 1098 of the city of Antioch. The causes of the Crusades are complex and rooted in medieval European as much as Middle Eastern history, but the immediate justification for the First Crusade was the Seljuq advance, in particular their defeat of the Byzantines at Manzikert in 1071 and their capture of Jerusalem in 1072. Pope Gregory VII had planned a campaign to help the Byzantines as early as 1074, yet it took another two decades to come to fruition. In 1095 Pope Urban II finally inaugurated the First Crusade to rescue the holy places from the “barbarians in their frenzy [who] have invaded and ravaged the churches of God in the eastern regions.”¹⁷

Neither Anatolia nor Syria, the main regions affected by the Crusades, were especially important to the Great Seljuqs, whose empire remained centered on Iraq, western Iran, and Khurasan, where contemporary writers barely registered the emergence of the new Frankish threat. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058–1111), for instance, the greatest Muslim intellectual of his day and a recipient of Seljuq patronage, had virtually nothing to say about the Crusades in his voluminous writings; rather, his work concerned the internal regeneration and reform of Islam. In some respects, Seljuq rule actually facilitated the Crusader advance. The civil war exacerbated bitter rivalries among the Turkish amirs, who generally proved incapable of sustaining a united front against the invaders.¹⁸ Further, much of Syria was controlled by the descendants of one of the unsuccessful Seljuq con-

tenders for power, Tutush, whose relations with Malik Shah’s successors remained distant. The Syrian Seljuqs on occasion even sought alliances with the Crusaders. Delegations of Syrian Muslims made their way to Baghdad to plead for aid against the Crusaders but, despite the Seljuq court poet Mu’izzi (1048–1125) urging the sultan “to make polo-balls out of the Franks’ heads,” little response was forthcoming.¹⁹



Eventually Sultan Muhammad Tapar (r. 1105–18) emerged from the chaos as supreme ruler of the Great Seljuq Empire. Although Muhammad was praised by medieval Muslim chroniclers as a pious warrior for Islam, he too paid only scant attention to Frankish dominance in Syria, where by now Crusader principalities had been established over the formerly Seljuq territories of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Edessa. Instead, Muhammad’s religious wars were directed internally against the Nizari Ismaili branch of Shiite Islam, whose leaders in Iran had, in the chaos of the civil war, been able to seize control of several strategic strongholds, including one just outside Muhammad’s own capital of Isfahan. Yet even here Muhammad’s efforts met only with partial success, and he failed to take the remote Ismaili strongholds in the Alborz Mountains, in particular Alamut, which formed the



basis for an Ismaili state within Seljuq territory (fig. 5). Indeed, this Ismaili state even outlasted the Great Seljuq Empire, finally meeting its demise at the hands of the Mongols in 1256.²⁰ Ismailis also had a strong presence in northern Syria, where they frequently collaborated with the Syrian branch of the Seljuq dynasty, Tutush's descendants.

Muhammad Tapar was the last Great Seljuq ruler in the west. On his death, the title of supreme sultan (*al-sultan al-mu'azzam*) was adopted by his younger brother Sanjar (r. 1118–57), who remained based in Khurasan, where he had been governor. In some respects Sanjar's reign was remembered as a second apogee of the Great Seljuq Empire. The sultan made the city of Merv home to an opulent court that offered patronage to the leading poets and scholars of the day (fig. 6). Sanjar's lavish patronage is also illustrated by the vast mausoleum he had built for himself at Merv (fig. 7), and by the various caravanserais (fig. 8) he had built across Khurasan both to serve as royal residences and to facilitate trade. Yet from the 1130s onward, severe external and internal crises emerged that would eventually combine to destroy the empire. Another nomad dynasty, originating from Manchuria, known to the Muslim sources as the Qara Khitay and to the Chinese as Western Liao, had been gradually encroaching westward during the twelfth century, displacing other nomadic groups en route. By the late 1130s the Qara Khitay had reached the eastern peripheries of Islamic Central Asia, causing chaos among the nomadic subjects of the Seljuqs' Qarakhanid vassals. Forced to come to the aid of the Qarakhanids, Sanjar was decisively defeated at the Battle of Qatwan (near Samarqand) in 1041. The sultan fled from the field of battle in ignominy, leaving a vast quantity of booty and even his wife captive in the hands of the Qara Khitay. News of the defeat reached Europe, where hopes were raised that the pagan Qara Khitay leader, Yelü Dashi, was actually Prester John, the mythical Christian king of the East, whom medieval Europeans hoped would save Christianity from the depredations of the Turks.

Despite the humiliating defeat at Qatwan, Sanjar and his empire survived. However, the Qara Khitay did not go away, and their presence on the borders of the Seljuq

Fig. 7. Mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar (center) and the Lesser and the Greater Kiz Kalas, Merv

Fig. 8. Ribat-i Sharaf Caravanserai, Khurasan (12th century)

empire continued to destabilize it. Sanjar's vassal Atsiz, ruler of the remote territory of Khwarazm, took advantage of the Qara Khitay presence to assert his own authority as an independent ruler, even briefly claiming the title of sultan—the first time a rebel from outside the Seljuq family had dared to do this. His ambitions were doubtless fueled by his alliance with the Qara Khitay ruler. Despite repeated campaigns, Sanjar was never able to reduce Atsiz to permanent obedience, and Atsiz's short-lived ambitions to be recognized as sultan paved the way for his descendants, who later in the twelfth century would revive this claim as the Khwarazm Shah dynasty. Moreover, Atsiz seems to have been able to assert himself as an alternative focus for the loyalties of the nomads of the steppe, in place of Sanjar. The sultan's deteriorating relationship with the nomads came to a head much farther south, in the town of Balkh, in modern Afghanistan. Forced off their traditional territories by the Qara Khitay and infuriated by excessive tax demands from Sanjar's governor, the Turkmen in Balkh revolted in 1151, defeating Sanjar's army the following year, occupying Merv itself and, most dramatically of all, capturing the sultan.

This Turkmen revolt struck the definitive blow against the Seljuq empire in Khurasan, which, contemporary sources reported, was a scene of utter devastation as nomadic groups rampaged at will. Sanjar died in 1157 shortly after his release from three years' captivity with the Turkmen, and attempts by several Seljuq claimants to reestablish the empire in Khurasan came to nothing. The territory remained fragmented among various contenders for much of the rest of the twelfth century. In some towns, Sanjar's amirs established themselves as rulers—others were subject to Turkmen chiefs—while Atsiz's descendants started to build their own Khwarazm Shah Empire in



Khurasan, which they would dominate until the next great nomadic invasion—that of the Mongols in the 1220s and 1230s.

In western Iran and Iraq, however, the Seljuq sultanate survived for another half century, owing to this region's distinct political history. At the beginning of his reign, Sanjar and his army had marched west in an attempt to exert direct authority in Iran and Iraq, reviving the unitary empire of Alp Arslan and Malik Shah. Such an ambition proved to be impractical, however: Sanjar was opposed by military and bureaucratic elites in the west who, seeing him as a threat to their positions, rallied around various sons of Muhammad Tapar. Faced with the prospect of defeat, Sanjar was forced to recognize a junior sultan to rule over the territories of Iraq and western Iran, known collectively as the Sultanate of Iraq, formalizing the split in the empire that had *de facto* existed for most of its history. These sultans of Iraq, Muhammad's sons Mahmud (r. 1118–31) and Mas'ud (r. 1134–52), were beset by political and financial problems that Sanjar seems to have done his best to exacerbate. The root of the Sultanate of Iraq's weaknesses was the system of payment for military and bureaucratic service, which took the form of revenue from grants of land, known as *iqta's*; these *iqta's* could comprise a relatively limited area, such as a single city, but they could also consist of entire provinces. The *iqta'* holder was thus on one level simply the tax farmer of a given locality, but in practice was also roughly equivalent to governor, residing in his *iqta'* and responsible for its administration. Seljuq princes were often allotted provinces as *iqta's*, both to provide an income and to allow them to be educated as rulers under the tutelage of an atabeg, with their *iqta's* serving as their training ground. In practice, given that such princes were usually young children, this meant effective rule was delegated to the atabeg, most often a Turkish amir.

Iqta's provided in principle a cheap, self-financing way of administering the empire, as the treasury did not have to find cash to pay salaries for *iqta'* holders; the downside was that the more that land was parceled out as *iqta's*, the less land was available for the state as a revenue source. It was land that provided the bulk of the empire's revenue (or the sultan's—the two cannot readily be distinguished). Sultans Mahmud and Mas'ud were beholden to the factions that had brought them to the throne, whose leaders had to be paid in *iqta's*, thereby further reducing the sultan's own revenue and power, as one chronicler put it, until “everything that belonged to the sultan was given out in *iqta'*.”²¹ Many *iqta'* holders set themselves up as *de facto* independent rulers, and by the mid-twelfth century, large swaths of the Seljuq sultanate were outside of any kind of central control—major provinces such as Fars and Azerbaijan in Iran as well as the Jazira (the “island” between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in northern Iraq, northern Syria, and southeastern Turkey), were all effectively detached from the sultanate, which became restricted to western Iran. The Abbasid caliphs also took advantage of Seljuq weakness to seize control of Baghdad and its surroundings. Even in their remaining western Iranian territories, the sultans had no real room for independent maneuver. From the 1150s onward, the Seljuq sultans were kept in office simply to provide legitimacy to the Ildegüzid dynasty of Turkish atabeg-amirs from Nakhchivan (r. ca. 1135–1225),

who were the effective rulers of the Rum Seljuq sultanate but who did not dare to call themselves sultans—testimony to the powerful mystique that continued to surround the Seljuq dynastic name. A last-ditch effort by Tughril III (r. 1176–94), the final Seljuq sultan in the west, to assert his independence was defeated by an alliance of Abbasid, Ildegüzid, and Khwarazm Shah forces. With Tughril III's death on the battlefield, the Seljuq Sultanate of Iraq disappeared from history, and the Ildegüzids finally claimed the title of sultan for themselves.

The second half of the twelfth century was thus characterized by extreme political fragmentation across Seljuq, or formerly Seljuq, lands.²² Nonetheless, the region maintained a broader cultural unity. Most provinces or towns, both in Khurasan and the west, were controlled by Turkish amirs who had originally served in the Seljuq military. Although some were rapacious and destructive, others took a long-term view, seeing their province or *iqta'* as a permanent power base. For instance, in the late twelfth century the amir of Nishapur, al-Mu'ayyad Aya Aba, a former slave of Sanjar, was praised by medieval historians for facilitating trade and increasing the town's prosperity.²³ These amirs also sought to enhance their own prestige by creating regional courts modeled on the Seljuq precedent, which acted as centers for artistic and cultural patronage. Indeed, although the chronicles depict the period as one of incessant warfare and political chaos, the later twelfth century witnessed a remarkable florescence of artistic production, engendered by competition among the multiplicity of petty courts trying to assert their own prestige and legitimacy. Furthermore, a new audience for works of art seems to have developed outside the court; lower-grade artifacts were produced, sometimes en masse, for what is presumed to have been a middle-class audience. This suggests that despite the often turbulent political conditions in the wake of the collapse of the Great Seljuq Empire, many parts of the region remained—or became—prosperous.²⁴

THE SELJUQ SUCCESSOR STATES, 12TH AND 13TH CENTURIES

In almost all of the territories the Great Seljuqs ruled, they were succeeded by dynasties that in some sense had their origins in the Seljuq empire. In Khurasan, the Khwarazm Shahs (1183–1231) were descended from a military slave appointed as governor of Khwarazm by Malik Shah, although on founding their own empire the Khwarazm Shahs did not emphasise their connection to the Seljuqs. The Kurdish Ayyubid dynasty, which ruled Egypt and Syria (1174–1260), had first risen to prominence as amirs in the service of the Seljuqs. The dynasty's founder, Salah al-Din (d. 1193), famous as an opponent of the Crusaders, was actually born in Tikrit, Iraq, where his father was fortress governor on behalf of the Seljuqs. The Ayyubids employed numerous bureaucrats from Iran and Iraq who had fled the collapse of the Great Seljuq Empire, and thus many aspects of Ayyubid administration and organization were reminiscent of the Seljuqs.²⁵

It was, however, in Anatolia and the Jazira that the Seljuq legacy survived most strongly, and these regions form our focus here. Parts of Anatolia had been ruled by a

branch of the Seljuq family since the late eleventh century, and the Jazira was ruled by two Turkish dynasties that had originated in the Great Seljuq state: the Artuqids, of Turkmen origin, and the Zangids, atabegs who, like the Khwarazm Shahs, had originated as military slaves.²⁶ They derived legitimacy from their connection to the Great Seljuqs, from whom they also borrowed many aspects of their political organization, and likewise comprised collections of appanages held by members of the same family based in a variety of different cities. This was also true, albeit to varying degrees, of Seljuq Anatolia.²⁷ Unlike the Great Seljuqs, all these dynasties were based on or near the peripheries of the Islamic world, ruling over substantial Christian populations and with close links—sometimes friendly, sometimes hostile—with Byzantium and the Crusaders. With the Mongol invasions in the 1220s and 1230s, which reshaped the political map of the Middle East, the Seljuq successor states became decreasingly significant politically. The new era was marked by competition between two superpowers: the Mongol state based in Iran and led by a branch of descendants of Genghis Khan, known as the Ilkhanate (1256–1339), and the Mamluks of Egypt and Syria (1250–1516). By the mid-thirteenth century, the age of the Seljuqs as a political force was over.

The Seljuqs of Anatolia (ca. 1081–1307)

The most prestigious of the Seljuq successor states was the Seljuq Sultanate in Anatolia (known in Arabic and Persian as Rum, after which it is sometimes called the Seljuq Sultanate of Rum). Turkmen bands had been infiltrating Anatolia since the 1040s, but

Turkish rule originated in the wake of the Great Seljuq sultan Alp Arslan's famous 1071 victory over the Byzantines at Manzikert. After the battle, Byzantium descended into civil war, which allowed groups of Turkmen to establish themselves across Anatolia. The seizure in 1081 of the western Anatolian city of Nicaea (modern Iznik) by Alp Arslan's cousin Sulayman b. Qulumush is traditionally

thought to mark the beginnings of the Anatolian Seljuq dynasty. The latter's relations with the Great Seljuqs were tense, and they also had to contend with several other Turkmen groupings who had based themselves in this distant frontier of the Muslim world. Initially the Seljuq polity was restricted to western and central Anatolia, with the



Fig. 9. The mosque-mausoleum complex at Konya, on the Alaeddin Tepe



coasts remaining in Byzantine hands and the east dominated by the Danishmendid Turkmen state.

This period is an almost total blank in the Muslim historical sources: no literature of any kind in Arabic or Persian is known to have been composed in Anatolia until the late twelfth century, and the region was beyond the purview of the chroniclers of the Great Seljuqs. Indeed, local Christian sources (Greek, Armenian, and Syriac), not Muslim, provide the relatively few details that exist about the early Seljuqs of Rum. Latin Crusade histories are also important, for Anatolia lay on the route of the First and Second Crusades to the Holy Land, and the Crusaders frequently clashed with the Turks.²⁸ It is these Latin sources that, referring to this new ethnic component of Turks, first give Anatolia the name by which it is known today—Turquie, or Turkey.

Despite the scant sources, it seems clear that Seljuq Anatolia in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries was more or less devoid of the typical attributes of Islamic civilization. The early Anatolian Seljuq state seems to have had only the most limited administrative structures. Few of its early rulers even minted their own coins, and there was probably no Persianate bureaucracy as adopted by Seljuq rulers in Iran and Iraq. Even mosques are almost entirely unknown in Anatolia from this period, suggesting a very limited Muslim population. Konya, which became the Seljuq capital after the Crusaders' capture of Nicaea in 1097, probably remained a predominantly Christian city, although the surrounding plains were heavily populated by Turkmen.

This picture began to change under Sultan Kılıç Arslan II (r. 1156–92), as the Seljuqs started to expand to both east and west at the expense of both Byzantines and Danishmendids, emerging by the 1170s as the dominant Muslim power in Anatolia. Evidence for the first Muslim constructions in Konya—mosque, palace, and dynastic mausoleum—appears during this time (fig. 9). Literature, especially Persian, began to

Figs. 10, 11. The portal (left) and interior courtyard (right) of the caravanserai of Sultan Han, near Aksaray (founded 1229)

develop under Kılıç Arslan II's patronage. Culturally, Anatolia became much more integrated into the Muslim world, and the prestige of the dynasty was further enhanced by the collapse of the Seljuq sultanate in Iran with the death of Tughril III in 1194, which left the Anatolian Seljuqs as the last surviving heirs to the Great Seljuq Empire. Their control of both the Black Sea and the Mediterranean coasts of Anatolia, secured in the second decade of the thirteenth century, allowed the development of commerce, which was supported by the construction of caravanserais (figs. 10, 11) by members of the elite (most likely on the sultan's orders).²⁹ A sophisticated court culture developed with the construction of palaces decorated with elaborate tile work (fig. 12; see also cats. 20a–g). The reign of Sultan 'Ala' al-Din Kay Qubad I (r. 1219–37) marks the apogee of the Anatolian Seljuq state. The ambitious Seljuqs campaigned as far afield as the Jazira and the Crimea, and the construction of a naval dockyard at Alanya signified their aspiration to be taken seriously as a Mediterranean power (fig. 13). Yet these expansionist tendencies were always carefully limited. The frontier with Byzantium remained largely stable, and there is no sign that Kay Qubad or any other Anatolian sultan of the thirteenth century aspired to restore the Seljuq empire of their cousins in Iran and Iraq, even if in their titles they claimed to be rulers of the entire world, just like the Great Seljuqs before them.³⁰

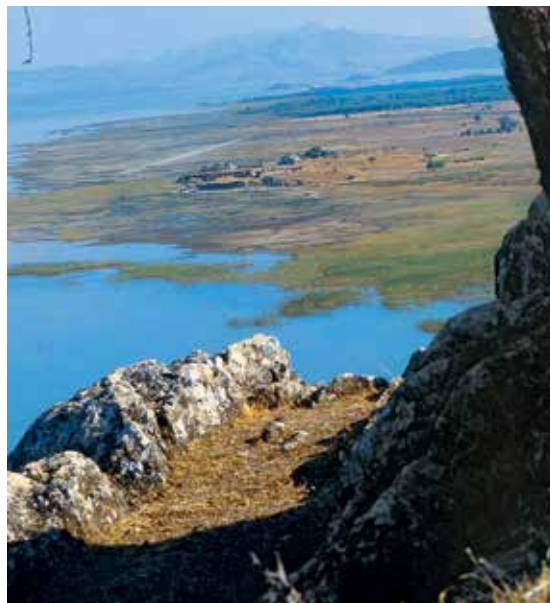


Fig. 12. The Kubad-abad palace complex of the Rum Seljuq sultan Kay Qubad I at Lake Beyşehir, Central Anatolia

Fig. 13. The shipyard at Alanya

The last years of Kay Qubad's reign were overshadowed by the Mongol invasions of the Middle East. Even before the sultan's death, a Mongol reconnaissance unit had penetrated as far as central Anatolia. Kay Qubad offered tribute, and Anatolia was saved from the Mongols' attentions—but not for long. As a poem recorded by the main chronicler of the Anatolian Seljuqs, Ibn Bibi, put it: "Since the day that great Kay Qubad died, no one has brought pleasure to mind, / Everything has deteriorated, both the subjects and the military are powerless, / All happiness went to oblivion when the king stepped down from the throne."³¹

The Anatolian Seljuq state was wracked with internal strife—a disputed succession and then a massive rebellion by the Turkmen, led by a self-proclaimed holy man named Baba Ishaq, which convulsed Anatolia for several years. These crises were exacerbated by the growing Mongol interest in Anatolia. At the Battle of Köse Dağ in 1243, Kay Qubad's ill-starred successor Ghiyath al-Din Kay Khusraw II (r. 1237–46), suffered a humiliating defeat by the Mongols. The sultan saved himself by fleeing the battlefield, leaving it to his officials to make what terms they could with the victors.³² Initially the Mongol yoke was comparatively light. The Seljuqs were permitted to reign as tribute-paying vassals of the Mongol Empire (an arrangement the Mongols instituted in other parts of the Middle East, such as Georgia). The accession of a new sultan, however, had



to be ratified by the Mongol khan. A visitor from western Europe, the friar Simon de Saint-Quentin, who passed through three years after Köse Dağ, was favorably impressed by the land's prosperity and the sultan's wealth. He described Anatolia as having nearly one hundred cities, numerous silver, copper, and iron mines, and a textile industry that exported its products as far afield as France and England.³³

From the 1250s, however, the impact of Mongol rule increased as suzerainty over Anatolia was transferred from the Golden Horde, the Mongol state in southern Russia and the steppes north of the Black Sea, to the Ilkhans, the branch of Genghis Khan's descendants who had established themselves as rulers of Iran. The Ilkhanid capital was Tabriz, close to eastern Anatolia, and the Ilkhans established a summer palace at Aladağ, north of Lake Van. The Mongols' biggest strategic problem was finding sufficient pastures for the horses on which their war machine relied, to enable them to prosecute their war against the Mamluk sultanate of Syria and Egypt, their main rivals in the Middle East. Pasture was in short supply in much of the region and was abundant only in northern Iran and Anatolia. The Ilkhans therefore stationed large numbers of troops in Anatolia, with two consequences. First, Anatolia became a sort of front line between the Mongols and the Mamluks, with one Mamluk attack in 1277 reaching deep into its heart to seize the central city of Kayseri. Second, the Mongols' use of Anatolian pastures destabilized the Anatolian Turkmen. Forced out of their traditional grazing lands, the Turkmen led frequent revolts against the Ilkhans, often claiming to be acting on behalf of the puppet Seljuq sultan, and sometimes even allying themselves with the Mamluks. Driven to the peripheries of Anatolia beyond the reaches of the Ilkhanid armies, the Turkmen started to form the principalities that would dominate Anatolia in the fourteenth century, of which the Ottomans were one.

Throughout the second half of the thirteenth century, power lay not in the hands of the Seljuq sultans—of whom the Ilkhans appointed as many as three at one time³⁴—but with Mongol officials. These included both Mongol-appointed bureaucrats at the



Fig. 14. Çifte Minareli Madrasa, Sivas (founded 1271 by the Ilkhanid minister Shams al-Din Juwayni)

Seljuq court, such as the *pervane* (chief minister) Mu'in al-Din Sulayman, who was the effective ruler of Anatolia up to 1277, as well as Ilkhanid military and fiscal officials who were posted to Anatolia. Religious officials, too, such as the *qadi* (chief judge) of Sivas, the celebrated Iranian scientist and philosopher Qutb al-Din Shirazi (d. 1311), were appointed from Iran. In addition, some senior members of the Ilkhanid elite had investments in Anatolia, sponsoring building programs that included the construction of mosques, hospitals, and madrasas (fig. 14), thereby transforming the appearance of Anatolian cities, making them much more Islamic.³⁵ Thus Mongol-ruled Seljuq Anatolia witnessed something of a cultural and artistic florescence. Indeed, the earliest history of the Seljuqs of Anatolia to survive, the *al-Awamir al-'Ala'iyya*, which idealized the reign of Kay Qubad, was composed by a bureaucrat in the Seljuq service, Ibn Bibi, for a senior Ilkhanid official, 'Ata Malik Juwayni. Although this idealization of a glorious Seljuq past continued into the fourteenth century, the political irrelevance of the Anatolian Seljuq sultanate is underlined by the fact that our sources barely note its end. Sometime around 1307, it seems, the last Seljuq sultan died, and the Ilkhans simply did not bother to replace him.

The Artuqids (ca. 1102–1409)

In contrast to the Seljuqs of Rum, the Artuqids ruled lands that had been part of the Islamic world since the Muslim conquests of the seventh century, albeit still with a substantial, perhaps even majority, Christian population. The Artuqid dynasty was based in

what is now southeastern Turkey in the northern part of the Jazira. The Artuqids traced their descent to the Turkmen chief Artuq, who was active in Syria and the Jazira in the late eleventh century. The real foundation of Artuqid power, however, came in the first years of the twelfth century, when Artuq's sons Sökmen, Yaquti, and Najm al-Din II-Ghazi established themselves in the Jaziran towns of Hisn Kayfa (Hasankeyf; figs. 15, 16), Mardin (fig. 17), and Mayyafariqin (Silvan), a *fait accompli* that the Seljuq sultans in Iraq, distracted by civil war, were obliged to acknowledge.³⁶ The relationship of the early Artuqids to the Great Seljuqs was complex. The Artuqids never explicitly repudiated Seljuq authority, and II-Ghazi (r. in Mardin 1107–22) fought the Franks in Syria at the behest of Sultan Muhammad Tapar. Yet II-Ghazi was at times reluctant to join these campaigns unless he saw a direct benefit to himself. In effect, he was able to act as an independent ruler, and efforts by Muhammad Tapar to impose his will by force on II-Ghazi were defeated. By the time of his death, in 1122, II-Ghazi controlled a broad swath of the Jazira and had been involved in campaigns as far north as Georgia and south into Syria. The Artuqids had become a substantial regional power, nominally part of the Great Seljuq Empire but *de facto* independent.



Fig. 15. Detail of the bridge of Hisn Kayfa (modern Hasankeyf) showing the reliefs of two standing attendants

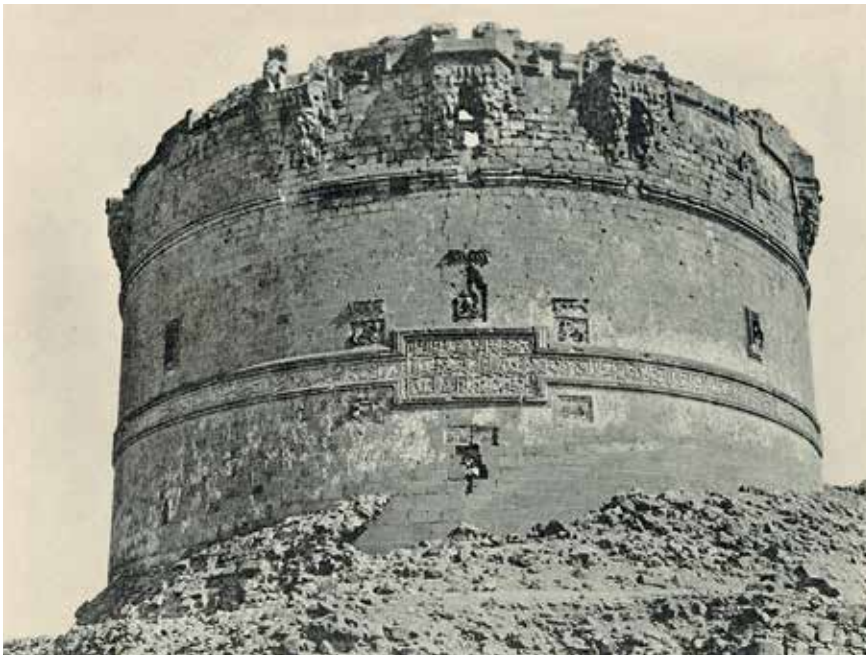


Fig. 16. Overall view of the bridge and city of Hisn Kayfa (modern Hasankeyf)



Fig. 17. View ca. 1899 of the hillside city of Mardin

Fig. 18. View ca. 1930 of Ulu Beden tower, built by the Artuqid ruler Mahmud in 1208–09 and formed part of the city walls of Amid (modern Diyarbakır)



Il-Ghazi's death, however, was rapidly followed by the rise of the Zangids based at Mosul, which stymied Artuqid ambitions for expansion; they lost considerable territory to the Zangids, effectively becoming Zangid vassals. Nevertheless, the Artuqids survived the Zangids and a host of other dynasties by the simple expedient of recognizing the overlordship of the dominant power at the time. Thus, after the Zangids, the Artuqids became vassals to first the Ayyubids of Syria, then the Seljuqs of Anatolia. Caught on the front line between the Seljuqs and the Ayyubids, the Artuqids had lost most of their territory by the eve of the Mongol invasions in the 1230s. Even so, a

branch of the dynasty managed to survive at Mardin until as late as 1409, and a branch of the Ayyubids held on to nearby Hasankeyf as late as 1516, only finally surrendering the principality to the Ottomans.³⁷ It was thus in this corner of the Jazira that the Seljuq successor states survived the longest.

The Artuqid polity maintained a strongly Turkish character. Najm al-Din II-Ghazi remained reliant on nomadic Turkmen troops, who depended on the winter pastures around Mardin, and campaigns had to be arranged around this ecological necessity.³⁸ The dynasty also stressed its Turkish character through the use of ancient Turkish titles, which its rulers regularly deployed on inscriptions (fig. 18).³⁹ Like other Turkish dynasties, rule was vested in the Artuqid family rather than a single individual, with branches of the family governing different towns. Although the Artuqid state was rather small and weak after the reign of II-Ghazi, the Artuqid courts were major centers of artistic output. Indeed, their political and military weakness may have encouraged Artuqid rulers to portray themselves as champions of Islam through their patronage of the arts rather than on the battlefield.⁴⁰

The Zangids (1127–1251)

The most significant of the Muslim adversaries that the Crusaders encountered in Syria were the Zangids, who took their name from their dynastic founder, 'Imad al-Din Zangi (r. 1127–46).⁴¹ Zangi's career illustrates the opportunities the medieval Islamic world offered Turkish commanders of relatively humble backgrounds. His father had been a military slave owned by Malik Shah who had advanced to the position of governor of Aleppo. Zangi was initially employed in the service of the various Turkish amirs of Mosul, rising to become in 1127 governor of that city as well as atabeg and guardian to two Seljuq princes. Zangi used Mosul as a base from which to extend his control into Syria and the Jazira. His main achievement against the Franks was his conquest in 1145 of the Crusader county of Edessa (modern Şanlıurfa, Turkey), an event regarded as cataclysmic by the Franks and which sparked the Second Crusade. However, the capture of Edessa came only at the end of Zangi's career; in reality, most of his conquests were at the expense of other Muslim rulers. He also continued to intervene in the affairs of the Seljuq Sultanate of Iraq, where he was a major power broker.

Despite Zangi's reputation as a warrior for Islam, the Islamic chroniclers often portrayed him in distinctly negative terms. In an age when violence and drunkenness were de rigueur for Turkish amirs, Zangi stood out as a brutal psychopath with a penchant for young men. One chronicler tells us that he was murdered by his slave retinue when drunk—the slaves being captive scions of Christian nobles, castrated by Zangi to prolong their youthful looks.⁴² His son Nur al-Din Mahmud b. Zangi (r. 1146–74) is remembered with a somewhat better reputation. He continued Zangi's counter-crusade yet, like his father, Nur al-Din concerned himself primarily with consolidating his own control. In 1154 he conquered Damascus and finally united most of Syria under his rule, but the achievement was short lived, for after Nur al-Din's death most of Syria fell to the Ayyubids. The Zangids continued to rule in the Jazira, however, with different

branches of the family controlling Mosul, Sinjar, Shahrazur, and Jazirat Ibn ‘Umar (Cizre) until the Mongol invasions. In Mosul the Zangids were overthrown by one of their own military commanders, an Anatolian-Armenian slave soldier named Badr al-Din Lu’lu’ (r. 1211–59). Although he established himself as atabeg on behalf of the Zangid princes, Badr al-Din Lu’lu’ in reality became an independent ruler, making Mosul the center of a glittering court as well as a hub for artistic production (fig. 20). Early thirteenth-century Mosul became especially famous for its metalwork.⁴³

Perhaps the most important legacy of Zangid rule was its economic transformation of Syria and the Jazira after a period of long decline. In particular, Nur al-Din Zangi sponsored a massive program of construction in urban areas. City walls, fortifications, hospitals, mosques, educational institutions, and markets were built on an unprecedented scale (fig. 19). Areas that had been abandoned came under cultivation again, new glass and ceramics industries emerged, and state policy played a much more active role in shaping the economy and society.⁴⁴ Zangid rule thus transformed not just the economy but also the physical appearance of cities in the region.



Fig. 19. Entrance portal of the hospital complex of Bimaristan al-Nuri, Damascus (built 1154 by the Zangid ruler Nur al-Din)

Fig. 20. Early 20th-century view of Mosul from the Qara Saray, with the Tigris River, the city walls, and the mausoleum of Imam Yahya visible in the distance



RELIGION IN THE AGE OF THE SELJUQS

The age of the Seljuqs witnessed profound religious change across the Islamic world. Increasing numbers of non-Muslims embraced Islam, whether out of conviction, desire for personal advancement, or economic reasons (non-Muslims were obliged to pay higher taxes).⁴⁵ The most significant group of converts—the Turks—originated from the fringes of Islamic territories or beyond, the non-Muslim steppe where the exigencies of Islamic rule did not apply. The pre-Islamic Turks followed a variety of different faiths, including shamanism. Among the elite of the Khazar state where the Seljuqs originated, Judaism was practiced, and some of the first generations of the Seljuq family had names redolent of the Old Testament, such as Mikha'il (Michael), Dawud (David), or Isra'il (Israel). In later generations these were replaced by purely Muslim or Turkish names—Muhammad Tapar, an Arabic-Turkish compound, for instance—suggesting that at least some Seljuqs may well have converted to Islam not from shamanism but from Judaism. In addition, Christianity had spread among various groups of Turks, and this same period of conversion to Islam also saw some nomadic Turks—including, it seems, some Oghuz—embrace Christianity.⁴⁶

The decision of Seljuq and his band of followers to become Muslim was emulated by numerous other steppe Turks of the period. The Arab historian Ibn al-Athir (d. 1233) describes how in 1043, some ten thousand tents of Turks converted en masse.⁴⁷ Although subsequently occasional groups of pagan Turks were recorded in contemporary sources, especially those dealing with Central Asia, it seems that the overwhelming majority of Turks associated with the Seljuqs had accepted Islam. Yet the Hanafi school of Islamic law to which the Seljuqs and most Turks belonged put a very low bar on the requirements for converts: the Hanafis recognized as Muslim anyone who affirmed belief in Islam, even if he or she knew nothing of the Qur'an or any of the religious duties of the faith.⁴⁸ It is likely, therefore, that many of these Turkish converts had only the most elementary understanding of Islam. Further, studies of Muslim Turkmen in twentieth-century Turkey suggest that pre-Islamic beliefs survived into modern times, so we can imagine, if not prove, that these elements formed an even more prominent part of the worldview of many Turkmen in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries.

The medieval Muslim world was divided both religiously and politically between adherents of the Sunni and Shi'a branches of Islam, whose origins date back to seventh-century disputes over dynastic succession via the Prophet Muhammad. By the eleventh century the disputes had increasingly come to be distinguished by institutional as well as doctrinal differences. Tension between Sunnis and Shiites frequently resulted in public disorder, especially in Baghdad. After having overthrown the Shiite Buyids, the Seljuqs were able to position themselves as defenders of Sunni Islam and the institution of the Abbasid caliphate. Older scholarship tended to accept these claims, defining the Seljuq reign as a "Sunni revival" following a period of Shiite domination of much of the Islamic world in the tenth century. More recent research has concluded that this image of the Seljuqs as defenders of Sunnism must be heavily discounted. As noted earlier, the Seljuqs did very little to stem the Crusader advance, various contenders for the sultanate even availed themselves of the support of the Ismailis, and Seljuq relations with the Abbasid caliphs were often tense or even openly antagonistic. Shiites generally lived unmolested in Seljuq domains (especially in western Iran, Iraq, and the region around Aleppo in Syria), and some achieved positions of great power and influence, even serving as viziers to the Seljuqs. When it suited him, Tughril flirted with Shiism and was capable of acts of impiety such as deliberately razing mosques. Yet the Seljuqs were never quite able to dispense with the caliphs, who, as descendants of the Prophet, lent a degree of legitimacy to the invaders. Equally, the caliphs, although bitterly resentful of the way their actions were circumscribed by the Seljuqs, never quite felt able to repudiate them given their own lack of military strength and economic resources and the danger presented by Shiite powers, which included both local dynasties within Iraq and the Fatimid dynasty of Egypt (909–1171), whose rulers rejected entirely the legitimacy of the Abbasid caliph.

In their personal behavior, too, the Seljuqs did not exactly live up to their billing as pious Muslims. Despite the Islamic ban on alcohol, drinking formed an important part of the lifestyle of the elite; this was true of the courts of the Seljuqs and their successors as well as those of many of their contemporaries and predecessors. The Arabic and Persian chronicles abound with stories of rulers' drunkenness: Alp Arslan, Sanjar, and Zangi are all among the many rulers tales of whose drinking exploits have come down to us. Indeed, the Seljuqs' reputation for piety has been dubbed by one scholar "the Seljuq dynastic myth."⁴⁹

The Zangids adopted a similar policy of promoting themselves as defenders of Sunni Islam while in practice evincing a rather more conciliatory attitude. As rulers of territories on the frontier with the Crusader states, and with a significant, perhaps majority, Shiite population in Aleppo, one of the principal cities of the Zangid realm, both 'Imad al-Din and Nur al-Din Zangi asserted themselves as Sunni rulers in their propaganda. One way in which this was manifested was through the building of madrasas, colleges dedicated to the teaching of Islamic law (although in practice students might study a wider range of subjects there, including literature, theology, and history). Madrasas, which first emerged in the eastern Islamic world in the early eleventh century



Fig. 21.
Gumushtegin
Madrasa, Bosra
(built 1136 by a
Zangid general)

and later spread westward, becoming the quintessential Muslim institution of learning (fig. 21), had earlier been sponsored in the Great Seljuq lands by Nizam al-Mulk. The vizier seems to have intended them to serve as part of his patronage network, providing jobs and opportunities for allies, and they certainly do not seem to have formed any part in the original promotion of Sunnis against Shiites.

The most vigorous opponents of madrasas were initially Baghdad Sunnis of the scripturalist Hanbali law school.⁵⁰ Yet the madrasa quickly became an accepted part of life in Baghdad and many other Seljuq cities. In various places, the institution mutated. The Shiites of Iraq, for example, developed a very similar institution, which they called the *hawza*. In some regions, madrasas may have served as vehicles for Islamization,⁵¹ but they also seem to have become increasingly associated with state attempts to promote a certain authoritative version of Islam. That, at any rate, was the way it was perceived in Syria: when Sunni rulers tried to build madrasas in Aleppo during the day, the Shiite population pulled them down at night. Nonetheless, the Zangids were generally tolerant of their Shiite population. When Nur al-Din took anti-Shiite measures, it seems to have been a result of pressure from local elites—in particular the Sunnis of Damascus, whose support he had required to take and hold the city.⁵² Similarly, the Great Seljuq Muhammad Tapar's anti-Isma'ili policy, and indeed even his construction of madrasas, seems to have been born of the need to secure the support of the elites of Isfahan.⁵³ Both cases are reminders that these medieval Turkish rulers relied on the consent and active collaboration of local elites to maintain their power.

A further illustration of the need to secure a degree of popular assent during this period is reflected in the increasingly close relationship between rulers and men of religion, especially Sufi holy men. Sufism, a mystical approach to Islam that promised to



Fig. 22. Rumi mausoleum complex, Konya

lead the Muslim believer to knowledge of and, ultimately, union with the divine through the guidance of a Sufi holy man, was becoming increasingly popular among Muslims of all social strata. The sophisticated philosophical speculations of some Sufis offered the intellectual elite a new way of understanding humanity's place in the divine creation, drawing on the legacy of Platonic thought. The most famous exponent of this type of Sufism was an Andalusian émigré named Ibn al-'Arabi (1165–1240), one of Islam's greatest thinkers, who resided for a while at the Seljuq court in Konya. At the same time, other Sufis appealed to a much more popular audience, preaching in the local vernacular rather than in Arabic and deriving their influence from their status as holy men who were perceived to be able to channel divine power. The Seljuqs appear to have been the first rulers actively to court the support of the Sufis in exchange for both popular legitimacy and spiritual rewards in the form of the blessings (*baraka*) a holy man could confer. For the holy man, the ruler's support both brought material benefits and confirmed the former's worldly as well as spiritual authority.⁵⁴ These features can be seen very clearly in the career of the most famous Sufi holy man of the period, Jalal al-Din Mawlana, also known as Rumi (1207–1273), who lived in Konya under the Anatolian Seljuqs (fig. 22). While Rumi's Persian poetry—both his lyric poems and his great Sufi epic the *Mathnawi*—offered spiritual insights and lessons, his prose correspondence addressed to senior figures in the Anatolian Seljuq state, both Seljuq sultans and Mongol-appointed officials, was preoccupied with mundane matters such as securing tax relief or exemption for his followers and soliciting gifts and grants. The ability of holy men like Rumi to secure significant funding from members of the elite, along with the undoubtedly popular appeal of their teachings, led to the increasing institutionalization of Sufism in the Seljuq age, with the emergence of *tariqas*, orders of Sufis based on their allegiance to a given holy man—of which the Mevlevis (the followers of Rumi)

Fig. 23. “Map of the World,” bifolio from the *Diwan lughat al-Turk* (Compendium of the Turkic dialects) of Mahmud al-Kashgari, 1076. Millet Genel Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (Ali Emiri, Arabi no. 4189; fols. 22–23)

are among the most well known. Both holy men and *tariqas* played an important if imperfectly understood role in the spread of Islam among non-Muslims in Anatolia and other frontier regions of the Islamic world.⁵⁵

SOCIETY, LANGUAGE, AND CULTURE IN THE AGE OF THE SELJUQS AND THEIR SUCCESSORS

Turkish settlements in the Middle East were concentrated in northern Iran, Anatolia, and northern Syria, areas with the rich pastures needed by the nomads in order to maintain their transhumant lifestyle. Although Turkish was the everyday language of the military and the court, the Seljuqs and their successor states relied on either Arabic or Persian, or a mixture of both, for formal administrative purposes. Thus, almost no Turkish-language literature was produced in the Seljuq territories: a single extant monument is a Turkish-Arabic dictionary produced in Baghdad in the late eleventh century, dedicated to the caliph al-Muktafi, advising him to learn the language of the conquerors, “because their reign will be long.”⁵⁶

Yet such a course was not inevitable, for in the Qarakhanid territories of Central Asia a Turkish-language Islamic literary tradition did emerge in the late eleventh century (fig. 23).⁵⁷ Apart from the question of prestige, the explanation lies in the Turks’ status in the Middle East. Research on Seljuq Iran has stressed how the Turkish military elite and their followers tended to live apart from the settled population, often setting up camp outside a town where they could graze their flocks.⁵⁸ There were clear advantages to separating the civilian and military populations, for occasional efforts to billet some Turkish soldiers in towns led to breakdowns in public order, as happened when the



Seljuqs first occupied Baghdad. Thus the Turkish and indigenous populations led quite separate lives, even if city dwellers often purchased the Turkmen's animal products and nomads purchased farm-grown staples they themselves could not produce, such as grain.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the numbers of Turks were probably relatively small. Even in Anatolia in the mid-thirteenth century, after nearly two centuries of Turkish rule, one contemporary estimated that only one in ten of the population was Muslim, the rest presumably comprising the Christian Greek and Armenian population.⁶⁰ Under these circumstances, it is natural that the Turkish language did not spread beyond the nomads, the military elite, and the rulers. Instead, the Turkish elite increasingly came to be at home in Arabic and/or Persian. Whereas Tughril I knew only Turkish, relying on his Khurasani vizier Kunduri to translate for him, later sultans were proficient in Arabic, and Tughril III even had a reputation as a fine Persian poet. In the Jazira and Syria, the Zangids and Artuqids used Arabic as their administrative and literary language, whereas Syriac (an Aramaic dialect) was favored among the Christian population and was also important as a medium for the transmission of scientific books into Arabic.⁶¹ More complex still was the situation in Anatolia, where in most places Greek probably remained the spoken lingua franca—Persian poetry from the region sometimes included Greek verses transcribed into Arabic script, suggesting that Muslims used the language also. The Seljuq chancery in Anatolia certainly had a department that produced correspondence in Greek, and possibly one for Armenian as well, for dealing with neighboring rulers. For literary works, however, Persian remained the preferred language while, as elsewhere in the Middle East, Arabic remained the standard medium for religious, scientific, and philosophical writing.

It was in fact the Persian, not Turkish, language that was the major beneficiary of Seljuq expansion. Persian had emerged as a literary language in Central Asia during the tenth century, but its use in the administration was at first contentious, and in large parts of what is now Iran, especially its west, Arabic remained the dominant medium of written communication until the Seljuq period. One of the main effects of the Seljuqs' importation of bureaucrats from Khurasan to the west was the popularization of the lingua franca of Khurasan, Persian, in other regions. The Seljuqs' patronage of Persian also spread the language into Anatolia, where it remained the principal literary and administrative language throughout the fourteenth century and subsequently retained an important role in the Ottoman Empire as well.

The Seljuq period witnessed a great flowering of Persian literature. The various Seljuq courts in Iran, Iraq, and Central Asia lavishly patronized poets; indeed, poetry counted among the most enduring cultural monuments of the Great Seljuq Empire. 'Umar Khayyam (d. 1131), whose quatrains (*Ruba'iyyat*) were popularized by Edward Fitzgerald's nineteenth-century free translation into English, remains the best known of these figures outside of Iran, although there his reputation rests primarily on his achievements as a mathematician and astronomer (see pp. 166–67). The rich tradition of Persian panegyric verse patronized by the court idealized sultans, bureaucrats, and occasionally amirs; didactic poetry also thrived. Further, Persian was adopted by authors

writing on scientific and religious themes when they wanted to attract the attention of the court. Thus, although al-Ghazali composed his great defense of Sufism, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (The revival of the religious sciences) in Arabic, he also wrote a Persian abridgment apparently destined for his Seljuq patrons.

One form of literature that does not seem to have prospered under the Seljuqs was historical writing, in contrast to later dynasties. Apart from the *Maliknama*, discussed earlier (see p. 5), which seems to have been based on oral Turkish legends surrounding the Seljuqs' origins, there is little evidence that the Seljuqs patronized historical writing. The earliest chronicle to survive intact, the short Persian *Saljuqnama* (Book of the Seljuqs) by Zahir al-Din Nishapuri, dates from the late twelfth century and was probably written to provide the youthful Sultan Tughril III with exemplary models based on his ancestors' conduct. In Anatolia, too, there is a dearth of historical writing until the very end of the thirteenth century, by which point the Anatolian Seljuqs were virtually an irrelevance politically. The Artuqids were commemorated in a local chronicle from Mayyafariqin by a certain Ibn al-Azraq al-Fariqi, written in Arabic, but they do not seem to have commissioned any works of history themselves. The Zangids fared slightly better, being the subject of a chronicle by the famous Mosul historian Ibn al-Athir, who was also commissioned by Badr al-Din Lu'lu' to write a vast universal history in Arabic, *al-Kamil fi l-Ta'rikh* (The complete history).⁶² Nonetheless, the sum total of historical production under these dynasties is consistently small, and scholars are to a large extent reliant on later sources for information about them.

Notwithstanding this lack of patronage of chronicles, the Seljuqs and their successors evinced a considerable awareness of and interest in the past. The public rhetoric of all these dynasties as expressed in panegyric poetry relied extensively on allusions to the pre-Islamic Iranian past as well as other ancient paragons of heroism and kingship.⁶³ For instance, the court poet Mu'izzi praised Sanjar's victorious campaign against Ghazna, comparing the sultan to the Macedonian conqueror Alexander the Great, the ancient Iranian hero Rustam, and the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law 'Ali b. Abi Talib (559–661), the epitome of chivalric virtues in Islamic tradition:

The spirit of Alexander envies the sultan of the world Sanjar, for the sultan of the world Sanjar exceeds Alexander in glory.

Alexander in his lifetime never made such conquests in the world as the sultan of the world Sanjar has in this year. . . .

The valour he has shown in Ghazna and Kabul is not equalled by Rustam among the Persians nor Haydar ['Ali b. Abi Talib] among the Arabs.⁶⁴

In Anatolia, the thirteenth-century Seljuq sultans began to adopt the names of ancient Iranian kings such as a Kay Qubad and Kay Kawus, and the very name of Rum for Anatolia evoked the heritage of ancient Rome and its successor, Byzantium, whose people continued to call themselves Rhomaioi (Romans). The classical heritage of Greece and Rome was also incorporated into art and, especially, architecture in Anatolia, Syria and the Jazira, through both the reuse of elements of classical architecture (figs. 24, 25)



Fig. 24. The ancient Greco-Roman theater at Aspendos, modern Turkey, reused by the Rum Seljuqs as a palace



Fig. 25. Detail of the facade of the Rum Seljuq stairwell at Aspendos showing traces of the characteristic zigzag pattern employed by the Seljuqs to designate their ownership of palatial buildings

and the incorporation of Roman and Byzantine imagery onto coinage (see cats. 14a–l).⁶⁵ The cult of Alexander was widespread throughout the Middle East; the Persian poet Nizami (d. 1209) composed a celebrated epic about him. This interest in Alexander has also been associated with the use of classical motifs on Artuqid coins.⁶⁶ Greek and Iranian traditions blended together in the work of the philosopher Shihab al-Din Yahya al-Suhrawardi (d. 1191), who served an Artuqid ruler and perhaps the Anatolian Seljuqs, promoting in his Arabic and Persian writings the Platonically influenced ideal of the ruler as a philosopher-king endowed with cosmic knowledge.⁶⁷ Indeed, some of the innovations in architecture during the period seem to reflect the aspirations of Turkish rulers to assert a new status. For example, the introduction of Iranian-style domes in mosques in the Artuqid lands provided the ruler a much more prominent position at

prayers.⁶⁸ Heroic legends of the Turkish past were also alluded to in the Turkish titles used by some of the Seljuq successor states. However, rulers who sought to portray themselves as great universal monarchs, such as the Great Seljuq sultans themselves, avoided using the Turkish titles preferred by smaller local dynasties like the Artuqids, instead sticking to Arabic ones. Thus the sultans who had laid claim to universal rule tended to express this in purely Islamic terms, and Turkish titles were restricted primarily to petty princes, suggesting a certain cultural hierarchy whereby Islamic values trumped Turkish ones.⁶⁹

THE SELJUQ LEGACY

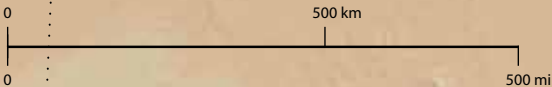
The Seljuqs were the first in a long series of Turkish dynasties that dominated the Middle East up to the early twentieth century; among the most famous were the Ottomans (ca. 1300–1923) in Anatolia, the Balkans, and the Arab lands; and the Timurids (1370–ca. 1507), Safavids (1501–1722), and Qajars (1785–1925) in Iran. The Seljuq synthesis of Turkish traditions with Iranian and Islamic ones was emulated, to varying degrees, by all these dynasties. Institutions first introduced to the Middle East by the Seljuqs were also adopted by these later dynasties. For instance, the calligraphic insignia called the *tughra*, which had originated as a stylized bow and arrow, was used by the Ottoman Empire to its end. Versions of the atabeg institution, under different names, were found in both the Ottoman and the Safavid states, and the title was even used under the Qajars. The *iqta'* survived in various forms until the nineteenth century, and the madrasa, first spread by the Seljuqs, remains an important educational institution in many parts of the Muslim world today.

Later generations idealized the Seljuqs both for their reputation as pious Sunnis and for the prestige of the Seljuq name. For Iranian bureaucrats serving the Mongol Ilkhans, the Seljuqs must have seemed a model of how to encourage the acculturation of a nomad dynasty to Irano-Islamic civilization. After the disappearance of the Seljuq states, several writers in Anatolia composed histories commemorating the dynasty, and numerous rulers in politically fragmented fourteenth-century Anatolia claimed Seljuq descent. Ottoman myths surrounding the emergence of their own empire stressed the dynasty's origins in the Seljuq Sultanate of Rum, to which the Ottomans claimed direct succession via appointment by the last Seljuq sultan. A similar interest can be observed in Timurid Iran, where authors also composed verse histories of the Seljuqs, which they dedicated to the current Turkish rulers, suggesting that the example of their predecessors remained relevant into the fifteenth century. The Seljuq legacy continues as a means of legitimizing modern states. In Turkmenistan, for example, the memory of the Seljuqs is invoked on public symbols such as currency. Modern Turkey sees itself as the descendant of the first Turkish state in Anatolia, and Alp Arslan's victory at Manzikert is commemorated by the Turkish government to this day.⁷⁰



The Seljuq Lands, 11th–14th Century

● City ○ Modern capital





60°E

Aral Sea

Syr Darya (Jaxartes)

KHWARAZM

Kone-Urgench

Khiva

Amu Darya (Oxus)

TRANSOXIANA

Tashkent

Bukhara

Samarqand

Afrasiyab

Merv

Dashrabad

Sarakhs

Ribat-i Sharaf

Balkh

Termez

Khulbuk

Gunbad-i Qabus

Gurgan

Mashhad

Nishapur

K H U R A S A N

Herat

Jam

Bamiyan

Kabul

Ghazni

Kubatchi

Tabriz

Maraghe

A Z E R B A I J A N

Qazvin

Alamut

Kharragan

Tehran

Sava

Rayy

Hamadan

Nihavand

Qum

Kashan

Natanz

J A B A L

Isfahan

Susa

Yazd

Basra

Bishapur

Istakhr

Shiraz

Siraf

Kirman

S I S T A N

Lashkari Bazar

Lahore

P U N J A B

Delhi

Indus

SINDH

RAJASTHAN

GUJARAT

Muscat

O M A N

Arabian Sea

GOA

P E N I N S U L A

Caspian Sea

Persian Gulf





Catalogue



Sultans of the East and the West

The Seljuqs were not the first Turks to conquer significant portions of Central Asia and Iran, nor were they the only Turks to move westward into Anatolia in the Islamic period. At its greatest extent, about 1030, the Ghaznavid Empire stretched from northern India to Hamadan, in western Iran, and Turkish nomads had also begun to populate Anatolia well before the arrival of the Seljuqs. Additionally, in the Arab world, at the caliphal courts of Baghdad and Samarra, Turkish slaves formed a significant and sometimes unruly segment of the Abbasid army. To varying degrees these pre-Seljuq Turks may or may not have influenced the ways in which the Seljuqs wished to project not only power but also a distinct identity.

In keeping with the traditions of regime change in the Muslim world, the Seljuqs minted coins in their own names.¹ While the name of the reigning caliph also appeared on their coins, the attachment of specific titles such as “the great sultan, the greatest king of kings, pillar of the religion” (see cats. 4a–h) to their proper names provides an insight into their position in relation to the caliph and perhaps into their own view of themselves. The caliphs conferred these titles on the Seljuqs and, reflecting the sultans’ status, their honorifics increased until the accession of Sultan Sanjar in 1118 and the myriad political and territorial disputes of the Seljuqs in the twelfth century.

In their heyday the Great Seljuqs styled themselves as temporal rulers who were also the protectors of the Muslim faith and its representative, the caliph. By contrast, the Seljuqs of Rum and the Artuqids and Zangids in Anatolia, the Jazira, and Syria varied the information on their coins depending on the metal—gold, silver, or copper (see cats. 14a–l). Whereas most gold coins include epigraphic information, including rulers’ names, at least one gold, some silver, and many copper coins feature figural imagery borrowed from sources such as Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and Sasanian coins. Yet only a few exceptional examples may refer specifically to the ruler whose name is inscribed on the obverse; generally the figural imagery does not signify the ruler or his dynasty.

The Seljuqs similarly projected their power, wealth, and faith through architecture, consolidating forms and practices that antedated their rule.² Inscriptions and textual references ascribe various major monuments to the patronage of the sultans, their viziers, and

other prominent members of society. Much has been made of the Seljuq construction of madrasas as a vehicle for reestablishing Sunni Islam in Iran, but mosques, minarets, free-standing tomb towers, and caravanserais also characterize Seljuq royal patronage. In the Jazira, Syria, and Anatolia of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Seljuq successor states commissioned a great variety of buildings, including hospitals, baths, bridges, and lodges (*hans* and *khanqahs*) as well as mosques, madrasas, and mausoleums. These structures would have signaled the Seljuq appropriation of the territory while serving the practical needs of the population.

Little is known of how the Great Seljuq rulers would have decorated their palaces or even how much time they spent in the built environment.³ Yet stucco sculpture (cats. 1a–j), ranging from near lifesize figures to smaller heads, suggests that rooms in which court functions occurred contained reminders of the supreme position of the sultan in relation to his subjects, some of whom were princes of lesser dynasties, amirs, or *ghulams*. As with items of daily use, the range in size of these sculptures may indicate that amirs or wealthy people emulated at a less extravagant level the interior decoration of the sultan's palaces, or that the smaller figures represented lesser servants of the court.

With the Rum Seljuqs and other Seljuq successor states in Anatolia, Syria, and the Jazira, some luxury items associated with rulers reflect the strong influence of Byzantine and other Christian art (cat. 6), while others are more in keeping with the stylistic traditions of Iran or the Arab world of Syria and Iraq. Through their luxurious textiles (cat. 5), inlaid metalwork (cats. 8, 12a, b, 13a, b), and richly illuminated manuscripts (cats. 2a–c, 9–11), the rulers would have communicated not only their authority but also their sophisticated taste and erudition, even when their political positions were precarious. In contrast to the extant portable objects of the Great Seljuqs, those of the successor states broadcast their names and titles through inscriptions glorifying them as just and wise warriors for the faith.

What explains the differences between the arts of the Seljuqs in Central Asia and Iran versus those of the Seljuq successor states? Certainly the environment of Iran and the mission of the Seljuqs to defeat the Buyids and the Ismailis and to obtain caliphal recognition contrasted with that of Anatolia, Syria, and the Jazira, in which the Seljuqs and their successors fought or made accommodations with the Mongols, Byzantines, and other Christian powers. Through the settled populations of Christians and Turks in Anatolia and the Jazira, the Seljuqs and their atabegs would have been more in contact with the culture of the eastern Mediterranean than the Great Seljuqs had been. Throughout the Seljuq lands the indigenous populations of Iranians, on the one hand, and Turks, on the other, provided a workforce for the Seljuqs, including skilled architects and craftsmen through whom artistic ideas were filtered. These interactions as well as the passage of time and the different situations they encountered at various stages of their conquests may account for the distinctions between the art of the Great Seljuqs and that of the Seljuqs of Rum and the successor states. Nonetheless, across western Asia in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, thanks to the Seljuqs, shared architectural forms, standards of workmanship, and modes of presentation formed the basis for a highly dynamic, inspired period of artistic production. **SRC**



a



b

1a–j

Nine Stucco Figures and One Fragment from Iran

Standing Figure with Jeweled Headdress (a)

Iran, 12th–early 13th century
Gypsum plaster; modeled, carved, polychrome-painted, gilded
56½ × 20¼ in. (143.5 × 51.5 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lester Wolfe, 1967 (67.119)

Standing Figure with Feathered Headdress (b)

Iran, 12th–early 13th century
Gypsum plaster; modeled, carved, polychrome-painted, gilded
47 × 20½ in. (119.4 × 52.1 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Cora
Timken Burnett Collection of Persian Miniatures and
Other Persian Art Objects, Bequest of Cora Timken
Burnett, 1956 (57.51.18)

These nine figures and one fragment from Iran are believed to derive from a royal context.¹ As suggested by their iconography—jeweled headdresses, arms, rich vestments—and by similar images found in situ, they were probably meant to decorate the walls of the reception areas of palatine complexes, where they typically flanked or faced the enthronement area. They most likely represented the



Fig. 26. Wall painting of standing attendants, Ghaznavid palace, Lashkari Bazar (mid-11th century). The photograph was taken in the 1950s, before the paintings' removal to the National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul (not preserved).

personal guard, the viziers or amirs, and the courtiers of a sovereign, be it the Seljuq sultan or one of his local vassals or successors. In their regality and power, these figures convey the very essence of rulership and authority in the visual arts of the Great Seljuqs and their successor states.

These sovereigns are not known to have been portrayed in their time, in any medium (though they appear in later paintings illustrating their history; see cats. 2a–c). Their rulership was expressed and extolled via their names and titles, minted on coins or inscribed on the buildings commissioned by them or their subjects. To symbolize the authority of rulers, the visual vocabulary of the eleventh century employed depictions of their guards of honor holding weapons and, in the following century, of their amirs or viziers holding insignia of office. In addition, representations of courtiers, including musicians and dancers, evoked the luxury of the ruler's court.

The lack of historical inscriptions on the surviving stucco figures themselves or of sources disclosing their meaning has led some scholars to question the identity of the larger standing ones (e.g., cats. 1a, b)—variably understood as royal guards, princely figures,

and even a Nestorian priestess—as well as their connection to the court. However, similar depictions in wall paintings and stone bas-reliefs in coeval royal buildings support their interpretation as the ruler's personal guard of honor (Persian *ghulam-an-i khassagi*, Arabic *al-ghilman al-khassa*) or his viziers/amirs.² The earliest occurrence of such imagery is in the Ghaznavid palace at Lashkari Bazar (mid-11th century), where club-wielding militiamen in ceremonial attire, all unbearded and probably Turkish *ghulams* (here, slave servants or guards), appear in a wall painting positioned so as to face the ruler in his main reception hall (fig. 26).³

Other portrayed personages to have been thus interpreted assume a frontal stance that is even more similar to that of the stucco ones (cats. 1a–d): those on carved marbles from Ghazni (11th–early 12th century), each holding a club (e.g., fig. 27); and those carved in stone on the bridge of Hisn Kayfa (probably mid-12th century; figs. 15, 16) and in the niche from a palatine structure at Sinjar (Gu' Kummet, early 13th century), holding an array of objects (fig. 30).⁴ Each of these objects—maces, bows, curved swords, birds, poles, polo sticks, cups, and napkins—symbolized a specific post at court. They were granted to the *ghulams*

who were closer to the sovereign and would have been a constant presence at royal ceremonies.

The Gu' Kummet niche is thought to have been the actual seat of the patron in his reception hall, which clarifies that such depictions reproduced and boosted actual ceremonials in the very setting in which they took place. Moreover, it supports a direct association with royal authority for the other examples mentioned above. Such fully dressed figures were not meant to depict the ruler, as indicated by the reiteration of the personages and their identical or differentiated attributes. Rather, they symbolized the ruler's prerogative and possession, and they served to enact his presence, expressing his authority and prestige.⁵

Nevertheless, the stucco examples, which are known individually and detached from their original context, have sometimes been interpreted as princely on account of their jeweled headdresses. But rather than royal crowns, the latter are *kulahs*, the distinctive headgear, sometimes encrusted with silver and gold, worn by the Turkish guards of the Ghaznavids and Seljuqs and indicative of their rank.⁶ The use of metal-encrusted *kulahs* together with a distinctive belt (*kamar*) and robe (*qaba*) to denote military rank may be an innovation of the Seljuqs, for headdresses seem previously to have been more indicative of tribal affiliation and occupation.⁷



Fig. 27. Marble relief with double-headed eagles and a standing attendant holding a club, Ghazni (11th–early 12th century). Formerly in the National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul



Fig. 28. Entrance gate to the Syriac monastery of Mar Behnam, near Qaraqosh (mid-13th century)



Fig. 29. Stucco panel of Mar Behnam, Syriac monastery of Mar Behnam, near Qaraqosh (mid-13th century)



Fig. 30. Stone niche with reliefs of attendants from the reception hall of the palatine structure at Gu' Kummet, Sinjar (early 13th century), now in the Iraq National Museum, Baghdad (A3105)

Two more examples closely related to our figures have a direct royal implication on account of their architectural context, in both cases the reception area of a small palace or pavilion. Most importantly, they also show the broader, multifaceted decorative program of a

ruler's reception hall. The first comes from the Qara Saray in Mosul (after A.H. 631/A.D. 1234; attributed to Badr al-Din Lu'lu'), where small nimbed stucco busts are accompanied by vegetal patterns, eagles and other birds, inscriptions, and a scroll terminating in animals'

and birds' heads (fig. 31).⁸ The second example, a painting in the reception pavilion at Samarqand (late 12th century), is even more relevant, as it shows a larger assortment of figures that vary in size depending on their role in the composition.⁹ Such evidence also



Fig. 31. Stucco decoration from the reception area of the Qara Saray, Mosul (after A.H. 631/A.D. 1234). The sequence of small busts is below the inscription.

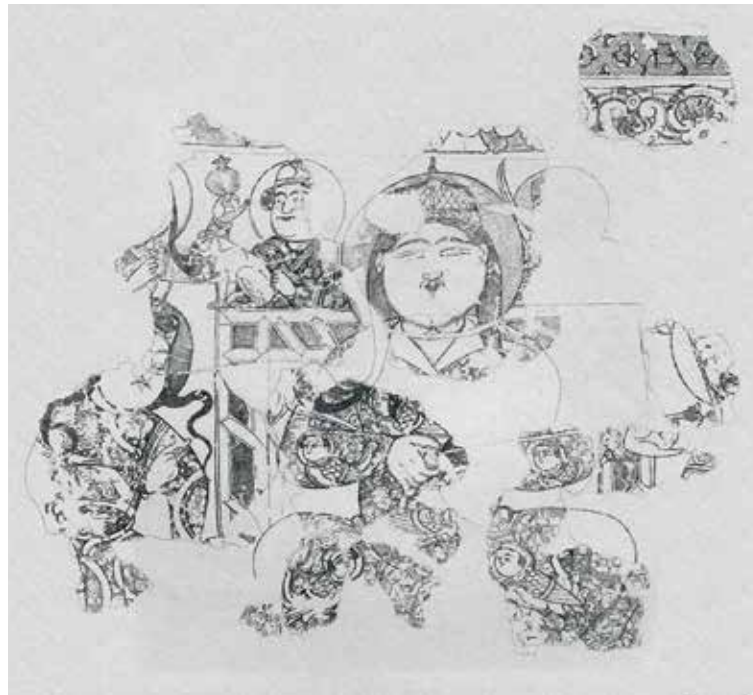


Fig. 32. Rendering of a late 12th-century wall painting of an enthroned figure and attendant from the reception hall at Samarqand



c



d

supports the hypothesis that the smaller gypsum-plaster figures in the group (cats. 1c, d) could have formed part of a larger composition that included not only royal guards but also courtiers engaged in various activities.

The Samarqand wall paintings, the subject of ongoing archaeological study, include bands with animal processions (a snow leopard, a panther, and fantastic beasts), a winged figure, an eagle, a human-headed animal, medium-size humans, smaller dancers and horsemen, and inscriptions in Arabic and Persian, sometimes with birds in the field. The focal point of the room—that is, where the Qarakhanid ruler would have sat enthroned, overlooking the entire reception hall—was the *suffa* (a small *ivan*), which was itself further enhanced by flanking paintings of large standing figures. One, a guard or courtier holding an arrow, has been reconstructed from the four that were there originally. Also revealing is the discovery in a lateral wall of what appears to be a

painting of a ruler—an arrow-wielding figure with a peculiar scaled-motif headdress, seated on a throne (fig. 32). Despite being smaller in size than the standing arrow bearer, he is surrounded by smaller figures, suggesting his supremacy.¹⁰ While the figure's identity will likely become clearer as on-site research continues, his position and dimensions provide a preliminary idea of the complexity of royal decorative programs.

The distribution of figures throughout the hall and their proportions offer a possible model for how the stucco figures were displayed in their original settings, with the larger ones positioned closer to the ruler, as royal guards, and the smaller ones (cats. 1c, d) representing courtiers engaged in or spectating at different activities performed for the entertainment of the ruler. The suggestion that the larger stucco figures represent the ruler's personal guards and amirs is lent further credence by painted manuscripts from the early and

Seated Figure with Jeweled Headdress (c)

Iran, 12th–early 13th century
 16¾ × 8⅞ in. (42.5 × 22.5 cm)
 Gypsum plaster; modeled, carved, polychrome-painted
 Victoria and Albert Museum, London (A.20-1928)

Standing Figure with Jeweled Headdress (d)

Iran, 12th–early 13th century
 20½ × 10⅝ in. (52 × 27 cm)
 Gypsum plaster; modeled, carved, polychrome-painted
 Victoria and Albert Museum, London (A.21-1928)



e

Head from a Figure with Beaded Headdress (e)

Iran, 12th–early 13th century
Fossiliferous limestone; carved, drilled
10 × 6½ in. (25.4 × 16.5 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Rogers Fund, 1933 (33.111)

Head from a Figure with Beaded Headdress (f)

Iran, 12th–early 13th century
8⅞ × approx. 6¼ in. (20.5 × approx. 16 cm)
Stucco; modeled, carved
Linden-Museum Stuttgart (A 37.662 L)

Head from a Figure with Beaded Headdress (g)

Iran, 12th–early 13th century
Stucco; modeled, carved
7⅞ × 7⅞ in. (20 × 20 cm)
Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London
(MXD 12)

Head from a Figure with Pointed Cap (h)

Iran, 12th–early 13th century
Gypsum plaster; modeled, carved
8½ × 5⅜ in. (21.6 × 13.7 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, 1942 (42.25.17)



f

mid-thirteenth century: the *Kitab al-diryaq* (Book of antidotes) and the *Kitab al-aghani* (Book of songs) each contain images of an enthroned sovereign surrounded by guards and officers.¹¹ In addition, accounts of royal Mamluk palaces in Cairo report that the *diwan* (reception hall) bore images of the sultan and his amirs, with their rank.¹²

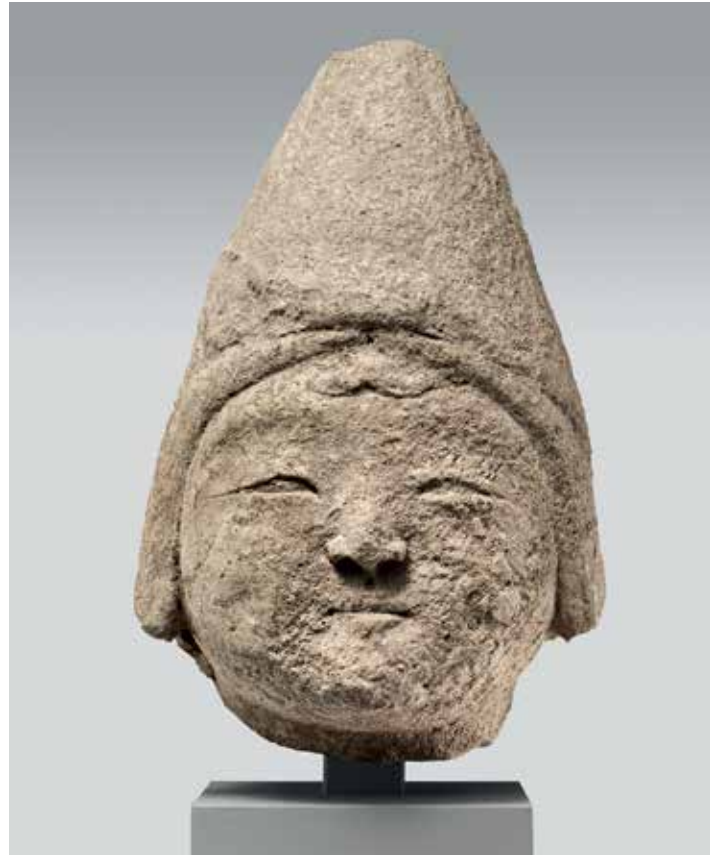
Among the extant images linked to royal authority, the standing figures show a chronological progression. The early Ghaznavid examples mentioned above assume exactly the same position, wear the same Turkmen-style belts and bags, and carry the same type of club (figs. 26, 27). Later examples, however, became more differentiated over time, each carrying a different object or insignia and often wearing different headdresses (cats. 1a, b; figs. 28, 30). This iconographic development may reflect the shift in status and position of court attendants, from less hierarchical Turkish *ghulams* in the mid-eleventh-century Ghaznavid state to more highly structured categories of attendants and amirs in the twelfth- and early thirteenth-century states ruled by the Seljuqs and their successors from Iran to Anatolia. During this period, former

ghulam commanders first were appointed atabegs of young princes and then eventually established their own family successions.¹³

Concurrent to these changes, the depiction of royal attendants was no longer linked exclusively to rulership. Northwest of Mosul, the Royal Gate of the church of Mart Shmuni, in Bakhdida/Qaraqosh (early 13th century), displays a seated figure at center dominating two lions, with standing attendants in trefoil niches. The composition, though still evocative of power, takes on a protective meaning, guarding the gate that connects the nave to the sanctuary in a Syrian Orthodox church.¹⁴ In about the mid-twelfth century, enthroned figures flanked by standing courtiers began to appear with frequency on inlaid metalwork and *mina'i* ceramics (see cats. 37, 68, 155). Although sophisticated, these objects were not a royal prerogative, as their extensive retrieval in urban sites attests, and therefore would have been widely accessible to the middle-class population. Such widespread diffusion may have diluted the potency of this royal imagery while maintaining a luxurious aura associated with courtly life.¹⁵



g



h

Stucco and Stone: Archaeological Evidence, Continuity of Traditions

The objects under examination here can be considered within the broader context of two uninterrupted architectural traditions in Iran and its neighboring regions: figural imagery and stucco decoration. The latter represents the seamless continuation into the Islamic period of Parthian and Sasanian carved and modeled stucco, especially well attested in Iran and the Jazira.¹⁶ It was in the twelfth century, however, that a renewed use of stucco emerged: a large number of mihrabs and vegetal and inscribed panels of this period are known, from Transoxiana to eastern Afghanistan and Khurasan, and from the northern and central regions in Iran (where the large number of preserved stuccos allowed for the identification of a “Kashan school”) to the Jazira (especially in the region of Mosul) and Anatolia.¹⁷ They often show a more pronounced use of volume that would dramatically increase in the fourteenth century.¹⁸

As for the tradition of figural images in the decoration of buildings, examples in modeled and carved stucco comparable to cats. 1a–j

are scarce compared with the rich evidence from the early Islamic periods, such as those from Chal Tarqan, Tepe Mel, and Nizamabad in Iran and from the Umayyad residential and agricultural complexes in the Syro-Palestinian region, in some cases, such as at Khirbat al-Mafjar, including three-dimensional, nearly freestanding figures.¹⁹ Nevertheless, they attest to a tradition that was never completely abandoned. Friezes representing camels adorned the Abbasid palace in Samarra and, broadening our view farther westward to the Mediterranean, several human and animal depictions were excavated from the palace at Sabra al-Mansuriyya, in Tunisia (mid-10th to mid-11th century).²⁰

Closer in geography and time to our figures—that is, from Khurasan and central Iran in the eleventh and twelfth centuries—are panels with fantastic creatures excavated at Termez; animals, from Khulbuk; two heads, one turbaned from Bishapur (fig. 33) and one with a jeweled headdress from Nishapur; and a hawk attacking a duck (see fig. 97) and the hand of a large figure (cat. 1j), both excavated at Rayy.²¹ Westward, in the Mosul area, figural

depictions in stucco occur in the early thirteenth century in a palatine context, namely the Qara Saray, as well as in Christian contexts. At the monastery of Mar Behnam, a stucco panel depicts the horse-mounted saint with angels, while another shows his sister, Mart Sara, in a standing frontal position (figs. 28, 29).²²

It is likely that the proliferation of stucco decoration in twelfth-century Iran galvanized the representation of figurative images in this medium as well. It was an impetus analogous in other media, for instance, the previously mentioned wall paintings in Lashkari Bazar and Samarqand, and also those in Khulbuk and Nishapur.²³

As for stone, high-relief carvings such as cat. 1e are scarcely attested in the architectural decoration of Iran, where the few known examples are flat bas-reliefs. Stone carvings were widely employed in Anatolia, in the area of Mosul, and probably in Baghdad (for instance, the Talisman Gate). Additionally, a local white marble was used extensively in Ghazni, the Afghan capital of the Ghaznavid and Ghurid dynasties.²⁴ Interestingly, the technique of cat. 1e does not attest to the use of the



i



j

toothed tools used in the stoneworking traditions of the regions west of Afghanistan, although the drill employed for the curls is not attested in Afghanistan; an Iranian origin is thus plausible.²⁵

Technical Analysis and Techniques

The majority of cats. 1a–j appeared on the art market between the mid-1910s and early 1930s, together with a number of other stucco figures and figurative panels attributed to the Seljuq period (see cat. 16).²⁶ About that time, surface color was added to satisfy the contemporary market aesthetic: the blues used in three of the figures were recently found to be synthetic ultramarine, and some of the reds appear to contain modern components. The remnant pigments—black, other reds, and gilding—could just as well be medieval as modern, making it difficult to confirm whether the paint was added to enhance extant polychromy (a crucial factor in most medieval decorative programs) or as an entirely modern addition.²⁷

Together with overpainting, repairs to and the filling in of missing parts were customary

restoration methods of the early twentieth century and were practiced extensively in the antiquities trade, including on all the objects illustrated here (with the exception of the archaeological fragment from Rayy, cat. 1j). This calls for caution when making observations, and rumors and accusations of forgery have, in the case of some stucco figures, proven to be correct.²⁸ The issue is complicated, as the whole group is without context, and scientific analyses cannot prove the dating of the gypsum plasters of which the figures are made (at least those that were analyzed). As a result, iconographic discussion of each figure must first take into consideration its provenance, as well as a mapping of the elements of which it is currently composed, including those related to different conservation efforts. Recent and ongoing investigations initiated on the occasion of this exhibition aimed to understand the composition of the materials, the techniques used, and the stratigraphy of interventions, as well as to compare the composition of objects that came through the art market with those unearthed through controlled archaeological excavations. The

Head from a Figure (i)

Iran, 12th–13th century
Gypsum plaster; modeled, carved
6⁷/₈ × 5¹/₄ in. (17.5 × 13.3 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Purchase, Friends of Islamic Art Gifts, 2014
(2014.529)

Hand from a Figure (j)

Excavated at Rayy, Husseinabad (RD2790),
11th–early 13th century
Gypsum plaster; modeled, carved
7¹/₈ × 5¹/₈ in. (18 × 13 cm)
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Acquired by
exchange with the University Museum, 1940
(1940-51-1)

results have helped build a table of reference for the composition of the gypsum plaster employed and have made way for initial hypotheses on manufacturing techniques.

Samples were taken from six fragments excavated at Rayy, including cat. 1j; from cats. 1b–d and cat. 1i; from a figure in the al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait (LNS2ST); from a figure in the Worcester Art Museum (1932.24); and from cat. 16, a large panel from the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Collaborations with the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, also enabled visual comparison with a panel in their collection (SW.160.2011).²⁹ All the objects are made of gypsum plaster that in most cases is quite consistent in composition and manufacturing technique, proving a poorly controlled, or “traditional,” firing of raw materials.³⁰ Such technology produces an unevenly fired gypsum plaster that contains relics with different degrees of calcination, from unburned gypsum to highly burned anhydrite, as well as contaminants from the fuel, the kiln surfaces and surroundings, and impurities from the original gypsum rock.³¹ Often a coarse, poorly sorted mixture was used for the inner layer of the figures and the Rayy archaeological fragments. A more refined mixture was used for the surface

layer, which may incorporate abundant unburned gypsum fragments (in cat. 1b) or a sand temper of complex composition (in cats. 1c, d).

A purer, more refined gypsum manufactured under a more controlled firing was employed in the Worcester Art Museum figure, which proved to be a modern cast, as well as for a (certainly modern) backing layer in some of the other figures.³² In fact, during the removal of this layer from cat. 1b, a scrap of a newspaper printed in English was discovered beneath it. Although it is not always possible to recognize modern interventions, stratigraphy of the back of the same figure, as well as of cats. 1c and 1d, revealed several phases of restoration. It remains uncertain if they were carried out in the same laboratory and/or at different times.

The coarser gypsum plaster that comprises the figures’ inner layers was roughly modeled and left to dry. This process was sometimes carried out in more than one phase until the desired size was achieved, as shown by the stratigraphy on the backs of some figures (for example, cat. 1b). At least one case, the seated figure from the Victoria and Albert Museum (cat. 1c), may have been executed on a horizontal surface, as shown by markings indicating the direction of the flow of gypsum plaster as it dried. The flat but uneven, unworked back surfaces show that the figures were meant to adhere to a wall, conforming to the medieval Islamic tradition of figural stucco decoration.³³ As in the Victoria and Albert example, other figures (e.g., cat. 1b) show evidence of drying absent surface contact. While this may suggest that the modeling of the inner layer was not executed on a wall—and there is, in fact, no evidence of a horizontal flow of gypsum plaster—voids may have resulted from the application of the dense, coarse gypsum plaster on the wall. In any case, when the inner layer had dried to the desired shape and size, the outer layer (1–5 cm) of finer gypsum plaster was applied to the front face, where it was modeled and carved to achieve the final appearance of the figure. The fragment of the hand (cat. 1j), the one archaeological object of the group, appears to be made of a fine gypsum plaster

of two shades of gray, based on the amount of impurities, particularly nodules of clay containing fine fragments of charcoal and soot.

The shaping technique—modeled, with carved details—is consistent with that of known examples in central Iran and Mosul representing human figures, and follows that employed in the Sasanian period.³⁴ Interestingly, some of the known figurative stuccos were modeled separately, among them the busts at the Qara Saray in Mosul, which were apparently nailed to the stucco relief.³⁵ Similarly, the plaque of a hawk attacking a duck (fig. 97), which is made of fine stucco only, with no inner, coarser layer, has refined borders; it may have been intended for a larger composition.

Overall, these investigations revealed multiple interventions and additions, with the most modern ones characterized by a distinctly more refined gypsum of a purer, more consistent composition than other samples for which a similar, nonindustrial manufacturing technique was hypothesized. Comparisons with excavated materials and with parallels on site also showed that both overall composition and modeling techniques are similar. Differences in the texture of gypsum crystals and in the typology and amount of mineral and rock fragments in the mixture could be used to distinguish among objects produced in separate instances. **MR**



Fig. 33. Stucco relief of a turbaned head from the excavations at Bishapur, probably in the “madrasa” Museum of the Bishapur Research Center, Bishapur (74)



a

2a-c

Three Folios from a *Majma' al-tavarikh* (Assembly of Histories) of Hafiz-i Abru

Sultan Barkiyaruq b. Malik Shah Enthroned (a)

Modern Afghanistan, Khurasan, Herat, ca. 1425
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
16 7/8 x 13 1/4 in. (42.9 x 33.6 cm)
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Gift of Wilson P. Foss, Jr., Ph.B., 1913 (1952.51.9)

Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad I b. Malik Shah Enthroned (b)

Modern Afghanistan, Khurasan, Herat, ca. 1425
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
16 7/8 x 13 1/4 in. (42.9 x 33.6 cm)
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Gift of Mary Burns Foss (1983.94.6)

Sultan Tughril III Enthroned (c)

Modern Afghanistan, Khurasan, Herat, ca. 1425
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
16 7/8 x 13 1/4 in. (42.9 x 33.6 cm)
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Gift of Mrs. Wilson P. Foss, Jr. (1965.51.5)

No illustrated manuscripts from Seljuq Iran have survived, and none of those compiled in the lands of the Seljuqs of Rum or the Jazira contains an image of the Great Seljuq sultans. Except for coins and building inscriptions, the rulers were commemorated only in historical texts written after the advent of the Mongols in the thirteenth century. These three illustrations come from a dispersed manuscript of the *Majma' al-tavarikh* (Assembly of histories), written by the historian Hafiz-i Abru between 1423 and 1425 at the Herat court of the Timurid ruler Shah Rukh. The manuscript is closely related to a holograph illustrated copy in the Topkapı Sarayı Library, Istanbul (H.1653), dated A.H. 6 Muharram 829/A.D. November 18, 1425, and produced for Baisunghur, the son of Shah Rukh.¹ Both manuscripts are imprinted with the seal of Shah Rukh, and their illustrations and calligraphy are closely related stylistically, suggesting that they were



b

produced by a single group of artists in a royal atelier in Herat.² As has been often noted, the compositions of the enthronement scenes are repetitive and appear initially to have few details that differentiate one ruler from another.³ However, two of the paintings included here are based loosely on a Mongol prototype found in the *Jami' al-tavarikh* (Collection of chronicles), a history of the world in four volumes by the Ilkhanid vizier Rashid al-Din. The first volume records the history of the Turkish and Mongol tribes, including the Seljuqs. By the terms of an endowment, two illustrated copies of the manuscript, one in Arabic and one in Persian, were intended to be produced each year for dissemination throughout the Ilkhanid Empire. Despite this provision, only two fragments of one illustrated manuscript from the time of Rashid al-Din, written in Arabic and datable to 1314, are extant, one of which contains illustrations of the Seljuq sultans.⁴



c

Sultan Barkiyaruq, the oldest son of Malik Shah, acceded to the throne in 1092, at the age of thirteen. In the Timurid illustration he is depicted seated on a throne with a gold back and flame-shaped finial with one leg folded sideways and the other bent at the knee and dangling from the front of the throne. His beardless face reflects his youth, and his crown and perhaps the flaming finial symbolize the legitimacy of his rule. As the text above the picture relates, Barkiyaruq's stepmother, Turkan Khatun, tried to install her six-year-old son on the Seljuq throne, having him proclaimed sultan at Baghdad.⁵ The sons and followers of the deceased vizier Nizam al-Mulk acted quickly to ensure that Turkan Khatun would not succeed. They abducted Barkiyaruq, taking him from Isfahan to Rayy, where they crowned him sultan. Although his accession resulted in a civil war with several of his relations, this illustration apparently depicts a

moment when, in the presence of a seated official wearing an incongruous Mongol hat, his words are being recorded by a scribe bent over a scroll at the right. The Mongol hats and the scribe both appear in the *Jami' al-tavarikh*, but that painting is more complex, with ten figures instead of six and details such as a pen box that are absent from the later work. While the Timurid artist may have chosen to illustrate this scene because of the Ilkhanid prototype, Barkiyaruq presented few alternatives since he spent his life as sultan fighting and died at age twenty-five.

The half-brother and successor to Sultan Barkiyaruq, portrayed in the second illustration, is identified in red above the painting as Ghiyath al-Dunya wa-l-Din Abu Shuja' Muhammad b. Malik Shah b. Muhammad b. Chaghri Beg b. Mikha'il b. Seljuq, known as Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad I and as Muhammad Tapar. During Barkiyaruq's reign this prince

established himself in Azerbaijan and pursued a permanent state of war with his brother. He ruled from 1105 to 1118. Here, Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad is depicted in the same pose as Barkiyaruq, except that his right hand is raised to his chest. The image, set before a landscape with two trees and flowering vegetation in the foreground, consists of the enthroned ruler, a falconer standing at the right, and a kneeling figure at the left. This group bears little or no relation to the text below the picture, which iterates Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad's various battles and victories. Not only did Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad restore a degree of peace to Iran, but he also built or rebuilt a number of religious monuments in Iran, the Jazira, and Damascus. As with the Barkiyaruq illustration, the artist has derived his composition from that in the *Jami' al-tavarikh* but has simplified the interaction of the figures while particularizing the setting with the addition of landscape elements.⁶

Rukn al-Din Tughril III, whose name appears below the third illustration, was the last Great Seljuq sultan to rule western Iran. Although he came to the throne in 1176, when he was eight years old, he gained control of his realm only in 1186, when his atabeg died. The next atabeg seized the Seljuq capital of Hamadan and enlisted the aid of the Abbasid caliph, but Tughril defeated the Abbasid army in 1188. Tughril was soon on the defensive again, seeking the aid of the caliph and various regional potentates before the atabeg seized and imprisoned him near Tabriz in 1190. He escaped, briefly occupied Isfahan, and made a stand at Rayy, where a large Khwarazm Shah army defeated and killed him in 1194, thus ending the Great Seljuq line.

Tughril III composed Persian poetry, but no monuments remain that can be assigned to his patronage. Like Barkiyaruq, he spent most of his reign fighting and taking cities, and losing them before he could rebuild them. In fact, he is responsible for the destruction of the citadel of Rayy. Despite the political disarray, in the last quarter of the twelfth century the portable arts in Iran flourished, apparently independently of Sultan Tughril III. **src**



3

Figurine of "Sultan Tughril"

Iran, late 13th century(?)

Stonepaste; molded, underglaze-painted in black and in white clay slip, in-glaze-painted in turquoise and black

H. 16⁷/₈ in. (43 cm)

Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London (POT 1310)

Inscribed in Arabic in cursive around the hat:

مولانا طغرل السلطان العالم العادل // سنة ثلث و ثمانين وخمس
مائة

*Our Master Tughril, the just and wise Sultan // the year 583.*¹

This large stonepaste figurine of a kneeling man is inscribed, on the brim of the hat, with the name and title of "Sultan Tughril" and the year A.H. 583/A.D. 1187–88. While this date is considered too early for the style of the object, the figurine has been interpreted as a late thirteenth-century representation of Tughril II (r. 1132–34) in the form of a chess piece. The association of this sultan on the battlefield with chess stems from a passage in the historian Rawandī's twelfth-century chronicle of the reign of Tughril's brother, Mas'ud, in which skill at chess is equated with prowess in battle.² Instead, the inscribed date corresponds to the reign of Tughril III (1176–94).

However, the fragmentary condition of the piece suggests a more complex history. There is evidence of several phases of recomposition and overpainting, as indicated by the

style of the decoration, which includes patterns such as the waterweed that antedate the apparently later vegetal motif on the back; and by the inscriptions, which include one in Persian that runs along the shoulder of the mantle, perhaps a poem ending in the phrase "with your heart on waves of blood."³

Certain features, particularly the kneeling position, variably understood as one of prayer, and the pointed hat, or *qalansuwa*, are unusual for royal depictions of the end of the thirteenth century; cross-legged seated postures and high fur hats (*sharbush*) or, less frequently, turbans and crowns are more typical.⁴ Although we do not know the figurine's original function or whether it is indeed a portrait of a Sultan Tughril II, it conveys the enduring interest in Seljuq sultans in periods succeeding their reign. **MR**



a



b



c



d



4a–h

Coins of the Great Seljuqs

Dinar of Tughril (r. 1040–63) (a)

Minted at Rayy, A.H. 440/A.D. 1048–49

Gold, Diam. 1 in. (2.5 cm); 4.1 g

American Numismatic Society, New York (1922.211.126)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the obverse field:

محمد رسول الله / السلطان المعظم / شاهانشاه / طغرل بك / ابو طالب
Muhammad is the Messenger of God / The Great Sultan, / King of Kings, / Tughril Beg / Abu Talib.

On the obverse margin: Qur'an 9:33

On the reverse field:

لا اله الا الله وحده / لا شريك له / القائم بأمر الله
There is no god / but God alone / He has no associate. / al-Qa'im bi-amr Allah.

On the reverse inner margin:

بسم الله ضرب هذا الدينار بالرى سنة اربعين واربع مائة
In the Name of God, this dinar was struck in Rayy in the year 440.

On the reverse outer margin: Qur'an 30:4–5

Dinar of Tughril (r. 1040–63) (b)

Minted at Nishapur, A.H. 444/A.D. 1052–53

Excavated at Nishapur, Tepe Madrasa, C, top floor

Gold, Diam. 7/8 in. (2.2 cm); 2.8 g

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,

Rogers Fund, 1939 (39.40.127.513)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the obverse field:

الله / محمد رسول الله / السلطان المعظم / شاهانشاه الاجل / ركن الدين
طغرل بك

God / Muhammad is the Messenger of God / The Great Sultan, / King of Kings, the Illustrious / Pillar of the Faith, / Tughril / Beg.

On the obverse margin: Qur'an 9:33

On the reverse field:

لا اله الا الله وحده / لا شريك له / القائم بأمر الله
There is no god but / God alone / He has no associate / al-Qa'im bi-amr Allah.

On the reverse inner margin:

بسم الله ضرب هذا الدينار بنيشابور سنة اربع اربعين واربع مائة (sic)
*In the Name of God, this dinar was struck in Nishapur in the year 444.*¹

On the reverse outer margin: Qur'an 30:4–5

Dinar of Alp Arslan (r. 1063–73) (c)

Minted at Rayy, A.H. 457/A.D. 1064–65

Gold, Diam. 1 in. (2.5 cm); 2.7 g

American Numismatic Society, New York (1922.211.131)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the obverse field:

الله / محمد رسول الله / السلطان المعظم / شاهانشاه / ملك الاسلام / الب
ارسلان

God / Muhammad is the Messenger of God / The Great Sultan / King of Kings / King of Islam / Alp Arslan.

On the obverse margin: Qur'an 9:33

On the reverse field:

عدل / لا اله الا الله وحده / لا شريك له / القائم بأمر الله
Justice / There is no god but / God alone / He has no associate / al-Qa'im bi-amr Allah.

On the reverse inner margin:

بسم الله ضرب هذا الدينار بالرى سنة سبع وخمسين و اربع مائة
In the Name of God, this dinar was struck in Rayy in the year 457.

On the reverse outer margin: Qur'an 30:4–5

Dinar of Malik Shah (r. 1073–92) (d)

Minted at Isfahan, A.H. 475/A.D. 1082–83

Excavated at Rayy (RH5284)

Gold, Diam. 1 in. (2.5 cm)

University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia (37-11-271)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the obverse field:

فتح / محمد رسول الله / السلطان المعظم / شاهانشاه / محي الدين / ملك شاه / بن محمد

Fath (Opening / Victory) / Muhammad is the Messenger of God / The Great Sultan / King of Kings / Reviver of the Faith / Malik Shah / b. Muhammad.

On the obverse margin: Qur'an 9:33

On the reverse field:

الله / لا اله الا الله وحده / لا شريك له / المقتدي بأمر الله
God / There is no god but / God alone / He has no associate / al-Muqtadi bi-amr Allah.

On the reverse inner margin:

بسم الله ضرب هذا الدينار باصفهان سنة خمس وسبعين و اربع مائة
[In the Name of God] this dinar was struck in Isfahan in the year 475.

On the reverse outer margin: Qur'an 30:4–5



e



f



Dinar of Mahmud b. Malik Shah (r. 1092–94) (e)

Minted at Isfahan, A.H. 486/A.D. 1093–94
Gold, Diam. 1 1/8 in. (2.7 cm); 4.5 g
American Numismatic Society, New York (1922.211.119)
Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the obverse field:
ايل ارسلان / محمد رسول الله / السلطان الاعظم / محي الدنيا و الدين
اسماعيل (?) بن الب / سنقر بك
*Il Arslan / Muhammad is the Messenger of God /
The Greatest Sultan / Reviver of the World and Faith /
Isma'il(?) b. Alp / Sunqur Beg.*
On the obverse margin: Qur'an 9:33
On the reverse field:

فتح / لا اله الا الله / المقتدى بامر الله / السلطان المعظم / محمود بن
ملكشاه / ناصر الدنيا / و الدين
*Fath (Opening / Victory) / There is no god but God
(alone) / Follower of God's Command / The Great Sultan
Mahmud b. Malik Shah / Protector of the World / and the
Faith.*

On the reverse inner margin:
بسم الله ضرب هذا الدينار باصفهان سنة ست و ثنتين و اربع مائة
*In the Name of God, this dinar was struck in Isfahan
in the year 486.*
On the reverse outer margin: Qur'an 30:4–5

Dinar of Barkiyaruq b. Malik Shah (r. 1094–1105) (f)

Minted at Isfahan, A.H. 488/A.D. 1095–96
Gold, Diam. 1 in. (2.5 cm); 4.2 g
American Numismatic Society, New York (1924.999.44)
Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the obverse field:
الله / محمد رسول الله / السلطان المعظم / ركن الدنيا و الدين / ملك الاسلام
و المسلمين ابو المظفر / بركيارق / معز الدولة
*God / Muhammad is the Messenger of God / The Great
Sultan / Pillar of the World and the Faith / King of Islam
and / of the Muslims, Abu al-Muzaffar / Barkiyaruq /
Mu'izz / al-Dawla.*
On the obverse margin: Qur'an 9:33
On the reverse field:

عدل / لا اله الا الله وحده / لا شريك له / المستظهر بالله / امير المؤمنين



g

*Justice / There is no god but / God alone / He has no
associate / One who seeks succor in God / Commander of
the Faithful.*

On the reverse inner margin:
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ضرب هذا الدينار باصفهان سنة ثمان و ثنتين و
اربع مائة

*In the Name of God, this dinar was struck in Isfahan in
the year 488.*

On the reverse outer margin: Qur'an 30:4–5

Dinar of Sanjar (r. 1118–57) with Honeycomb Pattern (g)

Minted at Balkh, A.H. 5[12–29]/A.D. 11[18–35]
Pale gold, Diam. 7/8 in. (2.2 cm); 2.3 g
American Numismatic Society, New York (1979.213.1)
Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the obverse field:
لا اله الا الله / محمد رسول الله / السلطان المعظم / معز الدنيا و الدين ابو /
الحارث (?) پادشاه [. . .]

*There is no god but God (alone) / Muhammad is the
Messenger of God / The Great Sultan / Fortifier of the
World and the Faith, Abu/-I-Harith (?) Padeshah / [. .]*

On the reverse field:
[. . .] الامام / المسترشد / بالله / امير / المؤمنين
[. . .] *the Imam / al-Mustarshid / bi-Allah / Commander /
of the Faith/ful.*

On the reverse margin:
و خمس مائة / نصرمن الله و فتح [قريب] . . .
*And 5[xx] / Victory from Allah and [imminent]
triumph [. . .]*

Dinar of Sanjar (r. 1118–57) with Double-knotted Dragons (h)

Minted at Herat, A.D. 1118–35
Pale gold, Diam. 7/8 in. (2.2 cm)
Orientalisches Münzkabinett, Universität Jena (2010-03-1)
Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the obverse field:

محمد رسول الله / السلطان المعظم / شاهانشاه (sic) / اعظم / معز الدنيا و
الدين / بن ملكشاه [. . .]

*Muhammad is the Messenger of God / The Great
Sultan / The Greatest King of Kings / Fortifier of the World
and of the Faith / b. Malik Shah [. . .]*

On the obverse margin:
[الرحمن الرحيم [. . .]
The [Merci]ful, the Compassionate [. . .]

On the reverse field:
هراة / لا اله الا الله وحده / لا شريك له / الامام / المسترشد بالله
*Herat / There is no god but / God alone. He has
no / associate. The Imam / al-Mustarshid bi-llah.*





h



Coins were an important way for both the Great Seljuqs and contemporaneous dynasties to convey political messages and affirm their authority. Considering the dearth of figural representations of the Seljuq sovereigns and of objects bearing their names—unlike the Rum Seljuqs and the Zangids—coins issued by the Great Seljuqs represent the only direct link to these rulers, together with monumental inscriptions on buildings. Gold issues (dinars) were not struck according to a standard, meaning they were meant to be weighed rather than counted. Those struck in Iran and in western mints in the eleventh century are all in fine gold (cats. 4a–f),² while eastern mints continued under the Seljuqs to issue a debased composition first initiated by their Ghaznavid predecessor Mahmud (r. 998–1030)—an indication of the continuity of minting practices notwithstanding changes in rule (cat. 4g). This practice gained ground for most Seljuq dinars in the twelfth century. Cat. 4g, struck at Balkh, in present-day Afghanistan, and cat. 4h, struck at Herat, both under Sanjar (r. 1118–57) during the time of the caliph al-Mustarshid (r. 1118–35), are examples of the pale gold dinars that became common in the time of this ruler.³ Their gold content is very low (15–20%), and the alloy is made mostly of silver.

Seljuq dinars are generally similarly composed on both sides, with one or two circular legends, or margins, enclosing the main field. On the obverse field is a modified version of the *shahada*, or profession of faith, and the name and title of the current Abbasid caliph in Baghdad; the internal margin bears the mint and year, while the external margin contains Qur'anic verses. The reverse field bears the continuation of the *shahada* and the name and titles of the Great Seljuq sultan (and

eventually those of the local amir); the margin contains another Qur'anic verse.

Cat. 4g is a rarer example that shows two different compositions, with the reverse field divided into a honeycomb pattern. Twelve of the honeycomb's hexagons contain the name of Sanjar, while the remaining seven contain the name and titles of al-Mustarshid. Herat was seemingly an inventive mint, especially in the years of Sanjar's reign, as the very rare double-knotted dragons on cat. 4h also suggest.⁴ The knotted-dragon motif, which frames the name and titles of Sanjar on the obverse field, may have kept its ancient Central Asian apotropaic powers or its cosmological significance linked to the pseudo-planetary nodes of the moon's orbit. This is in fact a very early occurrence of the motif; later examples appear often on entranceways, notably the twelfth-century Talisman Gate in Baghdad and the entry to the Aleppo citadel (fig. 91), as well as in later doorknockers from Anatolia (see also cat. 159).⁵ That the design of coins was an element of appreciation may be inferred from a poem by Mu'izzi in praise of the vizier Taj al-Mulk.⁶

The titles by which the Seljuq sovereign is referred to in coins minted for the caliph, the latter having the authority to grant the former his official legitimacy, are by and large those bestowed by the caliph. Any variations on this formula suggest the level of independence felt or aspired to by the Seljuq ruler in that specific territory and year. Similarly, coins struck in the Abbasid capital Baghdad in the name of the caliph may or may not also indicate the ruling sultan.⁷ The earliest coin presented here (cat. 4a) was minted at Rayy, an early capital of the Seljuqs, in the first years of the reign of Tughril (r. 1040–63), the founder of the

dynasty. While his names and the titles *al-sultan al-mu'azzam shahanshah* (the great sultan, king of kings) are struck on the coin, the name of the caliph, al-Qa'im bi-amr Allah (r. 1031–74), appears absent any honorifics. Not much had changed by the time the second earliest coin of the group was minted, at Nishapur, only four years later (cat. 4b), in which Tughril is referred to as “the Glorious Sultan, King of Kings, the Illustrious Pillar of the Faith.”

Seljuq dinars often bear one or more small motifs, usually above the main field on the obverse and/or reverse of the coin. They include abstract designs such as dots, often three in number; variations on “container” devices; and heart-shaped knots. Other legible depictions include floriated scrolls, vases, and variations on bows and arrows, straight and curved swords, and axes. Scholars have yet to find an explanation for their meaning. Their interpretation as *tamghas*—branding devices used by Turkmen tribes—is not supported by literary evidence, and this line of inquiry is complicated further by their changing meaning over time.⁸ The historical sources do not speak of *tamghas* in relation to the Seljuq rulers, but they do mention other devices used as personal insignia: the *tughra*, a stylized version of a signature, and the *'alama*, a sign manual.⁹ The symbolic power of the *tughra* was such that Mu'izzi uses it alongside the royal palace (*dar al-mamlaka*) and treasury to praise the vizier whose role was to guard the state's constituents.¹⁰

Research on the bow-and-arrow device on coins suggests that it may be of Turkish derivation, with links to the Turkish use of the arrow as a symbol of authority.¹¹ This device, which is not found on earlier Samanid or Buyid coins, is also seen on coins of the coeval Qarakhanids.¹² Other motifs, however, may differ in derivation and meaning, especially those also appearing on coins of other dynasties. Research has revealed that some motifs on Buyid coins can be linked to the individuals who struck them, who would have exercised their skills peripatetically.¹³ Indeed, in the Seljuq period coins minted in the same place and in the same year tend to have identical or similar motifs, which is not always the case of coins minted in the same year by the same ruler but elsewhere. The occurrence of such a motif in different mints may therefore be explained by the movement of the engravers.¹⁴ **MR**



5

Textile Fragments with the Name of 'Ala' al-Din Kay Qubad I

Anatolia, second quarter of the 13th century
Silk, gold thread; weft-faced compound twill
Overall 40 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 29 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (102 × 74.5 cm)
Musée des Tissus et Musée des Arts Décoratifs
de Lyon (23475)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*:

[علاء الدنيا] والدين أبو الفتح كيقباد بن كيقسرو برهان أمير المؤمنين
[Ala' al-Dunya] wa-l-Din Abu al-Fath Kay Qubad b. Kay
Khusraw, proof of the Commander of the [Faithful].¹

These silk fragments, embroidered in gold-spun thread on a brilliant red background, bear the name of Sultan 'Ala' al-Din Kay Qubad I (r. 1219–37), who oversaw the expansion of Rum Seljuq territory over large parts of Anatolia, from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. Lavishly ornamented with vegetal decoration and pairs of lions, these pieces represent one of the earliest extant examples of a textile produced for a Seljuq sultan (fig. 35).

The textile draws heavily on Persian iconographic influences, as demonstrated by the central motif of twelve roundels, each depicting a pair of addorsed rampant, regardant lions licking a stylized Tree of Life. However, while this motif is rooted in the pre-Islamic and Islamic textile traditions of Iran and Central Asia, it is manifested here in a uniquely Anatolian style. Beyond the remarkably abstract Tree of Life, the style breaks with its Eastern antecedents through its emphasis on the animals' musculature and depiction of tense, splayed claws, both of which are hallmarks of Rum Seljuq style.

The tastes of the Rum Seljuqs are also evident in the choice of iconography. Although the motif itself can be traced to eastern Islamic lands, and lions are a nearly universal symbol of royalty, the regal connotations of lions had particular significance for the Great Seljuqs and, later, the Rum Seljuqs, and are commonly found on their architecture, coinage, and courtly art. This significance was even more pronounced in the case of Kay Qubad I, whose architectural patronage exhibits a deep familiarity with the regal symbolism of Anatolia and the Jazira, cosmopolitanism that was due



Fig. 34. Seal of 'Ala' al-Din Kay Qubad I

in large part to his childhood spent in exile as a guest of regional courts, such as those of the Artuqids and Ayyubids, as well as the Byzantine court.² Indeed, evidence suggests that Kay Qubad I had employed the lion as a personal emblem. Lions occur prominently on buildings he commissioned, such as the

Sultan Han in Kayseri and the Alara Han in Alanya.³ Perhaps even more significant is a lead seal bearing his name and titles on the obverse and a rampant lion on the reverse (fig. 34), which makes explicit connection between the head of state and the lion.⁴ MF



Fig. 35. Digital reconstruction of cat. 5; the inscription is not included.

Plate of Rukn al-Dawla Dawud

Anatolia or Caucasus, first half of the 12th century
(1114–44)

Copper; gilded, cloisonné, champlevé enamel

H. 2 in. (5.1 cm); Diam. 10⁵/₈ in. (27 cm)

Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck (K 1036)

Inscribed, in Arabic in *naskhi* below the inner rim:

الامير الاسفهلار الكبير المؤيد المنصور ناصر الدين ركن الدولة
وصمصم الملة وبهاء الامة زعيم الجيوش تاج الملوك والسلاطين قاتل
الكفرة والمشركين الب ساونج سنقر بك ابا سليمان داود (sic) ابن
ارتق سيف امير المؤمنين

The amir, the great general, the God-aided, the victorious, Nasir al-Din, Rukn al-Dawla, protector of the faith, magnificence of the umma (nation), general of the armies, crown of kings and sultans, killer of the infidels and polytheists, Alp Sevinç Sunqur Beg Ata(?) Sulayman. Dawud(?) b. Artuq Sayf amir al-Mu'minin.

In Persian in *naskhi* below the outer rim: Indecipherable, but probably poetic.¹



This rare plate is dedicated to Rukn al-Dawla Dawud b. Sökmen (r. 1114–44), one of the Artuqid rulers of Hisn Kayfa, a city on the Tigris River in the northern Jazira (modern Turkey). It is the only medieval enamel object that bears the name of a Muslim ruler, and scholars have, for more than a century, debated its date, place of manufacture, and purpose.²

The plate is decorated on both its interior and exterior in cloisonné and champlevé enameling, sophisticated techniques that, excepting smaller objects such as jewelry, are unknown in the medieval Islamic world but are deeply rooted in the Christian traditions of Europe, Byzantium, and the Caucasus. While cloisonné is more developed in the eastern Christian sphere, champlevé—an ancient technique traceable to both Celtic and Gaelic traditions—and its use in combination with cloisonné existed in medieval Europe.³

The iconographic and decorative program comprises six circular medallions surrounding a larger roundel at center; figural imagery occupies or alternates with the medallions, while various motifs, among them foliate scrolls and hearts, decorate the figures' and animals' bodies and fill the remaining spaces. The ascension of the ancient Macedonian king Alexander the Great dominates the central roundel on the interior. Around it and on the exterior are images of court entertainments such as musicians, dancers, acrobats, wrestlers, animal



combats, heraldic and/or royal birds such as peacocks, an eagle grasping a snake, and fantastic creatures including griffins and a winged horse. While the exact meaning of the individual images awaits discussion, the overall expression symbolizes power, royalty, and the *dolce vita*, a concept native to both the medieval Muslim and Christian worlds. However,

the figurative and decorative styles relate most closely to the Byzantine tradition.⁴ The Arabic inscription circling the interior composition is dedicated to Rukn al-Dawla Dawud, whose name, genealogy, and honorific titles are given according to the general order and protocol established in the twelfth century by the Artuqids and other Islamic dynasties.⁵

The combination of technique, iconography, draftsmanship, and color emphasizes the quality of this piece—the only artwork that bears this Seljuq vassal’s name. Neither its place of origin nor its use is known with certainty, but research suggests a decorative and symbolic, rather than a practical, purpose.⁶ It was probably conceived as a royal gift for Rukn al-Dawla Dawud, either in Christian Byzantium, Georgia, or another region under Byzantine cultural influence.⁷ Both the iconographic and epigraphic programs—that is, the concentric composition reminiscent of the Ptolemaic planetary system, with Alexander (to whom Rukn al-Dawla Dawud may be compared) surrounded by allegories of power and courtly pleasures, and the inscription glorifying Rukn al-Dawla Dawud—suggest that whoever commissioned this magnificent plate aspired to an ideal kingship and courtly life for the ambitious Artuqid ruler.⁸ This masterpiece may also reflect the rising power of the Seljuq successor states in the northeastern Mediterranean, which during the first half of the twelfth century established their dominance on the peripheries of the Islamic world as they seized territories and power from the Christians. **DB**



This circular bronze mirror was intended for the Artuqid ruler Abu-l-Fadl Artuq Shah (r. 1225?–34) of Harput, a city in eastern Turkey.² It is representative of medieval Islamic examples of the “Chinese” type, with a pierced knob at the center.³ However, its size and weight make it an exceptionally monumental example of its kind.

The mirror is decorated on one side with inscriptions and astrological reliefs, arranged in three concentric bands with a bird of prey at the center, evoking the Ptolemaic system.⁴ The innermost band contains seven busts (probably representing the planets) alternating with words related to astrology and magic. The twelve signs of the zodiac appear, in interlacing circles, in the center band, together with the heavenly bodies that dominate them.⁵ A long inscription in the outermost band gives the name and titles of Abu-l-Fadl, as well as the lineage of the Artuquids of Harput extending back to Artuq (d. 1090), the founder of the dynasty.⁶

Apart from its practical use, the mirror, weighing 2.3 kilograms, reflects both the owner’s wealth and the abundant copper resources of the region.⁷ The iconographic program manifests the princely values of power and protection through animals, astrology, and magic (see “Astrology, Magic,

and the World of Beasts,” pp. 198–249). The bird of prey represents either the might of kingship, the ruler himself, and/or the sun, if not all three simultaneously controlling the earth and the cosmos from the center of the universe.⁸ Ideal and cosmic power are thereby multiplied and bestowed on Abu-l-Fadl—and, by extension, via the inscribed *sihsila* (chain), on the Artuqid branch of Harput, whose dynastic rule is legitimized. The indecipherable words in the interior inscription must be a magic formula to conjure the planets and the zodiac.⁹ This mirror was used for catoptromancy—to divine and control the future through the zodiac and the planets.

Abu-l-Fadl reigned at a time when eastern and southeastern Anatolia were subject to attacks by regional powers: the Rum Seljuqs, from Central Anatolia; the Ayyubids, from Syria; and the Khwarazm Shahs, from Iran.¹⁰ From 1226 to 1234, Harput was under siege by the Rum sultan ‘Ala’ al-Din Kay Qubad I (r. 1219–37), who in 1234 finally succeeded in deposing Abu-l-Fadl and extinguishing the Artuqid branch of Harput. In the context of such threats, one may question whether this monumental mirror was made in response to an increased need for power and protection, both for the ruler and for the Artuqid dynasty itself. **DB**

7

Magic Mirror of Abu-l-Fadl Artuq Shah

Eastern Anatolia, ca. 1220s–30s

Bronze; cast

Diam. 9½ in. (24 cm)

David Collection, Copenhagen (4/1996)

Inscribed in Arabic in *naskhi*, on the outer band:

عز مولانا السلطان العالم العادل المؤيد المنصور الملك المعز نور الدنيا
والدين ابي الفضل ارتق شاه بن الخضر بن ابراهيم بن ابي بكر بن قرا
ارسلان بن داود بن سكرمان بن ارتق نصير امير المؤمنين
Glory to our Lord, the wise Sultan, the just, the God-aided, the victorious, the honored King, Nur al-Dunya wa al-Din Abu-l-Fadl Artuq Shah b. al-Khidr b. Ibrahim b. Abi Bakr b. Qara Arslan b. Dawud b. Sukman b. Artuq Nasir, the Commander of the Faithful.

On the inner band:

بسم الله العظيم غيب طلسم كل شخص تلقا . . . ستميه⁶ زنج ونجمية
In the Name of God, the Most Supreme, (this) magic (mirror) was endowed (for) every person (who would) look (at it) [. . . abracadabra?] as an astronomical plate and horoscope.¹

Basin of Sultan Qara Arslan b. Il-Ghazi

Jazira, Syria, or Egypt, late 13th century (ca. 1289–92)
 Brass; hammered, engraved, chased, inlaid with silver
 H. 5 in. (12.8 cm); Diam. 12¾ in. (32.5 cm)
 Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (2013.65)
 Inscribed in Arabic, in *thuluth* around the body:

عز (sic) لمولانا السلطان الملك العالم العادل المجاهد المرابط
 المؤيد المنصور الملك المظفر فخر الدنيا والدين سيد الملوك والسلاطين
 محي العدل في العالمين القائم باوامر الدين حامي بلاد المسلمين ناصر
 الحق بالبراهين ابي الحارث قرا ارسلان ابن ايل غازي
*Glory to our lord the sultan, the king, the master, the
 wise, the just, defender of the faith, warrior at the
 frontiers, the God-aided, the victorious, the king, triumphant,
 the pride of the world and the faith, master of kings and sultans,
 reviver of justice in both worlds, he who carries out the commands
 of the faith, guardian of Muslim lands, supporter of truth, Abi al-Harith
 Qara Arslan b. Il-Ghazi.*

In graffiti around the exterior rim:

مما عمل بر اسم المولى الملك مجد الدين عيسى ابن الساطن الملك المظفر
 خلد الله [...] // برسم المولى امير داوود ابن الملك الصالح
*This was made by order of the master, the king,
 Majd al-Din 'Isa b. al-Sultan al-Malik al-Muzaffar. May
 God eternalize [...]. // By order of the Prince Dawud b.
 al-Malik al-Salih.¹*

This basin was made for Sultan Qara Arslan b. Il-Ghazi (r. 1260–92), Artuqid ruler of Mardin, a city in the northern Jazira built on

a mountain slope, with a citadel on top. Although modest in size and of simple hemispherical shape, which makes it comparable to cat. 13a,² it is noteworthy for its exterior surface decoration. A dense, elaborate *thuluth* inscription with elongated shafts runs around the basin and, against scrolling foliage, covers most of the surface. The inscription emerges from an interlacing arabesque that is framed toward the bottom of the basin by radiating droplike motifs. This decoration functions like a base supporting the script. Furthermore, most of the precious metal was reserved for the calligraphy that was inlaid with cut sheets of silver unlike elsewhere, where thin folios of silver were affixed.³

The greatest effort was concentrated on the calligraphy praising the basin's owner: "Glory to our lord the sultan, the king, . . . Qara Arslan b. Il-Ghazi," with honorific titles given in the sequence common at that time in the Jazira, Greater Syria, and Egypt.⁴ The prominence of calligraphy and the omission of figural imagery, as well as the style of the script, suggest the influence of Mamluk metalwork.⁵

Qara Arslan's success as a diplomat and loyalty to his Ilkhanid overlords brought stability and wealth to the Artuqid principality of Mardin at a time when elsewhere in the region struggles between the Mamluks and Ilkhanids, the two dominant powers of the day, had diminished trade and damaged the regional economy.⁶ He rose in rank toward the end of his reign, as confirmed by coins minted in A.H. 688/A.D. 1289–90, which include for the first time the title *al-sultan*.⁷ While the circumstances of his promotion remain unclear, the glorification of Qara Arslan as sultan on the present object confirms that it was made in the last years of his reign, possibly in a Mamluk workshop or by a craftsman inspired by the Mamluk tradition in Mardin or elsewhere, as a reflection of his increased political power and independence.⁸

Judging from two graffiti inscriptions naming the Artuqid rulers Dawud b. al-Malik al-Salih (r. 1368–76) and Majd al-Din 'Isa (r. 1376–1407), this basin belonged to the dynastic household and treasury of the Artuqids, handed down from one ruler to the next.⁹ **DB**





2v

1r

9

Section of a Qur'an

Northern Jazira, Sinjar or Nasibin, 1198–1219

Ink, gold, and opaque watercolor on paper

8⁵/₈ × 6¹/₈ in. (22 × 15.6 cm)

Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London
(QR 497)

This codex contains its original certificate of commissioning, naming the patron as Qutb al-Din Muhammad b. Zangi b. Mawdud, ruler of Sinjar and Nasibin.¹ Accordingly, it reveals a level of opulence one would expect from a princely commission. Although small, this Qur'an is extremely rare, as no other examples "made for any of the Zangid rulers of the Jazirah, let alone for the Zangids of Sinjar" survive.²

Each half of the double-page frontispiece contains two pairs of square, lobed medallions in gold and blue. According to the *kufic* inscription enclosed therein, the page marks the beginning of the twenty-eighth *juz'* (part) of the manuscript's thirty *ajza* (parts or volumes), of which seven, including this one, are extant.³ The medallions are connected horizontally to each other and, vertically, to an ellipse containing a split-palmette motif. The areas between the medallions are filled with stars and tripod geometric shapes akin to glazed tile patterns. The outer margins contain circular gold ornaments with vine-scroll decoration protruding in a point toward the edge of the page. Roundels of this type also appear in the text next to sura headings written in gold *kufic* with red borders.

The gold *naskhi* text outlined in black ink adds further richness.

As this example and the *Sirr al-asrar* (Secret of secrets; cat. 10) demonstrate, commissioning deluxe books was a prerogative of both the Seljuq sultans and of their atabegs, who held powerful positions in the Jazira. Features such as the elliptical forms recall eleventh-century models, but the generously spaced five lines of text per page reflect a new tendency toward legible, rounded script that developed during the twelfth century.⁴ **SRC**

***Sirr al-asrar* (Secret of Secrets)**

Mosul, 1189–1211

Ink, gold, and opaque watercolor on paper

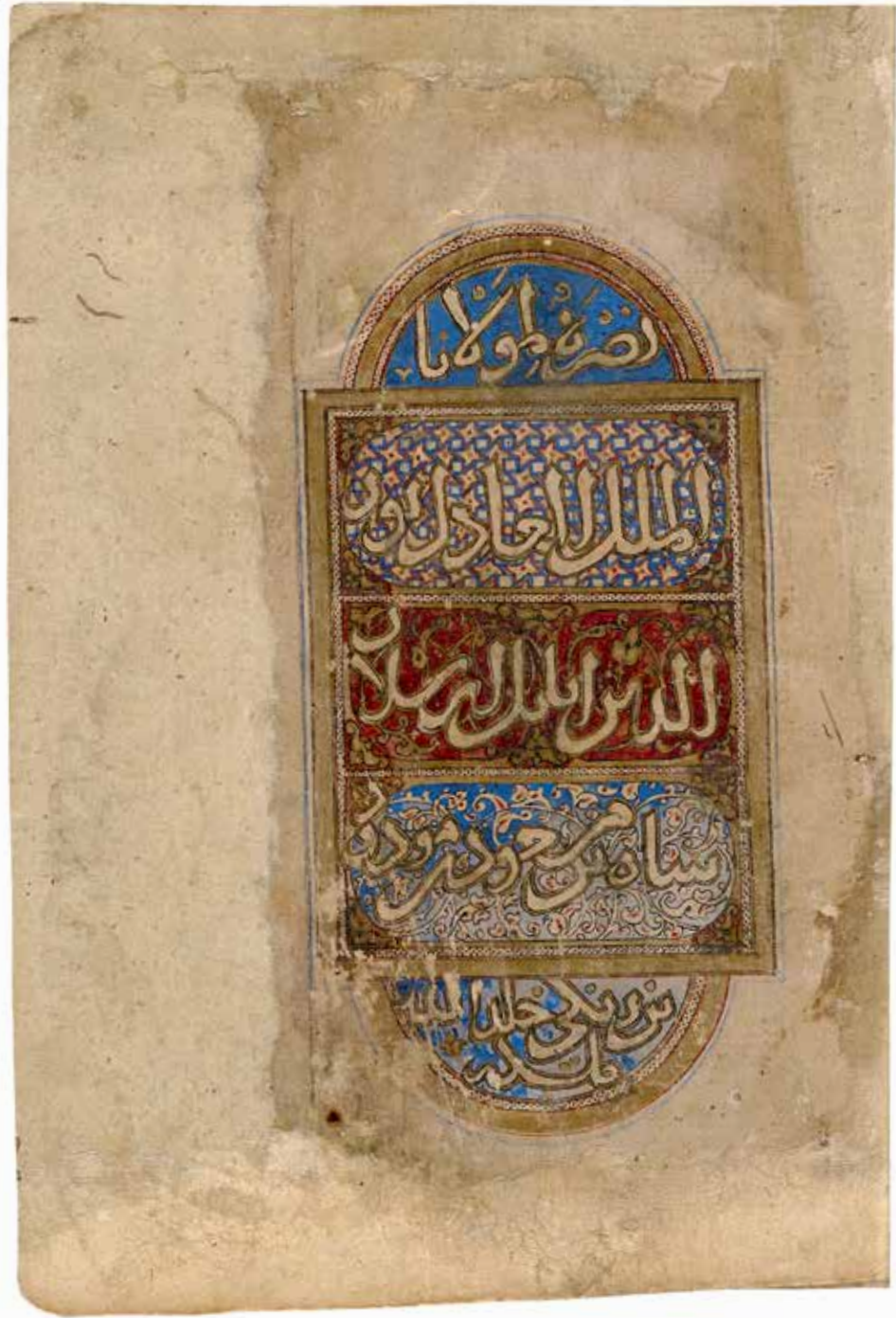
7 1/2 × 5 1/2 in. (19 × 14 cm)

Lawrence J. Schoenberg Collection of Manuscripts, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania Libraries, Philadelphia (LJS 459; fol. 1r)

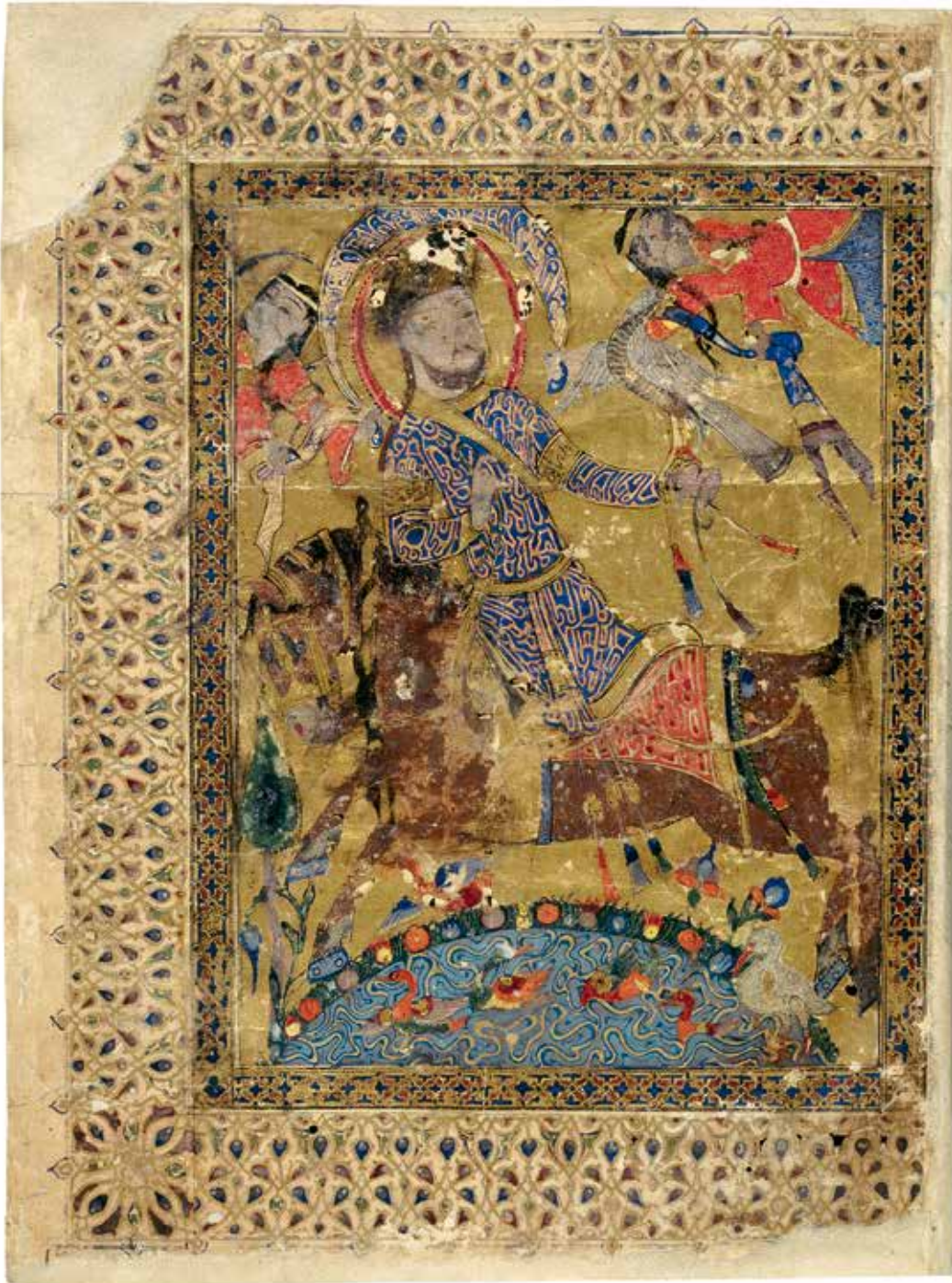
This manuscript of a text purporting to be a series of letters written by Aristotle to his pupil Alexander the Great contains an illuminated frontispiece with the name of one of the Zangid atabegs of Mosul, Nur al-Din Arslan Shah I. In 1193 the Ayyubids appointed Arslan Shah to rule Mosul, a position he retained until his death in January 1211. Prominent among his achievements is his appointment of his slave Badr al-Din Lu'lu', who became governor of Mosul and an exceptional patron of the arts (see cats. 12a, b). It remains to be discovered whether any significant buildings can be attributed to Arslan Shah's patronage.

The frontispiece of the *Sirr al-asrar* (Secret of secrets), in which the patron's name appears, is in the form of a vertical cartouche with three principal lines of script and a semi-circle above and below. The main part of the inscription reads: "the noble king Nur/al-Din atabeg Arslan/Shah bin Mas'ud bin Mawdud." Above and below, on a blue ground, are the words: "his victory is our lord's" and "Ibn Zangi, may God prolong his reign." The illuminator outlined the letters in gold and varied the color of the ground and decoration in each section, with four-pointed stars and squares on blue in the upper rectangle; dark red and gold arabesques in the center; and white and red vine scrolls on blue in the lower section.

The *Sirr al-asrar* is said to have been translated from Greek to Arabic by Youhanna (Yahya) b. al-Batriq at the court of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun in the early ninth century, though it may have been written originally in Arabic.¹ It consists of ten discourses of which nine are concerned with kingship, government, and military leadership. The tenth is a discussion of talismans, astrology, the physical properties of stones and plants, and various



phenomena. The only illustration appears on folio 108v, in the section on the art of war, and depicts a type of catapult. This manuscript would have served as a "mirror for princes" for Arslan Shah I, but the final section provides some insight into the importance of talismans and astrology in maintaining a balanced society. **SRC**



11

**Equestrian Portrait of Badr al-Din Lu'lu',
from the *Kitab al-aghani* (Book of Songs)
of Abu-l-Farraj al-Isfahani**

Mosul, A.H. 614–16/A.D. 1217–19

Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper

11¼ × 8½ in. (28.6 × 21.5 cm)

David Collection, Copenhagen

(D1/1990, Royal Library Cod. Arab. CLXVIII; fol. 2r)

This page, surrounded on three sides by an illuminated band, most likely occupied the left half of the double-page frontispiece to the final (twentieth) volume of the *Kitab al-aghani* (Book of songs). Over a fifty-year period, Abu-l-Farraj al-Isfahani (897–967), a polymath descendant of the Umayyad caliphs, compiled the collection of poems, set to music, by

various authors and presented it to the Hamdanid ruler of Syria sometime between 945 and 967. The oldest extant set of the *Kitab al-aghani* is dated A.H. 526/A.D. 1131, but the manuscript from which this image comes was produced between 614/1217 and 616/1219.¹ Of its seven extant volumes, six contain a single painted frontispiece.² All but one of the paintings represent a dominant male figure enthroned, conferring with officials, or on horseback. In each, the figure's robe has an all-over looping pattern resembling watered silk. *Tiraz* bands inscribed with the name Badr al-Din Lu'lu' bisect the upper arms of the robe.

Formerly a slave of Nur al-Din Arslan Shah I, the Zangid ruler of Mosul (see cat. 10), Badr al-Din rose first to the position of atabeg of Arslan Shah's sons and then, in 1211, upon their father's death, to regent and de facto ruler of Mosul. Only in 1233 did the Abbasid caliph recognize him as the sovereign of Mosul, despite his having dominated the region for more than two decades. Scholars have questioned whether the *Kitab al-aghani* paintings were intended as actual portraits of Badr al-Din or as symbolic images of the king performing various roles associated with his office. Certainly, the genii hovering above the figure as well as his majestic falcon, halo, and richly caparisoned horse jumping over a pond of waterfowl suggest that this is the ruler himself enjoying one of the sports of kings, but he is identifiable only by his accoutrements rather than his physiognomy. **SRC**

12a, b

Inlaid Brasses of Badr al-Din Lu'lu'

Tray (a)

Jazira, Mosul, mid-13th century

Brass; hammered, engraved, chased, inlaid with silver

H. 2¼ in. (5.8 cm); Diam. 19⅝ in. (49.8 cm)

Victoria and Albert Museum, London (905-1907)

Inscribed in Arabic, in *naskhi* along lobed rim:

عن مولانا السلطان الملك الرحيم العالم العادل المويد المظفر المنصور المجاهد
الجاهد المرابط بدر الدنيا والدين ركن الاسلام والمسلمين سيد الملوك
والسلطين قاهر الخوارج والمتدين قاتل الكفرة و المشركين حامي ثغور
بلاد المسلمين قانع المشركين منصف المظلومين من الظالمين مبيد الطغاة و
المحدين محي العدل في العالمين ابو اليتامى و المساكين قسيم الدولة ناصر
الملة جلال الامة فلك المعالي ملك ملوك الشرق والغرب ابو الفضائل لؤلؤ
ناصر امير المؤمنين جعل الله عمرة اطول الاعمار بمحمد واله

*Glory to our lord the sultan, the king, merciful, wise,
and just, the God-aided, who is made triumphant
(by God) and is aided in victory, the warrior at the
frontiers, Badr al-Dunya wa al-Din, Pillar of Islam and
of the Muslims, master of kings and sultans, destroyer
of sectarians and apostates, slayer of unbelievers and
polytheists, protector of the frontiers of the Muslims,
suppressor of the idolators, who brings relief to
the oppressed from the oppressors, destroyer of the
despots and the heretics, who revives justice among
the inhabitants of the world, the father of orphans and
of the poor, who apportions the state's resources, the
helper of the community, the glory of the Muslims,
zenith of high rank, king of the kings of East and West,
Abu-l-Fada'il Lu'lu', helper of the prince of the faithful,
may God grant him the longest of lives, by
Muhammad and of his family.*

In graffiti on the back:

برسم الشراب خانة الملكية البدرية

For the royal kitchens/buttery of al-Badri.¹

Tray (b)

Jazira, Mosul, mid-13th century

Brass; hammered, engraved, chased, inlaid with silver

H. 2⅝ in. (6.8 cm); Diam. 24¼ in. (61.5 cm)

Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich (26-N-118)

Inscribed in Arabic in *naskhi*, on the rim:

عن مولانا السلطان الملك الرحيم العالم العادل المجاهد المرابط المؤيد
المظفر المنصور بدر الدنيا والدين سيد الملوك والسلطين محيي العدل في
العالمين سلطان الاسلام والمسلمين منصف المظلومين من الظالمين ناصر
الحق بالبراهين قاتل الكفرة والمشركين قاهر الخوارج والمتدين حامي
ثغور بلاد المسلمين معين الغزاة والمجاهدين ابو اليتامى والمساكين فخر
العباد ماحي البغي والعناد فلك المعالي قسيم الدولة ناصر اللة جلال
الامة صفوه الخلافة المعظمة بهلوان جهان خسرو ايران الب غازي ايتانج
قتلغ بك اجل ملوك الشرق والغرب ابو الفضائل لؤلؤ حسام امير المؤمنين
*Glory to our lord the sultan, the king, the merciful, the
wise and just, the defender (of the faith), the warrior
(at the frontiers), the God-aided, who is made triumphant
(by God), the victorious, Badr al-Dunya wa
al-Din, master of the kings and sultans, reviver of justice
in the two worlds (in this world and the next), the
sultan of Islam and of the Muslims, he who separates
the oppressed from the oppressors, the supporter of
the Truth with (clear) proofs, the slayer of unbelievers
and polytheists, destroyer of sectarians and apostates,
protector of the frontiers of the Muslims, distinguished
among warriors and defenders (of the Faith), father to
orphans and the poor, pride of those who worship
(God), the effacer of injustice and opposition, zenith of*



a

*high rank, he who apportions the (resources of the)
state, helper of the community, glory of the faithful,
trusted friend of the Exalted Caliphate, warrior of the
world (Pahlavan-i Jahan), Khusrav of Iran, Alp Ghazi
Inanj Qutlugh Beg, most illustrious of kings of East and
West, Abu al-Fada'il Lu'lu', sword of the Commander of
the Faithful.*

On the exterior rim:

مما امر بعمله الفقير لؤلؤ احسن الله جزاه برسم الخاتون المصونه
خوانراه

*This was ordered by the poor Lu'lu', may God reward
him (by the order of) the honored Princess Khwanrah.*

On the interior rim:

محمد بن عيسون

Muhammad b. 'Absun.

In graffiti on the back:

الحسن بن عيسون // برسم شراب خاناه البدرى // العبد اللذليل ايبك
الطويل

*Hasan b. 'Absun // For the kitchen/buttery of
al-Badri // The poor worshipper, Aybek al-Tawil.²*

These metals are two of five surviving inlaid brasses made for Badr al-Din Lu'lu', a Christian slave of Armenian origin who rose to freedom to rule Mosul, first (1211–33) as atabeg, or tutor, of the Zangid ruler Arslan Shah I's sons, and then (1233–59) as independent ruler.³ Inlaid brass developed in the province of Khurasan during the twelfth century, where it flourished until the 1220s. The technique was brought to the west through trade and also by migrating craftsmen fleeing the Mongol conquest.⁴ Mosul, a prosperous city on the Tigris in northern Iraq, was among the most important centers for inlaid metalwork, a craft that thrived in particular under Badr al-Din. As the

Spanish Muslim geographer Ibn Sa'id, who in 1250 traveled in the Jazira and neighboring regions, observed, "there are many crafts in the city [of Mosul], especially inlaid brass vessels (*awani al-nuhas al-muta'am*) which are exported (and presented) to rulers, as are the silken garments woven there."⁵ It should be noted, however, that while many objects are signed by artists using the *nisba* "al-Mawsili," they were not necessarily made in Mosul.⁶

Inlaid-metal objects were considered luxury items, belonging to the courtly household. They were used on festive and ceremonial occasions and, as prestige gifts, played a role in complex diplomatic exchanges and negotiations.⁷ Compared with contemporaneous silver- and gold-ware, of which only few examples survive, inlaid brass is notable for its polychrome effects, detailed draftsmanship, and elaborate figural and calligraphic compositions, qualities associated with miniature painting.

The smaller of the two trays (cat. 12a) is more sparingly decorated. The circular medallion at its center is occupied by three sphinxes, their tails terminating in dragons' heads and entwined wings against a background of dense vine scrolls. Symmetrical, intertwined split-palmettes create radiating axes from the center and connect to three circular medallions. A lavish *naskhi* inscription in the name of Badr al-Din runs along the slightly notched rim. A graffito on the back indicates that this tray was made for the royal kitchen of the al-Badri household.

It probably was used during festivities to serve food and drink.

Of all the pieces in Badr al-Din's group of brasses, the monumental tray (cat. 12b) is the piece of highest quality, a large amount of its inlaid silver having survived.⁸ Revealing the full extent of the artist's creativity are the extraordinarily varied figural representations arranged in concentric circles, the centermost depicting intertwined harpies surrounded by chasing griffins. These fantastic creatures are succeeded by bands of interlaced polylobed medallions depicting scenes related to astrology (near the center) and the courtly cycle (toward the edge). T-fret ornament fills the background. Notable is the rare depiction of a pair of combating camels with interlaced necks. The variety and expressiveness of these figural representations as well as the style of decoration recall the Blacas ewer (cat. 15), dated 1232 and made in Mosul.

Simpler rinceaux decorate and frame the center circle as well as the edge of the tray. Octagonal medallions containing a more complicated T-fret composition appear within a band of pseudo-floriated *kufic* script. Inscriptions inlaid in silver on the rim praise Badr al-Din with his honorific titles. An inscription engraved on the interior of the horizontal band notes that this piece was ordered by Badr al-Din for the princess Khawanrah, presumably for the dowry of one of his daughters or wives. Another, completely isolated inscription inlaid on the same interior names a certain Muhammad b. 'Absun.⁹ He was either the groom or the artist responsible for the inlay. Other ownership graffiti are engraved on the back of the tray, but it is unclear if and how the names relate to each other. One possibility is that the tray was left unfinished because the marriage never took place or was broken, and the tray was later added to the royal kitchen of the al-Badri household.¹⁰ Platters of this size and weight (4.8 kg) functioned as tables, either balanced on stands (see cat. 69) or placed directly on the floor, to present food and drink during banquets.

Badr al-Din's brasses were already renowned during the medieval period. Writing of his defeat by the Khwarazm Shahs in 1237, the chronicler Sibṭ b. al-Jawzi stated that "the Khwarazmians looted his chattels, his treasures and all the possessions of his army. I have been informed that a silver-inlaid pen case which was worth twenty dirhams fetched five dirhams and



b

a basin and ewer brought twenty dirhams."¹¹ All five of the surviving brasses include an inscription praising Badr al-Din with the honorific title *al-malik al-rahim* (the merciful king), bestowed in December 1233, together with the rights of *khutba* and *sikka*, by the Abbasid caliph.¹² By consequence all five pieces date to 1233–59. Although the inscriptions do not mention specifically that the brasses were made in Mosul, stylistic characteristics reminiscent of the Mosul school include interlace patterns of polylobed medallions enclosing figural scenes and a decorative scheme relating to Chinese textiles, which were traded in Mosul and elsewhere in the region and which may have served as an inspiration.¹³ The dense T-fret composition used to decorate the background is another characteristic, as well as the profusion of figural imagery, in particular the varied iconography relating to astrology and the courtly cycle (see cat. 15). These objects were probably made in the city, and most likely at the court of the ruler, where the patron or a trusted delegate could provide artists with precious silver and gold, control its use, and prevent fraud.

Badr al-Din's ascent from slave to sovereign was especially noteworthy. Not only was he a capable ruler who brought stability and wealth to Mosul, but he also figured among

the most important proponents of art and culture of his time. His activities were not limited to inlaid metalwork; sophisticated examples of monumental architecture illustrate Badr al-Din's patronage of ambitious building projects (fig. 36), while luxurious manuscripts (see cat. 11) and decorative woodwork (see cat. 193) demonstrate that workshops in various media were established during his lifetime. The brasses, however, epitomize his aspirations toward universal power. Their immortalizing inscriptions and iconographic programs reflect the ideal life of a ruler as the protector of his people with wealth and power over the planets and the fantastic world. **DB**



Fig. 36. Early 20th-century view of the palace of Qara Saray of Badr al-Din Lu'lu', Mosul



13a, b

Inlaid Brasses of Mahmud b. Sinjar Shah

Basin (a)

Jazira, probably 1220s

Brass; hammered, engraved, chased, inlaid with silver and copper

H. 5⁷/₈–6¹/₄ in. (15–16 cm); Diam. 16¹/₈ in. (41 cm)

Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (I.3570)

Inscribed in Arabic in *thuluth* below the rim:

عز مولانا الملك المعظم العالم العادل المؤيد المظفر المنصور المجاهد المرابط
معز الدنيا والدين ركن الاسلام والمسلمين ناصر الحق بالبراهين القائم
باوامر الدين قاصع الكفرة والمشركين محي العدل في العالمين نصر المجاهدين
ملك امراء الشرق والغرب بهلوان جهان خسرو ايران اينانج قتلغ طغرلنكتين
اتابك ابو القاسم محمود بن سنجر شاه بن غازي ناصر امير المؤمنين
*Glory to our lord, the king, the exalted, the wise, the just, the God-aided, triumphant, victorious, the defender (of the faith), warrior (at the frontiers), fortifier of the world and of the Faith, pillar of Islam and the Muslims, supporter of the Truth with (clear) proofs, establisher of the commands of the Faith, suppressor of the unbelievers and the idolaters, reviver of justice in the two worlds (in this world and the next), victory of the defenders (of the Faith), king of the amirs of East and West, warrior of the world (Pahlavan-i Jahan), Khusraw of Iran Inanj Qutlugh Tughriltekin Atabeg, Abu al-Qasim Mahmud b. Sinjar Shah b. Ghazi, helper of the commander of the faithful.*¹

Ewer (b)

Jazira, probably Mosul, 1220s

Brass; spun, hammered, engraved, chased, repoussé, inlaid with silver

H. 16³/₈ in. (44 cm); Diam. 11⁵/₈ in. (29.6 cm)

Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (MW.466.2007)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic* and *naskhi*, on the neck:

عبد الرحمن // العز والاقبال والدولة والسعادة والعافية والاد لصاحبه
'Abd al-Rahman. // Glory, prosperity, wealth, happiness, health, and [. . .] to its owner.

On the shoulder:

عز مولانا الملك المعظم الملك العالم العادل المؤيد المظفر المجاهد المرابط
السيد المنور ركن الدنيا والدين سلطان الاسلام والمسلمين معز الدنيا والدين
ابو القاسم محمود بن سنجر شاه // العز الدائم الاقبال الزائد والدولة
الباقية والسلامة/الشاملة والاد لصاحبه // ملك احمد بن قاسم بن قيد(?)

Glory to our lord, the king, the august, the possessor, the wise, the just, the God-aided, the triumphant, the holy warrior at the frontiers, the enlightened master, the pillar of the world and the religion, Sultan of Islam and the Muslims, Mu'izz al-dunya wa-l-din Abu-l-Qasim Mahmud b. Sinjar Shah. // Lasting glory, increasing prosperity, continuing dominion, complete peace, and [. . .] to its owner. // Malik Ahmad b. Qasim b. Qayd(?) (later addition).

Above the foot:

باليمن والبركة والدولة والسلامة والسرور) والسيادة والشكر (و
السيادة والتامة و [. . .] لصاحبه

*With good fortune, blessing, dominion, prosperity, joy, mastery, gratitude, mastery, perfection, and [. . .] to its owner.*²

This basin and ewer were made for Mahmud b. Sinjar Shah (r. 1208–50/51), the Zangid atabeg who ruled Jazirat Ibn 'Umar (modern Cizre, in southeastern Turkey). Although of simple hemispherical form, the basin (cat. 13a) is exceptional for its monumental size and spare decoration. On the exterior all decorative efforts are concentrated on a single lavish inscription. A band of *thuluth* script embellished with split-palmettes and interlacing knots runs around the upper third of the body and creates a large epigraphic frieze.³ The absence of decoration on the rest of the body, combined with a script style of elongated letter shafts, emphasizes the prominence of the calligraphy and, thus, its content—namely, praise for the ruler Mahmud b. Sinjar Shah, including his honorific titles. A smaller, benedictory inscription runs along the rim in six bands demarcated by crescent moons, or *hafir*, an ancient Persian symbol of royalty that further

enhances the majestic nature of this basin.⁴

On the interior of the basin, a center medallion consisting of a stylized vegetal composition is framed by a band of chasing animals and droplike motifs radiating from its edge.

With a pear-shaped body, tall neck, and curved handle, the ewer (cat. 13b) resonates with a Mediterranean tradition rooted in Roman antiquity.⁵ The surface is fully inlaid with silver and copper, except for the spout, neck ring, and lid, which are later restorations, and two interlacing vegetal bands on the neck executed in the repoussé technique,

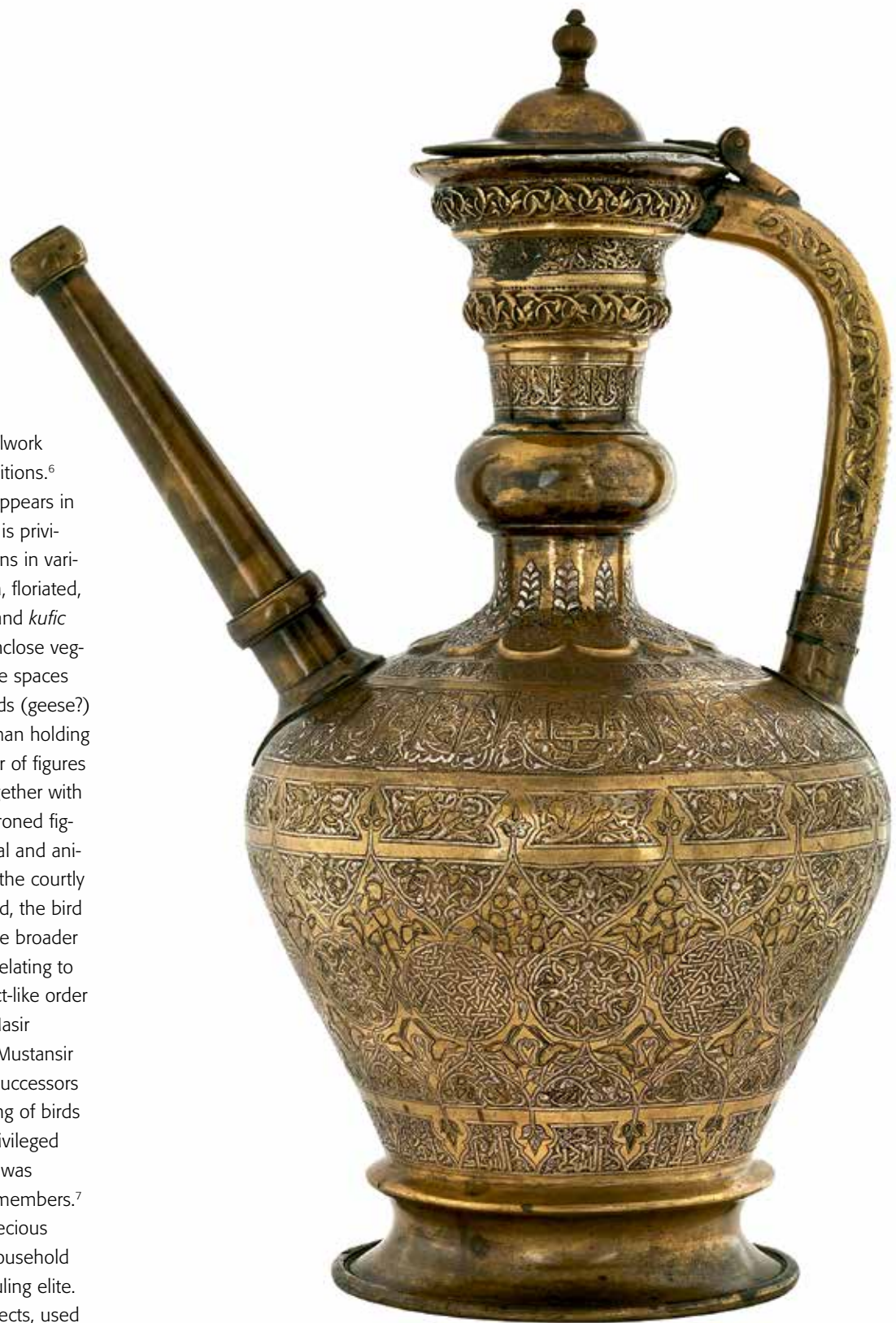


Fig. 37. Early 20th-century view of the doors of the south facade of the courtyard leading to the prayer hall of the Great Mosque, Jazirat Ibn 'Umar. The doorknockers comprise facing double-knotted dragons.

uncommon for medieval inlay metalwork but reminiscent of Iraqi jewelry traditions.⁶ The outstanding skill of the maker appears in the decorative program. Calligraphy is privileged by several elaborate inscriptions in various sizes and styles of *naskhi* (plain, floriated, and animated with human heads) and *kufic* (floriated). Interlacing medallions enclose vegetal and geometric motifs and create spaces for repeating paired long-necked birds (geese?) and alternating figural scenes of a man holding one such bird in each hand or a pair of figures either drinking or playing music. Together with motifs of chasing dogs and an enthroned figure with two attendants, these figural and animal scenes relate to the themes of the courtly cycle. However, as recently proposed, the bird iconography may also be seen in the broader context of fowling, or bird hunting, relating to the *futuwwa* brotherhood. In this sect-like order reformed by the Abbasid caliph al-Nasir (r. 1180–1225) and nurtured by al-Mustansir (r. 1226–42), and to which Seljuq successors and other rulers aspired, the shooting of birds (*ramy al-bunduq*) was one of the privileged sports, the right to engage in which was rewarded by the caliph to *futuwwa* members.⁷

Brassware lavishly inlaid with precious metals formed part of the courtly household and was a desired gift among the ruling elite. Ewers and basins were practical objects, used to wash hands, but their sophisticated and luxurious appearance also served to emphasize their owner's wealth and power and to impress guests at meals, festivities, and ceremonial occasions.

Although both basin and ewer were made for Mahmud and possibly used in tandem, their decorative and stylistic differences make it unlikely that they were conceived as a pair. The ewer bears characteristics of the Mosul school of metalworkers and was probably made in that city on the order of Mahmud or possibly of



Badr al-Din Lu'lu', ruler of Mosul, and sent as a gift to his rival in the north, Mahmud.⁸ This would not, however, preclude the possibility that the ewer was made by a migrant artist from Mosul called to work at Mahmud's court. The basin, meanwhile, could have been made in Mosul or another Jaziran workshop.

Jazirat Ibn 'Umar, one of many small principalities comprising the Jazira, flourished under Mahmud, as confirmed by his renovation of the Great Mosque. Elaborate decoration and

inscriptions survive on the prayer hall's north facade, for which Mahmud commissioned a splendid door with a complex interlace star pattern in metal appliqué (fig. 37) and a pair of apotropaic double-knotted dragon door-knockers (see fig. 87).⁹ As in the ewer and basin, Mahmud, who sought to manifest his wealth and power through the artistry of the monuments and objects that surrounded him, is immortalized by a glorifying inscription on top of the door. **DB**

Dinar of Nur al-Din Mahmud b. Zangi**(r. 1146–74) (a)**

Minted at Alexandria, A.H. 567/A.D. 1171–72

Gold, Diam. 7/8 in. (2.2 cm); 5 g

British Museum, London (1854,8-19.83)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the obverse:

الامام الحسن // المستضي بامر الله امير المؤمنين // لا اله الا الله وحده
لا شريك له ابو محمد // بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ضرب هذا الدينار
بالاسكندرية سنة سبع وستين وخمسة

Al-Imam al-Hasan // al-Mustadi' bi-amr Allah, Commander of the Faithful // There is no god but God alone, He has no associate. Abu Muhammad // In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, this dinar was struck in Alexandria in the year 567.

On the reverse:

عال / محمود / بن زنكي / غاية // وسلم تسليمًا الملك العادل // محمد
رسول الله صلى الله عليه وعلى اله // محمد رسول الله ارسله بالهدى
ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون

Outstanding quality / Mahmud / b. Zangi / in extreme // submit submission, the Just King // Muhammad is the Messenger of God. May God bless him and his family // Muhammad is the Messenger of God, He who has sent him with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may uplift it above every religion, though the unbelievers be averse (variation of Qur'an 9:33).



a



b

Dirham of Ghiyath al-Din Kay Khusraw II**(r. 1237–46): Astrological Device (Sun-lion) (b)**

Minted at Konya, A.H. 638/A.D. 1240–41

Silver, Diam. 7/8 in. (2.2 cm); 2.8 g

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest

of Joseph H. Durkee, 1898 (99.35.2379)

Inscribed in Arabic, in *kufic* on the obverse field:

السلطان الاعظم/غياث الدنياوالدين/كيخسرو بن كيخباد
The Greatest Sultan / Ghiyath al-Dunya wa-l-Din / Kay Khusraw Kay Qubad.

In *naskhi* on the reverse field:

الامام المستنصر بالله امير المؤمنين
Al-Imam al-Mustansir with the help of God, the Commander of the Faithful / This dirham was struck in Konya.

On the reverse margin:

سنة ثمان ثلثين ستمائة

In the year 638.

c

Dirham of Kılıç Arslan IV (r. 1248–65):**Equestrian Portrait (c)**

Minted at Sivas, A.H. 646/A.D. 1248–49

Silver, Diam. 7/8 in. (2.2 cm); 2.8 g

British Museum, London (1853,0406.100)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the obverse field:

الامام المستعصم بالله امير المؤمنين
Al-Imam al-Musta'sim with the help of God, the Commander of the Faithful.

On the obverse margin:

ضرب هذا الدرهم في سيفاس سنة ست واربعين وستمائة
This dirham was struck in Sivas in the year 646.

On the reverse field:

السلطان الاعظم ركن الدنيا والدين قلع ارسلان بن كيخسرو قسيم امير
المؤمنين

The Greatest Sultan Rukn al-Dunya wa-l-Din Kılıç Arslan b. Kay Khusraw, the Supporter, the Commander of the Faithful.



d

**Dirham of Het'um I the Great (1226–70)
and Kay Khusraw II (r. 1237–46): Equestrian
Portrait (d)**

Minted at Sis, A.H. 639/A.D. 1241–42

Silver, Diam. 1 1/8 in. (2.4 cm); 3 g

American Numismatic Society, New York (1917.215.911)

Inscribed, in Armenian on the obverse field:

ՀԵՏՈՒՄ ԹԱՂԱՅՈՒՄ ՀԱՅՈՑ

Het'um, King of the Armenians

In Arabic in *kufic* on the reverse field:

السلطان الاعظم غياث الدنيا والدين كيخسرو بن كيقباد // ضرب
بسياس سنة تسع وثلاثين وستمائة

*The Greatest Sultan Ghiyath al-Dunya wa-l-Din,
Kay Khusraw (b.) Kay Qubad // This dirham was
struck in Sis in the year 639.*

As elsewhere in the premodern Islamic world, coinage of the Seljuq successor states had two basic functions: as currency and as a symbol of power, by means of the inscribed name of the ruler and/or ruling authority.¹ Coins of the Artuqids, Zangids, and Rum Seljuqs are nevertheless particular for their figural imagery. While the exact meaning and function of the iconography on these coins remain a subject of debate, the figural depictions, relating to a broad range of models and traditions, form an important part of the material production of Anatolia, the Jazira, and Syria, and testify to the artistic and cultural exchanges that took place during Seljuq times.

Gold and, to a certain extent, silver coins were considered high-value money, used and traded over long distances for wholesale, fiscal administration, and state expenditure. It was the principal form of currency used by high-ranking officials to pay land tax or *iqta'* (revenue from grants of land). Traded between regions, it competed with other high-value money. The coin's worth was usually bound to its metal content but was, in principle, higher in value than the same amount of unworked metal.

Copper and highly alloyed silver coinage was considered petty money, circulated locally and used for daily purchases by merchants, artisans, and workers in the urban market.² According to Islamic law, only gold and silver money could legitimately be used in the exchange of goods and services.³ Nevertheless, gold and silver coinage was more restricted by law than copper coinage. In that regard, in a society where figural representation was

negatively received by the same Islamic theologians who interpreted and wrote the law, the existence of figural imagery on Rum Seljuq silver and gold coins (cats. 14b–d) is even more noteworthy.

After about 150 years with little coin production, economic growth in the late eleventh to the first half of the twelfth century led to increased minting in the territories and cities controlled by the Seljuq successor states, to meet the heightened demand for currency.⁴ The Zangids, Artuqids, and Rum Seljuqs struck gold (dinar), silver (dirham), and copper (*fals* or copper dirham) coinage. However, neither each dynasty nor each ruler had coins in all three metals in circulation at the same time. With few exceptions, minting of copper coins began in the 1140s.⁵ At the same time, Fatimid, Great Seljuq, and Crusader Arabic gold, Byzantine copper, and other coinage were still being used in the regions controlled by the Seljuq successor states. From the second half of the twelfth century, these alternate currencies were gradually supplemented and replaced by new gold, silver, and copper coins minted by the successor states.⁶

Gold Coinage

Economic, political, and legal matters aside, the minting of coinage depended on the supply and availability of a given metal. Thus, it is not surprising that, beginning with 'Imad al-Din Zangi (r. 1127–46), gold coins were minted by the Zangids and the Lu'lu'ids (descendants of Badr al-Din Lu'lu') in the Jazira, primarily in Mosul, the center of the prosperous Diyar Rabi'a region.⁷ No dinars were issued in Syria, which was poor in precious metals, but they were minted from A.H. 567–69/A.D. 1171–73 for Nur al-Din Mahmud b. Zangi in Egypt, a region renowned for its abundant gold resources, immediately following the conquest of this territory from the Shiite Fatimids by his Kurdish lieutenant, Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (cat. 14a).⁸ The Rum Seljuqs minted dinars in Anatolia, mainly in Konya, beginning as early as 573/1177–78, occasionally in Sivas, Kayseri, and a few other places. However, until 609/1212, only a few Rum Seljuq rulers minted gold, and in only one issue. The rarity of Rum Seljuq gold coins suggests that these

were prestige mints.⁹ The Artuqids in control of Diyar Bakr (northern Jazira) and parts of eastern Anatolia, which had soil poor in precious metals, never minted dinars.

The gold coinage of the Seljuq successor states is conservative in epigraphic content and design. The composition is simple and followed the tradition of two regional precedents—Abbasid and Fatimid—so as to facilitate acceptance of the new coinage and ensure its circulation.¹⁰ In Anatolia and the regions east of the Euphrates, the standard relates to variations of the Abbasid design, conceived under al-Ma'mun (r. 813–33), of a circular central field and a surrounding band, a convention that had already been adopted by the Great Seljuqs (see cats. 4a–h). Regional standards of finesse were applied, as well as inclusion and variations of signs, *tamghas*, and cartouches. The inscriptions give the name and titles of the issuing ruler, the *shahada* (profession of faith), and the name and titles of the Abbasid caliph or regional overlord. Sometimes a mint name and/or year are inscribed, as well as Qur'anic verses, among which the most common is 9:33, the "prophetic mission."¹¹ Through these coins rulers affirmed their power, their Sunni faith, and their loyalty to the Abbasid caliphate and/or the regional overlord to whom they submitted their services and paid taxes.¹²

However, in Egypt and Syria, the population was accustomed to the Fatimid dinar, the design of which was preferred by the Burids in Damascus (1104–54), the Zangid ruler Nur al-Din; his Kurdish lieutenant and founder of the Ayyubid dynasty, Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi; Salah al-Din's successors (until al-Malik al-Kamil, r. 1218–37); and even the Crusaders. For instance, in the gold coins struck by Salah al-Din for Nur al-Din in Egypt, of which cat. 14a is among the earliest (A.H. 567/A.D. 1171–72), the style of the script and its arrangement in three concentric circles around a center field are clearly Fatimid, while the content is comparable to other gold coinage of the Seljuq successor states.¹³ In the inscription, Salah al-Din declares his loyalty to the Zangid overlord for whom he conquered Egypt from the Shiite Fatimids, though unlike his later coins, his own name has been omitted. On one side,



e

f

in the center, is the name of Nur al-Din, at that time the Zangid ruler of Damascus, and around it are three legends referring to Qur'anic verse 9:33, as well as a benediction dedicated to the ruler. On the other side are the name and titles of the caliph and the Sunni profession of faith, reflecting the Zangid acceptance of supreme rulership by the Abbasid caliphate. On the border of the coin appears the year A.H. 561 and the location of the mint, Alexandria.

Silver Coinage

Little and often low-content silver coinage is attested from the eleventh and most of the twelfth centuries, suggesting a "silver famine" for a large part of the Islamic Near East, including the regions controlled by the Artuqids, Zangids, and Rum Seljuqs. As a consequence, the first silver coins minted from the first quarter of the twelfth century by the Seljuq successor states were *dirham aswad* (black dirham), rather small and murky coins with a low silver content.¹⁴ It is not clear if the phenomenon was related to a scarcity of silver or if the metal was being used to make other types of objects, of which only a few have survived or are known to scholars. Whatever the reason, the situation changed drastically in the last quarter of the twelfth century, owing not only to relevant coinage reforms but also to the massive importation of silver to the Levant by the northern Italian mercantile republics following the discovery of new silver mines in Saxony (Freiberg, Germany), Styria, and Carinthia (alpine Austria).¹⁵ The earliest large, nearly pure, regulated dirhams

were issued in Syria, first by Salah al-Din, in Ayyubid Damascus, in A.H. 570/A.D. 1174, and then by Nur al-Din, in Zangid Aleppo, in 571/1175–76. Beginning in 580/1184, full-size silver coins were also produced by the Rum Seljuqs in Anatolia. As for the various branches of the Artuqids, they were probably using the new silver coinage of their overlords, the Rum Seljuqs and the Ayyubids. Only the Mardin line minted dirhams, beginning in 624/1227, first in Dunaysir and later in Mardin.¹⁶

Unlike *dirham aswad*, these purer silver coins better fulfilled the Islamic law that prohibited illegitimate profit (*riba*) and were therefore legally more suitable for economic and monetary exchange.¹⁷ In Rum Seljuq lands the discovery of Anatolian silver mines at the beginning of the thirteenth century led to a "silver flood." The great number of Rum Seljuq dirhams issued in Anatolia suggests that here, as in Ayyubid Syria, silver rather than gold coinage was the principal high-value money. In comparison, the Zangids produced much less silver; in and around Mosul the high-value money was gold, although the Zangids of Syria were probably also using Ayyubid gold and, overall, silver money. Most silver coins of the Zangids, Artuqids, and Rum Seljuqs are epigraphic and follow standards of design and content similar to the gold coinage discussed above. However, Rum Seljuq dirhams are comparable in their finesse to dinars; very often the same dies were used to strike both.¹⁸ The quality and preeminence of dirhams made Seljuq silver coinage one reason for the wealth of the dynasty in the first half of the thirteenth century, and helps explain its

Dirham of Fakhr al-Din Qara Arslan (r. 1148–74): Victoria, after a Gold Coin of Constantine the Great (r. 307–337) issued at Siscia, Pannonia, Croatia (e)

Probably minted at Hisn Kayfa, no year
Copper, Diam. 1 1/8 in. (3 cm); 12.2 g
American Numismatic Society, New York (1917.216.891)
Inscribed, in Arabic in *kufic* on the obverse:

المك العالم العادل / فخرالدين / قرا ارسلان / بن داود / بن ارتق
The Wise and Just King / Fakhr al-Din / Qara Arslan / b. Dawud / b. Artuq.

In Latin on the reverse: VOT XXX / VICTORIA CONSTANTINI AVG
Vow for 30 Years / Victory of Constantine Augustus.

Dirham of Najm al-Din Alpi (r. 1152–76): Obverse: Virgin Mary Crowning the Byzantine Emperor Romanos III (r. 1028–34, after a gold coin); Reverse: Facing Portraits of the Seleucid Emperor Antiochus VII (r. 138–129 B.C., after a silver coin) (f)

Probably minted at Mardin, no year
Copper, Diam. 1 1/4 in. (3.2 cm); 16.3 g
American Numismatic Society, New York (1917.215.1072)
Inscribed in Arabic in *naskhi* on the obverse:

نجم الدين / ملك ديار بكر
Najm al-Din / King of Diyar Bakr.

On the reverse:

ابو المظفر البي / بن / تمر تاش بن ايل غازي بن / ارتق
Abu al-Muzaffar Alpi / b. / Timurtash b. Il-Ghazi b. / Artuq.



g

h

being a sort of anchor for the regional “currency community.” In fact, Rum Seljuq standards of fineness and weight were emulated by Trabzon Rum and Armenian Cilician silver coins.

Also exceptional is the presence of figural imagery on several dirham types issued before the mid-thirteenth century when, under Mongol rule, Rum Seljuq silver coinage became more traditionally Islamic—that is, aniconic, with inscriptions of the *shahada* and the titles and name of a fictive caliph or other ruling authority.¹⁹

The two main themes of the Rum Seljuq figural repertoire are the equestrian and the sun-lion.²⁰ The equestrian holding taut his bow in cat. 14c, two more arrows at the ready, is an embodiment of power and control and a symbol of an ideal ruler in the Great Age of the Seljuqs (examined in the following chapter, “The Courtly Cycle”). The image was introduced to Rum Seljuq coinage in the late twelfth century, appearing first in copper.²¹ Rukn al-Din Sulayman II (r. 1197–1204) was the first to extend equestrian imagery to coins in silver and even gold.²² That he placed the image on all his coins raises the question of whether it was his personal symbol of power, a line of inquiry in need of further research.

The equestrian image continued to be used by other Rum Seljuq rulers, such as Kılıç Arslan IV (r. 1248–65; cat. 14c), as well as in neighboring Christian regions. Cat. 14d, for example, features an equestrian portrait of Het’um I the Great, king of Armenian Cilicia. He wears a crown instead of a turban and holds a fleur-de-lis staff, a Christian royal symbol that replaces the Seljuq bow and triple

arrows or mace.²³ A cross further distinguishes this coin from those of the Rum Seljuqs, in which one often encounters small signs such as stars or the crescent, presumably another of the Seljuq regalia (cat. 14c).²⁴ The composition is surrounded by an Armenian inscription, “Het’um, king of the Armenians.” The reverse of the coin is purely epigraphic, inscribed in Arabic with “The greatest sultan Ghiyath al-Duniya wa-l-Din Kay Khusraw [b.] Kay Qubad.” Even though the coin was issued in a Christian territory, the message declares Het’um’s political loyalty to the Rum Seljuq overlord. Both cats. 14c and 14d convey Armenian and Rum Seljuq traditions and were suitable for trade in Anatolia and beyond, as they share iconographic features with other regions and territories in the eastern Mediterranean (Byzantium, Crusader territories, and other Seljuq successor states).

The combination of the sun and a lion (cat. 14b) was used only by Ghiyath al-Din Kay Khusraw II (r. 1237–46), who from A.H. 637/A.D. 1239 to A.H. 643/A.D. 1246 minted several issues, usually a single lion below the sun.²⁵ The device must certainly have impressed the Rum Seljuq ruler’s contemporaries, as it is mentioned by the erudite Syriac bishop Bar Hebraeus (1225–1286), one of the most relevant sources for the history of the Seljuq successor states: “He married the daughter of the king of Georgia and was passionately in love with her. He was so madly in love with her that he wanted an image of her on the dirhams, but was advised to depict the image of a lion above which was a sun in order to refer to his *tali*’ (ascendant star, nativity) and

Dirham of Sayf al-Din Ghazi II (r. 1170–80): Winged Figures above a Three-quarter-view Portrait (g)

Probably minted at Mosul, A.H. 567/A.D. 1172–73
Copper, Diam. 1 1/8 in. (2.9 cm); 12 g
American Numismatic Society, New York (1917.215.1003)
Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the obverse:

الملك العادل / العالم ملك / امرا / الشرق والغرب / طغرلتكين اتابك / غازي
بن / مودود / ابن زنگي

The Wise and Just King / the King of the Amirs / of East and West / Tughriltakin Atabeg / Ghazi b. / Mawdud / b. Zangi.

On the reverse:

سبع وستين / وخمسمائة

567.

Dirham of Nur al-Din Muhammad (r. 1167–85): Winged Figures above an Enthroned Figure (h)

Probably minted at Hisn Kayfa, A.H. 576/A.D. 1180–81
Copper, Diam. 1 1/8 in. (2.9 cm); 11.9 g
American Numismatic Society, New York (1925.13.1)
Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic* on the obverse:

ملك الامرا محمد / بن قرا ارسلان بن / داود بن سكمان / ابن ارتق نصير
/ امير المؤمنين الامام / الناصر الدين الله

The King of the Amirs Muhammad / b. Qara Arslan b. / Dawud b. Sukman / b. Artuq Nasir / the Commander of the Faithful / al-Imam / al-Nasir / li / Din Allah.

On the reverse field:

سنة ست / وسبعين / وخمس مائة

In the year 576.

**Dirham of Husam al-Din Yuluk Arslan
(r. 1184–1200): Mourning Scene (i)**

Probably minted at Mardin, A.H. 589/A.D. 1193
Copper, Diam. 1 3/8 in. (3.3 cm); 14 g
American Numismatic Society, New York (1927.999.106)
Inscribed in Arabic, in *kufic* on the obverse field:
الامام الناصر للدين/امير المؤمنين
Al-Imam al-Nasir, the Commander of the Faithful.
In *naskhi* on the obverse margin:
حسام الدين ملك ديار بكر يولق / ارسلان بن ايل غازي بن ارتق / سنة
تسع وثمانين وخمس / مائة
Husam al-Din King of Diyar Bakr Yuluq / Arslan b. Il-Ghazi b. Artuq in / the year 589.



**Dirham of Nasr al-Din Mahmud
(r. 1201–22): Double-headed Bird of Prey (j)**

Minted at Hisn Kayfa, A.H. 615/A.D. 1218–19
Copper, Diam. 1 1/8 in. (2.9 cm); 11.3 g
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Bequest of Joseph H. Durkee, 1898 (99.35.2376)
Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the obverse field:
الملك الصالح / محمود بن ارتق / الملك العادل / ابوبكر / الامام
الناصر / امير / المؤمنين
*The King al-Salih / Mahmud b. Artuq / the Just King / Abu
Bakr / al-Imam / al-Nasir, Commander of the Faithful.*
On the reverse field:
ضرب بالحصن / سنة ٦١٥
Struck in al-Hisn / in the year 615.



**Dirham of Nasr al-Din Artuq Arslan
(r. 1203–39): Rider on a Feline (k)**

Minted at Mardin, A.H. 606/A.D. 1209–10
Copper, Diam. 1 1/8 in. (2.8 cm); 12.6 g
American Numismatic Society, New York (1917.216.1058)
Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the obverse margin:
الملك العالم العادل ناصر / الدنيا والدين ارتق ارسلان / ملك ديار بكر
*The Wise and Just King Nasir / al-Dunya wa-l-Din Artuq
Arslan / King of Diyar Bakr.*
On the reverse field:
الامام الناصر / لدين الله امير / المؤمنين
*Al-Imam al-Nasir / li-Din Allah / the Commander of the
Faithful*
On the reverse margin:
الملك العادل سيف الدين ابو / بكر بن ايوب ضرب بماردين / سنة / سنة /
وستة / مائة
*The Just King Sayf al-Din Abu / Bakr b. Ayyub, struck in
Mardin / in the year / 606.*



**Dirham of Nasr al-Din Mahmud (r. 1219–34):
Representation of the Moon as a Seated
Figure Holding a Crescent Moon (l)**

Minted at Mosul, A.H. 627/A.D. 1229–30
Copper, Diam. 1 1/8 in. (2.7 cm); 7.6 g
American Numismatic Society, New York (1911.105.177)
Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the obverse field:
لا اله الا الله / محمد رسول الله / الامام / المستنصر بالله / امير المؤمنين
*There is no god but God (alone) / and Muhammad is
the Messenger of God / al-Imam / al-Mustansir with
the help of God / Commander of the Faithful.*
On the obverse margin:
ناصر الدنيا والدين اتابك / محمود الملك الكامل / الاشرف
*Nasir al-Dunya wa-l-Din Atabeg / Mahmud al-Malik
al-Kamil al-Malik / al-Ashraf.*
On the reverse:
ضرب بالموصل سنة سبع وعشرين و ستمائة
Struck in Mosul in the year 627.



by this means the goal was achieved."²⁶ Succeeding theories by both Ottoman and modern historians essentially originate from Bar Hebraeus's account and/or interpret the sun-lion as the sultan's "coat of arms."²⁷ Recent scholarship proposes that the device, placed on coinage, architecture, and elsewhere, refers to Kay Khusraw's personal ascendant, the zodiacal Leo in the house of the sun, but also to his personal predilection for lions as guardians and hunting animals: "the sun with the human face represented the sultan—casting 'the shadow of God on earth'—who was supreme over man and beast."²⁸

Copper Coinage

In the territories controlled by the Seljuq successor states, two main types of petty currency were in use: the *dirham aswad* and Byzantine copper coins, the latter imported during the second half of the eleventh to the early twelfth century to redress insufficient coinage for the growing regional economy. The copper coins remained in use in the successor states until the 1180s and, in the Diyar Bakr and Diyar Rabi'a areas controlled by the Artuqids and the Zangids until the 1220s.²⁹ However, the amount of petty coinage in circulation was still insufficient to fulfill the demands of the economy, a situation made worse by the fact that the *dirham aswad* was not considered fully legal tender under Islamic law. As copper was among the most available metals in several of the territories controlled by the Seljuq successor states, particularly in those areas under Artuqid and Zangid control, mines were exploited to generate a very specific type of copper coinage. The period from the mid-twelfth to the mid-thirteenth century witnessed a profusion of unusually large and heavy copper coins depicting a myriad of figural imagery. Minting activity was launched about A.H. 542/A.D. 1147–48 by the Artuqid ruler of Mardin, Husam al-Din Timurtash (r. 1122–53), followed by his rivals Qutb al-Din Mawdud (r. 1149–70), Zangid ruler of Mosul, in 555/1160; and Fakhr al-Din Qara Arslan (r. 1144–67), Artuqid ruler of Hisn Kayfa, in 556/1161.³⁰ These efforts were coupled with the renovation of roads and/or building of major bridges, emphasizing the commercial preoccupations of these early Turkish Jaziran rulers.³¹

That these new coins were called "*dirham*" suggests that they were meant to

replace *dirham aswad*. They bear Arabic inscriptions on one side, and sometimes the margins of the figural side are filled with the name and titles of the issuing ruler and/or the current overlord, as well as, on occasion, the mint and/or the date. The relatively large size of these coins (approx. 2.4–3 cm), the existence of figural imagery, and some of the depicted themes recall commonly used Byzantine copper coins, which this new coinage complemented.³² However, their iconography relates to a much broader range of visual traditions, including those from the ancient Roman (cat. 14e), Greek, Byzantine (cat. 14f), Sasanian, and Islamic worlds (cats. 14g, h). Certain examples even copy coins from different periods, such as cat. 14f, modeled after a Byzantine gold coin on the obverse and a Seleucid silver coin on the reverse.³³ Among the most important themes are religion and astrology (cat. 14l), as well as symbols of power and heraldry (cats. 14h, j).³⁴

Some coins have rare and unusual iconography, such as the "mourning scene" (cat. 14i) or the "feline rider" (cat. 14k), the visual sources and artistic models of which remain difficult to identify.³⁵ But in the main, and excepting the influence of regional manuscript painting, the dominant source materials were selected motifs from ancient and contemporary coins (busts or heads and Christian popular themes were favored, while pagan deities and buildings were not).³⁶ The nearly exact rendering of certain images suggests that mint makers had their models to hand, meaning that ancient coinage must also have been available alongside Byzantine copper coins. Ancient gold and silver currency was probably uncovered when rebuilding or erecting monuments, as many of the towns and cities occupied by the Artuqids and Zangids were important centers in antiquity. But even though some examples come quite close to their models (e.g., cat. 14e, in which even the original Latin script is included), mint makers tended toward interpretation, applying changes in details and introducing new features. This creative liberty led to some particularly striking and unusual examples.

For at least 250 years, scholars have debated the rich iconography of these coins in relation to classicist ideologies, astral associations, and other forms of symbolism, with one theory interpreting figural imagery not as

portraits of individual rulers but as attributes or concepts of rule; it would follow, then, that the Artuqids and Zangids aimed to establish a codified dynastic vocabulary of sovereign imagery.³⁷ However, general conclusions based on iconography remain questionable. The consideration of individual cases alongside evidence linked to a particular ruler and context would probably be a more fruitful approach to understanding specific imagery and its meaning. For example, the double-headed eagle (cat. 14j; see also cats. 148a, b) is among the few images that can be attributed to individual rulers—who seemingly used it as a personal or dynastic symbol of power—by means of their titles, names, or *tamghas* on the body of the bicephalic bird of prey.³⁸

Nevertheless, some explanations for the existence and profusion of certain imagery can be posited. Copper coinage was not considered proper legal tender and was meant for local issue; figural imagery would thus be less likely to elicit censure and could diverge from the more orthodox, aniconic Islamic canon. For economic reasons, introducing figural coins that recalled Byzantine coins already in use suggests that the rulers aimed to produce a trusted type of coinage that would circulate easily.³⁹ The motivation to benefit fiscally from each new issue might be one reason for the variety of coin issues but is not enough to explain the flourishing of the iconography.⁴⁰ Political, cultural, and artistic rivalries between these smaller principalities might be another explanation for the profusion and variety of figural imagery. Above all, the figural repertoire of these large copper coins reflects the spirit of the time, when open-minded rulers, curious and receptive to new creations, must certainly have stimulated the experimental efforts made visual in not only these coins but also other media. The Jazira was a kind of artistic platform, fostering a circulation of ideas that led to new inspiration. **DB**



The Courtly Cycle

The art of the Great Seljuqs is adorned with visual evidence of the idealized pursuits of sultans and grandees. Yet objects owned by specific Seljuq rulers in Iran or Central Asia or used in the context of their daily lives are unattested. Panegyric poetry and so-called mirrors for princes—a genre of texts that offered guidance and instructions to rulers—provide clues to the physical settings in which the Seljuq court operated and the etiquette they practiced, but the scope of these romanticized writings does not extend to reliable descriptions of the courts and of many of the types of objects associated with the Seljuqs and their subjects. In Anatolia several surviving Rum Seljuq stone and brick palatial structures shed light on the types and decoration of buildings in which those sultans ran their governments (cats. 20a–g). Likewise, the Artuqids and Zangids built pavilions and other palatine complexes,¹ but they resided and slept in tents in addition to these built structures. Indeed, recent research suggests that the Great Seljuq sultans and their Turkmen followers, whether soldiers or employed by the court for other functions, often resided in tents adjacent to their capital cities rather than inside the city or palace walls.²

Because encampments could be extensive and luxurious, many of the objects that are assumed to have been used in fixed dwellings were certainly also employed by Seljuqs with itinerant lives. Even on objects associated with urban centers (e.g., cat. 15), the decoration depicts figures being served or entertained in stylized garden settings. Opulent clothing and jewelry (cats. 23–33) and a range of accoutrements for the bath attest to the care taken to present oneself attractively in a variety of locales. Hammams, or public baths, constructed in cities, served the sedentary and itinerant population and were a center of social life where people not only bathed and scrubbed their skin but also shaved and received massages (cats. 36a–c).³ One of the salient attributes of much portable art of the period is the inclusion of ornament that refers directly to the court and activities deemed appropriate for kings and their entourages. Thus, although the Seljuq sultans moved from capital cities to hunting grounds to the field of battle, enthronements and formal ceremonies continued to occur. According to the vizier Nizam al-Mulk (1018–1092), “the pomp and circumstance of the kingdom and kingship must be maintained, for every king’s elegance and finery must accord with his exalted position and lofty ambition.”⁴

Large numbers of richly decorated ceramic and metal bowls, implements for serving and eating food, bottles, and cups attest to the enjoyment of feasts and drinking parties across the social spectrum. Underlying these celebrations was a code of etiquette that emphasized the generosity and hospitality of the host, expected to supply all the food and wine in his own containers, not those of the guests.⁵ Special feasts included Nawruz, the Persian New Year, which occurs at the vernal equinox, as well as other seasonal holidays and commemorations of births, circumcisions, marriages, and military victories. Not only did people exchange gifts on these occasions but they also danced, recited poetry, played music, and drank copious amounts of wine after their repast. Called, more often, *bazm* in Persian literature and *majlis* by the Artuqids, Zangids, and Lu'lu'ids, this ritual of formal feasting was considered one of the prerogatives of the Seljuq elite in both the eastern and western regions of their realm.

Much of the time of the Seljuq sultans and their close followers was devoted to hunting and fighting, both of which required bravery and expertise in horsemanship. While a few examples of Seljuq weaponry are extant (among them cats. 75, 76), numerous depictions of horsemen hunting lions, deer, and dragons adorn the full range of metal and ceramic objects. Additionally, the expensive, specialized sports of hawking and hunting enjoyed currency across the Seljuq domains. The Seljuqs delighted in hunting in its own right, but the skills they employed closely resembled those acquired in military training, or *furusdiyya*, which featured exercises with the lance, sword, mace, and bow. A further demonstration of equestrian proficiency occurred on the polo field. Not only was the game well established in Central Asia and Iran before the advent of Islam, but also polo grounds, or *maydans*, were a feature of Iranian cities as early as the Seljuq era. The appearance of polo players decorating Seljuq objects (cats. 78, 79) thus accords with the visual vocabulary of chivalry so closely associated with horsemen.

Whereas equestrian sports were the province of men,⁶ both sexes played games such as backgammon and chess. Archaeological finds from Rayy and Nishapur attest to the popularity of these pastimes (cats. 80–82).⁷ Other “indoor” pursuits that took place in buildings, tents, and gardens included the recitation of poetry and the enjoyment of music, found often on Seljuq lusterware, *mina'i* pottery, and inlaid metalwork. While we cannot reconstruct the songs of the Seljuqs, since music was not written down in notation, Persian poetry and Arabic prose of the period have come down to us in the form of manuscripts and, in the case of poetry, inscriptions on ceramics and metalwork. The increased use of paper from the tenth century onward contributed greatly to the diffusion of literature throughout the Seljuq realm.

Against a backdrop of instability as a result of frequent fighting, both among Seljuq rivals and with external foes, the celebration of courtly life and tastes characterizes the decoration of domestic interiors and utilitarian objects in a range of media. Since little is known of who owned many of these pieces, we can only speculate that the objects adorned with scenes of feasting, hunting, fighting, and entertainment suggested a graceful, desirable way of life, whether or not it was reflected in the day-to-day existence of the objects' owners. The variety of shapes and sizes of these works suggests a society with highly developed customs of social demeanor and a sense of what was proper in particular settings.⁸ Whether or not these objects were made for people of the court, they reflected the manners and mores to which courtiers conformed. **src**



The Blacas Ewer

Maker: Shuja' b. Man'a al-Mawsili

Jazira, Mosul, A.H. Rajab 629/A.D. April–May 1232

Brass; raised, engraved, inlaid with copper and silver

H. 12 in. (30.4 cm); Diam. 8⁵/₈ in. (22 cm)

British Museum, London (1866,1229.61)

Inscribed in Arabic in *naskhi* on the neck:

بالموصل نقش شجاع بن منعه الموصلی فی شهرالله المبارک شهر رجب
فی سنة تسع وعشرين وستمائة

*In Mosul, the decoration of Shuja' b. Man'a al-Mawsili, during God's blessed month, the month of Rajab, in the year 629.*¹

This vessel, although of common shape, stands out for its lavish inlaid decoration.² It is among the most important pieces in the history of Mosul metalwork, and it is one of two objects to bear an inscription specifying that it was made in that city.³ Its profusion of figural imagery occurs together with Arabic words of blessing inscribed in vegetal *kufic* and *naskhi* script. The figural scenes appear in small and large medallions formed by an interlaced polylobed design that structures the composition symmetrically, geometrically, and rhythmically. The geometry is enhanced by various fretwork patterns used either as background for the figural vignettes or as decorative medallions punctuating the epigraphic and figural friezes. The Blacas ewer represents the earliest dated

example with an overall geometric design on a fretwork ground—characteristic features of Chinese textiles, which probably served as inspiration.⁴ The artist, Shuja' b. Man'a al-Mawsili, whose name is inscribed on the neck, broke with the convention of depicting figures amid vegetal arabesques, indicating a preference for—and possibly even introducing—a more legible approach to visual composition that emerged in the 1230s and remained popular for more than a century.⁵

The ewer features a range of imagery relating to the courtly cycle, including hunting, sports, and military exercises; festivities with drinking, eating, music, and dance; and scenes from literature, such as the *Shahnama* story of Bahram Gur hunting on camelback with Azada sitting beside him playing the harp, recalling the eastern traditions of inlaid metalwork from which the technique was introduced to Mosul.⁶ Particular to this ewer is its great variety of themes, some of which are uncommon to metalwork and relate instead to manuscript painting and other media. Examples include a number of scenes pertaining to women of high social rank: one (veiled) plays the lute (fig. 38), another rides a camel in a litter, and a third sits cross-legged at her toilette, admiring herself in a large mirror. The

ruler sits with one leg bent, wearing a *sharbus* (furred hat) and attended by amirs (fig. 39), and compares closely to the frontispieces of the *Aghani* volumes, in which Badr al-Din Lu'lu' is depicted in various poses and royal activities (see also cat. 11). Was this ewer made for Badr al-Din and at his court, where Shuja' would have had access to the manuscripts? The magnificence of the inlaid decoration and the date of manufacture (slightly more than a year before Badr al-Din's official accession to the throne) point strongly to the patronage of Badr al-Din, the driving force behind Mosul inlaid-metal production, at a time when his power and standing in the region were increasing.⁷

Shuja' employed subtle details of gesture, expression, and posture to enliven and imbue each scene with intimacy and charm. The vignettes thus act as individual windows into aristocratic life in medieval Mosul. In a broader sense the ewer is representative of the courtly world of the Seljuqs, owing not only to its iconography but also to its purpose. Inlaid metalwork belonged to the courtly household and reflected the wealth and grandeur of its owner. Ewers like this example were meant to be admired while being used to wash hands during festive, ceremonial, or ritual occasions.⁸

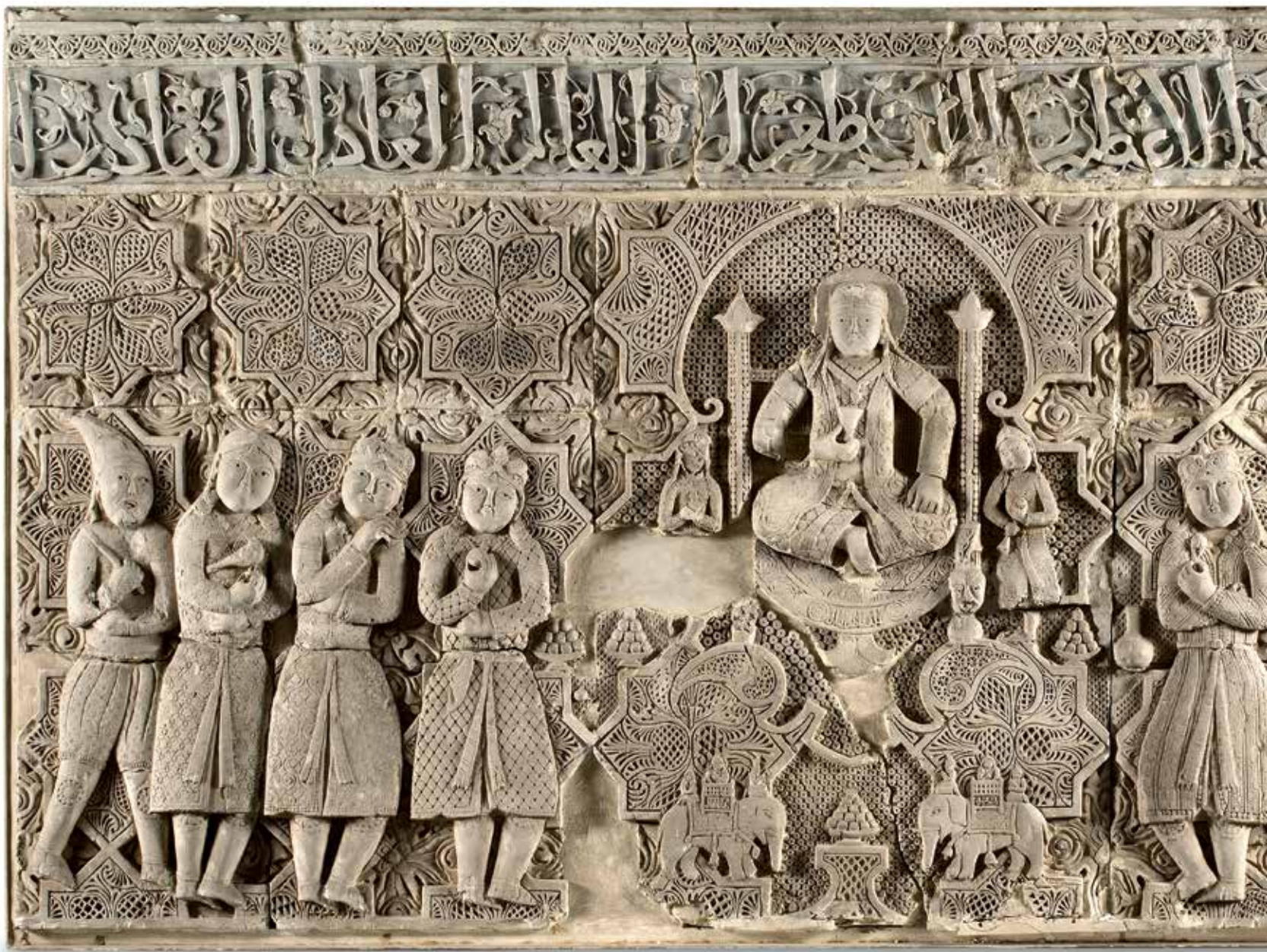
DB



Fig. 38. Detail of cat. 15 showing a veiled woman playing a lute



Fig. 39. Detail of cat. 15 showing a seated ruler with amirs



16

Panel with Enthroned Ruler and Courtiers

Iran, possibly from the vicinity of Rayy, second half of the 12th century

Gypsum plaster; molded, carved, painted

67¾ in. × 10 ft. 7⅛ in. (172 × 323 cm)

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Purchased with Museum Funds, 1929 (1929-69-1)

Inscribed in Arabic in cursive, on the upper panel:

السلطان الملك الاعظم الـ[م]لك طغرل العالم العادل القادر الـ[. . .]

*The Sultan, the King, the Greatest, the King Tughril, the Wise, the Just, the Strong.*¹

On the throne beneath the seated figure:

الملك المظفر العادل

The King, Triumphant, Just.

This panel, allegedly excavated in the vicinity of Rayy,² just north of the central Iranian plateau, may have come from a courtly building. Rayy was an important center under the Great Seljuqs, chosen by some sultans as their primary residence and disputed among their successors in the twelfth century.

An inscribed cartouche beneath the seated figure identifies him as a royal, and the larger inscription, in the upper register, gives the name of Tughril.³ While the figure's identity is not conclusive (see below and note 6), his authority is unequivocal. He is accompanied

by standing courtiers or *ghulams*, some of whom carry objects—ewers, sticks, handkerchiefs—that may represent their insignia of office. Such scenes, evocative of sovereign power, may have embellished the reception halls of royal buildings, as indicated by a number of preserved works with similar depictions (see parallels in cats. 1a–j).

The panel was reassembled from many fragments, and photographs showing it in a more intact state indicate that it went through several phases of restoration. Variations in the infillings in the enthronement scene offer

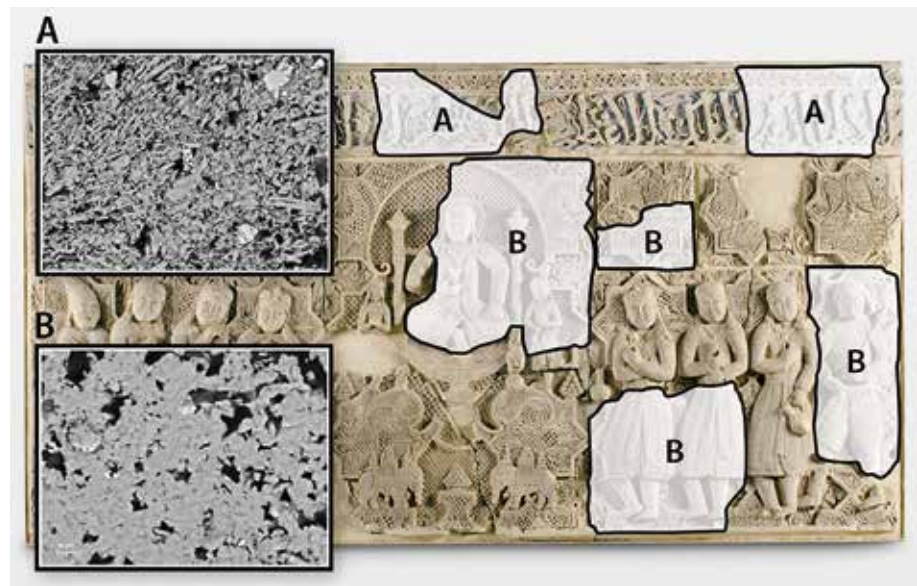


Fig. 40. Digital mapping of cat. 16 showing areas of differently textured gypsum plaster, identified with SEM-EDS analysis

further evidence of these campaigns.⁴ Soon after the panel's acquisition by the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1929, its authenticity came into question.⁵ The titles in the upper inscription, atypical for Seljuq and post-Seljuq sultans in Iran, suggest that the frieze was assembled so that the name of Tughril would align with the enthroned figure; a still-visible pencil mark and indentation were certainly functional in this regard.⁶ Furthermore, SEM-EDS and petrographic analyses have proven that the texture of the gypsum plaster consistently differs in samples taken from the upper

register and from the figural scene, suggesting that the two parts were not produced at the same time and may not have belonged together originally (fig. 40).⁷

Surface anomalies in the enthronement scene may also indicate modern interventions, such as a smoothing or recarving of details in the figures' faces; this issue, together with the various phases of restoration, awaits further investigation.⁸ At present, the gathered evidence does not answer the question of dating, but it is unlikely that the panel is an entirely modern production. It more likely reflects a

market in which, at the beginning of the twentieth century, invasive reconstructive practices were standard and sometimes intersected with antiquing attempts. **MR**



Cat. 17, two views

17

Model of a House with Festive Scene

Iran, 12th–early 13th century
Stonepaste; molded, modeled, glazed in transparent turquoise

2¾ × 7⅛ × 4½ in. (7 × 18.1 × 11.4 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1967 (67.117)

18

Model of a House with Amorous Couple

Iran, 12th–early 13th century
Stonepaste; molded, glazed in opaque white, luster-painted

1⅝ × 6⅜ × 4⅜ in. (4.1 × 16.2 × 11.1 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Grinnell Collection, Bequest of William Milne Grinnell, 1920 (20.120.66)

Inscribed in Arabic in cursive along the top edge:

العز الدائم (?) [.....] الغالب [.....]
*Perpetual glory(?) [...] Victor [...]*¹

These objects belong to a larger group of house models that provide a glimpse into vernacular Iranian practices and settings but whose original function or meaning has not yet been determined. Variably identified as hanging devices, children's toys, and offerings to Buddhist temples, they are now more likely to be seen by scholars as representations of celebrations, such as marriages, Nawruz (the Persian New Year), or festivities related to the end of the religious fast, on which occasions such objects could have been exchanged as gifts.²

These examples show the two main types of house models, one displaying an open courtyard (cat. 17) and the other with a figural plaque for a roof (cat. 18). Architectural elements such as the open courtyard with pierced balustrade and the corner roof projections in cat. 17 suggest that such models represent vernacular buildings, as common houses excavated in Siraf, Nishapur, and Ghazni often feature an open courtyard.³ While the hoop-type balustrade is unknown from archaeological findings, institutional buildings were sometimes decorated with merlons per long-standing traditions dating from pre-Islamic

times, from Central Asia to Mesopotamia.⁴ It is not unlikely that houses also had some kind of balustrade or rooftop decoration, possibly made of cheaper, widely employed materials such as bricks or rammed earth.⁵ Also plausible is the notion that decorative balustrades and roof posts symbolize, on the house models, embellishments fit for festive occasions.

The erotic imagery on the rooftop plaque in cat. 18, in which a woman and a turbaned man lie together beneath a folded or striped coverlet, led to the association of this and other house models with marriage, and to the hypothesis that they were used as wedding gifts.⁶ The association may also be plausible for the open-courtyard type of model, which most often shows scenes of social gatherings calling to mind festive occasions, with seated personages holding cups or musical instruments, and with round trays and vases, presumably for food and drink, set at the center (see, for instance, cat. 43).⁷ In the festive scene in cat. 17, the individuals holding cups may be women, as they have long hair and wear what seem to be veils.



Cat. 18

The complete scene represented in cat. 17, however, is one of a kind. In addition to the usual cup-wielders, it shows a turbaned, bearded man standing on a high stepped stool, or *kursi*, facing two figures on a raised platform, or *suffa*. The man on the *kursi* leans on a stick and has the conventional traits of older, wise, educated, or religious men.⁸ One figure on the *suffa* lifts his left hand and holds a stick or tool in the other, while the second individual lifts both hands. Recent scholarship favors an interpretation of the scene as a matrimonial ritual set in a domestic context, but a number of details remain enigmatic.⁹ For one, the wedded couple (if this is indeed the role of the two figures on the *suffa*) have exactly the same facial features, even though personages of opposite genders may be differentiated by the presence or absence of headdresses or veils (as in cat. 18).¹⁰ The unglazed surface of the tops of their heads suggest the original presence of a separately

applied headdress, as is the case with the turban of the figure on the *kursi*.¹¹ Regardless of the shape of the missing headdresses, neither figure has the long hair of the veiled cup-bearers or the beard of the figure on the *kursi*. They may represent young men. The meaning of the raised arms, traditionally described as those of an orante (in the attitude of prayer), is most likely associated with dance. Remarkably, the posture can also be found in a similarly mysterious and probably related group of unglazed, molded figurines also including musicians, of which cat. 89 is an example.¹²

Although the exact meaning of the scene escapes us, this house model suggests that such objects were related to the celebration or remembrance of ceremonies where food and drink were essential and which took place in embellished buildings. The mention in historical texts of castles (*qasr*) in silver and gold and of “houses, gardens and other such things” in wax brought as gifts to rulers echoes a wide

tradition of gift giving of comparable objects.¹³ A revealing passage in Ibn Bibi (written before 1281) reveals that architectural models were indeed also part of the traditional gifts given on the occasion of marriages in the medieval period: seven castles (*qasur*) in gold and silver inlaid with precious stones were offered in 1227 on the occasion of the marriage of the Ayyubid princess Gaziya to the Rum Seljuq sultan Kay Qubad I.¹⁴ Stonepaste house models may have been a much more affordable alternative to such princely gifts. **MR**



19

Nine-pointed Star Tile with Rider

Modern Turkmenistan, Kone-Urgench,
late 12th–early 13th century
Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, in-glaze-
and overglaze-painted
H. 5 1/8 x 6 x 1/2 in. (13 x 15.3 x 1.3 cm)
Museum of Kone-Urgench State Cultural and
Historical Park of Turkmenistan (237[15])

Glazed tiles, mosaics, and other elements represented a major trend in twelfth-century architectural decoration. The accidental discovery in the northeastern area of Kone-Urgench of this nine-pointed tile with an unfinished decoration of a rider, and of a very similar one with the same rider motif, gives rise to questions concerning the original use of such tiles in buildings as well as their origin, production, and commercialization.¹

The few known eleventh- and twelfth-century courtly or elite residential buildings in Central Asia and Iran indicate a taste for generously decorated walls on which a range of materials were combined to create an

astonishingly vivid polychrome effect. It is not known if the practice of Abbasid luster-painted tiles persisted after the ninth century, but glazed elements started to appear on the exterior of monuments in Iran in the second half of the eleventh century (fig. 41), about the same time that glazed earthenware tiles (plain and with molded decoration) were used in a palace at Ghazni.² By the late twelfth century architects in Iran and Central Asia were taking advantage of innovations that had been developed in pottery workshops, and they were starting to incorporate stonepaste *mina'i* tiles, such as this one from Kone-Urgench and another found at Rayy, into their projects.³ Craftsmen from Iran are believed to have transferred this practice to Anatolia, where *mina'i* tiles were found in situ in the palace at Konya (ca. 1160s–70s; see cat. 20a), but the tiles have never been investigated with comparative archaeometric analyses.⁴

Although no *mina'i* tile was found in its original context in Iran or Central Asia,

comparison with later examples and the ones from Anatolia suggests that they were used as insets in stucco or brickwork paneling or in combination with cross-shaped tiles in compositions based on the geometric interlacing of stellate and polygonal shapes.⁵ Common compositions were based on six- and eight-sided polygons, with ten-sided ones introduced in the early twelfth century;⁶ a nine-pointed star such as this example would have belonged to a complex geometric composition based on odd numbers.

The tile was likely imported from Iran since, to our knowledge, *mina'i* was only produced in pottery workshops in Kashan.⁷ It is thus surprising to find an unfinished *mina'i* piece in Khwarazm, which suggests that it was deemed suitable for commerce. **MR**



Fig. 41. Minaret with remnants of an inscription in turquoise-glazed ceramic



a

20a–g

Architectural Decoration from the Konya Köşk

Anatolia, Konya, built ca. 1160s–70s under Kılıç Arslan II (r. 1156–92), renovated under ‘Ala’ al-Din Kay Qubad I (r. 1219–37)

Hexagonal Tile Ensemble with Sphinx (a)

Stonepaste; over- and underglaze-painted, gilded
 9¼ × 8¼ × 1⅞ in. (23.5 × 21 × 2.9 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Jack A. Josephson, 1976 (1976.245)

Unlike in Iran, where there is little archaeological evidence attesting to the court architecture of the Great Seljuqs, a considerable number of palatine complexes, pavilions, and other courtly monuments survive in parts of Greater Syria, the Jazira, and Anatolia once controlled by the Seljuq successor states.¹ Among the most notable examples is the palace at Konya known as the Alaeddin, or the Konya Köşk. It is the earliest datable court monument in the Rum Seljuq realm,² as well as one of the few remaining examples of early Rum Seljuq architecture in Anatolia. The building and its decoration exemplify the aesthetics of Rum Seljuq court architecture in general as well as several

of the leitmotifs specific to the Anatolian visual and artistic vocabulary in particular. The *köşk* further demonstrates how the Rum Seljuqs created a material culture of distinctive hybridity by blending Persianate artistic traditions inherited from Iran and Central Asia with local styles rooted in Byzantium and the ancient eastern Mediterranean. Finally, when considered in a broader context that encompasses the lifestyle of the Rum Seljuqs, the Konya Köşk sheds light on the movable attitude of the Rum Seljuq sultans and their courts.

Konya, known since antiquity as *Ikónion* or *Ikonium*, became the capital of the Rum Seljuqs under Sultan Kılıç Arslan I (r. 1092–1107).

However, it was only during the reign of Kılıç Arslan II (r. 1156–92) that the city saw a significant increase in its wealth and political influence, a time that coincided with the Rum Seljuqs' subsumption of other Anatolian principalities. Rum Seljuq territorial expansion reached its height after the sultanate assumed control of several port towns along the Mediterranean and Black seas, including Antalya (1207) in the south and Sinop (1214) in the north. The establishment of Rum Seljuq rule over nearly all of Anatolia led to a commercial, artistic, and cultural golden age that lasted until the mid-thirteenth century, flourishing in particular under 'Ala' al-Din Kay Qubad I (r. 1219–37).

As the capital of the sultanate, Konya was at the heart of this efflorescence. The city's magisterial *köşk* was built under Kılıç Arslan II in the 1160s–70s,³ and refurbished by Kay Qubad I in the second quarter of the thirteenth century. Together with a complex that includes the Great Mosque, a tomb, and a madrasa, it is among the earliest surviving Rum Seljuq architectural monuments in Konya and Anatolia (see figs. 9, 42, 43).⁴ The formerly two-story monument was built halfway down an ancient tell (now called Alaeddin Tepe) atop one of the bastions or towers of the citadel; in the medieval period, such "citadel-palaces" frequently served as royal residences in the eastern Mediterranean and, in the Rum Seljuq realm, were often complemented by garden pavilions in nearby suburbs or rural areas.⁵ Indeed, Kay Qubad I was said to have built more palaces and pavilions (*saray wa kushk*) than could be described. Among those that survive, Kubadabad, built along Lake Beysehir according to a design by the sultan himself, remains the best known and most storied (see figs. 12, 44–46).⁶

Ancient ruins and materials were repurposed for use in the lower levels of the *köşk*,⁷ a not uncommon practice in the Seljuq successor states, particularly in the lands of Rum. At Aspendos, for instance, the ruins of the Roman theater were incorporated into another palace for Kay Qubad I, where figural tiles on the interior of one of the staircase buildings are comparable to those found at Kubadabad (fig. 44), and large fields of red-and-white



b

painting checkerboard or zigzag patterns are painted on the exterior of both staircases, a distinct pattern that the Rum Seljuq ruling elite used to mark the exterior of courtly buildings (see figs. 24, 25).⁸ Additionally, antique sculptures adorn the Konya city walls, among them an acephalous Hercules at one of the entrance gates, and repeated references to the Hellenistic hero Iskandar (Alexander the Great) appear in the form of his name, inscribed on buildings and state documents, and in his invocation as an ideal and just ruler in the *Hadayek al-siyar*, a "mirror for princes" composed for Kay Qubad I. All this suggests that the Rum Seljuqs identified themselves with the glory of Antiquity.⁹

By the early twentieth century, the Konya Köşk had fallen largely into ruin (figs. 42, 43), but fragments of tiles (cat. 20a) and of stucco reliefs (cats. 20b–g), as well as opus sectile (cut-stone mosaic) and a monumental stone sculpture of a seated lion, probably one of a pair,¹⁰ speak to its former artistic sophistication and lavish polychrome ornamentation. The upper story was dominated by an *iwan*, an

Fragment of a Spandrel with a Bird (b)

Stucco; molded
5½ × 5⅞ in. (14 × 15 cm)
Victoria and Albert Museum, London (A.77-1925)

Fragment of a Rider (c)

Stucco; molded
4¾ × 3⅞ in. (12 × 8 cm)
Victoria and Albert Museum, London (374:1-1906)

Fragment of a Floriated Kufic Inscription (d)

Stucco; molded
5⅞ × 5⅞ in. (15 × 13 cm)
Victoria and Albert Museum, London (374:42-1906)

element typical of Iranian court architecture from as early as the Sasanian palace at Ctesiphon, and which began appearing in Islamic court architecture in the early Islamic period. The *iwān* of the Konya Köşk had balconies on three sides facing outward over the city, thereby functioning as both a *manzara*, or belvedere, and a point from which the sultan could consider his dominion. A now lost inscription band, in white *naskhi* on a dark blue ground, quoting the name and titles of Kılıç Arslan II framed the Persianate arch of the *iwān* wall, while the spandrels to either side (and possibly other parts of the building as well) were filled with a complex interlace pattern of cross- and star-shaped and polygonal tiles (cat. 20a; fig. 42).¹¹ Thus, these tiles belonged to the first Seljuq construction phase that took place under Kılıç Arslan II. Decorated

in *mina'i* and gold, these tile ensembles are reminiscent of the luxury ceramic vessels developed by potters in Kashan, Iran, but on vessels rather than tiles, from which the technique was probably brought to Konya.¹²

The influence of Iranian artistic media is further evident in the *köşk's* numerous molded architectural reliefs in stucco, of which cats. 20b–g are key examples. As no archaeological context is known for the reliefs, it is difficult to date them precisely. A fragment in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (I.4263), bears traces of paint, suggesting a broader polychrome program of decoration. In addition to wider parts of the walls, these ornamental relief panels framed openings such as niches and doors (and possibly windows¹³), as suggested by the spandrel-like fragments of cats. 20b and 20g. Remains of figural and

epigraphic friezes framed at top and bottom by narrow bands (cats. 20f, g) confirm that the composition was at least partly compartmentalized in a manner comparable to other media, specifically inlaid metalwork. The imagery of real and fantastic animals—deer, avifauna, felines, sphinxes, and harpies—against vegetal scrolls recalls Iranian examples, as do the scenes of equestrian combat against lions and the several astrological allusions, among them a standing figure holding a fish in each hand, which may refer to the zodiacal sign of Pisces.¹⁴ These predominantly Persianate material, stylistic, and iconographic references represent the koine of imagery that would flourish in both the eastern and western parts of the broader Seljuq realm, but certain themes, such as the knotted dragon, which may symbolize the lunar eclipse; the mounted



c



d

monarch battling this mythic beast; and the royal and protective double-headed eagle are specific to the material culture of the western region.¹⁵

The stucco decoration found at Konya also speaks to the development and diffusion during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of an artistic language that spread beyond the Rum Seljuq realm into neighboring Christian territories, forming an interregional “international style.” As a result of this blending of Persianate, eastern Mediterranean, Caucasian, and other traditions, a Seljuq-influenced palace was built in twelfth-century Constantinople, while stucco reliefs that are almost identical to those from Kubadabad and relate closely to those from Konya decorated the thirteenth-century palace of the citadel at Ani, among them a fragment of a spandrel with a peacock. The diffusion to Trebizond and Armenia of Rum Seljuq-style *muqarnas* (stalactite-like architectural decoration) is likewise the result of this artistic exchange.¹⁶

Although the original order and locations of the fragments are unknown, their iconographic similarity to portable luxury objects of the elite confirms their purpose: to recreate an earthly paradise, or the ideal life and just dominion of the sovereign, which ultimately extended into the celestial realm. The monarch, distinguished by his headgear, enthroned with attendants, or engaged in



e

falconry while mounted on his steed, fights, hunts, and feasts (*bazm wa razm*) within a richly populated and abundant landscape. The chasing animals reinforce the dynamics of the hunt, while the birds of prey and peafowl denote nobility and power, an iconographic topos furthered by the sultan’s victory over lions and dragons.¹⁷ The fantastic and hybrid creatures together with the benedictory inscriptions offer otherworldly and magic protection.¹⁸ Decorated as such, the Konya Köşk, although situated in an urban environment, evoked the ideal natural setting awaiting the sultan at his country pavilions, as well as the paradisiacal ideal awaiting him in heaven (figs. 12, 44–46). Presiding over this cosmos was the monarch, whose authority ensured

Fragment of a Spandrel with a Bird (e)

Stucco; molded
4½ × 3¾ in. (11.4 × 9.4 cm)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Madina
Collection of Islamic Art, Gift of Camilla Chandler Frost
(M.2002.1.675)

Fragment of a Spandrel with a Doe (f)

Stucco; molded
H. 5⅞ in. (14.9 cm)
Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu
Berlin (I.7632)



Fig. 42. View ca. 1905 of the Konya Köşk



f

harmony and order. The rich polychrome palette and figural imagery of the Konya Köşk was not unlike those in eleventh- and twelfth-century monuments of Iran and Central Asia, from which the aesthetic was probably imported to Anatolia.

Remains of opus sectile on the floor indicate a colorful geometric star pattern, perhaps in the context of a fountain. Mosaic-cut stone, inherited from Late Antiquity, is known from Islamic architecture of the Artuqids, Ayyubids, and Mamluks in the Jazira, Syria, and Egypt, specifically in palatine reception areas (*qa'a* in Arabic) and/or baths or fountains.¹⁹ The pair of stone lions seated in niches on the exterior ground-level facade is further suggestive of an entranceway, for

animal guardians often flanked city gates or entrances to buildings in Anatolia and the Jazira.²⁰ This iconographic program together with the prominence of the *ivan* might therefore have been conceived in the context of a reception area—an immediate expression of might and majesty to visitors and emissaries to the Rum Seljuq court.²¹ The naturalism of the one extant, fragmentary lion betrays not the Seljuq period but Antiquity, from which it was likely repurposed. Nevertheless, the lion remained a potent symbol of royalty and power in the Seljuq era, its name—*arslan* in Turkish—frequently adopted by Seljuq rulers, among them the patron of the Konya Köşk himself (see cats. 136a–d). The iconography of this *köşk* might be seen as a visual



Fig. 43. View ca. 1905 of the Alaeddin mosque complex (center) and the Konya Köşk (right)

expression of a political language, made that much more potent by its location in the Rum Seljuq capital.

While the Konya Köşk was the official palace of the sultans of Rum, the court was highly mobile, and other cities such as Kayseri or Alanya functioned at times as court centers. Konya did, however, maintain its primacy as the “royal city” (*civitatem regiam Yconium*), “seat of government,” and “home to the throne of the state” (*mustaqarr-i sarir-i dawlat*), as it is referred to in several sources.²² That many Rum Seljuq rulers performed the symbolic act of moving the remains of their deceased relatives from elsewhere into the dynastic mausoleum at Konya is further proof of the city’s political importance.²³ Despite the



8

**Eight Fragments from a Frieze Depicting
Chasing Animals (g)**

Stucco; molded

H. of each approx. 2½ in. (5.7 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Madina
Collection of Islamic Art, Gift of Camilla Chandler Frost
(M.2002.1683a-h)



Fig. 44. Early 20th-century view of the Great Palace at Kubadabad, with tiles in situ in the northeast corner of the reception room

capital's significance, the Rum Seljuq sultans did not necessarily spend much time there. Indeed they embraced an itinerant lifestyle, the evidence for which is limited to the peregrinations of Kay Qubad I: in winter he enjoyed the milder climate of Alanya or Antalya on the Mediterranean coast and spent spring and summer in the high and often mountainous plains of central Anatolia; Kayseri served as the base for his spring campaigns and thus an important point to assemble the Seljuq army.²⁴ Konya remained the location of key ceremonial events, such as celebrating the accession of the sultan or receiving foreign emissaries and dignitaries. In reality, however, these activities could take place elsewhere.

After relocating to a new city, the monarch would continue to travel, this time from the urban palace to his country residences, where he would hunt, play polo, and feast. He was always in the company of courtiers and

servants, who would ensure his diversion and comfort. In accounts supported by Ibn Bibi,²⁵ the sultan's passage might involve the construction en route of mobile pavilions (*kushkha-yi rawan*) or tents, the appearance of which we unfortunately do not know. Tents were pitched not only during military campaigns or on the road but also near palaces and pavilions, for the "sultan's itinerant lifestyle was motivated by politics as well as pleasure, offering the chance of cementing his relationship with the Türkmén, as well as 'destroying enemies' (*dushman-gudazi*), whether these were less pliant nomads or other threats that the sultan sought to avert with nomadic power."²⁶ Indeed, growing in direct proportion to the Turkmen population was the risk for plunder, revolt, and other destabilizing factors. To control these nomadic groups, the sultan would to a certain extent follow them as they migrated across the plains of central Anatolia—an area that lies roughly between Konya and Kayseri—to assert his authority and earn the confidence of their chiefs. Lavish banquets at Kubadabad, for instance, helped build alliances and trust with tribal leaders.

At least some of the palatine locations, and specifically the suburban garden complexes such as those around Alanya, confirm the importance of agricultural activity. In addition to serving as leisure centers for the ruling elite and stopping points during hunting season, they were vital year-round to the administrative and economic landscape as functioning

agricultural enterprises.²⁷ In this context the movement of the sultan and his entourage, in addition to reasons of politics and the hunt, may also have been motivated by economic, agricultural, and tax-related incentives. **DB**



Fig. 45. Mosaic tile panel originally from the Great Palace at Kubadabad, now Karatay Museum, Konya



Fig. 46. Square *mina'i* tile of a rider originally from Kubadabad, now Çinili Köşk, Istanbul

21a–c

Lighting Devices

Tripod Lamp Stand (a)

Iran or Afghanistan, Khurasan, 11th–12th century
Bronze; pierced openwork, engraved, incised, inlaid with glazed ceramic

H. 23 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (60 cm); Diam. 14 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (36 cm)

Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London (MTW 1080)

Inscribed in Persian in *kufic*:

آب ملک (آب ملک) ایران بر آتش او آنک زیر او آب بر او // عمل مظفری (ع)
*May the water of the land of Iran be upon his fire (i.e., tyranny?), and may whoever is against it have water over him (i.e., be drowned?) // The work of the brass maker (Muzaffari?).*¹

Candlestick (b)

Maker: Shirin b. Awhad al-Quway'i

Anatolia, late 13th–14th century

Brass; engraved, incised, inlaid with silver and gold

H. 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (19.7 cm); Diam. 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (20.5 cm)

Museo Civico Medievale, Bologna (2092)

Inscribed in Arabic on the neck:

عمل شیرین بن اوحده القویئی
*The work of Shirin b. Awhad al-Quway'i.*²

In a time before electricity, lighting depended on the burning of organic materials such as oil, wax, or grease, the natural odor of which might be masked by the complementary burning of incense or perfume. Flame light was maintained by means of a regular supply of fuel, which, depending on the context, might involve some logistic organization. For instance, lighting for public spaces, mosques, and madrasas, as well as for the monumental residences of the well-to-do, royal, and elite, had to be maintained in significantly larger quantities than it was in private or domestic usage. During ritual and festive occasions, the demand for lighting devices and materials increased even further.³

Various lighting receptacles and devices, mainly in metal, were in use during Seljuq times, among which oil lamps, lamp stands, and candlesticks were especially popular.⁴ Tripod stands with long shafts (cat. 21a) allowed for more efficient illumination by raising a lamp or candle to an elevated level. Though large, tripod lamp stands could be disassembled and were therefore transportable, rendering them suitable for a mobile society. However, as only one lamp or candle could be placed on a single stand, they were not



a

effective in large spaces. Manuscript paintings suggest their use in domestic or private contexts, for example, as reading lamps.⁵ Lighting devices of this shape relate to a Byzantine prototype and were popular in both the western and the eastern Islamic worlds. Their use continued from the early Islamic period through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when truncated candlesticks came into fashion.⁶

The hexagonal shaft, circular plate, bulbs, and hemispherical base of cat. 21a are all pierced. Such openwork was common for hanging lamps and incense burners (cats. 34, 136a), allowing for the diffusion of smoke and/or light. In this example the pierced surface is nevertheless purely decorative.⁷ The three stylized lions with inlaid turquoise eyes were common in fitting or mount elements, and also known from incense burners.⁸ However, the inscription wishing death to an anonymous person (tyrant?)—a rare malediction amid the mostly benedictory content of Khurasani metalwork—suggests that the coppersmith made this stand as a special commission. While the lions and peacocks on the base connote royalty and most likely served an apotropaic function toward the owner,⁹ the inscription emphasizes the importance of superstition and belief in black magic.

Truncated candlesticks emerged from the Khurasan school of metalwork in the twelfth century and proliferated westward into the territories controlled by the Seljuq successor states in the early thirteenth century.¹⁰ They remained popular throughout the Islamic world until the early modern period. The many candlesticks that exist can be divided into regional and chronological groups according to shape and decorative repertoire and attest to the numerous workshops that produced them. With its curvilinear body, vertical foot, and flat shoulder, cat. 21b is characteristic of the Anatolian school.¹¹ It is among the rare signed pieces. Although the *nisba* of the artist, “al-Quway’i,” is currently not associated with a specific location, it suggests that Siirt, a city in eastern Anatolia renowned for inlaid metalwork, was not the only major center of production.¹² Common Anatolian characteristics of this candlestick are the style of the figures, often rendered with hair or hats relating to



b



Fig. 47. Detail of cat. 21b showing a rider slaying a dragon-snake



Fig. 48. Detail of fol. 34b from a copy of *Warqa and Gulshah* showing a tent illuminated by lamplight. Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Istanbul

Europe; iconography of the Labors of the Months; and depictions of hunters on horseback battling animals, from lions to a snake- or dragonlike beast (fig. 47), thereby evoking Christian imagery of Saint George slaying the dragon.¹³

In Anatolia, Greater Syria, and the Jazira, lavishly inlaid candlesticks belonged to the courtly household. Representative of the wealth and power of the ruler, they were used for specific ceremonial occasions. For example, at the Artuqid court in Mardin under Sultan Shams al-Din Salih (r. 1312–63), candles were brought and lit at evening *majalis* (assemblies

or court councils), inspiring the court poet Safi al-Din al-Hilli to compose a “candle cycle,” a series of six poems devoted to this ceremonial.¹⁴ In medieval manuscripts, truncated candlesticks appear in a range of contexts, including domestic, devotional, and funerary, or even in the center of a tent (fig. 48).¹⁵ The latter is more specifically confirmed by tombstones and cenotaphs from Mamluk Syria and Egypt and from fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Anatolia,¹⁶ where lamps in prayer niches are flanked by two bell-shaped candlesticks, alluding to the *Ayat al-nur*, or Verse of Light (24:35): “Allah is the Light of the heavens and

the earth. The parable of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp. . . . Light upon light. Allah guides to His Light whomever He wishes.”

Among hanging lighting devices, one type of lamp—globular in shape with a flaring neck—was especially common in Seljuq times (fig. 49). They are commonly called mosque lamps in reference to the enameled lanterns from Mamluk mosques in Cairo, which often include Qur’anic inscriptions.¹⁷ They were used most often in religious and funerary contexts, either hanging in a prayer niche or depicted on tombstones, mihrabs, or stele.¹⁸ Nevertheless, in Seljuq times the original context of



Fig. 49. Fragmentary lamp. Excavated at Nishapur, 10th–12th century. Green glass; applied decoration, H. approx. 4½ in. (11.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1948 (48.101.59)



c

these lamps is not always known. Many of the glass examples are quite small and not suitable for a large space. Indeed, if provided with a circular foot, they could be freestanding, or they might be stationary hanging lamps or portable lighting devices. Depictions in manuscripts suggest that, in addition to funerary and religious contexts, such globular lamps were used in domestic and private milieus.¹⁹

Cat. 21c is one of the few known Seljuq polycandelons, a prototype of the European chandelier.²⁰ This example stands on three

feet. Illumination was provided through small glass vessels placed within circular rings. Typical for the time, this lighting device is embellished with depictions of pairs of birds that was probably imbued with apotropaic meaning, emphasizing the importance of figural and animal imagery and the multifunctionality of the objects with which people surrounded themselves in Seljuq times. **DB**

Polycandelon (Lamp Stand?) (c)

Khurasan, allegedly from Bojnurd, 12th–13th century
Bronze; cast, engraved, punched, inlaid with copper
H. 11¼ in. (28.5 cm); Diam. 17¾ in. (44 cm)
Linden-Museum Stuttgart (A 36.069 a L)



22

Bowl with Couple in a Garden

Iran, late 12th–early 13th century

Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, in-glaze- and overglaze-painted

Diam. 7³/₈ in. (18.8 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.1643)

A couple appears in a lush garden, with a small refreshing pond at their feet and birds flying above.¹ Gardens were central to the court architecture of the Seljuq and post-Seljuq periods, providing the setting for princely activities such as hunting, feasting, and entertaining as well as for official meetings.² Following the tradition of Persian gardens in pre-Islamic, especially Sasanian, times, gardens either were incorporated into architectural complexes or existed independently as

large properties outside towns, with orchards or game enclosures for the diversion of the sovereign and his court.³ While historical sources on and archaeological remains of royal residences of the Great Seljuq period are scarce, the information we do have reports on several gardens built by Sultan Malik Shah (r. 1073–92) around his main capital, Isfahan. They were probably hunting enclosures, as the name Bagh-i Dasht-i Gur (garden of the onager's plain) may suggest. The mention



Fig. 50. Courtyard of the reception hall of the palace at Merv. At center are the remains of the north *ivan* with a door leading to a complex of rooms; at left are the remains of the west *ivan*.

of *kushks*, a Persian term that refers to pavilions or residential structures, in gardens reveals the wider range of activities carried out there. Gardens were clearly an integral part of the sultan's life and one of his many dwelling places (figs. 50, 51).⁴

The attention paid to gardens is all the more evident in contemporaneous Arabic and Persian poetry, where gardens and their trees, flowers, pools, and running water are a predominant topos encompassing a range of metaphorical implications. In panegyrics of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, gardens were used as poetic symbols to praise a patron or to emphasize the splendor of the sovereign and princely life, thereby becoming a metaphor for the prosperous state.⁵ A poem by Mu'izzi (1048–1125) uses the image of the garden to allegorize his relationship with one of his patrons, the powerful vizier Taj al-Mulk (1046–1093): "My nature is, through poetry, a blossoming and wonderful garden, since I planted a tree of your praise in that garden."⁶ In secular and mystic poetry, the garden is often portrayed as an earthly paradise, the symbolic setting for desired love, and a metaphor for Paradise itself—a notion often embraced in toponymy as well. The intimate scene on this bowl, in which a couple engages in amiable conversation and drinking, may

thus have wider implications owing to their location within a garden, the lushness and animation of which is echoed in the bird and vegetal motifs of their richly adorned robes. The figure pictured in the pond may have added further levels of interpretation.⁷ MR

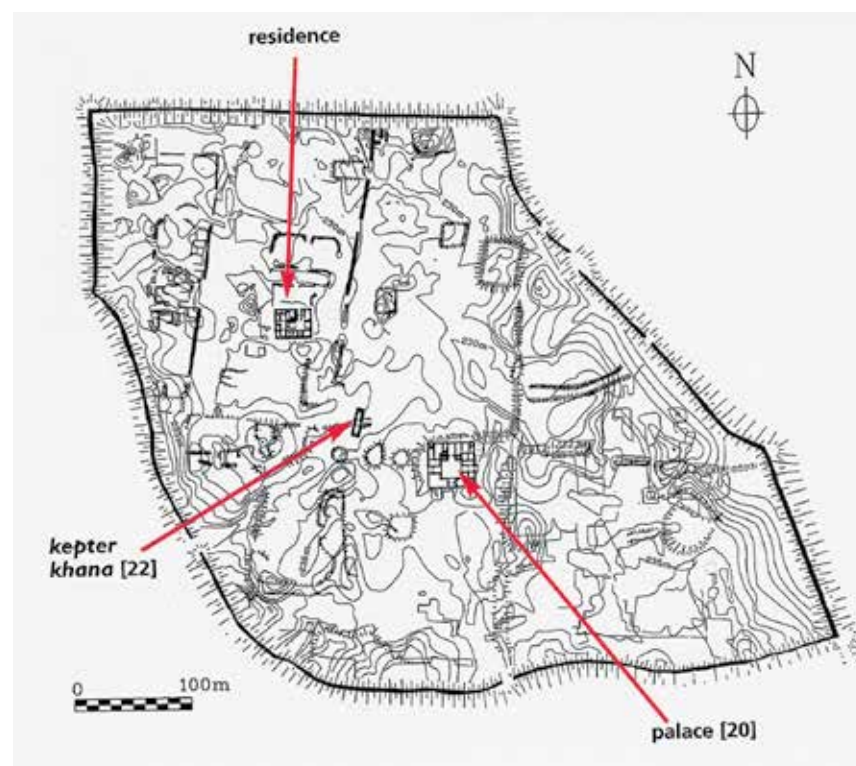
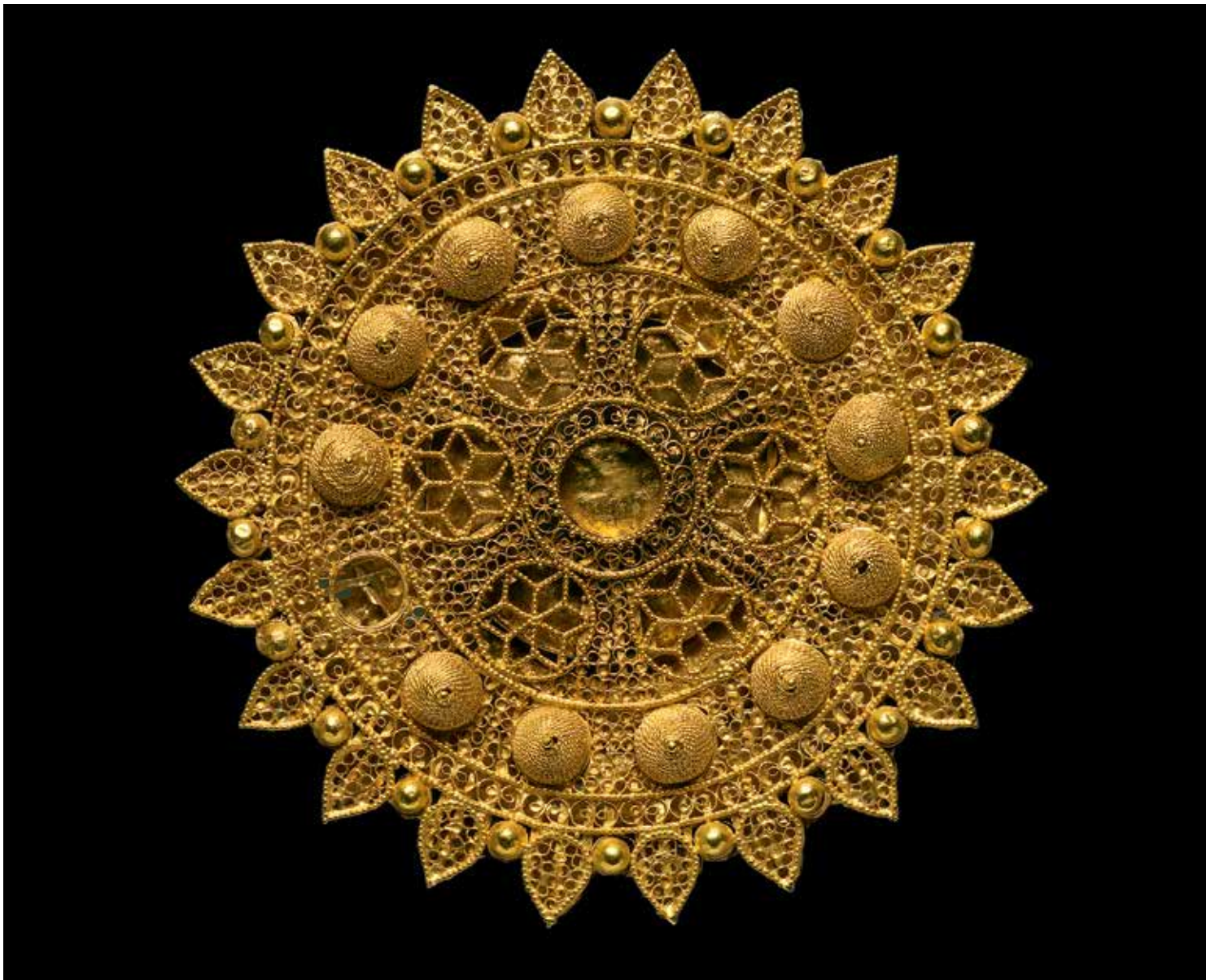


Fig. 51. Plan of the Merv citadel, Shahryar Ark, showing position and plan of the Seljuq palace



23

Roundel

Iran, 11th century
 Gold; filigree, granulation
 Diam. 2¾ in. (7.1 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
 The Alice and Nasli Heeramaneck Collection,
 Gift of Alice Heeramaneck, 1980 (1980.344)

This magnificent gold roundel exemplifies the sophistication of Seljuq goldsmithing by virtue of its construction and the combination of techniques applied to it. Because of its circular shape and the small holes perforating each of the leaf-shaped elements on its perimeter, it may have had a string, perhaps of pearls, around its periphery. This would preclude its use as a pendant, and suggests that it was attached to the wearer's clothing or more likely his headdress, in which case each petal would

have been sewn onto a support.¹ While princely figures and those in their entourage in a range of media from stucco to ceramics wear headdresses with a petal shape extending upward above the crown of the head, in the most detailed depictions these petals contain a rosette or other ornament.² That such rosettes were produced in simplified form across the Seljuq territories, perhaps as gold appliqué, is borne out by a stone jewelry mold acquired in Aleppo. Its incised rosettes consist of a central circle containing a round indentation surrounded by seven circles and nine petals.³

Assuming the jewelry mold is Syrian, it provides yet another link between the gold jewelry of Fatimid Syria and that of Seljuq Iran. In both traditions filigree is laid on a backing of

gold strips—thin and arranged in concentric circles on this roundel, thicker and of variable sizes and arrangement in the Fatimid examples.⁴ Given its imposing size, decorative elements, and glittering surface, this roundel may have represented the sun and planets. The central circle would originally have held a gem or possibly a larger gold domical element of the type found in the band between the stars and the outer petals. As in cat. 123, a *mina'i* bowl with the sun surrounded by six planets, the stars around the now lost central ornament may represent the planets orbiting the sun. Such an object would have been a fitting decoration for the headdress of a privileged person, on whom it would have bestowed good fortune. **SRC**



24

Robe

Iran, 11th–12th century

Silk; weft-faced compound twill

L. 48⁷/₈ in. (124 cm)

Sarikhani Collection, Oxfordshire (I.TXT.1021)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic* encircling the roundels:

عز واقبال ونصر

Glory, prosperity, and victory (repeated).¹

In the Abbasid period a tremendous interest in courtly culture is attested in written records such as the tenth-century *Kitab al-zarf wa-l-zurafa'* (Book of elegance and the elegant) by al-Washsha', who devoted large sections of his book to issues of attire.² The Seljuqs also embraced these courtly practices, as demonstrated by this exquisite silk robe. Lavishly constructed, deeply rooted in Persian traditions,



Fig. 52. Star-shaped tile (detail). Iran, Kashan, dated A.H. 608/A.D. 1211–12. Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, in-glaze- and luster-painted, Diam. 12³/₄ in. (32.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Gift of Horace Havemeyer, 1940 (40.181.1)

and imbued with symbolic significance, it typifies courtly fashion of the Seljuq period.

The robe is composed of eight pieces of fabric and, consistent with the prevailing style of the period, fastens—originally by means of a sash and four ties—on the wearer’s right side, a mode referred to as Tatar (*aqbiya tatarīyya*).³ The design consists of repeated roundels enclosing confronted geese flanking a Tree of Life, a branch of which they hold in their beaks. Encircling the roundel in *kufic* script is a benedictory Arabic inscription “glory, prosperity, and victory,” repeated twice in the normal orientation (upper left and lower right quarters) and twice in reverse (upper right and lower left quarters).⁴ Filling the space between roundels is a motif comprising two pairs of confronted horses mirroring each other across the lateral of a palmette cross.⁵ The weft-faced

compound-twill technique renders the same image on both sides of the textile, with white on blue on the obverse and blue on white on the reverse.

The iconography draws on antecedents such as Sogdian textiles of the eighth century or earlier.⁶ Such imagery was widespread in the Seljuq period, as attested by a star tile, dated A.H. 608/A.D. 1211–12, depicting a seated ruler wearing a robe decorated with similar representations of ducks (fig. 52), and may indicate a predilection for the motif among the elite. What is known for certain is that the robe was later repurposed for use in a burial, as indicated by the matching pillow and face covering (figs. 53a, b) as well as its patterns of degradation, which are limited almost entirely to the back and are therefore consistent with burial decomposition.⁷ **MF**



Figs. 53a, b. Pillow and face mask, Iran, 11th–12th century. Silk; weft-faced compound twill. Pillow: 15 × 7⁷/₈ × 1¹/₄ in. (38 cm × 20 cm × 3 cm); mask: 20⁷/₈ × 23¹/₄ in. (53 × 59 cm). Sarikhani Collection, Oxfordshire (I.TXT.1021)



25

Riding Coat

Eastern Islamic lands, probably Iran, first half of the 13th century

Silk; weft-faced compound twill (samite)

L. 68⁷/₈ in. (175 cm); W. across sleeves 50³/₈ in. (128 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Director's Fund and Oscar de la Renta Ltd. Gift, 2008 (2008.346a–c)

Similar to cat. 24, this robe closes on the right in a style referred to as *aqbiya tatarīyya*, or “Tatar style.”¹ A loop attached at the waist suggests the inclusion of a sash, while two small loops on the sleeves would have served to hold them in place when folded. The pronounced flare at the hip, a feature also in evidence in cat. 24, indicates that both coats were likely intended to be worn while riding a horse.

Stylistically, the birds are by far the most unusual aspect of the textile’s iconography. Rendered with relatively little detail, they stand

passant with outer wings raised and inner wings meeting in a heartlike shape at the center. Equally unusual for an Iranian depiction of birds are the tails terminating in distinctive “hooks.” The closest parallels can be found on a Spanish textile fragment from about 1200 in which confronted birds appear regardant with inwardly curling hooked tails, and on a textile with griffins that has been variably attributed to Central Asia, North Africa, or Sicily.² Similarly, the roundel upon which the birds perch is closely related to Andalusian textiles, most notably the lampas mantle of Ferdinand III



Cat. 25, back

(r. 1217–52).³ While significantly more dense in its overall decorative scheme, cat. 25 features a remarkably similar motif of palmettes sprouting from an eight-sided star enclosing a rosette.

It is, however, still possible to situate this coat within the context of the Seljuq period. The ascendance of the civil service under the Seljuq vizier Nizam al-Mulk placed great significance on *adab*—urbanity and sophistication—which spurred the development of new styles of clothing and an increased interest in luxurious fabrics, particularly silk.⁴ Likewise, the incorporation of southern European motifs on

Islamic textiles is not without precedent. There exists a group of textiles attributed to Iran or Central Asia in the second half of the fourteenth century that fuse Spanish, Italian, eastern Islamic, and Chinese motifs in what has been referred to as an “international decorative repertoire.”⁵

Paradoxically, however, while the style commonly attributed to the Seljuqs is that of the left-buttoning *aqbiya turkiyya*, or “Turkish” cut, and although this is the prevailing style of robe in illustrations from contemporary manuscripts, there is perhaps only a single complete robe attributed to the Seljuq period that closes

on the left.⁶ All others, including cat. 24, close on the right. Taken within the context of *adab*, however, it becomes possible that the adoption of the “Tatar-style” coat was a conscious decision on the part of the affluent sedentary Persian population, as it was less identifiable with the Seljuq Turks. These associations would have been increasingly acute toward the end of the Seljuq period, as a result of the Khwarazm Shah invasions and perhaps exacerbated by the westward migrations of nomadic groups at the start of the Mongol invasion. **MF**



Cat. 26

26

Necklace

Iran, 11th–12th century
 Gold sheet; granulation, twisted wire
 L. 15¾ in. (40 cm); Diam. of each bead ½ in. (1.3 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase,
 Hess Foundation Gift, 1972 (1972.188.3)

27

Necklace

Iran, 11th century
 Gold; granulation
 L. 16 in. (40.6 cm); Diam. of large bead ⅞ in. (2.2 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
 Gift of Mrs. Jacob M. Kaplan, 1972 (1972.218.1)

Both men and women in the Seljuq era adorned themselves with gold and silver jewelry. The Qur'an does not explicitly prohibit the practice, but the hadith, or traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, note the Prophet's proscription of the wearing of gold rings by

men, although silver rings were allowed. Another hadith permits women, but not men, to wear gold jewelry and silk, bearing in mind that they were meant to be seen only by their husbands.¹ Children of both sexes were allowed to wear jewelry, because they were not considered seductive.² What the Qur'an does say is that those who reach Paradise will be served by youths wearing silver bracelets bearing silver vessels (76:15, 21). Thus, the idea of personal embellishment with precious metal in an uncorrupted setting was well established by the time these two necklaces were produced. Their manufacture reflects the

high level of artistic skill and technical ability achieved by Iranian goldsmiths under the Seljuqs.

The necklaces, restrung in modern times, were most likely worn by women.³ Several illustrations in the mid-thirteenth-century manuscript *Warqa and Gulshah* from Konya depict Gulshah wearing a double strand of beads, one of pearls and one apparently of gold.⁴ The necklaces in the illustrations are akin to chokers and thus resemble these Iranian examples in their general form. Cat. 26 consists of twenty-three hollow beads made of gold sheet. Each bead has twelve sides; each side, a central hole (perhaps originally set with a gem) surrounded by a narrow band of twisted gold wire. The edges take the form of pentagons of granulation laid over twisted gold wire. At the points where the pentagons meet are larger single granules. Normally the beads would have been produced by beating the gold sheet into a dapping block, a stone with semicircles of different sizes carved out of its surface.⁵ On these beads, however, the seam where two semicircles of gold sheet would join is invisible, perhaps obscured by the gold wire and granulation applied to the surface.

The second necklace (cat. 27) is composed of sixteen spherical gold beads suspended by short stalks from a necklace of small ribbed gold beads, four of which separate each of the larger beads. The small beads and the clasp are later in date than the spherical beads. Unlike the first necklace, the beads on this one are visibly made of two hemispheres soldered together. On each half five tangent circles surround a sixth circle that encloses a design of concentric rings produced with twisted wire. Within the five tangent circles is a small repoussé dome decorated with three small circles in low relief. As abstract as this granulated and applied decoration is, it may have had a general astral significance, since the total number of circles—twelve—matches the sum of zodiacal signs.

While a great deal of medieval Iranian gold jewelry must have been melted down, certainly the concept of wearing and using gold was embedded in the culture. One passage in the eleventh-century *Shahnama* of Firdawsi, describing Sindukht as she prepares to



Cat. 27

persuade Sam not to attack her husband Mihrab's territory, illustrates this notion of luxury:

[She] Then boldly faced the danger, clad herself
All in brocade of gold with pearls and jewels
About her head, and from the treasury took
Three hundred thousand pieces as a largess.
They brought forth thirty steeds of Arab stock
Or Persian with their silvern equipage;
And sixty slaves with golden torques, each bearing
A golden goblet brimmed with camphor, musk,
Gold, turquoises, and jewels of all kinds;
One hundred female camels with red hair,
One hundred baggage-mules; a crown of jewels
Fit for a king, with armlets, torques, and earrings;
A throne of gold like heaven, all inlaid
With divers sorts of gems . . .⁶

SRC



28

Pair of Bracelets or Anklets with Polygonal Clasp

Modern Turkmenistan, Meruchak (Merve-Rud), second half of the 11th century
 Gold sheet; engraved, applied granulation
 Diam. approx. 3³/₈ in. (8.6 cm)
 State Museum of the State Cultural Center of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat (ÖWS-GZB 1614, 1615)

29

Bracelet with Granulation

Modern Turkmenistan, Meruchak (Merve-Rud), second half of the 11th century
 Gold sheet; twisted wire, applied granulation
 Diam. approx. 2⁷/₈ in. (7.3 cm)
 State Museum of the State Cultural Center of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat (ÖWS-GZB 1613)

Gold jewelry was sported by both men and women throughout the Seljuq realm. While there is evidence to suggest that gold adornment was widespread among people of most social strata, jewelry, together with clothing, remained an important signifier of wealth and rank.¹ This practice extended to all members of a household, who were considered possessions of the owner: *ghulams* and slaves, for instance, were dressed and bejeweled in ways complementary to the status of their masters, and even more so on celebratory occasions. Similarly, the gifting of jewelry and clothing was an important social and political practice between the caliph and his subjects and between sultans and governors and theirs, be they poets, literates, courtiers, ambassadors, or guests, for it symbolized the close relationship between donor and recipient as well as the investiture of the subject. Gifts were bestowed

at formal ceremonies, and the offerings were donned immediately.² Particular forms of jewelry may have had specific social significance. Ring-shaped earrings, for example, were a mark of servitude, although evidence from paintings of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries indicates that they were also worn by a range of other people.³

These three bracelets (or anklets, in the case of cat. 28) formed part of a hoard discovered near the medieval site of Merve-Rud, today's Meruchak, an area that flourished under the Seljuqs. The assemblage included about two hundred pale gold coins issued between A.H. 443 and 474 (A.D. 1051–52 and 1081–82), mostly on behalf of Alp Arslan (r. 1063–73) and Malik Shah (r. 1073–92).⁴

Although bracelets were worn by both sexes,⁵ the pair shown here, characterized by a tapered shank and a large spherical decoration or clasp, is representative of a type associated with depictions of women in the eleventh century. The form is also found in silver or in gold sheet wrapped around a metal core.⁶ Here, the polygonal central element is engraved with simple geometric decoration and enclosed within a granulated ring. The pieces resemble closely the two bracelets worn on each arm by the personifications of

Cassiopeia and Andromeda in a manuscript of al-Sufi's *Kitab suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* (Book of the images of the fixed stars) dated A.H. 400/A.D. 1009–10.⁷ Variations thereof—namely, anklets with four petal-shaped beads—are worn by Andromeda and Virgo in a copy of the same book made in Baghdad in 519/1125, while in another, made in Mosul in 566/1170–71 (cat. 117), Cassiopeia is pictured wearing a simple bracelet.⁸

The gold bracelet with granulated decoration and four hemispheres along the central clasp (cat. 29) also represents a popular type of ornament. Many similar bracelets in both silver and gold have been retrieved, although this one appears to be unique for its shaft made of wire rather than sheet with applied twisted wire. A close example in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (57.88a–c) antedates the group to the first half of the eleventh century, as the disks flanking the clasp were punched over a coin similar in style to those issued in the years 999–1000, 1007, and 1028.⁹ **MR**



30

Ring

Iran, 12th century

Gold; cast and fabricated from sheet, decorated with bitumen-highlighted incising, set with tourmaline bead
H. 1 in. (2.4 cm); Diam. 3/4 in. (1.9 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
The Alice and Nasli Heeramaneck Collection,
Gift of Alice Heeramaneck, 1980 (1980.541.6)



Cat. 30

31

Ring with Human Figures Flanking a Tree of Life

Iran, 12th century

Gold; cast and fabricated from sheet, granulation, filigree, gold wire
Diam. 1 in. (2.5 cm)

Benaki Museum, Athens (ΓΕ 1888)

These rings represent two styles of production and shape that were current and, apparently, worn by many people in Seljuq Iran. The design of the ring set with a tourmaline bead (cat. 30) conforms to that of a number of Seljuq examples in which an oval cabochon stone is held in place by four prongs soldered to the exterior of a truncated bezel.¹ Below each prong is an openwork ornament; between each of these and below the ornament along the shank, or ring proper, is a narrow band of incised scrolling filled with a black bituminous material. Another area of applied gold decoration appears below this, extending toward the knob, called a sprue,

at the back of the ring. Variations of this type of ring include ones with a flat, inscribed stone used as a seal. Such rings would have been worn by men, but as an illustration and passage in *Warqa and Gulshah* indicate, men or their agents presented them to women as tokens of love. In one episode Warqa asks Gulshah's servant to bring her a bowl of milk into which he has dropped his ring. As she is about to drink the milk, she spies the ring and recognizes it as "the seal of Warqa." In the illustration the ring appears to be gold, set with a stone.²

Owing to its filigree and granulation, the ring with a rectangular bezel (cat. 31) relates

very closely to Fatimid jewelry.³ However, the presence of human figures flanking a Tree of Life, pairs of birds, and the presence of a crowned human head on the sides of the shank have led to its Seljuq attribution. Whereas birds appear in Fatimid earrings and pendants, human figures are rare and attested in repoussé rather than in filigree and granulation.⁴ By the twelfth century some goldsmiths may have emigrated from Egypt or Syria to Iran following the collapse of the Fatimid dynasty in 1171, bringing their techniques with them and applying them to new designs. **SRC**



Cat. 31

Ring with Seated Lion

Iran, 12th century

Gold; inlaid with a black organic compound

H. $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (2.2 cm); Diam. $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (2.2 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase,

Friends of Islamic Art Gifts, 2007 (2007.344)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic* on the upper and lower edges:

العز والاقبال

Glory and prosperity.

The shape of this ring, with its hexagonal bezel, tapering shank, and small oval back-knob (the remains of the casting sprue), is typical of twelfth-century Iranian production. The seated lion, a symbol of power, rendered in relief in the center of the bezel, together with a border of niello crosses and the words *al-'izz wa-l-iqbal* (glory and prosperity) on the upper and lower edges, emphasizes the positive attributes of the ring and its protective and advantageous potential for the wearer. This imagery is maintained by the pairs of entwined serpentine forms on the ring's shoulders, which may parallel the depiction of serpents on magic bowls and other talismanic objects as an apotropaic device. A scrolling vegetal pattern with a niello background provides contrast with the plain gold relief decoration of the serpents above and an intertwined leaf motif below.

The pose of the lion—seated, with its tail raised and head lowered—is duplicated not only in a very similar silver ring of the same period and shape, but also in molded, glazed ceramic ewers in which the lion's tail forms the handle and its back, the spout (see cat. 136c).¹ Lest one think that a seated lion projects less power than a standing one, an inlaid brass candlestick combines bands of seated lions with vignettes of lions attacking bovines (see cat. 142). Moreover, seated lions adorn the spouts of several brass ewers that are otherwise decorated with a variety of auspicious symbols, including the signs of the zodiac and composite animals such as harpies (see cats. 118, 143). Thus, what might appear as a lion dejected or in repose instead keeps the same symbolic company as several other propitious motifs, not least the entwined serpents on this ring. **SRC**





33

Decorative Plate for a Belt or Harness

Jazira, Anatolia, or Iran, 12th–13th century
 Bronze; cast, engraved, gilded
 Diam. 2 1/2 in. (6.4 cm)
 al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah,
 Kuwait (LNS 28 M)

This gilded, lobed plate could have been affixed to either a man's belt or a horse's harness via the four small loops on its back, only the remnants of which now remain.¹ Since pre-Islamic times in Iran and Central Asia, decorated belts, often in precious metals, were objects of prestige that signaled one's reliance on and commitment to a ruler or chief. Among the Ghaznavids, the Great Seljuqs, and the Abbasid caliphs, such belts were part of the ceremonial vestments of royal guards, and they were bestowed together with jewels and clothing as gifts of honor and symbols of royal investiture. The Seljuq Turks brought this

custom, the result of cross-cultural stratification, to regions they conquered, including Anatolia.²

The openwork motif shows a horseman battling a dragon, a ubiquitous theme in the arts of Anatolia, where examples from the late twelfth century onward resonate with Christian themes of the dragon-impaling saints Theodore and George (see cat. 21b). It probably also incorporates adaptations of Byzantine, Arab, and Persian legends of heroes combating dragons—for instance, Rustam in the *Shahnama*—as well as Islamic astrological beliefs identifying the mythical beast with the pseudo-planet al-Jawzahr, responsible for solar and lunar eclipses.³ Coeval examples from the Jazira are known from Christian contexts, such as the mid-thirteenth-century stonework and stucco panels at the monastery of Mar Behnam that depicted the titular saint performing heroic feats alongside Saint George.⁴ The

attribution of cat. 33 to the Jazira or Anatolia, however, is doubtful.⁵ While the arrangement of the figures in the roundel mirrors Anatolian examples, the horseman is not impaling the dragon with a spear—a deeply rooted Anatolian convention unchanged from its Christian antecedents—but aims at the creature with a bow and arrow, a very rare occurrence in both Iran and Anatolia, although seen on a candlestick of the Rum Seljuq period.⁶

Whatever the plaque's provenance, the dragon slayer—as well as the cheetah perched on the rump of his horse (see cat. 70)—was no doubt meant to exemplify princely attributes, thereby furthering the prevalence of hunt-related iconography, found anywhere from portable objects to palatial architecture.⁷ It therefore would have been an appropriate symbol for a belt or harness. **MR**



34

Incense Burner in the Form of a Bird of Prey

Probably eastern Iran, Khurasan, 11th–12th century
Bronze; cast, pierced openwork, punched, engraved,
inlaid with opaque turquoise glass

8 7/8 × 3 1/4 in. (22.5 × 8.2 cm)

Département des Arts de l'Islam, Musée du Louvre,
Paris (OA 4044)

Inscribed in Arabic in *naskhi* on the head:

العز الدائم والدولة

*Perpetual glory and dominion.*¹

Fragrance has always played a major role in the Islamic world, invoked both as an attribute associated with Paradise and in relation to the pure and impure states between which the human body alternates. Beyond its practical function of conveying a pleasant aroma,

perfume was used for purification of a space or a person and, to a certain extent, for medical purposes.² Incense and fragrances were expensive, rendering aromatics a high-value raw material on a par with gold, precious stones, and slaves. They could be traded across great distances and were given as gifts by the ruling elite or used to pay tribute.³ For example, among the epics recounted in the Persian *Shahnama* is a mention of musk and ambergris being scattered together with coins to celebrate a royal reception.⁴

The aromas in incense, wood, and other substances were released when burned or heated. For this reason incense burners, ranging from the unadorned to the highly

decorative, were needed for domestic, religious, and ceremonial contexts throughout the Seljuq realm.⁵ A domed pyxis standing on three feet was the preferred form in the Jazira, specifically Mosul (fig. 54), and Greater Syria, while animal-shaped incense burners such as this example were more widespread in the eastern Seljuq lands.⁶ Birds and felines (see cat. 136a) were among the most popular, with birds of prey forming a distinctive subgroup.⁷ Predatory birds were a more common iconographic theme in ceramics and other types of metalwork, rendering its use as an incense burner rare.

Pierced openwork in a complex interlace star pattern—the means by which it diffused its sensuous aromas—covers the breast, back, and head of the bird. In style and medium cat. 34 relates to a group of metalwork from a yet unidentified (though probably Khurasani) workshop.⁸ Such a sophisticated household object would have been used by the affluent members of Seljuq society, most likely in a secular and/or private context so that its figural form would not provoke controversy. The bird of prey was itself connected with royalty, power, and protection, furthering the incense burner's luxuriousness and reinforcing its signification of wealth. **DB**



Fig. 54. Domed incense burner. Mosul, dated A.H. 641/A.D. 1243. Brass; inlaid with silver, H. 8 1/4 in. (21 cm). British Museum, London (OA 78 12-30)

35

Perfume Sprinkler (*Qumqum*)

Probably Syria, 11th–mid-13th century

Greenish glass; blown, applied blown foot, applied decoration

10¼ × 5¼ × 3¼ in. (26 × 13.4 × 8.3 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Richard S. Perkins Gift, 1977 (1977.164)

The ring-shaped body of this sprinkler was achieved by flattening and piercing the single glass bulb from which it and its long tapering neck were made.¹ The applied decoration consists of the trails on the lower part of the neck and the cushion-topped foot with flaring base, worked on the pontil. The shape is thought to have been newly introduced to Syria in the twelfth century.² Nonetheless, as metal incense burners and a range of small glass flasks attest, containers for perfume and those intended to scent the air represent a continuum in the Middle East from the Roman and Late Antique periods into the Islamic era.

In the medieval Islamic world substances such as musk, ambergris, sandalwood, and aloe wood were used not only as perfumes for the body but also as culinary ingredients, elements in drugs and potions, breath improvers, and aphrodisiacs. Given their concentrated form and expense, these essences functioned as the base constituent in a blend of aromatic substances. They would have been diluted for use in a sprinkler such as this one.

While this sprinkler could have contained the aromatic water of a whole range of substances, the most likely contents would have been rosewater. Apparently first prepared in the Islamic era, rosewater is produced “by heating fresh rose petals over a water bath, after which the aromatic vapors are



condensed.”³ In addition to its many gastronomic uses, rosewater presented in a sprinkler such as cat. 35 was linked to specific stages of a meal. Thus, when the host and his guests had finished eating, they would wash their hands and mouth with saltwort scented with one of several substances, including

rosewater.⁴ After moving from the dining area to couches, the guests and their host would be passed ewers containing rosewater, which they would spray over their clothes and face.⁵ Alternatively, servants passed among the assembled guests, sprinkling them with refreshing rosewater. **SRC**



a



b

36a–c

Bathing and the Hammam

Bath Scraper with Two Birds (a)

Iran, 12th century
Earthenware, siliceous grit; molded
H. 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (11 cm); Diam. 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (13 cm)
al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah,
Kuwait (LNS 155 C a)

Bath Scraper with Two Lions (b)

Iran, 12th century
Earthenware, siliceous grit; molded
H. 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (11 cm); Diam. 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (13 cm)
al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah,
Kuwait (LNS 155 C d)

As places where both women and men could maintain their personal hygiene, make religious ablutions, receive therapeutic treatments, and interact socially, hammams, or public baths, an ultimately Roman tradition, proliferated in the territories under the control of the Seljuqs and their successors. Archaeological evidence from Central Asian and Iranian regions attest to hammams in many urban areas during the medieval period, while textual sources document the use of private baths in the wealthiest households.¹ Public hammams commonly consisted of a room for reception

and undressing and additional rooms with basins and small pools of hot, lukewarm, and cold water that could be gathered into vessels and poured over the body; large Roman-type *natationes*, or swimming pools, were not common. Private rooms were used for washing.² A waterproof plaster, called *sarruj* in Iran, was often used for the walls and basins. Furnaces heated both the air circulating in the hypocausts (heated cavities beneath the floors) and the water. Among known decorated hammams, the one excavated at the Qanat Tepe in Nishapur had wall paintings depicting horsemen, birds, felines, and vegetal motifs. They must have been repainted with frequency, as the retrieved fragments show as many as twelve painted layers of lime plaster.³

Hammams were run by a keeper and lower-status personnel such as robe attendants, dung men, stokers, and water carriers.⁴ Others performed services including massage, shaving, and henna tattooing. The popularity and importance of the hammam for people at all levels of society is made clear in the chapter dedicated to bathing etiquette in the *Qabus-nama* by the amir of Gurgan Kay Kawus b. Iskandar (b. 1021). Completed in A.H. 475/

A.D. 1082, the text was written in the manner of a mirror for princes for his son and successor, and offers such advice as, “If the baths should be empty, regard it (as all wise men do) as a great boon,” perhaps indicating that amirs, too, frequented the public hammam.⁵

The activities performed in hammams necessitated particular utilitarian objects, of which these bath scrapers and bucket are



Fig. 55. Bath scraper in the shape of a lion. Iran, late 11th–12th century. Stonepaste; molded, incised, glazed in transparent blue, 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (5.7 × 6.4 × 3.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. Charles S. Payson (69.212)



c

Bucket with Signs of the Zodiac (c)

Iran, 12th century
 Brass; cast, engraved, inlaid
 H. 12¼ in. (31 cm); Diam. 8¼ in. (21.1 cm)
 Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (54.523)
 Inscribed in Arabic with benedictory words, in animated cursive below the rim and in *kufic* on the lower body

examples. They reveal how, during the medieval period, the improvement and diffusion of techniques such as inlaid metalwork together with an increased attention to adornment extended beyond the restrictive circles of elite production. As for the range of motifs depicted and the content of the inscriptions, the former may reflect an interest in propitious imagery (on this kettle, the signs of the zodiac), while the latter attests to a continued interest in benedictory texts.

Bath scrapers, used to slough off rough skin, were made in a variety of materials, from carved pumice to molded earthenware to, beginning in the late eleventh century, glazed stonepaste.⁶ Earthenware scrapers (cats. 36a, b) took the form of flattened triangles, squares, and circles, one side molded with animal or vegetal depictions, the other made coarse with the addition of siliceous grit to the surface.⁷ Stonepaste scrapers, by contrast, were molded into the shape of an animal and glazed

(fig. 55); the bottom side, already abrasive owing to the siliceous component of stonepaste, needed only to be incised with a grid pattern to become more effective.⁸ As for the imagery on these objects, lions and birds, often in paired compositions, are the most frequently reproduced motifs. Both have a long iconographic history of beneficial and, in the case of lions, astrological symbolism, although it is difficult to say if they were still read as such during this period.⁹

The bucket (cat. 36c), said to be from Hamadan, would have been used to heat and carry small amounts of water.¹⁰ Its shape is well attested in eleventh- to thirteenth-century metalwork from Khurasan and nearby regions; indeed, hundreds of examples were recently brought to light at the citadel in Ghazni, believed to have been a center of production.¹¹ Such vessels are also represented in later Iranian miniature paintings illustrating scenes in hammams.¹² As usual for

mass-produced objects, blessings are addressed to an unnamed individual: *li sahibi*, or “to its [the bucket’s] owner.”

More luxurious variants of these utilitarian objects include pumice bath scrapers embedded in an engraved silver case, a tradition that has continued through the centuries;¹³ and extensively inlaid bronze buckets executed at such a high level of craftsmanship as to be deemed masterpieces. The Bobrinski bucket in the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (CA-12687), made in Herat in 1163, is the most famous. Their production speaks to a differentiated market and a stratified society in which different levels of wealth and the availability of newly improved technologies resulted in a broadening of both an object’s range and its potential buyers. Social distinctions also existed in hammams, in terms of both manners and behavior, as advised in the *Qabusnama*, and also with regard to the display of personal possessions. **MR**

37

Bowl with Enthroned Figure and Horsemen

Iran, late 12th–early 13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, overglaze-painted
 H. 3¼ in. (8.3 cm); Diam. 7⅞ in. (20 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Rogers Fund, and Gift of The Schiff Foundation, 1957 (57.36.3)
 Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic* on the exterior; only واليمن ("and good luck") is legible.¹



This bowl displays a favored theme in the iconography of the late Seljuq and post-Seljuq periods, that of the enthroned ruler surrounded by the defining motifs of his rulership: amirs and courtiers, either attending him or engaged in *bazm* activities such as hunting with falcons or trained cheetahs. None of these motifs was unprecedented before the eleventh century, nor were they associated only with the arts of the Seljuq realm, as evidenced, for example, by the painted ceiling in the Cappella Palatina in Palermo.² However, during this period they became ubiquitous on utilitarian objects such as *mina'i* ceramics and inlaid metalwork.

The peacocks below the enthroned figure are another motif that predates the Seljuq period,³ although their traditional range of symbolic meanings, from the paradisiacal to the funerary, became more clearly linked to royalty during this time. Indeed, the poet Athir al-Din Akhsikati composed verses dedicated to Arslan b. Tughril (r. 1161–76), the Seljuq sultan of Iraq, declaring, “[The king is] in singularity a *simurgh* (*anqa*) and in speed a falcon, in sagacity a hoopoe (*hud hud*) and in imperial glory a peacock.”⁴ The peacock’s association with royalty has manifold origins, among them the regal splendor of its open fantail and the “eyes” of its feathers, which were ascribed solar or astral significance—powerful imagery associated closely with kingship. Additionally,

peacocks were commonplace in the gardens of rulers and the elite, owing to their presumed presence in Paradise. The beauty of these gardens was meant to be an earthly embodiment of their heavenly counterpart, making the birds’ appearance therein particularly apt.⁵

The concomitance of all these images associated with royalty was aimed at augmenting the potency of the depiction of the enthroned ruler. That seemingly ordinary benedictions appear on cat. 37 alongside such charged imagery may seem perplexing, more so when considered in tandem with the many standardized versions of bowls similar to this example, suggestive of mass production and a widespread distribution of these objects beyond the realm of the nobles and the court.⁶ It may be that, beyond mere aesthetics, the appeal of such objects depicting images of the sovereign and his prerogatives—attendants, courtly pleasures, martial entertainments—lay in a popular belief in the beneficence inherent in these symbols (see, for example, cat. 39).

While few literary texts help bolster this line of investigation, a hint may reside in a class of objects that were believed to have prophylactic and healing functions: so-called magic bowls inscribed with numerical squares and images of animals against whose bites they provided immunization (dogs, snakes, and scorpions). These bowls bear extensive inscriptions informing the reader of their magical properties, frequently including the name of a real or fictitious sovereign, often a caliph or sultan.⁷ They seem to originate in large part from Syria and Egypt, such as the example inscribed with the name “Nur al-Din Mahmud b. Zangi” (cat. 129), or from Mecca. Another example, inscribed with the date A.H. 506/A.D. 1112, has inscriptions relating it to Baghdad and to an imagined Amir al-Mu’minin of the “Banu Saljuq” (House of Seljuq).⁸ While a dating based on the historical information inscribed on these magic bowls has been questioned by scholars, with some attributing them to later centuries,⁹ they may provide retrospective evidence for a popular belief associating rulers with blessings. **MR**



38

Fragment of a Storage Vessel (*Habb*) with Enthronement Scene

Jazira, 13th century
 Earthenware; molded, barbotine, pierced, engraved
 H. 11½ in. (29.2 cm); Diam. 13½ in. (34.3 cm)
 Brooklyn Museum, New York, Gift of the Roebling Society (73.30.6)

This remarkable earthenware fragment once formed the top half of a *habb*, a common water vessel from Mesopotamia.¹ Surrounding the neck is a second layer of ceramic that encloses an air space, thereby adding insulation to augment the vessel's cooling properties and providing a surface for a rich decorative program.²

Depicted is an enthronement scene, symmetrically structured within an arcade against a pierced arabesque-like foliage. The figures have features typical of Seljuq times, such as long braids, moonlike faces, and slit eyes evocative

of their Central Asian origins. Their robes fasten on the right side and have *tiraz* bands on their long sleeves, and they wear a *sharbus*, or furred triangular hat, indicating their high rank. The ruler is distinguishable by his slightly larger proportions, his prominent centrality, and his position on the *takht*, or throne, commonly depicted as a simple structure with a pair of high, narrow finials. Seated on a circular cushion, the sovereign holds the regalia of nobility, among them a drinking cup in front of his chest and a folded *mandil* (handkerchief) in the hand resting on his bent left leg.³ Further symbols of royalty are the pair of peacocks above him and the two attendants holding emblems of their offices (a lance and, possibly, a cup).⁴ The two sphinxes with tails ending in dragons' heads are common apotropaic composite animals of the period and

function similarly to the attendants as personal guardians of the ruler.

While enthroned figures were known from the neighboring Christian world, comparable scenes of seated rulers with their attendants or amirs likely came to the Jazira in the late twelfth century from Iran and Central Asia, where enthronement imagery was also known, in several media.⁵ The appearance of such scenes on *habbs*, which, as sources of fertility and preservation, connects the subject not only to the courtly cycle, a popular theme in Seljuq times, but also to talismanic and apotropaic functionality.⁶ Indeed, the ideal of the calm and just ruler appearing amid his entourage in a harmonious composition might well have been meant to bring order, abundance, and protection to the *habb's* owner.⁷ **DB**



39

Twelve-sided Medallion with Enthroned Figure and Attendants

Iran, possibly from Rayy, 12th century
Stucco; carved, traces of pigment
Diam. 7⁷/₈ in. (20 cm)

Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (I.2670)

This stucco medallion, allegedly from the urban site of Rayy, probably would have been employed in the decoration of buildings. Carved stucco was used extensively in the architecture of Central Asia and Iran in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, either for large decorative wall paneling (see cats. 1a–j, 16) or in the form of small rectangular and lozenge-shaped plugs and polygonal tiles, which served as insets in brickwork paneling.

Although there is no evidence in situ for stucco tiles with figural images (vegetal motifs predominate), the enthroned figure flanked by attendants is found extensively in *mina'i* ceramics and inlaid metalwork of the second half of

the twelfth century, as well as in slightly later illustrated manuscripts. Here, however, the throne is more simplified in shape and differs further in the addition of the lions beneath or as part of its structure. The lion has a long-standing connection with royalty, both for its ferocious and potent nature and for its astral association with the sun.¹

In his somewhat irreverent retelling of the transformation of the lowly Turkmen into the Great Seljuqs, Bayhaqi (d. 1066), historian and secretary of the defeated Ghaznavids, recounted that the conquerors at first “made fun of [the Ghaznavids’] pomp and ceremony, and had stomped on the hats” sent with other ceremonial attire by the Ghaznavid sovereign Mas’ud I. Only a couple of years after this episode, in A.H. 429/A.D. 1037–38, Tughril nonetheless demonstrated a full awareness of the significance of royal insignia by triumphantly sitting on Mas’ud’s former throne to enact his annexation of Nishapur.²

The depiction of enthronement scenes fills a lacuna in the historical sources on the thrones of the Great Seljuqs and their successor states.³ That the enthroned figure is always attended by servants or officials is highly significant with regard to the role at court of these attendants.⁴ The only known description of a throne from that period, the gold one made in Ghazni for Mas’ud I, affirms the importance of these courtiers by including sculptural representations of four standing attendants, who hold the crown above the sovereign’s head.⁵ **MR**

40

Bowl with Majlis Scene by a Pond

Maker: Abu Zayd
Iran, dated A.H. 4 Muharram 582/A.D. March 27, 1186
Stonepaste; glazed in opaque turquoise, polychrome in-glaze- and overglaze-painted
H. 3¼ in. (8.1 cm); Diam. 8½ in. (21.6 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund, 1964 (64.178.1)

Inscribed in cursive, in Persian on the interior:

ای تن غم عشق به کزینت نکند / بجان و دینت نکند // در دام عاقبت
(عاقبت) شکر پای هوس / تا عشق سزاوار استینت نکند

Oh body, the sorrow of love will not make you any better (than this) / Will not (help) [. . .] your soul and faith // At the end, the sweetness of lust will entrap you / So that love will not make a fool of you.

In Persian and Arabic on the exterior:

دیدى که چه کرد برف با ما یارا / ای برف بگفتى ولى گو یارا // بر آتش
عاشقان [. . .] و سرد تو هم گرم گرفتى مارا

Oh beloved, did you see what the snow (white hair) did to me? / Oh snow (white hair), you told me, but tell my beloved // To the passion (fire) of lovers [. . .] and cold(?) / And you are still flirting with me!

قائله کاتبه ابو زید بعد ما عمله کتبه في يوم الاربعاء الرابع من محرم
سنة اثني و ثمانين و خمسمائة هجرية عربية بقا لصاحبه و کاتبه

Abu Zayd himself made it and composed it, Wednesday, 4th Muharram 582. Longevity to the owner and poet.



41

Bowl with Seated Figures by a Pond

Iran, dated A.H. 608/A.D. 1211–12
Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
H. 3¾ in. (9.5 cm); Diam. 8½ in. (20.5 cm)
Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford, Presented by Sir Alan Barlow, 1956 (EA1956.33)

Inscribed in Persian in cursive on the exterior:

ای روی تو بر مجلس جان زهره شده / با روی فلک یعنی
(همه، مه) [. . .] // از روی تو مهره شده

Oh your face has become the Venus of the majlis of life / It is imprinted all over the heavens / This servant has been driven to great despair because of you / Both my heart and eyes have shed blood from your sorrow.

في شهر سنة ثمان ستمائة
In the months of the year 608.

چاکر ز تو بسیار بجان گردیده است / خون شد ز غم تو کر دل و کر
دیده است // در سنگ دلی کنی و در بی آبی / مثل تو بخاک پای تو
گردیده است

This servant has been driven to great despair because of you / both my heart and my eyes have bled from your sorrow // Who are you, so cold-hearted and shameless? / No one is as cold-hearted and shameless as you.

The figurative scenes painted on these bowls, one realized in the *mina'i* technique and the other in luster, show two variations of scenes commonly reproduced in the repertoire of Iranian ceramics from the twelfth century onward: a group of people sit together while not being explicitly engaged in any activity. In some occurrences one or more personages are more prominently positioned on a throne.

The extensive inscriptions on Iranian ceramics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries rarely contain elucidations of the depicted imagery, as they most commonly include benedictions for the owner of the vessel, verses from one or more poems in Persian and Arabic, and, less frequently, the name of the potter and the date of manufacture. It is therefore difficult to decipher the meaning of such scenes as envisioned by the artist. However, by considering

them within the broader iconographic repertoire of portable objects of the period, most often showing personages engaged in various aspects of courtly life, scholars have come to identify such gatherings as evocative of the literary *majalis* (sing. *majlis*), at which courtiers and literati assembled for poem recitals, sometimes with contests as to their erudition and skills at poetic improvisation.¹ *Majalis* may be linked to public audiences or include forms of entertainment such as music, dancing, and feasting, representing one of the foremost leisurely diversions of the Great Seljuqs and their successors. They were not, however, strictly a princely prerogative and were also enjoyed among social and intellectual elites outside the court.²

The verses inscribed on these vessels, despite having no clear association to the



images depicted, may complete the evocation of the *majlis*, as if giving voice to the performers. At the same time, they challenge the literary knowledge of the viewer, who could himself reenact the experience of the *majlis* by testing his own erudition.³ The *mina'i* bowl (cat. 40) exemplifies the possibility of an interaction between image and text while underlining the importance of oral performance and written composition. The person seated apart from the rest of the group performs in front of two prominent figures on the throne, or *takht*. His hand gestures convey a heartfelt and skillful rhetoric and are mirrored by the main figure on the *takht*, whose own gesture seems to be responding to the orator.

The bowl was made by a master potter, Abu Zayd, who during nearly forty years of activity was not only responsible for a number

of exquisite vessels in both luster and *mina'i*, but was himself a proficient poet. In addition to frequently signing and dating his creations, he might include some of his own verses among the poetic inscriptions, such as on cat. 40.⁴ The poems on this *mina'i* bowl, at least one of which was composed by Abu Zayd, deal with love and therefore do not relate explicitly to the image. They are not, however, extradiegetic to the *majlis* and may be interpreted as the verses recited by the performer—an intellectual play interrupted by the claim of ownership of the author himself.⁵ Details of this skillfully executed *majlis*, of which Abu Zayd made several variants, add a uniquely realistic note to an otherwise conventional depiction while also resonating with the tone of the love poems: one of the standing courtiers leans slightly on the *takht*, suggesting

the informality and empathy of the shared experience of the performance.⁶

An assembly in a similarly peaceful outdoor setting, also with a pond or stream, birds, and fish, appears on the luster bowl (cat. 41), painted in the “Kashan style.”⁷ Here, too, the six figures, five of whom wear head ornaments with a teardrop diadem and are thus recognizable as women, may represent the audience of a *majlis*. Their serene poses and moon-shaped faces convey the ideal of beauty as expressed in the poetry of the period,⁸ and may recall the metaphor of the planet Venus (here in its Arabic form, *zuhra*) in the verses inscribed on the bowl. As the verses also use the notion of a “*majlis* of life” to express the importance of the beloved’s presence, the bowl’s scene may even be read as a transcendent gathering. **MR**



42

Compartmented Dish with Acrobat and Seated Figures

Iran, 12th–early 13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white (interior) and transparent blue (exterior), luster-painted
 Diam. 12¼ in. (31.1 cm)
 Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (AKM739)
 Inscribed in Arabic in cursive script on the exterior: Illegible.

The seven small hollows of this footed bowl were probably used to present to fellow diners sweetmeats such as *halwa*,¹ marzipan, fresh or dried fruits, and nuts. Sweets were served as snacks at festive and religious occasions; *halwa* in particular was associated with religious celebrations in medieval Anatolia.² The dish's design allowed for an attractive arrangement of foodstuffs,³ and its use was most likely reserved for sophisticated gatherings. Food presentation is given moderate

importance in the literary sources,⁴ but the familiar presence of pyramids of fruit as a motif in the visual arts suggests that such imagery did, at the very least, evoke luscious meals and celebratory abundance.

Compartmented dishes were in use before the Islamic period.⁵ Based on the evidence of examples excavated at Nishapur and Ghubayra and found at Raqqa, in the age of the Great Seljuqs and their successors in Iran and the Jazira, they were composed mainly of either earthenware or stonepaste.⁶ The recurring presence of seven hollows suggests a connection to Nawruz, in reference to the folkloric tradition, also described by the eleventh-century scholar al-Biruni, of growing seven different grains at the time of the New Year, although he does refer to a vessel equipped with seven small columns.⁷ Examples with three or five compartments are also known

but occur far less frequently than those with seven.⁸

The bare-chested figure at center is portrayed according to the conventions of wrestlers in both earlier and later Islamic art, from Central Asia to Sicily.⁹ He could also represent an acrobat, as wrestling in Iran (*zurkhana*) involves acrobatics and may be performed publicly, either in courtly settings or on the street.¹⁰ On the other hand, his dark skin and the conjectural presence of some form of costume/travesty below the chin may indicate other forms of popular entertainments involving masked dancers.¹¹ Together with the three seated figures in elaborate robes holding what might be fruit or a sweet, the wrestler/acrobat evokes the amusements of a festive *majlis* (see cats. 40, 41), at which a variety of foods would have been served, perhaps in a dish like this one. **MR**



43

Model of a House Depicting a Feast

Iran, late 12th–early 13th century
 Stonepaste; molded, modeled, pierced, glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
 Approx. 2 1/8 × 6 1/4 × 4 1/4 in. (5.4 × 16.1 × 10.6 cm)
 Département des Arts de l’Islam, Musée du Louvre, Paris (MAO 492)

Among the interpretations currently proposed for this and similar house models is that they depict festive gatherings such as marriages and celebrations connected to Nawruz or other festivals at which food and drink are essential (see cats. 17, 18). In this example, the ten personages hold what might be musical instruments or raise their arms in a pose that evokes dancing, either way suggesting merriment (detail). They sit cross-legged around what seems to be the portico of an open courtyard. Two vase-shaped elements (wine jugs?) and a large circular tray holding seven round objects (possibly centerpieces of fruit) are set at the center of the courtyard to complete the scene.

Scholars have suggested that the tray, whose round-shaped elements recur in the same number in other house models, represents the *haft sin*, the Persian tradition of

displaying seven (*haft*) objects whose name starts with the letter *sin* on the occasion of Nawruz.¹ However, it could also represent one of the many customs in which seven symbolic objects are brought to a bride’s house as good wishes.² Another interpretation posits the vase-shaped elements as sugarloaves, also part of traditional rituals linked to both marriage ceremonies and other celebrations, including Nawruz.³

The known house models are all made in stonepaste and range from simple monochrome-glazed to underglaze- and luster-painted pieces, which positions them varyingly in the period from the twelfth to the early thirteenth century. At least two fragments excavated at Rayy confirm the attribution of the models to the Iranian territories. Both fragments are of the open-courtyard type; one displays a lion, while the other shows two people holding, respectively, a plate and a musical instrument or bottle and forming part of a larger symposium scene (fig. 56).⁴ All these motifs connote, with some variation, good omens, not unlike the sequence of running quadrupeds carved in the walls of cat. 43.⁵ **MR**



Cat. 43, detail



Fig. 56. Fragment of a house model excavated at Rayy (RF3200). Stonepaste; molded, modeled, glazed in opaque turquoise. Oriental Institute Museum, University of Chicago. (A154238). One figure holds a tall vessel (or musical instrument, or baby) in the house’s “courtyard.” The figure shown here, on the “exterior,” holds a flat object (a plate?) with two hands.



44

Tray(?)

Iran or Afghanistan, early 13th century
 Brass; engraved, inlaid with silver
 H. 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (4 cm); Diam. 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (22.5 cm)
 Keir Collection, on long-term loan by Ranros Universal
 S.A. to the Dallas Museum of Art (K.1.2014.72)
 Inscribed in Arabic in zoomorphic *kufic* around the rim:

العز والاقبال والدولة والسعادة والسلامة والعافية والقناعة والعناية
 والراحة والتامة والدولة

*Glory, good fortune, dominion, happiness, prosperity, wellness, contentment, divine protection, comfort, perfection, and dominion.*¹

This lavishly inlaid object is representative of the luxurious household accoutrements and furniture of the upper strata of Iranian and West Central Asian society.² With its square shape and recessed polylobed medallion, it belongs to a group of similar objects,³ and the medium, composition, style of decoration, and

epigraphy are typical of the Khurasani school of inlaid metalwork. Characteristics of the latter include the animated script, the crescent-moon motif, the circular eight-petaled floral motif around a small central dot, and the arabesque composition based on the stylized split-palmette.⁴ None of the known examples of this type has a proper bottom, which raises the question of its intended function. It was probably inserted into another structure, possibly made of wood, such as a table or a larger plate.

Whether used in the context of dining or as an eye-catching ornament for a larger piece of furniture, a door, or an architectural element, its benedictory inscription in an animated *kufic* leaves no doubt that it was meant to protect its owner. A motif resembling a

crescent moon serves to mark the four corners and divide the inscription, and it further appears at the center of a symmetrical vegetal composition decorating the lobes of the recessed medallion. The crescent was a common motif of that time and probably relates to the *hafir*, an ancient Iranian symbol of sovereignty that was revived under the Buyids (932–1062) and continued to be used in the medieval period in both the eastern and the western parts of the broader Seljuq realm.⁵ Its appearance on inlaid metalwork suggests that efforts were made to imbue with royalty objects for wealthy households. As such, through its luxurious medium and ornamental repertoire, this tray signaled wealth and social status, certainly eliciting admiration. **DB**

45

Combined Folding Spoon and Fork

Iran or Afghanistan, 12th century

Silver; cast, engraved, inlaid with niello

5⁷/₈ × 1¹/₄ in. (14.8 × 3.2 cm)

al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah,
Kuwait (LNS 104 M)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic* on the exterior:

القوة لله الملك لله الشكار (الشكر) لله الكبرية لله العزة لله (البيرة) لله
*Power is God's. Sovereignty is God's. Thanks is God's.
Greatness is God's. Glory is God's. (Obedience?) is
God's.*¹

46

Spoon with Intertwined Dragons

Iran or Iraq, 12th–13th century

Brass; cast

L. 7⁷/₈ in. (20 cm)

Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London
(MTW 1420)

47

Two-ended Ladle

Turkmenistan, Possibly Merv, 11th–12th century

Bronze; cast

L. 11¹/₄ in. (28.5 cm); Diam., of ovoid spoon 2⁵/₈ in.
(6.7 cm), of round spoon 2¹/₈ in. (5.3 cm)

Museum of History and Local Lore of Mary Province,
Turkmenistan (KEK 15719)

These three spoons range from the luxurious to the utilitarian. Cat. 45, an ingenious combination of a spoon at one end and a fork at the other, is made of silver inlaid with niello and richly ornamented on all surfaces. On the shaft are two hinges that allow the piece to be folded and carried with ease. A bird with high tail feathers resembling a peacock at the center of the spoon is set in a band of cross-hatched silver with niello roundels at each of the cardinal points. An Arabic inscription fills the outer band, reaffirming God's greatness in six phrases. On the back of the spoon, a tightly coiled arabesque with niello accents forms the background for a larger interlaced scroll that covers the surface. A roundel at the center of the shaft contains a striding rooster in relief, and below the two tines of the fork are two scrolls and another bird, perhaps a peacock on the front and a duck on the back.

This example is the first known hinged spoon after the Roman era, a type of utensil



Cat. 45, front and back



Cat. 46

that would not appear in Europe until about 1400, when travelers customarily carried their own eating implements. A combination spoon and fork called a “sucket fork” was used in Europe for eating sweetmeats in thick syrup, the prototype for which may have originated in the Middle East, where sweetmeats were also appreciated.² Although one other Seljuq spoon is decorated with precious metal, most of the extant examples, like cat. 46, are brass or bronze.³

What distinguishes cat. 46 is its decoration of two intertwined scaly dragons with rabbits’ heads sprouting behind their tails. The upper portions of the dragons’ gaping maws join in an arc above their wings, which also touch. At the tip of the shaft appear two bearded, crowned figures, one facing up and the other down. As with the birds and inscription on cat. 45, the dragons and rabbits on this spoon must have been intended as protective devices, particularly necessary in the face of possible illness from contaminated food or even poisoning. Its place of production, either Iran or Iraq, is uncertain, but its iconography suggests that Iraq is the likely source. In addition to the appearance of pairs of dragons on the famous twelfth-century Talisman Gate in Baghdad, pairs of dragons adorn Jaziran metal objects (cat. 145), where they are also arranged confronting and with their top lips touching.

Cat. 47, a double-ended ladle, may have been used for a purpose other than eating. Possibly found at Merv, a thriving commercial center and regional capital under the Seljuqs, this object resembles several examples now in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran.⁴ Since one of the bowls of the ladles faces up and the other faces down, only one end could be used at once. The most logical explanation would be that each end served as a measuring device, with the now corroded end being slightly larger than the opposite bowl. The ladle might have been used to prepare cosmetics, potions, or medicine, for which precision in the proportion of ingredients was necessary. The scoop shape would have been effective for dipping into albarelli and other storage vessels. **SRC**



Cat. 47



48

Ceramic Bowl

Jazira, probably Raqqa, 12th century
 Stonepaste; underglaze-painted, glazed
 (transparent colorless), luster-painted
 H. 4¾ in. (11.9 cm); Diam. 9¼ in. (23.5 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
 H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Gift of Horace
 Havemeyer, 1948 (48.113.6)
 Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, at center:

Glory (repeated four times).
 On four radiating panels:

العز

بركة كاملة

Consummate blessing (in two abbreviated forms).¹

Bowls such as this one were typical tableware used for liquid or solid food. This example is biconical with a high, slightly conical foot, a shape that was very common in ceramics during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in both the eastern and the western spheres of the Seljuq realm—that is, Iran, Greater Syria, and the Jazira, particularly one of its main production centers, Raqqa.² Simple spiral patterns decorate the vessel’s exterior, while eight radiating panels separated by blue bands on the interior present the abbreviated formulaic inscription *baraka kamila* (consummate blessing) alternating with sections filled with small cross motifs. In a band at the base, the word *al-‘izz* (glory) is repeated four times in reserve on a ground of spirals. Above and below

the band are split-palmettes, also in reserve, enclosing a floral palmette.

The decorative elements, formulaic inscriptions, and color palette, including the tone of the luster glaze, are characteristic of ceramics produced in Raqqa, where the bowl probably originated, although it also shares features with those made elsewhere in Greater Syria.³ Indeed, this type of vessel was a common tableware item in a popular medium, but it was made more luxurious and visually appealing through the luster decoration. It would have been used daily by its well-to-do, middle-class owner, who was offered protection and praise through the inscribed formulas that blessed both his person and the meals being served to him. **DB**



49

Bowl of Najm al-Din ‘Umar al-Maliki al-Badri

Jazira, probably Mosul, ca. 1233–59

Brass; cast, engraved, inlaid with silver

H. 4 1/8 in. (10.5 cm); Diam. 8 1/4 in. (20.9 cm)

Museo Civico Medievale, Bologna (2128)

Inscribed in Arabic in *naskhi*, on the exterior:

مما عمل برسم الامير الكبير العالم الزاهد العابد الورع زين / الحاج
كهف الغربا عمده الملوك و / السلاطين نجم الدين عمر الملكي البدرى

What was made for the great amir, the wise, the ascetic, the devout, the ornament of / the Hajj, the refuge of the strangers, the support of kings and / sultans, Najm al-Din ‘Umar al-Maliki al-Badri.

On the foot:

العز الدائم والعمر السالم والدهر السالم والاقبال الزائد والجد الصاعد
والدهر المساعد والامر والبقاء لصاحبه

Lasting glory, unimpaired life, healthy existence, increasing success, thriving luck, opportunity, power, and perpetuity to its owner.¹

This brass bowl was made for Najm al-Din ‘Umar al-Maliki al-Badri, amir of Badr al-Din Lu’lu’, independent ruler of Mosul from 1233 to 1259.² The vessel is representative of the lavishly inlaid brasses known to have been present in courtly households in the western parts of the Seljuq realm.³ Such luxurious objects reflected the status and wealth of their owner, thereby embodying the grandeur of the individual him- or herself. The bowl was probably used during feasts, admired by all present.

The vessel has a truncated conical body on a high foot, a shape that, although unknown from other surviving metal objects, was common in ceramics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Iran, Greater Syria, and the Jazira (see cat. 48). It is believed to have been cast using a mold that, in slightly smaller proportions, imitated stonepaste bowls used for everyday dining by its well-to-do owner.⁴ The bowl’s composition, inscriptions, iconography, and ornament allow its attribution to Mosul. Together with the Blacas ewer (cat. 15), the five brasses of Badr al-Din Lu’lu’ (see cats. 12a, b), and other pieces, it forms part of the core group of inlaid metalwork from Mosul, one of the most significant metalwork schools in the Islamic world.⁵ Figural imagery enclosed in medallions is characteristic of the Mosul school. Here, on the vessel’s exterior, large polylobed medallions are interspersed with the main inscription, inlaid in elegant *naskhi* script, praising Najm al-Din ‘Umar. They enclose a

princely figure hunting and fighting on horseback (as a falconer) or on foot (attacking a bear or piercing a feline predator with his lance). Four smaller circular medallions with a seated cross-legged figure raising a truncated conical wine cup punctuate the benedictory inscription in animated *kufic* that runs in a band below the interior rim. Four riders with a falcon or raised mace, hunting a hare and a deer(?), are depicted at the bottom of the inner shell against dense, scrolling vegetal arabesques (fig. 57). While the equestrian hunt is a common theme of the courtly cycle, the circular arrangement of medallions is seen more frequently in compositions of interlacing or chasing animals.⁶

The unique shape and the inscription naming the owner indicate that this rare, luxurious bowl was a commission for Najm al-Din ‘Umar, “the ornament of the Hajj,” one of Badr al-Din’s officers in charge of the pilgrimage to Mecca.⁷ It may have been used in the context of feasting, perhaps as a finger bowl or to convey foods such as fruit, herbs, or nuts, which would not adhere to the inlaid surface.⁸ The luxurious vessel was a self-representational artifact, of which the inscription and iconography protected and praised its owner and wished him an ideal courtly life. The choice of themes related to drinking, the hunt, and horsemanship represent the favored courtly entertainments of Seljuq times. **DB**



Fig. 57. Detail of interior base of cat. 49 showing four horsemen hunting

50

Jug in the Form of a Crouching Man

Iran, late 12th century

Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
8½ × 5 in. (21.6 × 12.7 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Nasli M.
Heeramaneck Collection, Gift of Joan Palevsky
(M.73.5.361)

This jug belongs to a large group of figural objects, either functional vessels or figurines of seemingly no practical purpose, made in Iran and the Jazira. The figural types comprise humans, mostly seated (cat. 3), engaged in drinking, playing instruments, and, in the case of women, nursing infants; animals (cats. 134, 135, 136c, 140); and fantastic creatures.¹ The unusual squatting posture of the man seen here, with the spout of the jug emerging from between his booted legs, finds parallel in only one other piece, which depicts a monkey.² Indeed, a number of the figures are similarly humorous or curious in nature, recalling a caricature made by a “jug maker” in 1197 depicting Sultan Abu al-Hayja al-Samin (“The Fat”) as a portly rider.³ Additionally, literary jokes about food and puns on the names of foodstuffs were a known element of culinary gatherings.⁴

Absent specific evidence in the sources, we can only speculate as to the liquids that



such containers would hold: certainly plain water and wine, but possibly also flower- or fruit-flavored waters, which in wealthier households were sometimes mixed with snow; milk; and fermented beverages, including several kinds of *fuqqa'* (see cats. 61, 62).⁵ The consumption of drinks made with *bang*, a term used for cannabis and other narcotic plants, is also well attested in coeval Persian poetry.⁶ It is likely that the earliest Seljuq tribes settling in Khurasan at the beginning of the eleventh century consumed *kumis*, or

fermented mare's milk, but this staple drink of the steppe may have fallen into disuse by the time cat. 50 was made.⁷ Finally, it has been suggested that an ancient belief in the curative properties of breast milk continued into the Islamic period, as attested by the story of a milk-dripping statue in the region of Lur, reported in the late twelfth-century *'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat* (Wonders of creation).⁸ Accordingly, the presence of figurines of nursing women may ascribe to the entire group a beneficent or apotropaic value. **MR**



51

Bowl with Seated Figure

Iran, Kashan, late 12th–early 13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
 H. 3¼ in. (8.3 cm); Diam. 8⅝ in. (22 cm)
 al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait
 (LNS 298 C)

Inscribed in Arabic on the exterior:

الاعزاز والاقبال والبقا والنعمة والاقبال والكرامة والنعمة والاقبال والسعادة والاقبال

*Glory, prosperity, long life, grace, prosperity, generosity, grace, prosperity, happiness, prosperity.*¹

The seated figure in the center of this lusterware bowl holds a rounded object that may be a piece of fruit, while to the left a long-necked ewer seemingly floats on a lusterware ground. In the cavetto around the figure, a narrow band contains sections of circles and dots punctuated by nine luster roundels on a

white ground. A luster-painted band separates this and the everted rim that is decorated with luster scallops. While the inscription stresses prosperity and other positive qualities or circumstances, the figure, fruit, and ewer relate more specifically to the function of the bowl as a receptacle for food or possibly liquid and, by extension, the pleasure of dining. The ewer may represent a pitcher for water used for washing hands, although its shape is not typical of twelfth-century metal ewers produced in Iran (see cat. 85).

As discussed elsewhere in this volume (see cat. 173), the gender of the figure is indeterminate, since both Seljuq men and women appear with long locks of hair, low hats, and *tiraz* bands on their sleeves. The repeated pattern of three dots on the figure's

robe is the *cintamani*, an auspicious symbol that derives from Buddhist attributes of the Bodhisattva and survived to become one of the most popular motifs in Ottoman art.² The general composition and other decorative details, however, including the scallops on the rim of the bowl and the ewer next to a seated figure, have antecedents in Fatimid lusterware. An example in Cairo is decorated with a drinker seated next to a ewer that is not dissimilar in shape to the one in this bowl.³ However, here the mouth of the ewer recalls early Islamic examples from Iran or possibly ewers in other media than metal, such as ceramic and glass. The decoration on its side may refer to inlaid ornament on metal pouring vessels or glazed decoration on pottery. **SRC**



52

Fragment of a Bowl Depicting a Seated Couple, Dedicated to the Vizier Muhammad b. Abdullah

Iran, Kashan, late 12th–early 13th century
Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted with blue accents

6¾ × 6¾ in. (17.1 × 17.1 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Madina Collection of Islamic Art, Gift of Camilla Chandler Frost (M.2002.1.187)

Inscribed, in Arabic in *naskhi* on the exterior rim:

[...] الوزاء محمد بن عبد الله اعز الله انصاره و ضا[عف اقتداره]
[. . .] *Minister Muhammad b. Abdullah, May God hold dear his defenders and increase [his power].*

In Persian in *naskhi* on the exterior, above the foot:

ان سروران که نامه نکو کسب کردند / رفتند و یادگار ازیشان جز آن
نماند // نوشیایان روان اگرچه فروانش گنج بود / جز نام نیک که از پس
نوشین روان نماند]

[Those leaders who have earned a good name / are long gone and only their memory remains. / Even though Nush]in Ravan¹ had an abundance of treasures, when he was gone, / only his good name remained.

On the interior, below the rim:

[...] ن که ان بد اندیشه چه برد از [...]]
[. . .] *so what do the deceptive (persons) gain from [...]*

On the interior, in luster on a white ground:

ایارم دری که نگشود بیست / بگسست طناب صحبت ناپیوست // هیهات
که وصل ناپد / ایدش کم شد / فریاد که عهد نادرستش بشک [بست]
[Not only did my beloved not open a door but she closed it altogether; she not only cut the thread of incoherent words (conversation) but refused to continue it. Alas, the invisible] connection was lost, and he cried that his deceiving promise was broken.²

This fragmentary luster bowl contains two full quatrains and one partial line of poetry as well as an inscription on its exterior rim naming the presumed patron, Muhammad b. Abdullah, whose name implies an association with a vizierate.⁵ The two lines of poetry on the exterior, part of a *qasida*, were previously thought to have been the work of

Sa'di (ca. 1213–1291), as they appear in his *Gulistan*. However, since the bowl would have been produced not long after his birth, the verses must be reassigned to the twelfth-century poet Rashid al-Din Watwat, chief secretary to the Khwarazm Shah sultan Atsiz (1127–56) and his successor Il Arslan (1156–72).⁴ This implies that, after the fall of the Seljuqs in 1194, the Khwarazm Shahs continued to patronize the makers of luster-ware, choosing inscriptions relevant to their own history.

The verses do not have a direct narrative link to the figures depicted on the interior, which can be interpreted as representing a formal courtly gathering. The two principal figures are seated side by side, looking toward the now lost opposite side or central figure of the composition. Their shoulder-length hair and domical headdresses with small patches, apparently decorated with writing, suggest that they are men of status. The right hand of the figure on the left is visible at waist height, forming a C shape with thumb and forefinger. Behind them stand two attendants with long locks of hair and smaller faces, which may allude to both their lesser social rank and their youth. A narrow, slightly curving tree, probably a stylized cypress, separates the four primary figures of the fragment from the head of another attendant, drawn at a ninety-degree angle to the more complete figures.

Since no one is depicted eating or drinking, the group most likely represents an audience for either a ruler or a poet. Given the literary context provided by the inscriptions as well as the identification of the patron as a government official, this bowl may provide a key to similar pieces in which figures appear to be listeners, at times to poets or singers whose dress suggests a different social class (see, for instance, cat. 40) and at other times to speakers who are similar in size and apparel.⁵

SRC and AG

Bottle with Applied Decoration

Syria, 11th–12th century
 Glass; mold-blown, tooled, applied decoration,
 worked on the pontil
 H. 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (17.5 cm); Diam. 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (8 cm)
 al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah,
 Kuwait (LNS 1377 G)

This pear-shaped bottle with ribbed sides was formed in a mold and embellished with a thick trail of undulating glass applied to the base of the neck. While it has no precisely analogous pieces, it is thought to relate to the group of glasswares attributed to central and northern Syria in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹

The taste for lobed glass vessels continued in Syria into the thirteenth century, when the technique was combined with marvering to provide a richer visual impact emphasizing color contrast as well as the rippling effect of lobing. Such bottles were apparently exclusively made of glass in Syria, as opposed to Iran, where glass and ceramic bottle shapes are closely equivalent. Unlike the pear-shaped metalwork that appears in manuscript illustrations,² the small size of cat. 53 suggests that it was designed to hold a liquid that was used in lesser quantities than water or wine but in greater amounts than perfume. One such substance is milk, which sours and curdles quickly and in its unfermented state would need to be drunk right away. Another possibility is that the bottle held potions, attested in the eleventh-century Geniza documents as having been sold in bottles.³

The archaeological context in which this bottle was found is unknown. In cities such as Nishapur, small and medium-sized glass vessels were excavated in kitchens and the areas of houses devoted to eating.⁴ While this confirms the idea that cat. 53 and related bottles contained potable liquids, oil, or syrup, it does not lead to any specific conclusion. Presumably, the makers of glass vessels did not determine their use, which was a choice left to their owners. The embellishment of its surface and the particularity of its shape, however, suggest that this was a bottle of some worth, employed by people of means. **src**



Bottle with Gilded and *Mina'i* Decoration

Iran, late 12th–early 13th century

Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, in-glaze- and overglaze-painted, applied siliceous slip, gilded
H. 8⁵/₈ in. (21.9 cm); Diam. 3 in. (7.6 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch (M.45.3.118)

This bottle, the bulbous shape of which appears to have been introduced in the twelfth century, belongs to a small group of objects made in the *mina'i* technique that are further enhanced with gilding and relief decoration made of a siliceous slip, rendering them among the most elaborate and visually charged ceramics of the medieval period.¹ Although certainly not as luxurious as vessels in gold or silver, they would have counted among the prized possessions of their elite owners and elicited the admiration of assembled guests. A bottle and a bowl from the same group are inscribed with names and titles associated with a governor of Nishapur in the last quarter of the twelfth century, suggesting that such vessels were also used by the ruling classes.²

The gilding is applied over a lacelike pattern of harpies and scrolls, frontally depicted and realized in relief, in a siliceous slip that was manually applied to the vessel.³ The gilded motifs are further emphasized by a painted contour line in red. This extravagant and expensive program of decoration, reminiscent of jewelry, was the last stage of a complex manufacturing process that began with an overall glazing in opaque white. The surface was then painted with a dense pattern of cobalt-blue stripes and larger bands of copper turquoise, which sank into the glaze during firing (known as the in-glaze technique). Only after the first firing were the relief decoration, overglaze painting (*mina'i*), and gilding added.⁴ It may be that objects so sumptuously ornamented were not only used for feasting but also displayed as purely decorative objects in wall niches, such as those uncovered in excavations at the Tepe Madrasa in Nishapur as well as in private residences in Khurasan.⁵ **MR**



55

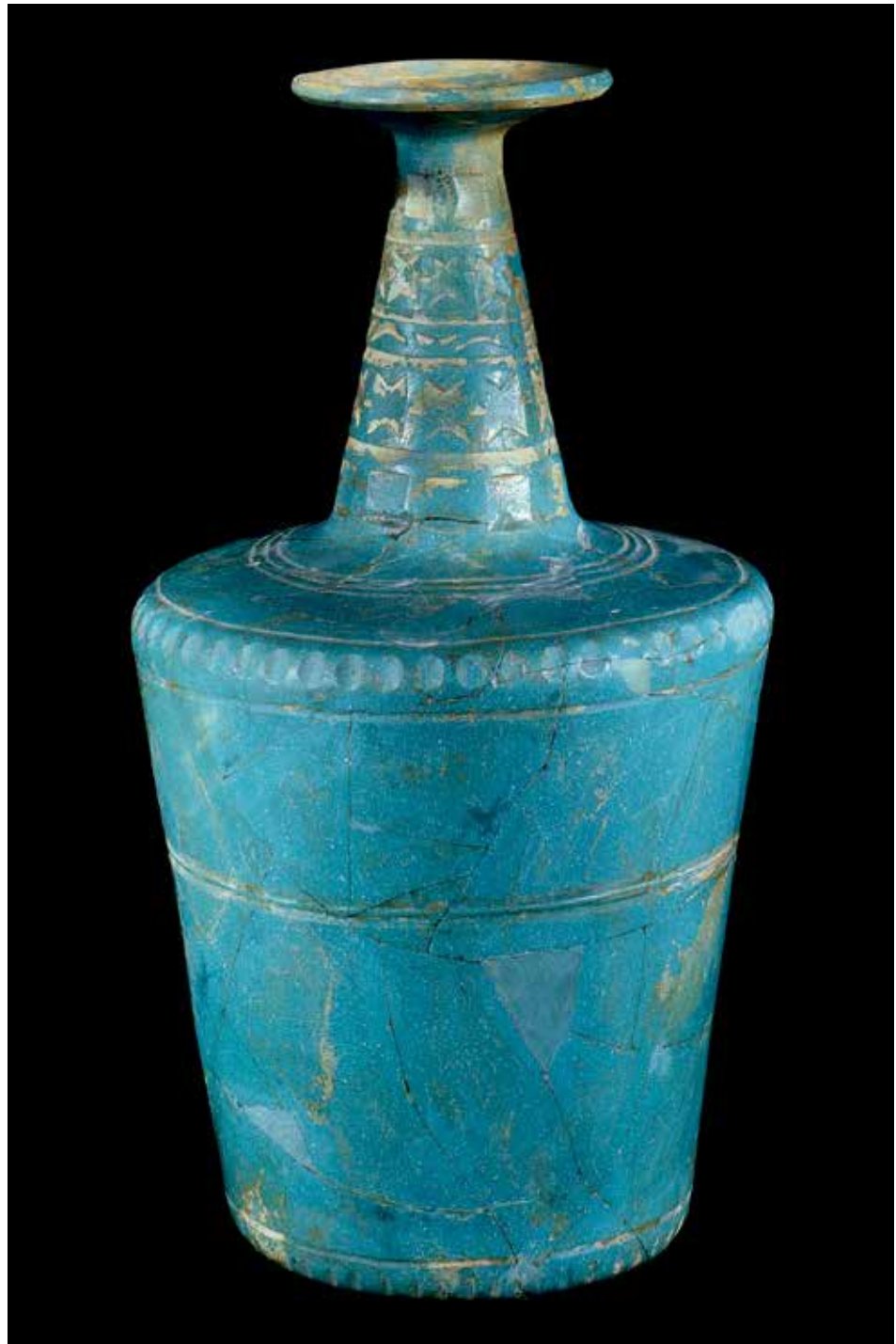
Bottle

Iran, late 10th–first half of the 11th century
 Opaque turquoise glass; blown, cut
 H. 10¾ in. (27.3 cm); Diam. 6½ in. (15.5 cm)
 Corning Museum of Glass, N.Y. (53.1.8)

This bottle, said to come from Gurgan, in northeast Iran, was manufactured from an uncommon material—opaque turquoise glass—but in a well-attested shape, suggesting that it was made within established centers of glass production. Its closest parallels are two transparent glass bottles, one excavated at Nishapur and another from the Dule Temple in Ji Xian, Tianjin, China.¹

Opaque glass was employed in Islamic workshops to produce marvered glass or as applied decorative threads but was rarely used to create whole vessels.² The most famous opaque turquoise object is a scalloped bowl in the Treasury of San Marco in Venice, its declared provenance, “Khurasan,” inscribed under the base (fig. 58).³ The production of such vessels may have started earlier but is safely and more extensively attested in the eleventh century, one of the most creative periods in terms of technological experimentation. For this bottle, a dating in the first half of the century is supported by two similarly shaped objects, the first found at the tomb (1018) of Princess Chenguo at Naiman, in Chinese Inner Mongolia, and the second at the above-mentioned Dule Temple (1058).⁴

It has been argued that opaque turquoise glass was intended to imitate more expensive turquoise stone.⁵ Then again, it exhibits an affinity with another innovation of the eleventh century, stonepaste, as many of the few known objects in opaque turquoise glass are close in both color and shape to the earliest stonepaste vessels produced in Iran.⁶ While a direct technological connection is difficult to prove, a relation between the two groups is suggested by their shared raw materials (crushed/ground quartz and fused glass), as well as by the fact that the San Marco bowl has a peculiar foot resting on the inner corner, a characteristic found only in the earliest stonepaste vessels.⁷ That the two materials were



the expression of a shared aesthetic may be suggested by the sources, in which opaque glass is probably, and ceramics are certainly, associated repeatedly with Chinese porcelain. The latter ultimately may have been the model for both, although a possible intention to deceive on the part of craftsmen can only be speculated.⁸ The search for new and different materials and shapes to which these objects attest is best explained by closely connected workshops operating within a lively creative environment, further promoted by a growing clientele in need of novel paraphernalia for their feasts. **MR**



Fig. 58. Scalloped bowl. Khurasan or Egypt, 10th–11th century. Opaque turquoise glass, silver-gilt, gold, cloisonné enamel, stones, H. 2¾ in. (6 cm); Diam. 7¾ in. (18.6 cm). Treasury of San Marco, Venice (140)



Cat. 56

56

Cup with a Poem on Wine

Iran, second half of the 10th–11th century
Silver; fire-gilded, hammered, chased

H. 3¼ in. (8.3 cm); Diam. 5 in. (12.7 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1964 (64.133.2)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic* below the outside rim:

اشرب فليوم فضل لو علمت به / بادرت باللهو واستعجلت بالطرب //
أورد الخدود، وورد الروض قد جمعاً / والغيم مبيتسم، والشمس في
الحجب // لا تحبس الكاس واشربها مشعشعة / حتى تموت بها موتاً بلا
سبب

*Drink! For this day has a special boon, which if you
had known about it / You would have hurried up with
entertainment and hastened with rapture! // [Rosy
cheeks, garden roses cut / Smiles are misty and the
sun is veiled] // Don't hold the cup back, but drink it
diluted, until you die from it (dead) without reason.¹*

57

Bowl with Duck and a Poem on Wine

Iran, Hamadan, Nihavand, 11th century
Gold; hammered, incised, punched

Diam. 3 in. (7.6 cm)

British Museum, London (ME OA 1938.11-12.1)

Inscribed in Arabic in foliated *kufic* below the
outside rim:

الخمير شمس في غلالة لاذ / تجري و مطلعها من الخردادى // فاشرب
على طيب الزمان فيومنا / يوم التذاد قد اتى بردان
*Wine is a sun in a garment of red Chinese silk / It
flows; its source is the flask // Drink, then, in the
pleasance of time, since our day / Is a day of delight
which has brought dew.²*

These sophisticated vessels, inscribed with verses inviting one to drink, echo the close connection between wine drinking and literature in upper-class social practice of the medieval Islamic period. Drinking parties of the cultured elite were accompanied by the recitation of poems, music, and, sometimes,

dancing, a tradition carried on uninterrupted from the pre-Islamic period and practiced by the Seljuq sultans and their entourages, as well as by the urban elite.³ Although these activities were conceived of in the Seljuq period as predominantly leisurely, albeit recalling the intellectual and feasting abilities expected of the ruling classes, they can also be seen as the legacy of ceremonies associated with kingship and investiture in pre-Islamic Central Asia and Zoroastrian Iran.⁴

The verses inscribed on the silver cup start with an exhortation to drink and end with an urging to surrender to the excesses of drunkenness. They are drawn from the *diwan*, or collection of poems, of Ibn Sikkara al-Hashimi, a satirical poet who lived in Baghdad in the second half of the tenth century (d. 995). He was an exponent of *mujun*, a genre of poetry developed in Basra and Baghdad at the end of the ninth century that celebrated a lustful and



Cat. 57

licentious way of life.⁵ The inscription is closely connected to the peculiar aesthetic of this earlier poetic genre, which was no longer practiced in the eleventh century but still well known, owing to the fact that it was included in a famous anthology compiled by al-Tha'alibi (d. 1038).⁶

The poem inscribed on the gold cup expresses a quieter invitation to drink, and it praises wine with metaphorical comparisons—to the sun; to Chinese silk; to a stream flowing from a source—that underscore its powerful, sensual, and life-giving qualities. Like those of Ibn Sukkara, these verses were composed by a tenth-century poet, Ibn al-Tammar al-Wasiti, and were included in al-Tha'alibi's anthology.⁷ Whatever the reason for this coincidence, it may speak to the ways in which poetry circulated outside of elite

circles, although we cannot be sure whether the engravers transcribed the poems directly from this or another anthology or knew them by oral transmission. It has been suggested that *diwans* were present in ceramic workshops so that verses might be selected for inscribing onto *mina'i* objects.⁸

The function of the two cups as vessels for wine is made clear not only by their inscriptions but also by their shape. The straight, flaring sides and narrow, flat base of the silver cup correspond to bowls depicted in symposium scenes of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, such as cat. 17.⁹ The hemispheric shape of the gold cup is long-standing, found, for instance, in Central Asian stone *babas* (anthropomorphic commemorative figures of the Early Turkish Period; see cat. 190) and Sogdian wall paintings.¹⁰

The cups' precious materials and sophisticated workmanship suggest an elite setting. The fire-gilding on the interior of the silver cup resulted in a beautiful pale gold color that would have shimmered in the light of oil lamps and exalted the wine contained therein.¹¹ The letters and scrolls engraved on its exterior—below the rim, an elegant *kufic* with foliated endings, set against a background of vegetal scrolls; and above the base, a repeated pattern of palmettes—are emphasized by black outlines, and stand out even more against the minutely scaled background pattern. The letters on the gold cup, in a foliated *kufic*, are similarly highlighted, with the variation of displaying a pointed background. In both cases the verses could be easily read, if not recited from memory. **MR**



58

Bowl with Seated Figures

Excavated at Rayy (RH6057), probably made in Kashan, early 13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, in-glaze- and overglaze-painted
 H. 4¼ in. (10.9 cm); Diam. 7⅞ in. (18.9 cm)
 University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia (37-11-87)

This stonepaste bowl, which has been restored from many pieces with minimal infill, has two particularly notable aspects to it. The first is the decorative band with seated figures gesturing to one another alternating with floral motifs (*bota*). The images allude to social gatherings in a garden, or the first part of the feasting/ fighting dyad (*bazm wa razm*) that described notions of a good life for heroes of epic and romantic stories such as the *Shahnama* (Book of kings) or the *Khamsa* (Quintet).¹

Second, this bowl provides evidence of the process of making ceramics. The shape itself was expertly thrown from a stonepaste mixture,² and carefully dipped into an opacified tin glaze to cover the entire bowl. The second phase in the *mina'i* decorative technique needed a sure hand for the painted-on decor, as well as careful control of the kiln's atmosphere during firing to set the enamel-like colors (*haft rang*). Neither is evident on this piece. The drawing is shaky and the colors burned: in short, a "second," or apprentice, piece. That it was presumably brought from Kashan and sold on the market indicates the value and taste for this type of ceramic among the urban population of Rayy. **RH**



59

Master Mold

Iran or Afghanistan, 12th–13th century
 Earthenware; molded
 H. 7¾ in. (19.8 cm); Diam. 6⅝ in. (16.8 cm)
 al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait
 (LNS 1039 C)

Inscribed in Arabic in *muhaqqaq* on the exterior:

عليك بمطبوخ النبيذ فانه حلال اذا لم يخطف العقل والفهما / عمل فقيه
 سمرقند // عبد

It is advisable to consume cooked wine, which is lawful, as it does not alter one's mind and perception / Made by (the) Faqih of Samarqand // 'Abd.¹

This mold for a ewer would have been the source from which two negative molds, each a half of the vessel, was made. However, as the vertical seam indicates, it too was made of two halves joined together and therefore cannot be the original master mold. Presumably it represented a popular design that was worthwhile to reproduce in order to continue selling negative molds and, ultimately, vessels

of its kind.² Its decoration consists of a band of stylized leaf forms connected by arched vines below a narrow braid. A wider band above contains the inscription, composed in a well-written *muhaqqaq* script on a ground of palmette scrolls inhabited by hares, felines, birds, and other animals. Some of the letters of the inscription terminate in human heads, a common feature on Seljuq inlaid metalwork.

Both the signature of Faqih, meaning lawyer or theological scholar, of Samarqand and the supposed Herat provenance suggest that the piece was produced in Khurasan. Given the content of the inscription, the maker may have combined his jurisprudential and ceramic skills in this object. The source of the inscription has been traced to the tenth-century Khurasani poet Abu-l-Fath Busti, who in turn based his line on the writings of Abu Hanifa, founder of the Hanafi school of law,

one of the four confessions of Sunni Islam. Although a glazed ewer made from this mold or one of its copies gives the name Ahmad al-Samarqandi on the neck of the vessel, he may be the same person as Faqih of Samarqand, since *faqih* is a profession, not a name.³

The Qur'an contains three injunctions against the use of intoxicants, two of which refer to them as *khamr*, or wine.⁴ Al-Busti's poem, however, uses the more general word *nabidh*.⁵ The inscription on the ewer echoes the Qur'an's emphasis on the ill effects of alcohol that distort the perception of the drinker. Mystical interpretations of *nabidh*, or cooked wine, identify it as the drink of those not yet initiated in an ancient Persian ritual in which wine substituted for blood.⁶ The inscription on cat. 59, however, appears to reflect the growing body of law under the Seljuqs concerned with punishments for drinking wine.⁷ SRC

Storage Vessel (*Habb*)

Jazira, allegedly found at Meskeneh, Syria,
12th–early 13th century

Earthenware; modeled, barbotine, stamped,
slip-painted

H. 31 1/8 in. (79 cm); Diam. 17 7/8 in. (45.5 cm)

Musée de l'Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris (AI91-04)

This monumental jar represents a typical vessel from Mesopotamia known as a *habb*.¹ They were widespread during the early and medieval Islamic periods, when they were produced in considerable quantities and for several purposes, among the most important being the storage of cool drinking water.² Most comparable examples have been found in the Jazira. *Habbs* were most often heavy, unglazed earthenware vessels with thick, porous walls and an elongated, sometimes pear-shaped, body with a hemispherical lower part, suggesting that they could not stand without a supporting element or without being placed in a hollow of the floor.

The upper third of cat. 60 presents a decorative second wall or screen creating an air space around half of the neck. The presence of this wall and the polylobed arches with which it is pierced suggest that the vessel dates from the Zangid period, when earthenware of this kind was in high demand in the flourishing urban centers of the Jazira.³ The motif of a stylized female figure with small globular eyes and a triangular bust, all made with barbotine spirals, appears behind one of the arches, on the decorative wall, and on the upper half of the body, recalling the ancient traditions in which these vessels and their symbolism are rooted.⁴ The figure probably derives from an ancient Near Eastern goddess of fertility such as Ninmah or Ishtar, the latter worshipped with particular ardor in the Jazira.⁵

The hierarchical composition suggests that the jar once stood in the corner of a courtyard. Only the parts with the arched screen and the goddesses below were meant to be seen, while the hidden back and lower parts were decorated simply, with zigzag-like stamps and barbotine spirals. Both its contents and its owner were protected by the goddesses, and probably also by the snakelike animals whose



heads form the tops of the handles or the dogs sitting in the shadow behind the arches, recalling the very architectural setting in which the *habb* would have stood. The vessel and its iconography provide and preserve water, the

source of life, as expressed in an inscribed example: "I am a *habb* of water wherein there is healing. I quench the thirst of mankind. This I achieve by virtue of my sufferings on the day I was cast among the fiery flames."⁶ **DB**

61

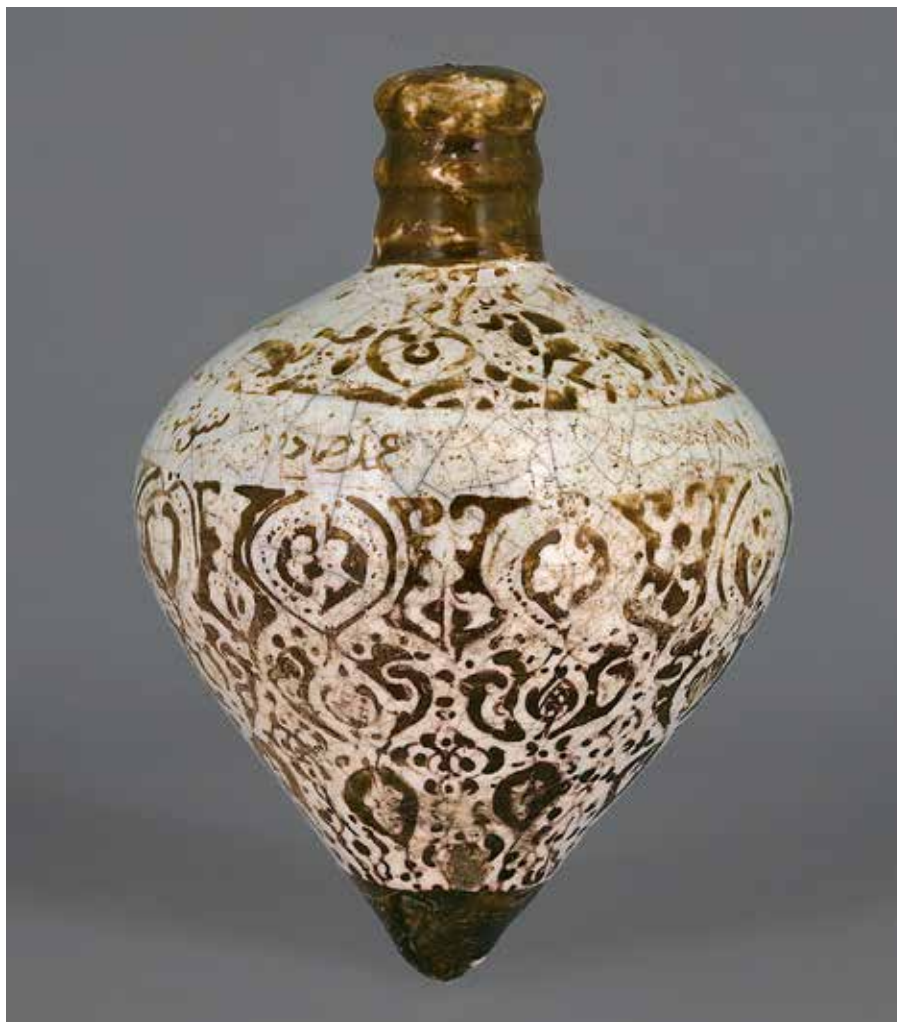
Spheroconical Vessel

Afghanistan, reportedly from Herat,
late 12th–early 13th century

Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
H. 5 1/8 in. (13 cm); Diam. 3 5/8 in. (9.2 cm)
al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah,
Kuwait (LNS 903 C)

Inscribed in Persian in cursive with poetic verses. Only
a few words are legible:¹

شولش کر [...] عقیق یار [...] خسته [...] زار زار [...] همی [...]]...
عمل صادق[؟]



Cat. 61

62

Spheroconical Vessel

Syria or Egypt, 12th–14th century
Earthenware; molded(?), incised, glazed in transparent
green

H. 4 3/4 in. (12.1 cm); Diam. 3 1/2 in. (8.9 cm)
Victoria and Albert Museum, London (C.365-1921)

63

**Tabouret with Winged Griffins and
Benedictions**

Syria, 12th century
Earthenware; molded, modeled, glazed in turquoise
H. 8 1/8 in. (20.6 cm); Diam. 10 in. (25.4 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Henry G.
Leberthon Collection, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. A. Wallace
Chauncey, 1957 (57.61.13)

Inscribed in Arabic in cursive on its three sides:

العز الدائم

Perpetual prosperity.



Cat. 62

64

**Star-shaped Tile with a Seated Figure
Holding a Spheroconical Object**

Iran, late 12th–early 13th century
Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
5 3/8 x 5 1/8 x 1/2 in. (13.5 x 12.9 x 1.2 cm)
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (C.443-1991)



Cat. 63

These two peculiarly shaped vessels (cats. 61, 62) and the tabouret (cat. 63) into which they may have been fitted for presentation might relate to the consumption of beverages. A depiction of a seated figure holding what appears to be one such vessel may be tentatively identified on the accompanying luster tile (cat. 64); if this were indeed the case, it would represent a variation of the round elements—fruits or sweets—that so frequently appear in banqueting images and other scenes meant to evoke the qualities of courtly life.²

The function of both sphericoconical vessels and tabourets has long been debated. Sphericoconical vessels made of earthenware are well known from archaeological contexts of the tenth to fourteenth century far beyond the Iranian and Syrian regions, in an area spanning Russia to Egypt to Kenya, on the east coast of Africa. Apart from their shape, their singularity

lies in an extremely hard ceramic body obtained by a high-temperature firing, which has a vitrifying effect that partially turns the clay into stoneware. Also exceptional are the thickness of their walls and the single small hole at the top. The complexity of their interpretation is compounded by the occurrence of a variety of both glazed and unglazed, plain and decorated examples, as well as objects of the same shape but made of materials such as glass. In the eleventh to fourteenth century, unglazed vessels, either plain or with stamped motifs, predominated in Central Asia and Iran, while glazed ones with scaled patterns (as in cat. 62) prevailed in Greater Syria.³ Their diffusion and variety point to a large number of production centers, despite the relative lack of attested evidence of manufacture.⁴

Absent explicit mentions of these objects in the textual sources, scholars have to rely on

varied interpretations of problematic evidence, such as an illustration in the *Daqa'iq al-haqa'iq* (cat. 130), a compendium of texts related to astrology, astronomy, magic, and talismans.⁵ In it, a bearded, turbaned man riding a bird—a personification of the angel of the Third Mansion of the Moon—holds a sphericoconical vessel seemingly of the unglazed type (fig. 59). A stick protruding from the hole at top may function as a stopper, which confirms the vessel's use as a container but not the nature of its contents. It is unclear whether it relates to the straw fan (perhaps used to stoke a fire) also held by the angel.

Among the more frequently recurring hypotheses with regard to these vessels is that they were aeolipiles (devices used to fan fires through the exhalation of steam); containers for mercury (employed in various alchemical and medical preparations, as well



Cat. 64

as to make pigments) or other potentially hazardous or precious substances, including pyrite, perfume, or ink; plumb bobs; or military or Greek fire grenades. A convincing hypothesis, based on a large number of literary sources and on a few objects inscribed with exhortations to drink to good health, associates a group of spheroidal vessels with the terms *fuqqa'*, or *kaz al-fuqqa'* in the literature, which were containers for drinking fizzy fermented drinks.⁶ Indeed, there is sufficient evidence to substantiate most of the aforementioned hypotheses, though none provides a definitive answer for the group as a whole.⁷ Researchers are now oriented toward ascribing different functions to vessels based on their material, shape, or decoration,⁸ although a comprehensive investigation that incorporates the context of retrieval, chronology, and material analysis is still needed.

Glass and luster examples such as cat. 61 may well have been used to hold beverages, perfumes, or alembics, but evidence to

support this idea is, in fact, scarce. The few such vessels with inscriptions related to drinking, all from the Iranian regions and with little incised or stamped decoration, are of the unglazed type, and they are spherical rather than spheroidal in shape. In the Syrian and Egyptian regions, by contrast, unglazed spheroidal vessels, most bearing a scaly pattern of decoration like cat. 62, are often associated with explosives or fire and are often, but not exclusively, found in castles.⁹ The luxurious luster-painting of cat. 61 points toward an interpretation as a container for either beverages or precious liquids such as perfume.¹⁰

The triangular tabouret appears to be a variation of the more common six-sided or rectangular ones, which may or may not have circular openings.¹¹ Many such examples were excavated in Greater Syria, for example, at Hama, Raqqa, and Harran.¹² As with most coeval stonepaste objects, they are usually attributed exclusively to Raqqa, although stonepaste production was actually more widespread

in the twelfth century (see cats. 108a–i).¹³ That these low tables were used to carry containers of liquids can be inferred from miniature paintings in *Maqamat* manuscripts of the thirteenth and mid-fourteenth centuries. Although none features spheroidal vessels, one does depict a large jar with a tapering body that seems to have been inserted into a tabouret, while others clearly show jars whose points peek out the bottom of the tabouret (for instance, in the Saint Petersburg *Maqamat*).¹⁴ It is therefore conceivable that, in Syria, beverages were contained within spheroidal vessels and served from tabourets, a theory further supported by the inscribed benedictions wishing blessings to the owner and by the auspicious motif of two confronted winged griffins. **MR**



Fig. 59. Fol. 10r of the *Daqa'iq al-haqa'iq* (cat. 130) showing a turbaned man holding a spheroidal object



Cat. 65

65

Small Cup with Applied Decoration

Iran, ca. 900–1199

Nearly colorless glass with a yellowish-green tinge; blown (two gathers), applied decoration

H. 3 1/2 in. (9 cm); Diam. 4 1/2 in. (11.4 cm)

Corning Museum of Glass, N.Y., Bequest of Jerome Strauss (79.1.270)

66

Goblet with Applied Decoration

Iran, 11th–early 12th century

Colorless glass with a greenish tinge; blown, applied decoration

H. 4 1/2 in. (11.4 cm); Diam. 2 3/4 in. (7 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Friends of Islamic Art Gifts, 2000 (2000.279.2)

These delicate glass vessels lend insight into eating and drinking practices in Iran during the reign of the Great Seljuqs. The cup with a low foot (cat. 65) is decorated with a form of

applied globules called prunts, arranged in three horizontal rows around the cup. These are bordered above by a narrow band formed of two thin trails of glass and below by one trail. While the shape of the cup with its straight sides and low, splayed foot may derive from relief-cut glass cups of the tenth century, some late eleventh-century ceramic bowls also have straight sides, but with a ring, not splayed, foot (fig. 60), attesting to the popularity of the form. Nevertheless, drinkers who appear in Seljuq ceramics and metalwork do not use cups of this shape, which may simply be a result of the artistic convention of depicting wine glasses as conical vessels with or without a stem foot or because straight-sided cups were not used by the type of personages represented on ceramics and metalwork. Despite the Qur'anic injunction against the consumption of wine, poetry and legal texts as well as visual evidence indicate widespread wine drinking in the medieval



Fig. 60. Bowl. Iran, late 11th–early 12th century. Stonepaste; glazed in transparent purple and turquoise, H. 3 3/4 in. (9.5 cm); Diam. 6 1/4 in. (15.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Grinnell Collection, Bequest of William Milne Grinnell, 1920 (20.120.216)



Cat. 66

Iranian world. In addition to grapes for red and white wine, alcoholic drinks were produced from fermented dates, fermented sugar, fruit such as figs, apricots, peaches, blackberries, cherries, and some vegetables. Beer was made from various grains, and the traditional drink of Turks, *kumis*, came from fermented mare's milk.¹

In representations of drinkers in other media such as metalwork, ceramics, and stucco (see cats. 16, 38), conical beakers appear, but the flange and splayed foot are usually invisible, and the beakers are often much larger than the examples shown here. Since drinkers depicted on objects are invariably men, dainty goblets may have been intended for women's use or for small quantities of strong fermented drinks. However, a goblet with a flange and splayed foot appears on a lusterware bowl dated A.H. 575/A.D. 1179–80 (fig. 61). It is being offered to a bearded man

in a turban by a young servant in the presence of a beardless figure enthroned in a garden.² The servant holds the goblet with his thumb touching the edge of the flange and his forefinger underneath it, but on the actual glass goblet the swirling trailed decoration on its sides may have kept the drinker's hand from slipping while drinking.³ Most representations of drinkers do not show them actually imbibing; rather, they hold the goblet by the stem in a static pose, which may reflect a princely prerogative and one stage of the etiquette of a *bazm*, or Persian feast.

Although the everted rim of the goblet in the bowl differs from that of cat. 66, the figures and inscription on the bowl provide useful information about the period and context in which such goblets would be used. The poem below the figures refers to the amir of Transoxiana saying, one assumes to his turbaned guest, that he should toil in the land of Merv

to become joyous and "take ample wine and give brimful goblets" of it.⁴ By 1179 the Seljuq sultan Tughril III no longer controlled Transoxiana, begging the question of whether the bowl was produced, presumably in Kashan,⁵ for a Seljuq patron nostalgic for the "good old days" when Sultan Sanjar ruled from Merv (1118–57), or for a patron from one of the rival dynasties rising in the east. The place of production of the glass goblet would have been in the eastern Iranian world, as comparable examples have been found in Afghanistan, northern Iran, and Turkmenistan.⁶

In a tavern scene from the illustrated *Maqamat* of al-Hariri dated 1237, where the protagonist al-Harith finds the rascal Abu Zayd enjoying the wine, the cupbearers, and the music, a tippler on a balcony appears to be using a cup that is similar in shape to cat. 65.⁷ Although this drinker's companion holds a conical glass or cup and both vessels are green, the differently shaped glasses suggest that, in informal and/or commercial situations, wine was consumed from a variety of containers. Conical glasses with or without stems were not reserved for potentates and were apparently popular with drinkers of all classes. The straight-sided glass cup, on the contrary, so rarely illustrated in other media, may have been used only by those who were not directly connected to the rich or powerful, such as the drinker on the balcony. Without more corroborating evidence, one can only speculate about the social implications of different shapes of glasses. However, since even the way they were held varies, the suggestion is that a specific etiquette applied to some but not all types of drinking vessels. **SRC**



Fig. 61. Lusterware bowl. Iran, dated A.H. 575/A.D. 1179–80, Diam. 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (16.9 cm). Private collection



67

Lobed Bowl

Raqqa, second half of the 12th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in transparent colorless glaze,
 in-glaze- and luster-painted with incisions in
 the luster

H. 3¼ in. (8.4 cm); Diam. 5⅞ in. (14.9 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Gift of Horace
 Havemeyer, 1948 (48.113.9)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic* on the exterior:

Blessing (repeated).¹

بركة

This lobed cup exemplifies the array of elegant tableware that was present at the feasts of the urban middle class and elite in twelfth-century Greater Syria, an appraisal justified by a comparison of the ceramics assemblages found in urban or palatine contexts and those found in rural areas.² The cup is said to come from Raqqa's so-called Great Find, a casual retrieval in the early twentieth century of a large number of intact vessels concealed within bigger jars, probably the stock of a merchant, in a street once devoted to selling pottery.³ Not much is known of the context of the excavation, carried out by a displaced community of

Circassians to retrieve building materials. Though authorized by the Ottoman administration, it occurred during a time of frenetic excavation activities, both legal and illegal, at the site. The assemblage, however, was documented in detail, and several objects entered the market soon after their retrieval.⁴ The group consisted mainly of underglaze- and luster-painted stonepaste vessels, predominantly bowls and jars. It is plausible that the entire cache was manufactured in Raqqa, a major center of stonepaste production in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries; cat. 67 and nine other luster-painted vessels with the same epigraphic motif have been attributed to the same painter.⁵

The cup's lobed shape represents a departure from the range of vessels produced in northern Mesopotamia and Syria in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and might reflect an eastern influence, as was the case with the variety of shapes, often lobed, that began to appear in Iranian stonepaste manufacture of the late eleventh century. The shape ultimately seems to originate in the metalwork of the Iranian and Central Asian territories, where it is

attested in bronzes of the Sogdian period well into the tenth and eleventh centuries and in high-tin bronzes manufactured in Khurasan.⁶ This is particularly interesting, as Jaziran and Syrian stonepaste of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries appears to have had a rather standardized range of shapes, which probably reflects intensified production for a larger but less demanding market.⁷ This cup's more rarefied design suggests that it was produced for a more discerning and sophisticated market than the one for which the usual range of vessels was created, and long after stonepaste was introduced as a technological innovation and luxury commodity in the late eleventh century. **MR**



Fig. 62. Detail of cat. 68 showing two musicians in a garden setting

68

Ewer

Maker: Yunus b. Yusuf al-Naqqash al-Mawsili
Jazira, probably Mosul, A.H. 644/A.D. 1246–47
Brass; raised, engraved, inlaid with silver and gold
H. 17½ in. (44.5 cm); Diam. 6½ in. (16.5 cm)
Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (54.456)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic* on the base of the neck:

عمل يونس (س) ابن يوسف النقاش الموصل في سنة اربعة واربعين
وستماننة

*The work of Yunus(?) b. Yusuf, Decorator of Mosul,
in the year 644.*¹

This vessel belongs to a group of pear-shaped ewers, lavishly inlaid in silver and sometimes gold, by the renowned al-Mawsili school of metalworkers.² Although the patron is anonymous, the inscription “Glory to our lord, the sultan, the royal” confirms that it was intended for a ruler; another confirms that it was made by Yunus b. Yusuf, “Decorator of Mosul” (*al-Naqqash al-Mawsili*), in A.H. 644/A.D. 1246–47. The fretwork arabesques,

polylobed medallions containing figural scenes, and above all the figure leaning forward to kiss the hand of an enthroned, *sharbush*-clad ruler link this ewer to inlaid brasses from Mosul (see cats. 15, 72).³

Ewers like this one were among the range of sophisticated and luxurious objects that furnished the households of the ruling elite in the western Seljuq world. Both decorative and functional, they were likely paired with basins and used for washing hands on festive, ceremonial, and ritual occasions.⁴ They may also have been used to serve water, wine, and other beverages at courtly festivities, although brass was known to impart an unpleasant metallic taste or, worse, to cause verdigris, a potentially lethal form of metal poisoning. A thin layer of tin was commonly added to brass vessels to protect against it.⁵

Although dishes and bottles are a common motif in medieval Islamic art—indeed, in the

present example, a bottle with a top comparable to a work in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (54.152.3) appears next to a pair of musicians seated on a bench in a garden (fig. 62)—depictions of an ewer of this exact type are less known and do not clarify the exact use(s).⁶ While the precise function of this and comparable vessels remains to be explored, the rich imagery related to music, hunting, and enthronement not only evokes the splendor of court life but also expresses a prevailing attitude among Seljuq and other Turkish rulers that is perhaps best described by the Ghaznavid poet Manuchihrī Damghani: “We’re men of drinking, feasting and singing. Hurray for the *rebab*, kebab and wine!”⁷ **DB**



with a running figure, also wearing a zigzag-embazoned armor, on a vase dated A.H. 657/ A.D. 1259, made, probably in Mosul, by 'Ali b. Hamud al-Mawsili for a certain Haqta b. Tudhra, an as-yet unidentified Christian patron.⁵ Was this tray stand, then, intended for a Crusader or a Christian nobleman? Regardless of the owner's identity, his person was protected by the inscriptions and his power endorsed by the angelic enthronement scene and surrounding images of worldly power (hunting, animal combat), earthly paradise (music, drinking, dancing), and the celestial realm (the zodiacal imagery on the exterior rim and foot).⁶

Its blending of Christian and Seljuq-Islamic iconography would have made this tray stand suitable for either a Christian or a Muslim court, thereby emphasizing the coexistence of many worlds and cultures during Seljuq times. Take, for instance, the city of Mosul itself, in the hands of the Zangid atabegs but governed by Badr al-Din Lu'lu', who was born an Armenian slave. Festive eating and drinking were universally relevant in the Seljuq realm and beyond, for "well-supplied trays and various kinds of eatables" were symbols of the wealth and abundance of a good king.⁷ **DB**

69

Tray Stand

Jazira or Syria, probably Mosul, mid- to late 13th century
Brass; engraved, incised, inlaid with silver
H. 9⁷/₈ (25.1 cm); Diam. 10¹/₈ in. (25.7 cm)

Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (MW.110.1999)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the upper rim:

العز والبقا والسعا والجد اوا اوالا والمجد والعلاء والصد االنصر على
الاعداء لصاحبه

Glory, long life, ambition, hard work, [. .] splendor, grandeur [. .] and victory over enemies to its owner.

On the foot:

العز الدائم العمر السالم والاقبال الزائد والدولة االزائد والباقية
والسلامة [. .]

*Eternal glory, safety, increasing prosperity, increasing power, perpetuity, safety, and [. .]*¹

This rare tray stand was used to display and serve food at feasts. Its use at court is confirmed by the lavish inlaid decoration and the benedictory inscription around the upper rim invoking "victory over enemies to its owner."²

While its inscriptions remain silent on the date or place of manufacture, the iconography and style of the inlay, specifically on the body, relate to the renowned al-Mawsili school of metalwork, which flourished in Mosul under Badr al-Din Lu'lu'. Indeed, among other similarities, the prominence given to a scene featuring a seated groom holding the bridle of a richly caparisoned horse and its rider standing behind (fig. 63) compares closely with cat. 68.³

The figure of the rider is particularly striking. The zigzag motif on his dress (armor?), a royal insignia probably introduced by the Crusaders and/or borrowed from Byzantium and used in the context of battle or hunting;⁴ his weapons (a lance or spear and a battle-axe); and his hairstyle signal a Crusader or a Byzantine nobleman. He compares closely

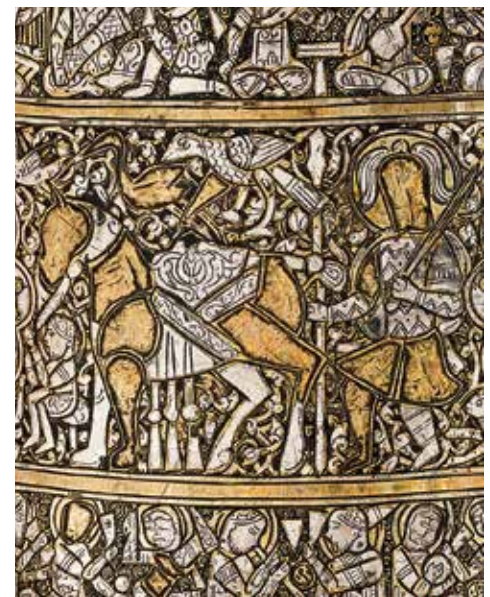


Fig. 63. Detail of cat. 69 showing a seated groom, a striding horse, and a rider in armor (possibly a Crusader)



70

Mounted Hunter with Cheetah

Jazira (or Iran?), 12th–early 13th century
 Stonepaste; molded in sections, glazed in transparent turquoise, underglaze-painted in black

10⁷/₈ × 3 × 8¹/₄ in. (27.6 × 7.6 × 21 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1966 (66.23)

This hollow stonepaste vessel is molded in the shape of a hunter on horseback. With a mace in his right hand and a shield on his back, he wears all the paraphernalia of the battlefield, but the presence of the small cheetah seated behind him suggests that he is a hunter. Cheetahs, caracals, and other wild felines were captured, tamed, and trained by specialized cheetah-keepers (*yuzdar*) to assist in hunting expeditions, a traditional leisure pursuit of royals and the wealthy elite in pre-Islamic Iran that was later adopted by the Arabs in the first centuries of Islamic history. The felines were

trained to ride pillion on their masters' horses and were employed in the hunt of animals such as hares and gazelles.¹ Cheetahs were especially prized for their speed and strength.

A passage from the *Shahnama*, written in the early eleventh century but based on traditional epics passed down orally, tells of a hunting party organized by the Sasanian king Khusraw Parviz, who was accompanied by hundreds of richly dressed and armed horsemen and footmen, falconers, tamed felines, musicians, and servants; among them were three hundred horsemen leading cheetahs.² Such extravagance befits the royal hunt, an elite pursuit through which the king could exhibit his outstanding capabilities. Hunting and martial prowess (*razm*), together with the ability to achieve full contentment by feasting (*bazm*)—a concept that included the appreciation of poetry, music, dance, and drink—embodied the essence of kingship in the Iranian tradition and celebrated in the *Shahnama*.

The horseman in cat. 70 was manufactured by altering a preexisting mold of a drinker (which is an image found on comparable objects): the applied arm holding the mace covers and conceals the mold's original, bent arm holding a cup. But the artisan who painted the figurine opted not to conceal but to highlight the cup by painting it black.³ His decision, although originating from a contingency, may reflect his understanding of fighting and feasting as not conflicting but complementary activities.

Although the figurine is allegedly Iranian, it may have originated in one of the many workshops active in the second half of the twelfth century in the Jazira and Syria that produced underglaze-painted stonepaste vessels (often referred to collectively as "Raqqqa ware"). The white degradation of the glaze is, in fact, particular to these wares.⁴ **MR**



71

Bowl with Lion-hunting Scenes

Iran, late 11th–12th century
 Stonepaste; molded, incised, pierced, glazed (colorless), splashed in blue
 H. 4¾ in. (12 cm); Diam. 5⅞ in. (15 cm)
 Sarikhani Collection, Oxfordshire (I.CE.2164)
 Inscribed in cursive on the exterior: Untranslatable

The iconography of the hunt is on full display on this molded bowl. Each figure in the monochrome scene expresses motion: a horseman lifting his sword above his head as though about to strike, and another shooting an arrow; the horses at full gallop; the lions with their thick, wagging tails; and the hare squatting as though ready to pounce. Of the standing attendants, the most preserved one is participating in the hunt with a long stick. The protrusion of the relief decoration from the densely patterned background of scrolls, palmettes, and birds adds to the dynamism of the composition, masterfully realized in rich detail.¹

The lion hunt was a favorite pastime of the Seljuq sovereigns, to whom this Sasanian tradition was transmitted through the Persian epics. It was most often carried out in enclosed gardens—Malik Shah (r. 1073–92), for one, had several such gardens around Isfahan.² An abundance of references in the sources and a rich associated iconography underlie the symbolic value given to the hunting of lions. To defeat

their strength and tame their wildness proved the supremacy of the sovereign while substantiating his skills in *razm* (hunting and fighting), a requisite for ruling princes.³ Indeed, in testament to his prowess, Malik Shah had towers built from the hooves of gazelles and onagers slain during his hunts.⁴ For the Seljuq sultans the mobility intrinsic to hunting expeditions may also have been a means of controlling the territory, as well as a continuation of earlier nomadic practices: by demonstrating their obviously “Turkish” skills, the royal hunt enabled the Seljuqs to distinguish themselves from Persian urban elites. It also provided an occasion for charitable acts: Malik Shah allegedly gave alms to the poor for each animal he killed.⁵

A *mina’i* bowl in the Brooklyn Museum (fig. 64) shows another leitmotif in the iconography of the hunt, although with different artistic means and visual results. Against the turquoise background a falconer appears on a fully harnessed horse. He is motionless, as if parading for the pleasure of the gathered audience. The mere presence of the falcon resting on his gloved hand evokes both the hunt and an affluent or courtly setting (the latter further alluded to by the audience members, apparently engaged in conversation), as *bayzara*, or falconry, could be an expensive luxury. The love for hawking was not limited to the

privileged class, but it was beloved by sovereigns, whose practice of it often involved ostentatious expenditure.⁶ The large number of texts devoted to the subject and the extremely specialized associated terminologies in both Arabic and Persian attest to the high level of natural scientific knowledge it involved and how much it was prized within educated circles.⁷

The different quality of the two bowls argues that they were probably made for purchasers of different means. However, both make use of an iconographic theme, albeit executed differently, that is heavily charged with princely connotations—no doubt symbolically favorable for both the beholder of the vessel and his guests at the banqueting “table.” In both objects the animals shown with the hunting horsemen reinforce these connotations already and primarily conveyed by the theme of the hunt itself, as both falcons and lions were directly associated with royal power. The lion’s definition in this regard goes back for millennia and was readily adopted in Islamic times; in the eleventh century lions were often used as effigies on royal banners, as gathered from plentiful references in Persian literature.⁸

The depictions and inscriptions on the two bowls thus convey a complex array of meanings, which, at the most basic level, can be synthesized into the ethical, beneficial, and recreational connotations of the hunt. As a theme, the latter evokes the ideal of kingship, which involved not only bravery and skill in battle but also the merrymaking and pleasure-taking of the *majlis* (alluded to by the seated courtiers on the Brooklyn bowl). As such, both bowls were befitting social gatherings involving feasting. **MR**



Fig. 64. Bowl with falconer and four pairs of seated figures. Iran, late 12th–early 13th century. Stonepaste; glazed in opaque turquoise, in-glaze- and overglaze-painted, H. 3¾ in. (9.4 cm); Diam. 8¼ in. (21 cm). Brooklyn Museum, New York (86.227.65)



72

Candlestick with Enthronement Scene

Jazira, probably Mosul, second quarter of the 13th century
 Brass; engraved, incised, inlaid with silver
 H. 9⁵/₈ in. (24.4 cm); Diam. 14¹/₂ in. (36.8 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Edward C. Moore Collection, Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 1891 (91.1.563)

Inscribed in Arabic in graffiti on the top:

علي بن احمد بن العباس

'Ali b. Ahmad b. Al-'Abbas.¹

This sophisticated candlestick, probably from Mosul,² illustrates various scenes that celebrate the sovereign's power over both earth and the cosmos: images of the planets appear alongside scenes of his slaying a lion and enjoying the pleasures of the royal feast. His authority becomes most evident in the enthronement scene, which appears in one of three large polylobed medallions that dominate the composition of the body. Typical for such scenes, the ruler sits atop a cushion on a *takht*, or

throne, with high lateral finials. Symbols of his nobility include his fur hat, or *sharbush*, and the folded *mandil*, a precious cloth affordable only by the elite, which he grips in the hand that rests on his knee.³ His larger proportions in comparison to other figures further distinguish his superiority.

Specific to Jaziran inlaid metalwork is the combination of frontal, side, and three-quarter views, which adds dynamism and variation to the overall pictorial program while allowing for a focus on certain details.⁴ Note, for instance, the bearded figure bending to kiss the ruler's right hand and the two standing figures—representative of the court officials, guards of honor, amirs, and viziers present at royal ceremonials—holding their symbols of office: the *amir al-silah* benches the sword around which a sashlike band draws an "eight" toward the ruler. The other figure extends a rectangular box toward the ruler; he is probably the *dawadar* (state secretary),

holding a pen box (see cat. 174b). This scene alludes to the obligation of kissing the hand of or the floor before the sovereign, and other protocols such as the *nawba* ceremony,⁵ which must have been practiced in Mosul under the Zangids and during the reign of Badr al-Din Lu'lu', as well as elsewhere in the Seljuq world. This courtly display of obeisance demonstrated both the ruler's supremacy and the loyalty of his adjuncts when they came to pay him allegiance. In one account, related to the foundation of Aksaray, the Rum Seljuq sultan Kılıç Arslan II (r. 1156–92) seized Kayseri and "all the fortresses of that province and put them under the command of his amirs. . . . The Artuqids in Diyar Bakr read the *khutba* in the name of the sultan, and the rulers of Amid from the house of the Nisanids came to kiss the sultan's hand. The rulers of Erzurum and Erzincan submitted to the sultan. In short he dominated all regions."⁶ **DB**

Ewer with Falconer in Repoussé

Khurasan, probably Herat, late 12th–early 13th century
Brass; raised, repoussé, engraved, inlaid with silver

H. 17⁵/₈ in. (44.8 cm); Diam. 7¹/₂ in. (19 cm)

Gallerie Estensi, Modena (6921)

Inscribed in Arabic in animated script, on the neck:

العز والاقبال / والدولة والبقاء

Glory, prosperity, dominion, and long life.

On the shoulder:

العز والسعادة والسلامة والعناية والعافية والقادرة والبقاء الدائم والعلاء
[إصاحبه وال...]

*Glory, happiness, prosperity, divine protection, health,
almighty and exalted, perpetual long life [. . .]*

In the cartouches:

العز والاقبال والدوامه والد / والسعادة والسلامة و. . . العافية التامة
وال / وال / لصاحبه / واو // العز وا / والدولة / والسعادة والدوامه وا /
لكرامة / والعلاء / والبقاء / والع. . .

*Glory, prosperity [. . .] happiness, prosperity, health [. . .]
to its owner / and [. . .] // Glory [. . .] dominion, happiness,
perpetuity, dignity, and exaltedness, long life, and [. . .]*

On the base:

باليمن والبركة والدولة والسرور والسعادة والسلامة والنعمة والثناء

*With good luck and blessing, dominion, joy, happiness,
prosperity, well-being, and praise.¹*

In shape and medium, this vessel represents a typical ewer from Khurasan, specifically the city of Herat, where a robust school of inlaid metalwork developed in the twelfth century and flourished until the 1220s.² Characteristic of Herat metalwork are the repoussé animals and figures punctuating the composition.³ Exceptional to this ewer is the falconer on horseback on each side of the neck, executed in high relief and with precisely rendered details such as the rider's dress and the horse's trappings and bound tail suited for hunting.⁴ The falconer in repoussé is a rare feature (see also fig. 64) and acts as a visual marker of the thematic focus chosen for the lavish decoration: hunting activities on horseback.

On the lobed ribs that encircle the vessel's body, arabesque scrolls with animal heads (evoking the *waq-waq* motif)⁵ create interlaced medallions that enclose a rider in action—raising his shield and sword, performing the Parthian shot, or attacking a cheetah. Chasing animals likewise refer to the hunt while animating the composition. The same motifs are repeated, in repoussé, on the neck (in a frieze below the falconer) and on the spout. Where the neck meets the body is another frieze in which the themes of *bazm* and *razm* (feasting and fighting) appear alongside scenes of



drinking, music (a harp and a lute), dance (a figure with long sleeves), and sport fighting (two combatants with shields and swords). A cross-legged figure raising a cup sits on the heart-shaped base of the handle.

The iconography reflects the chivalric tradition of the Seljuqs and other Turks but also echoes Persian notions of ideal kingship, for which courage, horsemanship, and martial skill are requisite.⁶ Further expressive of kingship are the paired themes of *bazm* and *razm*, as celebrated in the Persian epic the *Shahnama*. During the royal hunt the king would showcase his prowess (*razm*) and afterward achieve full

contentment by feasting (*bazm*).⁷ Royalty is further emphasized by the enthroned figure on the back of the neck. He sits cross-legged holding a cup in front of his chest, flanked by birds of prey and two falconers.

The several animated benedictory inscriptions aim to protect the anonymous owner and assure a life of glory, prosperity, and divine blessing. The predominant theme of horsemanship and the rare falconer in repoussé suggest that this extraordinary vessel was a special commission for a person of high rank who perhaps was a proficient rider, hunter, and warrior. **DB**

Relief with Two Fighting Horsemen

Iran, 12th–13th century

Stucco; carved, polychrome-painted

43 1/8 × 19 3/4 in. (109.5 × 50.2 cm)

Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection (54.29)

Inscribed in Persian in cursive, possibly reading:

چرخ باد مسعود دولت (?)

May the fortunes of power (always) turn (?).

The combat theme illustrated on this stucco panel, together with both the peacocks in the central medallion and the inscription, would have been an appropriate embellishment for a palace or pavilion of the ruling elite of the Seljuq and post-Seljuq periods, most likely in Iran.¹ Battling or jousting horsemen appear infrequently among the countless riders depicted in ceramics and metalwork, who are most often seen engaged in the hunt,² but they were a known motif in architecture, as demonstrated by a slightly earlier marble bas-relief from Ghazni (fig. 65). The latter, although with more archaic features and closer to Central Asia in its iconography—the flying gallop of the horses; belts with pendants instead of lamellar armor; swords instead of spears³—also includes a peacock and garden-like vegetation, both evocative of Paradise.

These same paradisiacal elements are augmented in cat. 74 by the inscribed poem, which furthers the stateliness conveyed by the main theme of combat.⁴ The importance of a prince's prowess in warfare was deeply rooted in the cultural traditions of both the newly established Turkish Seljuq leadership and their regional subjects, who associated martial skill with the *razm* of Persian epic. *Razm* was always

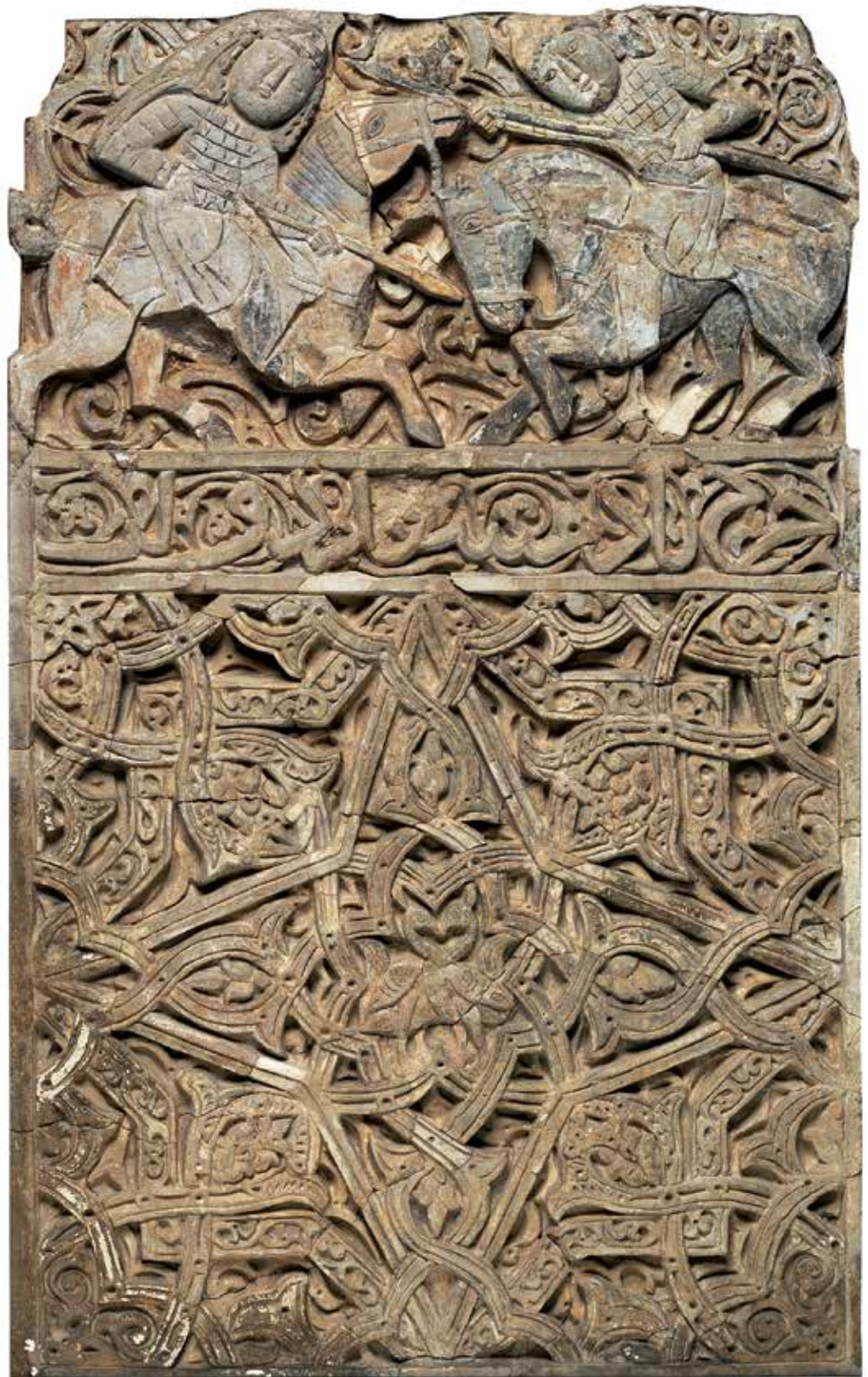


Fig. 65. Bas-relief of two battling horsemen. Ghazni, 11th–12th century. Marble; carved, 18 1/8 × 33 1/2 in. (46 × 85 cm). David Collection, Copenhagen (23/1989)

paired with *bazm*, or the art of pursuing convivial and intellectual gatherings, and both the visual language and the poetry of the era replicated these values. A clear example is a verse by the eleventh-century court poet Mu'izzi, who wrote, in Persian, in praise of the Turks, the ethnic group to whom his patrons belonged: "They [the Turks] are like pheasants

when they hold the wine cup; they are like / lions when they hold the sword and spear . . . / In battle they burn more fiercely than the fires of hell: they are fitter / for the *majlis* than the *houris* of Paradise."⁵ **MR**

75

Saber Blade

Iran, 11th–12th century

Watered steel

L. 30⁷/₈ in. (78.4 cm)

Furusiyya Art Foundation (R-249)

Inscribed in Arabic in *naskhi*:

والدولة والسعادة و الأقبال و العز

Might, auspicious fate, good fortune, and felicity.

This slightly curved blade,¹ single-edged until above its point, represents an evolution from the straight sword of the earliest Islamic centuries to the saber. Fighters on horseback used the latter as a slashing weapon.² Thus, expertise in its use was closely aligned with the formal training of the cavalry called *furusiyya*. A detail that reflects design improvements is the cuff below the quillon to protect the bearer's fingers. Below the top, dull edge of the blade on one side are two friezes of chasing animals; the first, on the cuff, shows a large dog chasing a hare and is separated from the other band by a gutter with a central ridge. The second band includes a benedictory inscription in Arabic written upside down in *naskhi* and a longer animal frieze with dogs, a tiger, and a winged quadruped pursuing a hare that faces them. Both this type of inscription and the animal frieze are staples of Seljuq metalwork and not restricted to a particular class of object.³

Along with lances, bows, arrows, and maces, swords were an essential weapon of the Seljuq soldier. Useful both in war and the hunt, they were one of the subjects of *furusiyya* literature, treatises written in the early Abbasid centuries and recycled and expanded under the Mamluks. The ninth-century author Ibn Akhi Hizam Muhammad b. Ya'qub's treatises on *furusiyya* formed the basis of many subsequent texts devoted to horsemanship, hippology, and blacksmithing, as well as lance and sword techniques on horseback, arms, archery, and polo.⁴ Beyond functioning as a training manual for cavalry in medieval Middle Eastern armies, mostly composed of Turkish slaves, *furusiyya* came to incorporate chivalric ideals of the horseman as noble, brave, and gallant, courtly paradigms that find expression in many of the arts of the Seljuqs. **SRC**



76

Dagger

Greater Syria, excavated in Israel, 12th–13th century

Blade: steel; hilt and scabbard: silver; engraved, inlaid with niello

L. 15¼ in. (38.8 cm)

Furusiyya Art Foundation (R-937)

Inscribed in Arabic in *naskhi* on the scabbard:

العز الدائم والاقبال الزائد

Perpetual glory and increasing good fortune.

The decoration on the hilt and scabbard of this unusual dagger¹ and its design elements combine forms and functions found on weapons of both Christians and Muslims in the eastern Mediterranean. The faceted, slightly everted pommel of the hilt has been likened to crowns found in both Islamic and Christian contexts.² The cruciform fleur-de-lis in lozenges on the pommel and shaft of the hilt derive from European-inspired Crusader examples, while the winged griffin on the opposite side of the pommel appears on both Middle Eastern Christian and Islamic metalwork and other media. Details of the hilt that have been described as Christian, such as the swastika and rosette on the hilt, actually are closely related to motifs on Mosul metalwork of the early thirteenth century.³ The quillon, terminating on either side of the blade in a dragon's head with open mouth, recalls a range of dragons that appear in metal, stone, and painted form in Anatolia, the Jazira, and Sicily.

On the scabbard the uppermost of four bands contains a benedictory inscription in Arabic. The two sections below it contain a dragon slayer on horseback who raises his sword to slash the beast at his horse's feet and a bird of prey on a stag's back. The face and hair of the horseman as well as the "hand of God" in the upper right of this vignette derive from European pictorial sources, primary among them images of Saint George

slaying the dragon, while the bird-and-stag motif is a ubiquitous symbol of domination in Seljuq art from Iran, Anatolia, and the Jazira, as well as on some Crusader objects. The hounds and hare on the chape (the lower section of the scabbard) also appear on the Seljuq saber (cat. 75) as well as innumerable pieces of

Seljuq metalwork. Here and on the saber, the chasing animals evoke the hunt, even though such a luxurious weapon as this dagger may only have been worn, suspended by its five loops from a European-style baldric, or shoulder belt, and not used for slaying men or animals. **SRC**





77

Candlestick with Equestrian Medallions

Anatolia, mid-13th century
 Brass; cast, engraved, incised, inlaid with silver
 H. 8 1/8 in. (20.5 cm); Diam. 7 5/8 in. (19.5 cm)
 David Collection, Copenhagen (2/1963)
 Inscribed in Arabic in *naskhi* on the socket:

السلامة، البقا، الكرامة

Prosperity, perpetuity, and generosity.

On the neck:

العز الدائم والاقبال والسلامة

Perpetual glory, prosperity, and well-being.

On the shoulder:

العز الدائم والاقبال والدولة والسعادة والسلامة والكرامة والعافية
 والراحة والرحمة والنصر على العدا والبقا الدائم لصاحبه

*Perpetual glory, prosperity, dominion, happiness,
 prosperity, generosity, health, rest, mercy, victory
 over enemies, and perpetual life to its owner.*

On the base:

العز الدائم والاقبال والدولة والسعادة والسلامة والكرامة والبقا الدائم
 لصاحبه والراحة والرحمة والعافية والنصر على اعدا العز الدائم والال
 والدولة والسعادة والسلامة والكرامة والبقا الدائم لصاحبه

*Perpetual glory, prosperity, dominion, happiness,
 prosperity, generosity, and perpetual life to its owner.
 Rest, mercy, health, victory over enemies, and
 perpetual life to its owner.*¹

The equestrian imagery on this Anatolian candlestick speaks to the long-standing chivalric tradition of the Seljuqs.² Hunting on horseback was essential on the Eurasian steppe for seasonal pasturage, the procurement of food, and strategic and political purposes, and it helped maintain the battle readiness of warriors.³ With time, hunting and other equestrian activities such as polo and mounted archery became an expression of nobility, bravery, and other courtly values. Since the early Islamic period,

hunting was a royal sport for which considerable financial and logistical resources were needed—to build and maintain hunting grounds, and to train and take care of the animals, both predators and prey.⁴ In addition to the manifold artworks displaying such iconography, the importance of the hunt in Seljuq Anatolia finds further expression in the many sultanic garden estates that were built just outside urban centers and included an enclosed *shikargah*, or game park, a practice inherited from the Seljuqs of Iran. Many of these estates were likely used seasonally, such as the hunting pavilions built by the Rum Seljuqs in the verdant suburbs surrounding Alanya.⁵

The large circular medallions that dominate the body of cat. 77 each contain a nobleman at the hunt. Maneuvering his horse at a galloping but controlled clip, he appears in one scene as a falconer, holding a bird of prey with one hand and the bridle of his horse with the other, while his dog (a saluki or greyhound) trots underfoot. Next, he is a dragon slayer, aided by a hunting cheetah that sits on the rump of his horse, and in the third scene he attacks a lion. To hunt alongside birds of prey, dogs, and cheetahs was among the favored activities of Seljuq rulers, as was the royal lion hunt,⁶ and it is not surprising to see such imagery in both the eastern and western Seljuq realms. However, the motif of the dragon slayer, in particular the rendering of the beast with a tail folded in a pretzel-like knot, is specific to Anatolia and the Jazira, where it appears in all media associated with the ruling elite.

Prominent examples include a molded stucco relief from the Konya Köşk (see cats. 20a–g); a monumental steel mirror inlaid in silver and gold, now in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Istanbul (fig. 66); and a painted folio from the *Daqa'iq al-haqa'iq* (cat. 130).⁷ Examples appearing on coins and seals confirm that the motif was considered a symbol of power and of the authority of certain Rum Seljuq rulers.⁸ Visually the theme relates to Christian (Armenian, Georgian, and Byzantine) models of a saint or holy warrior, George and Theodore foremost among them, whose miraculous victory over the dragon has apotropaic and magical significance. However, it also has roots in Byzantine, Arabic, Persian, and Turkic epic and



Fig. 66. Mirror. Probably Anatolia, early to mid-13th century. Steel; inlaid with gold, H. 16¼ in. (41.3 cm); Diam. 8¼ in. (20.9 cm). Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Istanbul (2/1792)

popular literature, such as the Persian *Shahnama*, the Byzantine *Digenis Akritis*, and the Turkish Anatolian *Battalnama* and *Danishmendnama*. The symbolic meaning of the holy and heroic dragon slayer was clearly understood by the many cultures that populated Seljuq Anatolia, where it was incorporated into the courtly cycle to represent princely authority, triumph, privilege, and, possibly, protection. That it appears on this candlestick alongside images of sporting activities and scenes (in six smaller cartouches) of music, dancing, and wine drinking indicates that the dragon hunt was seen as one of many royal pastimes. **DB**



78

Dish with Polo Player

Iran, probably Kashan, A.H. 604/A.D. 1208

Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
Diam. 13 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (35.2 cm)

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Purchased with
the Assistance of the National Art Collections Fund
and the Bryan Bequest (C.51-1952)

Inscribed in Persian in cursive, on the interior, inner band:

ای دل ز طرب هیچ نشان می بینی/وز دیده بجز کهر فشان می بینی //
در آرزوی دمی خوشم تا که زیم/مردم همه اینند که تو شان می بینی
*Oh heart, do you see any sign of joy [in me]?/Do you see anything but tears (jewels) in my eyes?/I am hoping for a happy moment while I am still alive./All people are what they are.*¹

ای دل ز طرب چرات بیگانگیست/مردن ز غم عشق نمردانگیست //
با این همه صبر این چه رسوا شدنست /کو آن همه عقل این چه دیوانگیست

*Oh heart, why are you estranged from joy?/Dying of the sorrow of love is not courageous./With all this patience, why are you being dishonored?/Where is all your wisdom—why such madness?*²

On the interior, outer band:

زان حین که با تو عازم آید گفتن /آزرده چنانک که چه شاید گفتن //
من روح گدازم و تو . . . عشوه دهی /گر می رود از ماست بیاید گفتن
*From the time you told me you were leaving, I have been so sad that I don't know what to say. //My soul is melting and you try to tantalize me?/ Even if my soul dies, I must say this.*³

هر کبری که بر سر شتر می کردم /در پای شتر ز دیده تر می کردم //
چاه که کاروان تهی کرد ز آب /من باز ز آب دیده پر می کردم
*Any tears I shed while riding a camel/Will shed like pearls on its hoofs;/ Any well that the caravan empties of water, I will fill with my tears.*⁴

And continuing in Arabic:

في رجب سنة اربع و ستمائة

On Rajab of the year 604.

In Persian in cursive on the exterior:

کیرم که صبا زلف تو در تاب کشد/لعل تو ز جام می ناب کشد //
زنگی بچه بر کنار گلزار تو کیست/کز چاه زنندان تو می آب کشد
I take it that the wind is blowing your tresses, /That your ruby [lips] are stained with the pure wine. //What is the small black mole on your face / That draws water from the well of your chin (dimple)?

عادت نبود مرا که از روی هوس /درد دل خویشتن بگویم با کس //
با این همه یک سخن بخواهم گفتن /در عشق تو مردم بغیرادم رس //
It has not been my habit, where lust is concerned, /To speak of pain in my heart to anyone. /Despite this, I wish to say one thing /I have died for your love; [Respond to my cry for help!]

This dish, dated A.H. 604/A.D. 1208, is a masterful example of the sophisticated luster ceramics produced, likely in Kashan, at the end of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.⁵ It depicts a horseman during a polo match, his hand holding a bent stick as a mallet, his wrist turned as if to launch a stroke. Though seemingly a motionless moment, subtle details imbue the scene with the anticipation of the action to come—the concentration of the player as he gazes out of the frame toward the ball; the horse stamping the ground with its front hooves, awaiting a command from its master. The

dense background of vegetation, birds, and incised whirls complements the horseman's richly festooned garment with an inscribed *tiraz* band and ornate boots, as well as the horse's spotted coat and opulent trappings.

Images of polo players, either individually or in groups, began appearing in Iran in the twelfth century,⁶ while polo matches became a common subject in manuscript paintings from the fourteenth century onward. Polo, generally played on horseback, was a Persian invention that migrated west in the early Islamic period. Large *maydans*, or plazas, usually with adjacent stables and spectators' lodges, at the Abbasid palaces of Jawsaq al-Khaqani, Ja'fariyya, and Balkuwara in Samarra have been tentatively identified as polo grounds,⁷ although they might also have served for equitation exercises of the *furusiyya*. In the literature, polo is often referred to in connection with royals and their retinue; especially noteworthy is a remarkable match played by court women and the king in Nizami's *Khusraw and Shirin*.⁸ Indeed, the high costs of polo rendered it a pastime for only the wealthiest, while the skills it required matched many of the attributes expected of a prince.

The dish is extensively inscribed with several poems in Persian. While the link between poetic texts and images is usually more an evocation of the courtly milieu than a direct link, it has been suggested that these verses may establish the polo player as an unattainable object of desire. **MR**



79

Fragmentary Box with Polo Players

Jazira, probably Mosul, early 13th century
 Brass; engraved, incised, inlaid with silver and copper
 H. 2⁷/₈ in. (7.2 cm); Diam. 4 in. (10.1 cm)
 Département des Arts de l'Islam, Musée du Louvre,
 Paris (OA 3446)

Inscribed in Arabic, in *naskhi* on the upper band and in *kufic* on the lower band:

العز الدائم و الاقبال الزائد الدولة الباقية والسلامة الشاملة النعمة
 السابغة و الكرامة لسعادة [...] الكاملة و البقدارة لنا // العز
 الدائم و الاقبال او اليمن [...] و السلامة و الكرامة (?) لصاحبه

Perpetual glory and increasing prosperity. Wise dominion and complete prosperity [...] Enduring prosperity and generosity. Happiness [...] complete [...] and mighty to us. // Perpetual glory, prosperity, and good luck [...] prosperity and generosity(?) to its owner.¹

This fragmentary box depicts one of the most gallant pastimes of the Seljuq ruling elite. Originally a Persian game, polo was introduced to Muslim courts in the early Islamic period and was probably practiced in specific game parks.²

Polo, together with hunting and archery, was a leisure activity that fulfilled the aspirational ideals of kingship, most notably nobility and bravery.³ In the context of the Seljuq chivalric tradition, such equestrian sports were seen as forms of military training at times of peace.⁴

On the body of the box, between two bands of benedictory inscriptions, eight figures hold the bridles of their galloping horses with one hand and their polo mallets—short sticks with a convex end known as *čawgan*—in the other as they give full chase after the ball. While depictions of individual polo players are common in Anatolia and Iran, groups of players engaged in a match were less so during Seljuq times, except for Jaziro-Syrian inlaid metalwork.⁵ The dynamism of the action is further enlivened by the polychrome accents of copper and silver inlay. The use of these metals and the style of the figures recall the Khurasani

tradition of inlaid metalwork, which can be seen in several early works of the al-Mawsili school and were probably made in Mosul.⁶ The closest comparison is with a ewer signed by Ibrahim b. Mawaliya (early 13th century) in the Musée du Louvre, Paris, on the lower body of which appears a similar series of polychrome polo players. Cat. 79 was decorated either by the same artist or in the same workshop.⁷

Although this object is fragmentary, the pierced openings on two sides disrupting the upper inscription band indicate that there was once a lid with an attachment mechanism similar to that of cat. 168b.⁸ The box may have been intended to contain soap, aromatics, or other luxury items, or it may have held an inkwell. Whatever its purpose, its sophisticated inlay work and noble iconography suggest that this box was a symbol of the wealth and status of a sovereign or court official. **DB**

80

Fragment of a Base Depicting a Game of Backgammon

Excavated at Rayy, late 12th–13th century
Stonepaste; glazed, in-glaze- and overglaze-painted
Diam. approx. 3 1/8 in. (8 cm)
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, University Museum–
M.F.A. Persian Expedition (39.380)



81

Die

Excavated at Rayy (RG3448), 11th–12th century
Bone; carved
3/8 x 3/8 x 3/8 in. (1 x 1 x 1 cm)
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology
and Anthropology, Philadelphia (37-11-208)

82

Die

Excavated at Rayy (RH6049), 11th–12th century
Wood; carved
7/8 x 7/8 x 7/8 in. (2 x 2 x 2 cm)
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology
and Anthropology, Philadelphia (37-11-210)



This fragment of a base from a ceramic bowl (cat. 80) contains the image of a backgammon board and the two players seated on either side of it. The twelve sections on each player's side of the board represent the months of the year, while the thirty pieces that were moved around the board symbolize the days of the month.¹ The red stripes above and below the board appear to be a tree trunk and connect to the leafy branches at the top of the fragment. Despite the suggestion that the backgammon board is lying on or attached to the trunk, this natural detail implies that the game was being played outdoors in a garden.

The other necessary accoutrements for backgammon are dice. The smaller bone die (cat. 81) has drilled roundels with holes in the center in the arrangement that is standard today, representing a number from one to six on

each side. The wood die (cat. 82) is atypical, since it is drilled with concentric circles forming a number, such as four, on one side and a central circle surrounded by nine smaller circles on another. Possibly this configuration was intended to signify the planets orbiting the earth and would have included the two pseudo-planets, Nawbahr and al-Jawzahr. The

word for backgammon, *nard*, also signified any kind of dice game, so the wood die may have been used for such a pastime, played without a board. While some religious authorities denounced backgammon and other dice games, this game of chance was praised as superior to chess because it relied only on luck, thus implying greater trust in God. **SRC and RH**



83

Bowl with Bahram Gur and Azada

Iran, probably Kashan, late 12th–early 13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed (opaque monochrome),
 in-glaze- and overglaze-painted, gilded
 H. 3 3/8 in. (8.7 cm); Diam. 8 3/4 in. (22.1 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
 Purchase, Rogers Fund, and Gift of The Schiff
 Foundation, 1957 (57.36.2)

The scene on this bowl represents a famous episode from the *Shahnama*, the Persian epic passed down orally for centuries until preserved in writing by the poet Firdawsi (d. 1020).¹ The story tells of a hunting expedition of Bahram Gur and his concubine Azada, depicted here on the back of his camel. While the prince shows his mastery in archery, Azada plays the harp—an evocation of the paired royal pursuits of *bazm* and *rasm*, or feasting and fighting. Bahram Gur, challenged

by Azada to transform a male gazelle into a female, a female into a male, and to pin together with a single arrow the ear and hoof of another gazelle, is shown succeeding in the third dare, which he accomplishes after throwing a stone onto the ear of the animal, causing it to lift its hoof. The epilogue of the story, in which the camel tramples Azada on Bahram Gur's order after she disparages the prince for his cruel feats, is portrayed at the bottom of the dish.

This episode occurs on several *mina'i* bowls and less frequently in metalwork. The general scheme—Bahram Gur and Azada on camelback—is maintained, while the narrative is depicted with variations. These range from simpler representations of the two lovers before the dare takes place to more complex arrangements such as the one shown here, in

which Bahram Gur's feats and Azada's tragic demise are both included.² Such variations attest to the popularity of the story, intelligible to the viewer with even the sparsest of iconographic clues, as well as to the creativity of the craftsman.³ A demand for personalization has also been suggested.⁴ In any case, *mina'i* bowls with narrative and literary scenes tend to be of higher quality than those bearing paintings of other subjects, a difference that speaks to a differentiated market (for an archaeological example, see cat. 58). The presence of scenes from the *Shahnama* in both royal and non-elite contexts reveals the popularity and diffusion of these epic tales, in both their written and oral tellings, and suggests the adaptability of ubiquitous royal iconography.⁵ **MR**



Folios from a *Shahnama* (Book of Kings)

Iran or Anatolia, dated A.H. 30 Muharram 614/
A.D. May 9, 1217
Ink on white glossy Persian paper
18 7/8 × 12 5/8 in. (48 × 32.1 cm)
Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence
(MS Magl. Cl.III.24; fols. 125v–126r)

The *Shahnama*, or Persian book of kings, was completed by Abu-l-Qasim Firdawsi in A.D. 1010 and presented to his patron Mahmud of Ghazni. Although no eleventh-century recension survives, three manuscripts from the thirteenth century attest to the popularity of the epic poem that charts the history of Iran from prehistory to the Arab conquest in A.H. 651.¹ No illustrated versions are known before the early fourteenth century. The earliest *Shahnama*, from which this bifolio (125v–126r)

comes, dates to 1217. Composed of 265 folios, it is thought to have been produced for a patron in Anatolia at one of the centers of the Rum Seljuqs.² A partial colophon on folio 264v names Akhi Muhammad b. Akhi, the presumed scribe whose title, “Akhi,” refers to “leaders of associations of young men organized as guilds in Anatolia in the 13th–14th centuries, who adopted the ideals of the *futuwwa* . . . and were recruited mainly among the craftsmen.”³

Since the atabegs and local leaders in Anatolia and the Jazira were Turks, Arabs, Kurds, and Armenians, not Iranians, their interest in Firdawsi’s text is noteworthy. It may reflect the penchant of these notables for literature that served as a guide to appropriate behavior for rulers, in the same way that “mirrors for princes” such as the *Kalila and Dimna*

tales guided the powerful and their offspring down the right path. Moreover, the Rum Seljuqs, many of whom were named after kings in the *Shahnama*, may have wished to emulate Mahmud of Ghazna, the Central Asian Turk under whose patronage the *Shahnama* was composed.⁴ Following a pattern established at the courts of the Great Seljuqs, the Rum Seljuqs employed poets and scientists whose language was Persian and whose brilliance reflected on their patrons. The inclusion of rectangular cartouches enclosing honorifics is a highly unusual feature, attributable to the early date of the manuscript before the system of rubrics and chapter headings became codified in *Shahnama* production.⁵ **src**

Ewer

Maker: Mahmud b. Muhammad al-Harawi

Khurasan, Herat, A.H. Sha'ban 577/

A.D. December 10, 1181–January 7, 1182

Brass; raised, repoussé, engraved, inlaid with copper and silver

H. 15¼ in. (38.6 cm)

Georgian National Museum, Simon Janashia

Museum of Georgia, Tbilisi (19-2008:32)

Inscribed on the body, in Arabic in *kufic*:

البركة والدولة والباقية والبر والبركة والدولة واليمن [الر؟] والبركة والدولة
Blessing, dominion, lasting good luck, devotion, blessing, dominion, good luck, [al-r. . ?], blessing and dominion.

In Persian in *naskhi*:

آفتابه چون دهر زیبا که مراست/مانند این دهر امروز کراست //
 هرکس که ورا بدید گفت نیک زبیاست/همتاش ندید کس که این بی
 همتاست // آفتابه ببین کی روح ازین بفراید /و این آب حیاتست کی زو
 می آید // هر آب کی زو بدست می برآید/هر ساعت راحت دیگر بنماید //
 آفتابه ببین کین همه کس بستاید/در خدمت چون تو مهتران آبی ساید //
 هر دیده بدیدی کی می بکشاید/نتواند گفت هیچ کی به زین [آید] // این
 جامه آب در هراتش (هر آتش؟) سازند/مانند این دهر کی پردازند //
 رحمت بادا بر آن کس کی چنین سازد/سیم او [زر بخشد او] چنین
 پردازد // هفت اختر چرخ اگر چه سرافرازند/انکس کی چنین سازد با
 او سازد // بختش آید بدوستی بنوازد/محبت بر نمود بدشمنش در
 سازد // العمل النقش محمود بن محمد الهروی/بتاریخ شعبان سنة سبع
 و سبعین و خمسمائة

My ewer is the most beautiful ewer of all time / Who in this world has anything like this today? / Everyone who has seen it has said it is very beautiful / No one has seen its equal, for it is unparalleled // Look at the ewer from which spirit is born / It is the water of life that flows from it / Any stream that comes from it into the hand / Creates a new pleasure every moment // Look at the ewer that is praised by everyone / It would be worthy of service to an honored person like you / Every eye that sees it opens wide / And says that nothing could be better than this // This water vessel is made in Herat' / Who else could produce anything like it (in the world)? / Although the seven stars (the Pleiades) of the celestial sphere lift their heads high, / May they look favorably upon him who produces such a ewer // Mercy be on him who makes such a ewer / May he be given silver and gold for making it / May good fortune come to him and caress him in friendship / May affliction be removed and given to his enemies.

This vessel represents the epitome of inlaid metalwork from Khurasan, a region known for its rich metal and mineral resources.

Throughout the twelfth century and until about 1220, the metalwork industry thrived in Herat, an important urban trading center that flourished under the Ghurids in the twelfth century, but which was variably contested by other dynasties including the Ghaznavids, the Great Seljuqs, and the Khwarazm Shahs. Herat became renowned for the quality of its inlaid metal, a business controlled by the



merchant class. Its metalwares were sold and exported to a new class of learned, bourgeois customers that included leading religious and political authorities, unlike in the western part of the Seljuq domain, where inlaid-metal objects were designated for the nobility and the ruling elite.²

This ewer, with an inscription specifying that it was made in Herat during Sha'ban 577

(between December 10, 1181, and January 7, 1182), and the iconic Bobrinski bucket, dated 1163, in the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (CA-12687), are the only two inlaid-metal objects with inscriptions confirming their manufacture in Herat. Together they form the basis of the claim that the city was the primary production center in the eastern Islamic provinces, for the attribution of many

other inlaid-metal objects to medieval Herat has been established by means of stylistic and epigraphic comparison to the two vessels.³

The ewer is typical of the Khurasani type, which occurs in both metal and ceramic and consists of a tall fluted body with or without a rim, a flaring foot, a flat shoulder, and a cylindrical neck with a high beaklike spout.⁴ Another characteristic of this school of metalwork is the application of the repoussé technique to animal and figural motifs. On such ewers, including the present example, one commonly finds a lion on each side of the neck—the body seen in profile; the head, frontally—and another, recumbent lion either on the top or at the edge of the spout. This vessel is, however, distinctive for the long Persian poem inscribed on alternate ribs, praising its beauty and its maker, on whom the seven planets shall look favorably.⁵ The poetry also alludes to the practical function for which the vessel was created, to convey water for washing hands. In a broader context, the depictions of real and fantastic animals and the planets may represent the material and spiritual worlds. The iconography and inscriptions increase the protective and talismanic properties this vessel aims to provide to both maker and owner and emphasizes the importance of such symbolism on household objects of the wealthy urban society of medieval Khurasan. **DB**



86

“Al-Harith Recognizes Abu Zayd in a Library in Basra,” from a *Maqamat* of al-Hariri

Northern Jazira, Diyar Bakr, mid-13th century
Ink, gold, and opaque watercolor on paper
12⁵/₈ × 8¹/₂ in. (32 × 21.5 cm)
Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
(MS Arabe 3929; fol. 2v)

The *Maqamat* (sessions, assemblies) of Abu Muhammad al-Qasim b. ‘Ali al-Hariri al-Basri, known as al-Hariri (1054–1122), is a book of fifty parts written in rhyming Arabic prose. Its primary device is the interaction of al-Harith, a traveling salesman who mixes with learned company wherever he goes, and Abu Zayd al-Sarujī, a scruffy rogue whose linguistic bravura outshines the wordplay of scholars and aristocrats. Al-Hariri, who lived in Basra, completed the book about 1108 and dedicated it to a vizier of the Abbasid caliph al-Mustarshid. Thanks to the virtuosity and complexity of its language as well as the rise in the use of

paper, the *Maqamat* enjoyed great popularity in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries and was widely disseminated across the Arabic-speaking world. Yet of the hundreds of *Maqamat* manuscripts from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, only thirteen have illustrations.¹

Since the opening folios and first *maqamah* of this manuscript are missing, the first illustration accompanies the second *maqamah*. It represents al-Harith in a library in Basra, surrounded by men discussing books, when an old man in ragged clothes enters the building. The old man starts a discussion with one of the men about what he is reading and then responds by embellishing the language he has just heard. Eventually, after a few more linguistic tours de force, al-Harith, shown gesturing toward the old man, recognizes Abu Zayd, but before he can greet him, the rogue has vanished.

Because the success of al-Hariri’s *Maqamat* rested on its clever language, an image such as cat. 86 is more allusive than illustrative. Nonetheless, it depicts in simplified form the necessary components of a library: books on shelves and in the hands of readers within a token architectural setting. The figures in their fine robes with gold *tiraz* bands represent the affluent, educated, literature-loving class of residents of medieval Iraq, Syria, and the Jazira. On the basis of another painting from this manuscript with images of tombstones reminiscent in form of those in northern Iraqi cemeteries, that region has been suggested as the source of this *Maqamat*.² However, more recent scholarship has pointed to the Artuqid court in Diyar Bakr on the basis of the silhouetting of the figures, absence of marginal rulings, unpainted ground, and a variant of the *sharbush*, or furred Turkish cap, worn by the second figure from the left.³ **SRC**

87

Bowl with Musicians in a Garden

Iran, late 12th–early 13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
 H. 3 1/2 in. (8.9 cm); Diam. 8 3/8 in. (21.3 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
 H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Horace
 Havemeyer, 1956 (56.185.13)
 Inscribed, in Arabic in knotted *kufic* on the interior rim:
 السعادة

Happiness.
 In Persian, in decorative *kufic* on the interior:
 هر جهان تنگ آید باید که ز ناچنس و خش ننگ آید //
 با هر کهر لب کرچه هم رنگ آید فریاد بر آورد چون سنگ آید
*If the world is diminished (in any way) the malicious
 and the base must be disgraced // Lips are as red as
 jewels (rubies) that will cry if they encounter a stone.*
 In *naskhi* on the exterior:
 ای دوست مجوی کر خردمندی خاصیت رازیانه از زیره // از مردم سغله
 مردمی ناید / به دبه نفت روغن شیرده (؟)
*Oh friend, be wise—do not seek the qualities of fennel
 in cumin // Do not expect civility from base people / it is
 like putting oil in a pit of [. . .] (untranslatable verses).*



88

Bowl with Lute Player and Audience

Iran, late 12th–early 13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in opaque turquoise, in-glaze-
 and overglaze-painted, gilded
 H. 3 1/2 in. (8.9 cm); Diam. 7 3/4 in. (19.7 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Henry G.
 Leberthon Collection, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. A. Wallace
 Chauncey, 1957 (57.61.16)
 Inscribed, in Arabic in *kufic* on the interior: Benedictions.
 In Persian in cursive on the exterior: Undecipherable;
 the last three words are “prevailing help to the owner.”
 In *naskhi* on the exterior:

[. . .] هر دم همه ساله می دود در تک و تاز / یک چند بناخوشی // جهد
 مرگ / کوتاه کند همه حدیثان (؟) دراز [. . .]
 [. . .] *Every moment, all year he runs / Even in
 ill-health // Against death / (that) cuts all long stories
 short [. . .]*
 Continuing in Arabic:
 عز دائم و الاقبال الزائد النصر الغالب لصاحبه
*Everlasting glory, good fortune, and conquering victory
 to its owner.*



Cat. 87, two views

These bowls represent different aspects of a theme redolent of the lives of the elite: musical entertainment and feasting. The musicians on the luster bowl (cat. 87), a lute player and most likely a singer, are depicted outdoors; the checkerboard cypresses and long dotted branches at their sides, as well as the small canopy and flying bird above their heads, symbolize the gardens and pavilions where most of these activities would have taken place in the warmer months. A larger gathering is

depicted on the *mina'i* bowl (cat. 88), where ten people, all but one seated, encircle the lute player, perhaps representing his audience or a group of singers.¹ The raised bowls full of fruit further suggest the festive nature of the event. The presence in both cases of poetic inscriptions points to the close relation between music and poetry, which was often recited at social gatherings and *majalis* (see cats. 40, 41).
 The instruments depicted are variations of the lute. The one in cat. 87, crafted from one



Cat. 88

graduated piece of wood, is a *barbat*, the most commonly seen variant in Islamic art, while that in cat. 88 is an *'ud*, of which the sound box and neck are made separately.² Despite religious proscriptions, music was the subject of many Arabic texts, from those continuing the Late Antique philosophical exploration of the physical properties and effects of sound to those on musical theory and the mystical aspects of listening to music.³ Musicians could be male or female; those depicted on cat. 88 are men, while those in cat. 87 are women, as identified by the drop-shaped diadems on their headdresses and their henna tattoos.⁴ The latter, medallions or flowers on the back of the singer's hand and possibly on the arm of the lute player, was a largely female

cosmetic practice, attested in the medieval period in both poetry and the visual arts (see, for example, the woman in cat. 22).⁵

In both the intimate garden scene and the large musical assembly, the sumptuous clothes and jewels evoke a luxurious setting. Although such entertainments would have taken place among persons of high rank and social and cultural elites, these scenes may have been intended specifically to depict a courtly setting, and indeed, musicians and enthroned figures often appear together.⁶ Their presence on sophisticated yet utilitarian objects such as these bowls, paired with the blessings added in the inscriptions, speak to the symbolic beneficence of courtly and princely life in the visual language of the period. **MR**

Figurine of a Lute Player

Iran, late 11th–13th century
 Earthenware; molded, iron-rich slip
 13 × 6 × 1 in. (33 × 15.2 × 2.6 cm)
 Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto
 (958.118.2)

This figurine belongs to a group of similar objects excavated at several sites, including Susa and Gurgan, in Iran, and Wasit, in modern Iraq.¹ They are all made of molded earthenware and are unglazed but sometimes show the addition of modeled parts, such as the arms.² Scholars have suggested that they may be toys for children, decorative objects, or even elements added to the architectural decoration of buildings. At Wasit about four hundred such figurines were found together in a pottery workshop,³ which speaks to fabrication in large numbers and accessibility far beyond an elite group of customers.

The variety of personages from the Wasit group helps explain the cultural context in which such objects were made. Many figurines wear heavily ornamented headdresses, a



Fig. 67. Lute player. Anatolia, first half of the 13th century. Marble; carved, 14¹/₈ × 7⁷/₈ in. (36 × 20 cm). Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (I.7168)

seeming anomaly explained by their prevalent engagement in convivial activities (fig. 67). The latter are reminiscent of the feasts and banquets held at the courts of the Seljuqs and local rulers, where attendants and guards wore luxurious gear. Musicians are widely represented, some playing flutes, others beating drums. Some figurines hold a jug and a round basin, as though to serve food and drink or to wash guests' hands. Others are depicted with both hands raised, their long pointed sleeves hanging down, as in cat. 89. Although the latter gesture is often ascribed by scholars to

orantes, it most likely signals dancing, which complements the actions of the other personages.⁴ Several figurines are shown holding a smaller doll or baby.

These objects may be linked to the similarly puzzling small-scale models of houses that often feature musicians, cupbearers, and figures with both arms raised (cats. 17, 18, 43). The models have been associated with celebrations related to Nawruz or to marriages, during which they may have been presented as auspicious gifts. It is tempting to envisage a common framework for the earthenware figurines.⁵ **MR**



90

Display Dish with Pairs of Musicians in Medallions

Jazira, probably Mosul, ca. mid-13th century
 Brass, bronze; engraved, inlaid with silver
 H. 2³/₈ in. (6 cm); Diam. 14¹/₈ in. (36 cm)
 Keir Collection, on long-term loan by Ranros Universal
 S.A. to the Dallas Museum of Art (K.1.2014.77)

91

Six-pointed Star Tile Ensemble with Lute Player

Anatolia, Konya, ca. 1160s–70s
 Stonepaste; in-glaze- and overglaze-painted, gilded
 Diam. 4¹/₂ in. (11.3 cm)
 Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu
 Berlin (I.936a–f)

Music was associated with royalty in the Islamic world, as it represented the sensuous pleasures of the earthly paradise that rulers tried to evoke at their courts. Beginning in the early Islamic period, music played a key role at feasts, in religious and ceremonial processions, and in other aspects of courtly life, including warfare and the hunt.¹ Cats. 90 and 91 depict various types of musicians in ways that allude to their social importance while describing the range of music performed and

instruments used at the courts of the Seljuq successor states.

The sole inscription on cat. 90, in pseudo-*naskhi* script on the rim, does not provide a date of manufacture, but the technique and the style of the figural and vegetal repertoire tie this dish to the al-Mawsili school of inlaid metalwork, which flourished in Mosul under Badr al-Din Lu'lu' in the second quarter of the thirteenth century.² The interlacing sphinxes at the dish's center recall two of the five brasses bearing the names of Badr al-Din, particularly one tray (cat. 12b) that also shares with cat. 90 the same griffin motif. The ducklike birds in the *waq-waq* foliage compare with those in other al-Mawsili brasses (for instance, the Homberg ewer, cat. 168a), while the circular medallions below the rim enclosing pairs of seated musicians relate to similar pairings of musicians on the Blacas ewer (cat. 15).³

Although the figures are generalized, the instruments they play are individuated. The flute (probably a *nay*) and the tambourine appear together three times, alternating with figural groupings that pair a harpist with a tambourine player, another tambourine player with a figure who holds a shaker, and a second shaker player with a person raising a cup to his lips. This reference to drinking together with the fruit plates, treelike branches, and *tazza*-type vessels evoke the festive garden settings where, during the warmer months, musicians customarily performed for the ruler and his feasting guests. One can therefore see how this large dish was itself representative of the luxurious household of which it formed part, used by its elite owners to display fruits or other nonadhesive foodstuffs during festive events.

The fragmentary star tile (cat. 91) depicts a lute player. This and similar tile ensembles

once formed part of larger interlacing compositions of stars and polygons that embellished the walls of the Konya Köşk, a palatial monument built by the Rum Seljuqs (fig. 45).⁴ Decorated in *mina'i* and gold, these ensembles resemble the luxury ceramic vessels developed at Kashan.⁵ The musician's facial features and hair, the overall palette, and the vegetal decoration based on a stylized split-palmette are stylistically faithful to the Iranian tradition. The two treelike elements with blue and red leaves belong to a more widespread aesthetic and allude to the gardens in which courtly festivities with musical entertainments took place.⁶

In keeping with the overall composition, the musician and instrument are drawn with a few dark outlines in a simplified manner, rendering it difficult to distinguish specifics, such as the type of lute being played, the most common variants being the *barbat* and the *'ud*.⁷ Of ancient origin, the lute has remained among the most important musical instruments in the Islamic world, as depictions in a range of media confirm.

In both objects, the musicians' genders are questionable. While both male and females performed at court, pictorial and historical sources confirm that during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, female slave musicians became particularly famous and performed at the Artuqid and Zangid courts in the Jazira.⁸ Unlike in other examples, none of the distinctively female elements are in evidence, among them a drop-shaped diadem on the headdress or henna tattoos on the hands, arms, and face (see cat. 87). Women might also be distinguished by their veils, but as female musicians and dancers were courtesans and/or slaves, they were not required to cover themselves, which may explain why depictions of veiled musicians are uncommon.⁹ **DB**





92

Candlestick with Dancers

Anatolia, 13th–early 14th century
 Brass; engraved, incised, inlaid with silver
 H. 8¼ in. (21 cm)

Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia, Rome
 Inscribed in Arabic with benedictory inscriptions that are difficult to read. Bands of cursive on the exterior repeat words of blessing, such as *العز الدائم* (“perpetual glory”).¹

From the early Islamic period, dancing to musical accompaniment represented an important part of courtly entertainment.² In Anatolia and other regions controlled by the Seljuq successor states, individual dancers characteristically are depicted with long sleeves and appear together with musicians.³ The group dance in

evidence on a small, coherent assemblage of Anatolian candlesticks, of which cat. 92 forms part, seems to be less common outside Seljuq art.⁴

The dancing scenes on these candlesticks usually comprise three or more rows of three to five standing figures holding hands,⁵ alternating with three larger, circular medallions that enclose a rider in action. The composition compares with a frontispiece of the *Kitab al-aghani* (1217–19) commissioned for Badr al-Din Lu’lu’ in Mosul, in which five women dance to the rhythms created by the musicians seated around them. Some of them step on a *noria* (waterwheel), which turns in

a river brimming with ducks and fish, thereby referencing the importance of dance and music at Badr al-Din’s court while evoking the lushness and abundance of the Jazira and Syria.⁶

Both the Anatolian candlesticks and Jaziran manuscript painting might trace their source to a group of molded stonepaste vessels (late 11th–12th century) from Iran. Common to all are a chain of dancers who hold hands with their arms crossed. However, the figures rendered in stonepaste or in paint have variably positioned legs to convey motion and/or different dance steps. That the poses in the present example and the other Anatolian candlesticks are simpler is likely owing to the capabilities of the medium: the rendering of movement and expression is significantly more difficult in inlaid metal than it is in ceramic or paint. Although scenes of group dances in medieval Iranian ceramics have been interpreted as the *dastaband*, a Zoroastrian ritual dance, their occasional juxtaposition with chasing quadrupeds (e.g., cat. 93), as well as the context provided by written sources, confirms their intended evocation of courtly life.⁷

The Anatolian candlesticks show dancers alternating with riders representative of various royal pastimes—in this example, a polo player, a falconer, and, exceptionally, a dragon slayer performing the Parthian shot. Noble horsemen were a key motif of the courtly cycle, which together with the luxurious medium and references to dancing further confirm this candlestick’s use at court, no doubt to illuminate a banqueting table. **DB**

Ewer with Dancers

Iran, late 11th–12th century

Stonepaste; molded, glazed in transparent turquoise

H. 9 in. (23 cm); Diam. 6¾ in. (17 cm)

Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale "Giuseppe Tucci,"
Rome (4863/5142)

The choral dance displayed on this ewer is not uncommon in Seljuq molded stonepaste wares of this type; at least fourteen other ewers, vases, and bottles are known whose bodies were made in the same or similar molds.¹ They all show standing figures holding hands in a double chain, with their legs variably displayed to convey motion and different dance steps.² Basing their interpretation of the scene on literary descriptions of group dances, scholars have called the dance *dastaband* (*sic*) and have tentatively associated it with Zoroastrian ritual. The Persian term *dastband* is substantiated as not being linked with Zoroastrianism by several medieval sources, most notably Muhammad Maydani (d. 1137), who in his Persian-Arabic dictionary defines it as "a kind of dance in which one holds the other by the hand."³ Other choral dances performed at the time included the mystic Sufi *sama'*, which sought to invoke God's presence through music and dance.⁴

Problematizing the scene's interpretation, scholars have also underlined its parallels to Turkmen folk traditions, chiefly by means of the dancers' dress, a caftan over loose trousers, which is usually read as an iconographic standard for personages of Turkish ethnicity.⁵ Our information on the persistence of Turkmen traditions in the Seljuq period is scarce, but such dances may have taken place among the entourages of Turkmen soldiers at the Great Seljuq court. A passage in Ibn al-Jawzi mentions a dance performed by the Seljuq sultan Tughril and his fellow Turkmen to celebrate the bride's arrival on the occasion of his



much-awaited marriage to the caliph's daughter: "After kissing the ground before her, Tughril went out and joined his Turkmen companions to dance in the courtyard of the palace (*sahn al-dar*)."⁶ While the cultural context of the dance exhibited on this ewer remains undisclosed, its pairing with the chasing quadrupeds on the shoulder, also found on other molded vessels with dance scenes, fits the iconographic program of the courtly cycle, as it references one of the ruler's chief pastimes, the

hunt.⁷ Hunting and dancing, like all activities related to fighting and feasting (*bazm* and *razm*), helped define the royal identity. Thus, this ewer in all likelihood evokes life at court, where festive dances were performed with frequency to entertain princes and nobles. The proliferation of courtly iconography on quotidian objects and vessels of the Seljuq and post-Seljuq periods may be a result of the beneficent properties ascribed to the sovereign and his dominion (see cat. 37). **MR**



94

Ewer with Banqueters and a Persian Poem

Modern Turkmenistan, probably Merv, 12th century
Earthenware; molded, modeled
H. 5½ in. (13.8 cm); Diam. of rim 2⅞ in. (7.4 cm),
of base 2¼ in. (5.5 cm)

Museum of History and Local Lore of Mary Province,
Turkmenistan (BX.HMI)

Inscribed in Persian in *kufic* on the upper and lower
parts of the body¹

This fragmentary unglazed ewer features three pairs of feasting personages—dancing, holding a falcon or a cup, offering each other fruits—and drop-shaped medallions with birds and a palmette motif, framed by a poetic inscription in Persian. The latter is an early occurrence of the use of Persian on a portable object, a practice that would increase greatly, in cursive script, on ceramics in the late twelfth and early

thirteenth centuries.² The upper part of the ewer was very likely shaped in a mold (or a copy made from the same master mold) that is now in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (fig. 69) and with which it shares almost the exact same decoration.³ A different mold was employed to shape its lower body and base, which bear an interlaced epigraphic band in Persian.



Fig. 68. Line drawing of the base of an earthenware ewer, excavated at Nishapur (Metropolitan Museum, 40.170.653), made from the same mold as cat. 94. It bears blessings in Arabic in *kufic* script.

The ewer appears to have been hastily made, with loss of some details, but the decoration of the mold is remarkably well defined and justifiably signed; to mark its authorship, the artisan who created it added the words “work of Abu Nasr” or “al-Wali.”⁴ The formula is written in positive and incised (rather than in negative and in relief, like the rest of the decoration), so the words would have appeared, barely legibly, in negative on the finished

vessel. This lack of legibility was unlikely a mistake; it allowed the authorship formula to be easily smoothed away from the final object and was probably meant to be seen only on the mold.⁵ A relatively small number of such molds from excavated contexts have been published, and none replicates the occurrence of an incised authorship formula. Hence, it is not possible to theorize a regular pattern of production, but molds could be duplicated and sold, and the name of the potter may have been important in the trade.⁶ Abu Nasr, or al-Wali, was a master potter, and his refined mold, or at least the final objects realized from them, had a wide market: the ewer, which most probably came from the archaeological site at Merv, has an equivalent that was excavated in Nishapur, where it is believed to have been an import (fig. 68).⁷

A Khurasani provenance is consistent with most features of the ewer, among them shape and manufacture, the presence of a Persian poem in *kufic* script, the star-shaped strapwork (found on Afghan molded and Bamiyan wares), and the features of the figures.⁸ The somewhat awkward stance of the dancing pair, with arms crossed and one bent leg lifted, may be linked to a Central Asian iconography of dance—long since apparent in

Abbasid art through the presence of Turkish elements—of which the present example may be a variation. The armband, or *tiraz*, an Islamic tradition, is paired with Turkish elements transmitted from Central Asia, such as the belted coat (*qaba*), headdress (*kulah*), and long sleeves.⁹ Sleeves also define the choreography of specific dances, depictions of which are rare in Islamic art before the Mongol period.¹⁰ At the same time the presence of imagery related to feasting, such as trays of fruit, ewers, and cups, has been attested for centuries in Islamic art and reflects a culture deeply indebted to pre-Islamic Iranian traditions.

The ewer is a quickly and cheaply made variant of the high Khurasani craftsmanship visible in the mold, which displays a mastery of both Persian literature and complex geometric patterns. Moreover, it reconciles diverse cultural and iconographic traditions that had been interacting for centuries. These traditions were enriched and enlivened by the social and cultural developments that succeeded the establishment of Turkish Seljuq rule and that of their largely Turkish successor states. **MR**



Fig. 69. Mold for a vessel. Iran, 12th century. Earthenware; carved, H. 4 in. (10.2 cm); Diam. 6 in. (15.2 cm). Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B60P2142)



Science, Medicine, and Technology

Like the Abbasid caliphs and the Ghaznavid and Samanid rulers of Iran and Central Asia, certain Seljuq sultans and successor state rulers demonstrated a keen interest in the exact sciences and employed the most brilliant minds of their day to compile accurate astronomical tables, revise the solar calendar, and design scientific instruments. The advances made by these scholars would have been impossible without the remarkable movement to translate a broad range of Greek scientific treatises into Arabic initiated at the Abbasid capital, Baghdad, in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. In addition, mathematicians in the Seljuq era used certain systems devised by Indian scholars as well as the discoveries of earlier figures from the Persianate world working in Baghdad, such as al-Khwarazmi (ca. 800–847), who wrote a seminal treatise on algebra and other texts on astronomy, the astrolabe, calendars, and geography. In the same polymath tradition, al-Biruni (973–1048), also a native of Khwarazm, composed 180 treatises on subjects ranging from mathematics, astronomy, and the physical and natural sciences to geography and history. The exceptional influence of his work on Seljuq scholars is evident in the inclusion of his texts in scientific compilations produced for patrons in both Iran and Anatolia (cats. 113, 115).

While the conquest of Iran and the process of overcoming the Buyids in western Iran and Iraq during the reign of Rukn al-Din Tughril Beg I (r. 1040–63), and in Anatolia and Greater Syria during that of his successor Alp Arslan (r. 1063–73), left little time for patronizing scientists, Malik Shah I (r. 1073–92) attracted poets, scientists, and other men of learning to his court. Of these, ‘Umar Khayyam (1048–1131) is the brightest star in the firmament. Despite his reputation today as a poet, Khayyam was primarily a mathematician, astronomer, philosopher, and physician. A native of Nishapur, Khayyam traveled frequently to the Isfahan court of Malik Shah.¹ There in A.D. 1074–75 he joined other astronomers in devising a more accurate calendar and establishing the start of the New Year on the vernal equinox, at the beginning of the astrological sign Aries.² While scholars disagree on whether Malik Shah built an observatory at Isfahan in 1076 that was demolished after his death,³ Khayyam did compile astronomical tables for Malik Shah based on observations of the stars.

The accurate measurement of the movement of the stars and planets and of the relation of specific places on earth to the stars, based on improved mathematical calculations, led to important practical developments, such as the design and production of astrolabes (cat. 114).

These instruments could be manipulated to tell the time of day, the direction of Mecca, and the distance of various stars, thus enabling wayfinding. The desire to harness time also is expressed through the water clocks invented by al-Jazari and described in the *Kitab fi ma'rifat al-hiyal al-handasiyya* (Book of the knowledge of ingenious mechanical devices), composed at the Artuqid court in Diyar Bakr in 1198–1200 (cat. 111a).⁴ Likewise, with a combination lockbox (cat. 110), which may have been based on a design by al-Jazari,⁵ precision of manufacture and design underscores its function.

The improved understanding of materials, exemplified by studies on the specific gravity of metals by 'Umar Khayyam and his student al-Khazini (cat. 112), would have benefited the market overseers who ensured the purity of precious metals for coinage and other uses. Although the development of the hard white ceramic body called stonepaste does not appear to have been theorized by Seljuq scientists, it revolutionized the production of pottery from Egypt to Iran (cats. 108a–i). Not only did the repertoire of shapes, colors, and glaze techniques multiply, but also ceramics now joined metalwork as a site for poetry and complex inscriptions. As a result, fine ceramic wares are among the most representative artistic products of Seljuq Iran and Greater Syria. Perhaps the most influential of all technologies, introduced before the advent of the Seljuqs but fully exploited from the tenth century onward, is paper. From writing computations on a permanent support instead of in the sand to producing books of all sizes, including Qur'ans, scientific treatises, poetry, and literature, this invention and its dissemination throughout the Islamic world expanded literacy and the body of knowledge.

Not surprisingly, medicine played a significant role in Seljuq society in Iran, Anatolia, the Jazira, Syria, and Iraq. Important hospitals were constructed in the major cities of Iran and in Konya, Divriği, Aleppo, Damascus, and Baghdad, often in connection with madrasas so that physicians could teach students as well as treat patients. By the eleventh century the practice and theory of medicine incorporated several main intellectual strands. First, the inheritance of the Greek tradition is evident in translations and adaptations of the writings of Galen (cat. 106), the second-century Greek physician and philosopher who believed that one's state is determined by the relationship of four bodily fluids: blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. He also described medical cases and devised medications using plant and animal material. Probably the most frequently used text on pharmacopoeia in the Seljuq period was *De Materia Medica* of Dioscorides, a first-century Greek physician, who describes medicinal plants and recipes for remedies that use them (cats. 107a, b). In addition to the theoretical and practical knowledge in Greek and Latin texts that were translated into Arabic, some theories in the Seljuq period derived from so-called prophetic medicine—that is, medical therapies based on traditional Arab teaching and practices mentioned in the Qur'an. This system prohibited the use of narcotics and wine for medicinal purposes as well as surgery.⁶ Finally, home cures handed down from generation to generation, as well as talismans for the prevention of disease, provided practical and reassuring alternatives to the medical theories propounded in texts but not always based on empirical proof. Medical encyclopedias written by two hugely influential physicians, al-Razi in the early tenth century and Ibn Sina (Avicenna) in the first third of the eleventh century, covered a broad range of topics relevant to diseases and ailments and their cures, and they continued to be used and translated for hundreds of years after their initial compilation. **SRC**



Cat. 95, front and back

95

Apothecary Jar with Running Hares and a Dog

Iran, probably Kashan, first half of the 12th century
Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
H. 7¼ in. (18.4 cm); Diam. 4 in. (10.2 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase,
Friends of Islamic Art Gifts, 2013 (2013.255)
Inscribed in Arabic in cursive on the rim:

العز(ة) الدائم والاقبال الزائد والنصر الغالب والدائم والسعادة والكرامة
والدولة والنعمة والبركة والرفعة والرفاهة و... والبقاء لصاحبه
Perpetual glory(?) and increasing prosperity, conquering and lasting victory, happiness, generosity, dominion, prosperity, blessing, and Mercy [. . .] long life to its owner.

96

Apothecary Jar with Seated Figures and Running Animals

Iran, probably Kashan, mid-12th–early 13th century
Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
(exterior), transparent blue glaze (interior)
H. 12 in. (30.6 cm); Diam. 7½ in. (19.1 cm)
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (C.125-1935)

These jars may have been used by physicians to store dried herbs, roots, bark, seeds, and fruit; balms, honey, and other bee products; salts, minerals, and metals; and various other solid or viscous substances, all of which might be employed in the preparation of drugs or home remedies.¹ Similar stonepaste jars with simple cylindrical shapes, or albarelli (see below for the emergence of the term), were introduced in the eleventh century and became common by the second half of the twelfth, when variations in shape such as that seen in cat. 96 also began to appear.² The shape finds antecedents in earlier earthenware productions, for example, in Iranian monochrome green and brown wares of the tenth and eleventh centuries (alongside more common variations with a rounded shoulder).³ The slimmer neck would have allowed for a flap of leather or other material to be fastened around it with a string, thereby securing the contents

of the jar (although a lid might have been employed for the same purpose) and allowing for easier handling.

While Islamic pharmacology was based largely on Greek traditions transmitted by Dioscorides and Galen, innovations included new applications of known remedies—for example, using wormwood, a species of *Artemisia*, to treat opium poisoning—and the introduction of new ingredients including camphor, musk, senna, myrobalan (the fruit of *Terminalia* trees), and sal ammoniac (ammonium chloride).⁴ Trained physicians were not the only ones to prescribe and prepare potions, balms, and other drugs. Popular medical knowledge, oftentimes transmitted by women, promulgated at-home medicine—as did untrained doctors and, to more nefarious ends, charlatans, about whom flourished a popular literature stemming from their real and fictional exploits. Beginning in the tenth century,

moreover, some religious scholars advocated for prophetic medicine (*al-tibb al-nabawi*) as an alternative to Greek methodologies and prescribed simple remedies based on the Qur'an and the Sunna.⁵

The extensive Islamic medical literature gives very detailed recipes for pharmaceuticals but significantly less information on the tools needed to make them. There are, however, many vivid illustrations of apothecaries at work, most often preparing potions in deep cooking pots or vessels, in late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century medical treatises, among them the *Kitab al-diryaq* (Book of antidotes) of 1198 (cat. 106) and the 1224 copy of Dioscorides' *De Materia Medica* (cats. 107a, b).

Save for one exception (see below), no albarello was found with its original contents, but the cylindrical body of the earliest ones connects them to later examples from Ayyubid and Mamluk Syria and Egypt, for whom there is evidence of their apothecary use. These were extensively traded well beyond the Mediterranean basin, presumably for their contents,⁶ and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they began to be replicated in Italian maiolica. (Indeed, albarello is an Italian term, broadly applied to denote a cylindrical apothecary jar with a narrow neck.⁷) Known Mamluk and Italian examples bear inscriptions stating their intended contents, and sometimes the name of the facility or hospital for which they were made, as well.⁸ A Syrian example containing a white residue was excavated together with other vessels and grave goods at the Chungul Kurgan, an early thirteenth-century princely burial in the Black Sea Steppe. It may have contained a healing substance for the tomb's royal Turkish (Qipčaq/Cuman/Polovt-sian) occupant.⁹ Finally, similar jars appear among other vessels in a scene set beside a pharmacy in a thirteenth-century manuscript of Ibn Butlan's (d. 1066) *Da'wat al-atibba'* (The physicians' banquet), written in 1054.¹⁰

Nevertheless, it cannot be ruled out that albarelli were used to store nonmedicinal ingredients. In this respect it is interesting to note that, while Syrian albarelli are glazed on the interior, making them water-resistant and airtight—that is, suitable for both dry and



Cat. 96

viscous materials—cat. 95, from Iran, is glazed only inside its neck, rendering it inappropriate for substances that might need preservation from air exposure.¹¹ Both jars' iconography is not directly connected to anything they may have contained, although the overall auspicious symbolism would certainly have been suitable for the promotion of good health.

Such an interpretation finds further credence in the inscribed benedictions, as well as in the courtly figures and chasing animals, all of which are motifs related to the courtly cycle. For their cleverness and speed, as implied by the dog giving chase in cat. 95, the hare seems to have been regarded as especially auspicious (see also cat. 137). **MR**



97

Mortar and Pestle

Iran or Afghanistan, Khurasan, early 13th century
 Bronze; cast, engraved
 Mortar: Diam. 8 in. (20.3 cm); pestle: L. 9¼ in. (23.5 cm)
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Nasli M. Heeramaneck Collection, Gift of Joan Palevsky (M.73.5.264a, b)

Inscribed in Arabic, in foliated and knotted *kufic* (with extra *waws*) on the upper body:
 باليمن واو البر و الكة و او الد و الة و السامة (السلامة) و
 الس(ة) و السعادة و (السلامة)

With good fortune, blessing, dominion, prosperity(?), happiness, and prosper[ity].

In *naskhi*, on the rim:

العز و ا / لاقبال / و الدولة و السعا / دة و السلامة و الد / ولة (ة)
 و ا / لتايد

Glory, prosperity, dominion, happiness, prosperity, dominion(?), and (divine) support.

On the foot and the head of the pestle:

التايد
(Divine) support (repeated, in full and abbreviated forms).¹

98

Mortar

Anatolia, 13th century
 Bronze; cast
 Diam. 7⅞ in. (20 cm)
 Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (I.1287)

Inherited from ancient times, mortars and pestles were a common culinary household tool in the Islamic world, used to grind all manner of spices and grains, to pulverize seeds and herbs, or to break sugar from sugarloaves.² They also served alchemists and artisans in preparing inks, pigments, glue, and other items, and they became especially important in the pharmaceutical and medical world. Their necessity for the preparation of medicaments is illustrated in a folio of the

Fig. 70. "Physician Preparing an Elixir," folio from *De Materia Medica* of Dioscorides. Iraq or northern Jazira, possibly Baghdad, dated A.H. 621/A.D. 1224. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 13⅞ × 9¾ in. (33.2 × 24.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1913 (13.152.6)





Cat. 98

dispersed Dioscorides *De Materia Medica* manuscript, a guide to medicinal plants (fig. 70; see also cat. 107b).³ In the painting a seated figure—the physician, pharmacist, or perhaps an assistant—is working a large pestle and mortar to prepare a therapeutic syrup.⁴ While the more mundane forms of early mortars and pestles made of stone or wood are no longer extant, a great number of cast-metal examples survive from the medieval period, and at least seven types exist.⁵ In shape and style of decoration, cat. 97 is representative of a type from Khurasan.⁶ The mortar's body has a distinctive octagonal shape with a wide flaring rim and flat base, yet its interior, including the base, is circular, which allowed for more efficient pounding. The decorated exterior of this type of mortar is most often divided into three sections: a central band with rope design, a band of chasing animals, usually in the lower part, as seen in cat. 97, and a wide benedictory *kufic* inscription in the upper section. Other benedictory inscriptions like the ones seen here, in *kufic* or in *naskhi*, may run along the two octagonal rims.

Mortars do not often survive with their pestles. This pestle has a simple form, with a knoblike spherical handle and slightly flared pounding end. It is banded with a ring in relief (as part of the casting),⁷ positioned between the upper third and the middle of the shaft. The purpose of the band on the shaft might be to prevent the hand from hitting the edge of the mortar while pounding. Although it is difficult to know whether or not the pestle once belonged to a particular mortar, the fact that the band of the pestle should be above the rim of a mortar when standing in it, as in the case of cat. 97, may permit one to define possible mortar-pestle pairs. This pestle stands out for its ornate surface, which includes an engraved bird on the knob, a benedictory inscription, and a band of split-palmette flowers as well as several simple interlacing bands in the lower part of the pestle's shaft. Neither the mortar nor the pestle of cat. 97 appears to have been used often. This sophisticated set probably served more as a decorative artifact and might have been offered to the owner as a gift or acquired as a special souvenir.

Cat. 98 is representative of examples from Anatolia and the Jazira.⁸ Like their counterparts manufactured in Khurasan, they are often octagonal in form, but they differ in their distinctive horizontal proportions. The body is clearly defined, and the rim and base are wide and flat, and joined to the body with a forty-five-degree chamfer. Two massive handles, sometimes in the form of animal heads such as lions or bulls,⁹ with huge inserted rings are attached to the mortar, likely to facilitate its transport or to anchor it for stability when in use. Many of the known examples of this type are decorated on the body's surface with droplike or triangular bosses or engraved with arabesque decoration, scrollwork, or benedictory or probably talismanic pseudo-inscriptions.¹⁰ This mortar, however, is exceptional for the appearance of a sphinx in relief on each facet against its otherwise plain surface. Both it and cat. 97 reflect Seljuq art and culture, in particular the constant attempts to solicit protection through the inclusion of apotropaic animals and inscriptions on utilitarian objects. **DB**



99

Surgical Saw with Lion-shaped Handle

Iran, 10th–12th century
 Bronze; cast
 L. 14¼ in. (36.2 cm)
 Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial
 Collection (57.94)

Inscribed in Arabic in floriated *kufic*, on the blade:
 الملك لله الملك لله الملك لله
Dominion to God, dominion to God, dominion to God.
 Below the handle on both sides:

God.

100

Surgical Saw

Iran, 11th–12th century
 Bronze; cast
 L. 9½ in. (24.1 cm)
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of
 Nasli M. Heeramaneck (M.76.174.134)

These small saws were most likely used for amputation,¹ the one common form of invasive surgery in the medieval Middle East. Gangrene was the most frequent cause, but only lower joints, not those above the knee or above the elbow, were amputated. Even then, success was hardly guaranteed.² Given the high risk associated with amputation, the forms of decoration on the saws most likely were intended to empower the surgeon and safeguard the patient. The more ornate of the two saws (cat. 99) is inscribed along one side of its blade with a repeating inscription, “Dominion to God.” Its handle is in the shape of a lion with its tongue extended, the loop of a long tail terminating in a trefoil. Unlike a sword or dagger with a quillon separating the blade from the hilt, the handle of this saw is attached to a small rectangle inscribed on both sides with the word “Allah,” which in turn is soldered to the blade. The lion’s foreleg, forming the base of the inscribed rectangle, curves inward toward its foot in the form of a bird’s head. The teeth along the edge of the blade have dulled with age but presumably would have been quite sharp originally.³

The smaller saw (cat. 100), cast in one piece, has suffered from corrosion so that the engraved arabesque along the curve of the handle is barely visible. Whatever other incised ornament might have adorned this saw, such as an inscription on the rectangular area between the handle and blade, is no longer legible. The curved handle terminates in a stylized trilobed leaf form. While decorative, the handles of both saws appear functionally awkward because they do not provide enough space for the surgeon to grip them with all of his or her fingers. Nonetheless, the suggestion that these are ceremonial saws is dubious, since no known Seljuq ritual incorporates small saws.⁴

One type of amputation outside of the realm of medicine is the Islamic punishment for theft, cutting off the hand of the thief, as ordained in the Qur’an (5:38): “As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands: a punishment by way of example, from Allah, for their crime.”⁵ Even so, once the amputation was complete, a medical procedure was necessary so the amputee did not bleed to death. According to one hadith, the Prophet



Muhammad ordered that the amputation be followed by cauterization.⁶

Given the strong theoretical grounding of medieval Arab and Persian medicine in the ancient Greek texts of Hippocrates, Galen, and their followers, doctors in the Seljuq era based their training and knowledge on the concept of the four humors—blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile—whose balance or imbalance determined one's state of health. This approach, in addition to a belief in laws of nature, could have led to an emphasis on interpretation over empiricism. However, in addition to reflecting a strong interest in Greek science at the Abbasid court and the translation of virtually all available Greek and Syriac medical texts into Arabic in the ninth and tenth centuries, Islamic medicine incorporated innovations and new knowledge based on Indian and other sources.

Under the Seljuqs the number of hospitals, often connected to madrasas, expanded. Much as they do today, physicians ministered to their patients and taught medical students.⁷ Hospitals had both an outpatient section and wards for patients with infectious

diseases or who were undergoing surgical and other procedures requiring observation or close control. Some but not all physicians performed surgery, including amputations. In some hospitals physicians' assistants, both male and female, acted as surgeons while the physicians diagnosed and treated diseases with prescriptions for drugs.⁸ Apparently, over the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, physicians developed specialties, in large part as a result of the availability of useful treatises in Arabic on a diverse range of subjects, from ophthalmology to surgery.⁹ Yet their methods were not always described in medical texts, and the techniques that do appear in these handbooks were not necessarily put into practice, leaving modern scholars to ponder the extent to which any surgical procedures, including amputation, were actually performed.¹⁰ **SRC**

101

Medical Probe or Spatula

Modern Turkmenistan, probably Merv,
10th–12th century
Bronze

L. 5¼ in. (13.5 cm); Diam. of spoon ⅜ in. (1 cm)
Museum of History and Local Lore of Mary Province,
Turkmenistan (KEK 16132)

102

Tweezers

Modern Turkmenistan, probably Merv,
10th–12th century
Bronze

3⅜ × ½ in. (8.6 × 1.1 cm)
Museum of History and Local Lore of Mary Province,
Turkmenistan (KEK 16380)

103

Dental Hook

Modern Turkmenistan, probably Merv,
10th–12th century
Bronze

3⅞ × ¼ in. (9.9 × 0.4 cm)
Museum of History and Local Lore of Mary Province,
Turkmenistan (KEK 16380)



Physicians in the Seljuq period employed a large set of tools specifically engineered for performing medical procedures, including dentistry and surgery (for the latter, see also cats. 99, 100). These three objects were retrieved from the archaeological area in, most likely, Merv.¹ This thriving cosmopolitan town served as the chief capital for several Seljuq sultans and was certainly home to a consistent number of physicians (and possibly hospitals) catering to a large portion of the population.

Among the extensive Islamic medical literature, which includes instructions for at-home remedies and techniques, are manuals for trained physicians that illustrate the specific instruments needed for each procedure, with which physicians were expected to equip themselves.² These texts provide some indication of how many of the bronze, iron, and lead tools found in archaeological contexts and excavations from Central Asia to Anatolia were used. Most of the surgical instruments were

already known in the ninth century, and descriptions in later sources show that similar ones continued to be used in subsequent periods.

The medical probe or spatula (cat. 101) may have been intended for medicinal, pharmaceutical, or cosmetic use, such as the examination of and application of ointments to wounds; cauterization; or the measurement of powdered or liquid drugs or cosmetics. Similar tools, often with decorative knuckles just below the bowl of the spoon, were excavated at the citadel of Rayy, as well as in Qasr-i Abu Nasr, Hama, Tarsus, Tille Höyük, Bahrain, and Fustat.³ Tweezers or pinchers (cat. 102) may have been used for extracting foreign objects from body cavities. A similar bronze tool was excavated at Qasr-i Abu Nasr (where it was identified as a fork). However, the most commonly excavated tweezers are of the adjustable type, found at Nishapur, Siraf, and Fustat.⁴

The double-pronged hooked instrument (cat. 103) was probably employed in more

drastic dental extractions involving the roots of the teeth. Similar instruments, with slightly longer ends, were also used to make incisions in the skin before the ligation of arteries, to extract pimples, and as a cauterizer. Dental problems are frequent topics in medical manuals, which also lament the damage inflicted by untrained barber-surgeons. Extraction was to be avoided unless absolutely necessary or vehemently requested by an aching patient, and the utmost care had to be taken so as not to leave behind any pieces of tooth. Afterward, the wound was rinsed with salted wine or vinegar and hemorrhages stopped with pounded vitriol or cauterization. Cotton—an innovation of Islamic medical practice—soaked in butter was applied to soften the gum in case a broken piece of root remained. Expert practitioners were even trained to use gold and sometimes silver wire to interlace and strengthen loose teeth.⁵ **MR**



104

Melting Pan

Excavated at Rayy (RCh85), late 12th–early 13th century
Bronze alloy; cast, hammered
L. of handle 4½ in. (11.5 cm);
Diam. of pan 3 in. (7.5 cm)
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia (35-8-290)

This small, shallow pan, made of a bronze alloy composed of copper, tin, lead, zinc, and another element, has a compass-drawn double circle in the center.¹ Its thin, flat hammered handle ends in a finial and was soldered to the rim. Found in a workshop setting with other tools such as small measuring cups, soapstone molds, and tweezers, it was probably used for pharmaceutical or alchemical processes. The locus of the find, on top of the prehistoric site of Cheshme 'Ali, on the Rayy Plain, northwest of the Late Antique and medieval walled city, indicates that, after a hiatus of several centuries, this site was revived as a place of manufacture, if not of settlement, in the late eighth to ninth century and continued to be used until the early decades of the thirteenth century. **RH**

105

Pharmaceutical Box

Iran or Afghanistan, Khurasan, 11th–12th century
Silver; cast, gilded, engraved, inlaid with niello
¾ × ¾ × 3 in. (1.9 × 2 × 7.5 cm)
Linden-Museum Stuttgart (A 37.662L)
Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the back:

بِاللّٰهِ اَمَلْ مَا ارْتَجِيْ وَ بِاللّٰهِ اِدْفَعْ مَا لَا اَطِيْقُ

With the help of God, I seek that for which I hope; and with the help of God, I cast aside that which I cannot endure.

On each interior section:

كافور [. . .] لك / بالله (?) / مسك

*Kafur (camphor) [. . .] lak/luk (gum-lac; red resin) / bi-Allah(?) (to God?)/mishk (musk).*¹

Since ancient times, aromatics have played a major role in the Islamic world. They are important for the fragrance or flavor they release when, for example, heated or burned (as incense) or diffused with liquids.² In addition to the high monetary value of most of their raw materials, aromatics were highly regarded for their medicinal qualities. The hadith and the writings of Arab theorists such as al-Kindi (801–873), al-Biruni (973–1048), and Ibn Sina (known as Avicenna, 980–1037) inspired by descriptions of aromatics and their effects in the works of scholars and texts from antiquity, investigated the medicinal properties of aromatics when ingested or inhaled.³

Although made in a medium known in the eastern parts of the Seljuq world to have been used for luxurious objects, this silver-gilt container inlaid with niello is unique in that no other example of its kind is known from that time.⁴ The rectangular box has a ring on one side so that it could be attached perhaps to a belt, similar to a purse full of gold coins or other precious things when traveling. Each of the five compartments has an inner lid with a tiny ring or handle that can be removed either by hand or with the help of a thin instrument such as tweezers (see cat. 102) and an outer lid that attaches with a clasp mechanism to the body of the box. Recent examination has shown that three of the compartments contained remains of thick substances having the appearance of ointments, which might well be of later date than the box. The terms inscribed in *kufic* on the inner lids of several sections confirm that the original purpose of this delicate box was to contain aromatics and/or medical substances. From right to left, the sections are labeled *kafur*, for camphor; [text erased]; *lak* or *luk*, for gum-lac or red resin; what might be “bi-Allah” (to God); and *mishk*, for musk.

Musk obtained from the musk deer and camphor from the camphor tree were among



Cat. 105

the most popular aromatics traded across the Islamic world and beyond. The intense fragrance of musk was used to delight the senses and to a certain extent for purification.⁵ Thus, food, wine, textiles, rooms, and open spaces, as well as hair and other parts of the human body, were scented with musk in daily life or at festive or ceremonial occasions, including funerals, of the wealthy and the ruling elite.⁶ It also served as a base element mixed with other aromatics in ointments and recipes for cosmetic and medicinal uses.⁷ In addition to being a perfume, camphor was esteemed for its medical and therapeutic qualities and used to treat eczema and pox. Its cooling properties were supposed to calm fever and other reactions to poisoning, yet an

overdose of it could be harmful and cause hair to whiten.⁸

The gum-lac or red resin was obtained from a tree in India and had no fragrance. Besides its use in dyeing textiles, it was known for its cleansing and dissolving properties and to be effective against asthma, coughing, choking, and digestive problems.⁹ The protective proverb inscribed in a decorative floriated *kufic* on the back of the box confirms the Muslim belief that the healing qualities of the ingredients would work only with faith in and help from God.¹⁰ **DB**

106

Double-page Frontispiece from a *Kitab al-diryaq* (Book of Antidotes)

Jazira, dated A.H. Rabi' I 595/A.D. December 31, 1198–January 29, 1199

Ink on paper

14 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 10 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (36.5 × 27.5 cm)

Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (Arabe 2964)

This manuscript of a *Kitab al-diryaq* (Book of antidotes) was written by an unidentified author known as pseudo-Galen, after the famous Greek physician to whom the book is attributed on the title page. According to the inscription, the text was taken from the first discourse of Galen's book on electuaries, or remedies for snakebite and poisoning, with commentary by John the Grammarian.¹ In addition to its illustrated double-page frontispiece, the manuscript contains nine folios with figural images and three with depictions of plants or snakes.

Across the two pages of the frontispiece runs a *kufic* inscription stating that the owner and the scribe is Muhammad, son of Imam Abu-l-Fath, son of Imam Abu-l-Hasan, son of the imam. (Muhammad's name is given again on the final folio with the date A.H. Rabi' I 595.) On the right-hand page of the double-page opening that follows this, the inscription mentions that the book is for the library of Imam Abu-l-Fath Mahmud, son of Imam Jamal al-Din, son of Imam Abu-l-Fath, son of Imam Abu-l-Hasan, son of the beneficent imam.² If Imam Abu-l-Hasan is the same person in both inscriptions, the scribe Muhammad would be



the uncle of Abu-l-Fath Mahmud, the owner. Moreover, the identification of Muhammad's forebears and cousins as imams and a reference in the colophon to the pure family of the Prophet indicates that the manuscript was copied by and for Shiites. Whether this family were Ismaili or from a different Shi'a community is unclear.³ The complexity of composition and high-quality materials used for the illustrations, however, suggest that the family was both educated and wealthy. The text itself couches the information about how to prepare the antidotes in the form of biographies of doctors from antiquity, which on the one hand displays the anonymous author's "knowledge," yet on the other does not assume that the reader is a physician.

The two nearly identical images of the frontispiece contain a central crowned figure seated cross-legged and holding a crescent moon that encircles the figure's head and torso. Smaller attendants appear to hold the moon steady on either side of the central figure. Surrounding this group is a circle formed by the bodies of two dragons. These forms knot at the cardinal points, but their tails twist again and fan out directly below the seated figure, while their heads, with mouths wide open and tongues sticking out, confront each other above the figure's head. Large winged figures fill the four corners around the central group. Although the iconography of the frontispiece may not have a direct connection to the text,⁴ the presence of a figure holding

the moon and surrounded by dragons certainly has strong cosmological implications. Some scholars have viewed the moon imagery as having its roots in ancient Mesopotamia,⁵ yet astrological symbols were found on numerous metal objects of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries (see the succeeding chapter, "Astrology, Magic, and the World of Beasts"). The two dragons have been identified as the two pseudo-planetary nodes, thought to be responsible for lunar and solar eclipses. In these images they are kept under control by the central figure and the four "angels" in the corners, much as the theriac medicines discussed in the text provide protection against poison and venom.⁶ SRC



a



b

107a, b

Folios from a Dispersed Arabic Translation of *De Materia Medica* by Dioscorides

Preparing Medicine from Honey (a)

Calligrapher: Abdullah b. al-Fadl
Iraq, Baghdad, dated A.H. 621/A.D. 1224
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
12³/₈ × 9 in. (31.4 × 22.9 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Bequest of Cora Timken Burnett, 1956 (57.51.21)

Preparing Medicine from Brined Grapes (b)

Calligrapher: Abdullah b. al-Fadl
Iraq, Baghdad, dated A.H. 621/A.D. 1224
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
13¹/₄ × 9³/₄ in. (33.5 × 24.9 cm)
Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (W675)

One of the most influential medical treatises handed down to the Muslims from antiquity was *De Materia Medica*, by a first-century B.C. physician, Pedanius Dioscorides of Anazarba, in Cilicia. In ninth-century Baghdad, Istifan b. Basil translated Dioscorides' Greek text into Arabic. Hunayn b. Ishaq (d. 873), who had translated the Greek original into Syriac, then corrected Istifan b. Basil's Arabic text.¹ This corrected version, considered definitive, was widely disseminated throughout the medieval Muslim world, including Seljuq Iran, Anatolia, and the Jazira as well as other parts of Syria and Iraq. Several variants have been identified, however, including the somewhat abbreviated text that accompanies this illustrated version.² These two pages are from a group of thirty-one folios of the Arabic translation that were removed from a manuscript in the Hagia Sofia Library in Istanbul before 1910.³

Both illustrations come from book 5 of Dioscorides' text on wines and minerals. The Metropolitan Museum's page (cat. 107a) concerns the making of a medicine from honey and water, prescribed to cure weakness and loss of appetite. The honey-mead wine *onomali* can be made by washing beeswax and reserving the water, but Dioscorides admonished against cooking and drinking it because of the amount of wax dirt in it.⁴ In the picture a doctor holding a gold cup in his left hand stirs the honey boiling with water in a large cauldron as he prepares to scoop it up for a seated patient who awaits his cure. On the floor above them, on either side of a row of amphorae in which medicines or their ingredients are stored, a figure at the left drinks from a glass beaker, and another kneels at the right stirring a pot.

Cat. 107b depicts two figures, the one at the right a doctor and the other variously

identified as another doctor, an assistant, or the patient.⁵ They stand on either side of a tripod holding a sieve through which liquid drips into a large bowl. The liquid is juice from pressed grapes, which is mixed with brine and squill (an herb similar to an onion) to produce a winelike medicine used to treat disorders of the digestive system. As with the previous image, the doctor wears a robe with a short skirt over leggings. The figures are framed by a pomegranate tree and an orange tree, both showing a distinctive jointed treatment of their trunks. This type of tree trunk is also found in the *Kitab na't al-hayawan wa manafi'hi* (Properties of animals and their uses) of Ibn Bakhtishu', which has recently been assigned variably to the northern Jazira and Baghdad.⁶

Although the continuing use and embellishment of *De Materia Medica* manuscripts in the early thirteenth century underscores the utility of its contents, its illustrations do not necessarily provide specific information about the practice of medicine and pharmacology under the Seljuqs. Rather, they suggest the setting in which drugs were produced and administered, even if the specific potions discussed in the text may not have been in use during the Seljuq period. While the Walters illustration provides little precise information on the location in which the grape and squill mixture is being made, the two fruit trees indicate a garden, presumably one associated with or in the interior courtyard of a hospital. Although a number of notable hospitals were constructed in the ninth century, the eleventh-century Seljuq vizier Nizam al-Mulk endowed hospitals in association with the madrasas he commissioned in Nishapur, Isfahan, Balkh, and Baghdad.⁷ Following suit, the Seljuq successor Nur al-Din Zangi endowed madrasas and hospitals in Aleppo and Damascus (see fig. 19) in a period of intense building activity among the successor states. The Metropolitan Museum image may well represent a pharmacy within a hospital, where, in addition to in-patients, doctors saw patients in an outpatient clinic and prescribed medicine that would have been supplied by the in-house pharmacy. **SRC**



a

108a–i

Stonepaste Technology in Syria and Iran

Luster Bowl with Turquoise Glaze (a)

Syria, allegedly found at Tell Minis, late 11th–early 12th century
Stonepaste; glazed in opaque turquoise, luster-painted
H. 3 1/8 in. (8 cm); Diam. 9 in. (23 cm)
Victoria and Albert Museum, London (C.49-1960)

Small Scalloped Dish with Turquoise Glaze (b)

Excavated at Rayy (RH6095), late 11th–early 12th century
Stonepaste; glazed in opaque turquoise
H. 1 1/8 in. (2.8 cm); Diam. 5 3/4 in. (14.5 cm)
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, University Museum–M.F.A. Persian Expedition (39.429)

Small Scalloped Dish with Cobalt Blue Glaze and Carved Scroll Motifs (c)

Iran, late 11th–early 12th century
Stonepaste; carved, glazed in transparent blue
Diam. 7 1/4 in. (18.6 cm)
Victoria and Albert Museum, London (C.68-1931)

Beginnings: The Eleventh Century

Ceramic production in the Islamic lands from Egypt to Central Asia saw a major change in the second half of the eleventh century, when the development of a new ceramics medium—referred to by scholars as stonepaste—in part replaced earthenware and led to further experimentation with shapes and decorative techniques. Discussed here is a group of monochrome and luster-painted bowls that illustrate well the dynamics of this change from its beginnings into the twelfth century (cats. 108a–f); the luster bottle (cat. 108g) and *mina'i* bowl (cat. 108h) exemplify the developments that took place in the second half of that century. The earthenware mold (cat. 108i) illuminates the manufacturing process, showing how technological advancement and artistic sophistication were incorporated into an industry focused on extensive production.



b



c

Stonepaste (also fritware or siliceous ware) is made primarily of finely ground quartz in the form of pebbles or, less frequently, sand, which is then mixed for greater malleability and structure with small amounts of liquefied glass (glass frit or glass fragments) and refined clay. In both the Syrian and the Iranian regions, archaeological evidence has proven that stonepaste was being produced at least by the last quarter of the eleventh century, and most likely earlier, in a number of centers along the Middle Euphrates, in the northwestern Jazira (Qal'at Ja'bar; Tell al-Fakhkhar, near Raqqa; and possibly Balis/Maskanah), Khurasan (Nishapur), and Jabal in central Iran (Isfahan).¹ At this time the Great Seljuqs had taken full possession of the Iranian regions and were establishing their authority in Syria—soon to be followed, however, by the fragmentation of their authority and frequent changes in power. Although attempts are sometimes made to link the emergence of the new ceramic technology to specific events, ceramic production developed largely independently of such political changes and represents in part the evolution of established techniques.² Scholars have endeavored to locate this technological and artistic growth in the

socioeconomic expansion of a new wealthy, mainly mercantile class that would have been the recipients, and rarely the patrons, of these objects.³ Similar developments occurred in metalwork with the emergence of inlay, hammering, and wheel turning.

The most widely accepted theory on the emergence of stonepaste production is that of its diffusion as a fully developed technology from Egypt, where experimental phases are attested in the tenth and early eleventh centuries and from which it spread to Syria and Iran. This postulation is strongly supported by an identical composition for the stonepaste body and by the recurrence of the same basic shapes and some stylistic motifs.⁴ There is undoubtedly a close connection between the earliest stonepaste vessels made in Syria and those made in Iran; they begin to diverge more markedly in technique, decoration, and style over the course of the twelfth century. However, the disparity in availability of archaeological data for the two regions and the even sparser information available for southern Jazira and Iraq preclude a detailed comparison of their manufacture or a comprehensive understanding of how the two regions' industries interacted, as well as the role of local

ceramic traditions.⁵ Syria has in recent decades been the focus of more extensive investigation than Iran and has witnessed the publication of a larger number of assemblages with a safe stratigraphic context relevant to the period. Corpora uncovered in Iran, by contrast, remain largely unpublished, or they are unstratified or not chronologically pertinent to the present discussion. These circumstances have resulted in the undervaluation of certain existing divergences between the two regions' earliest productions.

The diffusionist theory, which also links the spread of stonepaste to that of luster, is based largely on the study of more refined and often intact luster vessels in museum collections (and a few excavated fragments).⁶ These objects for the most part mirror the earliest archaeological assemblages, most closely those from the Syrian regions. Yet excavated assemblages often include more variation, including objects more closely linked to localized conditions—that is, related to other local productions, accessible imports, and the particularities of the excavated loci—or of coarser quality, thereby restituting a more nuanced view of the overall circumstances.

Early Syrian assemblages are dominated by (lead-based) monochrome glazes with occasional in-glaze splashes of color; they most often cover an otherwise unadorned surface but sometimes one that is incised and carved, and rarer still a molded motif (*laqabi*). Luster-painted decoration is equally rare and may or may not have been introduced some time later (see cat. 108a). Standard shapes include simple bowls with slightly curving sides and everted flat or simple rims, all displaying a novel and remarkable thinness.⁷ This early Syrian group is often labeled “Tell Minis” ware, so called for a famous assemblage—cat. 108a included—said to have been recovered in the eponymous village near Ma’arrat al-Nu’man, the study of which established its recognition as distinct from later productions.⁸ Yet regional variations in the earliest Syrian productions are starting to be recognized thanks to the diversity of the archaeological findings. Potters experimented early with painting techniques, namely, new applications of in-glaze painting, such as *laqabi*, and of local underglaze painting traditions now applied to stonepaste. Attesting to this development, which would eventually lead to the establishment of underglaze painting as the most common decorative technique in the region, are the fragments excavated at the Damascus citadel, attributed to the late eleventh century.⁹

Early central Iranian stonepaste corpora share with their Syrian counterparts all the same basic shapes, as well as a similar thinness. However, they also include—as in the case of assemblages from Isfahan and Rayy—a range of inventive shapes, some of which appear to have been inspired by metalwork or Chinese ceramics and porcelains (see cats. 108b, c).¹⁰ They reflect a taste for small vessels, lobed shapes, dimpled walls, and scalloped, lobed, and variably decorated rims; some rest on flower-shaped supports. Small neckless jars with small ring handles are also introduced. A simple palette of monochrome glazes not at all different from that of Syria—colorless, opaque white, turquoise, purple, and blue, sometimes in combination, on the exterior and interior of an object (see fig. 60)—and a lead-based composition balance the novelty of shapes. No other decoration apart from an occasional splash of a second color or carved scrolls, epigraphic elements, or animal motifs enriches the surface.¹¹ Some vessels were pierced before glazing, a technique almost nonexistent in Syria,¹² but which would appear with increasing frequency in Iran in the twelfth century (e.g., cat. 108d). At the same time, they share a peculiar obliquely cut foot that is a distinctive trait of the earliest Syrian stonepaste productions and not attested in other wares.¹³

While less information on manufacturing is available for Syria, excavations at Isfahan and Nishapur confirm that, in Iran, bowls were fired in saggars.¹⁴ Also, most vessels, including wheel-thrown plain bowls, were produced with molds. The use of molds was likely meant to counter the stiffness of the siliceous compound while increasing the rapidity and

Bowl Signed by Hasan al-Qashani (d)

Iran, late 11th–early 12th century
Stonepaste; molded, pierced, glazed (transparent), splashed with blue

H. 4 1/4 in. (10.8 cm); Diam. 6 1/4 in. (15.9 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lester Wolfe, 1968 (68.223.9)

Inscribed in Arabic, in cursive on the exterior:

العز والاقبال والدولة المباركة (sic) والرحمة و البركة

Glory, prosperity, blessed power, and mercy to its owner.

And in *kufic*:

عمل حسن القاشاني

Made by Hasan al-Qashani.

Bowl with Colorless Glaze and Carved Vegetal Motifs (e)

Iran, 12th century

Stonepaste; carved, glazed (transparent colorless)

H. 3 5/8 in. (9.2 cm); Diam. 8 3/8 in. (21.3 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Nasli M. Heeramaneck Collection, Gift of Joan Palevsky (M.73.5.282)



d



e



f

Luster Bowl with Bear (f)

Iran, 12th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in transparent light blue,
 luster-painted
 Height: 1 3/8 in. (3.5 cm); Diam. 7 in. (17.8 cm)
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Nasli M.
 Heeramaneck Collection, Gift of Joan Palevsky
 (M.73.5.288)

**Luster Bottle with Interlace
 Strapwork and Lobed Rim (g)**

Iran, probably Kashan, second half of the
 12th– early 13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white,
 luster-painted
 H. 10 1/4 in. (26 cm)
 Benaki Museum, Athens, Gift of Marina
 Lappa-Diomidous (FE 705)



Mina'i bowl with Majlis in a Garden (h)

Iran, late 12th–early 13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, in-glaze-
 and overglaze-painted
 H. 3 1/4 in. (8.1 cm); Diam. 8 1/4 in. (21 cm)
 Brooklyn Museum, New York, Gift of the
 Ernest Erickson Foundation, Inc. (86.227.61)

Fig. 71. Bowl. Iran, Nishapur, 10th century. Earthenware;
 glazed in opaque turquoise, H. 2 in. (5.1 cm);
 Diam. 6 1/4 in. (15.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of
 Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1938 (38.40.243)



g

number of pieces produced. An elaborate example with musicians and standing figures (cat. 108h) was excavated in a kilns area at Nishapur. The scene may be understood as narrative when considered in relation to a more complete piece excavated at Hauz-khan (between Merv and Sarakhs) depicting the legend of Farhad carrying the body of his beloved Shirin over the river.¹⁵

No satisfactory explanation has yet been proposed for the broader repertory of shapes observed in central Iranian monochrome

stonepaste vessels as compared with those in Syria. If one were to maintain the hypothesis of a common derivation, which convincingly explains the shared technical features beyond those of a shared and interacting visual language, a possible reason could be that production began some decades earlier than the (archaeologically attested) mid-eleventh century, by which time manufacturers had begun to develop their products independently. In the large assemblage from Isfahan, for example, the nearly 3:10 ratio of stonepaste

to glazed earthenware (monochrome green and brown, sgraffito, splash, and slip-painted wares) suggests that by the last quarter of the eleventh century, stonepaste was widespread and, despite its novelty, neither expensive nor particularly luxurious, at least in an urban context.¹⁶ Creativity in shapes may have stemmed from a mode already seen in earthenware, in particular sgraffito vessels with decorated rims and opaque-turquoise vessels, which were probably executed in dialogue with imports from China.¹⁷





i

Mold Fragment with Musicians and Modern Cast (i)

Excavated at Nishapur, east kilns, late 11th–early 12th century
Earthenware; carved
Each 6¼ × 3¼ in. (16.2 × 16 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1948 (48.101.5a, b)

In Khurasan stonepaste assemblages, despite sharing with Syria and central Iran the standard repertory of shapes, seem not to include either decorated or lobed rims/bowls, which may indicate that a slightly different development occurred in the region. If confirmed by future excavations, this would strengthen the hypothesis that stonepaste technology and manufacturing disseminated from a common origin, as well as help explain regional differences. A distinct local development has been attested in twelfth-century Afghanistan.¹⁸

Early Experimentation?

Despite the lack of safely dated evidence for the emergence of stonepaste before the mid-eleventh century, historical texts from as early as the mid-tenth century make reference to the use of siliceous materials in the Iranian territories, though not necessarily for ceramic production. The *Risala* (Epistle) of Abu Dulaf

mentions a technique he encountered during his travels in central Iran (ca. 943–52) that was used to create “Chinese pottery,” though it seems to describe a sort of glass production, possibly opaque:

Chinese pottery is white or some other colour, either translucent or not translucent. It is made in the country of Fars from quartz stone, *al-kils al-qal'i* (probably tin oxide), and glass, pounded into a paste and it is inflated and made with fire tongs just as glass is inflated in the making of cups and other vessels.¹⁹

Neither Abu Dulaf nor Yaqt al-Hamawi, who transmitted this text in the early thirteenth century, may have had the technical understanding to know what was being described (they were geographers, not craftsmen), but the mention of quartz and glass—components used to make stonepaste—and the reference to “Chinese pottery” are noteworthy. If the passage were indeed describing the manufacture of opaque glass, the few existing coeval vessels, in opaque turquoise, could in fact be seen as mimicking “Chinese” objects on account of their often lobed and scalloped shapes.²⁰ These forms have also been demonstrated to recur in early central Iranian stonepaste. While this correspondence can certainly be explained by a common visual language, the communality extends to the above-mentioned peculiarly shaped foot (for instance, in fig. 58),

a technicality that might suggest a shared manufacturing environment.²¹

A second text to mention a siliceous compound is al-Biruni’s *Kitab al-jawahir* (Book of precious stones), completed before 1048, which again mentions Chinese bowls (*al-qisa al-siniyyat*): “One may make [Chinese bowls] here from pure *marwa* (quartz pebbles), described in the chapter on glaze, mixed with clays.” The text goes on to describe how the clay was prepared and the bowls made.²² Although the omission of glass as an ingredient may preclude the possibility that al-Biruni is describing stonepaste (he does mention glaze, technically similar), he does seem to be witnessing something closer to ceramic production. Similarly, in the late twelfth-century *Jawahirnama* (Book of precious stones) of Muhammad b. Abu-l-Barakat Jawhari Nishapuri (dated A.H. 592/A.D. 1196), a recipe for Chinese ware also mentions ground quartz.²³ These and other texts confirm the fascination with Chinese pottery, presumably porcelain, that must have been strong in the Iranian regions at the turn of the eleventh century.²⁴ They also suggest that siliceous ingredients were perceived by literate people—whose knowledge of the described technology is, admittedly, a matter of debate—as components of sophisticated manufactures.

In addition to these passages, and although no trial phases have yet been definitively identified in the earliest stonepaste from Iran or Iraq, experiments using siliceous components in ceramic and brick production were not completely unknown east of Egypt. Some of the earliest (9th century) include a silica-based slip applied to splash and sgraffito wares in Iraq and Iran; the siliceous bricks of the Qasr al-Ashiq and the Qubbat al-Sulaybiyya mausoleum in Samarra (probably late 9th century); and, above all, proto-stonepaste bodies developed in Syria and Iraq by adding glass to the clay.²⁵ There is no direct evidence linking these materials to the emergence of stonepaste, although they demonstrate that the potential of crushed quartz was acknowledged long before a proto-stonepaste was developed in Egypt.²⁶

A potentially significant contribution to the discussion lies in a group of earthenware

vessels with comparable shapes, dimensions, and thinness, and with a similar taste for elaborate rims and applied decoration as those of the early Iranian stonepaste group. They are covered with an opaque turquoise glaze, which makes their appearance identical to that of turquoise-glazed stonepaste (see fig. 71). Fragments were excavated in late eleventh-century layers at Isfahan, together with the earliest stonepaste but in much smaller quantities; in an eleventh- or twelfth-century phase at Istakhr (Estakhr); and at Nishapur, also in small quantities.²⁷ Further research is needed to understand fully the significance of this ware, which may have been an imitation stonepaste made by craftsmen not yet knowledgeable in the medium, a preexisting production whose repertory of shapes was later adopted by stonepaste manufacturers, or a transitional ware.

The Case of Luster

The increase in number of stonepaste workshops in Syria and Iran from the eleventh to the twelfth century suggests that the technique spread rapidly and was not a prerogative of only a few craftsmen. This may not be the case of an associated technology reintroduced at about the same time, luster painting, in which a mixture containing metallic-oxide pigment is applied to a finished glazed object. During a supplementary firing in a reduced (low-oxygen) atmosphere, the pigment is chemically transformed into an impalpable sheen. This technology may have been known to only a restricted number of workshops.²⁸ Archaeological data are rarely helpful in identifying luster production centers, since the technique is applied to completed and fired objects and produces hardly any wasters; in fact, almost no information is available for Syria or Iran.²⁹ With regard to the latter, epigraphic and historical sources and petrographic analyses support the theory that luster was the prerogative of a number of family-run potteries in the central Iranian town of Kashan.³⁰ The 1196 *Jawahirnama* implies that Isfahan was also a place of manufacture, but the text remains an isolated piece of evidence (fig. 72).³¹ As for Syria and Anatolia, petrographic analyses that support centralized luster

production have been challenged, at least for the second half of the twelfth century, by a corpus excavated at Gritille, in southern Anatolia, that was likely produced in the region.³²

The timeline for luster's emergence is a subject of debate. Some scholars argue that stylistic similarities, especially in Syrian examples, indicate that stonepaste and luster developed in Syria and Iran almost simultaneously and coincident to their diffusion from Egypt.³³ Stratigraphic data suggest that luster was applied to stonepaste very early on; however, it is regularly absent from the earliest excavated assemblages in Syria and Iran to include (predominantly monochrome) stonepaste wares. Finds from eleventh-century contexts at the citadel of Damascus are a unique exception.³⁴ By the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, luster-painted stonepaste vessels were being produced in Syria that featured a variety of geometric, vegetal, and figural motifs—including seated figures, harpies, griffins, winged horses, lions, hares, eagles, and other real and fantastic animals—showing an evident link to Egyptian examples. Inscriptions in these early pieces are limited to benedictions or names, written in Arabic in *kufic* script. The luster, sometimes also scratch-decorated, was generally painted over a white background, either a transparent colorless or opaque white glaze. Opaque turquoise glazes (e.g., cat. 108a) were less commonly produced, increasingly so in the later twelfth century.³⁵

Archaeologically sound information on the emergence of Iranian luster is scant for the period from the late eleventh to the second half of the twelfth century, and scholars have traditionally relied on pieces inscribed with dates to reconstruct a chronology. The earliest of these, a bottle in the British Museum, London (1920.2-260), dates from A.H. 575/A.D. 1179.³⁶ However, luster fragments have also been found in earlier dating layers in the *masjid-i jami'* in Isfahan, Siraf, Rayy, and the Qohandez in Nishapur.³⁷ No examples have been collected from earlier sites such as Istakhr, Sirjan, or Susa.

The Twelfth Century in Syria

Stonepaste production expanded significantly in the twelfth century, as witnessed by a



Fig. 72. Reproduction of a kiln employed for enamel (*mina*) and luster (*talavih*) in the *Jawahirnama-yi Nizami* of Nishapuri. Malek Library, Tehran (MS 3609; fol. 153v)

substantial increase in production centers; advancements in established techniques and the development of new ones, especially underglaze painting; a greater sophistication in decoration; and a more marked stylistic divergence between Syrian and Iranian productions.

In Syria, where the increase in manufactures and in mass production is better documented, the industry exploited a cheaper manufacturing and firing process, the result of which was a coarser, more friable body quite different from the hard, fine, compact nature of the earliest wares, the siliceous bodies of which were partially vitrified during firing. Even luster was executed using a cheaper technique, often resulting in a brown, non-metallic shine. In the course of this progression, lead-based glaze was gradually substituted by one of alkali-lead. The greater accessibility of these later wares is reflected in their widespread dissemination.³⁸ Also at this time, true underglaze painting—mostly in black or blue under a colorless or turquoise glaze, but also polychrome—became standard (see cat. 148b and fig. 74). In addition to sophisticated objects with designs executed by skilled masters, a repertory of standardized filling motifs was developed and deployed on objects of varied degrees of refinement.



Fig. 73. Ewer. Syria, probably Raqqa, 12th century. Stonepaste; underglaze-painted, glazed (transparent colorless), luster-painted, H. 7³/₈ in. (18.7 cm); Diam. 5¹/₄ in. (13.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Gift of Horace Havemeyer, 1948 (48.113.16)

Luster, too, began to be applied to underglaze-painted objects (see cat. 48 and fig. 73).³⁹ Monochrome pieces, predominantly molded, continued to appear, most often as small portable elements such as tabourets (see cat. 63) and inkwells, as well as human or animal-shaped vessels or figurines. Serving vessels remained the most common productions, although their shapes were largely simplified in comparison with those of the previous century. Exemplary of the period are a bowl with curved walls and an everted rim and another with straight walls and a low carination (also called a biconical bowl).

In the literature these vessels are referred to as “Raqqa” ware, for the site along the Euphrates River from which many of them came to Western collections in the early twentieth century. Raqqa, however, was but one of several production centers in a region that spanned northern Jazira, Syria, and Egypt. Several of these may also have yielded

polychrome underglaze-painted pieces, known as “Rusafa” (or “Resafa”) ware.⁴⁰

These wares testify to shared techniques and visual languages, regardless of political and dynastic powers. At the same time, however, the complex outline of intermediate phases and local features being identified in newly excavated assemblages underscores the independent developments taking place at all these sites, a fact that has been explained as a reflection of the political fragmentation of twelfth-century Syria, as well as its favorable economy. For example, a group detected at Qal’at Ja’bar has the same body and shapes of the earliest stonepaste vessels but with an alkali-lead glaze. Also exemplary is a group defined by a repertory of underglaze-painted and reserve-painted medallions, produced at Aleppo but also found in central Syria;

and the above-mentioned underglaze-painted wares of unusually early date found at Damascus.⁴¹ In southern Anatolia, at Gritille, a group of calcareous clay vessels (second half of the 12th century) is visually identical to and overlaps with stonepaste production, even including luster; the limited number and uniformity of shapes and glazes (mainly turquoise and manganese) and the high percentage of luster (as seen above) argue for a distinct local production.⁴² Finally, the nearby site of Tille Hoyuk delivered the finding of a double-glaze underglaze-painted ware.⁴³

The Twelfth Century in Iran

In Iran, the twelfth century, at least from the middle of the century, marked a shift in taste from monochrome vessels of minimal embellishment to richly decorated, colorful objects of larger, more elaborate shape (cat. 108g; see also cats. 54, 143). All these developments speak to the higher expectations of their consumer base. At the same time, serving vessels became more standardized in form, with two basic bowl shapes—low carinated ones similar to their Syrian counterparts, and others with rounded walls—and dishes with everted rims.⁴⁴ Such codification attests to industrial-style production, possibly subdivided into specialized phases of manufacture,⁴⁵ which would

have made these sophisticated wares available to a larger number of consumers.

Of the new decorative techniques introduced in the twelfth century, underglaze painting developed differently in Iran than it did in Syria, building on local slip-painting traditions: analysis of so-called silhouette ware reveals that the black pigment was mixed into a quartz slip. Only later did true underglaze painting (with no slip medium) develop.⁴⁶ And although the underglaze technique became common, it does not seem to have had quite the same currency or to have had so wide a reach as Syrian underglaze-painted wares. For this reason, coupled with the favor shown to them by Western collectors when they became requested at the beginning of the twentieth century, the best known and extensively studied Iranian stonepaste wares are luster-painted and *mina’i* ceramics. *Mina’i*—the modern term for *haft rang* (seven-color) in the historical sources—was a novel and distinctive Iranian method of overglaze painting (enameling) that was sometimes paired with gilding, and which may have been transposed from techniques employed on different materials, such as glass enameling.⁴⁷

Both luster and *mina’i* are associated with the city of Kashan, although Nishapuri’s 1196 treatise (see above) further implies that



Fig. 74. Bowl with *alif-lam* motif. Syria, probably Raqqa, 12th century. Stonepaste; glazed (transparent), underglaze painted, H. 3 in. (7.6 cm); Diam. 10³/₈ in. (26.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund, 1934 (34.71)

Isfahan was a second site of luster production in Iran. Both techniques are described in the most important medieval text on Iranian stonepaste, written by Abu-l-Qasim in the early fourteenth century, when *mina'i* had already been discontinued. The text also contains an unprecedented and accurate description of stonepaste technology.

Abu-l-Qasim was uniquely qualified to write such a tome, for his family had made ceramics in Kashan for generations and continued with his brother. Other family-run potteries in the city can be identified by inscriptions on their creations.⁴⁸ Cat. 108d, for instance, is inscribed with the name Hasan al-Qashani, the latter portion a *nisba* linking the potter to Kashan (it appears variably as “Kashani”).⁴⁹ Kashan was undoubtedly a major center for most technologies related to stonepaste and, despite the above-mentioned evidence to the contrary, is largely believed to have had a virtual monopoly on more sophisticated ceramics such as lusterware. Stonepaste, however, was produced throughout Iran: a dearth of archaeological evidence, such as excavations of workshops and kilns, has not prevented petrographic analyses from identifying at least nine petrofabric groupings, presumably of diverse origin.⁵⁰ (Ray was the only site from which a waster was available for investigation.)

A chronological progression of lusterware and *mina'i* is widely accepted, as reflected by styles of decoration and, less prominently, shapes of objects. Once again, the incomplete archaeological record prompted scholars to turn to dated inscriptions. It is generally accepted that the earliest examples, none of which is dated, are reserve-painted against a luster background and iconographically similar to the Syrian pieces. Large figures, often seated, with moonlike faces predominate and, in a hallmark of this so-called monumental style, usually occupy most of the surface. Further classifications include the sketchier miniature style, seen in both luster and *mina'i*, characterized by small figures set in a spare or artificially ornate garden background (typical of this mode are checkerboard cypresses). The later “Kashan” style, which is attested from the end of the twelfth through the first two decades of the thirteenth century, merges



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Bowl with Purple Glaze and Incised Epigraphic Elements

Excavated at Ray (RH4504), mid-12th–early 13th century

Stonepaste; incised, transparent purple glaze

H. 3¼ in. (8.4 cm); Diam. 8⅛ in. (20.6 cm)

University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia (37-11-39)

elements of both the monumental and the miniature into dense, sophisticated compositions whose complex iconography includes narrative scenes, mystical themes, and, most notably, extensive inscriptions, predominantly Persian poetry written in cursive script, which add complexity to the semantic value of the depicted images.⁵¹

The number of stylistic features shared by the otherwise distinct Iranian and Syrian stonepaste of the twelfth century—for instance, the dotted branches on both Iranian *mina'i* and Syrian polychrome underglaze-painted wares; the moonlike faces of figures; the ubiquitous biconical bowl—exemplifies how a common visual language was adapted to and inflected by local techniques and traditions. At the same time, as the archaeological evidence from Syria has prompted the amendment of the previously accepted timeline of production in that region, the need for an archaeologically controlled reevaluation of the chronology of stonepaste manufacture in Iran becomes all the more acute. **MR**

This biconical bowl features on its interior an incised pseudo-epigraphic band surrounded by vegetal fill. For the semiliterate urban population, which would have been the bowl's intended market, it was probably enough to recognize the first set of letters in each group to understand the intention: to convey words of good wishes, as seems to have been the practice on many objects of the period.¹ Both the interior and exterior are covered with a magenta-colored glaze, while the ring foot is left plain. The body is made of stonepaste (for which, see cats. 108a–i),² and the glaze is lead-based, with tin used as an opacifier; other components are calcium, manganese (acting as the colorant for the purple hue), iron, copper, and strontium. **RH**



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Fragment of a Box with Combination Lock

Maker: Muhammad b. Hamid al-Asturlabi al-Isfahani
Iran, probably Isfahan, dated A.H. 597/A.D. 1200–1201
Brass; cast, beaten, inlaid with silver and copper
1¾ × 9¼ × 7¼ in. (4.4 × 23.5 × 18.5 cm)
David Collection, Copenhagen (1/1984)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the top center:

عمل محمد بن حامد الاضطرابي الاصفهاني في سنة سبع و تسعين و
خمس مائة

*The work of Muhammad b. Hamid al-Asturlabi
al-Isfahani, in the year 597.*

Along the front edge:

السعادة والسلامة والتأييد والنصرة والتمكين والقدر

*Happiness, prosperity, support (from God), victory,
strength, and might.*

In *naskhi* along the top edge:

العز والاقبال والدولة والسعادة والسلامة والتأييد والنصرة والتمكين

والقدرة والرحمة والراحة [. . .] والعافية والنعمة والسعادة والسلامة

والتأييد والنصرة والتمكين والقدر والرحمة والراحة

*Glory, prosperity, dominion, happiness and prosperity,
and support (from God), victory, strength, might, mercy,
and happiness.¹*

This fragmentary object belongs to a small group of medieval Islamic strongboxes with combination locks.² It is dated A.H. 597/A.D. 1200–1201 and signed by Muhammad b. Hamid al-Asturlabi al-Isfahani, a descendant of a renowned family of astrolabe makers in Isfahan. Another very similar box, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is dated

A.H. 593/A.D. 1196–97 and bears in its fragmentary inscription the *nisbas* al-Asturlabi and al-Isfahani, leading scholars to believe that it also was made by Muhammad b. Hamid.³ Given the time difference of twenty-two years between Muhammad b. Hamid's last dated astrolabe and his first box (in Boston), and the absence of the *nisba* al-Asturlabi on the astrolabes, one may conclude that it was only toward the end of his life that he made such boxes with combination locks and that, perhaps, he included a reference to his earlier profession to remind patrons of his former profession and status.⁴

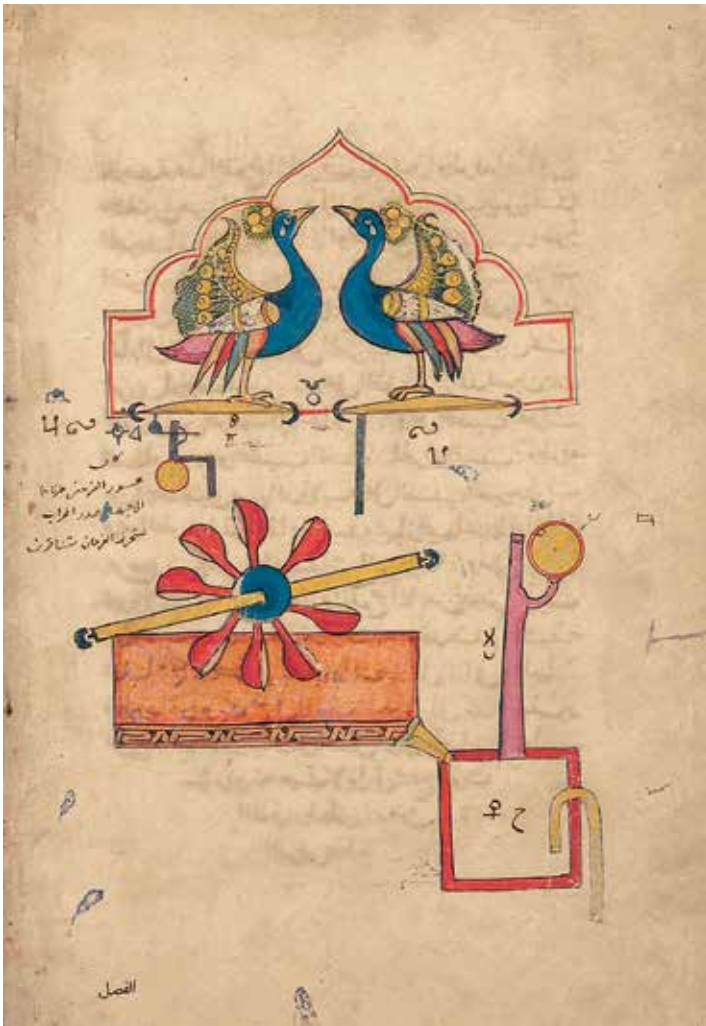
On top of the lid of this box are four double dials surmounted by rotatable pointers, each one triangular. The operative point is marked by the inlaid decoration on the flat part of the knob. Each knob has to be turned to the appropriate one of the sixteen letters on the small six-pointed disk below, then the pointer has to be turned so that it

matches the correct one of the sixteen letters on the circular scale on the lid itself. When the right combination is entered—probably based on a word code—it releases the inner metal plate, which is attached both to an external handle and to the locking mechanism itself.⁵

At around the same time, the mechanical genius al-Jazari, who worked at the Artuqid court in Diyar Bakr, the northern part of the Jazira, described a similar strongbox with combination lock in his *al-Jami' bayn al-'ilm wa al-'amal al-nafi' fi sina'at al-hiyal* (Compendium of the theory and practice of the mechanical arts).⁶ Cat. 168c presents a Jaziran version of such mechanical boxes from the thirteenth century, lavishly inlaid with an iconographic repertoire and in the style of the al-Mawsili school. Such boxes with combination locks were mechanical devices known in both the eastern and western regions of the Seljuq realm. They are among the few examples that survive from the many elaborate devices, including water clocks and automata (see cat. 111b), for which al-Jazari's work became famous and whose origins are believed to be rooted in Mediterranean cultures tracing as far back as Hellenistic antiquity. Together with other original devices, such as a unique geomantic device from the British Museum signed by Muhammad al-Khutlukh al-Mawsili in A.H. 639–40/A.D. 1241–42 (fig. 75), with dials comparable to those of cat. 168c but which was intended to predict the future,⁷ they illustrate the inventive spirit and ingenuity seen in mechanical technology during Seljuq times. **DB**



Fig. 75. Geomantic instrument. Jazira or Syria, 1241–42. Brass; engraved, inlaid with silver and gold, 10½ × 13¼ in. (26.8 × 33.6 cm). British Museum, London (1888,0526.1)



حركة هذا الفرخ الثاني قضيباً واحداً وطرفه أيضاً بين
 كفتين من الدولاب ولبعيداً في تشكيل صورة هذه
 الحركات للفرخين فأما أوضح من الصورة ومثل صورة
 الفرخين في الحراب والمجاور والقضبان ودولاب الكفات
 وحوض تحته ومنه يخرج ما يقع على كفات الدولاب من
 الماء إلى قدر الصفيير وعلى الحراب وعلى الفرخين عند
 محوري أو جلسماً **ت** وعلى القضيبين المدلسين من
 المحورين من طرفهما الأسفلين **ج** وعلى القضيب المحرك
 للسطام **د** وهو القضيب المعطوف المحرك للقضيب **هـ** وطرفه
 بين الكفتين من الدولاب وعلى القضيب الغير معطوف
 وهو الطويل ليقوم مقام القضيبين بأزاهما عند طرفه النازل
 بين كفتين من أعلى كفات الدولاب **و** ومتى دار هذا
 الدولاب تناقرا الفرخان وانفذ في المار من حوض حقت
 الدولاب وعليه **ز** إلى قدر الصفيير وقد قدم كيفية
 عملها في الشكل الأول والشكل الثاني وعليها **ح**
 فيطردها الهواء وينفذ في أنبوب عليه **ط** إلى بندقه صفيير
 على طرف الأنبوب وهو نافذ في أرض الحراب الأول
 في زاوية حيث لا يراى لسمع صوت
 الصفيير فظن انه من
 الفرخين وعليه **ي**

a

111a, b

Folios from the *Kitab fi ma'rifat al-hiyal al-handasiyya* (Book of the Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices) of Badi' al-Zaman b. al-Razzaz al-Jazari

Design for the Water Clock of the Peacocks (a)

Scribe and artist: Farrukh b. 'Abd al-Latif al-Katib al-Yaqaṭi al-Mawlawi

Syria or Iraq, dated A.H. 715/A.D. 1315
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
12³/₈ × 8³/₄ in. (31.4 × 22.1 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1955 (55.121.15; fol. 2v–2r)

Design for the Automata of the Slave Girl Serving a Glass of Wine (b)

Scribe and artist: Farrukh b. 'Abd al-Latif al-Katib al-Yaqaṭi al-Mawlawi

Syria or Iraq, dated A.H. 715/A.D. 1315
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
12¹/₄ × 8¹/₂ in. (31 × 21.5 cm)

al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait (MSLNS 17; fol. 17r)

Al-Jazari, the author of this treatise on a range of practical and fanciful mechanical devices, served at the Artuqid court in Diyar Bakr, completing this manuscript between 1198 and 1200. With the exception of two manuscripts attributed to the thirteenth century,¹ the dispersed book from which these illustrations come is the earliest copy of the text. The book had its genesis in a conversation between al-Jazari and Nasr al-Din Mahmud (r. 1201–22), presumably before the latter began his reign, in which Nasr al-Din observed a device made by al-Jazari and, complimenting him on it, asked if he would compose “a book which assembles what you have created separately, and brings together a selection of individual items and pictures.”² Al-Jazari proceeded to write a treatise, organized in six sections, with explanations and illustrations of fifty types of devices. The sections cover: 1) the construction of clocks that show the passage of the “constant and solar hours”; 2) the construction of vessels and figures used for drinking; 3) the construction of pitchers and basins for

phlebotomy and ritual washing; 4) the construction of fountains that change shape and “machines for the perpetual flute”; 5) the construction of machines for raising water; and 6) the construction of “different, dissimilar things.”

The water clock of the peacocks (cat. 111a) tells the passage of the constant hours. The image (fol. 2v) contains some but not all the elements of the clock. At the top is a lobed arch (mihrab) containing two young confronted peacocks. In the completed device, the arch would be surmounted by a further arch containing a peahen, above which was a semicircle bordered by fifteen glass roundels. Another arch below the pair of peacocks would contain a single peacock. At daybreak the peahen would face right but in the course of half an hour would turn completely to the left. Half of the first roundel would turn red and the pair of peacocks would whistle loudly. After another half an hour, the peahen would turn back to the right, the roundel would turn red, and the peacocks would whistle, and so on until half an hour after sunset. At night the

roundels would fill with light for the number of hours of darkness. Below the peacocks is a wheel with large scoops intersected by an axle and another wheel that should be toothed and mesh with another toothed wheel attached by a rod to a ball on which the single peacock stands. When the water fills the scoops, the wheels turn and the peacock rotates. Although the scooped wheel is depicted sideways, its axle would have been perpendicular to the back wall of the mihrab, which it would have pierced, connecting to a pipe on the inside of the house. The black lines below the peacocks represent rods, one bent and one straight, which are activated by the movement of the waterwheel, causing the peacocks to turn. The small basin at the lower right is described as an air vessel, from which air is expelled into the pipe at the right and thence into a ball that is inserted into the roof of the top mihrab where, heard but not seen, it whistles. The description (fol. 2r) proceeds with explanations for other constituents of this elaborate water clock.

In the second section, devoted to vessels and figures used for drinking, al-Jazari describes a device that consists of a figure of a slave girl, which emerges from a cupboard eight times an hour to offer a glass of wine to the ruler (cat. 111b). In this illustration the doors of the cupboard are omitted so that the slave girl and the other components are visible. The slave girl, made of papier-mâché, stands with feet fastened to a board set on four rollers on a slight incline. The rollers fit into channels in the floor of the compartment. In her right hand, made of copper, the slave girl holds a glass for the wine and, in the left, a cloth. Her forearm and upper arm are connected by an axle, enabling her to bend the arm. A rod extends from this axle and hooks over an iron bar attached to the side of the cupboard. Depending on whether the glass is empty or full, the rod and thus the figure's arm move up or down. When the rod goes up, it disconnects from the iron bar and the slave girl rolls forward, pushing the doors of the cupboard open with her left hand. In the dome at the top of the cupboard is a tinned copper reservoir into which wine is poured. It drips into a tipping bucket below it. When the bucket fills with enough wine, it decants into

the glass in the slave girl's hand and the process of serving the wine begins. The king takes the wine glass, drinks the wine, uses the cloth to wipe his mouth, and returns the glass to the slave girl's hand and raises her arm, starting the cycle again.

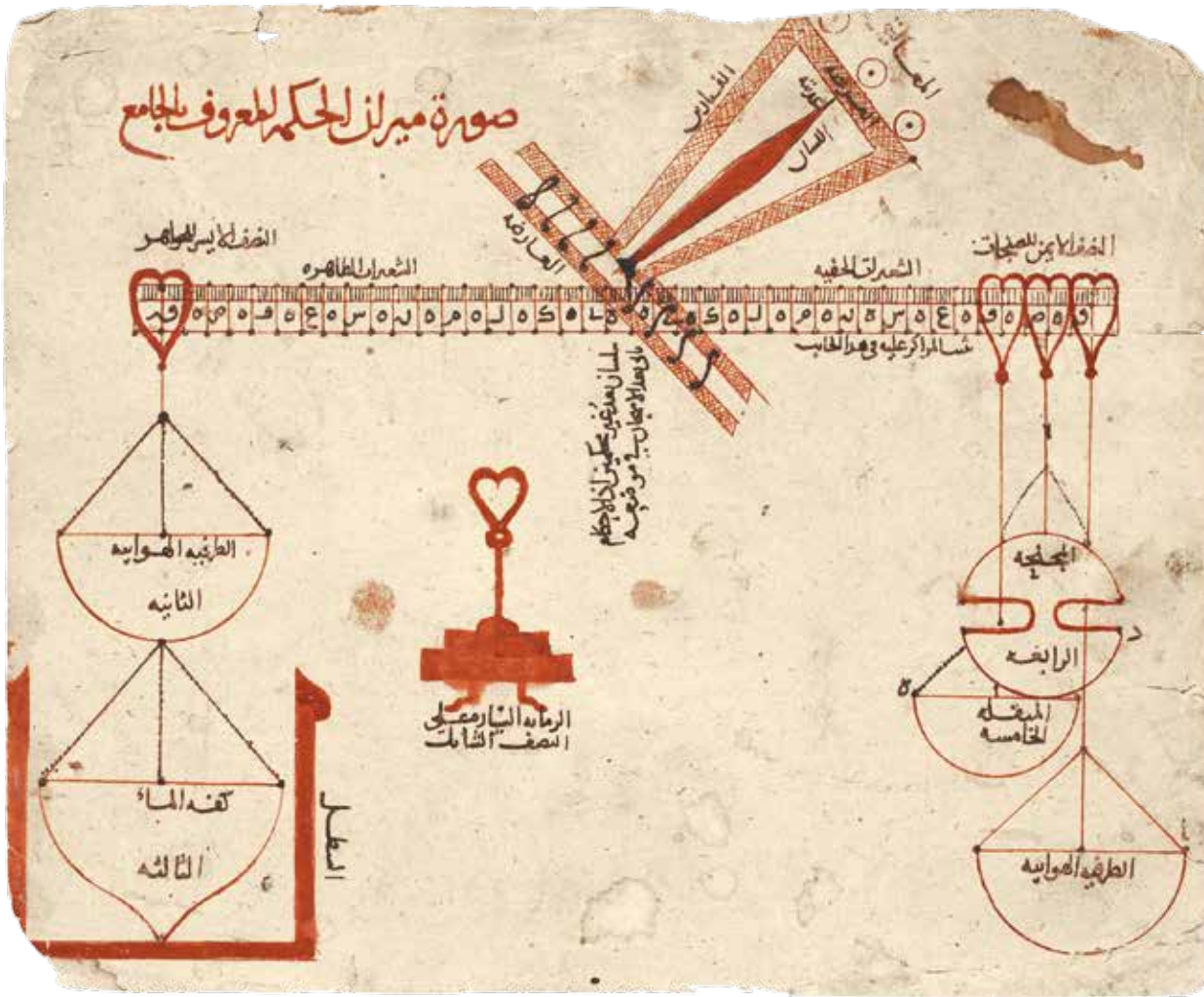
The manuscript from which this illustration comes has been attributed variously to Syria, Iraq, and Egypt.³ The inclusion of the word "al-Yaquti" in the name of the copyist must indicate his scribal affiliation with the tradition of Yaqut al-Musta'simi, the thirteenth-century calligrapher at the court of the last Abbasid caliph in Baghdad, but it also may signify that Farrukh b. 'Abd al-Latif studied with Yaqut

himself, as the master died only in 1298.

While this does not prove that the manuscript was copied in Baghdad, the figural style and treatment of the drapery have affinities with illustrations from certain thirteenth-century manuscripts produced in northern Iraq in the Jazira, such as the *Maqamat* (cat. 86). Also, nimbuses, like the one ringing the slave girl's head, appear regularly in that *Maqamat* manuscript but are not prevalent in the so-called Schefer *Maqamat* produced in Baghdad.⁴ The dearth of colophons that include the site of production hampers a more precise attribution for this manuscript and others that date from the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. **SRC**



b



112

“The Comprehensive Balance,” from a *Kitab mizan al-hikmah* (Book of the Balance of Wisdom) of Abu-l-Fath ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Khazini

Iran, ca. 1270
 Ink on paper; unbound
 6¼ × 7⅞ in. (16 × 19.5 cm)
 Lawrence J. Schoenberg Collection of Manuscripts,
 Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books,
 and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania Libraries,
 Philadelphia (LJS 386)

Al-Khazini completed his *Kitab mizan al-hikmah* (Book of the balance of wisdom) in 1121, at the court of Sultan Sanjar at Merv.¹ A slave of Greek origin, al-Khazini was brought up by Sanjar’s treasurer, who provided the education that enabled the author to become one of the leading specialists in mechanics of his day.² His most illustrious teacher was ‘Umar Khayyam, whose two treatises on the theory

of the level balance are included in the *Kitab mizan al-hikmah*.³ Although some folios of this volume of the manuscript are missing, its table of contents indicates that it included the eight treatises of the original on the following subjects: theories of centers of gravity of Greek and Arab scientists; centers of gravity and the steelyard, or lever; comparative densities of certain metals and precious stones based on the work of al-Biruni; balances designed by Greek and Arab scholars; the water balance of ‘Umar Khayyam; the comprehensive balance and its constituent alloys; weights of coins; and the steelyard clepsydra.⁴ The book has been called “the culmination of centuries of developments, both Greek and Islamic, in the science of weighing [and] the determination of specific gravities.”⁵

The comprehensive balance, described in great detail and illustrated in al-Khazini’s

manuscript, was based on and added refinements to an instrument invented by a contemporary of al-Khazini. As illustrated here, this highly accurate weighing machine consists of a two-meter-long metal beam with a shorter crossbeam at its center point that in turn connects to a suspension device. Five bowls serve as scales, including one at the lower left that holds water. The red object between the bowls is a movable weight. Because of the precision and sophistication of this device, it could be used not only for finding weights of objects but also for determining specific gravities of a range of materials, including metal alloys. Both al-Khazini’s text and his comprehensive balance were instrumental in enabling market inspectors to determine fraud, owing to its accurate weighing of metals and other substances. **SRC**

Astronomical Anthology

Iran or Anatolia, dated A.H. 625/A.D. 1227–28

Ink on paper; leather binding

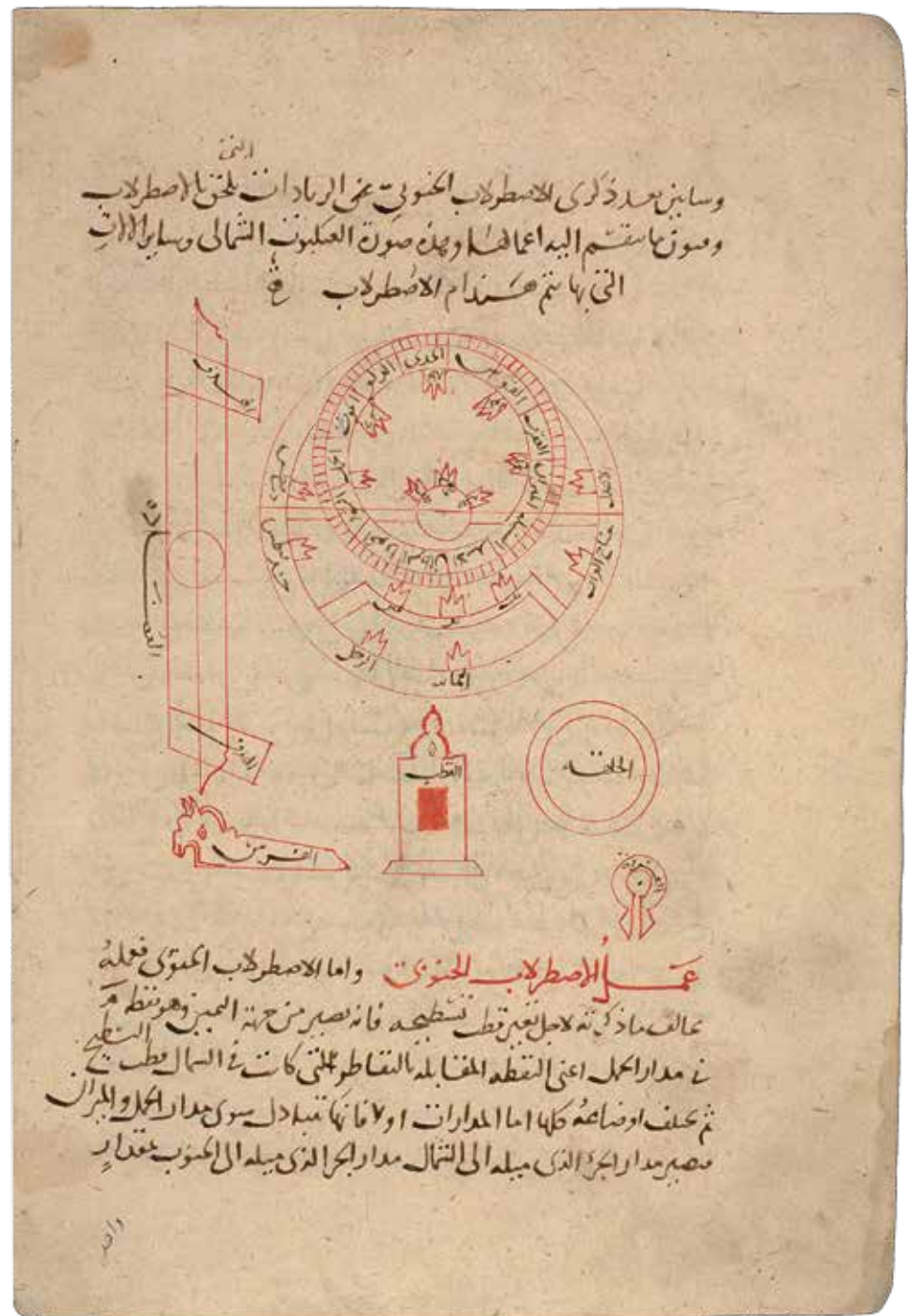
97/8 × 7 in. (25.2 × 17.8 cm)

Lawrence J. Schoenberg Collection of Manuscripts, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania Libraries, Philadelphia (LJS478)

This anthology consists of eighty-seven folios containing six treatises on astrolabes and other instruments used for astronomical calculations and terrestrial wayfinding. They are the *Kitab fi isti'ab al-wujuh al-mumkina fi san'at al-asturlab* (On the construction of the astrolabe) by Abu Rayhan Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Biruni (973–1048); two treatises on crab and drum astrolabes now attributed to the tenth-century astronomer Nastulus (or Bastulus); and treatises on an instrument for finding the direction of Mecca, on the ecliptic, and on the compass.¹

The importance of manuscripts of this sort cannot be overestimated. Astrolabes enabled their owners to solve various astronomical and geographical problems and to tell the time of day, which in turn indicated the time of prayer and the hour of birth, to be used for casting horoscopes. Planispheric astrolabes as described by al-Biruni were the subject of treatises as early as 150 B.C., but works in Arabic on the subject did not begin to appear until the early ninth century. Al-Biruni's contribution was a compendium and "classification of all known methods for astrolabe projections," which included additional proposals of his own.² One of the greatest scholars of his age, al-Biruni wrote 146 books of which 95 were devoted to mathematics, astronomy, and related subjects.

Al-Biruni's original treatise most likely included diagrams such as the ones found in the 1228 *Anthology*. This one, folio 17v, depicts several key elements of the astrolabe. The large circle enclosing a smaller ecliptic one with notches marked in it is referred to as the spider (*ankabut* or *rete*), a movable part that fits inside the outer rim on the front of an astrolabe. Below it is the *qutb*, a pin that passes through the central hole of the astrolabe and, with the horse, shown at the bottom left, holds in place the spider and the *alidat*,



depicted sideways at the upper left. The *alidat*, the second movable part, is a ruler that is attached to the back of the astrolabe by the *qutb*. The simple ring at the right, the *halqa*, may be the one that is placed under the spider. However, the smaller ring with an opening and two projections may have also enclosed the central pin, perhaps on the back of the astrolabe. SRC

17v



114

Astrolabe

Maker: Muhammad b. Abi-l-Qasim b. Bakran al-Najjar al-Isfahani al-Salihani
Iran, Isfahan, dated A.H. 496/A.D. 1102–3
Brass

H. 7¼ in. (18.3 cm); Diam. 4¾ in. (12.2 cm)
Museo Galileo—Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza, Florence (1105)

Inscribed in Arabic in *abjad* letters on the back:

صنعه محمد بن ابي القسم بن بكران / النجار الاصفهاني الصالحاني
في سنة و ص ت

The work of Muhammad b. Abi-l-Qasim b. Bakran / al-Najjar al-Isfahani al-Salihani in the year 496.

This astrolabe, presumably made in Iran in the year A.H. 496, bears the signature of Muhammad b. Abi-l-Qasim b. Bakran al-Najjar (“The Carpenter”) al-Isfahani al-Salihani written in *abjad* letters.¹ Its parts include a rete, a mater, four plates, an *alidada*, and a *qutb*, or pin,² to hold the *alidada* in place on the back of the

astrolabe (see cat. 113 for an explanation of these parts). Each of the plates has longitude and latitude lines for different locations, which include Medina (24°N, 30°E), Jerusalem (31°N, 35°E), and Damascus (32°N, 36°E). The curved lines show the altitude, or angular distance above the horizon, represented by the horizontal line running through the middle of the plate, and the angular distance around the horizon, or azimuth, denoted by the concentric circles around the center of the plate. The movement of the rete over the plate simulates the rotation of the sun and stars across the sky of the given locale.³ Thus, one could determine the time of day and by extension the time and direction of prayer. Given its small size and the specific latitudes and longitudes of the plates, this would have been a useful, portable instrument for a person on a pilgrimage

to two of the three holiest places in Islam, Medina and Jerusalem.

In addition to wayfinding, the astrolabe served several other purposes. When the astrolabe is held vertically, the alidada on the back of the mater can be rotated to measure the altitude of the sun or a star, sighted along its length, which is the first step in determining the time. The two lower quadrants contain a shadow square used to make measurements for surveying and gnomonic projections,⁴ while a sine quadrant appears in the upper left. The upper right quadrant is engraved with the meridian altitudes of the sun for different latitudes and the azimuth of the *qibla* as represented by a trefoil/trilobated arch in which the word “Isfahan” is inscribed,⁵ thus enabling verification of the direction of prayer. **SRC**



79r

78v

115

Three Treatises and a Letter on the Theory, Construction, and Use of Astrolabes

Anatolia, Sivas and Kayseri, dated A.H. 628–35/
A.D. 1231–38

Ink and colors on paper

9½ × 6⅞ in. (24 × 16 cm)

al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah,
Kuwait (LNS 67 MS)

The three treatises in this manuscript are *Kitab fi 'amal al-asturlab* (Treatise on the uses of the astrolabe), by Abu-l-Hasan Kay Khusraw b. al-'Ula al-Shirazi, copied by Mahmud b. Muhammad al-Mushi in Sivas in A.H. Ramadan 628/A.D. July–August 1231; *Kitab fi isti'ab al-wujuh al-mumkina fi san'at al-asturlab* (Treatise on understanding the particulars of the manufacture and uses of the astrolabe), by Abu Rayhan Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Biruni, copied by the same scribe who completed the first treatise and dated Dhu-l-Hijja 628/

September–October 1231; and *Kitab fi kayfiyat tastih al-kura 'ala sath al-asturlab* (Treatise on the principles of projection of the celestial sphere on the astrolabe), by Ahmad b. Muhammad b. al-Husayn al-Saghani, copied by 'Abd al-'Aziz b. 'Abd al-Jabbar al-Mutatayib in Kayseri on Saturday, 11 Dhu-l-Qa'da 635/ June 23, 1238. The final section, most likely copied by the same scribe who worked on the third treatise, is a letter from Kamal al-Din b. Yunis in which he states that he has proven a premise on the division of circles not elaborated by Archimedes.¹

The illustration on the right-hand page is a diagram of the rete, or top plate of the astrolabe, described as “an openwork star map.”² The Arabic names of the signs of the zodiac are written on the large curves, starting with Capricorn at the upper right and running counterclockwise because this map is a stereographic

projection—that is, drawn as taken from a globe. The vertical band that intersects the center of the rete represents the equator, and to its immediate left, on the upper curved section, is the word for Aries, the first month of the zodiacal calendar. Fourteen pointed elements on an actual astrolabe would have written on them the names of stars visible in the Northern Hemisphere. On the facing page, the circle at the upper left represents a plate of which the center is the North Pole. The concentric circles are the Tropic of Cancer and the equator, and the outer edge is the Tropic of Capricorn. Plates such as these, which would fit under the rete, were designed with specific geographic latitudes in mind and could be exchanged depending on where one was. The six smaller diagrams on the lower half of the page signify alternate forms of the rete, each inscribed with the names of the zodiacal signs. **SRC**



116

Celestial Globe with Stand

Maker: Yunis b. al-Husayn al-Asturlabi
Iran, globe dated A.H. 540/A.D. 1144–45;
stand of a later date

Brass; cast, engraved, inlaid with silver

Diam. of globe $6\frac{7}{8}$ in. (17.5 cm)

Département des Arts de l'Islam, Musée du Louvre,
Paris (MAO 824)

Like other celestial globes, this one is constructed to indicate the planets and constellations as if the earth were at the center of the globe, with the viewer observing from outside the sphere of fixed stars.¹ Globes of this general type are reported to have been produced by Greek scientists as early as the sixth

century B.C. The *Almagest* of Ptolemy (active A.D. 127–48), the Greek astronomer from Alexandria, contains a catalogue of 1,025 stars and details the relation of each to one of 48 constellations. Ptolemy also described at length the design of a celestial globe that provided a marked improvement in accuracy over

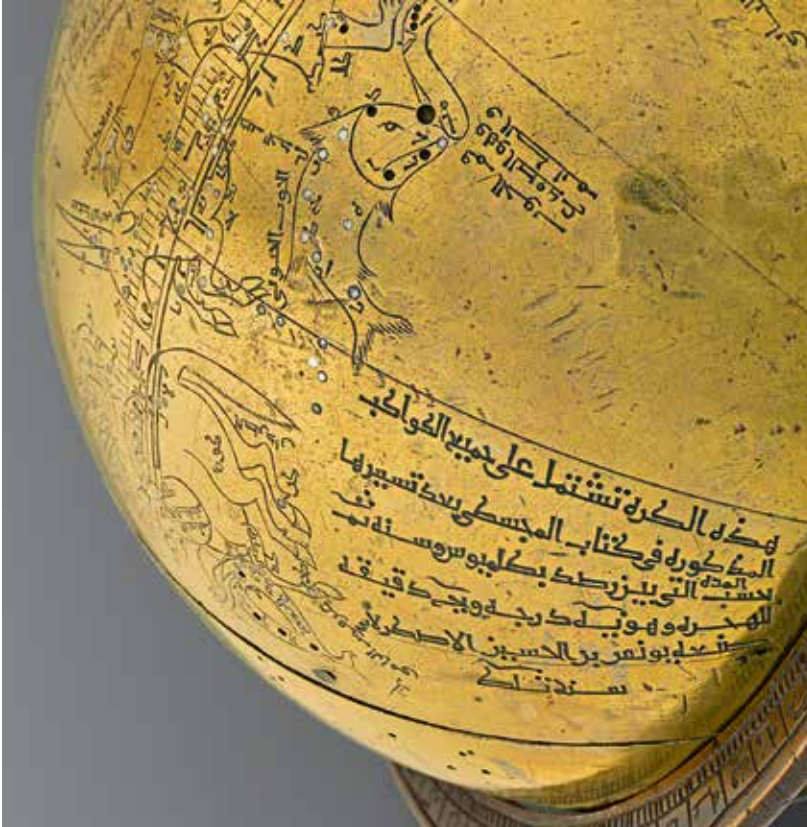


Fig. 76. Detail of cat. 116 showing the inscription

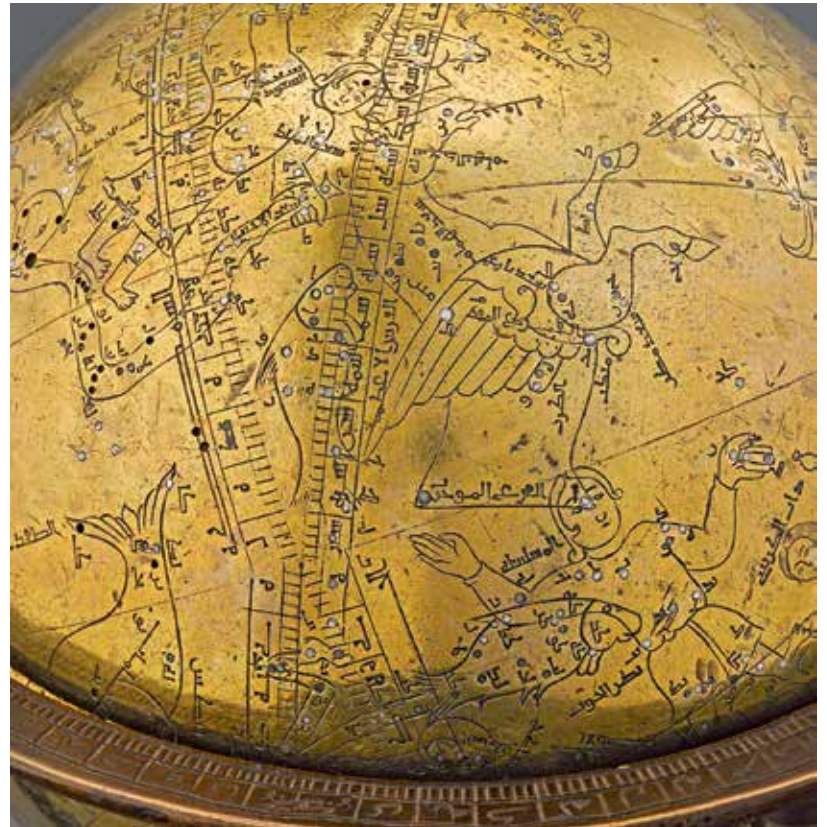


Fig. 77. Detail of cat. 116 showing the constellation Andromeda with Aquarius and Pegasus

its predecessors.² However, certain elements associated with Islamic celestial globes, such as the celestial equator, did not appear on Ptolemy's globe. Advances in astronomy and instrument making are evident in cat. 116 and in the many texts produced at Baghdad from the eighth to the tenth century.

The inscription on the Seljuq globe states: "This globe includes all the stars mentioned in the book of the *Almagest* after modifying them in proportion with the interval between the calculations of Ptolemy and the year [A.H.] 540, i.e. 15°18'. [It is t]he work of (*san'at*) Yunis b. al-Husayn al-Asturlabi [in the] year 539" (fig. 76).³ Thus, Yunis b. al-Husayn was less likely to have depended on Ptolemy's design for a celestial globe than on his star catalogue. The 1,025 stars are indicated on the globe by inlaid silver dots on or near the 48 constellations, which are indicated by incised designs arrayed over the surface of the globe. In addition, a horizon line is divided into 90 degrees with labels for every 5 degrees and for the ecliptic, or annual rotation of the sun through the zodiacal constellations, as well

as ecliptic latitude circles and equatorial polar circles. Although the maker's signature, unique to this object, does not indicate where the globe was produced, the hairstyle of the constellation figures, particularly Andromeda (fig. 77), is closest to that of Cepheus in al-Sufi's *Kitab suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* (Book of the images of the fixed stars) dated 1125, copied at Baghdad (fig. 78).⁴ While this does not specifically localize the globe, it lends credence to its attribution to Iran.

The Seljuq sultan Muhammad Tapar (r. 1105–18) demonstrated his interest in astronomy by commissioning a new solar calendar, and he is reported to have ordered astronomical observations in Isfahan in 1083.⁵ Astronomers, meanwhile, continued to be active under Sanjar (r. 1118–57) and most likely under his successors. Although we cannot connect this celestial globe to a particular owner, it would have been a desirable accoutrement not only for astronomers but also for educated people whose interests would have encompassed astronomy. **SRC**

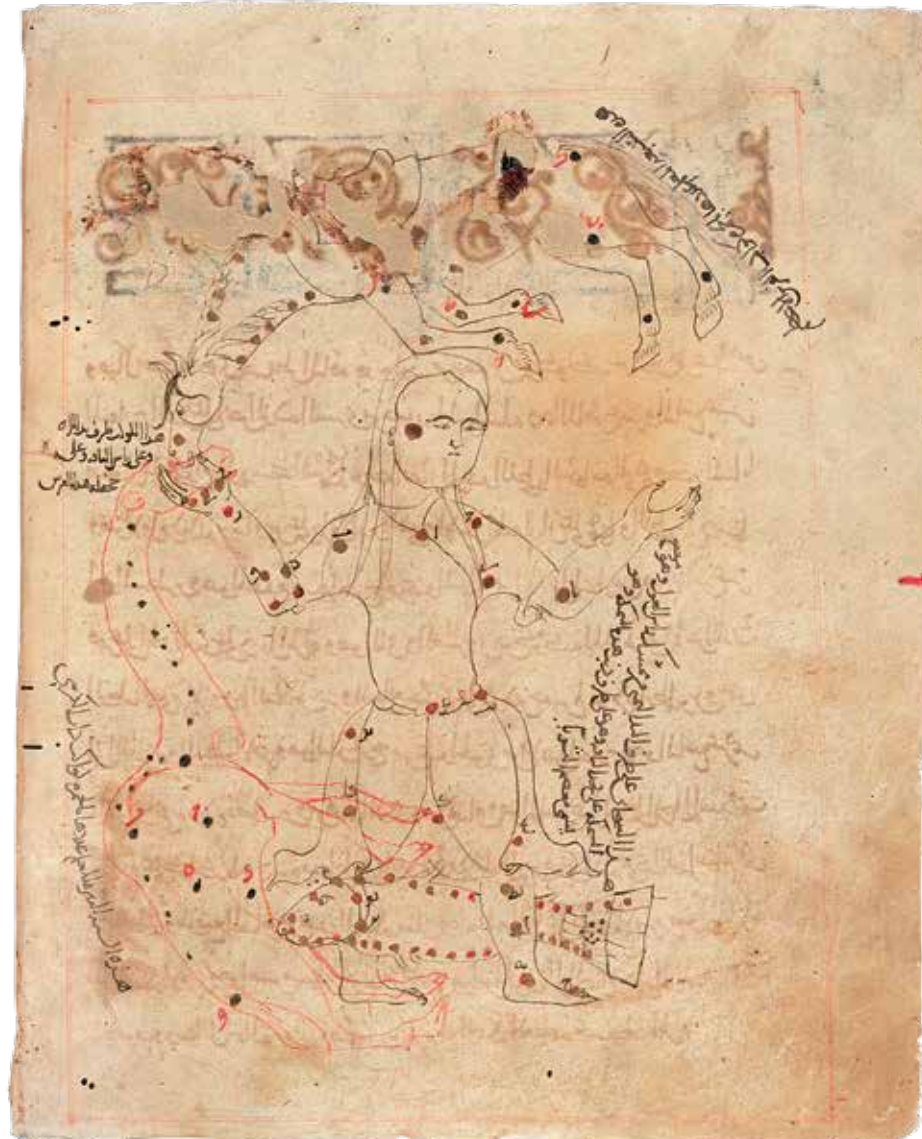


Fig. 78. "Cepheus," fol. 23a from the *Kitab suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* (Book of the images of the fixed stars) of Abu-l-Husayn 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Umar al-Sufi al-Sufi. Baghdad, dated 1125. Ink on paper, 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (23.7 x 17.1 cm). Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (MS 2.1998)

117

"Andromeda," folio from a *Kitab suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* (Book of the images of the Fixed Stars) of Abu-l-Husayn 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Umar al-Sufi

Iraq, Mosul, dated A.H. 566/A.D. 1170–71
 Ink on paper
 10⁷/₈ × 8¹/₂ in. (27.5 × 21.5 cm)
 Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford
 (MS Huntington 212; fol. 74v)



This copy of the *Kitab suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* (Book of the images of the fixed stars), originally composed in A.D. 964 in Shiraz by al-Sufi, contains a partially effaced dedication thought to be to Sayf al-Din Ghazi II, Zangid ruler of Mosul from 1170 to 1180.¹ If so, the manuscript may be viewed as evidence of the continuation of the Zangid tradition of support for scholarship and the arts.² Al-Sufi's text has been described as the "most important treatise on constellation iconography to be produced in the Islamic world."³ Not only did the treatise continue to be copied and used in the Islamic world until the nineteenth century, but it was also highly influential in medieval Europe. While it is largely based on books 1 and 2 of the

Almagest, written by the second-century Alexandrine astronomer/mathematician Ptolemy, al-Sufi's text incorporates the Bedouin system of celestial cartography called *anwa'*. This involved mental mapping of the stars and an entirely different nomenclature and figuration for the constellations from those of Ptolemy.

In this copy of the manuscript, the scribe, who was probably also the illustrator, has combined the two systems in his images of Cassiopeia and Andromeda. In the earliest known manuscript of al-Sufi's treatise, copied at Baghdad in 1125, the image of the constellation Andromeda is depicted as a standing crowned figure, viewed as if looking down on it from above—based on a celestial globe. She appears on the right-hand page of a double-page

opening, facing on the left-hand page a similar but not identical figure depicted in reverse, as if seen from below, as a person on earth would view the stars in the sky.⁴ Two folios later, the globe image of Andromeda appears with a fish, a camel, and a horse, all of which are from the Bedouin tradition.⁵ Likewise, in the Mosul manuscript, Andromeda is drawn with the additional animals representing the Bedouin view of the stars. The Arab constellations of the horse, camel, and fish overlap with Andromeda because of shared stars in the two systems. The artist has drawn Andromeda's hand so that it cups the lower jaw of the camel, the three dots representing stars in both constellations. **SRC**



Astrology, Magic, and the World of Beasts

One of the defining characteristics of Seljuq art is the ubiquitous presence of animal imagery on ceramics, metalwork, textiles, and buildings. Real, fantastic, and hybrid creatures appear in the art of all the regions controlled by the Seljuqs and their successors, but their meaning and function remain the subject of debate. In general these beasts project power and protection. However, apart from the arrival of the Seljuqs in Central Asia, Iran, and Iraq, followed by Anatolia, the Jazira, and Greater Syria, what conditions led to the widespread adoption of animal iconography? In the eleventh century the Seljuqs, recent converts to Islam, may have incorporated some potent symbols of their tribal or ethnic identity into their belongings, as they did in their names, such as Tughril Beg, whose name means “falcon.” Far more extensive is the animal imagery on objects of the twelfth century, particularly the second half, begging the question of whether specific events that were out of people’s control were driving the demand for objects with apotropaic properties.

As scientific manuscripts and instruments demonstrate, the educated population under the Seljuqs and their successors evinced a strong interest in astronomy, medicine, and the exact sciences (see the preceding chapter, “Science, Medicine, and Technology”). Yet alongside the spread of empirical and theoretical knowledge, enabled in part by the use of paper, the belief in astrology and talismanic protection from illness and other evils was very popular, despite objections from religious authorities. In fact, even the most erudite authors of astronomical texts also wrote treatises on astrology, including al-Biruni (973–1048). While astrology provided guidance for individuals and advice based on birth signs and the alignment of the stars, events such as eclipses, comets, earthquakes, and epidemics struck fear into people’s hearts. In addition, fighting, unfair taxation, and the insecurity of childbirth all contributed to anxiety and the need for personal security.

Certain types of events, such as lunar and solar eclipses, could be predicted, but people were no less fearful when they occurred, and neither did they cease to associate eclipses with other negative but unrelated incidents. Even the historian Ibn al-Athir was frightened as a youth in A.H. 571/A.D. 1176 when he observed a total eclipse of the sun in Jazirat Ibn ‘Umar (modern Cizre). As he described it, “I was young and in the company of my arithmetic teacher. When I saw it I was very much afraid; but I held on to him and my heart was strengthened. He was also learned in astronomy and told me, ‘Now you will see that all this will go away’, and it went

quickly.”¹ Although total solar eclipses occur in the same place only three or four times in a thousand years, between 1061 and 1241 three total eclipses were observed in Baghdad, Cizre, and Cairo. Ibn al-Jawzi (1116–1201) reported that during the 1061 eclipse in Baghdad, the birds fell out of the sky.² Specific prayers, *salat al-kusuf*, were said during solar eclipses acknowledging them as a sign from God.³ Nonetheless, eclipses are an important subject of astrological texts, where their cause is attributed to the two pseudo-planets, the head and tail of the dragon al-Jawzahr, which swallows the sun and moon. Moreover, even the death of the Prophet Muhammad was foretold by a solar eclipse that took place six months prior.⁴

Comets and shooting stars also attracted attention. In April 1066, according to Ibn al-Athir, “a large comet appeared in the . . . east with a long tail . . . stretching to the middle of the sky.” It was visible for about two weeks and then disappeared. “At the end of the month another comet appeared in a circle of light like the moon. The people were frightened and full of anxiety.”⁵ Most likely one of these celestial bodies was Halley’s Comet, which appears regularly every seventy-five or seventy-six years and was visible in late March 1066. While astronomers found comets difficult to predict using the same types of calculations employed for the movement of the stars, astrologers considered them to be bad omens whose physical appearance—color, shape, et cetera—and association with meteorological conditions determined how they would affect people.⁶

Far more destructive, and probably more terrifying, were earthquakes. In Syria and the Jazira in the twelfth century, reports of “felt” earthquakes spiked to twenty-five, two and a half times the number experienced in each of the previous three centuries. While the uptick could simply have been the result of increased data, thanks to the presence of the Crusaders who reported these tremors,⁷ evidence is also to be found in the archaeological record of destroyed and rebuilt monuments. In Iran earthquakes contributed to the ruin of Nishapur in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a decline aggravated by the early twelfth-century Seljuq invasion and local sectarian struggles. After a period of nearly three hundred years without an earthquake, Nishapur experienced four between 1145 and 1270.⁸ In Tabriz, where forty thousand people perished in a major quake in 1042, the fact that no other earthquake occurred until 1273 was attributed to the auspicious birth chart devised by an astrologer for the reconstructed city.⁹ For unpredictable disasters such as earthquakes, astrology provided some solace for survivors, whose custom was to flee to the desert, where they would stay until the aftershocks had stopped.¹⁰

Finally, in addition to the painful and potentially serious (or even fatal) bites of dogs, scorpions, and snakes, people across the regions controlled by the Seljuqs and their successors were threatened with some regularity by deadly epidemics. Famine often triggered these outbreaks, as populations that could not afford the inflated prices of food were forced to eat carrion. In Baghdad and Mosul in 1047–48, for example, famine and carrion eating were “followed by a raging epidemic, as a result of which necessities for the sick rose steeply.”¹¹ Although bubonic plague seems to have been almost nonexistent in the Seljuq era, other diseases such as smallpox claimed many lives, including two of Malik Shah’s children.¹² Where people were helpless to combat illness, charms, talismans, and magic bowls served as psychological aids and sources of comfort. In the same way, the myriad fantastic beasts that populated the Seljuq world must have provided symbolic protection and strength in the face of many a daunting circumstance. **SRC**



118

Ewer

Khurasan, ca. 1180–1210

Brass; raised, repoussé, inlaid with silver and a black compound

H. 15¾ in. (40 cm); Diam. 7½ in. (19.1 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1944 (44.15)

Inscribed in Arabic, in *naskhi* on the neck:

العز والاقبال والدولة والبقا دائم لصاحبه

Glory, prosperity, dominion, and perpetual life to its owner.

In anthropomorphic *naskhi*, on the upper neck and shoulder:

العز والاقبال والدولة والنامية [. .] والسعادة والبقا // العز والاقبال

والدولة والسعادة والسلامة والعافية والنعمة والشاكرة والبقا دائم

Glory, prosperity, dominion, growth [. .] happiness, prosperity, health, prosperity, praise, and long life.

In *kufic*, on the bottom band:

باليمن والبركة والدولة والبركة والراحة والبقا

With felicitation and blessing, dominion, blessing, comfort, and long life.

On the handle:

العز و الاقبال

Glory and prosperity.

On the bottom:

صاحبه فولاد بن ميرك

Its owner (is) Fulad b. Mirak.



Fig. 79. Detail of cat. 118 showing a repoussé lion



Fig. 80. Detail of cat. 118 showing crowned harpies



Fig. 81. Detail of cat. 118 showing the zodiacal sign Leo

At the time that cat. 118 and the group of long-necked ewers to which it relates were produced, Herat was under the control of the Ghurids, not the Seljuqs, but evidence strongly suggests that these pieces were exported to centers in Seljuq Iran and elsewhere. Most of the extant examples are between $14\frac{7}{8}$ and $15\frac{3}{4}$ inches (38 and 40 cm) high and share such characteristics as a neck decorated with a repoussé lion on either side of the spout, the top of which is also adorned with a repoussé lion (fig. 79).¹ While the number, width, and shape of the flutes vary from ewer to ewer, the shoulder of all examples is generally flat and the foot curves outward. The diagnostic piece in the group (cat. 85), dated 1181–82, is inscribed with Arabic poetry and interlace decoration on its flutes. It is debatable whether the simplicity of the ornament—in contrast to this ewer’s complex decoration of pairs of repoussé addorsed, crowned harpies below the shoulder (fig. 80) and birds at the bottom of each flute—indicates a stylistic

development or a range of tastes and budgets among the metalworkers’ clients.² Additionally, the amount of silver and copper inlay varied on pieces, indicating different levels of luxury in the group.

Like an even more ornate ewer in the British Museum, London (1848,0805.2), the center of each flute on this one is decorated with a sign of the zodiac enclosed in a medallion whose border is formed of vines terminating in rabbits’ heads. Each sign is combined with its planet lord. Starting from the left of the bottom of the handle and moving clockwise, the signs are Aries, the ram, ridden by Mars holding a severed head; Taurus, the bull, mounted by Venus playing a lute; Gemini as two standing figures separated by a head on a stick, which should refer to Mercury but may represent the pseudo-planet al-Jawzahr; Cancer, the crab, with the moon above it; Leo, the lion, with a tail ending in a dragon and a full sun above its back (fig. 81); Virgo, a kneeling figure holding a sheaf of corn, resembling

leaves, in each hand;³ Libra, the scales, with Venus playing a lute; Scorpio with a figure of Mars holding a rod and standing between two large scorpions; Sagittarius, the centaur, turning back to shoot a leonine dragon; Capricorn, the goat, with bearded Saturn astride it; and Aquarius, the water carrier at the well. Pisces, the fish, should have appeared between Aquarius and Aries, but it is covered by the lower part of the handle. With its many human-headed benedictory inscriptions, lions and harpies, astrological imagery, and abundant inhabited vines, this ewer would have embodied the protective qualities desired in so many Seljuq objects. **SRC**

119

Casket with Bird Finial and Signs of the Zodiac

Iran or Afghanistan, Khurasan, late 12th–early 13th century
 Brass or quaternary alloy; cast, engraved, inlaid with silver, copper, and a black compound
 H. 14 3/8 in. (36.5 cm); Diam. 9 1/2 in. (24 cm)
 Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London (MTW 1266)

Inscribed in Arabic, in *naskhi* on the roundels and bordering panels:

بالعز واليمن والسلامة

With good fortune, wealth, and prosperity.

In *kufic* on the panels below:

باليمن

With good fortune (repeated).

In profile and decoration this large inlaid brass casket resembles two other cylindrical boxes thought to have come from Khurasan.¹ It rests on three feet, and its lid is surmounted by an ogival dome with a finial of a bird resting on an eight-petaled flower. Not unlike other forms of Seljuq metalwork, the box is decorated with bands of benedictory Arabic writing in *kufic* and *naskhi* script on the sides, base, lid, and finial.² Whereas the *naskhi* inscriptions, on the sides and lid, occupy continuous bands and are written over a ground of spiral vine scrolls and punching, the *kufic* inscriptions appear in cartouches punctuated by stylized stars, and on the lid and finial, leaf forms or disks resembling a moon enclosing a split-leaf motif. The celestial imagery is further developed in the central band on the sides, in which a geometric interlace encloses the twelve signs of the zodiac and two interlaced leaf designs in roundels.

A hasp, of which the top and bottom elements are in the shape of eagles, and a hinge with an eagle comprise the mechanism for opening and locking the box. While the inscriptions and ornament lend no insight into what the box contained, one could surmise that the contents were valuable enough to be locked away.



As with the birth chart (cat. 121), all but one of the zodiacal signs follows the conventional iconography. The exception is Gemini, depicted as a harpy, which is a common substitution in Seljuq imagery.³ However, in other examples the sign is represented by two harpies or a human and a harpy, maintaining the

reference to the twins and possibly to the planet Mercury, the planetary lord of Gemini.⁴ In some pre-Islamic examples Mercury was depicted as a human-headed bird, but here the sign may be fully subsumed in its planetary lord.⁵ **SRC**



120

Pitcher with Images of the Zodiac

Iran, late 11th–12th century
 Stonepaste; molded, glazed (transparent colorless)
 H. 5 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (14.2 cm); Diam., of rim 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (8 cm),
 of base 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (6 cm)
 British Museum, London (1966,0613.1)

The decoration of this pitcher, with its globular body and straight neck with a slightly everted rim, consists of two rows of roundels containing the signs of the zodiac with their planetary lords molded in low relief. Additionally, the potter pierced the body of the jug around each sign, producing translucent holes that may have been intended to suggest stars. Rather than refer to a specific moment in the calendar, which is helpful when using the zodiac to predict an individual's future, the jug includes

all twelve astrological signs, presumably to emphasize the owner's protection by the heavens. Moving rightward from the handle, the upper register contains Gemini with Mercury, Taurus with Venus, Aries with Mars, Virgo with Mercury, Leo with the sun, and Cancer surmounted by the moon. In the lower register, moving in the same direction, are Sagittarius shooting a dragon, Scorpio with Mars, Libra with Venus, Pisces with Jupiter, and Capricorn and Aquarius, both with Saturn. The zodiac traditionally begins with Aries, the sign for the New Year, but on this jug it appears opposite the handle, which is a replacement of the original.

Unlike inlaid metalwork decorated with zodiacal signs, this piece does not incorporate into its decorative program the planetary

system of exaltations and dejections—that is, the points or single degrees in the orbits of the planets when their influence is strongest and weakest.¹ The only exception is Sagittarius, portrayed here as a centaur shooting its own dragon-headed tail. Although its planetary lord is Jupiter, Sagittarius is home to the exaltation of the tail of the eclipse dragon, Nawbahr, one of two pseudo-planets thought to be responsible for solar and lunar eclipses. The exaltation of the head of the dragon, al-Jawzahr, occurs in Gemini. Astronomers in the Seljuq era knew that the eclipse dragon was not an actual planet, but the astrological belief in the symbol was potent enough that it was used to adorn objects and architecture in Iran, Anatolia, and cities from Aleppo to Baghdad. **src**



121

Astrological Birth Chart

Eastern Iran, 12th century
 Ink and gold on paper
 6 1/8 x 8 3/8 in. (15.6 x 22 cm)
 al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah,
 Kuwait (LNS 275 MS a-b)

Astrological charts of this type would have formed part of a larger nativity book (*kitab-i wiladat*) that included precise information about the position of the twelve signs of the zodiac, the planets, the fixed stars, and so-called lots, or imaginary points on the ecliptic, the plane of the sun's path in the celestial sphere,¹ at the time of the subject's birth. Because this chart is fragmentary and includes only a folio with images of the zodiacal signs and another of text, the identity of the individual for whom it was made remains unknown. The rudimentary, though lively, style of the figures and the friable quality of the paper suggest that, despite the use of gold, the birth

chart was not commissioned by a highborn individual. Rather, it may have been produced in a commercial situation, its information customized at the request of a client. The prognostication based on this mapping of the stars is generalized but rosy, promising wealth and many friends.

Each of the astrological signs is identified by a Persian inscription in the margin next to it. Since the zodiacal calendar begins with Aries, the ram, this chart is meant to be read counterclockwise starting at the upper right. Within the compartments containing the signs of Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, and Capricorn are written the names of six of the planets (Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the moon, Mercury, and Venus) plus the two pseudo-planets, identified as the head and the tail of the eclipse dragon, in the compartments for Cancer and Capricorn, respectively.² Atypical of standard Seljuq iconography, Sagittarius is portrayed as a harpy with arms and

hands, shooting a bow and arrow across its back. Normally the harpy replaces only the twin human figures of Gemini, not the dragon-tailed centaur, Sagittarius.³ Furthermore, the astrologer has not followed the custom of combining zodiacal signs with their ruling planets.⁴ Instead, celestial bodies are given on the birth chart as follows: the head of the eclipse dragon in Cancer, Mars and Jupiter in Leo, the moon and Saturn in Virgo, the moon in Libra, Mercury in Scorpio, Venus in Sagittarius, and the tail of the eclipse dragon in Capricorn. (The sun is absent.) Presumably the shifted positions of the planetary lords reflect their actual locations at the time of birth of the subject. **SRC**



122

Bowl with Epigraphic Band and Signs of the Zodiac

Iran, Kashan, early 13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
 H. 4½ in. (11.3 cm); Diam. 7¼ in. (18.5 cm)
 Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford,
 Presented by Sir Alan Barlow, 1956 (EA1956.58)
 Inscribed in Persian in *naskhi*, on the rim:

ای برده دلم ز دست دلداری کن / در کار توام بعشق همکاری کن // دانم
 که لب خوش تو دادم ندهد / باری زبان خوش مرا یاری کن
*Oh you who has stolen my heart, comfort me / I am
 devoted to you, help me in matters of love // I know
 that your sweet lips will not appease me / So, comfort
 me with your sweet words.*

On the body:

کفتم که نقاب از قمرت برگیرم / گازی ز لب چون شکرت برگیرم // [گفتا]
 کی چو شمع قصه را گاز کنی / بچاره نترسی که سرت برگیرم / ...
 الدائم والعز الزائد و السلامة . . .
*I said, I want to take the veil from your moonlike
 face. / I wanted to (take a) bite from your lips sweet as
 sugar. // [She said], When, like trimming a candle, will
 you cut this story short? / Oh poor one, are you not
 afraid that I may cut off your head? // [. . .] perpetual,
 increasing glory and well-being [. . .]¹*

This unusually shaped bowl with a squat, globular body and small mouth has been described as a “beggar’s bowl,”² but such a function is unlikely, for extant beggars’ bowls are later in date and most often boat-shaped. However, this bowl may have originally had a lid and been modeled on a metal prototype.³ Its interior is glazed and decorated with a leaf-and-tendrill ornament, which indicates that it was meant to be seen, but what it contained is a mystery. In addition to two inscription bands, one on the rim and another on the widest part of the body, a band of leaves, nearly round in shape and reserved on a luster ground, runs around the lower half of the bowl. Above the inscription on the body are twelve roundels containing the signs of the zodiac. Unlike cat. 120, the astrological symbols appear here without their ruling planets. For example, Sagittarius is portrayed as a centaur shooting an arrow, but its usual target, the

dragon pseudo-planet, is absent. Aquarius appears in one of the variants of its form, a seated man holding a bottle rather than the more traditional man drawing water from a well, but the decorator otherwise followed the standard iconography for the zodiac.⁴

While one can assume that the astrological signs on this piece were intended to provide protection and good luck, the relationship between the poetry and the imagery is difficult to define. All four couplets concern aspects of love and passion, for example, calling for the veil to be lifted from the face of the beloved. While astrology might be used to predict whether such desires would be satisfied, the zodiac on this bowl has no such specificity. Rather, the association of the zodiacal signs with verses of love poetry suggests romantic aspirations and the means, through astrology, to achieve them. **SRC**



123

Bowl with Courtly and Astrological Motifs

Iran, late 12th–early 13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed (opaque monochrome),
 in-glaze- and overglaze-painted, gilded
 H. 3¾ in. (9.5 cm); Diam. 7⅝ in. (18.7 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
 Purchase, Rogers Fund, and Gift of The Schiff
 Foundation, 1957 (57.36.4)

The finely painted figures and decoration on the interior of this bowl combine the imagery of the courtly cycle and astronomy. In the center is the sun surrounded by the personifications of six planets. Moving clockwise from the top right are Mars, holding a severed head and a sword; Mercury, the scribe, seated cross-legged with a pen in his right hand and scroll in his left; Venus, seated on a throne or chair and playing the lute; the moon, a female figure with a crescent moon around her head; Saturn, holding a sickle in each hand; and Jupiter, on a throne-like seat, holding something resembling a chain. Islamic astronomers believed that each planet orbited the earth; in graphic terms their circuits formed seven concentric circles, with the moon creating the innermost and Saturn the outermost circles based on their distance from the earth.¹

Beyond the seventh sphere is an eighth containing the constellations, including the twelve signs of the zodiac.

Instead of including the fixed stars, or constellations, the painter of the bowl placed one large and two small gold circles, representing stars, between the heads of each planet and six small stars around the sun. A band of ten horsemen, separated by birds, rings the central group of planets. One interpretation identifies these figures as representations of the “ten periods of time governed by the thirty-six decans,” or thirds of each astrological sign or month.² Certainly the depiction of horses and riders moving in one circular direction could suggest the passage of time. However, the figures also could embody the idea of the

cavalry, a key element of any ruler’s support and one emblem of the chivalric tradition in the Seljuq era. Since the band of figures on the inside rim consists of two enthroned men on opposite sides of the bowl and musicians and attendants inclining slightly toward their leader, much as the figures do in the gypsum-plaster panel of an enthroned figure and his courtiers (cat. 16), the horsemen are likely to denote one of the components of an orderly society, presided over by a capable king or prince in a universe governed by the planets. The inscriptions on the interior rim and the exterior are both fragmentary as a result of damage and overpainting. On the interior the words convey good wishes and on the exterior mention the “king of the Muslims” and more blessings. **SRC**



124

The Vaso Vescovali

Iran, Khurasan, ca. 1200
 High-tin bronze; engraved, inlaid with silver
 H. 8½ in. (21.5 cm); Diam. 7¼ in. (18.5 cm)
 British Museum, London (1950,0725.1)

This lidded bowl on a splayed foot is one of the most ornately decorated inlaid-metal objects of medieval Iran. Even if its lid was not originally intended for this base, as has been suggested,¹ the astrological theme of the latter, which is decorated with the twelve zodiacal signs, is fully realized by the presence of the planets on the lid. The astrological signs appear in roundels, running clockwise in a

wide band that encircles the exterior of the base. In addition to the representations of the signs themselves, such as the scales for Libra (fig. 82) or the bull for Taurus (fig. 83), each roundel contains the personification of the “planet lord” of that specific sign. Five of the seven planets have two domiciles, one during the day and one at night. Since Venus is domiciled in Libra in the day and Taurus at night,

both signs are augmented by an image of a woman playing the lute, the standard personification of Venus. While the domiciles of the planets relate to the whole period of any given sign, specific degrees are assigned to the planets as they pass through their orbits, resulting in exaltations and dejections, or periods of their greatest or least power.² In the Taurus roundel the crescent to the proper left of Venus's head thus refers to the moon's exaltation at three degrees in the sign of Taurus. Although Saturn's exaltation is in Libra, its scythe attribute is absent from the roundel. An item with a handle and a round top, identified as a mirror,³ may instead be a fan, in

keeping with one of the attributes of Saturn on the lid of this piece.

Separated from the base by a narrow band of revelers, musicians, and dancers, the top is decorated by eight roundels containing personifications of the seven "real" planets and the one pseudo-planet, al-Jawzahr, the dragon, said to be responsible for eclipses.⁴ Four of these ring the knob and four are placed at an angle to the upper roundels, in the lower, wider part of the rim. Hunters, dogs and their prey, and tendrils appear between the lower roundels. Each of the planets has multiple arms and holds a variety of attributes, comparable to the representations of the planets in

the *Daqa'iq al-haqa'iq* (Degrees of truths, cat. 130). Whether or not this has any connection to Hindu iconography, the ability of the planets to hold a number of symbolic objects reinforces the conviction that the order of the cosmos, created by God, is ruled by the planets. Although the patron and maker of this remarkable lidded bowl are unknown, they undoubtedly would have understood the meaning of each of its many details. **SRC**



Fig. 82. Detail of cat. 124 showing the scales of Libra with Venus, playing a lute, seated below



Fig. 83. Detail of cat. 124 showing the bull of Taurus with Venus, playing a lute, seated on its back



125

Basin with Signs of the Zodiac

Jazira or Syria, ca. 1240–1300

Brass; beaten, engraved, incised, inlaid with silver and gold

H. 7 1/8 in. (18.1 cm); Diam. 17 7/8 in. (45.5 cm)

Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (MW.109.1999)

Inscribed in Arabic, in monumental *thuluth* on the interior:

مما عمل برسم الجناب الكريم العالي المولوي الاميري الكبير الاجلي
المحترمي المخدم المجاهدي المرابطي المظفري

Made by order of His Honor, the noble, the lofty, the lordly, the great amir, the most glorious, the revered, the masterful, the holy warrior, the defender, the triumphant.

In *kufic* and *naskhi* on the exterior:

مما عمل برسم الجناب الكريم العالي المولوي الاميري الكبير الاجلي
المحترمي المخدم المجاهدي المرابطي المظفري المؤيدي

Made by order of His Honor, the noble, the lofty, the lordly, the great amir, the most glorious, the revered, the masterful, the holy warrior, the defender, the triumphant, the God-aided.

In graffiti on the base:

الخرانة النورية حسن بن ايوب

*The luminous treasury of Hasan b. Ayyub.*¹

This magnificent basin is one of a group. The style of the figures and vegetal decoration, as well as the interlacing circular medallions applied to the exterior, relates it to cat. 69, from the mid- to late thirteenth century, while the inscription in monumental *thuluth* script and the concentric astrological motifs on the interior compare with Mamluk and Ilkhanid inlaid metalwork.² The eloquent inscription gives the titles of an anonymous high official.³ While the exact identification of this basin's owner(s) and its attribution remain to be discussed, its lavish inlaid decoration suggests that it was used together with an equally luxurious ewer for ablutions or washing hands at banquets and other festive events or

ceremonies.⁴ The assembled guests and entourage of the owner would certainly have admired it, specifically its astrological iconography, which is deployed on a larger scale on both the interior and exterior.

The interior surface is densely decorated. At the bottom, the seven planets and the twelve signs of the zodiac are enclosed in concentrically arranged circles. The sun, the fourth planet according to the medieval cosmography, is depicted as a disk in the center of the composition. Such a transferal from a secondary to a central position confirms the sun's predominant role in the medieval period, as it was associated with light, energy, power, and command (see also cat. 123).⁵ Around it are the six planets, easily identifiable by their attributes, appearing counterclockwise in descending order: the moon, a seated female figure holding a crescent; Mercury, a seated figure seen in profile with one knee bent, writing a scroll; Venus, sitting cross-legged playing the lute; Mars, a striding warrior, holding his classic attributes of a long sword (which he holds in his right hand) and a severed head (which he grasps by the hair with his left); Jupiter, without attributes but depicted as an enthroned

cross-legged figure, reinforcing his aura of responsibility, power, wisdom, and judiciousness; and Saturn, running with an object in each hand. Surrounding the planets are the twelve signs of the zodiac with their planetary overlords, following the Domicilia system:⁶ Leo with the sun, Cancer and the moon, Gemini holding a disk (probably the head of Mercury), Venus playing the lute on Taurus, Mars riding Aries, Jupiter with Pisces, Aquarius in Saturn, Capricorn with Saturn, Sagittarius pointing the bow to al-Jawzhar, Libra with Venus (deliberately depicted as a goose),⁷ and Virgo in Mercury as a seated figure holding two leaves. The radiating drops at the edges of this astrological composition may be interpreted as the continuous rays of the shining sun. Repeated on the basin's exterior are the twelve signs of the zodiac with their planetary overlords, although not all in sequence.

Three large medallions with the motif of the royal hunter—one, exceptionally, holding a cheetah but leaping from the horse—intercept the elegant, eulogistic inscription, while smaller circular medallions below enclosing a bird of prey attacking a duck punctuate a band of seated musicians and feasting figures. **DB**



126

Candlestick with the Labors of the Months

Anatolia, late 13th–14th century
 Brass; cast, engraved, incised, inlaid with silver
 H. 7⁷/₈ in. (20 cm)

Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia, Rome
 Inscribed in Arabic on the body and neck:

العز الدائم الاقبال // العز الدائم الاقبال الشا/مل الامر النافذ الحداما //
 العز الدائم الاقبال الشامل الامر

*Perpetual glory, prosperity. // Perpetual glory, perfect prosperity, absolute authority. // Perpetual glory, perfect prosperity, authority.*¹

The seasons and months were popular themes in ancient Greek and Roman, medieval European, and Byzantine art. Beginning in the thirteenth century such depictions were introduced to Islamic art but with iconographic and stylistic changes. The iconographic cycle

of the Labors of the Months was a known subject during Seljuq times, although exclusively on Anatolian candlesticks, for which it became a preferred theme.² Known examples such as cat. 126 belong to a group of at least five candlesticks of nearly equal dimensions and design (see also cat. 21b), suggesting that they were all made in the same workshop or by the same artist, probably Shirin b. Awhad al-Quway'i, who signed cat. 21b. The bodies of both these candlesticks are decorated with personifications of the twelve months, which are enclosed in interlacing ogive-polygonal cartouches that alternate with small fretwork roundels.³ In cat. 21b, however, smaller-scale figures decorate the upper third of the body.

The personification of the months in Seljuq art was inspired by Christian models of European, Byzantine, Georgian, and Armenian origin.⁴ However some of these anthropomorphisms are difficult to identify, for they were adapted liberally, out of sequence, and with modified attributes; some hold indeterminate objects, further complicating their identification. In cat. 126 the figure seated on a stool stretching out his hands mimics a person warming himself by an open fire, which traditionally represents January or February. In the Anatolian candlesticks the fire or flame is either simplified into a line, transformed into a plant, or, as here, omitted completely. The man working with a mattock most frequently represents February but also sometimes March (in England) or, on one occasion, April (in Germany). The Mars-like warrior holding a sword (and shield?) is March, unknown in the European tradition but relating to Byzantine and Caucasian examples.⁵ The man carrying an animal on his shoulders is the Christian Good Shepherd (Luke 15:4). Despite its rarity in European Labors of the Months,⁶ this allegory of April, known from Byzantine iconographic cycles, appears in all the Anatolian candlesticks. The man reaping with a sickle represents July, while the one lifting a beaker is August. Among the personages and attributes difficult to identify is a figure holding a plate with three small roundels.⁷ This convention of depicting a fruit plate, known from medieval inlaid metalwork (cat. 90), probably represents the harvest (September).

It remains to be discussed whether such iconographic metamorphoses may relate to the indifference in the medieval Islamic world toward the solar calendar in relation to the lunar calendar, which was represented by the signs of the zodiac, specifically in the Seljuq realm. That Christian iconography appeared on Anatolian candlesticks together with Seljuq imagery and benedictory Arabic inscriptions⁸ demonstrates the demand for new and varied decorative motifs for these common lighting devices. It also reveals the complexities of a well-to-do society and ruling elite variably composed of Christians, Muslims, and others, for which these luxurious objects were intended. **DB**



127

Amulet

Excavated at Rayy (RG8217), 12th–early 13th century Goldstone

1 5/8 x 1 1/8 in. (4 x 2.9 cm)

University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia (37-11-937)

This flat, polished lozenge-shaped pendant was intended to be hung around the neck on a chain or braided thread as a protective or curative amulet (*ḥama'il*).¹ While legal and theological treatises strictly forbade black magic and sorcery, the use of amulets was tolerated.² The fact that this stone shape was found with its eye broken off and its surfaces blank raises the question of whether it was ever completed for these purposes. More often, surviving amulets of this shape carry inscriptions such as Qur'anic verses (2:67, 3:36, or 11:17). There are also cases in which magic squares (*wafq*, *wifq*) would have been drawn on such a surface (see cat. 128).³ In the case of this example, was the shape itself enough to ward off the evil eye, or was its amuletic function never activated? **RH**

128

Amulet

Iran, Anatolia, or Iraq, 12th century

Bronze; incised

2 1/2 x 2 1/4 in. (6.4 x 5.7 cm)

Collection of Roy and Cecily Langdale Davis

Inscribed in Arabic in *naskhi* on both sides (readable but untranslatable):

جسم محتار و سحر باسم هو البحر(?) [...] / [...] باسم هو [...] البحر(?) سطورهم باسم جسم(?) الهوا باسم عبا و

This amulet, which in general is meant to banish evil spirits, cure illness, counteract infertility, and in some cases bring the bearer together with his or her beloved, is in the shape of a tablet (*lah*). It takes the form of a square with triangular extensions at the upper right and left



Cat. 128, front and back

corners and a larger triangular tab, pierced for suspension, at the top.¹ On one side a haloed figure with a sword in his left hand rides a lion, while to the right of this pair a serpent wriggles upward. The group is enclosed in a square below which a dog or other quadruped is running. The other three sides of the square and the lower edge to the left of the dog are inscribed with magic writing that appears to combine letters and numbers; that on the lower right is too corroded to decipher. On the reverse side of the amulet, a haloed figure holding a lance upright sits cross-legged on a low platform. On either side of this figure, in the upper half of the surface, are eight lines of writing and, in the lower half, two magic squares divided into thirty-six smaller squares containing numbers.

The interpretation of the images, words, and numbers on talismans such as this is anything but straightforward. The figural group of the haloed man, lion, serpent, and dog resembles a depiction of the angel Abu-l-Hanif in the *Daqa'iq al-haqa'iq* (Degrees of truths, fig. 84), although there, the angel grasps the serpent in one hand and a crown in the other while astride the lion.² Minor angels such as this functioned as intermediaries between man and God, "guard[ing] the walls of heaven against the 'listening'" of jinn and Satan.³ Therefore, to include the image of an angel on an amulet would help the desired wish or message reach God. The inscription likely began on the lower right, and with the words *basmala* (in the name of God),⁴ but the rest of the inscription is either illegible or unintelligible.

On the reverse the numbers in the two magic squares would have added up to the

same sum in the vertical, horizontal, and diagonal rows. Additionally, the numerals have letter equivalents that alone or combined stand for the name of God or have other positive or negative attributes.⁵ The seated figure may represent another angel of the type that presided over the passage of specific planets from one astrological sign to the next.⁶ The inscription here refers to various angels whose names are repeated. They include Emmanuel and possibly Misra'il, among the ranks of lesser angels like the one on the other side of the tablet. **SRC**



Fig. 84. Fol. 86r of the *Daqa'iq al haqa'iq* (cat. 130) showing the angel Abu-l-Hanif



129

Magic Bowl Dedicated to Nur al-Din Mahmud b. Zangi

Syria, dated A.H. 565/A.D. 1169–70

Copper alloy; cast, turned, engraved, formerly filled with a white substance

H. 3 in. (7.5 cm); Diam. 7½ in. (19.1 cm)

Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London (MTW 1443)

Magic bowls have a long history in the pre-Islamic Middle East, where they were used to invoke demons or other spirits. By contrast Islamic magic-medicinal bowls appeal to God for help with a range of physical and spiritual maladies.¹ This bowl, hemispherical in shape and engraved on its interior and exterior, is inscribed with a dedication to Nur al-Din Mahmud b. Zangi, who ruled Damascus from 1146 to 1174. In 1154 Nur al-Din commissioned a hospital in the city, which might indicate a special interest in medicine, but only after years of fighting the Crusaders and suffering two defeats in the early 1160s did Nur al-Din turn pious. This took the form of charitable endowments but also may be reflected in his acquiring two magical-medicinal bowls, presumably for personal protection.



Fig. 85. Detail of cat. 129 showing dedicatory inscription

A long *naskhi* inscription below the exterior rim includes the date, A.H. 565, and a dedication to “al-Malik al-’Adil Mahmud b. Zangi” (fig. 85). It goes on to enumerate the “proven uses” of the bowl: to protect against snakebites, scorpion stings, fever (of several varieties), labor pains, equine abdominal pain from eating earth, rabid-dog bites, abdominal pain, colic, and migraine; to increase strength and to stop bleeding and chest pain; to protect against the evil eye, ophthalmia, and catarrh; to drive out evil spirits; and to help cure “all diseases and afflictions.”² For the bowl to be effective, one had to drink water or milk from it.

The decoration on the interior is badly rubbed but includes a band of magic writing

around the rim and nine medallions on the sides enclosing single figures, a scorpion, possibly intertwined serpents, a quadruped, and, in four of the medallions, a square of magic writing. This imagery apparently refers to some of the causes of distress that the bowl is meant to cure. Three undulating bands on the exterior surround roughly triangular areas on the sides of the bowl, all of which enclose lines of magic writing, as does the very worn circle on the base. Although the writing is illegible, the letters most likely are those in the Arabic alphabet that stand for one of the names of God,³ and thus strengthen the power of the bowl to invoke his help. **SRC**

***Daqa'iq al-haqa'iq* (Degrees of Truths)
of al-Nasiri (Nasir al-Din Muhammad
b. Ibrahim b. 'Abd Allah al-Rammal
al-Mu'azzim al-Sa'ati al-Haykali)**

Central Anatolia, Aksaray,
dated A.H. 10 Ramadan 670/ A.D. April 10, 1272
Ink, gold, and opaque watercolor on paper;
modern leather binding
9⁷/₈ × 6¹/₂ in. (25 × 16.5 cm)
Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
(MS Persan 174)

This manuscript comprises five texts in Persian, including the *Daqa'iq al-haqa'iq* (Degrees of truths) of al-Nasiri. An inscribed dedication to the work's patron, Ghiyath al-Din Kay Khusraw III, gives both the date and the place of production, Aksaray.¹ Kay Khusraw III was one of the last Rum Seljuqs and ruled Aksaray and Kayseri at the pleasure of the Mongols from 1264/65 until they executed him, in 1284. Despite damage, missing and disordered folios, and three campaigns of illustration,² the manuscript is exceptional for the richness of its illustrative program. The style of the images betrays a Byzantine influence, but the iconography suggests a wide range of sources, from Greek to Indian.

Presented to Kay Khusraw while he was still a child, the manuscript presumably was intended to instruct him in the arts of prediction. The illustrated sections deal primarily with astrology, angelology, talismans, and magic. Although this may be the unique copy of al-Nasiri's text, important treatises on astrology had been written in Arabic by Masha' Allah in the late eighth and early ninth centuries and by Abu Ma'shar in the ninth century. Latin and Persian translations of these works were thereafter widely disseminated. Although al-Nasiri's focus is on prognostication, his underlying understanding of astronomy is evident from the illustrations that accompany his text, among them the seven planets in the medieval cosmography (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the sun, Venus, Mercury, and the moon). The section on the Lunar Mansions includes angels, which preside over the passage of the sun from one sign of the zodiac to another, and their nefarious counterparts, jinn, which accompany the sun at other points in its migrations.



108v

In each of the six illustrations of the conjunction of the moon with various planets, multiarmed personifications of the latter are depicted holding attributes. Allegorized in the folio shown here (108v) is Mercury, fabled protector of the applied arts, in his traditional guise as a scribe. He dips his pen into a large

inkpot with one hand and holds a book with another, while his upper hands hold fire and snow. Multiarmed figures are highly unusual in Islamic art, begging the question of whether the artist or al-Nasiri was referring to an Indian astrological text as a model.³ **src**



131

Figurine of a Falcon with Motifs of Seated Figures

Iran, late 12th–early 13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
 18½ × 9⅞ in. (47 × 25 cm)
 Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (C.1-1967)

132

Fountainhead in the Form of a Cockerel with a Parrot for a Tail

Found at Raqqa, late 11th–12th century
 Stonepaste; molded, modeled, carved, glazed
 (transparent colorless), in-glaze-painted in blue,
 turquoise, and purple (*laqabi*)
 15¼ × 10¼ in. (38.6 × 26 cm)
 David Collection, Copenhagen (ISL. 57)

Sculpture in the round saw a new interest by ceramicists in both Iran and the Jazira in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Most were small-scale ewers, vases, and figurines shaped as humans, animals, or fantastic creatures, but large examples such as the ones presented here were also known. The standing falcon (cat. 131),¹ probably made in Kashan, is realistic in shape, although with unnaturally elongated legs. The object is hollow and supported by feet and wings on a rectangular base. Its entire surface is covered with luster depictions of seated figures, one horseman, and running animals, most enclosed in medallions and all reserve-painted in two colors (ruby red and green-gold).



Fig. 86. Fountainhead in the form of a fighting horseman. Found at Raqqa, late 11th–12th century. Stonepaste; molded, modeled, carved, in-glaze-painted in blue and purple (*laqabi*). National Museum of Damascus (5819/ε)



Cat. 132

The standing cockerel-parrot (cat. 132), found in Raqqa and likely made there or elsewhere in the Jazira (or Syria), is even more realistic in the overall shape and proportion of the birds' heads, but these aspects are counterbalanced by the hybrid composition and fantastic colors: blue, turquoise, and purple, applied in-glaze in the so-called *laqabi* technique. The object is hollow, with an internal duct and openings at the birds' beaks. It must have functioned as a fountainhead, possibly in

combination with the two other objects with which it was found, a sphinx with tail and wings terminating in dragons(?) and a horseman fighting a dragon (figs. 86, 98).²

While the necessary functionality of fountainheads provides an idea of cat. 132's original setting—a courtyard or garden in a wealthy residential or palatine building (see also cat. 154)—we have no way of knowing how a purely decorative sculpture like cat. 131 would have been employed. Both objects can be

tentatively ascribed the generic apotropaic, or even talismanic, meaning attributed to birds. Falcons were associated with royalty: they were trained for use in the hunt and were sung in poetry as a “boon companion” of the sovereign.³ The image of a bejeweled falcon surmounted the royal *chatr* (parasol) of the neighboring Ghaznavids in the second half of the eleventh century,⁴ and metaphors employing falcons sometimes appear in panegyrics addressed to Seljuq rulers to convey the idea of royal skills. For instance, speed is championed in a poem by Athir al-Din Akhsikati.⁵ The echo of Turkish shamanistic and totemic beliefs may have contributed to the establishment of such an association in the Seljuq period, as the founder of the Great Seljuq dynasty was named Tughril, the Turkish word for falcon.⁶ Falcons could also have an astronomical meaning, for the royal hawk was often equated with the constellation Aquila (al-Uqab). In poetry, as soul-birds, falcons sometimes evoked death or, more frequently, love and its ecstasy; both associations were rooted in the bird's strength.⁷

Cockerels, which crow in the morning and thus help keep time, were believed also to know when it was time for daily prayers. They were praised as patient and courageous animals, and the colors of their feathers made them, remarkably, as beautiful as peacocks, though without the latter's ugly face.⁸ Its union in cat. 132 with the parrot, an exotic bird associated with India and said to love sugar (sweetness), may have had an underlying pious or mystical meaning, for it was believed that the latter could learn to talk by listening to the voice of its master while watching its own reflection in a mirror, itself a highly potent symbol. At the very least, however, the effect of these two beautifully colored birds combined in such dramatic fashion was certainly meant to elicit surprise.⁹

The fantastic composition of the cockerel-parrot and illusionistic decoration of the falcon suggests that their wondrous aspects may have been a major attribute of each. Wonderment could have been perceived as decorative and entertaining, but it also may have inspired viewers toward a deeper reading of the figures within the framework of God's creation, as envisioned in the description of a number of talismanic statues, including two fountain statues, in al-Tusi's *'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat* (Wonders of creation).¹⁰ **MR**



133

Bottle with Three Bulls

Iran, late 10th–early 11th century
Transparent emerald-green glass; blown, faceted,
linear-cut
H. 10 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (25.6 cm); Diam. 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (13.6 cm)
Corning Museum of Glass, N.Y. (55.1.126)

The shape of this bottle, said to have been found in Iran,¹ finds parallels in a bottle excavated at Nishapur and in mallet-shaped vessels with disk rims excavated at the site of the Serçe Limani shipwreck, on the southern coast of Anatolia. The latter examples, thought to have come from a port on the eastern Mediterranean, possibly Beirut, are slightly smaller (the tallest measures 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.) and have simpler imagery on the neck, the closest being a wheel-cut motif of lions, which appears on a complete bottle.²

The Serçe Limani shipwreck (ca. 1025), also gives a chronological framework for cat. 133. The figural part of the bottle's decoration consists of three linear-cut bulls with long, curving horns, walking toward the left. Whether they were merely decorative or had a symbolic meaning is left to speculation, although bulls played an important role in pre-Islamic and Islamic iconography, and their depiction became more frequent during the course of the twelfth century (see cats. 134, 135). When compared with imagery found on similar vessels, including lions, goats, hares, and animal combat scenes (most famously on a cameo glass ewer in the Corning Museum, 85.1.1, showing an eagle attacking a deer), the naturalism of the bulls in cat. 133 seems to reflect an everyday environment, although associations with myths and/or astronomy are possible. **MR**



134

Container in the Form of a Humped Bovine

Iran, 12th–early 13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
 H. 17½ in. (44.5 cm)
 Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial
 Collection (38.139)

135

Container in the Form of a Humped Bovine

Iran, 12th–13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in transparent blue, luster-painted
 H. 14½ in. (36 cm)
 Keir Collection, on long-term loan by Ranros Universal
 S.A. to the Dallas Museum of Art (K.I.2014.350)

These two extensively decorated objects, which may have been used as flower vases, belong to a series of animal-shaped containers made in Iran. Featured animals are lions (cat. 136c), camels (cats. 139, 140), sheep, elephants, and goats, as well as fantastic creatures, but the preponderance of bulls and, less frequently, cows speaks to the special significance of bovines.¹ A rare finding in an archaeological context is a blue-glazed fragmentary quadruped excavated at Rayy (RG8152/02, /04), now in the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. The majority of these objects are thought to have

functioned as ewers, for they are hollow and spouted, although their impractical form suggests, in some cases, that they were instead used as flower vases or had another, mainly decorative connotation. (None of their Syrian equivalents, for example, two undecorated pieces in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 30.95.153, .154, is hollow.) A ritual function in wine-drinking ceremonies ultimately deriving from arcane blood rites has also been suggested.²

Archaeozoological research suggests that cattle husbandry, a basic economic activity for both the nomadic and sedentary population,

experienced considerable growth in Iran from the twelfth to fourteenth century.³ Raised animals included humped bovines (*Bos indicus*) and the Asian water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*).⁴ That the animals had inward-turning horns is indirectly confirmed by Qazwini's description of a fire temple at Karkuy, the two domes of which were "each crowned with a single horn, curving inwards, so that together they resembled the horns of a huge bull."⁵

Qazwini's passage also hints at the symbolic role of bulls (and cows) in Iranian culture, which may have contributed to their continued, and frequent, appearance in visual imagery of the Islamic period. In Zoroastrian and Mazdaic cosmogony the primordial bovine, or "uniquely created bull," was the fifth creation of Ohrmazd (Ahura Mazda), after sky, water, earth, and the single plant or tree, and before man and fire. All manner of healing

and life-giving plants were generated from the uniquely created bull, which likewise became the progenitor of animal life; as such, consecrated bull urine was used in Zoroastrian rituals.⁶ In the *Shahnama* the mythical hero Faridun, king of Warena and defeater of the dragon-shouldered Zahhak, was raised by the cow Birmaya, and his weapon of choice was a bull-headed mace forged of iron—the *gurzi gawsar*, a symbol of heroism and the dispensation of justice in Iranian epics. Faridun's close connection with cattle, also seen in the suffix *gaw* (cow) associated with his totemic ancestors, can be traced back to earlier Iranian mythology, and ultimately to the Indo-Iranian myth of the cattle freed from the dragon; its legacy in the medieval period was strong, as can be deduced by the many tales placing Faridun in relation to cattle.⁷ Noteworthy is the fact that the bull in cat. 135 has a tail that terminates in a dragon/lion. Similar hybrid creatures are mentioned in eleventh- to fourteenth-century Iranian sources.⁸

The Taurus constellation and astrological sign further renders possible an astral significance. Because the lunar exaltation takes place in Taurus, the moon and the bull are closely linked, to the extent that the pseudo-planet al-Jawzahr, believed to be responsible for lunar (and solar) eclipses, probably derives its name from the Persian *gaw chahr*, "bull-shaped" or "bull face."⁹

Marvelous features such as the dragon/lion tail and the small figures lifting the vase in cat. 134 and the small lion springing from the vase to the head in cat. 135, as well as the dense luster-painted motifs covering both vessels' bodies, may draw from the resilient symbolism of ancient mythologies, or they may just as easily seek to elicit wonder from the viewer and beholder. The heterogeneous nature of a group of objects closely related to cat. 135, representing a falcon (cat. 131), a camel (cat. 139), and a harpy (Metropolitan Museum, 57.51.1), all with similar depictions of figures engaged in courtly activities on their bodies, may confirm this interpretation. **MR**



Cat. 135



a

136a–d

The Lion Motif

Incense Burner in the Shape of a Lion (a)

Eastern Iran or Afghanistan, 11th–12th century
Bronze; cast, pierced, engraved
9 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (24.4 × 29.5 cm)
David Collection, Copenhagen (48/1981)

Frieze Fragment with a Lion (b)

Iran or Central Asia, 12th century
Earthenware; molded, carved
4 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (10.8 × 16.8 cm)
al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah,
Kuwait (LNS 1071 C)

The lion, known for its formidable physical prowess, has been associated with royalty, power, and protection since ancient times, and during the Seljuq period the Turkish word for lion, *arslan*, was a preferred name of rulers and members of the ruling elite.¹ In shamanistic beliefs, the lion and tiger are spirits that assist the shaman in his travels through the heavens and the netherworld.² The lion was the royal hunting trophy par excellence, and its defeat by the sovereign represented the skill and courage of the ideal ruler and huntsman.

As a symbol of both the sun and the zodiacal sign of Leo, the lion had strong solar and astral connotations and frequently appeared together with a sun disk as an anthropomorphism of Leo and its overlord planet. For example, the Rum Seljuq sultan Ghiyath al-Din Kay Khusraw II (r. 1237–46) particularly favored this motif and

used it as a personal emblem for his coins and monuments (see cat. 14b). The image of the lion has also been interpreted as an indirect metaphor for Seljuq rule—that is, light overcoming darkness, or the order, prosperity, protection, and harmony bestowed by the ruler on his people and lands.³ The



b



c

Ewer in the Shape of a Lion (c)

Iran, late 12th–13th century
Stonepaste; glazed in blue, luster-painted
8 1/8 × 4 3/8 × 6 7/8 in. (20.5 × 11 × 17.5 cm)
Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche
Museen zu Berlin (I.5364)

philosopher and astronomer Qazwini (d. 1277) identified the lion as one of the four bearers of Allah's throne (the others are the eagle, the bull, and man), and it has been proposed that the sovereign was likewise borne, further confirming the lion's association with royal authority and raising its significance from an earthly to a divine or heavenly level.⁴

Lions were among the most commonly depicted animals in the Seljuq period, across

both media and the realm, from Merv to Mosul to Konya.⁵ Whether flat, in relief, or in three dimensions, they vary from naturalistic to so stylized that it is not clear whether they are lions or another breed of feline predator. Common for the period, the animal may appear with attributes of other creatures, such as wings, or they may be made composite with the heads of dragons or birds appearing at the tips of the wings,

tail, or elsewhere (cats. 136a, b). Exact meanings differed depending on context and were not always clearly identifiable. However, the lion's projection of royal authority and strength remained a constant, and certain rulers, such as the Rum Seljuq sultan 'Ala' al-Din Kay Qubad I (r. 1219–37), had a specific preference for the motif, displaying the lion prominently alongside other symbols of power, such as the double-headed eagle, as a personal emblem on buildings, textiles, coins, and seals.⁶

Cat. 136a is characteristic of animal-shaped incense burners that were produced in the eastern parts of the Seljuq realm.⁷ Together



Fig. 87. Doorknocker, originally from the Great Mosque, Jazirat Ibn 'Umar. Brass, 10⁵/₈ × 9¹/₄ in. (27 × 24 cm). Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul (3749)



Fig. 88. Early 20th-century view of the lion stone relief from the Syriac monastery of Mar Behnam, near Qaraqosh (mid-13th century)

with birds (cat. 34), feline predators were among the most popular forms. Here, anatomy, proportion, and detail are ignored in favor of abstraction: engraved vegetal ornamentation, vine scrolls, and other openwork cover the beast's entire body. The tail terminates in the head of a bird (of prey?) and appears almost as an independent creature. The thick "mustache," prominent teeth, and protruding tongue are expressive characteristics of this kind of incense burner. Standing on its four paws with its tail pointing forward, the bird's sharp beak evoking a weapon, this feline incense burner takes on a frightening and powerful dimension. It was probably intended for a wealthy or elite household, where, similar to a guardian, it protected the owner and his family and impressed guests. The object's sophistication and royal iconography were thus paired with wealth and nobility, as expressed through the luxurious and precious incense or other aromatics that it dispersed through the openwork surface.⁸

In cat. 136b a feline predator with a tail terminating in a dragon's head strides forward with its left foreleg lifted, appearing in profile against a ground of stylized vegetal scrolls. The suggestion is of a lion strutting through its natural environment.⁹ That the object is made of unglazed earthenware is a rarity; figural reliefs in stucco and stone were more common in the Seljuq era.¹⁰ However, the rectangular shape and linear organization of the design suggest that it once formed part of a frieze. Absent information on its original context and complete iconographic program, interpretation of the frieze is difficult. Lions with dragon's-head tails, a popular Seljuq motif, may allude to al-Jawzahr, the dragon-monster thought to devour the sun (here represented by the lion) and cause eclipses. These supernatural-seeming phenomena, though imbued with maximum magical power, struck fears of darkness and destruction.¹¹ Subtle details on the lion's body, such as the three-dot *cintamani* on the hip and foreleg—a royal and apotropaic motif in Seljuq times¹²—suggest that the animal was protected against the eclipse's dark energy. The band with circles at the neck that reads like a necklace or collar increases the sense of nobility and prestige but also alludes to a lion

in captivity, such as those used in hunting games practiced by Seljuq rulers. As such, and absent an exact context, it is possible that this relief had more decorative than iconographic purposes.

Cat. 136c presents a ewer in the shape of seated lion. Such sculptural ceramic vessels were popular in both the eastern and western parts of the Seljuq world. A variety of figures and animals are known, though bovines were the most common (cats. 134, 135).¹³ Iranian examples are usually more stylized, while those from Syria are more naturalistic. This lion, glazed in dark blue and luster-painted, is reminiscent in its technique and polychromy, as well as in its schematic and stylized features, of the Iranian tradition. It has been suggested that certain of these lion-shaped vessels were pendants to the bull-shaped ones, serving specifically as a kind of "Persian rhyton" for the wine-drinking ceremony performed by the ruling elite to celebrate the dawn of the New Year.¹⁴ The lion as a container for wine, which in certain proverbial and mythical contexts is referred to as "liquid sun,"¹⁵ would therefore act as a metaphor for its contents. In this example, however, the two spouts—a small one on top of the head and another, larger one between the shoulders—are closed, thereby precluding the possibility of such a function.¹⁶ Whatever decorative purpose it served, this lion figurine would still have retained its royal and protective virtues.

With its circular shape and lion's head in combination with five pairs of facing dragons' heads, cat. 136d is representative of doorknockers from the Jazira and Greater Syria.¹⁷ These sophisticated objects furnished and embellished the wood doors—usually one per door panel—of public religious buildings such as mosques or madrasas, as well as of the palaces and houses of the ruling and wealthy elite. In addition to their aesthetic purpose, doorknockers were highly functional, allowing access to the space beyond when sounded to announce one's presence or when pulled/pushed to open the door.¹⁸ The known figural examples, cat. 136d among them, include a fixed piece in the shape of a lion's head to which a movable knocker is attached, the latter comprising one or several pairs of dragons.



Doorknocker with Lion's Head and Facing Dragons (d)

Jazira or Syria, 12th–13th century

Bronze; cast

Diam. 6 1/8 in. (15.6 cm)

Département des Arts de l'Islam, Musée du Louvre, Paris (MAO 97)

d

Perhaps the most renowned examples of this type appeared on the splendid doors leading from the courtyard to the prayer hall of the Great Mosque in Jazirat Ibn 'Umar (modern Cizre), ordered by the Zangid ruler Mahmud b. Sinjar Shah (r. 1208–50/51; see fig. 37).¹⁹ However, in the Cizre examples a single but much more monumental pair of dragons increases their prominence and visual impact (fig. 87). Instead of being rendered flat, the snakelike beasts are three-dimensional, their bodies joined by an interlacing knot and their tails ending in the head of a bird of prey. Al-Jazari drafted a design for a similar door and doorknocker for the palace of the Artuqid ruler Nasr al-Din Mahmud (r. 1201–22), in Amid.²⁰ Although no material evidence for the knocker is known, al-Jazari's drawing together with the Zangid example confirms that the iconography of a lion's head and a pair of dragons became common on doorknockers in the Jazira and the neighboring regions, beginning with the Seljuq successor states.²¹

Doorknockers with dragons allude to the serpentine doorknockers of the Ka'ba,

possibly evoking the protective serpent in the well that guarded the treasures of this holy place.²² They also compare with the dragon guardians that often appear on or near gates or entryways in Anatolia, Iraq, and Greater Syria, in both Muslim and Christian contexts (see fig. 91).²³ The open-mouthed dragon refers to al-Jawzahr, which threatens the sun, represented by the lion; such depictions of a lion with a menacing dragon's-head tail constitutes another motif that was common in Muslim and Christian gateways (fig. 88),²⁴ but the placement of such a frightening symbol at a threshold or entrance is questionable.

Let us turn, then, to the central positioning of the lion's head for possible interpretations of its combination with the open-mouthed dragon. The latter's configuration in pairs and the formation of the two snakelike bodies into a continuous ring may allude to the daily cycle of the sun, spouted out by the dragon of the east in the morning and devoured by the dragon of the west at night, thereby creating the twinned antagonists of light and darkness, chaos and order, yin and yang.²⁵ According to certain sources—for example, the poet

Khaqani—this image is a metaphor for the ruler (alias the snake), who is responsible for the light.²⁶

Another possibility is to identify the lion (itself a symbol of the sun) as a metaphor for the sovereign. Certain sources identify the ruler as the sun, conqueror of darkness and disorder, whose powers can control the evil and the good dragon (snake)—that is, the earthly ruler, the pillar of the world, who ensures peace, order, and justice.²⁷ Whatever their exact meaning, the positioning of such doorknockers at entryways confirms that the lion/dragon pairing was imbued with magical and apotropaic powers. Similar to talismanic guardians, such figural doorknockers protected the space behind the doors and the people who lived there from evil, enemies, and other menaces.²⁸ To a certain extent their purpose may also have been to neutralize bad spirits, or to “purify” the person who came knocking. **DB**

137

Tray Decorated with Wheel of Three Hares

Iran or Afghanistan, Khurasan, 12th century

Brass; engraved, inlaid with copper

Diam. 7¼ in. (18.3 cm)

Keir Collection, on long-term loan by Ranros

Universal S.A. to the Dallas Museum of Art

(K.I.2014.71)

Inscribed in Arabic, in *kufic* on the interior:

اليمن والبركة

Felicitation and blessing.

In cursive on the exterior:

العز والاقبال والدولة والسلامة و السعادة والشفاعة والبقا

Glory, prosperity, dominion, well-being, happiness, and enduring protection.



Three hares, arranged in a so-called animal wheel and set against a rich vegetal pattern, constitute the main motif of this circular dish or tray.¹ Each hare shares an ear with the successive hare in the circle, so each animal appears complete despite the presence of only three ears in total, which form a triangle. The tray was most likely made in southwestern Afghanistan or in Khurasan, for the shape and decoration find parallels in objects in the former collections of the Afghan museums.²

Radially set animals with conjoined or intersecting bodies seem to have emerged as a motif in Khurasani metalwork in the twelfth century, most often depicting sphinxes and hares in the number of three or four.³ With regard to the iconography of the hunt (see “The Courtly Cycle,” pp. 72–165), the running hares may represent a favored prey. In keeping with the words of good wishes inscribed on the vessel, the animals also convey a generic beneficence on account of the luck, survival, and cleverness attributed to them in Arabic and Persian sources. Moreover, the hare, believed to change from female to male every year, was known to menstruate—an expression of

impurity thought to keep away jinns, or demons. It is thus as both a carrier of good luck and a talisman that hares emblazoned battle armor, as revealed by a passage in Nizami’s *Khusraw and Shirin*.⁴ Vaguely related Turkish beliefs, also originating from the menstrual cycle of the animal, link it to the ambivalent worlds of the humid, lunar, and feminine.⁵ Furthermore, the Hare constellation (al-Arnab), which Islamic astronomy locates beneath the left foot of Orion, imbues the animal with an associated astral significance and may explain the occurrence of hares enclosed in stars in Abbasid and Fatimid art.⁶

Compounding the complexity of the iconography in cat. 137 is the arrangement of the hares into a wheel. This ancient motif, the antecedents of which are in seventh- and eighth-century Buddhist art from Central Asia and the Himalayas, has astral and, especially, lunar significance.⁷ Its semantic roots trace back to Indian astrology, which reads the patchy shadows of the moon as a rabbit, and to a Chinese Daoist legend that ascribes to the hare on the moon an alchemical role linked to immortality.⁸ In transmitting the legend of the hare on

the moon, the Buddhist tale *Sasa Jataka* adds metaphysical and religious implications to the story by positing that the hare is an incarnation of the Bodhisattva.⁹ The corresponding iconography depicts it as a hare within a disk. It may be that, in nomadic Central Asia, heir to the art of the steppes and its common use of conjoined and rotating animals, this notion was transmuted into three rotating hares.¹⁰

The hare-wheel motif likely flourished in twelfth-century Khurasan owing to a combination of factors: the intersection of Central Asian Buddhism with Islamic and ancient Turkish beliefs; the cultural prominence of beneficial iconography related to the royal hunt; and the strong talismanic and cosmic connotations of the hare. The latter’s frequent association with the sphinx, which appears either as an alternative animal wheel or in combination with hares, also puts forth a solar connotation, suggesting that the lunar symbolism of the hare was both preserved and augmented through its integration with the sun. In the case of cat. 137, the sun is evoked primarily by the radial composition and in the raylike decoration encircling the medallion.¹¹ MR

Dish with a Caparisoned Elephant Carrying a Woman

Iran, probably Kashan, dated A.H. Shawwal 611/
A.D. February–March 1215

Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted,
incised

H. 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (8.6 cm); Diam. 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (20.5 cm)

Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (PO.285.2004)

Inscribed in Persian, in cursive on the interior:

ای یاد لب ت مرهم داغ دل من / فارغ ز غمت خیال دل من // وصل تو که
کس نیافت کر می طلبم / بوی خلد آمد بر دماغ دل من

Oh the memory of your lips is the remedy for my aching heart / Thinking of you frees my heart from sorrow // No one (was able to) unite with you; If I ask / The scent of paradise will penetrate my heart.¹

همواره ز من کشیده دامن دل تست / فارغ ز من سوخته خرمن دل تست //
کر عمر وفا کند من از تو دل خویش / فارغتر از آن کنم که از من دل تست
Your heart has always escaped from me / It is free from my broken heart // If I live long enough, I will make my heart even freer than yours.²

In cursive on the exterior: The first quatrain is repeated, followed, in Arabic, by:

في شوال سنة احدى عشر و ستمائة

In Shawwal 611.

And continuing in Persian and Arabic:

نگه کردن اندر همه کارها / به از در و گوهر بخوارها // بعد ما عمله و
صنعه محمد بن ابی (طاهر؟) بن ابی الحسین

Caution in all matters is better than a load of pearls and jewels // Made and decorated by Muhammad b. Abi (Tahir?) b. Abu-I-Husayn.³

Although this dish probably does not depict a specific narrative, both its iconography and epigraphic content are dense in thematic and narrative suggestions.⁴ The caparisoned elephant carrying a veiled woman in a *hawda* (palanquin) embodies regality, its display, and its protection—the dominant elements of a complex layering of semantic signification.

The elephant, painted in reserve, occupies an outdoor setting, as suggested by the plants, pond, and animals (a bird and a snake). It is encircled by a rayed medallion, or *shamsa*, which together with the sphinxes adds to the regality of the scene. Not only does it don anklets and a bell, but its body is richly embellished with an allover pattern of three-dot motifs in both large and diminutive varieties. The *hawda*, luster-painted, is likewise densely decorated, with scrollwork scratched into the luster. The dish, painted beneath its base with so-called waterweed motifs, rests on three feet in the shape of winged sphinxes.⁵



Elephants were introduced into the eastern Islamic lands from the Indian subcontinent, where they were associated with the royal realm. The Umayyads and Abbasids inherited the same attitude, and ownership of elephants was the prerogative of the caliphs, who put them to use largely as mounts in ceremonial processions. The latter practice was still present in Iran during the reign of the Seljuqs and their successors, who only sporadically employed the animals for warfare, even though the Ghaznavids had begun to deploy them extensively in battle in the early eleventh century.⁶ Consequently, elephants usually appear in Islamic art with ceremonial trappings, and often bearing a *hawda*.⁷ Disrobed elephants are few and derive from different iconographic formulas, for instance, the astrological elephant–bull combat on a marble slab from Ghazni.⁸

It follows, therefore, that the woman on this *hawda* hails from the sultan's court. She is shown in what is likely an idealized depiction, moving between the palaces, pavilions, tent camps, and gardens that collectively compose the sultans' dwellings.⁹ Her veil, modestly concealing her moonlike beauty—a quality praised in contemporary poetry and illustrated in analogous objects—suggests that she has ventured outside the intimate safety of her quarters on the court grounds, and the snake in the pond may symbolize the related perils, a notion furthered by the inscription calling for caution.¹⁰ It might be that she is the object of the love verses describing the pains of lost, unreciprocated, or distant love, a sentiment elicited by the theme of the journey depicted on the dish. **MR**



139

Container in the Form of a Camel Carrying a Jar

Iran, probably Kashan, late 12th–early 13th century
Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
H. 15½ in. (39.5 cm); Depth. 9¾ in. (24.9 cm)
Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London
(POT 857)

140

Figurine in the Form of a Camel Carrying a Palanquin and Two Riders

Probably Iran or Iraq, 12th–early 13th century
Stonepaste; molded in sections, glazed in turquoise
7⅞ × 5½ × 2½ in. (19.5 × 14.1 × 6.5 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Fletcher Fund, 1964 (64.59)

In the arts of twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Iran and nearby regions, depictions of the camel are largely associated with transport and travel. One- and two-humped camels are shown carrying burdens on their backs, sometimes fanciful ones, such as the jar for flowers in cat. 139, and sometimes more realistic ones, such as the palanquin and seated figures in cat. 140.¹ In all such representations, the first of which occurred relatively early in Islamic art,² details of the animals' saddle-cloths and trappings are always included.

During the Seljuq period one-humped dromedaries, most likely Arabian in origin, and two-humped Bactrian camels, from Central Asia, had for centuries been the primary beast of burden used in caravans, including those that traversed Asia through the extensive network of so-called silk roads, transporting merchandise as far east as China. Camels also



Cat. 140

carried the belongings, portable furniture, and tents of the nomadic and the itinerant. To bear people across distances, the animals were straddled and ridden like horses, although elite passengers or women of a certain rank were hidden away in closed litters mounted on the camels' backs, much like the turquoise figurine in cat. 140.³

The centrality of the dromedary in the Arab culture and economy—they also provided meat and milk—was reflected in the development of a vast related vocabulary, as well as a poetic topos in praise of the “ship of the desert” (*safinat al-barr*), the appreciation of which far outlived the pre-Islamic period, when the device first emerged. Both traditions, together

with the animals, followed the Arabs' migration north- and eastward.⁴ In Central Asia, one-humped and two-humped camels counted among the livestock depended on by the Turkish population, whose main wealth, however, came from horses, sheep, and bovines, and who seem mostly not to have eaten their meat—a custom that possibly changed after they encountered Arab culture and converted to Islam.⁵ Surprisingly, camels seldom appear in the otherwise rich Turkish animal mythology and art, although their role in ancient shamanistic beliefs may be suggested in the name of the Qarakhanid prince Bughra (“Camel-stallion”) Khan and his Muslim successors.⁶

While there is little information on when one-humped dromedaries arrived in Iran and Central Asia (where two-humped camels were the norm), from at least as early as the ninth century herders started to interbreed the two species. The hybrid animals were stronger and therefore more suitable for caravan transport and riding. They also fetched a higher price at market, considering the years-long gestation required to birth and rear a single animal. It has been suggested that the Turkmen tribes that settled in Khurasan and eventually founded the Great Seljuq state bred hybrids, and that their southward migration was prompted, beyond an unstable political situation, by this purported occupation.⁷ According to this interpretation, at the beginning of the eleventh century, interbreeding had become unsustainable in the northern Karakum Desert, as one-humped camels—necessary to continue the breed—could not bear the winters there, which had become harsher as the result of a sudden climate change. Be that as it may, the early Turkmen settlers in Khurasan were indeed associated by their contemporaries with camel breeders, as demonstrated by the Ghaznavid Mas'ud I's reference to them as *sarbanan* (camel herders).⁸

This partial convergence of Arab and Turkish traditions may explain the frequent presence of camels in the arts of the twelfth century. Coeval poetry illustrates that the strong, resilient animal, well known for carrying heavy loads, held a special place for mystical poets, who, like Farid al-Din 'Attar (d. 1220/21), portrayed the camel as an example of a modest life spent bearing one's burdens (“Be in this valley like a camel and do not make mistakes. / Walk softly, eat thorns, and carry the burden correctly”), or as a paragon of obedience, intoxicated by the voice of the beloved caravan leader, whom it would follow anywhere.⁹ Both are metaphors for mystic love by way of spending one's life under God's guidance and heeding the call of one's Master without resistance. It is possible that these underlying meanings may have held some significance for the beholders of such camel-shaped objects. **MR**



Cat. 141

141

Bowl with Bird of Prey Attacking a Bird

Eastern Iranian region, 12th–13th century
 Earthenware; white-slipped, glazed (transparent colorless), incised, in-glaze-splashed in brown, purple, and green
 H. 4 in. (10 cm); Diam. 14 in. (35.4 cm)
 al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait (LNS 352 C)

142

Candlestick with Lion and Bull in Combat

Khurasan, 12th–early 13th century
 Bronze; hammered sheet, repoussé, engraved, inlaid with copper and silver
 H. 12¼ in. (31 cm); Diam. 13¾ in. (35 cm)
 al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait (LNS 81 M)
 Inscribed with benedictory words in Arabic in either cursive or *kufic* in four registers, one on the neck, one on the shoulder, and two on the body

Animal combat was a beloved theme in Iranian art in the Seljuq and post-Seljuq periods, as demonstrated by these two different iterations of the subject. Incised on the ceramic bowl (cat. 141) is a falcon or eagle attacking a long-legged bird with a funnel-shaped beak.¹ While the oddity of the latter feature was possibly exacerbated by repairs to about two-thirds of it, the suggestion overall is of a wading bird. Such a representation is unusual for the period and together with the foliage composing the background probably evokes the luxuriance of a water-rich environment, be it a garden or riverine setting.² The northwestern Iranian regions, where similar ceramics probably originated (modern Azerbaijan and

Georgia), are set between the Caspian and Black seas and have a rich hydrography.

The eight-sided candlestick (cat. 142), of Khurasani craftsmanship, bears a more elaborate set of images accompanied by good wishes inscribed in different scripts. The main register, at the center of each side, shows a lion attacking a bull from behind, the latter animal, clearly in pain, lowering and turning its head to look backward. The fierce posture of the lion, its tail curled, stands in opposition to the submissive bull, its legs flailing as if caught midstride. Two inscribed bands enclose the figurative register, each bordered by another band with additional lions, this time seated, in pairs, flanking a frontally depicted bird or harpy with outspread wings. All figures are realized in relief using the repoussé technique; as with all other elements of the decoration, they are also inlaid with silver.³

Animal combat scenes have been known since ancient times and have been employed in Islamic art since the Umayyad period. They

are primarily evocative of dominance over submission. Such a meaning could be applied to different aspects of supremacy: from worldly authority to heavenly dominion, from the power of the beloved toward the lover to the alignments of the stars and the planets. The accompanying inscriptions offer no further clarity; as in the case of cat. 142, they mostly wish well unto the owner of the object. A unique exception, which gives a mere mention of the animals and information on the manufacturing and patron, is a bronze aquamanile in the shape of a cow suckling her calf as a lion attacks her hump, dated A.H. 603/A.D. 1206 (fig. 89).⁴ As in poetry, the level and depth of interpretation—literary, beneficial, astronomical, mystical—depended on the cultural background of the viewer. The choice of combatants might have conveyed aspects specifically linked to the animals. In poetry both falcons and lions were consistently associated with regality (see cats. 71, 136a–d); the latter are frequently mentioned as symbols of



Cat. 142

authority on banners, and sometimes carpets, to signal the luxurious lifestyle of the patrons.⁵ As the astrological Leo, the lion is further linked to the sun, which not only is Leo's overlord planet but also functions as a powerful metaphor for the sovereign.

Coeval Persian poetry illustrates the complexity of animal-combat symbolism. Athir al-Din Akhsikati (d. ca. 1174) offers a fitting example by staging both lions and hawks in a series of upending metaphors: "As the royal hawk of your ambition seeks its prey./Out of sown fields, may the heavenly lion be its feed."⁶ The hawk embodies the ambition of the poem's recipient, but its prey departs from the naturalistic metaphor of the hawk surveying the "sown fields": in the unexpected final twist, the hawk vanquishes the "heavenly lion."

As this is the standard designation for the constellation Leo, the metaphor elevates the scope of the hawk/recipient's ambition to the astronomical—facilitated by the royal hawk's possible connection to the constellation Aquila. Perhaps the recipient may even gain victory over a heavenly element. While these associations may not have been made explicit in their visual representation, their ambiguity allowed for interpretations that were open to the viewer's own knowledge. **MR**



Fig. 89. Aquamanile of a cow suckling her calf being attacked by a lion. Maker: Ali b. Muhammad b. Abu al-Qasim. Khurasan, dated A.H. 603/A.D. 1206. Bronze, H. 12¼ in. (31 cm). State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (AZ-225)

143

Pierced Jug with Harpies and Sphinxes

Iran, Kashan, dated A.H. 612/A.D. 1215–16
 Stonepaste; openwork, underglaze-painted,
 glazed in transparent turquoise

H. 8 1/8 in. (20.8 cm); Diam. 6 5/8 in. (16.8 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
 Fletcher Fund, 1932 (32.52.1)

Inscribed in Persian, on the rim with a *ruba'i* by
 Rukn al-Din Da'vidar Qummi:

من بی تو همان سر زده ام فارغ باش // همواره بهم بر زده ام فارغ
 باش // دست از تو بمهر دیگری از سر تو // بیزار شدم کر زده ام
 فارغ باش

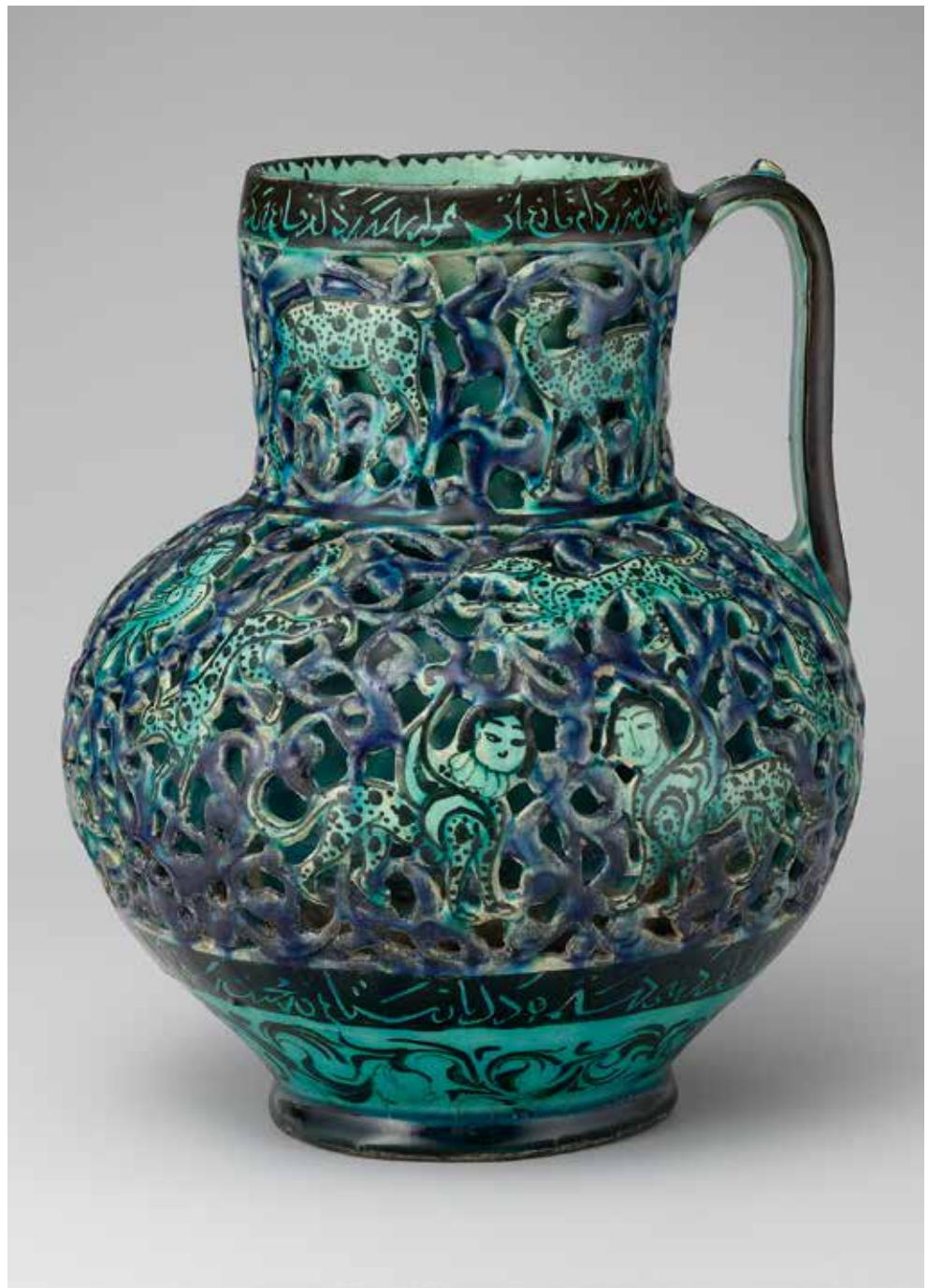
*Without you, I am depraved; Be free from care //
 Ceaselessly, I am unsettled; Be free from care //
 (Turning) from you, I reach for the kindness of another,
 because of you // Although I have done so, I despised
 it. Be free from care.*

Around the base with an anonymous *ruba'i* and, in
 Arabic, the date of manufacture:

گفتم چو رسد بزلف دانی دستم // دل باز ستانم وز محنت رستم // یک
 لحظه چو در پیش رخس بنشتم // جان نیز چو دل در سر زلفش بستم
*I said, (Do) you know, if my hand reaches her
 tresses // I (could) reclaim my heart and be free from
 suffering // One moment, while sitting face-to-face with
 her // I tied my soul, like my heart, to the end of her
 curls.*

في شهر سنة اثنى عشر و ستمائة
In the months of the year 612.

By 1215–16, when this jug was made, the technical proficiency of Iranian potters had reached a pinnacle.¹ The jug consists of two layers, the interior vessel and the carved



openwork on the neck and globular sides with black and blue underglaze painting under a transparent turquoise glaze. Along the rim of the mouth and above a band of waterweeds above the foot run two inscriptions. The lower one comprises verses by an anonymous poet together with the date. The upper inscription is a *ruba'i* (quatrain) by Rukn al-Din Da'vidar Qummi.²

The love poetry appears to have little direct relation to the imagery on the neck and body. Here spotted dogs, cheetahs, and hares bound through the foliage above and below pairs of winged sphinxes and harpies. Around the rim four deer lope across a ground of foliate scrolls. The sphinxes, dogs, and cheetahs all have slight smiles, which communicate a happier mood

than the poetry. Standing confronted, separated by a stylized tree, the sphinxes can be interpreted as guarding the Tree of Life, a role they often fill on objects of this period.³ Like sphinxes, harpies, here depicted addorsed with heads viewed frontally, were inherited from the classical world, but their meaning in the Seljuq context was associated with the zodiac, particularly the sign of Gemini.⁴ Although they came from distant, inaccessible lands, harpies could represent happiness and appeared often in courtly scenes.⁵ In the absence of human figures on this jug, the real and imaginary beasts and their luxuriant natural setting suggest a paradisiacal theme only slightly diluted by the longing tone of the poetry. SRC



144

Bowl with Dragons

Iran, dated A.H. 607/A.D. 1210

Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted, part of the inscription scratched in the luster

H. 4 1/4 in. (10.8 cm); Diam. 8 3/8 in. (21.4 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1961 (61.40)

Inscribed in Persian in cursive script in three bands on the interior. From the topmost:

در عالم عشق غم ز شادی کم نیست / شادان نبود هرک بغم خرم نیست

// هر چند دراز است بیابان بلا / دیدم بیای عشق گامی هم نیست

In the realm of love, sorrow is not less than joy / He

who has never felt sorrow cannot ever be happy //

I have seen that the desert of affliction / however long

it may be is hardly a step toward love.

همواره ترا دولت و عز افزون باد / اقبال تو بگذشته ز حد بیرون باد //
 تا هرچه زین کاسه بکام تو رسد / ای صدر جهان ترا بجان افزون باد
*May your power and glory be perpetual / May your
 good fortune surpass all limits // So that everything in
 this bowl brings you enjoyment / Oh master of the
 world, may it prolong your life.*

في جمادى الآخر سنة سبع و ستمائة
Jumada al-Akhir 607.

شادی نکند سر کل ازینت نرسد / مردی نکند سر کل گر بهم رسد //
 مارا فزون (؟) [. . .] می ترسانی / ای هرچه ز تو دارد ار سر رسد
 (Untranslatable)

عز و اقبال و مهتری و سرور / از خداوند این مبادا دور
*May glory, prosperity, greatness and joy / never be far
 from (its owner).*

جمادى الآخر

Jumada al-Akhir

همواره ترا دولت و عز افزون باد / اقبال تو بگذشته ز حد بیرون باد //
 تا هرچه زین کاسه بکام تو رسد / ای صدر جهان ترا بجان افزون باد
*May your power and glory be perpetual / May your
 good fortune surpass all limits // So that everything in
 this bowl brings you enjoyment / Oh master of the
 world, may it prolong your life.*

نگه دار بادا جهان آفرین / بهر جا که باشد خداوند این
*May the Creator protect (its owner) / wherever he
 may be.*

The decoration on this bowl is organized in concentric bands, three of which are inscribed. Two others are intertwined and decorated with a scaled pattern, representing the snakelike bodies of serpents or dragons, the heads of which are positioned so as to confront one another in four pairs, their mouths open wide.¹ The bowl exhibits several characteristics of “Kashan style” wares, that is, luster-painted stonepaste vessels usually attributed to Kashan in the late twelfth to early thirteenth century.² These elements include the biconical shape, typical from the second half of the twelfth century; the Persian inscriptions, painted on or scratched (here upside down) into the luster; and the decorative program of interlaced geometric medallions with scribbled scrolls in the cavetto, the curled-up scrolls in one of the concentric bands, the double line marking the concentric bands, and the palmettes painted in reserve on the exterior.

Dragons are common in Anatolian, Jaziran, and Iraqi iconography, in both portable objects and on architectural decoration, where they often form part of a composition, but they rarely appear on coeval Iranian ceramics. This specific motif, however, is found on a number of vessels—bowls, a ewer, and a bottle—for

which manufacture in the same workshop or according to a circulating pattern can be proposed.³

The iconography of the dragon may have retained its ancient protective and apotropaic meaning. It also had cosmological associations with the moon- and sun-swallowing pseudo-planet al-Jawzahr, which was held responsible for eclipses. Accordingly, the small motifs between the gaping maws of the dragons have been interpreted as references to the sun in a symbolic expression of rulership that is also found in poetry, as in this panegyric by ‘Uthman Mukhtari (d. 1118–21) for a Seljuq ruler of Kirman, Mu‘izz al-Din Arslan Shah Qawurdi: “(The Sultan), coiled like a snake, (holds) in his mouth, / Hidden like the teeth of the snake, the disk of the sun (*muhreh-ye mār*):”⁴ Another bowl in this group, in

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, furthers this association through its more clearly rayed *shamsa* medallion at center, which also shows a lion painted in reserve (fig. 90; see also cat. 146).⁵

That the bowl, and possibly its imagery, may have had a perceived beneficial quality is supported by a twice-inscribed benediction wishing that “everything in this bowl” brings enjoyment and prolongs life. Good wishes to the owner, conveyed in Arabic, are common in metalwork and other forms of art but in this case are addressed to a “minister of the world”—an appellative which is most likely poetic, albeit evocative of the qualities and honorific titles associated with rulership. It is tempting to suggest that the bowl was made as a gift and that the inscription was meant to flatter its recipient. **MR**



Fig. 90. Bowl with lion. Iran, Kashan, early 13th century. Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted, H. 4 1/8 in. (10.5 cm); Diam. 8 3/4 in. (22.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Lewis Balamuth, 1968 (68.215.10)



145

Candlestick Base with Interlacing Dragons

Probably Jazira, early to mid-13th century
Brass; hammered, turned, engraved, incised, inlaid
with silver and copper

H. 9³/₈ in. (23.8 cm); Diam. 13¹/₂ in. (34.4 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Edward C. Moore Collection, Bequest of Edward C.
Moore, 1891 (91.1.561)

Inscribed in Arabic, in *naskhi* on outer rim of shoulder:

العز الدائم والاقبال الزائد والجد الصاعد والامر الناقد [أو الساعد]
القاصد [أو النصر الغالب والدهر المساعد والامر/ أو الدولة الباقية أو
السلامة الكاملة والعافية الدا/ نمة والسعادة/ والغزوية] الصافية و
الكرامة العالية و[السلامة الكاملة والعز أو البقا والشكر والتأنيبا
والمجد أو العلا والظفر بالاعدا والسعادة] والبقا لصاحبه

*Perpetual glory, increasing prosperity, ascending luck,
effectual command, / constant happiness, conquering*

*victory, eternal support, lasting command and domin-
ion, complete well-being, perpetual health, / happiness,
pure [. . .] (?), high generosity, / complete well-being,
glory, long life, thanks, praise, magnificence, / nobility,
victory over the enemies, happiness and long life for
its owner.*

In *kufic* around missing socket on shoulder:

الغالب والدهر المساعد/ العز الدائم والعمر السالم والجد الصاعد
والدهر المساعد [أو العافية لصا] والدولة الباقية والسعادة الكاملة
والسلامة الكاملة والجاد [أو] النما والبقاء دائم لصاحبه /

*Perpetual glory, a healthy life, ascending luck, / eternal
support, [. . .] health, eternal dominion, / complete hap-
piness, complete well-being, / increasing [. . .] and ever-
lasting life for its owner.*

In *naskhi* on the shoulder (added later):

حمد الرحم^(٥) // علي بن احمد
Praise be to the Benefactor(?) // 'Ali b. Ahmad.

On the interior body:

احمد بن العباس
Ahmad b. al-'Abbas.

In *naskhi* on the body (added later):

فاطمة
Fatima.

In angular script on the interior body:

برسم الخزانة المنقرية
By order of the treasury of (the ruler) al-Muzaffar.

In *naskhi* on the interior body:

علي ابي^(٥)
'Ali Abi(?).



Fig. 91. Entrance to the citadel at Aleppo showing a stone relief of paired dragons

This conically shaped, neckless candlestick bears the hallmarks of the al-Mawsili metalworkers, who created sophisticated inlaid objects for courtly households of the Seljuq successor states.¹ Among their creations is this lighting device, which was made for the treasury of a ruler or high-ranking officer known by the title *al-muzaffar*.² Most intriguing are the three densely decorated zigzag bands. The curvilinear drawing of the zigzag units increases elegance and adds dynamism to this continuous motif, while arabesque-like patterns enrich the corners, and copper inlays create polychrome accents. The central band consists of pairs of confronted winged dragons with knotted serpentine bodies, feline forelegs, and tails ending in interlacing dragons' heads. The two other bands contain elegant arabesques.

Dragons and arabesque motifs appear against a background of engraved, spiraling vegetal scrolls. Parallels for the paired dragons depicted here occur on gates and portals, such as those at Sinjar, Amid (present-day Diyarbakır), Aleppo (fig. 91),

Damascus, and Baghdad; doorknockers of Jaziran and Syrian palaces, madrasas, mosques, and other monuments built under the Seljuq successor states (fig. 87); and also tombstones.³ Various meanings and interpretations have been proposed for the paired-dragon motif, which was popular in medieval arts from West and Central Asia, in Christian, Islamic, shamanistic, Zoroastrian, and other traditions.⁴ The dragon with an open mouth and knotted snake-like body may relate to the pseudo-planetary monster *al-Jawzahr*, which was thought to cause lunar and solar eclipses—devastatingly terrifying in the medieval world—by devouring the sun and moon. It has also been connected to ancient Central Asian and Mesopotamian beliefs regarding “issuing and devouring” dragons, which have been subject to a range of interpretations, from potency to royalty and from harmony to protection.⁵

While the iconography of facing winged dragons with open mouths and tails ending in dragons' heads remains to be discussed, the rendering on cat. 145 was likely intended to perform a function similar to those that

appeared on gates, portals, and doorknockers—that is, to provide talismanic protection, but also to convey royalty. The benedictory inscriptions atop this candlestick increase its apotropaic power, while the lavish scripts and interlaced stellate, circular medallions around the now lost neck reinforce high value and sophistication. **DB**



146

Dragon-head Mace

Anatolia, 12th–13th century
Copper alloy, iron; cast
H. 13¾ in. (35 cm)
Furusiyya Art Foundation (R-113)

The ubiquitous western Seljuq dragon, characterized by its open mouth, curled snout, and pointed tongue, not only decorated city gates and monuments from Kayseri to Mosul and Aleppo to Baghdad but also adorned ceramics and metalwork as well as weapons. The head of this mace is in the form of a dragon's head, its maw wide open to reveal a standing quadruped, either a bull or, more likely, a lion. The argument in favor of identifying the dragon's prey as a lion hinges not only on the common association of the two beasts in Rum Seljuq and successor-state art and architecture (see cat. 136d) but also in the imagery of combat between the natural and supernatural creatures in which the supernatural prevails.

As the illustrations to the *Warqa and Gulshah* manuscript indicate, maces were employed in close combat in combination with spears and swords. The one indisputable example in the manuscript of a mace used in battle, an example with a wide pointed head, is wielded by a cavalry soldier, which is consistent with other sources describing "maces widely used by the elite armoured shock-cavalry of Saljūq Rum."¹ In the *Siyasatnama* (Book of governance) of Nizam al-Mulk, the eleventh-century vizier, describes the education of Turkmen slaves at the Seljuq court as a gradual process of being given boots, then a horse and saddle, then a belt "to gird on his waist," followed in the fourth year by a quiver and bow case and in the fifth year "a better saddle and a bridle with stars on it, together with a cloak and a club [mace] which he hung on the club-ring" fastened to his belt.² SRC

147

Textile Fragment Depicting a Figure and Mythical Animals

Iran, late 12th–mid-13th century
Silk; compound plain weave with supplementary wefts
Overall 12⅞ × 17⅞ in. (32.7 × 43.4 cm)
Musée des Tissus et des Arts Décoratifs de Lyon,
Bequest of Jean Pozzi, 1971 (MT 36.612)
Inscribed in Arabic in *naskhi*:

بالبركة و اقبال دائم و دولة
With blessing, perpetual prosperity, and dominion.

This extraordinary textile fragment consists of four identical roundels rendered in blue on a red ground, each enclosing an inscriptional band that encircles depictions of mythical beasts in medallions flanking a figure.¹ As in cat. 24, each band repeats the same benedictory inscription four times (twice in the normal orientation and twice in mirror reverse), allowing the words to be read from either side of the textile.² The composition of each roundel centers on a half-length portrait of a figure. Sparingly rendered and holding two scepters terminating in birdlike heads, the figure has notably long hair ringed with a silver halo (fig. 92). It is very likely a depiction of Alexander the Great, perhaps drawing on a corrupted understanding of the iconography employed in scenes of his apotheosis. Referred to as the "Ascension of Alexander," this scene was a popular subject among the Byzantines and Europeans, as seen in a Crusader bowl presumed to have been made in Constantinople and found in Muzhi, Siberia (fig. 93). Notably, the theme also appears in a later bowl made for the Artuqid court (see cat. 6).³

While the motif began as a depiction of Alexander riding a chariot drawn by two griffins—lured by food suspended on the end of pikes—it is represented here as a formulaic rendering of a ruler. The pikes have been transformed into scepters not unlike the macehead at left (cat. 146). As in cat. 196, the transmission of iconographic motifs could

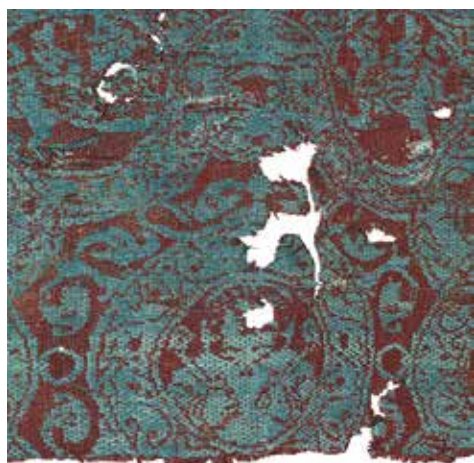
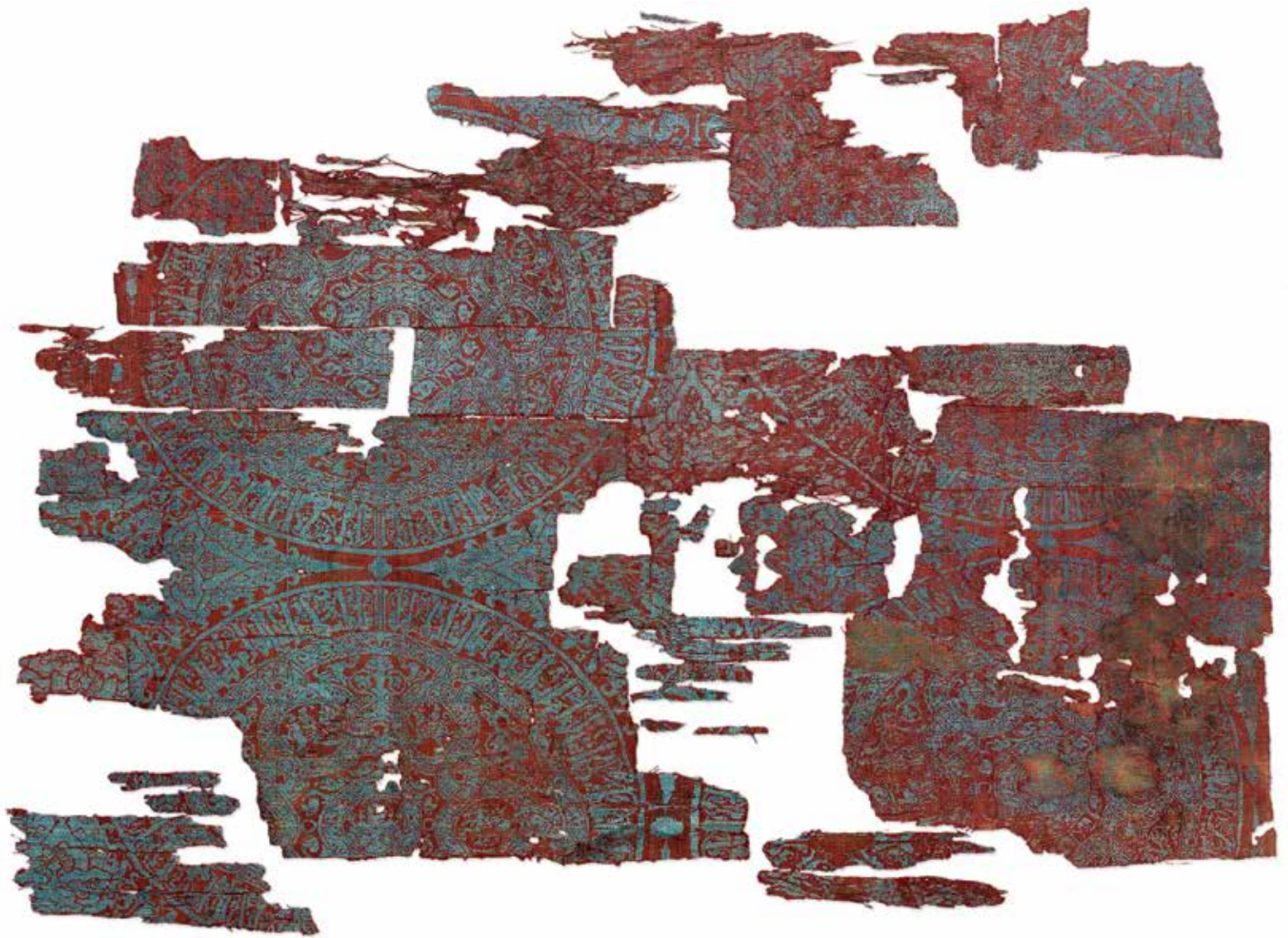


Fig. 92. Detail of cat. 147 showing central figure

have become muddled, with the end result drawing on not just the iconographic formula but also the milieu in which the artisan was

working. Far from being unique to the Seljuqs, such a transformation of the same motif appears in a contemporary ceiling painting in the Cappella Palatina, Palermo.⁴

Flanking the central figure are three pairs of distinctive, winged mythical beasts, each encircled by interconnected medallions composed of a complex interlaced knot pattern—griffins at top, winged horses at center, and two unidentifiable quadrupeds below, which may be dragons. The composition is remarkably similar to that of the Artuqid and Muzhi bowls. In the former, the figure of Alexander is flanked by six medallions containing mythical and real animals, among them two scenes of winged horses in combat.⁵ In the latter Alexander appears between ten allegorical depictions set in interlaced medallions, including a depiction of Bellerophon riding Pegasus.⁶ **MF**



Fig. 93. Bowl with the ascension of Alexander, datable to 1208–16. Silver, Diam. 11 in. (28 cm). Shuryshkar Regional Historical Museum Complex, Muzhi, Siberia (OF 798)



148a, b

The Double-headed Eagle Motif

Fragmentary Star Tile with Double-headed Eagle (a)

Anatolia, first half of the 13th century, probably from Kubadabad, ca. 1219–37
 Stonepaste; underglaze-painted, glazed (colorless)
 Diam. 9½ in. (24 cm)
 Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (I.6579)

Jar with Double-headed Eagles (b)

Greater Syria or Jazira, first half of the 13th century
 Stonepaste; underglaze-painted, glazed (transparent colorless)
 H. 9½ in. (24 cm); Diam. 4 in. (10 cm)
 Département des Arts de l'Islam, Musée du Louvre, Paris (OA 8178)

Birds of prey such as eagles are known specifically for their ability to fly with speed and at high altitudes, as well as for their incredible powers of attack, heightened by sharp eyesight that enables them to spot potential prey from long distances. They have stood since antiquity for strength, power, protection, and authority.

In Roman times, for example, the eagle attribute of Jupiter was both an imperial and a heraldic symbol, while Aquila, the eagle, appeared on a standard known as an aquilifer, which was carried by a special-grade Roman Legion. In Central Asian shamanistic beliefs, which were inherited to a certain extent by the Seljuqs and other Turkish dynasties and tribes, the bird of prey is an *ongon*, or spirit, and perhaps served as the totem of the Oghuz tribe from which the Seljuqs, Artuqids, and Zangids descended. Furthermore, the eagle is believed to be the intermediary that helped the souls of the deceased and of shamans pass between microcosms and the heavens. Additionally, the eagle is also a solar symbol or even the representation of Ali Toyon, the highest divinity in the heavens, and may as such appear atop a Tree of Life.¹

Although known in Sumerian Mesopotamia and Hittite Anatolia, the double-headed eagle, with its body seen from the front and its two



Fig. 94. Glazed ceramic tile from Kubadabad bearing a double-headed eagle with the royal title *al-sultan* on its breast



heads seen in profile, disappeared until its reintroduction in the Near East and eastern Mediterranean, probably around the eleventh century.² Beginning in the twelfth century, it became a preferred motif in the western parts of the Seljuq realm under the control of the successor states, where it appeared first on Zangid copper coins. It eventually spread across media and to architecture and the portable arts, including luxurious glazed tiles, stone and stucco reliefs, coins, vessels, and even a unique wood bookstand painted in gold on red lacquer that was made for the Mevlevi Sufi lodge in Konya in 1279 (see fig. 101), probably to be used together with the earliest known illuminated *Mathnawi* (1278).³ The motif was a symbol of power and of royalty and was used as a personal emblem by certain rulers. The Artuqid ruler Nasr al-Din Mahmud (r. 1201–22) placed the device on almost all his coins (see cat. 14j), as well as on the two towers of the Amid city

walls and on tiles decorating his palace in the inner citadel.⁴ Under the Rum Seljuq sultan 'Ala' al-Din Kay Qubad I (r. 1219–37), tiles comparable to cat. 148a but with the titles *al-sultan* and *al-mu'azzam* inscribed on the chest were produced, confirming the identification of the ruler with this emblem (fig. 94).⁵ The double-headed eagle was also used in the Byzantine world and other Christian domains, and its symbolism of royalty was understood both within and beyond the Seljuq realm.⁶

Cat. 148a is a fragmentary tile and waster that was unlikely used to decorate the wall of a building.⁷ However, the many comparable examples found in situ at Rum Seljuq palaces, particularly at Kubadabad,⁸ and at the Artuqid palace of Amid, specifically in their reception areas, suggest that this tile was also intended for the same area of a courtly building. The eight-pointed star shape suggests a Rum Seljuq building in Anatolia, such as the Palace-Hamam at the Great Palace of Kubadabad, where a tile

almost identical to cat. 148a was excavated.⁹ It would have appeared together with other star-shaped, figural, and nonfigural cross-shaped tiles in a larger geometric composition. In addition to fulfilling the taste for polychromy and the prominence of figural imagery on the walls of Rum Seljuq palatial monuments, this tile conveyed royalty, power, and protection.

With its inverted pear-shaped body, cat. 148b represents one of the most common types of ceramic jars produced at Raqqa and elsewhere in Greater Syria and the Jazira.¹⁰ The appearance of double-headed eagles on such underglaze-painted ceramics confirms the popularity of the motif. The pointillé decoration on the jar's neck may echo a pseudo-inscription. In addition to the decorative aesthetic effect of setting contrasting dark painted motifs against the white ground, the aim was probably to express protection and a sense of royal sophistication in a popular object. **DB**



149

Textile Fragment with Double-headed Eagles and Facing Lions

Iran or Anatolia, 13th century
 Silk, gilded animal substrate around a silk core;
 plain and twill weave (lampas)
 7⁷/₈ × 19¹/₂ in. (20 × 49.5 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
 Gift of George Hecksher, 2011 (2012.338)

The design on this fragmentary textile consists of two rows of animals situated within roundels, with the upper roundels containing double-headed eagles and the lower ones, confronted lions. The roundels are situated against a dense vegetal background outlined by the ground warp, with the resulting depiction occurring in the negative. Prima facie, the textile appears most closely related to a series of lampas textiles commonly attributed to eastern Iran or Central Asia.¹ Like the present fragment, they feature animals enclosed in rows of roundels against a densely decorated background. Where this textile differs, however, is in the greater spacing—both vertically and horizontally—between roundels, the offsetting of the upper and lower rows, and its presentation of a different animal in each row, as opposed to a single creature depicted throughout.²

Despite these eastern similarities, the style of the zoomorphic motifs in cat. 149 relates to



Cat. 149, reverse

western examples. The lions resemble those seen in the Kay Qubad I textile (cat. 5) and the doorknocker with lions and dragons (cat. 136d).³ Also interesting is the treatment of the double-headed eagles, whose breasts are formed through an inverted palmette. This peculiar motif appears on tiles from the Rum Seljuq palace of Kubadabad (cat. 148a) and also on Iranian textiles.

Both Great Seljuq and Rum Seljuq textiles feature both lions and double-headed eagles. Lions were frequently used as symbols of rulership and seem to have been of particular significance throughout the Seljuq lands. There is also a body of evidence suggesting that double-headed eagles may have held similar

regal connotations for the Rum Seljuqs, with depictions occurring frequently on royal architecture, coins (cat. 14j), and possibly textiles.⁴ Perhaps more significant are a number of tiles excavated from Kubadabad palace depicting double-headed eagles with the word “sultan” inscribed across their chests.⁵ Given the sheer number of objects on which such iconography occurs, this textile cannot unequivocally be ascribed to a royal patron. It is, however, beyond a doubt that the combination of these two creatures would have carried significant regal significance in the Seljuq period and beyond. **MF**



150

Textile Fragment with Double-headed Eagle

Anatolia(?), 13th century
 Silk and gold; compound twill, brocaded
 12 × 13 in. (30.5 × 33 cm)
 Collection of Rina and Norman Indictor

This unusual textile fragment depicts a stylized double-headed eagle. The heads are missing here but can be seen in two of the three other extant fragments of the original textile (fig. 95).¹ Its body seems almost to be made of chainmail, and its shoulders have metamorphosed into roundels formed by rosettes encircled by interlacing knots. The eagle splays its claws as though to attack the two rampant, regardant lions acting as heraldic supports, a fairly standard composition (see cat. 196). Stylistically, these lions differ from the usual depictions in that their bodies are covered in gold spots, reminiscent of leopard skin. They rear back to meet the gaze of the snakelike dragons' heads in which their tails, rising out from under one of their hind legs, terminate.² Springing from a star-shaped rosette below is a stylized plant that may represent a miniaturized Tree of Life.

These figures are framed within a roundel formed by two flanking double-headed dragons, their maws agape as though to consume

the rosettes between them. This scene is almost certainly a personification of al-Jawzahr, an invisible pseudo-planet thought to cause eclipses by devouring the sun and moon.³ Double-headed dragons appear frequently in depictions of al-Jawzahr, most notably in the frontispiece to the *Kitab al-diryaq* (Book of antidotes; cat. 106), in which such a beast encircles a seated figure holding the moon. Another common variation occurs in the *Vaso Vescovali* (cat. 124), in which al-Jawzahr takes on a human form and sits on a throne-like perch of menacing double-headed dragons.⁴ The two heads are likely meant to represent the two lunar nodes that came to be identified with the dragon's head and tail.⁵

While the exact interpretation of this scene is open to debate, the combination of dragons and double-headed eagles seems to have had particular significance in Anatolia. Take, for instance, the carved panels at the entrance to the late thirteenth-century *Çifte Minareli Madrasa*, in Erzurum, where a double-headed eagle perches atop a Tree of Life with coiled dragons for a trunk.⁶ Here, one of the most telling details is also the smallest—two small birds on the second-lowest branches of the tree. This motif is paralleled by the two birds flanking the dragons in cat. 150, the only part

of the decoration to occur beyond the boundaries of the roundels. This motif accompanies al-Jawzahr elsewhere, notably in the *Vaso Vescovali*, in which two small birds perch on the knees of Gemini.⁷ **MF**



Fig. 95. Reconstruction of the double-headed eagle motif in cat. 150

151

Textile Fragment with Double-headed Eagle and Flanking Dragons' Heads

Anatolia, 13th century
 Silk and gold; weft-faced compound twill (samite)
 11 × 8⁷/₈ in. (28 × 22.5 cm)
 Kunstgewerbemuseum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
 (1881,475)

This finely woven textile fragment of red and gold-wrapped silk depicts a double-headed eagle flanked by dragons' heads. It was almost certainly commissioned by a member of the Anatolian elite.¹ The piece shares some notable similarities with the fragment inscribed with the name of the sultan 'Ala' al-Din Kay Qubad I (cat. 5). Both are lavishly constructed from gold-wrapped thread over a brilliant red background, feature animals with imperial connotations, and were eventually deposited in European churches.² Red was also associated with royalty for the Rum Seljuqs and other dynasties in the Mediterranean, most notably in a chrysobull depicting Alexios III, Emperor of Trebizond, and his wife, Theodora, who wears a red robe decorated with double-headed eagles similar to cat. 151 (fig. 96).³

The heraldic composition, most notably the escutcheon framing the double-headed eagle, emphasizes the royal implications of the fragment. The eagle conforms to an established iconography of a gaping mouth, outstretched wings, and splayed claws (see cats. 148a, b). It does, however, differ in one significant detail: a single line stemming from the wing breaks the frame of the escutcheon and transforms in the exterior into a vegetal pattern, which eventually terminates in the open maw of a dragon. While compositions that include



both dragons and double-headed eagles are not uncommon (see cat. 150), this piece differs in that it makes an explicit connection between the two creatures.⁴ Far from being unique, this precise composition appears on the western portal of the mosque in the Ulu Cami and Darüşşifa (Great Mosque and hospital complex) in Divriği, commissioned by Ahmad Shah, amir of the Seljuqs' Mengüjekid successors, in 1229.⁵ The Mengüjekids were contemporaries of the Rum Seljuqs and Byzantines, and Ahmad Shah would no doubt have been familiar with the imperial connotations of this scene.⁶ MF



Fig. 96. Detail from a chrysobull showing Empress Theodora wearing a robe with double-headed eagles. Tempera on vellum, 1374. Holy Monastery of Dionysiou, Mount Athos, Greece



152

Tile with Griffin Motif

Iran, 12th century
Stucco; molded, carved
Diam. 19⁷/₈ in. (50.5 cm)
al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah,
Kuwait (LNS 32 ST a)

This ten-pointed star tile containing a striding winged griffin is one of a group, of which two others have depictions of an elephant holding a rabbit in its trunk and peacocks with entwined necks.¹ Like a gypsum-plaster relief excavated at Rayy showing a hawk attacking a duck (fig. 97),²



Fig. 97. Relief of a hawk attacking a duck. Excavated at Rayy, 11th–12th century. Gypsum plaster; carved, 12³/₈ × 14¹/₄ in. (31.2 × 36 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, University Museum—M.F.A. Persian Expedition (35.915)

these tiles would have adorned the walls of a house or court reception hall. While the association of griffins with elephants and peacocks suggests that it was considered a symbol of power or even Paradise—the latter interpretation reinforced by the surrounding foliage—the mythical beast’s long history stretches back to about 3000 B.C. in Egypt and Mesopotamia, thus contributing to its complex iconography. By the Achaemenid period (550–330 B.C.) in Iran, the eagle’s head and wings and lion’s body and ears were the standard attributes of the griffin. Its legs and feet were usually those of a lion in the back and an eagle in the front, but on this example the front left foot is hooved. (The right foot is damaged.) Griffins entered Greek art and literature, and according to Herodotus they hoarded gold.³ In various forms of Greek and Roman art, they are depicted guarding the dead or pulling the

chariot of Alexander as the “solar companions to Alexander’s ascension”⁴ (see cat. 6). A Roman coin with a griffin raising its left front leg to rest it on the wheel of a chariot is possibly the ultimate source of the pose of this Seljuq griffin, despite an interval of a thousand years.⁵ Far closer in date to this tile are examples of griffins from the Islamic world, including the famous Pisa Griffin (11th–12th century), which stood atop the Pisa Cathedral until 1828, and a Fatimid lusterware bowl (10th–11th century) decorated with a griffin with a raised left front leg.⁶ Although the griffins in both the Pisa example and cat. 152 have wattles, closer iconographic connections exist between cat. 152 and other Seljuq objects, in which the griffin appears in combination with other solar and cosmic symbols representing the daily course of the sun through the sky.⁷ **SRC**



153

Stamp with Sphinx

Eastern Iranian region (reportedly from Afghanistan), 11th–12th century
Earthenware; carved
Diam. $3\frac{3}{8}$ in. (8.6 cm)
al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait (LNS 552 C a)

Earthenware stamps were employed for different purposes, among them the manufacture of ceramics and the embellishment of food, especially bread. This stamp, the decoration of which is in positive relief, would have left a negative impression on the surface to which it was applied. It may have been used to make the final, negative mold in a ceramics workshop; the rather large handle would have assured a stable grip. Round stamps with similar handles were excavated at the potter's quarter in Samarqand and have been attributed to the ninth to twelfth century.¹ Similar round-shaped stamps present in assemblages from Fustat and excavated at Tiberias are usually interpreted as stamps for bread. They are either decorated with geometric and vegetal motifs and animal iconography or inscribed with beneficial words, whether wishes for good health and happiness or well-meaning exhortations referring to food (literally, "eat well"); one inscription reads, "Army's bread."² This object bears the carved image of a sphinx with a prominent

wing against a background of scrolls. The radial halo and dotted (starred?) body may allude to and reinforce the solar and astral connotations of this fantastic creature, which is believed to have had a protective function (see cats. 143, 154, 155, 157a, b).

Interestingly, other everyday objects, for example, bath scrapers such as cats. 36a, b, bear a similar assortment of iconographic motifs and benedictions (excepting the food-related ones), although with regional adaptations and features reasonable for inexpensive objects that were mostly locally produced. Although the decoration of such objects certainly fulfilled aesthetic requirements, it is tempting to ascribe to them, as in the case of cat. 153, a generic beneficial value desired in everyday life—such as what might have been assigned to the enthronement scenes, also with sphinxes, so often depicted on *mina'i* vessels. The religious inscriptions and symbols found on Byzantine-period bread stamps, including Coptic ones, used in Christian contexts to mark, among other things, Eucharistic bread, have prompted for them an association with amulets and charms worn or touched for protection—actions that are symbolically close to the intake of consecrated food.³ However, the absence of specific magical references makes such a hypothesis more elusive in the case of stamps from Islamic contexts. **MR**

154

Sphinx with Wings and a Tail Terminating in a Dragon's Head

Probably Northern Jazira, 12th–13th century
Bronze; cast
 $4\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ in. (10.8 × 12.1 cm)
David Collection, Copenhagen (5/1978)

155

Candlestick with Sphinxes

Jazira, mid-13th century
Brass; cast, inlaid with silver
H. $7\frac{7}{8}$ in. (20 cm); Diam. $11\frac{1}{2}$ in. (29.1 cm)
Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (I.3571)
Inscribed in Arabic on the rim:

مثل نوره في مثل / ضرب الله نوره / و كان للحياة (?) / و راسي قد
مال / افنحني و . . . / هدى الى [. . .] الناس / [. . .] نفسا (?) / حكمة
بالضياع بالصناع (?)

*The parable of his light is as if / God struck his light /
And it was for life (?) / [And my head . . . ?] /
Guided to [. . .] people / [. . .] the one (?) / His wisdom
in craft(?) [. . .]¹*

Mythical and fantastic composite animals such as the sphinx were ubiquitous in Seljuq art.² In ancient times the sphinx was among the creatures most closely associated with legends about the end of the inhabited world. As such, it acted as a guardian or protector of gates (to either the netherworld or the heavens), cities, tombs, temples, palaces, and the Tree of Life. The sphinx also had a solar, and thus cosmic, connotation.³ The contexts in which the creature appeared during the Seljuq period



Cat. 154

suggests that it was imbued with protective, magical, and/or solar functions, and it also may have acted as a symbol of royal power.⁴

Cat. 154 presents a small sculpture that probably once adorned a fountain or a basin in an Artuqid palace or pavilion.⁵ Other fountain figures are known from the Jazira but in glazed ceramics and in a more naturalistic rendering (see fig. 98).⁶ This sphinx, as is customary, has a winged feline body and a female human head. It wears a tripartite headdress (a diadem?), a mark of nobility. Following the Seljuq manner, the hair falls in braids down the shoulders, the face is moonlike, and the eyes are slit. The body, despite appearing calm and controlled, assumes a posture that only a supernatural being could achieve: the four legs are raised and bent forward at a ninety-degree angle, leaving empty the space between the ground and the belly.

It was common in Seljuq art for parts of one creature's body to end in the attributes of

another; here, the sphinx's tail and wings terminate in dragons' heads with maws agape, as though devouring the sphinx. The dragon is the animal embodiment of al-Jawzahr, the invisible planet-monster, which exercised its terrible powers over the cosmos by swallowing the sun and moon to cause eclipses. This figurine, therefore, may represent the solar eclipse, for the sphinx was the solar symbol par excellence.⁷ The physical representation of an event that in Seljuq times was considered a supernatural phenomenon expresses not only an astrological moment of the utmost power but also fear, darkness, and destruction.⁸ Another, less fearsome interpretation may be that the dragon (darkness) swallows and then spurs out the sphinx (light) as the sun rises and sets each day. These two antagonists—a sort of Seljuq yin and yang—prevail over the world, humanity, and the cosmos, responsible for ensuring harmony and order.⁹ The force and protection encapsulated in this figurine were



Fig. 98. Fountain figure in the form of a sphinx. Found at Raqqa, late 11th–12th century. Stonepaste; molded, modeled, carved, in-glaze-painted in turquoise (*laqabi*), H. 14⁵/₈ in. (37 cm). David Collection, Copenhagen (Isl. 56)



Cat. 155

therefore at their most potent. While its exact function remains to be discussed, this figurine conveyed royalty, majesty, and protection to its noble owner and to those who would drink or use the water that flowed from its mouth.

Cat. 155 shows a candlestick of unusual polygonal shape with hemispherical bosses accentuating the center of each of its nine concave sections.¹⁰ The style and figural repertoire of its inlaid metalwork are reminiscent of the Mosul school. The iconography relates to the courtly cycle (see pp. 72–165), with imagery such as an enthroned figure holding a wine cup, a falconer on horseback, and a hunter slaying a lion with his sword or killing a ducklike bird while performing the Parthian

shot. These scenes appear on the bosses, repeating and alternating with double-headed eagles. Above and below these raised medallions are pairs of sphinxes, facing each other and ascending (above) or walking horizontally in opposite directions (below). As is common in Seljuq art, their feline bodies are seen in profile, while their human heads are seen from the front. Their wings are joined to form a kind of halo, a feature that in medieval Islamic art did not, like its Christian counterpart, necessarily evoke sanctity. Here, for example, the enthroned figure is distinguished by such a halo.

Each of the sphinxes wears a tripartite headdress in a manner similar to the ruler in

various of the depicted scenes; their distinctively large proportions and regal poses further connote royalty, meaning that they appear here as heraldic royal guards.¹¹ Like the double-headed eagles, another symbol of nobility (see cats. 148a, b), they surround the monarch, augmenting his majesty and glorifying his absolute sovereignty, heroism, and justness. In addition, a few similar but smaller sphinxes are included among the chasing animals that run along the polygonal foot of the candlestick's body. This sphinx, although still an idealized and mystical creature, appears here in a secular and more mundane, apotropaic context.¹² **DB**



156

Luster Bowl with Harpy

Excavated at Rayy (RG7993), probably Kashan, mid-12th–early 13th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white, luster-painted
 H. 3½ in. (8.8 cm); Diam. 7⅞ in. (20 cm)
 University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia (37-11-11)

This deep bowl has on its interior a base roundel with an image of a harpy painted in reserve. The roundel is surrounded by six circles on filler background. The exterior has a band of pseudo-epigraphy representing a formula of good wishes. The image of the half-woman, half-bird monster, whose sources belong in the ancient past, is here utilized in an apotropaic mode. The harpy, a fabulous creature, belongs to the series of “wonders” described and illustrated within the visual

culture of the pre- and post-Mongol central Islamic lands.¹ Written record of these compilations is best known from the late thirteenth-century *‘Aja’ib al-makhlūqat wa ghara’ib al-mawjudat* (The wonders of creation and oddities of existence).² The image of a harpy on this ceramic bowl attests to the earlier and probably continuing belief within the popular visual culture at Rayy in the efficacy of the monstrous image to ward off the evil eye. **RH**



a

157a, b

Magic Mirrors

Mirror with Four Chasing Sphinxes (a)

Iran, 12th–13th century

Bronze; cast

H. ½ in. (1.4 cm); Diam. 7⅝ in. (19.5 cm)

Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (I.2200)

Inscribed in Arabic as a framing band: Illegible.

Polished-metal mirrors were known across the ancient world, from Egypt to Greece to China, and continued to be for centuries later. The medieval Islamic period, specifically during the rise of the Seljuqs and other Turkish dynasties, witnessed the production of a large number of circular cast-bronze mirrors with a fully decorated reverse.² While exact workshops remain to be determined, the dates of the known examples—ranging from A.H. 548 to A.H. 675 (A.D. 1153–1276)—together with their

provenances and findspots suggest that, despite a relatively short phase of manufacture (12th–13th century), cast-bronze mirrors enjoyed wide popularity within and beyond the Seljuq realm both during their reign and for a long time afterward. The simple technique of sand-cast bronze would have enabled mass production for a broad market,³ a hypothesis confirmed by the large number of mirrors with similar motifs and the relation of only a few examples to specific patrons (e.g., cat. 7).

**Mirror with a Pair of Adorsed
Sphinxes (b)**

Iran or Anatolia, 12th–13th century

Bronze; cast

H. 3/8 in. (1.1 cm); Diam. 4 1/8 in. (10.5 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,

Bequest of Mary Anna Palmer Draper, 1914

(15.43.285)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic* as a framing band

العز والبقا والدولة والبهى والرفعة والثنا والقدرة والعللا

والملك والنما والغنطة والقدرة والا/ لصاحبه ابدا

*Glory, eternal life, dominion, splendor, honor, beatitude, strength, nobility, sovereignty, increase, felicity, and strength given to its owner forever.*¹



b

Medieval bronze mirrors vary in size and weight, forming two distinct groups according to their shape and physical characteristics: circular, with a straight handle soldered or joined to the outer rim (fig. 99), or, like the present examples, with a pierced knob on the reverse (Chinese-type mirrors). Those with a fixed handle were meant to be held, while the second type could be held or suspended by a cord or metal ring strung through the hole in the knob. Most mirrors bear figural decoration on their reverse sides, with iconography ranging from the zodiac to heraldic animals, the courtly cycle to ancient mythology.⁴ One rare, monumental mirror bears the image of Solomon and his jinns on one side and the *Ayat al-kursi* (Throne Verse) from the Qur'an (2:255) on the other.

The varied and sometimes striking iconography depicted on these mirrors has given rise to myriad interpretations as to their use and meaning, ones that go well beyond their practical function of providing a reflective surface. While certain scholars have gone so far as to suggest that these objects were not, in fact, mirrors but weights,⁵ their function as talismans is widely accepted, as reinforced by the benedictory inscriptions and apotropaic motifs that so often adorn them. At least some examples are believed to have been used for divination or to possess other magical powers, a hypothesis supported by several examples that bear magic inscriptions on their polished sides (even though these likely date from later periods).⁶ Depending on a mirror's size, epigraphic content, and iconography, its virtues and



Fig. 99. Mirror. Northwest Iran or Anatolia, 12th–13th century. Bronze; cast, chased, Diam. 8 3/4 in. (22 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Florence E. and Horace L. Mayer, 1978 (1978.348.2)

perceived functions could be compounded by the interaction of any or all of these elements (see cat. 7).

The most common imagery depicted on mirrors relates to the sphinx, a fantastic creature revered since ancient times for its protective powers and solar/astral connotations.⁷

The four sphinxes in cat. 157a,⁸ each with a human female head seen from the front on a winged feline body seen from the side, recall the chasing animals (predominantly dogs and hares) that were a frequent motif in Seljuq art, specifically in courtly scenes that evoked the thrill of the royal hunt. And indeed, to a certain extent, the sphinx's offer of protection may have been conflated with the notion of the sovereign ruling justly over his subjects.⁹

Cat. 157b depicts two addorsed sphinxes, each a mirror reflection of the other. This composition was the most popular to appear on medieval Islamic mirrors.¹⁰ The human female head is again rendered frontally, while the feline body is seen in profile. The tail comprises a series of small dots ending in a curved peak, redolent of a scorpion's tail. The sphinx has been associated with the sun since ancient times, and this mirror may be compounding that power by presenting it in combination with the astrological sign of Scorpio.¹¹ Because such mirrors have magic inscriptions on their backs (probably added in later eras) and/or have been discovered in burials, laid in some instances on the breast of the deceased, they draw strong comparisons to magic amulets, revered for their apotropaic power well into post-Seljuq times.¹² **DB**

158

Fragment of a Storage Vessel (*Habb*)

Jazira, 13th century

Earthenware; molded, pierced, barbotine, engraved

H. 13¾ in. (34.9 cm); Diam. 117⁄8 in. (30 cm)

Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (PO.620.1999)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic* on the exterior:

نقش عبدالعزیز؟ (عبد الرحمان؟)

Decoration of 'Abdul-['Aziz?]' ('Abd al-Rah[man?]).¹

This fragment once formed the top half of a *habb*, a common water vessel from Mesopotamia. *Habbs* were made of unglazed earthenware, a cheap, simple medium that together with their distinctive shape helped ensure their cooling properties.² Seljuq *habbs* are distinguished by their rich surface decoration, imbued with rich associations of protection and fertility and often rendered in high relief, as though they were living sculptures garnished with jewels and drapery.³ This degree of elaboration and the fact that certain pieces are signed, such as this one, by the artist 'Abdul-['Aziz?], confirm that, in Seljuq times, *habbs* were powerful, sophisticated objects made for well-to-do Jaziran society.

In cat. 158,⁴ a selection of real and fabulous animals common in Seljuq art, among them lions, harpies, and other human-headed birds, as well as crowned female busts are arranged within or between arched sections against arabesque relief- or openwork. All the creatures gaze frontally outward and, rendered in such high relief, appear as though they are emerging from the vessel. The female busts have been compared to masks, which in various cultures, including the shamanistic and Gök Türk traditions that the Seljuqs, to a certain extent, likely inherited, were regarded as talismans.⁵ In *habbs* such as cat. 158, they are distinguished by their relative monumentality in comparison with the other figures as well as by their prominent location, usually in the uppermost

register.⁶ Thus, they may have been regarded as superhuman protectors overlooking the other figures. Similar to the ancient mother-earth goddesses that appear in earlier examples (see, for instance, cat. 60), although rendered in Seljuq style—that is, with moon-like faces and slit eyes that recall their Central Asian origins and which had become signs of beauty—the busts may also symbolize fertility, a fitting implication for containers that held water, the source of life. These divine females augment the apotropaism of the harpies and other mystical animals, while the lions connote royalty and the crownlike headdresses and jewelry convey nobility.⁷ **DB**





Religion and the Literary Life

The specifics of Islamic practice under the Seljuqs depended on region, ruler, and period, all of which, in turn, influenced religious architecture and literature. Because the Seljuqs' conversion and observance of the faith were closely related to their political ambitions, a certain opportunism colors the historical record. Thus, some of the early Seljuq sultans, such as Tughril Beg, destroyed the congregational mosques in the cities they attacked.¹ Yet Tughril Beg also strongly supported the Hanafi *madhhab*, or school of religious law, and one of its *kalams*, or group of followers, the Maturidis, in fierce opposition to the Shafi'i *madhhab* and its *kalam*, the Ash'aris. In 1053 Tughril Beg ordered the official cursing of the Ash'aris in mosques in Khurasan, a Sunni stronghold.² Whether this command was theologically or politically motivated remains unclear, but it was certainly in keeping with the Seljuqs' goal to control the territories they had conquered.³

Although the Seljuqs were not responsible for innovations in Iranian architecture, many of the most common features in the form of religious buildings were firmly established on their watch. The four-*iwan* mosque—that is, a structure built axially around a central courtyard, onto which four *iwans*, or vaulted rooms, open—became the predominant plan of Iranian mosques in this period. Additionally, soaring dome chambers containing the mihrab (prayer niche) came to be standard and to demonstrate the superior level of engineering and design skills in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (see fig. 3).⁴ Patronage of these mosques and other religious buildings, including madrasas, was not limited to the Seljuq sultans but included viziers, amirs, and wealthy Turkmen.

The argument that the Seljuqs initiated a “Sunni revival,” which returned their territories to orthodoxy after Shiite Buyid rule in Iran and influence in Baghdad, has been questioned in recent scholarship, but they did commission a number of madrasas to be constructed in Iran and Iraq. The most energetic patron of these establishments was Nizam al-Mulk (1018–1092), the formidable vizier of three successive Seljuq leaders, Chaghri Beg, Alp Arslan, and Malik Shah. Interestingly, he was closely affiliated to the Shafi'i school of law and the Ash'aris, whom the Seljuqs had earlier officially denounced. As with the mosque form, madrasas had existed before Nizam al-Mulk's time, but his vision of providing scholarships for students and quarters in which they could board was fully developed in the madrasas he commissioned. The most famous of these “Nizamiyyas” were founded in Nishapur and Baghdad, but he also built them in Balkh, Mosul, Herat, and Merv. These attracted renowned theologians, including al-Ghazali (1058–1111), the prominent theologian and jurist, who taught at the Baghdad Nizamiyya from 1190 to 1194.

The history of religious architecture in Anatolia, Syria, and the Jazira in the time of the Seljuqs follows a different course from that of Iran. Building new monuments that would identify not only the new rulers but their religion, as distinct from Byzantine Christian structures, the Rum Seljuqs developed individual styles that relied on the architectural and ornamental skills of craftsmen from Anatolia, the Caucasus, Syria, and Iran. Along with mosques and madrasas, dervish lodges, called *khanqahs*, were constructed by Seljuq patrons. The ground plans of twelfth- and thirteenth-century mosques in Anatolia range from hypostyle with small courtyards to buildings without courtyards under a flat wood or vaulted stone roof.⁵ In Syria and the Jazira the hypostyle mosque type with a large courtyard remained in use. Domed bays on the axis of the mihrab were adopted, but the most notable feature of the principal Seljuq mosques of Anatolia was the ornate decoration of their entrance portals and facades. In addition to interlace and vegetal scroll ornament, fantastic beasts such as dragons appear on some facades of religious buildings, including madrasas.⁶ As with Iranian religious buildings, the patrons in Anatolia, Syria, and the Jazira included sultans, amirs, and other high-ranking officials.

Another important type of religious building in Iran and Anatolia is the *khanqah*. Beginning in the late tenth century these buildings were associated with specific groups of Islamic dervishes, or Sufis, who followed the teachings of an individual mystic. With the advent of the Great Seljuqs in Iran and later of the Rum Seljuqs and successor states, these complexes proliferated. Great mystical thinkers and poets such as al-Ghazali, Abu-l-Hafs al-Suhrawardi (1145–1234), and Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207–1273) attracted large numbers of followers who slept, prayed, and performed the rituals peculiar to their *tariqa*, or mystical school, based on the teaching of their spiritual guide. To accommodate these people, lodges were constructed with dormitories, kitchens, refectories for the dervishes and the poor, prayer halls, and discussion areas.⁷ The complexes included tombs, at first of the founder of the *khanqah* and his family and later of his adherents. As the popularity of a *tariqa* grew, for example, the Mevlevi dervishes of Konya, who followed the teaching of Rumi, the complex expanded to accommodate pilgrims and resident Sufis. In Syria and the Jazira, by contrast, Sufi gatherings took place in madrasas, one of the most important forms of Seljuq religious architecture.

In the same way that patrons of religious architecture paid to embellish the buildings they commissioned, so deluxe religious manuscripts were produced that included lavish illumination and elegant Arabic script. Not only the use of paper but also the establishment of madrasas led to an increase in book production. The Qur'an and other religious books were never illustrated, and the illuminators thus relied on complex geometric and vegetal patterns in gold and other colors to emphasize the opening pages, chapter headings, and other important junctures in the text. In Anatolia, the Jazira, and Greater Syria, Islamic book producers most likely interacted with their Christian counterparts, who seem to have worked in cities rather than in monasteries, even when their books were made for monks. While the Turkish-Persian character of Iranian society in the Seljuq period resulted in the adoption and development of forms of religious art and architecture that already existed in Iran, the Seljuqs of Rum and their successor states in the Jazira and Greater Syria presided over a society that was a complex mix of Christians and Jews, Sunnis and Shiites, and speakers of Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Arabic, and Persian. Their religious architecture reflects this diversity and the creative responses that it inspired. **SRC**



159

Pair of Doorknockers

Jazira or Syria, first half of the 13th century

Bronze; cast, engraved

Each approx. 14⁷/₈ × 6³/₄ in. (37.5 × 17.1 cm)

Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (MW.127.1999.1, .2)

In the territories of the Seljuq successor states, sophisticated cast-bronze doorknockers such as these two were used primarily to furnish wood doors, usually one per door panel, on public buildings such as mosques, madrasas, and mausoleums and on the private residences of the elite.¹ Figural and more decorative examples with geometric and/or vegetal designs are also known (see cat. 136d).

This magnificent pair belongs to a group of doorknockers characterized by a vertically elongated, symmetrical, arabesque-like design based on the form of a trilobed arch. The latter is intertwined with stems and half-palmettes in different planes, although some objects in the

group consist only of the trilobed piece.² This pair stands apart for its weight, monumentality, and complexity of design. The handle-boss, which in other doorknockers from the region often takes the form of a lion's head, appears here as a geometric shape, evoking a square room with an octagonal intermediary section covered by a shallow dome. The latter is decorated with pierced and engraved arabesques, further complementing what is an overall vegetal, abstract design. Noteworthy are the split-palmettes at the top facing the handle, which seem almost anthropomorphic, like a pair of facing dragons with open mouths.³ While it is unclear whether the artist intended to reference these mythic, protective creatures, this pair of doorknockers—among the finest to survive from the medieval Islamic world—speaks to the virtuosity of Seljuq metalwork.

Although nearly identical from the front, a slight difference in size as well as variations on

the back confirm that the two objects were made, not from the same sand-cast mold but from individually designed wax models for each mold. This technique was more laborious but guaranteed a finer result and was thus more suitable for luxury commissions. Indeed, the resulting objects are comparable to three-dimensional sculptures, serving as decorative top pieces for ingenious creations (see, for instance, fig. 75).⁴ While the arabesque design compares stylistically to carved architectural reliefs and other objects (see fig. 31 and cat. 193) attributable to the Jaziran capital of Mosul during the reign (1211–59) of Badr al-Din Lu'lu', one cannot exclude the possibility that the workshop responsible for these doorknockers was located in another Jaziran or Syrian city. **DB**



160

Window Shutters (Door?)

Anatolia, Konya, probably from the Beyhekim Mosque,
late 13th century

Wood (walnut); carved, cast-metal appliqué

Overall 64 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 43 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (165 × 111.5 cm)

Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (WW.56.2003.1, .2)

Inscribed in Arabic in cursive on the right and left panels:

العاقل من وعظته التجارب // والجاهل من لا يفكر في العواقب

*The wise one is he who has learned a lesson from
experience // And the ignorant one is he who does not
think of the consequences.¹*



Fig. 100. Wood columns and ceiling in the hypostyle hall of the Afyon Mosque (founded ca. 1272)

Unlike in the eastern Seljuq lands, where large wood objects are less known,² wood survived in considerable quantities in the western reaches of the realm, confirming it as the preferred medium to furnish mosques, madrasas, and sometimes tombs. This is particularly true in Anatolia, where wood must have been largely available and was used to make some of the most remarkable doors, window shutters, minbars (see cat. 161), and *mahfils* (prayer lodges for the imam or ruler) of the Seljuq era, as well as columns and ceilings in hypostyle prayer halls (fig. 100), chests, and monumental *rahlas*, or Qur'an stands (fig. 101).³ As exemplified by cat. 160, wood objects usually received surface decoration in the form of carving, painting, or a combination of the both, as well as metal appliqué.

Judging from their dimensions, these panels functioned as either window shutters or a small door. Their pendant, in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (I.661), is almost identical in size and design. In both the Doha and Berlin examples, a symmetrical interlacing star pattern spreads outward from the center and creates various units that are filled with arabesque-like motifs. Epigraphic and arabesque panels at top and bottom complement the overall geometric composition. Metal appliqué—a suite of rosettes alternating with lozenges—decorate and consolidate the wood above and below the panels.⁴

Cat. 160 and its pendant in Berlin probably once belonged to the Beyhekim Mosque, in Konya (probably late 13th century). The building was named for Akmal al-Din, called Beg Hakim (Beyhekim), a renowned Rum Seljuq doctor who is said to have treated, among other important figures, the founder of the Sufi Mevlevi order, Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207–1273).⁵ The small, rectangular building consists of a domed prayer hall preceded on the east side by a vestibule and two smaller lateral rooms, one to the north and another to the south.⁶ Two sets of wood doors, each consisting of two panels, were found in situ: one, now in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (I.2672), gave access from the vestibule to the domed prayer hall, and the other, in the Mevlana Museum, Konya, led from the vestibule to the south lateral room.⁷ Cat. 160 and its pendant are about 13 centimeters shorter and 5 centimeters narrower than this other pair, and instead of Qur'anic verses, they are inscribed with a proverb-like text, perhaps from Rumi or the hadith, that speaks to the wisdom that a person of Beg Hakim's erudition and standing would have possessed.⁸ It is possible that they served as shutters in one of the four windows rather than as doors, for which the only possibilities would be the main entrance to the building or the entrance from the vestibule to the north lateral room.⁹ **DB**



Fig. 101. Bookstand (*rahla*) from the Mevlevi Sufi lodge, Konya, 1279. Gold and red lacquer on wood, H. 37¼ in. (94.5 cm); Depth 16¾ in. (45.2 cm). Konya Müze Müdürlüğü (332)



161

Two Fragments of a Minbar

Iran, Yazd, A.H. 546/A.D. 1151

Wood (teak); carved, traces of paint

Horizontal: 18 1/4 x 30 1/8 x 1 3/8 in. (46.4 x 76.5 x 6.4 cm);

vertical: 47 1/2 x 12 3/8 x 3 1/4 in. (120.7 x 31.4 x 8.3 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund, 1934 (34.150.1, .2)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the vertical fragment:

[...]وت فأرجع البصر هل ترى من فطور ثم أرجع البصر كرتين
ينقلب إليك الدار صر خاسراً [أو] هو حسيبر ولقد زيننا السماء الدنيا
بمصابيح وجعلناها رجوماً للشياطين]

[. . .] *Return your gaze; seest thou any fissure? Then return again, and again, and thy gaze comes back to thee dazzled, awestruck. And we adorned the lower heaven with lamps, and made them things to stone Saifans* [Qur'an 67:3–5].

On the horizontal fragment:

امر هذا المنبر عبد مذنب / أبو بكر بن محمد بن أحمد كلابي / ثمانية تقريباً
إلى الله ورجاء إلى رحمة الله / في زمن الأمير الأجل السيد المويد
المظفر المنصور عضد الدين / شمس الملوك / و السلطين علاء الدولة
كرشاسب / ابن علي بن فرامرز بن علاء الدولة / حسام أمير المؤمنين في
جمادى الأولى سنة ست و أربعمين و خمس مائة

*This minbar was ordered by the slave, the humble sinner, Abu Bakr b. Muhammad b. Ahmad Kalay Thamana. He seeks the favor of God and hopes for His mercy. In the time of the very illustrious amir, the Lord, the God-aided, the Victorious, the Vanquisher, the Support of Religions, the Sun of kings and sultans, 'Ala' al-Dawla Garshasp b. 'Ali b. Faramarz b. 'Ala' al-Dawla, the sword of the Commander of the Believers, in Jumada I of the year 546.*¹

On the upper right and left of the horizontal fragment:

لا إله إلا الله / محمد رسول الله

There is no god but God alone, and Muhammad is the messenger of God.



Fig. 102. Digital reconstruction of the structure of the minbar from which the fragments in cat. 161 derive

These two fragments once belonged to a minbar (pulpit), a raised platform from which announcements and *khutba* (Friday sermons) to the Muslim community are addressed. Minbars are often made of wood or stone and are frequently the largest, if not the only, piece of mosque furniture. As wood can succumb to fire, insects, and rot, early wood minbar fragments rarely survive and only a few are known. The earliest surviving example is in the Great Mosque of Kairouan, Tunisia, brought

there from Baghdad by the Aghlabid amir Abu Ibrahim Amad (r. 856–63).² In Iran the oldest minbar is from the Jami' Mosque of Shushtar and is dated A.H. 445/A.D. 1053.³ Therefore, these fragments are not only among the very few extant minbar pieces of their period but also the only survivors of the two known minbars built in this style.

The fragments shown here come from a mosque at Yazd, in central Iran, and belong to a period from which few Iranian examples are known.⁴ While most minbars, like that of Kılıç Arslan II, dated A.H. 550/A.D. 1155 (fig. 103), have diagonal side panels, this one consisted of vertical panels fastened together with mortise-and-tenon joints to support each step. The horizontal fragment crowned the upper part of the minbar, where the imam would sit, and the vertical fragment formed the lower side section, possibly carrying the fourth step (see fig. 102).⁵

The horizontal fragment consists of three wood panels assembled with butt joints. A foundation inscription states that the minbar was commissioned in A.H. 546/A.D. 1151 by Abu Bakr b. Muhammad in the time of 'Ala' al-Dawla Garshasp, a governor of Yazd under the Seljuqs. The angularity of the letters and the deeply carved foliate scrolls are typical of the archaic styles of late tenth- and eleventh-century carved tombstones, mihrabs (prayer niches), and minbars.⁶

The vertical fragment is composed of six pieces of wood, three of which contain Qur'anic verses from sura 67, "al-Mulk" (The Dominion).⁷ Because the inscription starts from the middle of the sura and runs counter-clockwise along the uprights, as well as the top crosspiece, it is likely that the other vertical pieces (now lost) were carved with the remainder of the sura, adorning the entire structure with sacred verses. As a central axis between the two upper crosspieces, two lines of vertically arranged hexagonal forms create a repeating pattern of six-pointed stars in negative space. While this decoration is missing in the lower sections, likely the same or a similar pattern would have filled those spaces, too. Both horizontal and vertical fragments contain traces of red, indigo, and white pigments on

the surface, suggesting that they were once painted to highlight their inscriptions and ornaments. The mortise-and-tenon joints on the horizontal fragment suggest that, although the minbar was composed of multiple small pieces of wood, they were assembled to form a solid structure.

Minbars had both functional and symbolic importance for the Great Seljuqs and their

relationship with the urban environment.

Abu Bakr, who commissioned this minbar, was a local authority under 'Ala' al-Dawla Garshasp and was related by marriage to the reigning sultan, Sanjar.⁸ While the religious function of the minbar was to deliver the *khutba* and blessings for the sultan, this one also symbolized Abu Bakr and emphasized his piety and political power. **PGG**



Fig. 103. Minbar of Kılıç Arslan II, dated A.H. 550/A.D. 1155, Alaeddin Mosque, Konya



Figs. 104a–f. Six elements of a frieze. Excavated at Nishapur, Tepe Madrasa, last quarter of the 11th century. Terracotta; carved, painted, each approx. 23½ × 11 in. (59.7 × 27.9 cm). National Museum of Iran, Tehran

162

Six Elements of a Frieze in the Name of a Sultan

Excavated at Nishapur, Tepe Madrasa, last quarter of the 11th century
Terracotta; carved, painted

Each approx. 23½ × 11 in. (59.7 × 27.9 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,

Rogers Fund, 1939 (39.40.58, 39.40.60–64)

Inscribed in Arabic in cursive:

أمر بتجديد هذه العمارة في أيام السلطان الأعظم شاهنشاه
الاعظم مولى العرب والعمج سلطان الأرض (الله مالك بلاد الله ركان
الاسلام والمسلمين معز الدنيا والدين ابو الفتح ملكشاه بن محمد يمين
امير المؤمنين)

[... ordered the renovation of th[is building during the days of the g[reat] sulta[n], [august] ki[ng] of kings, lord of the A[rabs [and the Persians, sultan of God's l]and, [ruler of God's country, Pill]ar of I[s]lam and the Muslims, fortifier] of the wo[r]ld and the re[l]igion, Abu-l-Fath Malik Shah b. Muhammad, right hand of God's Caliph, the command[er] of the fai[thful].¹

These six panels were excavated at Tepe Madrasa in Nishapur, where they are believed to have formed a large frieze running along the entrance to the prayer hall. The panels are

made of carved terracotta, a variation of the more common carved-brick techniques widespread from central Iran to the southwest parts of Khurasan and Afghanistan. They show traces of white underpainting as well as red and blue paint, which were more evident immediately after the excavations.²

The town of Nishapur was a major urban center in Khurasan, a key region in early Islamic history for its political, military, cultural, and economic contributions to the developments

occurring at the core of the caliphate. After gaining de facto independence and flourishing from the ninth century onward under the local Tahirid and Samanid dynasties, the city experienced more turbulent times in the first half of the eleventh century. Nishapur repeatedly passed between Ghaznavid occupation—from whose exorbitant taxation the populace suffered—and Seljuq rule. However, the prosperity of the town, based on its advantageous position on the trade route to Central Asia; abundant natural resources (mainly turquoise and alabaster); extensive cultivation of cotton; and production of cotton and silk textiles, in addition to its thriving religious and intellectual life, continued into the Seljuq and post-Seljuq periods. The Mongol invasion of 1221 and earthquakes in the thirteenth century brought the city to ruin, and a much smaller settlement was established just north of the ancient city.

Excavations at Tepe Madrasa brought to light a dense residential urban pattern, including palatine constructions and a multiperiod prayer hall, with traces of at least six different phases of construction. The plan of the mosque consisted of a relatively small hypostyle room with a monumental entrance portal. These panels were found in a subsistence precipitated by the collapse of an underground domed chamber used as a water repository (*ab anbar*) that relates to reconstruction activity of the eleventh or twelfth century.³ Although highly fragmentary, the panels include the word *al-sultan*, a title that first occurred in the eleventh century in the epigraphic decoration of the monuments of the Seljuq Malik Shah (r. 1073–92) and the Ghaznavid Ibrahim (r. 1059–99). As such, they most likely testify to construction activity that was officially patronized by a Seljuq sultan or carried out during his reign.⁴

Other terracotta elements—a frieze and two drums of an engaged column—recovered in the same subsistence and likely part of the mosque decoration of the same period, all bear inscriptions with the words *al-mulk li-llah* (dominion is to God). This formula is commonly found in the monumental epigraphy of the eastern Islamic lands, such as in the Seljuq northern domed hall added to the *masjid-i jami'* of Isfahan in A.H. 481/A.D. 1088–89.⁵ **MR**



Cat. 163

163

Tile with Niche Design

Jazira, 12th century

Stonepaste; molded, glazed in transparent turquoise
16¾ × 9¾ in. (42.5 × 24.8 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Theodore M. Davis Collection, Bequest of
Theodore M. Davis, 1915 (30.95.184)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic* inside the niche:

له كفوا احد/فسيكفيكم/الله وهو السميع/العليم

Equal to Him is not anyone (Qur'an 112:4). So God will guard you against them, and He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing (2:137).

164

Tile with Niche Design

Iran, 12th–early 13th century

Stonepaste; molded, glazed in opaque turquoise,
overglaze-painted

11⅞ × 9 in. (30 × 23 cm)

Keir Collection, on long-term loan by Ranros Universal
S.A. to the Dallas Museum of Art (K.1.2014.296)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, along the outer frame:

انما وليكم الله ورسوله والذين امنوا الذين يقيمون الصلوة ويؤتون
الزكاة وهم راكعون

Your friend is only God, and His Messenger, and the believers who perform the prayer and pay the alms, and bow them down [. . .] (Qur'an 5:55).

At center:

لا اله الا الله

There is no god but God alone.



Cat. 164

The original context and use of these two panels, which are similar in shape, decoration, and the religious content of their inscriptions, are unknown, but they certainly have some devotional meaning or aspect.¹ Their rectangular shape and niche design link them to a large group of panels, most often made of stone or ceramic, attested in most Islamic territories. Objects in the group date from the ninth century onward, and their function and meaning are likewise debated. Depending on the context of their discovery or the content of their inscriptions, they have been variably explained as flat or commemorative mihrabs, tombstones, and, more infrequently, pious gifts.²

An otherwise coherent group from Ghazni, Afghanistan, bears an even larger variety of texts: Qur'anic verses associated with mosques, building texts associated with mosques and mihrabs, blessings to the owner, and a text in Persian, probably a poem. They suggest an even broader set of functions, for both religious and private buildings as well as in funerary settings, and further underscore the importance of context in the interpretation of those panels whose uses are not explicated via epigraphic means.³

While these two panels are similar in overall composition, they present certain details that reflect regional architectural forms. The

choice of materials offers further indication of geographic differentiation. Cat. 163 shows a niche with a pointed arch enclosing a vegetal motif. Its leaves recall the scalloped tympanum more often encountered in the western Islamic lands, where the legacy of Late Antique and Byzantine shapes is strong. Together with the columns' twisted shafts and characteristic capitals and bases encountered in Abbasid architecture in Iraq, the Jazira, and Syria, as well as the altered, seemingly alkaline turquoise glaze, they speak to a Jaziran provenance.⁴ The honeycomb pattern in the tympanum of cat. 164, as well as the shape of its niche and its opacified turquoise glaze, speaks instead to Iran.⁵

Both panels bear religious and Qur'anic inscriptions that express piety but are otherwise not indicative of a specific setting or function. The use of the Qur'anic verses 2:137 in cat. 163 and 5:55 in cat. 164 do not find many parallels in monumental epigraphy.

The hanging lamp depicted in cat. 164 may further support a religious function, perhaps as a devotional element, but it may also derive from a funerary context. The lamp could relate to the Ayat al-nur (Qur 24:35), which begins, "God is the Light of the heavens and the earth; the likeness of His Light is as a niche wherein is a lamp (the lamp in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star) kindled from a Blessed Tree." The verse was subject to a mystical interpretation in al-Ghazali's *Mishkat al-anwar* (Niche of lights, A.D. 1111), and the broad dissemination of that text fostered the widespread use of the lamp motif in the twelfth century (though its first appearance dates to the mid-eleventh).⁶ While this may explain the appearance of the lamp in the niche of mihrabs, the link is not interchangeable.⁷

Finally, the lamp could also have an eschatological meaning connected with a hadith on martyrdom, which fostered the practices of donating or bringing lamps and oil in funerary contexts. The formula *nawwara Allahu qabrah* or *hufrah*, or "May God enlighten his tomb," may give an idea of the popular understanding of the lamp and explain its use in funerary contexts (the motif began to appear on Egyptian tombs in the twelfth century, as well as on many Persian funerary monuments).⁸ **MR**



a



b



c

165a–c

Stucco Decoration from Dandanqan Mosque

Frieze Fragment from a Mihrab (a)

Modern Turkmenistan, Dandanqan, second half of the 11th century

Stucco; carved

17 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (45 × 41 × 19 cm)

State Museum of the State Cultural Center of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat (ÖWS-AH 5170)

Inscribed in Arabic in cursive:

[...ه]و كافر وخير الناس بعد[...ه]

[... h]e is an unbeliever and the best people [after him ...]¹

Leaning Column Fragment from a Mihrab (b)

Modern Turkmenistan, Dandanqan, second half of the 11th century

Stucco; carved

16 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (41 × 22 × 14 cm)

State Museum of the State Cultural Center of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat (ÖWS-AH 5172)

Leaning Column Fragment from a Mihrab (c)

Modern Turkmenistan, Dandanqan, second half of the 11th century

Stucco; carved

17 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (45 × 22 × 14 cm)

State Museum of the State Cultural Center of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat (ÖWS-AH 5171)

These fragments once formed part of the extensive stucco decoration of a mosque excavated at the site of Dashrabat. Located in the Karakum Desert, about thirty kilometers southwest of Mary, in modern Turkmenistan, the site has been identified with the medieval-period town of Dandanqan. Deriving from an inscribed frieze (cat. 165a) and two leaning columns (cats. 165b, c), these fragments once belonged to the mosque's large stucco mihrab, originally about three meters high (fig. 105).²

Dandanqan (or Dandanaqan) was situated along the route connecting Merv to Sarakhs. According to the accounts of Arab and Persian geographers from the tenth century onward, who also mentioned the wall encircling the town, caravans and travelers made stopovers in its *ribat* (caravanserai), enjoying a respite from the sandy dunes that marked this portion of the route.³ The town is known primarily for the pivotal battle fought in its vicinity in A.H. 431/A.D. 1040, when the light cavalry of the Seljuq Turkmen overcame the vast and well-equipped but ultimately unprepared army

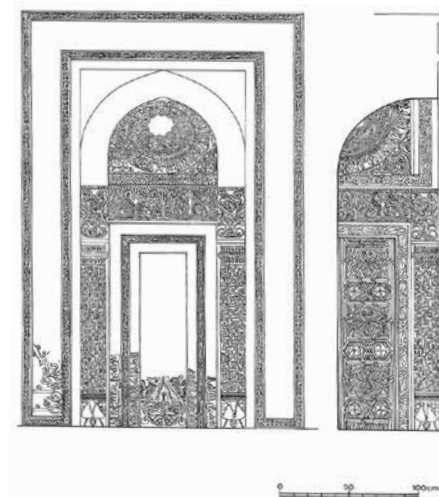


Fig. 105. Tentative reconstruction drawing of the original mihrab of Dandanqan Mosque

of the Ghaznavids, who until that point had been the major dynastic power in Khurasan.

The victory at Dandanqan assured the decisive establishment of the Seljuqs in Khurasan and enabled the dynasty to progressively conquer central Iran and the westward regions. It marked a turning point in medieval



Figs. 106a, b. Excavation images of, at top, the semidome of the mihrab with an inscription bearing a date and the name of the artisan and, at bottom, of the lower part of the mihrab niche, Dandanqan Mosque

history that would have resonance for a large swath of the Islamic lands. For the relatively minor town of Dandanqan, one consequence must have been a growth in importance, for nearby Merv became the principal residence of several Seljuq sultans and one of the main capitals of the empire. Although there is little evidence to prove it, historical sources mention “a significant number of traditionalists and other scholars” who originated from the town during Sultan Sanjar’s time.⁴

The mosque, situated at the center of the ruins of the walled town, was partly excavated

in 1942 in two short campaigns, during which small trench pits also were dug elsewhere and a survey of the whole site was carried out. Although earlier, extensive digging by the local population for the retrieval of reusable building materials (baked bricks) had largely compromised the stratigraphy of the site, the investigations identified a well-planned canalization system equipped with many wells, which along with the historical sources suggests that the extent of the oasis was larger than it is today. At least two other buildings with brick and stucco ornamentation, including figural motifs, were also partly exposed. Other finds included bronze and copper objects; fragments of slip-painted and, in more limited numbers, sgraffito and stonepaste ceramics; worked bone objects; and coins.

The excavation of the mosque identified at least two phases of building, both referring to a plan with a courtyard and with carved stucco decoration. The earlier building, construction of which is hypothetically placed in the tenth century and may correspond to the “beautiful mosque” mentioned by al-Muqaddasi, was a larger hypostyle structure with columns of baked brick. As revealed by the portion of the building exposed during excavation, the prayer hall comprised two rows of columns linked by intersecting arches, which would have led to the (unexcavated) mihrab area.

The second major phase of construction, to which the present fragments belong, was characterized by the shrinkage of the hypostyle hall through the erection of a wall immediately behind the first row of columns, which contained the mihrab. The result was a rectangular plan opening onto the central courtyard with

columns placed immediately against the parametrical walls. Although presumably much smaller, this mosque was covered with extensive stucco decoration, as testified by the remains of the mihrab, which had a square section and a semidomed conch (figs. 106a, b, 107a, b), and of the pointed arches linking the columns.⁵ A fragmentary inscription in *kufic* script on the semidome gives the name of a certain Abu Bakr, most likely the master, and the year of construction (*‘in wa ‘arba mi’a, mimma ‘amal Abu Bakr*), of which only the century and the last digits of the decimal remain, giving a date in the second half of the eleventh or early twelfth century, most likely 1096–1196.⁶

Notably, all the collapsed stucco decoration was found on a layer of yellow sand, suggesting that, whatever the reason for its destruction, it happened some time after the mosque had been abandoned and invaded by the dunes. The encroaching sands must have been an endemic problem for Dandanqan, which, according to Yaqut, had been abandoned by the early thirteenth century, if not for this reason than perhaps on account of the unstable political situation (the town was sacked by Oghuz tribes in A.H. 553/A.D. 1158, following Sultan Sanjar’s death). It is difficult to say why the rebuilding of the mosque at the end of the eleventh century was planned on a smaller scale: an otherwise unrecorded decline in the population or the advancing sands may be among the reasons. At any rate, the surviving stucco decoration testifies to a sophisticated artistic milieu among even the smallest Seljuq towns in the eleventh century. **MR**



Figs. 107a, b. Excavation images of the lower left part of the mihrab niche showing its square section and lateral engaged columns, Dandanqan Mosque

Mihrab

Iran, 12th century

Stone; carved

68½ × 38⅞ in. (174 × 91 cm)

Benaki Museum, Athens (FE 39021)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic* along the outer edge:

شهد الله انه لا اله الا هو والملائكة واولو العلم قائماً بالقسط لا اله الا هو
العزیز الحكيم

God bears witness that there is no god but He and the angels, and men possessed of knowledge upholding justice; there is no god but He, the All Mighty, the All Wise (Qur'an 3:18).

On the center arch:

اقبل على صلاتك ولا تكن من الغافلين واعبد ربك حتى ياتيك اليقين
Concentrate on your prayer (hadith) and be not thou among the heedless (Qur'an 7:205) and serve thy Lord, until the certain comes to thee (15:99).

This imposing mihrab bears inscriptions that reaffirm the faith and call attention to prayer. These Qur'anic verses and the related hadith are entirely fitting for a mihrab, which the faithful would face when praying. Additionally, its decorative motifs allude to certain key Islamic beliefs.

The mihrab consists of a framing inscription band enclosing a pointed-arch niche "supported" by two pilasters, within which is a smaller niche surmounted by a trefoil-shaped arch resting on two pilasters. Inside the smaller niche is a relief-carved lamp suspended by cords. The tympanum of the outer niche is decorated with vine scrolls, and extending upward from the point of the arch is a trefoil out of which grow two volutes. Flanking the arch are two bosses carved in high relief, each with a carved six-petaled rosette. Because the mihrab does not form an actual niche, it is akin to those associated with mausoleums and shrines rather than mosques or prayer halls.¹

In contrast to some of the best known late eleventh- and twelfth-century Seljuq mihrabs with rich stucco decoration,² the elements of cat. 166 are more subdued, but very legible. The lamp, found often in mihrabs, tombstones, and later prayer rugs, alludes to the verse from the Qur'anic chapter "al-Nur" (The Light): "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp—the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star—lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western, whose oil almost lights up, though fire should



not touch it. Light upon light. Allah guides to His Light whomever He wishes. Allah draws parables for mankind, and Allah has knowledge of all things" (Qur'an 24:35). Less conclusively, the vegetal ornament in the tympanum of the larger arch could be interpreted as paradisiacal, appropriate for a

mausoleum, while the rosettes on the bosses could refer to stars and, by extension, the heavens. In combination these decorative elements and the inscriptions reinforce the central message of Islam in which God in his omniscience is the creator of all things and promises Paradise to his believers. SRC

167a, b

Ceramic Tile Decoration in Anatolia

Mosaic Tile with Rosette (a)

Artist: Muhammad al-Tusi

Anatolia, Konya, Sirçali Madrasa, A.H. 640/

A.D. 1242–43

Mosaic of polychrome-glazed cut tiles on stonepaste body, set into mortar

10¼ × 10¼ in. (26 × 26 cm)

Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu

Berlin (Konya 99a)

Mosaic-tile Panel with Inscription (b)

Artist: Attributed to Muhammad al-Tusi

Anatolia, Konya, Karatay Madrasa, A.H. 649–51/

A.D. 1251–53

Mosaic of polychrome-glazed cut tiles on stonepaste body, set into gypsum

12¾ × 66⅛ in. (31.5 × 168 cm)

al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait

(LNS 234 C)

Inscribed in Arabic in *thuluth*:

[...] نسينا أو اخطانا ربنا ولا تحمل علينا اصرا كما حملته على الذين
من [...]

[...] we forget, or make mistakes. Our Lord; charge us not with a load such as Thou didst lay upon those (before) us [...] (Qur'an 2:286).

In addition to the establishment of public religious buildings such as mosques and madrasas to accommodate a society controlled by Muslim rulings, the most marked change in the architectural landscape of Anatolia under the Rum Seljuqs and other Seljuq successor states was the introduction of polychrome ceramic-tile decoration. They inherited the aesthetic from Azerbaijan, Iran, and Central Asia, and married it to the dominant, regionally established stone tradition. Glazed tiles appeared as polychrome markers that punctuated the surface decoration of a few minarets, windows, and other architectural openings in the late twelfth century, but beginning in the early thirteenth century, larger surfaces of polychrome tile decoration became more widespread on minarets or interiors of buildings. Portals, exterior facades, and sometimes interior masonry walls often continued to be built

and decorated in stone.¹ The laborious, exacting technique of cut-tile mosaic, which allowed for the execution of elaborate designs, developed in particular alongside other ceramic-tile techniques.

Cat. 167b, the larger of these two fragments, is inscribed with a portion of a verse from sura 2 of the Qur'an, "al-Baqara" (The Cow). The verse appears in dark, eggplant-colored *thuluth* against a continuous spiral-like rinceau, in turquoise, with split-palmettes and arabesque-like flowers. The spiral units are almost circular and add a geometric touch to the floral and cursive style of the script.² This long, wide inscription panel was placed above one of the northeast corner windows in the north wall of the interior domed courtyard of the Karatay Madrasa in Konya.³ It appeared together with other passages from sura 2, which were similarly positioned above windows and other openings. These monumental friezes collectively ringed the base of the splendid dome, which has rayed stellate motifs multiplying across its surface and rests on triangular pendants, in which are repeated, in square *kufic*, the names of Muhammad, the four caliphs, and three important prophets, Dawud (David), 'Isa (Jesus), and Musa (Moses). The decorative program is unified by the use of glazes in two dominant tones, eggplant and turquoise, and of a harmonious script type, in a design that was adapted to fit an almost symmetrical spatial arrangement (fig. 108). The glorification of the faith via epigraphy creates an astonishing impression overall, one that gradually intensifies as it ascends from the floor to the dome in evocation of the stars and heavens.

Cat. 167a is a mosaic tile with an interlacing rosette emerging from a central star and two straight, axial ends. The eggplant-colored



a



b

pattern appears against a turquoise ground within a square field. The tile originally formed part of the lavish surface decoration of the mihrab in the south wall of the main *iwān* of the Sirçali Madrasa in Konya, punctuating an upper corner of the rectangular border framing the prayer niche (fig. 109).⁴ The Sirçali Madrasa was founded by Badr al-Din b. Muslih, a figure who has been identified with Lala Muslih, vizier of the Rum Seljuq sultan ‘Ala’ al-Din Kay Qubad II (r. 1249–57). The building was conceived according to one of two typical schemas for madrasas: a porticoed open courtyard dominates the plan, with small cells for students, other rooms such as the tomb-chamber of the founder, and axial *iwāns* around it. In this case, there is only one *iwān*, in the western part of the courtyard, which aligns with the main entrance in the east.⁵

The building’s walls were decorated with both mosaic tiles and unglazed reddish bricks. In addition to turquoise and eggplant purple, the tiles were occasionally glazed with cobalt blue. The design consisted of continuous patterns based on the repetition of geometric (most often stellate and polygonal) motifs, sometimes in interlacing arrangements, as well as arabesque patterns. Epigraphic bands and cartouches as well as smaller interlacing rosettes such as cat. 167a punctuated the arches and niches. Two hexagonal inscription pendants enclosed in the interlacing band running along the intrados of the main *iwān* deserve particular attention. One on the right side begins, in Persian, “I made this ornamentation which does not exist elsewhere in the world; I will not last but it will last as a souvenir,” and continues, in Arabic, on the left side, “[This is the] Work of Muhammad b. Muhammad b. ‘Uthman, master-builder from Tus.”

Muhammad al-Tusi was responsible not only for the tile decoration of the Sirçali Madrasa but also most likely for the architecture, a conclusion suggested by the harmony with which the former fits the latter.⁶ It has been argued that this master from Tus, an Iranian city in Khurasan, was in charge of a large workshop active in Konya about 1235–55, where he coordinated the tile manufacture for several mosques and madrasas, including not only Sirçali but also Karatay.⁷ Accordingly, a



Fig. 108. Interior domed courtyard of the Karatay Madrasa, Konya



Fig. 109. View ca. 1900 of the courtyard and main *iwān* of the Sirçali Madrasa, Konya

consistent, highly elaborate style of mostly turquoise- and eggplant-colored mosaic-cut tiles dominates the Rum Seljuq capital. The mosaic technique and the use of Persian in this Iranian master’s inscription-signature is not surprising in light of the tight links between Anatolia and the eastern Seljuq regions.⁸ **DB**

168a–c

Inlaid Brasses with Christian Iconography

The Homberg Ewer (a)

Maker: Ahmad al-Dhaki

Jazira, probably Mosul, dated A.H. 640/A.D. 1242–43

Brass; raised, engraved, inlaid with silver

H. 15½ in. (39.5 cm); Diam. of base 5⅞ in. (14.5 cm)

Keir Collection, on long-term loan by Ranros Universal

S.A. to the Dallas Museum of Art (K.1.2014.82)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic* on the neck:

عمل احمد المعروف الذكي النقاش الموصلني في سنة اربعين وستمائة

*Work of Ahmad, known as al-Dhaki, the decorator from Mosul, in the year 640.*¹

Pyxis (b)

Jazira or Syria, mid- to late 13th century

Brass; hammered, engraved, inlaid with silver

H. 4⅞ in. (10.5 cm); Diam. 4 in. (10.3 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,

Rogers Fund, 1971 (1971.39a, b)

Box with Fragmentary Combination Lock (c)

Probably Jazira or Syria, early to mid-13th century

Brass; cast, hammered, engraved, inlaid with silver

8⅞ × 7⅞ × 6¼ in. (20.5 × 19.5 × 16 cm)

Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London

(MTW 850)

Inscribed in Arabic in *naskhi* around the base of the lid:

[...] الدائم [...] الاقبال الزائد والجد الصاعد والغمر [...]]

*Perpetual [glory?], increasing prosperity, ascending luck, authority[?] . . .*²

During the course of the thirteenth century, luxurious inlaid brasses signed by al-Mawsili artists or redolent of their style began to display a very particular iconography borrowing from Christian motifs, namely Gospel scenes, images related to the life of Christ, and



Fig. 110. Detail of cat. 168a showing a standing figure with birds, likely the Presentation in the Temple



a



b

standing figures of saints and ecclesiastics. These images appear alongside traditional Islamic themes that were popular in the Seljuq era, such as the courtly cycle and astrology.³ It is noteworthy that such Christian iconography was largely depicted with deliberate variations. The artists either did not entirely understand the iconography or they did not care much about the established canon. Scholars tend to associate these objects with Ayyubid Syria, but recent research on one of the masterworks of the group, the Freer canteen,⁴ confirms that Mosul, where the al-Mawsili school emerged under Badr al-Din Lu'lu', was likewise an important center of production. In any case, the juxtaposition of Christian and medieval Islamic themes suggests that these brasses were probably intended for very specific communities, underscoring the complex multicultural milieu of the western Seljuq realm.⁵ Some may have been ordered by local Christian patrons, others as souvenirs for Crusader knights. Suitable for Muslim and Christian courts, as prestigious diplomatic gifts, or as luxurious export works, they reached rulers and elite individuals both within and beyond the Seljuq world, as far west as Europe.

Cat. 168a, known as the Homberg ewer, belongs to the category of Syro-Jaziran inlaid ewers that were commonly used in combination

with basins for washing hands at celebratory, religious, and ritual occasions.⁶ Dated 1242, the ewer is the second of three known artifacts signed by the renowned al-Mawsili metal-smith al-Dhaki. The faceted form recalls the Blacas ewer (cat. 15), made in Mosul, as does the characteristic sculptural rosette at the bottom, a brand mark of the early inlay masters, which together suggest that cat. 168a was made in Mosul as well.⁷ Thus one may consider the Homberg ewer to be another dated marker among the inlaid brasses of Jaziran provenance with Christian iconography. Owing to a modern restoration of the inlay, the ewer's decorative program is difficult to read with clarity. In addition to courtly imagery, arranged in friezes with an enthroned ruler and attendants, a series of figures appears one per facet on the neck, while a beaded, column-less arcade with one figure standing beneath each plain-center arch runs above the foot. One of these figures (fig. 110) relates to a painting in a Syriac manuscript (cat. 172) and the scene of the Presentation at the Temple.⁸ In cat. 168a the figure with outstretched arms carries a pair of pigeons or doves and represents Joseph, who in the Temple of Jerusalem offered the birds in sacrifice to the Lord.

Cat. 168b belongs to a group of at least three small cylindrical boxes with lids, or



Fig. 111. Detail of cat. 168b showing the standing Saint Andrew

pyxides.⁹ Deriving from ancient Greek ceramic prototypes, used mainly by women to hold cosmetics, trinkets, or jewelry, comparable vessels in metal and ivory (often referred to by the abbreviated form "pyx") are used as liturgical receptacles in the Catholic, Old Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican churches to carry the Eucharist to those unable to receive the consecrated host in church. In the medieval Islamic world they were intended to hold *ushnan*, a vegetal-ash soda used to launder clothing.¹⁰ Sophisticated examples such as this one might also have held aromatics, jewelry, or other more precious items.

Unlike comparable examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (320-1866), and the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo (225), the surface decoration of cat. 168b omits epigraphy.¹¹ Set against a background of dense arabesque foliage, a suite of eight interlacing trilobed arches dominates the design, each one containing a standing figure, except for one depicting the Entry into Jerusalem. Christ, riding a donkey, is accompanied by three pairs of figures: one below him, spreading garments; one behind him, holding branches; and one, angelic pair supporting a canopy above him. This latter detail compares with Islamic depictions of enthroned rulers.¹² Among the single standing figures, only the



c

one opposite the Entry scene appears frontally, and the two figures flanking him draw further emphasis to him by turning their faces and censers to face him (fig. 111). This clearly significant individual, wearing a long cleft beard and a chasuble and holding a slanting cross in front of his body, has been identified as Saint Andrew.¹³ Andrew was the patron saint not only of the See of Constantinople but also of an eponymous Crusader fraternity founded in the 1230s and based in Acre.¹⁴ In cat. 168b, his hair, divided in two equal halves and marked at the apex with a dot, is characteristic of depictions of Christian warriors or Crusaders in inlaid metalwork from the region (see cat. 69), further confirming a Crusader connection.

Preserved on the lid of the pyxis, despite its reworking in the modern period, is an iconographically exceptional representation of the Virgin and Child: the Virgin sits on the ground, not on a throne, as one would expect from a Madonna. Her cross-legged position recalls depictions of Seljuq rulers, while her bound turban echoes the male headgear distinctive to the local Arab community in Syria and the Jazira. That Christian themes dominate the decorative program suggests with near certainty that the intended owner of the pyxis was Christian. However, the amalgam of Muslim and Christian iconographic traditions,

executed in an Islamic medium against Islamic arabesque decoration, has led to a truly original result.¹⁵

Cat. 168c, also reminiscent of the al-Mawsili school, represents a Jaziro-Syrian version of a small group of strongboxes with combination locks made in both the eastern and western Seljuq lands.¹⁶ The lavish inlay work is dominated by courtly motifs celebrating the sovereign: he appears as a falconer or lancer on horseback; enthroned with attendants; in the company of musicians and backgammon players; and feasting. The figures and scenes are structured hierarchically, with the ruler appearing larger than any other motif, in circular, quatrefoil, and polylobed medallions. These elements in combination with the fretwork are al-Mawsili characteristics. Noteworthy is the design on the sides of the box, in which an enthroned figure and his surrounding entourage are arranged into a sunlike pattern with the ruler at center. Together with the seated figures holding a crescent (personifications of the moon) and the sun disk on the lid, the concentric arrangement equates the sovereign with the sun and reflects the ideation of his sublime power and control over the cosmos.

On the lower portions of the front and back of the box, at a smaller scale and almost

in the shadow of the majestic Seljuq iconography above, are several standing Christian figures, typically enclosed in polylobed arches. On the front panel, below the riders at center, a man who likely represents Christ stands with his hands clasped. He wears a hooded mantle and holds a standing cross, a symbol of the Passion and Crucifixion. The bookstand to his left evokes the Gospels. Three cruciform motifs, one above and two flanking his head, form a larger cross with the body of Christ as its vertical axis—yet another allusion to the Crucifixion, but perhaps also to the Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹⁷ On the back panel at the center is a figure in the orante posture, an ancient Christian pose of prayer. Like the Christ figure, this individual wears a hooded mantle and occupies the central axial position. She is the Virgin Mary, who when not holding the Christ Child is often portrayed in prayer to her son.¹⁸ The two standing figures on her side with the bookstand (and torch?) are probably the Old Testament prophets or saints who predicted her motherhood of Christ. While the exact iconography awaits further study, the references to the Passion are noteworthy, as it is not a common motif among inlaid Islamic brasses with Christian iconography.¹⁹ **DB**



169

Bowl

Probably western Iran, late 12th–early 13th century
Silver sheet; beaten, engraved, chased, punched, gilded
H. 4 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (10.5 cm); Diam. 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (20.6 cm)

Keir Collection, on long-term loan by Ranros Universal
S.A. to the Dallas Museum of Art (K.1.2014.79)

Inscribed in Arabic in *naskhi* around the rim:

العز الدائم والاقبال السالم والجد الساعد والنصر الغالية والسعادة
والبقا لصاحبه الامير الاسفهلار الكبير المؤيد المظفر بدر الدولة والدين
والاسلام والمسلمين ملك الامرا الغ همايون آخر بك قراکز ظهير امير
المؤمنين

*Perpetual glory, healthy prosperity, good luck, and continuity to the owner, the amir, the great general, the God-aided, the triumphant, the full moon of state and the religion, and of Islam and of the Muslims, prince of amirs, Ulugh Humayun Akhar Beg Qaragöz, protector of the prince of the faithful.*¹

Silver and gold vessels were the deluxe tableware of the Seljuq ruling classes, and their presence at banquets, where they may have been used for wine drinking, glorified the owner's fortune and power.² However, few examples are known, as many were probably melted down in regions where resources of

precious metal were scarce.³ Moreover, the emergence of sophisticated and iconographically rich objects in polychrome inlaid brass may have seduced patrons away from silver and gold wares.

This bowl, round in shape and standing on a high splayed foot, is made of silver sheet and therefore relatively light and delicate.⁴ The thin surface was formerly gilded, as suggested by remnants, giving it a beautiful pale gold color that would have shimmered in the lamp-light. The body comprises fourteen lobed compartments beaten from the sheet. Pairs of harpies with symmetrically addorsed—indeed, nearly conjoined—bodies that seem almost bicephalic alternate with symmetric arabesque patterns on the compartments. The interior is plain save for the bottom, which is decorated with a small medallion of two simple circles enclosing a harpy surrounded by four lozenges with arabesque motifs. A lavish honorific inscription in *naskhi*, some of the letters floriated, runs around the vertical rim. It addresses

the princely owner, amir Badr al-Din Qaragöz, who judging from the title *ahurbeg* was in charge of the stable. Qaragöz, which means “dark eye,” has been identified with a high official and army chief (d. 1219) whose career included the governorship of Hamadan in 1194.⁵

Even though the shape of this bowl relates to Byzantine examples, both the harpies and the inscription point to a medieval Islamic attribution of the Seljuq era. In the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the city of Hamadan, today in western Iran, was contested by the Great Seljuqs, the atabegs of Azerbaijan, and the Kharazm Shahs. The city was renowned for its metalworking and in the early fourteenth century was mentioned by Qazwini for the quality of its gilded objects. It is thus tempting to attribute the bowl to Hamadan. Whatever its attribution, the bowl may exemplify the crossover of ideas and style between Christian and Muslim populations within the Seljuq territories, for interactions via trade and diplomatic gift exchange were likely. **DB**



170

Wine Vessel with Hebrew Inscription

Georgia, late 12th–early 13th century

Brass; inlaid with silver

H. 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (22 cm); Diam. 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (20 cm)

Georgian National Museum, Shalva Amiranashvili
Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilisi (Or 3682)

This conical ritual wine vessel consists of three pieces of sheet brass riveted together to form the sides and one round piece for the base. One section of the Hebrew inscription band is out of alignment with the next, suggesting that the sheets were cut down and reattached at some point later in the existence of the cup.¹ Although much of the inlay is lost, originally the vessel would have been a luxurious object with both the inscription and decoration in

silver on a yellow brass ground. The inscription is bordered above and below by a band containing a scroll design. On the walls of the cup, three rows of roundels with alternating patterns of vegetal interlace are set on a ground of another interlace configuration that extends from the eight-pointed stars to the rows of roundels. Even if the vessel was produced in Georgia by Shelomo the Tbilisian, who is mentioned in the inscription, the decorative repertoire comes from Seljuq and early thirteenth-century Iranian metalwork,² and was adopted by metalworkers in regional centers both during and after Seljuq domination, which ended in Georgia in 1122.

The vessel would have been used in the ceremony of the Jewish Sabbath and on

Jewish holidays when the blessing, or Kiddush, is recited over the cup containing wine. The person reciting the blessing would drink from the cup and pass it to other participants in the Sabbath meal. Since the Jewish population was long established in Georgia by the medieval period, said to have migrated there during the Babylonian Captivity in the sixth century B.C., this vessel could have been the property of the majority community that had close ties to Baghdad and Iran in the twelfth century.³ The Mongol invasion of 1236 caused the dispersal and decline of the Jewish population of Tbilisi, which suggests that this cup may have been created before that date. **SRC**



171

“Constantine and Helena,” Folio from the Miaphysite Lectionary

Copied by Mubarak b. David b. Saliba b. Ya’qub Jazira, Mosul, ca. 1220 or ca. 1260
 Ink, colors, and gold on paper
 18¹/₈ × 15³/₈ in. (46 × 39 cm)
 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,
 Vatican City (Syr.559; fol. 223v)

The manuscript in which this image appears was commissioned by Rabban ‘Abdallah b. Khusho b. Shim’un for the altar at the

Syrian Orthodox monastery of Mar Mattai, near Mosul. Copied by Mubarak b. David b. Saliba b. Ya’qub, a monk from that monastery, the manuscript is dated in accordance with either A.D. 1220 or 1260.¹ Lectionaries included readings for Christian feast days and illustrations of saints, martyrs, and figures of special importance for the history of the church, such as Constantine and his mother, Helena. Their image accompanies the readings for the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, on September 14.

Constantine (ca. 272–337), the Roman emperor who issued an edict in A.D. 313 declaring tolerance for Christians and ending three centuries of their persecution, is depicted on the left holding the True Cross with its three crossbars, which he and Helena, at the right, have lifted above the ground.² The gold crowns and halos of the emperor and his mother reinforce their royal identity and key status in the church. Their robes, however, bear a close resemblance to those worn by figures in Arab manuscripts such as the *Maqamat* of al-Hariri (cat. 86) and the *Kitab al-diryaq* (cat. 106). Not only do both garments have wide gold stripes on the upper arms, indicating *tiraz* bands, but also the bold split-palmette and looping-vine motifs of the fabric duplicate those in Arab manuscripts of the same period.³ In the Islamic manuscripts in which this fabric pattern appears, the figures who wear it range in age from young to old, in ethnicity from Arab to Turkish, and in social rank from high to middling. Thus, although some scholars have questioned whether the use of Arab garments for Constantine and Helena was politically motivated, the more likely explanation is the artists’ familiarity with such clothing in their own society. Constantine’s crown resembles those found in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Persian manuscripts, but also that of the seated prince in the Talisman Gate, Baghdad, and the Syrian king in *Warqa and Gulshah*.⁴

The correlation between the dress and facial types represented in this painting and in manuscript illustrations attributed to Mosul in the first half of the thirteenth century has occasioned a discussion of whether the same artists were working for Christian and Muslim clients. While the colophon of cat. 171 indicates that the scribe was working in the monastery, the visual vocabulary that Christians and Muslims shared in Mosul in the thirteenth century suggests that groups of artists with the same training collaborated on specific projects, both Christian and Muslim, but were not members of one or several fixed workshops.⁵ This interaction would have taken place against the backdrop of a complex society in which Muslims may have ruled,⁶ but Christians were well represented in many walks of life. **SRC**



8r

7v

172

Gospel Lectionary of the Syrian Jacobites

Copied in Estrangelo scripts by the monk-priest Sahda and the monk Isaac in the monastery of Saint Thomas

Northern Jazira, Tur 'Abdin, Salah, 1241

Ink and colors on parchment

17¾ × 12⅝ in. (45 × 32.1 cm)

Orientabteilung, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (MS Sachau 322)

This richly decorated manuscript of 285 folios contains numerous multicolored headings, borders, and section dividers in a noteworthy variety of geometric designs. The double-page frontispiece, which appears after five pairs of carpet pages listing the contents of the manuscript, consists on the right-hand page of a cross on a three-stepped platform with four illuminated headings, presumably the names of the Evangelists, on an unpainted ground, all of which is contained within a painted ornamental border. On the left is a cross contained

in a circle, with four stars within roundels in the four quadrants of the inner circle.

Within the gold border of the cross on the right page, the artist has painted a complex, multicolored chevron design comprising small squares. In the center an X formed of black squares edged by white ones is set within two rows of squares of which the gradations from blue to gray resemble shading. While this is atypical of Islamic manuscript illumination, it does appear in the mosaics of the eighth-century Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and in Late Antique mosaics and textiles.¹ As with the Vatican lectionary (cat. 171), however, this manuscript's distinctive illumination does correspond to ornament found on local architecture.

Perhaps most striking is the now lost roundel over the main entrance to the Artuqid al-Asfar Mosque, in Mardin,² not far from the monastery of Salah where this gospel was produced. There, a row of zigzags encircled a now

lost inscription much as the cross on the left page of cat. 172 is set within a roundel of rows of squares that appear to form zigzags because of their contrasting colors. The stars above and below the horizontal bar of the cross recall the astral and solar imagery found in Jaziran metal objects such as the Blacas ewer (cat. 15), and may refer to God's power over the heavens and earth as they do in the Islamic context. The star-and-cross design that is ubiquitous in the tiled decoration of Iran, Anatolia, and the Jazira in the Seljuq and post-Seljuq eras has been adopted in this manuscript as one of the motifs used for decorative bands separating areas of text.³ As with cat. 171, the choice of patterns in this manuscript reflects the visual environment in which both Christians and Muslims lived in the early thirteenth century, which provided a wealth of pictorial material for artists to adopt for their own specific purposes. **SRC**

173

Dish with Schoolroom Scene

Iran, probably Kashan, late 12th century
 Stonepaste; glazed in opaque white (interior)
 and transparent blue (exterior), luster-painted
 H. 4³/₈ in. (11 cm); Diam. 18³/₄ in. (47.5 cm)
 David Collection, Copenhagen (50/1966)



This exceptionally large luster dish, presumably made in Kashan in the late twelfth century, is painted with a scene set in a schoolroom.¹ At the center of the composition, painted in reserve, sits the teacher. He is cross-legged, bearded, and turbaned, and he holds a writing board and a rod in his right hand—raised as if about to strike. He is surrounded by twenty-four pupils, also sitting cross-legged; each holds what seems to be a rounded object. Complementing the school’s furnishings are a ewer, a bookstand holding an open book, and thirteen more writing boards, all but one, which is blank, inscribed with repeated letters or groups of letters, as though employed to learn the alphabet. What remains of the background is further crowded with scrolls, also painted in reserve, while halos behind each person’s head help make him or her more noticeable.

In addition to his central position in the room, the teacher’s densely patterned garment and size distinguish him from his smaller, unvariegated pupils. The latter have in some cases been described as “boys and girls,” although the few variations among them do not clearly support such a hypothesis. These differences manifest in the facial

expressions and dot-patterning of their robes; in the presence or absence of a headdress; and in the length of the hair (some have two long locks hanging past their shoulders). However, the orientation of all the students in the same direction except for one short-haired pupil, who looks toward a long-haired one, has prompted a narrative interpretation of the scene as the first encounter of Layla and Majnun, a fictional couple caught up in an unrequited and despairing love. Their story, which originated in Arabic tales, became popular after being turned into a Persian narrative poem by Nizami of Ganja, who made it one of the subjects of his *Khamsa*, or Quintet (completed in A.H. 584/A.D. 1188). Nizami composed the romantic poem at the request of Shirwanshah Aqsetan, the ruler of Azerbaijan, weaving into the story elements that more closely reflected the urban, Persian context in which he lived. For example, the characters are

transformed into aristocrats, and nature poetry and the story of a childless king are introduced. Additionally, the two lovers meet not in the desert, as they do in the Arabic original, but at school among other children.

The interpretation of the scene as that of Layla and Majnun relies only on the popularity of the story at the time. At least one other pair of literary paramours, Warqa and Gulshah, whose tale was versified by ‘Ayyuqi into a Persian poem from an Arabic original, slightly earlier than that of Layla and Majnun, also situates the lovers’ first encounter at a school.² Therefore, absent more precise indications, it is difficult to support this or other interpretations with any certainty. In any case, together with the recurrence of the classroom setting in contemporary Persian verse, the dish confirms the prominence of schools in idealized depictions and probably would have resonated with contemporary viewers. **MR**

174a, b

Literacy and Writing

Inkwell (a)

Iran or Afghanistan, Khurasan, late 12th century
Bronze; cast, hammered, engraved, chased, inlaid
with silver and copper

H. 4½ in. (11.5 cm); Diam. 3¾ in. (9.5 cm)

Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (972.10.1.1–3)

Inscribed in Arabic, in *naskhi* on the surface of the lid:

الشيخ العميد معتمد الدولة أمين الملك بدر الحضرتين علي بن محمد بن
على المشرف

*The Sheikh, the chief delegate of the state, deputy of
the sovereign, the full moon of the two Excellences,
'Ali b. Muhammad b. the Inspector.*

In *kufic* and in *naskhi* on the body: Benedictions.¹

Pen Box (b)

Jazira, probably Mosul, ca. 1250–1300

Brass sheet; hammered, engraved, chased,
pierced openwork, inlaid with silver and gold

2⅝ × 11⅜ × 3¼ in. (6.8 × 29 × 8.4 cm)

Museo Civico Medievale, Bologna (2129)

Inscribed in Arabic in *naskhi*, from the left side to the
right and continuing along the back:

را. [. . .] وعز يدوم ال // للناس عز يدوم أو اقبال // أو حب عله من
الحنان [. . .] ومحبه تجرى مع الانفاس [. . .] وإذا احب الله ال (العبيد؟)
القا عليه محبه

[. . .] *For the people, lasting glory and prosperity. //
And love (composed of) mercy [. . .] And a tenderness
that emanates with each breath [. . .] and if God loves
(His servant?) He bestows devotion upon him.*

On the outer and inner lids:

افتح دواتك بالنعوذ و الدنيا عطايا // كم من اعاد في النفوس / من الننى
و المنايا // المنايا اكتب لتفرج هم وترفع اذا عز [شرح وفيه؟] اباطلا / و
لا زاد و اعلم بانك [. . .] / والذي [. . .]

*Joyfully open your pen box! This world is (filled with)
gifts! // How many (of these gifts) did He restore in
the souls (of men)? (How many) wishes and desires?
// Write to dispel grief, and should you encounter a
faulty work that has been held in esteem, rise above it
and know that you [. . .]²*

Both the Qur'an and the hadith emphasize the special role of the written word in Islam, God having used it to teach man to distinguish between good and evil.³ Indeed, various authorities record that the first object Allah created was the pen and the second, the inkwell.⁴ Islamic treatises and other writings



a

describe the preparation of ink, writing tools, and other implements such as inkwells—*mihbara* or *dawat*, the latter also referring to an inkpot set into a pen box. Despite the high esteem accorded the written word, various texts prohibit the use of inkwells made of precious metals, recommending instead those in wood, glass, and ceramic, and call for the omission of figural motifs in their decoration.⁵

While writing tools and implements have been in use for as long as the act of writing itself, in the medieval Islamic world, and specifically during the Seljuq era, they can be connected with the establishment of madrasas and the work carried out in them, such as the production of religious, scientific, and literary books and the instruction thereof.⁶ Writing was

further relevant in administrative and political affairs. Inkwells and pen boxes were held in particularly high regard in the Seljuq world, mostly on account of its notably literate elite culture and society. Sophisticated examples such as cats. 174a and 174b were inlaid with copper, silver, and gold. Some are embellished with proverb-like inscriptions or iconography that relate to the implements and/or the action of writing. Such “speaking objects” were given as esteemed gifts to cultivated beneficiaries. They have been further identified as “state inkwells” (*dawat-i dawlat*), insignia of the Iranian vizier, or as “royal and vizierial inkwells.” The latter usually were stored in the *dawatkhana* (house of inkwells) and used not only by the vizier but also by rulers and/or

their personal scribes (*katib*) and advisers to write the ruler's missives or chronicles. In all cases, these objects acted as status symbols for high-ranking officers and the wealthy and elite classes.⁷

Cat. 174a, with its circular shape and separate, attachable lid topped by a petaled dome, is typical of medieval Islamic inkwells.⁹ Inlaid examples such as this one became popular as the industry flourished during the second half of the twelfth century in Khurasan, from which it spread westward in the thirteenth century.⁹ Together with at least two more inkwells, one in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and another in the Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv,¹⁰ cat. 174a forms a small group that is almost identical in design and iconography, suggesting that they were all made by the same artist or, at the least, in the same workshop. Common characteristics are three large trilobe-arched panels in which a figure appears against a floriated arabesque-like ground. These panels alternate with epigraphic cartouches below and smaller circular medallions above that are either floral or contain a bird, another common motif of the Khurasani school of metalwork;¹¹ all appear against an otherwise plain surface. Further epigraphic bands and circular medallions with flowers or birds are on the lid, the petaled dome of which is decorated with symmetric arabesque patterns.¹² Most intriguing are the three figures in the trilobed panels. One, seen from the front, wears a turban and sits cross-legged while writing with a pointed reed pen, on paper in cat. 174a and the Tel Aviv inkwell and, in the London inkwell, on a tablet of ancient eastern shape, its sides tapering toward a curving top with a circular handle.¹³ A second turbaned figure, also depicted frontally and sitting cross-legged, holds a rod with a curved end (perhaps a sharpener or penknife); perpendicular to it lies a *miqatt*, or whetstone, on which the pen was placed when its nib was cut.¹⁴ The third, kneeling figure wears a tripartite headdress with lateral, almost vegetal lobes (or, in the London example, a round cap). Seen in three-quarter view, he holds what is probably a round inkwell.

In cat. 174a one can distinguish the hanging chain that allowed such inkwells to be

fastened to the belt of the scribe, attached to the object via small loops or handles. Benedictory inscriptions aim to protect its owner, 'Ali b. Muhammad, chief delegate of state and *mushrif*, or inspector of the court treasury, who was in charge of the royal household. The depicted imagery may have aimed to glorify 'Ali b. Muhammad as a state official in the act of writing or accounting (first image) and preparing his work utensils (second image), as well as to indicate that this inkwell was an official gift (third image), perhaps bestowed upon his appointment to the prestigious position.

The circular figural medallions and background fretwork in cat. 174b recall the style of al-Mawsili inlaid metalwork.¹⁵ Oblong pen boxes, either angular or rounded, were used throughout the Seljuq realm. They usually include space for both pens and an inkwell (the latter fit into the rightmost third of cat. 174b).¹⁶ That this example is inlaid in silver and gold, a medium that under the Seljuq successor states was used to create luxurious

objects for courtly households, and with themes related to astrology or enthronement, indicates that it and others like it were made for members of the ruling elite. As suggested by depictions in inlaid metal or manuscript paintings of standing attendants holding oblong boxes before enthroned rulers (see cat. 72), this shape was preferred for royal or state pen boxes under the Seljuq successor states in Syria and the Jazira and was also adopted by the Mamluks and Ilkhanids.¹⁷ Cat. 174b is distinguished by its inscriptions in gold inlay encouraging its owner to "open your pen box" and "write to dispel grief." Similar to a "speaking object," this box reflects the cultural values that dictated its context of production and usage. It sheds light on how the intellectual and literate urban elite and ruling classes in both the eastern and western parts of the Seljuq world perceived such objects as desirable, not only for their beauty but also for serving as a metaphoric "source of water or of life."¹⁸ **DB**



b



175

Inkwell with Decorative Roundels

Excavated at Rayy (RH5970), 12th–early 13th century
H. 2¼ in. (5.6 cm); Diam. 2¼ in. (5.6 cm)

Glass; blown

University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology
and Anthropology, Philadelphia (37-11-411)

176

Small Inkwell with Loops for Hanging

Excavated at Rayy (RG8296), 12th century
Glass; blown

H. 1⅞ in. (5 cm); Diam. 2⅜ in. (6 cm)

University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology
and Anthropology, Philadelphia (37-11-620)

177

Compass/Pair of Dividers

Excavated at Rayy (RGQ^^), 12th century
L., of long fragment 4⅞ in. (12.5 cm),
of short fragment 3⅛ in. (8 cm)

Bronze

University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology
and Anthropology, Philadelphia (37-88-92)

The first inkwell (cat. 175) was blown from translucent cobalt blue glass into a metal mold with a band of circular decoration. The rolled rim makes a convenient opening for dipping the pen. The second one, the smaller of the two (cat. 176), has a flat, thick base blown from translucent turquoise-colored glass. It was then tooled into its shape. Four loops for hanging the container were attached at the shoulder and at rim.

The compass or pair of dividers was cast in three parts: two legs and an anchoring rosette. Chased decoration was applied on three sides of both legs, while the internal sides were left plain. The double-punched openings, set two centimeters apart, would have been used to establish the radius of a circle or arc. A brass pin formed the hinge by which the legs attached to the central rosette.

Such an instrument, together with a straight-edge, would have formed part of the toolkit in an artisanal shop tasked with copying and illuminating manuscripts, producing book covers, or making drawings for *muqarnas* construction and building plans. Careful examination under

raking light of calligraphed and illuminated pages and of plans and drawings reveals lines incised into the surface of the paper that provide accurate but invisible guidelines for complex geometric constructions. Extant fifteenth-century builders' scrolls such as the Topkapı or Tashkent scrolls reveal the relationship between these guidelines and the finished drawings.¹ Such a process is equally observable in cat. 181, a Qur'an, in which every page shows traces of inscribed lines and circles.² **RH**



178

Inscribed Seal

Modern Turkmenistan, 11th–12th century
Bronze

Signet: ¼ × ⅜ in. (0.5 × 0.9 cm); L. ¾ in. (1.8 cm)

Museum of History and Local Lore of Mary Province,
Turkmenistan (KEK 16380)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*:

الحسين

al-Husayn (in reverse)

This small seal engraved with the name *al-Husayn*, written in reverse in new-style letters, is attached to a neck with two holes, allowing it to be suspended from a belt or by a chain around the neck. Although its archaeological context is unknown, the seal is assumed to have come from the Seljuq city at Merv. Whereas seals of government officials in early Islamic times contained specific pious phrases and names, personal seals such as this one can bear only the name of the owner or a name in combination with religious formulas and a date. Bronze seals with decorative devices, possibly specific to their owners, were excavated at Nishapur, but they cannot be securely dated to the Seljuq era and may be from an earlier context.¹

Early and medieval Islamic seals had many uses. Lead seals were worn as proof of payment of taxes by non-Muslims to their Muslim overlords; clay or lead seals were attached to bales or other containers as authentication of the weight or dimensions of commercial goods;² and seal impressions functioned as signatures or marks of ownership on the whole range of documents and books. However, the practice of sealing documents in the Seljuq era is not attested in Iran by surviving examples and must be inferred through textual evidence.³

Before the introduction of the practice of inking seal impressions on paper, documents were sealed with bullae, or impressed clay disks, which would have been fastened with string to the document. Known Rum Seljuq bullae include those of 'Ala' al-Din Kay Qubad.⁴ Given the deep incision of the name on cat. 178, it would have been used to stamp a bulla rather than to apply an ink impression on paper. While such a seal would have appeared on personal documents such as letters, it also could have been utilized by a scribe or secretary on documents and for marking ownership of manuscripts. **SRC**

179

Folio from a Single-volume Qur'an

Iran, ca. 1000–1050

Ink, gold, and opaque watercolor on paper
5½ × 4⅜ in. (14 × 11 cm)

Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art,
London (QUR 284; fol. 1r)

Since the Qur'an is considered by Muslims to be the literal word of God as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, its text is canonical and cannot be altered. While this most likely contributed to the development of fine Arabic calligraphy with which to copy the text, it also limited the opportunities for embellishing the Qur'an to components such as sura (chapter) headings, verse markers, frontispieces, and finispieces. By the ninth century Abbasid Qur'ans regularly contained illumination painted primarily in gold with touches of black, blue, red, and/or green. Because of the expense of parchment, made of the skin of sheep or goats, ninth-century Qur'ans with gold illumination would have been affordable only to people of considerable wealth.

The increasing use of paper beginning in the tenth century made Qur'ans and other books much more widely available. Nonetheless, scribes and illuminators continued to decorate Qur'ans, sometimes lavishly. This illuminated frontispiece would have formed the right half of a double-page composition.¹ It consists of two superimposed circles whose intersection is covered by a pointed ellipse. A border of gold braid surrounds the central field, from which it is separated by a narrow band of rectangles containing black dots. Stylized leaf ornaments appear in the corners of the field. Within the ellipse and on the blue ground in each circle is a *kufic* inscription in gold, outlined in black, stating that the Qur'an has 237,000 dots (*nuqta*). Such inscriptions give the number of chapters, verses, words, vowel marks, and even the dots over and under the letters of the Qur'an.²

In addition to adding writing, which is absent from most full-page illuminations in



ninth- and tenth-century Qur'ans, the illuminator of this page borrowed a ninth-century-style geometric composition and rotated it ninety degrees. As in Seljuq Qur'ans of the second half of the eleventh century, the first pages of the text contain vegetal ornaments in the

margin next to each sura heading, a cut-down version of which is in the right margin of the illuminated frontispiece. Elliptical and round verse markers and rectangles with other information crowd the side margins, a style of page layout that is associated with the Seljuqs. The

combination of conservative and progressive elements in this manuscript represent one phase of the transition from early Abbasid Qur'ans to a new style, practiced in many regions of the Muslim world. **SRC**



2r

180

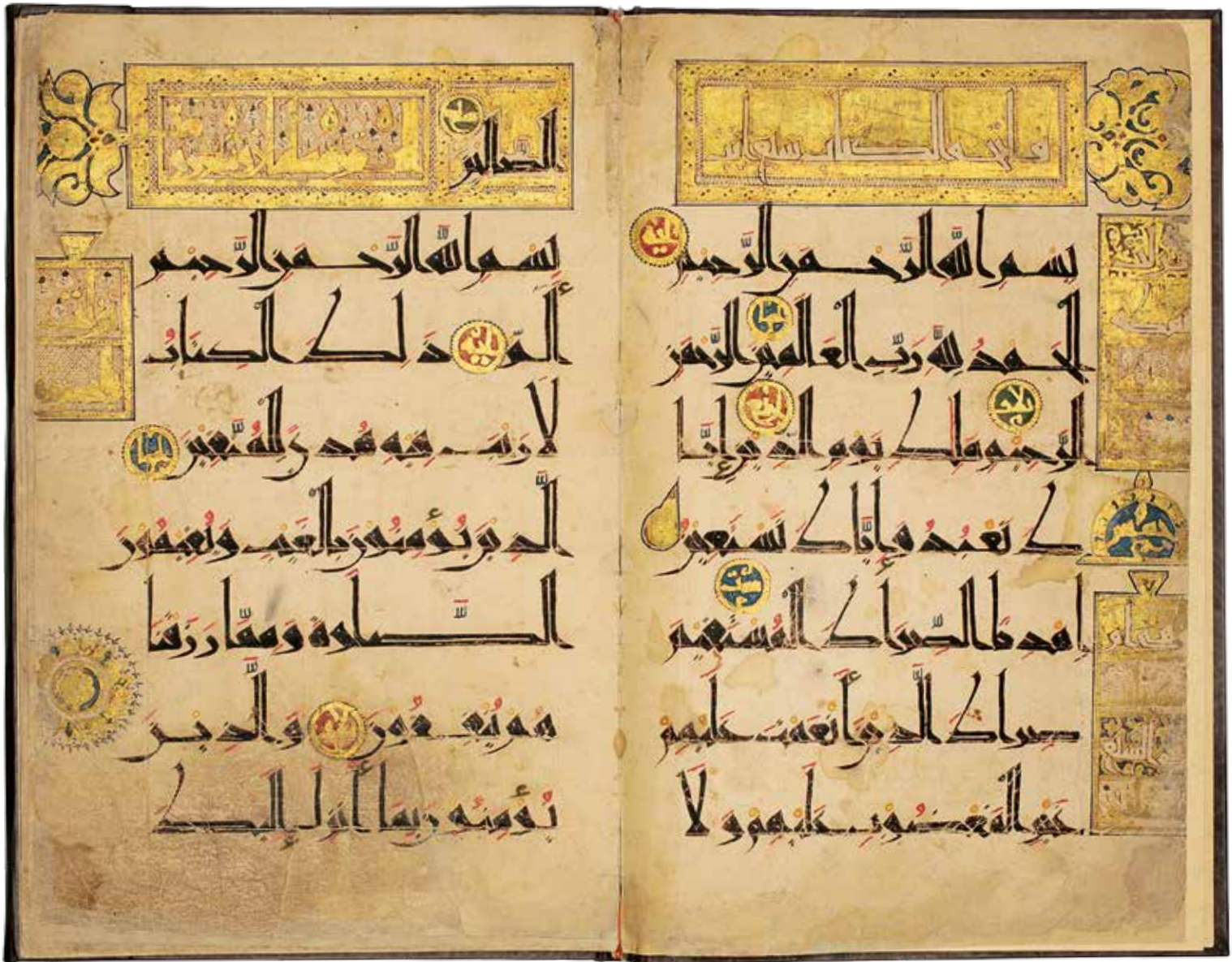
Fragments from a Seven-part Qur'an

Iran, late 11th century
 Ink, watercolor, and gold on thick cream laid paper
 14³/₈ × 9³/₈ in. (36.5 × 23.8 cm)
 Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art,
 London (QR 89)

The increasing use of paper for books over the course of the tenth century led eventually to the acceptance of this support for Qur'ans, which until then had been written on parchment. Although some very early Qur'ans were produced in codex form,¹ the classic Abbasid shape of the holy book in the ninth and tenth centuries was horizontal. This format enabled scribes to stretch certain letters across the line of writing, resulting in visually appealing rhythms but complicating the legibility of the script.² As long as the reader or reciter had memorized the Qur'an, difficult-to-read words

did not pose a major problem. However, with the increased availability of books, thanks to the spread of paper, legibility became more desirable since presumably not every Muslim who could now buy a Qur'an knew it by heart.

Parallel to the use and development of the squared script known as *kufic*,³ documents other than Qur'ans were written in various rounded scripts. Starting in the late ninth century a style of writing emerged that combined rounded and angular letters. Termed the new style, this script was



3r

2v

adopted for Qur'ans at a time of flux in the physical production of books. The result was a range of sizes, formats, and composition of the quires of parchment or paper.⁴ Additionally, the complexity and amount of illumination increased so that by the eleventh century, when this Qur'an was copied, the margins could contain a variety of illuminated rectangles, circles, and other elements.

These opening pages are crowned by chapter headings, "al-Fatiha" (The Opening) and "al-Baqara" (The Cow), written in a conservative new-style script on a gold ground, set

within a border of gold braid and an inner band of off-white ribbon on a blue ground. In the margin of each is a stylized palmette, a holdover from the *tabulae ansatae* of illuminated frontispieces of ninth- and tenth-century *kufic* Qur'ans. Aside from the style of the script, the most characteristically Seljuq feature of this double-page opening is probably the inclusion of marginal rectangles, two on the right and one on the left, containing information about the place of the two suras in the Qur'an, including the name of the place the Fatiha was revealed (Mecca).⁵ The truncated

circle between the two rectangles on the right marks the fifth verse of the first sura. Decorative details such as tear-shaped leaves and hatching, somewhat casually drawn here, appear in other Seljuq Qur'ans, including one dated A.H. 485/A.D. 1092.⁶ SRC

Folios from a Copy (*Mushaf*) of the Qur'an

Copied and illuminated by Mahmud b. al-Husayn al-Kirmani
Iran, Hamadan, dated A.H. Jumada I 559/ A.D. 1164
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
16½ × 11½ in. (41.9 × 29.2 cm)
University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia (NE-P 27)

Surviving Qur'an manuscripts from mid-twelfth-century northwestern Iran are rare, making cat. 181 an especially important example of Seljuq-period book production.¹ Between the time of its creation and its donation as a pious foundation (*waqf*) by Amir Ahmad Jawish (d. 1786) to al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo, the manuscript underwent many alterations, several of which are detectable. A red-ink interlinear commentary or gloss is probably contemporaneous with the copying of the text, while the green-gold framing of the text (and the cause of its internal damage) represents another stage in the life of the manuscript. At some later moment(s), many of the headings and subheadings received enhancement or outright reconfiguration, and the text and gloss were also amended in places. This object's value thus lies not only in its twelfth-century pedigree but also in the complex history of usage, edits, and repair that its pages document.

Folio 2r, the left-hand page of a double-page frontispiece, originally bore a complex design of interlocking strapwork with blue lozenges, on which was written, in white squared script, "The men of Medina ascertained the number of verses in the Qur'an as being 6,217, the people of Basra, 6,214, and the people of Kufa, 6,666." As part of the eighteenth-century refurbishing, the page was inset into a Venetian *tre lune* paper framing, on the upper part of which appears the *waqf* dedication.

In folio 3r, sura 2, verses 1–5, are written in rounded script on polished Syro-Egyptian paper or similar, while the heading is rendered in a squared *kufic* style in white. Nearly contemporary, interlinear glosses in red ink, which cannot be characterized as part of the complex commentary tradition, were added throughout. The page was inset in the *tre lune*

frame when the *waqf* inscription was added to it as well as into the beginning *basmala*. The original page would have had an elaborate illuminated frame, the traces of which are barely visible in the lower left corner of the newer green-gold frame.

A sura heading appears in the middle of folio 105v, giving the first thirteen verses for sura 19, "Maryam." Meanwhile, the last two verses of sura 34, "Saba," and the start of 35, "Ya Sin," appear on folio 150r. The latter page is preserved in its original form, with markers for the five- and ten-verse locations.

The main field of the double-page finispiece (fols. 211v–212r) consists of a vertically oriented rectangular frame with a braided border and a central floral motif drawn with the help of compasses. Two smaller horizontally oriented rectangles are located at the top and bottom of the frame and contain the colophon, which reads from top to bottom on the same page before continuing on the facing page of the finispiece. The colophon was copied in white paint on an illuminated ground and outlined in black ink. The entire phrase was then further outlined with a cloudlike frame surrounded by vegetal designs highlighted with red glaze. The colophon letters have been enhanced, again with white paint, apparently at a later date, on both folios, most likely at the time when they were inset into *tre lune* frames. Folio 212r was also patched at its center.

Beginning on folio 211v and continuing onto folio 212r, the full colophon reads: "Mahmud b. al-Husayn 'the scribe' or 'chancery secretary' al-Kirmani wrote and illuminated it/ in the city of Hamadan, may God the Most High protect her, at the end of/ Jumada I of the year 559 [ca. April 1164]./ And thanks be to God, Lord of the Worlds, and His blessings upon Muhammad and his family and his kin." **RH**



2r



3r



105v



150r



212r



211v



182

Volume 53 of a 60-Volume Qur'an

Copied by 'Ali b. Ja'far b. Asad; dedicated to a madrasa founded by Nur al-Din Mahmud b. Zangi in Damascus, A.H. Dhu-l-Hijja 562/A.D. September–October 1167
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
7³/₈ × 6¹/₄ in. (19.5 × 16 cm)
Keir Collection, on long-term loan by Ranros Universal S.A. to the Dallas Museum of Art

The dedicatory inscription in this Qur'an section states that the manuscript was made as a *waqf*, or charitable endowment, by Abu-l-Qasim Mahmud b. Zangi Aqsunqur, better known as Nur al-Din Zangi, in 1167, the presumed date of the work's completion.¹ The colophon at the end of this volume (fig. 112) states that it was copied by 'Ali b. Ja'far b. Asad and donated to the Nuriya al-Kubra Madrasa in Damascus.² This madrasa, completed in A.H. 563/A.D. 1167–68 and devoted to the Hanafi school of law, was the third constructed by Nur al-Din in Damascus. It exemplifies his energetic building activity throughout Syria and his mission to spread Sunni Islam.

The text of this opening, written in two lines of elegant *naskhi*, consists of verses 31–33 of sura 51, "al-Dhariyat" (The Scatterers). Since the lines of text are from the middle of the sura, the illuminated rectangles at the top of the pages cannot be sura headings; rather the *thuluth* inscription states that this is the fifty-third *juz'*, or section, of the Qur'an.³ As a holdover from the earliest Qur'ans, written on parchment, cat. 182 was produced as a multivolume manuscript. While a division into thirty equal sections is most common, this Qur'an was divided into sixty, most likely because, with a maximum of four lines to a page, each volume would have been unattractively thick, with double the number of folios in a thirty-part manuscript.

The same attention to the aesthetics of the book informs the illumination on these pages. Rather than crowd the margins with roundels and squares containing information about verse counts, as found in eleventh-century Iranian Qur'ans (see cat. 180), the illuminator has adorned the pages with a palmette device at the halfway point along the

outer margin. While gold predominates, the central area is painted in blue and the whole element bordered in blue ink. A gold chain with blue dots frames the illuminated rectangle at the top of each page, while narrower bands of white with black dots and gold form an inner border. The inscriptions appear reserved on blue against a ground of swirling vine scrolls and split-palmette leaves. Although this slight turn away from geometry toward a balance of vegetal and geometric forms may reflect regional differences, it is also a harbinger of developments in Qur'anic illumination of the thirteenth century. **SRC**



Fig. 112. Colophon of cat. 182



183

Folios from a Qur'an Manuscript

Eastern Iran or modern Afghanistan, ca. 1180
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
11¾ × 8¾ in. (29.8 × 22.2 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Gift of Horace
Havemeyer, 1929 (29.160.24, .25)

These two folios from a dispersed Qur'an exemplify the transition during the Seljuq period from Qur'ans written in squared *kufic* script on parchment to those written in the more rounded new-style script on paper.¹ As is evident from the roughly contemporaneous Hamadan Qur'an (cat. 181) of 1164, the new style was not uniformly adopted in Iran, but by the late twelfth century its practitioners had perfected its mannered, slightly eccentric forms. In this manuscript the script is

characterized by the extreme elongation of tall letters, particularly *lam*, *alif*, and *kaf*. The *lam-alif* combination, which appears three times on the right-hand page, is distinctively written in the shape of an ellipse with a flattened trefoil at its base. On the left-hand page letters that extend below the line of the text, such as *nun* and *alif maqsura*, are written on the diagonal with a narrow stroke that widens and terminates in a bowl shape.

The folios come from sura 5 of the Qur'an but are not contiguous, with verses 12 and 13 on the right page and verses 22 to 24 on the left.² The original manuscript consisted of thirty parts, for reading one volume each day of the month. In addition to the script the rich decoration of looping vines, blossoms, and leaves between the lines of text sets the manuscript

apart from most others copied in this script, with the exception of one Qur'an signed by a Ghaznavid scribe and dated A.H. 573/A.D. 1177–78.³ On the basis of its stylistic relationship to this latter Qur'an, cat. 183 has been dated to about 1180 and assigned to the eastern Iranian world. However, comparable decorative leaf forms can be found in the mid-twelfth-century Gunbad-i 'Alaviyan at Hamadan as well as on lusterware ceramics presumably made in Kashan,⁴ which could indicate that the manuscript was made in a place closer to central Iran. **SRC**



366r

365v

184

Qur'an

Copied by Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Jabali al-[. . .];
illuminated by 'Abd al-Rahman b. Muhammad al-Sufi
Iran or Iraq, ca. 1200
Ink, colors, and gold on paper
15³/₈ × 13 in. (39 × 33 cm)
Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Is 1439)

The *naskhi* script of this one-volume Qur'an is characterized by its clarity and balance, suggesting that the scribe, Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Jabali, had mastered the system of proportions formulated by the tenth-century calligrapher and Abbasid official Ibn Muqla (885–940) and refined by Ibn al-Bawwab (d. 1022) in the early eleventh century.¹ Both of these calligraphers worked in Baghdad, but their reputations for excellence ensured the widespread adoption of the new-style writing invented by Ibn Muqla and its development into the more legible, rounded scripts of Ibn al-Bawwab. Since the *nisba* of Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Jabali is missing, one can only speculate on

whether he was working in Iraq or Iran, but wherever it was, the term "Jabali" implies that he came from a mountainous region.

The opulent illuminated sura headings and marginal decoration suggest that this manuscript was produced for an important individual or institutional client. Instead of naming the sura in the heading, the verse count has been given. Moreover, four of the six illuminated headings contain the final verse of the previous sura, so the illumination appears next to the text or in two rectangles framing it. The swirling vine scrolls, lavish blossoms, and curling leaves set the ornament apart from the symmetrical illumination of some Jaziran manuscripts (see cat. 9) or the thin stems and casually drawn blue and gold leaves of others of Rum Seljuq provenance (see cat. 84). The ornate ansae attached to the sura headings in the margins represent a foliate type that, along with roundels and leaf shapes, was prevalent in illuminated Qur'ans of the late twelfth and

early thirteenth centuries. Unlike cat. 183, in which the illuminator left bare the outlines of letters in sura headings, here the gold *kufic* script apparently has been written over the illumination. Whether the scribe or the illuminator wrote the headings is unclear.

Although the geographic origin of the Qur'an and its producers is debatable, the appearance of "al-Sufi" as part of the illuminator's name may indicate a connection to a Sufi or mystical order for which this Qur'an may have been made. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the most important mystical schools were founded in Iran, Central Asia, and Baghdad, centering their activities on *khanqahs*, or convents, which grew into large complexes owing to the charitable donations of their disciples. A Qur'an such as cat. 184 would have made a fitting gift for such an establishment.

SRC

Rum Seljuq Qur'an

Copied by al-Hasan b. Juban b. 'Abd Allah al-Qunawi;
 illuminated by Mukhlis b. 'Abdallah al-Hindi
 Anatolia, Konya, dated end of A.H. Rabī' II 677/
 A.D. September 1278
 Ink and gold on paper
 4 1/8 × 3 1/8 in. (10.5 × 8 cm)
 Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Is 1466)

This pocket-size Qur'an of 341 folios was produced at a time of crisis for the Seljuqs of Rum. From A.H. 675–78/A.D. 1277–78 a peripheral Turkmen group, the Qaramanids, occupied the Rum Seljuq capital of Konya and installed a pretender to the throne. The manuscript's patron is unnamed, but its scribe is associated with the Sa'ad al-Din Köpek Madrasa in Konya,¹ so a Rum Seljuq owner is more likely than a Qaramanid one. The Qur'an is the only one associated with the Rum Seljuqs to have survived. Although the great Rum Seljuq patrons of architecture, such as

'Ala' al-Din Kay Qubad I, certainly would have commissioned large Qur'ans, small ones such as cat. 185 were portable and could be carried on one's person, which would have been useful for itinerant fighters and hunters.

Notably, the manuscript also contains the name of the illuminator, Mukhlis b. 'Abdallah al-Hindi, responsible for twelve fully illuminated pages.² While the *nisba*, or place-name, al-Hindi suggests that the illuminator came from South Asia, he may have been descended from Indians rather than being one himself. The double-page illuminated *shamsas*, or sunburst roundels, contain a central gold interlace with blue touches separated by a narrow band from an encircling ring of gold interlacing. Parallels can be drawn between the interlacing at the center of the roundel and similar, but more simplified, decoration in the roundels beneath the glazed inscription at the minaret of Jam in Afghanistan, built in

A.H. 570/A.D. 1174–75, suggesting that this type of ornament was well known in South Asia. However, by the late twelfth century a taste for interlacing is also evident in Great Seljuq (cat. 181) and Rum Seljuq Qur'anic illumination,³ so the artist did not necessarily rely directly on South Asian prototypes for his inspiration. The eight gold trefoils and blue petals in the outer band of the *shamsa* relate to Ilkhanid illumination,³ so the artist did not necessarily rely directly on South Asian prototypes for his inspiration. The eight gold trefoils and blue petals in the outer band of the *shamsa* relate to Ilkhanid illumination in which the punctuation of the petals by gold leaves appears to have originated in the period of the master calligrapher Yaqut.⁴ Previously the petals were used alone as an element for outlining five- and ten-verse markers. Incorporating details of Great Seljuq, Rum Seljuq, and Ilkhanid ornament, the illumination of this Qur'an represents a transitional moment in the decoration of the holy book. **SRC**



332r

331v



2r

1v

186

Munajat (Confidential Talks) of 'Ali b. Abi Talib

Jazira, ca. 1200

Ink, gold, and opaque watercolor on paper, morocco-leather binding

6 7/8 x 5 1/8 in. (17.4 x 13.1 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Louis E. and Theresa S. Seley Purchase Fund for Islamic Art and Rogers Fund, 1995 (1995.324)

This manuscript has been attributed to the Jazira because of the similarity between the calligraphy of its *basmala*, or opening line, and the frontispiece of the *Kitab al-diryaq* (Book of antidotes), dated A.H. 595/A.D. 1198–99 (cat. 106).¹ In both manuscripts the new-style script, with its elongated vertical letters and diagonally slanting lower letters, is set against a ground of ebullient foliage and scrolls in the illuminated sections. Thanks to the small size

of the *Munajat*, however, the illumination at the top somewhat crowds the first line of the text, written in *naskhi*.

The *munajat*, or “confidential talks,” of the first Shi’a imam, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, take the form of prayers to God. Along with the forty sayings of Imam ‘Ali, similar to the traditions, or hadith, of the Prophet Muhammad, books of *munajat* provided doctrinal guidance to medieval Shiites. The first page gives the chain of transmission of the prayers in this book as well as the genealogy of the twelve Shi’a imams, followed on subsequent pages by the prayers themselves. Although the Seljuqs in Iran and their successor states in Anatolia and the Jazira had energetically attempted to promote Sunni Islam and suppress Shiism, the effort was neither systematic nor entirely successful. The ‘Uqaylids, a Shi’a Arab tribe, gained

control of parts of the Jazira in the 1160s.² In addition, the Ismailis, another Shi’a group that in the late eleventh century had gained a powerful foothold in Iran, from which they harassed the Great Seljuqs, had branches in Syria in the regions of Aleppo, Damascus, and Hama, but their power had waned by the end of the twelfth century. Since the Ismailis believed the imamate descended through Isma’il, the son of the sixth imam, Ja’far al-Sadiq, who is not mentioned here in the list of imams, the manuscript is unlikely to have been an Ismaili text. Nonetheless, as with the *Kitab al-diryaq*, Shiites presumably still lived within the regions controlled by the Seljuqs and their successors and practiced their religion, as this manuscript reveals. **src**

187

Qur'an Commentary

Copied by Fadl b. 'Umar al-Rayidh;
 illuminated by Muhammad b. al-Jawhari
 al-Baghdadi
 Probably Jazira, Mosul or Sinjar,
 A.H. 3 Ramadan 600/A.D. May 5, 1204
 Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
 15¾ × 12¾ in. (40 × 32.5 cm)
 Orientabteilung, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin
 (MS Landberg 822)



3r

2v

This combined Qur'an and commentary (*tafsir*) contains three illuminated double-pages in 286 folios. It is the seventh and final volume of a set and includes suras 49 to 114. On the final opening (fols. 285v–286r) the signature of the calligrapher, Fadl b. 'Umar al-Rayidh, appears in *rayhani* script in the text block along with the date. In the illuminated rectangles above and below the main field, the illuminator, Muhammad b. al-Jawhari al-Baghdadi, has signed his name and included the year A.H. 600 (A.D. 1204). It is therefore the earliest known example of a signature by an illuminator who was not also the calligrapher of an Islamic manuscript,¹ and it heralds the increase in lavish full-page and double-page illumination in Ilkhanid and Mamluk manuscripts from the thirteenth century onward. Along with Qur'ans, hadith (traditions of the Prophet Muhammad), and legal texts, Qur'an commentaries were required reading for students at madrasas. Here, one or several verses in *muhaqqaq* script is followed by interpretation in *rayhani*.

Although some early horizontal-format *kufic* Qur'ans contain full-page illuminations, the complex illumination of fols. 285v and 286r includes motifs such as reciprocal trefoils in the outer borders (fols. 2v–3r), a new ratio of more blue to less gold, and the absence or truncation of the *tabula ansata* motif in the center of the outer margin. Whereas the

Hamadan Qur'an of A.H. 559/A.D. 1164 (cat. 181) contains a single-page illuminated opening with *kufic* inscriptions noting the number of verses according to different readings,² the illuminated double-page frontispiece of cat. 187 contains no writing. Instead it is organized around a ten-pointed star in an interlaced pattern featuring pentagons, triangles, rhombuses, and partial stars. On the basis of the similarity of the split-palmette leaf decoration within the stars to that of the 1198–99

Kitab al-diryaq (Book of antidotes; cat. 106), the manuscript has been attributed to the upper Tigris region.³ However, the design of the thirteenth-century doorknockers thought to come from the Jazira (cat. 159) is more closely analogous in the layering of its interlace. The knotted pattern of the border derives from the plaited frames of many early and medieval illuminated pages, but the inclusion of blue quatrefoils punctuates and enlivens the design. **src**



286r

285v

Kitab adab al-kuttab (Book of the Etiquette of Scribes) of Ibn Qutaybah

Signed by Muzaffar b. 'Umar b. Muhammad al-Mayyafariqi

Jazira or Syria, dated A.H. Rabi' I 538/

A.D. September–October 1143

Ink on paper

7⁷/₈ × 5¹/₂ in. (20 × 14 cm)

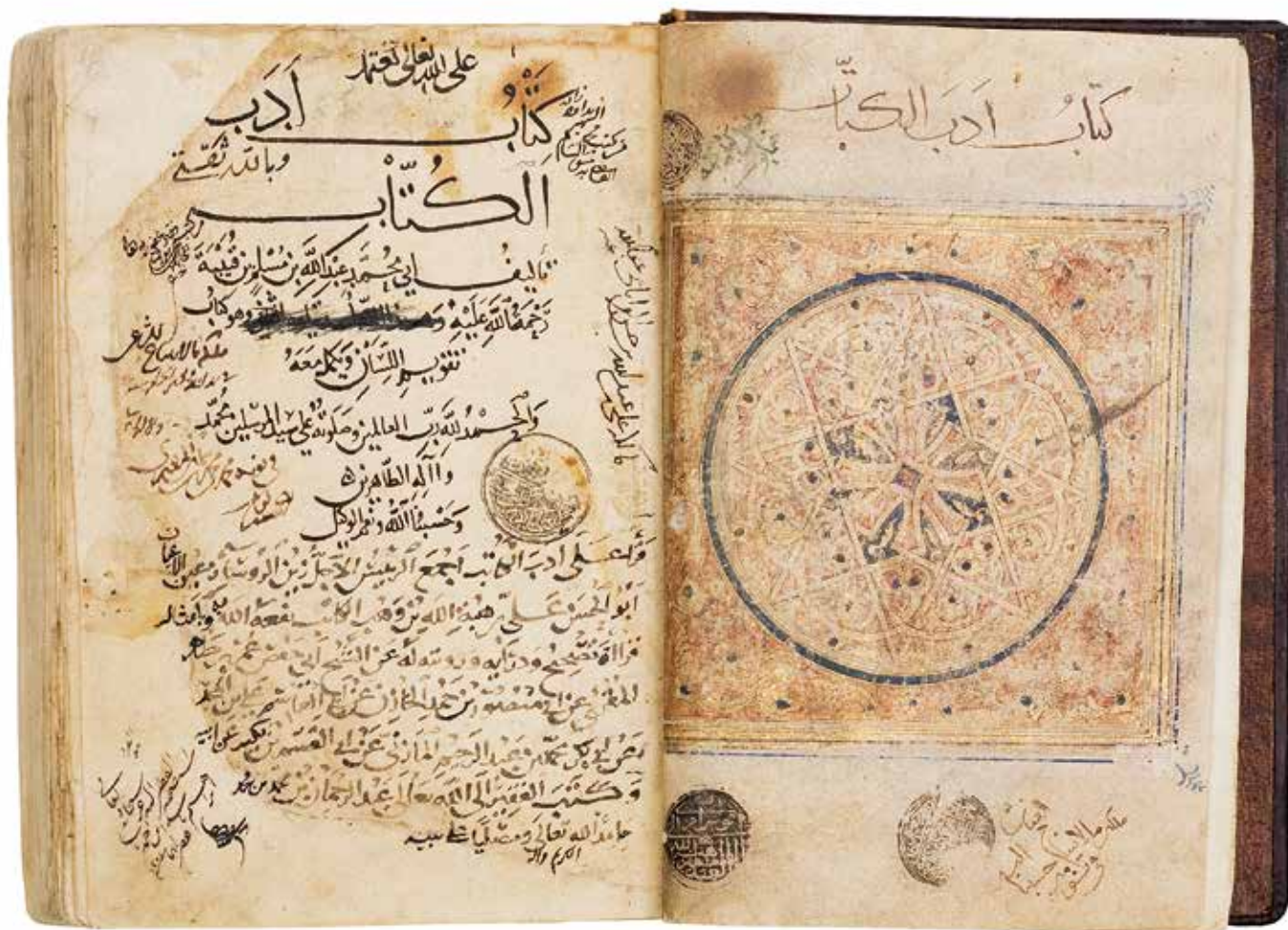
Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London (MSS 606)

The training of calligraphers and secretaries involved the acquisition of a range of skills that included knowing how to cut the nib of the reed pen, understanding the proportions of one letter to another depending on the script, and mastering the spelling, grammar, and usage of Arabic and Persian.¹ The *Kitab adab al-kuttab* (Book of the etiquette of scribes) by the ninth-century polymath Ibn Qutaybah served as a philological and

practical manual for the study of the Arabic language. Its introduction “may be regarded as a politico-cultural profession of faith,”² in the context of the Sunni reaffirmation during the reign (847–61) of Caliph al-Mutawakkil, but its widespread use from Spain to Iran attests to its abiding educational value for scribes. In general *adab* literature presupposed the knowledge of Arabic poetry and prose as well as the literature of Iran and the philosophy of the Greeks and Indians within the ethical framework of Islam. Thus, even a subject such as orthography could be promoted as an attribute of a cultivated person, since educated individuals would be expected not only to write correctly but to know how to spell.

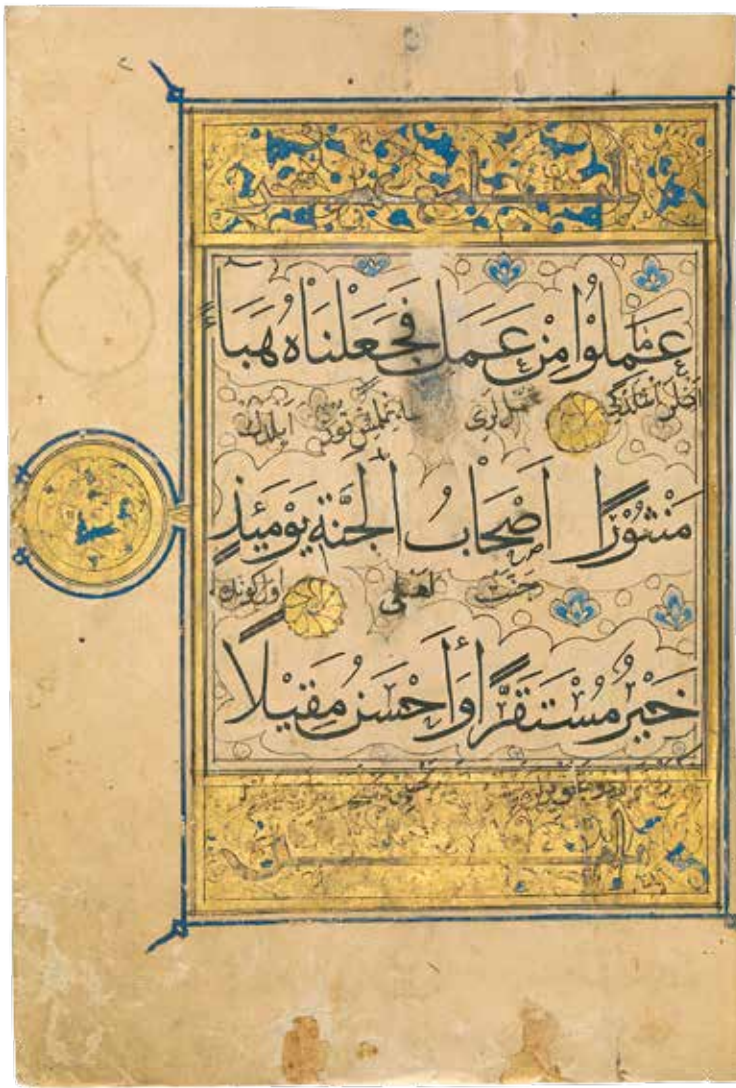
This volume of the manuscript was copied by a scribe with the *nisba* Mayyafariqi, which could mean that either he or one of his ancestors came from Mayyafariqin, in the Jazira, but

does not in and of itself support an attribution to the Jazira. The illumination with an eight-pointed star and eight-lobed roundel inscribed in a circle on folio 3v bears some relation to the illuminated headings of a Qur'an dated A.H. 466/A.D. 1073–74, copied in new-style script, that has been attributed to Iraq or Iran.³ However, the motif also appears in tenth-century *kufic* Qur'ans, as well as the Melisenda psalter, commissioned in Jerusalem between 1131 and 1143.⁴ While a connection to the Syrian Christian milieu of the Jazira could be proposed, supported by the closeness in time of the psalter and cat. 188, the ubiquity of the star-within-a-circle motif mitigates against a firm attribution to either the Jazira or Syria. The title page, on folio 4r, includes a certificate of a student having read the book aloud in the presence of his teacher, whose chain of authority leading back to the author is also given.⁵ **src**



4r

3v



2r



1v

189

Section from a Qur'an

Iraq or Anatolia, probably second half of the 13th century

Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper; tooled leather binding

19½ × 9½ in. (49.5 × 24.1 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund, 1975 (1975.201)

This Qur'an consists of 114 chapters (suras) of uneven length. A system was therefore devised to divide the book into 30 equal parts, enabling a reading of generally uniform length each day of the month. The result is that sections can begin in the middle of a sura, as is the case with section 19 here, where the text starts with verse 23 of sura 25, "al-Furqan" (The Differentiator). Written on paper in black ink in *muhaqqaq* script, the Qur'an contains an interlinear Turkish translation added in a

smaller script at a later date than the Arabic.¹ The manuscript ends in the middle of verse 41 of sura 27, but the last three words of the verse were squeezed in next to the line, most likely by someone other than the scribe.²

Because of the interlinear Turkish, this manuscript has been attributed to Iraq or Turkey of the second half of the thirteenth century, after the Mongol invasions and conquest of Baghdad in 1258. In addition, the style of the illuminated *juz'* heading with its looping vines drawn in black ink and lively blue palmette leaves recalls that of the *Munajat* attributed to the Jazira (cat. 186). *Muhaqqaq* calligraphy is one of the so-called six pens, or six rounded scripts whose rules were refined by the thirteenth-century master Yaqut, active in Baghdad in the second half of the thirteenth century.³ This elegant style of writing became the favorite of calligraphers copying Qur'ans

for patrons from Egypt to Iran from the late thirteenth through the fifteenth century.⁴

Although the illumination on the facing page incorporates details, such as the gold geometric interlace border, known from twelfth-century and earlier pages, the strict geometry of the composition is mitigated by the blue leaves, petals, and scrolls in the central roundel, its border, and the inscription bands above and below the field. The four circles in the corners of the field contain crescents filled with petals surrounding a smaller circle that has now darkened. The device recalls depictions of the moon such as those held by the central figures in the frontispieces of the *Kitab al-diryaq* (Book of antidotes; cat. 106). While a Qur'an would not contain a literal depiction of the moon, such a detail subliminally suggests God's dominion in heaven as well as on earth. **SRC**



The Funerary Arts

As discussed in the hadith, the dead in Islam should be washed and shrouded in three pieces of clean, white cotton in preparation for burial in a simple grave, level with the ground.¹ However, pre-Islamic rituals and practices played a role in how and where the Seljuqs were buried. In Central Asia, before their conversion to Islam, Turkic peoples placed their deceased in burial mounds (*kurghans*), which in some instances were associated with statues of male figures (cat. 190), thought to represent the enemies whom the deceased had killed.² With their embrace of Islam in the tenth century, the Seljuqs adopted the burial customs of the greater Iranian world and abjured commemorative statues at their graves. Nonetheless, they did not strictly adhere to Islamic funerary practices. Despite the doctrine of burying the dead in a simple shroud, some corpses were dressed in silk robes, as the caftan discovered in a grave at Rayy attests (cat. 195). While this may have been a used garment rather than one purpose-made for burial, its pattern, cut, and material contravene the requirement of a basic fabric.

Tombs in Seljuq Iran ranged from simple crypts dug in the ground with or without brick revetements and a vaulted ceiling to funerary towers with subterranean crypts. At Rayy the dead were buried in coffins, despite the incompatibility of this practice with Islamic law.³ In addition to a tomb tower at Rayy dated A.H. 534/A.D. 1140, excavators found small tombstones of marble or alabaster that would have marked the humble graves at the site.⁴ The Tughril Tower, as it is known,⁵ has flanged exterior walls and is now missing its dome. It most likely would have contained a cenotaph of either stone or wood (cat. 192) on its main floor and a subterranean crypt to hold the body of the deceased. While notable pre-Seljuq Iranian examples of this type include Gunbad-i Qabus (1006) and the west tower at Radkan (1017–21), tomb towers became one of the dominant building forms of the Seljuq era. These tall structures served primarily to mark the graves of local princes and grandees, their prominent height announcing the import of these individuals to the surrounding countryside. Unlike the huge domed square of the mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar, in Merv (see fig. 7), Seljuq tomb towers were singular constructions, not designed for regular use.⁶

In the thirteenth century Seljuq Anatolia largely adopted the forms of Iranian mausoleums—round or polygonal towers with conical or pyramidal roofs. Certain buildings with inscriptions indicating that their architects had come from Iran were constructed of baked

brick, the standard building material of the tomb towers of the Great Seljuqs, but Anatolian builders more typically used stone, which afforded greater opportunities for decoration. Low-relief carving akin to that found on architecture in the Caucasus adorns the exteriors of the Döner Kümbet (second half of the 13th century) and Mahperi Khuand Khatun (1237–38) towers at Kayseri. While monumental freestanding mausoleums were common in Anatolia, tombs in the Jazira and Syria were instead incorporated into madrasas or larger complexes. Both the Rum Seljuqs and the Artuqids built dynastic mausoleums that were included in mosques and madrasas, which would have combined ritual and pedagogical functions with tomb visitation.

Since most people could not afford to build tomb towers, they or their survivors ordered tombstones carved with Qur'anic verses, their name, and their death date. While many Iranian examples have survived, the understanding of how they functioned is hampered by the paucity of archaeological information. Stones that are carved on only one side most likely were inset or otherwise attached to a wall of some form of funerary monument or building in a religious complex. The customary disposition of bodies in Muslim graves was with the head turned toward Mecca. Unless all the tombstones in a building were placed on the east or west wall, they could not have been headstones. Rather, tombstones such as cats. 201, 203, and 204 would have commemorated the deceased, who may have been buried in a crypt within the building at some distance from the tombstone.

As with funerary shrouds, not all burials strictly followed Islamic custom. Nine collective tombs of the ninth and tenth centuries were excavated at Siraf. In one, four skeletons lay alongside one another but perpendicular to a fifth in one large compartment,⁷ in contrast to the more numerous multiple graves with low walls separating the corpses. Graves were cut from the rock in the areas between the large tombs with “low oval or rectangular covers,”⁸ the bodies laid in them without coffins. A common form of grave marker found at Siraf, produced from the tenth to the twelfth century, consists of one hollow block of stone up to six feet long with carved ornament and inscriptions and a smaller medial ridge (cat. 202). They marked the graves but were not used as coffins.⁹

As in Iran, people of means in Rum Seljuq Anatolia ordered large, finely decorated, and inscribed wooden cenotaphs and coffins for their relations or spiritual leaders.¹⁰ While these objects would have been placed inside a mausoleum or other structure, freestanding stele-shaped tombstones were placed at the heads of graves at Ahlat, in eastern Anatolia. Many may postdate the Seljuq period, but the extensiveness of the cemetery and the presence of several thirteenth-century tomb towers surrounded by simpler graves suggest that such markers were in use during the Seljuq era. Similar to the tombstones in Anatolia, some twelfth- and thirteenth-century examples at Artuqid sites have *muqarnas* decoration above the inscriptions on the face of the stone and geometric or other decoration on the back. They stand at the head of low cenotaphs that lie on top of burials. Finally, the cemetery of the Salihin in Aleppo contained several ornately carved twelfth-century stone cenotaphs on one, two, or three socles akin to the example from Siraf, and low versions with vertical headstones of the same type as the ones found at Artuqid tombs.¹¹ SRC

Anthropomorphic Figure (*Baba*)

Western Turkmenistan, probably 6th–10th century

Stone; carved

Head 15 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (39 × 45 cm);

trunk 33 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 22 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (85 × 58 cm)

State Museum of the State Cultural Center of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat (ÖWS-AH 4849)

This stone figure carved with anthropomorphic features, or *baba*, attests to the importance of obituary commemoration to the early Turks, whose legacy survived in the funerary practices of the Seljuqs. Similar *babas* have been found largely in the territories settled and nomadized by steppe cultures, an area stretching from south Siberia, Mongolia, Xinjiang, and West Central Asia to the Black Sea and Eastern Europe. They have a large chronological span, from the Neolithic Period to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A.D.¹

Among early Turkish cultures, excepting obvious regional and chronological differences and certain nuances in meaning, there is a broad uniformity in the use of *babas*. As suggested by archaeological excavations, runic inscriptions, and Chinese textual sources, they functioned primarily at funerary sites where commemorative ceremonies for deceased ancestors took place. These memorial complexes comprised one or more enclosures with burials. They could also include wooden poles for hanging the heads of sacrificed animals, stone posts (*balbals*) related in number to the enemies the deceased had killed, and zoomorphic sculptures such as lions and rams, which had protective connotations.² *Babas* can be female or male, standing or sitting, with variations in clothing and headdress. Some hold a vessel in one or both hands and/or have a dagger or sword hanging from the belt. They are generally accepted to be representations of the honored deceased and thus “attended” the ceremonies performed to commemorate them.³

This figure of a man sports a beard and mustache. One arm is bent and the hand is empty, though there is a dagger at his side. The carving was executed with flat (untoothed) tools. The figure was recovered in the 1960s in the cemetery of the village of Odek (Balkan



province, modern Turkmenistan), but may have been brought there from the nearby Caspian regions, where funerary memorials with stone *babas* are more common.⁴ However, its few iconographic details do not support a specific attribution.

While there is no evidence that the funerary traditions associated with these memorial sites survived in Seljuq practice once they converted to Islam,⁵ honoring the deceased maintained a

special role. Coeval historical sources remark on the visits of the sultans to the tombs of their forefathers, while one text, endorsing a commemoration, lists the burial places, often in family tombs, of all the sultans.⁶ In the Seljuq period the boom in funerary architecture with high elevations, such as domed mausoleums and tomb towers, was an ongoing trend that may have been facilitated by this Turkmen legacy. **MR**



191

Interior of a Mausoleum

Syria, 12th–early 13th century
 Ink and opaque watercolor on paper
 7 1/8 x 6 in. (18 x 15.3 cm)
 Musée de l'Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris (Al 82-01)

This fragmentary image of the interior of a mausoleum, unique in this period,¹ has no accompanying text that would explain its purpose or whether it is an illustration of a specific monument. In its present state the painting depicts a large arch with blue columns and two smaller arches to either side of it on the lower register. The slightly higher springing of a further arch is visible at the right. Three classic mosque lamps (see fig. 49) hang from the large arch before a blue curtain, above a cenotaph. Covering the top of the cenotaph is a gold, red, and black textile

decorated with Arabic writing that may be the profession of faith, "There is no God but Allah."² The arches to the right and left, as well as those in the upper register, contain larger hanging lamps. Below the lamp at the left sits a blue object resembling a strip of cloth with an unidentified pyramidal object next to it.³ The light blue rectangle above the right-hand arch resembles a textile with geometric ornament.

Architectural details such as the joggled voussoirs, in alternating white and blue, in the right and left lower arches support the dating of the page to the twelfth or early thirteenth century, since this feature is found in the architecture of Ayyubid Aleppo and Damascus.⁴ A precise analogue to the interlaced semicircles of the large arch occurs in the Madrasa al-Sultaniyya in Aleppo, completed in A.H. 620/A.D. 1223.⁵ Other details such as

the zigzag decoration of the partial arch at the right recall twelfth-century buildings in the Jazira.⁶

Although this scene has been described as the representation of the *qibla* wall of a mosque and a table or stool instead of a cenotaph,⁷ the presence of the fragmentary arch at the right that is the same size as the "mihrab" complicates this interpretation, though the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and some Mamluk mosques have more than one niche in the *qibla* wall. The Arabic script and prominent positioning of the cenotaph under the arch, perhaps leading to a dome, as one might expect to find in a Muslim mausoleum, render unlikely the identification of the building as one used by a Christian cult.⁸ Instead the contents of two of the arches on the lower register suggest multiple burials in this site as are found in dynastic mausoleums. **src**



192

Cenotaph with Finials

Iran, 11th–12th century

Wood

27 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 23 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 57 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (69.5 × 60.5 × 145.1 cm)

Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (974.68.1)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the upper frame:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم كل نفس بما كسبت رهينه/وفدت على الكريم
بغير زاد من الحسنات والقلب سليم وحمل الزاد اقبح كل شئ اذا
كان الوفود على الكريم/العبد الصالح محمد بن احمد غفر ذنوبه

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

*Every soul shall be pledged for what it has earned
(Qur'an 74:38). I came to the Generous (God) without a
provision of good deeds and sound heart; and the bur-
den of (this) provision is the ugliest of all if the arrival is
upon the Generous. The pious servant Muhammad
from al-Hadd [. . .] May (God) forgive his sins.*

On the lower frame:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم مالك يوم
الدين اياك نعبد واياك نستعين اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين
انعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين // كل نفس ذائقة الموت

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Praise belongs to God, the Lord of all Being, the All
Merciful, the All Compassionate, the Master of the Day*

*of Doom. Thee only we serve; to Thee alone we pray
for succor. Guide us in the straight path, the path of
those whom Thou has blessed, not of those against
whom Thou art wrathful, nor of those who are
astray. // Every soul shall taste of death (Qur'an 1;
3:185).*

Running from front to back:

الحسين // فاطمة // رضيت بالله ربا وبالاسلام ديناً ومحمد نبياً
وبالقران كتاباً و يعلى عليه السلام اماماً ويا // الحسن والحسين/وعلى
بن الحسين/ومحمد بن علي وجعفر بن محمد

*Al-Husayn // Fatima // Satisfied with Allah as the Lord,
Islam as the religion, and Muhammad as the Prophet
and the Qur'an as the scripture and 'Ali, Peace Be
Upon Him, as a leader and with // al-Hasan, and
al-Husayn, and 'Ali b. al-Husayn, and Muhammad b.
'Ali, and Ja'far b. Muhammad.*

On the sides:

قال النبي عليه السلام اذا تحيرتم في الامور فاستعينوا من اهل القبور
// بعلية السلام // وموسى بن جعفر

*The Prophet said, Peace Be Upon Him. If you are uncer-
tain in the (religious) affairs, seek after the people of
the graves // Peace Be Upon Him // and Musa b. Ja'far.*



Cat. 192, side view

On the center register:

قال النبي عليه السلام القبر صندوق العمل والدنيا مزرعة الآخرة

And the Prophet said, Peace Be Upon Him: The tomb is the box of (your) deeds, and life is the farm of the afterlife.

On the upper side:

الله لا اله الا هو الحي القيوم لا تأخذه سنة ولا نوم له ما فى السموات وما فى الارض من ذا الذى يشفع عنده الا باذنه يعلم ما بين ايديهم وما خلفهم // وقال النبي عليه السلام/نفسكم اصحاب النار

God there is no god but He, the Living, the Everlasting. Slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who is there that shall intercede with Him save by His leave? He knows what lies before them and what is after them, and they comprehend not anything of His knowledge save such as He wills. His Throne comprises the heavens and earth; the preserving of them oppresses Him not (Qur'an 2:255). // And the Prophet said, Peace Be Upon Him. You, yourselves, are the people of Hell (hadith).¹

This wood cenotaph, or *sunduq*, is a unique example from Seljuq Iran in contrast to Anatolia, where numerous wood coffins survive.² With the exception of three rectangular panels on the lateral sides, which contain vegetal ornament in the four corners around a central inscribed lozenge, and an openwork panel on

the lid with vegetal decoration in two colors, the rest of the cenotaph is covered with *kufic* inscriptions. On the better preserved of the two lateral sides, the four vertical panels contain the names of five of the twelve Shi'a imams, al-Hasan, al-Husayn, 'Ali b. al-Husayn, Muhammad b. 'Ali, and Ja'far b. Muhammad. From right to left in the lozenges are the names 'Ali, Allah, and Muhammad. On the opposite lateral side the names in the lozenges are al-Husayn, Fatima, and, now lost, al-Hasan. On the lid around the central decorative panel appear the names of the seventh to twelfth Shi'a imams. In addition to Qur'anic verses and hadith that are specifically meaningful to Shiites, the names of the twelve imams and the *ahl al-bayt*³—Muhammad, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn—indicate that the person for whom this cenotaph was produced was certainly Shiite. However, the name of the deceased and his or her date of death does not appear.

This absence of historical information calls into question the function of this sarcophagus. Was it intended for the mausoleum of a

wealthy or powerful individual or perhaps a shrine in which a spiritual leader was interred? While parallels with examples from later periods are problematic, the sarcophagus of Shah Isma'il, the first Safavid shah (r. 1501–24), does come to mind as an example of a sumptuously decorated wood cover for a ruler's tomb. Shah Isma'il's cenotaph is inlaid with wood of contrasting colors, ivory, and silver and gold thread, an idea that appears in an incipient phase on the cover of cat. 192. Indeed, the surface of the Seljuq example appears to be darker than the carved areas, and these in turn contrast with the blackness of the areas that are ajouré.⁴ Where the two tomb covers diverge is in the openwork technique employed on the Seljuq *sunduq*, which anticipates other funerary furniture, particularly the so-called *zarih*, or grillwork covers, found in Iran covering the tombs of Shiite saints.⁵ While today the *zarih* are monumental and made of metal, they may have had more modest forerunners, of which this cenotaph could have been one. **SRC and AKA**



Cat. 192, overhead view



193

Cenotaph

Jazira, probably Mosul, ca. 1237
 Wood (mulberry?); carved, inlaid with ivory and bone, cast-metal fittings
 32 × 31½ × 19¾ in. (81.2 × 80 × 50 cm)
 David Collection, Copenhagen (3/1993)

Although wood survived in fairly good quantities from monuments in Rum Seljuq Anatolia and other regions controlled by the Seljuq successor states, wood chests are rare for the early and medieval Islamic periods.¹ This example is of rectangular shape and stands on four elongated, bulbous columnar feet. It is made of 75 wood pieces, 53 of which constitute the intricately symmetric and geometric front panel. The overall design is composed of squares, rectangles, and polygonal shapes that form a continuous pattern dominated by two cruciform motifs. Ivory and bone inlays establish polychrome accents, and alternate with other elements carved with dense arabesque-like compositions.

While both inlay decoration and complex geometric and arabesque compositions are common in medieval Syria and Egypt, the density of the scrollwork in cat. 193 and the presence of interlacing split-palmettes and other floral motifs with pronounced spiraling ends

resonate with Zangid and Lu'lu'id decorative programs from the Jazira, particularly the southeastern center of Mosul, where they are present in both Muslim and Christian monuments.² In 1916 the German scholar Ernst Herzfeld visited the shrine of Imam Yahya b. al-Qasim (fig. 113), a Shiite official active under Badr al-Din Lu'lu' (r. 1211–59). Alongside Imam Yahya's wood cenotaph, dated A.H. 637/A.D. 1237, Herzfeld observed a wood chest. No photographs of the chest or cenotaph survive, but Herzfeld's meticulous drawings suggest that the chest in the shrine matched cat. 193 almost exactly.³ While one cannot confirm with certainty that the chest was made specifically for the shrine and was not instead moved there from another building, the apparent similarity in inlay and arabesque design between cat. 193 and the cenotaph of Imam Yahya make it tempting to conclude that they were conceived together, if not for the same building, certainly about



Fig. 113. Early 20th-century view of the shrine of Imam Yahya b. al-Qasim, Mosul

the same time and by the same wood workshop. The similarity of their decoration with stucco and stone embellishments in the shrine further suggests that cat. 193 and the cenotaph of Imam Yahya were made in concert with the shrine to create a harmonious overall design. **DB**



194

**Fragmentary Burial Shroud with
Checked Pattern**

Excavated at Rayy (RN6948), Naqqareh Khaneh,
927–1027

Brown and yellow silk; plain weave

Top left: 47 × 62 in. (119.4 × 157.5 cm); top right: 70 ×
50 in. (177.8 × 127 cm); center left: 26 × 39 in. (66 ×
99.1 cm); bottom left: 49 × 64 in. (124.5 × 162.6 cm)

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Acquired by exchange
with the University Museum, 1940 (1940-51-121a–d)

195

Fragment of a Burial Textile

Excavated at Rayy (RA0874), Aminabad Tower,
10th–early 11th century

4½ × 6 in. (11.4 × 15.2 cm)

Blue, yellow, and green silk; warp-faced plain
weave with pattern wefts

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Acquired by exchange
with the University Museum, 1940 (1940-51-48)



Fig. 114. Early 20th-century view of the citadel of Rayy,
looking north toward Mount Tochal



Cat. 195

These two extraordinary burial fragments were scientifically excavated from tomb towers to the south of the citadel of Rayy that had been employed as cemeteries before and after the Seljuq invasion (fig. 114).¹ Both fragments were uncovered in vaulted crypts beneath the towers. The smaller of the two (cat. 195), which features palmettes in tightly spaced, interlaced medallions on blue, yellow, and green silk, was found in a tomb tower at a site known as Aminabad.² The larger piece (cat. 194) is part of a burial shroud and consists of brown and yellow silk in a simple checkered pattern. Although fragmentary and deteriorated, a small opening for the neck survives, closing on the left side and fastened with knotted buttons and looped closures from the same material.³ This shroud was discovered along with two skeletons at Naqqareh Khaneh, a tomb tower often referred to as the “tomb of the Great Seljuqs,” based largely on its elaborate decoration (fig. 115).⁴ Despite this appellation, however, the shroud predates the Seljuq period by at least a decade, as evidenced by carbon 14 dating carried out in the 1950s that provided a date range of 927–1027, which corresponds closely with the period of Buyid

reign over Rayy.⁵ Circumstantial evidence may suggest a similar date for the smaller fragment, as a bronze coin minted at al-Muhammadiyah in Rayy and attributed to A.H. 387/A.D. 997 was excavated near the grave from which the fragment had been uncovered.⁶

Despite predating the Seljuqs, these fragments are instructive to our understanding of religious and funerary practices in medieval Iran. Muslim funeral rites generally consist of washing and enshrouding the deceased, praying over the body, and burying it with the head of the deceased facing Mecca, with little deviation between sects and religious schools.⁷ Although shrouds were sometimes donated, the cost of burial attire was considered to be a debt of the deceased and thus provided for by his or her estate.⁸ These generally were purchased by one’s heirs, as commissioning one’s own burial shroud was discouraged.⁹ Although there is some deviation in practice, it is generally held that burial attire should be white for its associations with purity.¹⁰ There is general agreement that burial garments should never be inscribed. Both Shiites and the Hanafi school proscribe the use of silk, while the Shafi’i school forbids its use for males.¹¹ The latter is

perhaps unsurprising considering general ambiguity surrounding the permissibility of silk clothing.¹²

Yet even when allowing for minor departures from proscribed practice, these two textile fragments are at odds with established orthodoxy. The solution to this inconsistency is best found in a landmark study of conversion to Islam in the medieval period that proposes a theory of “innovation diffusion” in Iran. According to this argument, there is an inverse relationship between the conservatism of the local ruling elite in Iran and the rate of conversion to Islam among the general populace.¹³ As such, during the period in which Muslims were a minority in Iran, the earliest elites went to great lengths to avoid any behavior that might suggest to their Abbasid masters that they were not true Muslims, or even “crypto-Zoroastrians.”¹⁴ In the tenth century, however, during which conversion in Iran is suggested to have reached 80 percent, the Buyids began to reintroduce pre-Islamic culture to courtly life, including the use of Sasanian iconography, forms of dress, iconography, and the royal title *shahanshah*.¹⁵ By the time of the Seljuq invasion, this fusion of Islamic and pre-Islamic traditions was such that they employed both the Islamic title sultan and the Sasanian *shahanshah*.¹⁶

Within this framework, the deviation seen in funerary textiles employed in a “royal grave,” whether Buyid or Seljuq, is significantly less problematic.¹⁷ Indeed, these early fragments are nonetheless indispensable to our understanding of the Persianate society that would flourish under the Seljuqs. **MF**

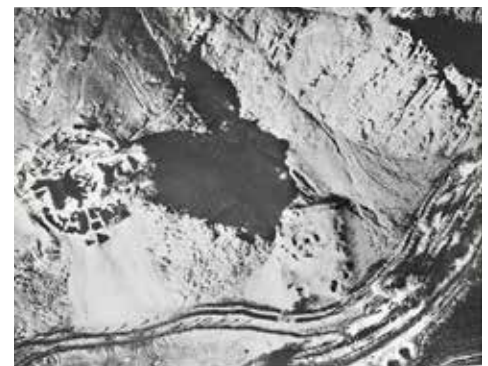


Fig. 115. Early 20th-century aerial view of the remains of the Naqqareh Khaneh tomb tower, Rayy



196

Textile Fragments with Scene of Apotheosis

Excavated at Rayy (RN6926), Naqqareh Khaneh, 10th–11th century

Silk; warp-faced plain weave with pattern wefts

Max.: 12¼ × 4⅛ in. (31 × 10.3 cm);

min. ⅜ × 2⅞ in. (3.5 × 7.5 cm)

Byzantine Collection, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C. (BZ 1929.101, 1930.1, 1934.6); Philadelphia Museum of Art, Acquired by exchange with the University Museum, 1940 (1940-51-26)

Inscribed in Arabic in floriated *kufic*, beneath the bird's feet, on the vertical band, and flanking the bird's head:

نعمة تامة // نعمة داركة كافية وغبطة طاهرة [ا] // الحرسة [. .]

Complete prosperity // Continuous, satisfying prosperity and pure happiness // Guardians [. .]¹

These four fragments constitute a single rectangular composition repeated vertically and horizontally. The design consists of an eagle or similarly large bird of prey framed by three inscriptions. The bird is depicted frontally with its head in profile, a pose commonly seen on heraldic images of eagles and double-headed eagles on textiles and other media (see cats. 148a, b). Peculiarly, roundels have been set into the bird's shoulders. They encircle a composite animal, possibly a griffin, sejant erect. Below the wing the tail is flanked by

rampant winged lions that almost appear to be scaling the tail feathers.

A princely figure at the center of the eagle clutches a band that wraps around the bird's neck.² Suggested identifications for this figural group have included Alexander the Great, Zal and the *simurgh*, and Nimrud.³ Recent scholarship contends that the frontal posture employed in these motifs does not correspond with any of the earliest known depictions of the story of Zal and the *simurgh* in the *Shahnama*, which present both figures exclusively in profile.⁴ The figure may be inspired by Ganymede, the Greek youth abducted by Zeus and brought to the heavens to serve as a cupbearer; as the motif is doubtlessly rooted in pre-Islamic Iranian traditions, it is possible they reflect a combination of similar stories.⁵

Independent of a precise identification of the figures, the enduring popularity of this motif in Iran and the greater Islamic world invites further examination. A more general interpretation of the piece suggests a scene of apotheosis, which neatly allows for nearly all of the suggested identifications, albeit influenced by the Greek story of Ganymede.⁶

That this textile should feature a scene rooted in pre-Islamic Iranian traditions is unsurprising considering the resurgence of interest in Sasanian culture in the Buyid and Seljuq periods. It is also unsurprising that such scenes of apotheosis would have served as attractive iconography for a burial textile, even if problematic for the reasons discussed elsewhere (see cats. 194, 195). The use of the textile as a burial garment is confirmed by the smallest of its fragments, excavated in a controlled context from the Naqqareh Khaneh tomb tower at Rayy (fig. 116), which preserves part of the lower benedictory inscription.⁷ MF



Fig. 116. Early 20th-century view of the remains of the Naqqareh Khaneh tomb tower, Rayy



197

Tombstone of the Lady Jalila

Greater Syria or Jazira, 12th century
 Sandstone; carved
 22¼ × 26⅞ in. (56.5 × 67 cm)
 al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah,
 Kuwait (LNS 201 S v1)

Inscribed in Arabic in floriated *kufic* on the front panel:
 بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ هٰذَا قَبْرُ السَّیِّدَةِ الْجَلِیْلَةِ زَوْجَةِ الْاَمِیْرِ مُحَمَّدِ
 بْنِ الْاَمِیْرِ الْهَیْجَا رَحِمَهَا اللّٰهُ

In the Name of God, the Gracious, the Compassionate, this / is the grave of the Lady Jalila, wife of the amir / Muhammad, son of the amir al-Hayja(a), may God bestow mercy on her.

This heavy tombstone is cut at the bottom into a conical appendage, which suggests that it might once have been inserted into a vertical stone slab or tomb cover, possibly with a pendant, similar to twelfth-century grave markers at the Salihin cemetery in Aleppo.¹ It is inscribed on the front with three lines of

floriated *kufic* that are aligned one above the other in concordance with the overall rectangular shape. The back is left plain, but the sides are carved with a stylized trefoil-like motif consisting of two joint split-palmettes (fig. 117). The latter motif became particularly common in the twelfth century as embellishment on the tops of letter shafts.

Especially notable is the tombstone's inscription in floriated *kufic*, a script type that in the twelfth century became one of the most preferred throughout the Islamic world, as confirmed by examples from Iran (cat. 204) to Egypt.² Stylistically, cat. 197 finds parallel in buildings from Syria and the Jazira, where floriated *kufic* flourished on monuments built in the territories controlled by the Seljuq successor states.³ The letters have elongated shafts that occupy three-quarters of the total height of the script, compared with only one-quarter

for the lower parts of the letters. The floral decoration consists of fine curling leaves that either extend along the tops of the shafts or grow, scroll-like, behind them. Although the overall design of this tombstone is simple, the elaborate rendering of the epigraphy highlights the long-standing sophistication of stone-carving traditions in Syria and the Jazira. As such, it signals the prestige of the object and, concurrently, of the deceased, the lady Jalila, wife of a second-generation amir who was likely a high-ranking officer in the service of the Seljuqs. **DB**



Fig. 117. Detail of cat. 197 showing the motifs along the side



198

Tombstone

Greater Syria, 11th century

Sandstone; carved

14⁷/₈ × 14⁷/₈ in. (37.8 × 37.8 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Madina Collection of Islamic Art, Gift of Camilla Chandler Frost (M.2002.1.663)

Inscribed in Arabic in floriated *kufic* on the framing arch:

قال [هو الله |] / [..] حد الله الصمد لم يلد و [..]

Say [He is God], / One God, the Everlasting Refuge / who has not begotten and [..] (Qur'an 112).

This small semicircular tombstone is missing its lower part. An inscription band runs along its front edges to evoke a nichelike composition, enclosing at center two circular medallions, one epigraphic and the other vegetal. Both the circles and the inscription band are edged with rows of triangles or small dots. While these simple repeating motifs are early Islamic and more traditional, the style of the

kufic script, with certain letters terminating in split-palmettes, is characteristic of the early medieval period. The back of the tombstone is decorated with trefoils curving out from a horizontal branch that seems to be cut off toward the lateral edges, as if this stone slab were left unfinished or reused in a funerary capacity. Semicircular grave markers are known from twelfth-century tombs at the Erheb cemetery in Syria.¹

The carved inscription comprises fragments of sura 112, "al-Ikhlās" (The Purity of Faith), which is one of the last three chapters of the Qur'an. It is brief but significant, recited during prayer after the opening sura, "al-Fatiha." According to tradition, it is equal in value to one-third of the Qur'an, and to read or recite it three times is equivalent in reward or blessing (*sawab*) to reciting the entire text. By using it in a funerary context, the intention is



Cat. 198, reverse

to bestow these blessings on the deceased. The stone carver placed the word "say" in the upper circular medallion, to visually invite the visitor to recite the sacred verses. **DB**



199

Two Corner Posts of a Grave Marker

Syria or Iraq, 11th–12th century

Marble; carved

Each H. 30³/₈ in. (77 cm); Diam. 5¹/₄ in. (13.2 cm)

David Collection, Copenhagen (27-a-b/1997)

Inscribed in Arabic in floriated *kufic*, on the right post:

الجنة فقد فاز وما الحياة الدنيا الا متاع الغرور

Paradise shall win the triumph. The present life is but the joy of delusion (Qur'an 3:182).

On the left post:

[...] و ما هم منها بمخرجين/نبي عبادي اني انا الغفور الرحيم

Neither shall they ever be driven forth from there.

Tell my servants, I am the All Forgiving, the All Compassionate (Qur'an 15:48–49).

These squared posts are each carved on two sides and crowned with a pointed mini-dome.¹ The two remaining faces are plain and present a rectangular hole, suggesting that they likely were affixed to the corner of a larger structure or building. The carved sides follow a rectangular composition, with bands of floriated *kufic* framed by a narrow band of rinceaux based on a split-palmette motif. The domed tops are embellished with further rinceaux, symmetrically rendered. The post on the right conforms to the “beveled” style, a highly abstract vegetal ornamentation that commonly presents

rounded relief edges with sharp deepening lines. Beveling is characteristic of Abbasid Syria and Iraq in the late eighth and ninth centuries, particularly in the caliphal capital Samarra (836–63), from which it spread to Egypt.² Examples of carved stones datable to the eleventh and twelfth centuries confirm that the style persisted in Iraq until at least that time. With their combination of fine carving and sophisticated floriated *kufic*, these posts are further evidence that the beveled style continued in the “post-Samarra” period.³

One of the inscribed Qur'anic verses derives from sura 3, “al-Imran” (The Family of Imran), the content of which confirms that cat. 199 appeared in a funerary context: “Paradise shall win the triumph. The present life is but the joy of delusion.” But while these posts certainly decorated a tomb, it is not clear if they formed part of a group of four, with one post placed at each corner. They are similar in proportion and composition but differ in certain details, which suggests that they more likely came from different tombs but were made in the same workshop. For instance, the inscription on the post to the left is carved in rounded relief, while that of its pendant presents a flatter surface. They further differ in the shape and size of their top pieces. These latter elements resemble head-dresses, as would appear in the Ottoman period on tomb markers that referenced the deceased by taking the shape of his turban or other headgear. Certain stela-like gravestones from twelfth-century Syrian tombs also have a small round top.⁴ Another medieval example with a ribbed half-dome is known from Mardin, located a few steps south of the late fourteenth-century madrasa of Sultan 'Isa (fig. 118).⁵ **DB**



Fig. 118. Medieval tomb in front of the madrasa of Sultan 'Isa (1385), Mardin



200

Tombstone of Muhammad b. Abi Bakr

Iran, Nishapur, dated A.H. Shawwal 532/

A.D. June–July 1138

Steatite; carved

16 × 13¾ in. (40.6 × 34.9 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers

Fund, 1948 (48.101.3)

Inscribed in Arabic, in *naskhi* on the outer frame:

شهد الله انه لا اله الا هو والملائكة واولو العلم

God bears witness that there is no god but He, and the angels, and men possessed of knowledge (Qur'an 3:18).

In *kufic* on the center panel:

بسم (هذا قبر) الله / الشيخ الشهيد جمال / القراء محمد بن ابي بكر /
امين المقرئ خوا / جكك / توفي في شوال / سنة اثنى وثلثي (تلتين) /
وخمسمائة

In the name of God, this is the tomb of / the Shaykh, the martyr Jamal / al-Qura' Muhammad b. Abi Bakr / b. Amin al-Muqri' Khwajakak / died in the month of Shawwal of the year 532.¹

Although by some standards this tombstone, carved in the characteristic steatite stone of Khurasan, appears humble in size and decoration, its inscription conveys important information about the deceased. Before the mention

of his name, he is described as “the Shaykh,” identifying him as either a respected scholar or Sufi or a social leader, probably middle-aged or elderly. This pronouncement is followed by the term *shahid*, which in this context means “martyr” and suggests that this death did not occur naturally. Rather, martyrdom was earned by those who suffered “a violent death while fighting in the cause of Islam or as a consequence of religious persecution, but . . . also simple murder; death from the plague; death by drowning,”² or other accidents. Although the cause of death cannot be determined, Nishapur in the twelfth century was subject to social unrest owing to the rivalry of two Sunni *madhhabs*, the Hanafis and Shafi'is, as well as the presence of violent urban militias.³ Described as “Jamal al-Qura’,” the deceased would have been devoted to his faith, and the term may imply that he was a devout, beautiful reader of the Qur’an. His father, Abi Bakr b. Amin, was a *muqri*, or Qur’an reciter, so the deceased was a second-generation Qur’an

reader. Finally, the word “Khwajakak” at the end of his name may refer to his occupation as a merchant, *khwajagi* in Persian.

Despite the tombstone’s date, 1138, the calligraphic style is quite conservative and reveals little of the elaboration of letter forms found on other twelfth-century Iranian examples (see cats. 203, 204). Rather, the tops of the vertical letters are cut on a very slight diagonal, and only certain letters (initial *jim*, *kha*, and *kaf*; final *kaf* and *nun*) are embellished with stylized leaf-form terminals. Rather than suggest a mihrab with several bands of writing around a central niche, a small arch on the top line of the inscription in the central panel fulfills that function. Because the tombstone was bought, not excavated, by a joint Metropolitan Museum–Iranian team, its archaeological context is uncertain. However, the excavators did unearth a group of twelfth-century graves at the Tepe Madrasa section of Nishapur, so this tombstone may be associated with that part of the site.⁴ SRC

Tombstone of al-Khatun Fatima bint Zahir al-Din

Iran, 11th–12th century

Marble; carved

25¾ × 17 in. (65.4 × 43.2 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, V. Everit Macy Gift, 1931 (31.50.1)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the outer frame:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفَيِ النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِنْ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبُنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرَى لِلذَّاكِرِينَ

In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful; and perform the prayer at the two ends of the day and night; surely the good deeds will drive away the evil deeds. That is a remembrance unto the mindful (Qur'an 11:114).

On the pointed arch:

اقْبَلِ عَلَى صَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ وَأَعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ

Concentrate on your prayer (hadith) and be not thou among the heedless (Qur'an 7:205) and serve thy Lord, until the certain comes to thee (15:99).

Under the scalloped conch:

أَمَرَتْ بِهَ الْخَاتُونُ فَاطِمَةُ بِنْتُ ظَهْرٍ الدِّينِ

Al-Khatun Fatima, daughter of Zahir al-Din, ordered this.

In *naskhi* on the trefoil arch:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ

Indeed, Allah is with those who fear Him and those who are doers of good (Qur'an 16:128).¹

Although carved stones of this type have been identified as grave markers, aspects of the form and inscriptions of this example suggest that it is instead a flat mihrab.² The hadith and Qur'anic inscriptions focus on prayer and doing good deeds and make no mention of Paradise, which is often found on tombstones. More importantly, inscriptions on gravestones usually mention the tomb, *qabr*, in addition to the name of the deceased and the date of his or her death, all of which are absent in cat. 201. Here the name of the woman who ordered the stone, Al-Khatun Fatima bint Zahir al-Din, appears on the lintel, between the two vase-shaped capitals of the large engaged columns, indicating that she donated the stele, most likely to a preexisting building.³ Whether that structure was a shrine, mausoleum, or mosque cannot be determined, because the only information known about the Iranian provenance of the piece is that it was sold by an art dealer in the southern city of Ahvaz, near the head of the Persian Gulf.

The slab consists of a frame with a Qur'anic inscription on three sides and a band of lobed palmette leaves along the bottom. The writing on the top line is twice as high as on the sides and contains certain stylistic flourishes such as the elongated, angled *alif* and *raa* of *al-nahar*. These embellishments correspond to the exaggerated forms of the new-style script that came to characterize numerous Seljuq Qur'ans (see cat. 180).⁴

More noteworthy are the four recessed arches within the inscriptional frame, each in a different shape, with the final small keel arch containing a hanging lamp. As discussed elsewhere,⁵ the lamp is more than a general symbol of God's radiance. Rather, it represents the innermost chamber of a tomb, where the person who is commemorated is buried and whose path to heaven will be illuminated by God's light. **SRC**



202

Tombstone

Iran, Hamadan, 12th century

Limestone or sandstone; carved

14½ × 19½ × 11¼ in. (36.8 × 49.5 × 28.6 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase,

V. Everit Macy Gift, 1930 (30.112.45)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the upper central panel of the front:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ [. . .]

In the name of God [. . .]

On the upper central panel of the reverse:

عليهم

Upon them.

This stone in the form of a small sarcophagus would have been attached to a larger lid of a grave marker. Extant examples of such tombstones range in date from the late tenth to the early thirteenth century.¹ While the limestone grave covers of this type from Siraf are decorated with elaborate *kufic* inscriptions, most of the ornament on this piece is geometric and vegetal. Each of the long sides has three sections. On either side of the wider central section are two arches with a scallop design in the arch, below which a vine in the form of a stylized leaf encloses a trefoil. The latter motif is repeated twice in a band below the arches. The center section, bordered at right and left by vertical bands of simple interlace, contains a short inscription band and, below it, four rows of four hexagons containing crosses. A ridged socle with triangular extensions forms the base of this grave marker and would have been contiguous with the rectangular lid of the



tomb. Since the inscriptions include a truncation of the *basmala* and the phrase “to them,” the name of the deceased can be assumed to have been carved on the sides of the tomb cover to which this piece was attached.

Unlike other grave covers, which have complex epigraphic decoration on the sides and little or none on the top, some of the dense ornament here recalls filigree jewelry. Given the supposed provenance of the stone as coming from a cemetery in Hamadan, the connection to jewelry may not be far-fetched,

since Hamadan was a commercial city of which the main exports were “gold work and leather articles.”² The scallop design in the arches, reminiscent of a similar motif in cat. 201, has funerary associations going back to the Romans and continuing in Coptic art and Islamic Egypt, so its appearance here is iconographically consistent with broader trends in commemorative sculpture and architecture. Unfortunately, not enough inscriptional evidence remains for an identification of the person who lay beneath this marker. **src**

Tombstone of Abu Bakr b. Ibrahim

Maker: 'Umar b. 'Ali b. Mahmud
Iran, dated A.H. 495/A.D. 1101–2
Marble; carved
H. 18¾ in. (47.6 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Phil Berg
Collection (M.71.73.74)

Inscribed in Arabic in *kufic*, on the outer frame:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالِدٌ لَا يُولَدُ
وَأُولُوا الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ [. . .]

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
God bears witness that there is no god but He and the
angels, and men possessed of knowledge upholding
justice; there is no god [. . .]* (Qur'an 3:18).

On the inner frame and the panel it encloses:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ
يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ // هَذَا قَبْرُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ عُثْمَانَ / تَوَفَّى فِي
شَهْرِ مُحَرَّمٍ / سَنَةِ خَمْسٍ وَتِسْعِينَ / أَوْ أَرْبَعِمِائَةَ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Say, He is God, One God, the Everlasting Refuge, who
has not begotten, and has not been begotten, and
equal to Him is not anyone* (Qur'an 112) // *This is the
grave / of Abu Bakr b. / Ibrahim b. 'Uthman / died in
the month of Muharram / in the year 495. God speaks
the truth.*

On the bottom register:

عمل عمر بن علي بنحود(?)

The work of 'Umar b. 'Ali Binhud(?).

This handsome tombstone is inscribed not only with the name of the deceased but also with that of the carver. Unfortunately, little can be inferred from these names except that the carver was of high enough skill or status that his name could be prominently displayed on the stele. Presumably, the use of marble also reflects the standing of Abu Bakr b. Ibrahim or



whoever paid for the gravestone. The source of the tombstone is unknown, which limits understanding of how big a market the carver supplied and whether it was local or regional. The choice of Qur'anic verses is standard, and may indicate that the bands around the central niche were carved in advance and the central lines filled in to order.

Certain elements of the tombstone's epigraphy and decoration reveal the care and artistry with which it was produced. The central recessed niche consists of a keel arch resting on vase-shaped capitals and columns that resemble the simple knotted interlace found in illuminated manuscripts.¹ Likewise the chain motif on either side of the arch, used as a framing device in manuscripts, develops here

into a tendril terminating in a leaf.² The letter forms are consistent in each of the three sizes, from the largest on the outer band to the smallest in the central panel. Low letters such as the *mim* of the *basmala* have narrow vertical extensions, while the initial *raa* and medial *ha* of *rahman* rise and curl, ending in a split leaf. Balanced with the vertical flourishes, the width of the letters and shallow depth of the relief carving also contribute to the visual rhythm and substantiality of the whole composition. Although the style and material of this slab may have been determined to a certain extent by regional taste, by the second quarter of the twelfth century, new modes of carving appear to have been widely adopted across the eastern Seljuq realm. **src**

Tombstone of Shihab al-Din Abu 'Abdallah

Iran, dated A.H. 16 Jumada I 538/

A.D. November 25, 1143

Marble; carved

27 × 20½ in. (68.6 × 52.1 cm)

Seattle Art Museum, Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection
(44.68)Inscribed in Arabic in floriated *kufic*, on the outer frame:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ان الذين قالوا ربنا الله ثم استقاموا تتنزل
عليهم الملائكة الا تخافوا ولا تحزنوا وابشروا بالجنة التي كنتم
توعدون صدق الله

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate;
Those who have said, Our Lord is God; then have gone
straight, upon them the angels descend, saying, Fear
not, neither sorrow; rejoice in the Paradise that you
were promised (Qur'an 41:30). God speaks the truth.*

On the middle frame:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم يبشروهم ربهم برحمة منه / ورضوان وجات
لهم فيها نعيم مقيم خالدين فيها ابدًا ان الله عنده اجر عظيم

*In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Their lord gives them good tidings of mercy from Him
and good pleasure; for them await gardens wherein is
lasting bliss, therein to dwell forever and ever; surely
with God is a mighty wage (Qur'an 9:21–22).*

In *thuluth*, between the second and third frames:

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله

*There is no god but God alone, and Muhammad is his
Messenger.*

On the third frame:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم شهد الله انه لا اله الا هو والملائكة واولو العلم
قائما بالقسط لا اله الا هو العزيز الحكيم / ان الدين

*In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
God bears witness that there is no god but He and the
angels, and men possessed of knowledge upholding
justice; there is no god but He, the All Mighty, the All
Wise (Qur'an 3:18). The religion [. . .]*

Filling the center arch:

هذا قبر / سيد / السعيد / الشهيد شهاب / الدين شرف / السادة ابو

عبد / الله محمد بن علي / بن احمد بن الحسين / بن محمد بن علي بن

عبد / الله الحسيني قدس الله / روحه توفي في يوم

*This is the tomb of Sayyid al-Sa'id, the martyr Shihab
al-Din, the Honor of the Notables, Abu 'Abd Allah
Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Ahmad b. al-Husayn b. Muham-
mad b. 'Ali b. 'Abd Allah al-Husayni, May God sanctify
his soul. Died on the day*

On the bottom frame:

الجمعة السادس عشر من جمادي الاولى سنة ثمان وثلثين و خمس
مائة

Friday 16th of Jumada I of the year 538.



This tombstone, with its densely packed inscription bands, variety of scripts, and different levels of relief carving, typifies the Iranian style of the second quarter of the twelfth century. Moreover, the concurrent trend toward embellishing inscriptions with vines and floriation is amply evident in the outer inscription band, where a curving vine with curling leaves crowns the first word, *bism*. The vine then weaves its way behind the inscription so that foliage appears above the low letters such as *mim* and *baa*. On the uppermost horizontal

band the foliation takes the form of a spiral vine scroll terminating in pointed trefoils in the spaces above the low letters. The middle inscription band reverts to a more conservative style of *kufic* akin to that seen in cat. 203, in which vertical extensions sprout from the low, round letters. The inner band is written in the rounded monumental script *thuluth*, as is the profession of faith that appears on a raised horizontal section between the middle and inner inscriptions above the niche. Inside the niche the inscription follows the style of the



Fig. 119. Tombstone of Abu Sa'd b. Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Hasan. Maker: Ahmad b. Muhammad. Iran, Yazd, dated A.H. 545/A.D. 1150. Marble; carved, painted, H. 22¼ in. (56.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1933 (33.118)

middle band, while the line along the bottom of the composition is written in a somewhat less ornate version of the foliated *kufic* outer inscription. The decoration of the niche, with its pointed, ogive arch resting on two volutes; the raised (now damaged) bosses entwined in tendrils in the spandrels; and the stepped border of the lowest line of this part of the inscription, reveals the development of greater epigraphic and ornamental complexity in tombstone design in this period. A closely related tombstone (fig. 119), dated A.H. 545/A.D. 1150, is also inscribed with Qur'an 41:30, as well as 3:18. It is signed by Ahmad b. Muhammad, who carved another tombstone, dated A.H. 536/A.D. 1141, that is still in Yazd.¹

The name and titles of the deceased indicate that he was a Shiite; as a *sayyid* he would

have claimed descent from one of the Shi'a imams. If he came from Yazd, the possible source of the tombstone, he would have hailed from "a numerous and influential group" of Husayni *sayyids* claiming descent from Ja'far al-Sadiq, the sixth imam.² Called a martyr, he may have died fighting a religious war or as a result of persecution. During the Seljuq period some Shiites coexisted peacefully with the Sunni rulers and population, but the Ismailis rebelled against the Seljuqs and were the focus of many unsuccessful efforts to eradicate them. Since the original source of this slab is unknown, further identification of the precise religious profession of the deceased is impossible. Whoever Shihab al-Din Abu 'Abdallah was, he or his heirs would have been able to afford an elaborate gravestone stylistically consistent with other Iranian examples of the period.³ **SRC**

Notes

The Great Age of the Seljuqs

1. Al-Kāšgarī and Dankoff 1982–85, vol. 1, p. 274.
2. Bosworth 2011a, p. 13.
3. On the Gök Türk–Seljuq connection, see Peacock 2015, pp. 22–24, 129.
4. See Bosworth 2011b; Peacock 2010a, especially pp. 16–46.
5. See Peacock 2010a, pp. 35–46; Peacock 2015, pp. 287–89, for a consideration of these issues; and Bulliet 2009 for arguments for the climate-change thesis.
6. See Bosworth 1963 on the Ghaznavids, Seljuqs, and the fall of Khurasan; see also Peacock 2010a, pp. 83–94.
7. For a survey of the Great Seljuq Empire, see Peacock 2015; for its early history up to 1072, see Peacock 2010a.
8. For details of these dynasties and the complex political history of this period, see Bosworth 1968.
9. On the battle, see Hillenbrand, C., 2007.
10. Ibn al-Athīr 1965–67, vol. 10, p. 171 (A.H. 482).
11. Durand-Guédy 2010a, pp. 91–93.
12. Cited in Peacock 2015, pp. 21, 68.
13. On Nizam al-Mulk see most recently Hillenbrand, C., 2015; on his patronage network see Safi 2006; Durand-Guédy 2010a, pp. 121–29; on the Seljuq conquest as a Khurasani takeover, see Durand-Guédy 2015, pp. 62–64.
14. See Shimizu 1998.
15. For a discussion of the origins of the atabeg system, see Hillenbrand, C., 2015, pp. 35–36, and Peacock 2015, pp. 93–94.
16. Al-Kāšgarī and Dankoff 1982–85, vol. 1, p. 176; see further the discussion in Vásáry 2015, pp. 11–14. For a detailed discussion of continuity and change in the Seljuq bureaucracy, see Peacock 2015, pp. 196–201; for the older view, which emphasizes continuity, see Lambton 1988.
17. Barber 2012, p. 4, citing the speech of Pope Urban II given at the Clermont in 1095; for more on the causes and the Turkish-Byzantine connection, see Barber 2012, pp. 9–10; on Islamic responses to the Crusades in general, see Hillenbrand, C., 1999 and Cobb 2014.
18. Cobb 2014, pp. 78, 84–94.
19. Mu'izzī 2006, pp. 509–10.
20. On Muhammad Tapar's anti-Islami activities, see Durand-Guédy 2010a, pp. 172–81.
21. Al-Bundārī 1889, p. 135. On the *iqta'* system, see Lambton 1988, pp. 97–129.
22. See Bosworth 1968 for the political history.
23. Peacock 2015, p. 297.
24. For a discussion on the question of patronage from outside the court, see Pancaroğlu 2000, pp. 190–95, 257–59; Gibson 2008–9, especially p. 48; Korn 2011, p. 402. For a detailed discussion of the evidence for economic recovery in Syria, see Heidemann 2002a. For an overview of the Seljuq lands, see Peacock 2015, pp. 286–314. For a contrary view of the region's economic prosperity, see Bulliet 2009.
25. Peacock 2015, p. 317.
26. For an overview of the history of the Jazira in the period, see Hillenbrand, C., 1985.
27. Soon after the Seljuqs gained control of most of Anatolia in the late twelfth century, defeating their Muslim rivals, Sultan Kiliç Arslan II (d. 1192) divided it among eleven of his relatives. Although eventually a single line that was based in Konya and central Anatolia emerged as supreme, a second branch of the dynasty ruled in Erzurum in the early thirteenth century. During the second half of the thirteenth century, under Mongol domination, there were again multiple sultans and at times an east-west division of Anatolia. See Cahen 1968 for a survey of Seljuq Anatolia; for an overview with more recent bibliography, see Peacock 2010b and Peacock and Yıldız, eds. 2013.
28. See Beihammer 2015 on these sources.
29. See Blessing 2014, pp. 173–79, with further references.
30. Korobeinikov 2013.
31. Ibn Bibi 1956, p. 464.
32. On Mongol rule in Anatolia, see Melville 2009.
33. Quoted in Peacock and Yıldız, eds. 2013, pp. 1–2.
34. The conventional explanation for this, offered in Cahen 1968 (pp. 277–78, 285, 297), is that the appointment of multiple sultans concurrently was part of a Mongol policy of divide and rule; however, more recently it has been argued that it reflects rivalries within the Mongol court. See Melville 2009, p. 55, and in more detail Yıldız 2006, pp. 160–64, 191–238.
35. See Blessing 2014 on Ilkhanid architectural patronage in Anatolia.
36. For these events see Hillenbrand, C., 1981, pp. 254–65; Vāth 1987, pp. 23–55; Hillenbrand, C., 1990, pp. 29–35.
37. For a survey of the Artuqids to 1409, see Ilich 1984 and Vāth 1987; the later Ayyubids of Hasankeyf have not yet been the subject of much study, but see Mıynat 2009. Ayyubid rule in Hasankeyf was interrupted by the domination of the Aqqoyunlu Turks from 1462 to 1482 but was restored by the last Ayyubid ruler, al-Malik II Khalil, under whom the principality swayed between Safavid and Ottoman control until the ultimate domination of the latter from 1516.
38. Hillenbrand, C., 1981, pp. 271–75.
39. See Pancaroğlu 2013, pp. 48–50, on the use of Turkish titles.
40. Korn 2011, p. 402.
41. On the Zangids in general, see Heidemann 2002a; Heidemann 2002b.
42. Al-Bundārī 1889, pp. 208–9.
43. On the later Zangids and Badr al-Din Lu'lu', see Patton 1991.
44. Heidemann 2002a; Heidemann 2007; Heidemann 2009a.
45. On this see Heidemann 2009a, p. 162; also Peacock 2015, pp. 278–83.
46. For the conversion of the Turks and pagan elements, see the discussion in Madelung 1971, pp. 117–25; Peacock 2010a, pp. 122–27; Peacock 2015, pp. 246–47.
47. Ibn al-Athīr 1965–67, vol. 9, pp. 520–21.
48. Madelung 1971, p. 122.
49. Safi 2006; for a different perspective, see Tor 2011; for Alp Arslan and Sanjar, see Peacock 2015, pp. 174–76, 251; for Zangi, see Hillenbrand, C., 2001.
50. Durand-Guédy 2010a, pp. 123–26; Peacock 2015, p. 271.
51. Leiser 2004.
52. Hillenbrand, C., 2012, pp. 170–75.
53. Durand-Guédy 2010a, pp. 172–81, 188–95; Durand-Guédy 2015, pp. 66–67.
54. See Safi 2006.
55. For a useful survey of Sufism in the period, see Green 2012, pp. 70–112; on Rumi and the Seljuqs, see Peacock 2013b.
56. Al-Kāšgarī and Dankoff 1982–85, vol. 1, p. 70.
57. See the discussion in Vásáry 2015; Peacock 2015, pp. 181–214.
58. Durand-Guédy 2010a, especially pp. 88, 93–101; Durand-Guédy 2015, pp. 58–62.
59. For more on relations between nomadic Turks and city dwellers, see the discussion in Peacock 2015, pp. 293–97.
60. Rubruck and Jackson 1990, p. 276.
61. Snelders 2010, p. 154.
62. For Great Seljuq sources and historiography, see Peacock 2015, pp. 12–19; for Seljuqs of Anatolia, see Peacock and Yıldız, eds. 2013, pp. 6–12; for Ibn al-Azraq al-Fariqi, see Hillenbrand, C., 1990; for Ibn al-Athīr, see Patton 1991, pp. 4–5.
63. On the synthesis of Iranian and Islamic traditions, see Tor 2012.
64. Mu'izzī 2006, pp. 182–83.
65. Redford 1993a; Blessing 2014, pp. 35–38.
66. Korn 2011, pp. 391–92, 401.
67. Marcotte 2001, pp. 398–99, 402, 416; Yalman 2012 is less skeptical of the Seljuq connection than Marcotte.
68. Korn 2011, p. 390. Of course not all Iranian influences in architecture can be attributed to such an agenda. For further examples from Anatolia and Syria, see Blessing 2014, pp. 39–41; Hillenbrand, R., 1985.
69. Pancaroğlu 2013, pp. 50–51.
70. For more detail, see Peacock 2015, pp. 315–22, and Peacock 2011; on Manzikert and its significance, see Hillenbrand, C., 2007; for a Timurid *Saljuqnama* incorporated in the chronicle *Jami'i-tawarikh-i Hasani*, see Baya'nī 2014; an edition of another *Saljuqnama* by the Timurid court poet Lufti is said to be currently in preparation by Dr. Muhammad Karimi Zanjani Asl.

Sultans of the East and the West

1. Bates 1982, pp. 14–20. Bates notes, “the first purely Islamic coins were gold dinars, dated [A.H.] 77/[A.D.] 697,” produced following the coinage reform of Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik, about A.D. 695. These gold coins bore only religious inscriptions, no names, and replaced the earliest Islamic coins that had human and other imagery. In A.D. 762 the Abbasid caliph struck dirhams in his own name, a feature that prevailed on Islamic coinage.
2. Hillenbrand, R., 2015.
3. Durand-Guédy 2013a; Peacock 2010a, pp. 53–57.

Cats. 1a–j

1. First publications for these objects are: cats. 1a, c, d, h: Riefstahl 1931, figs. 3, 9, 10, 14; cat. 1b: Ackerman 1940, p. 467, no. 41; cat. 1e: Dimand 1934; cat. 1f: Kalter 2003, p. 48, fig. 42; cat. 1g: Riefstahl 1931, fig. 18, and Rogers et al. 2010, p. 131, no. 156; cat. 1i: Bonhams 2014, pp. 182–83, no. 220; cat. 1j: unpublished.
2. Whelan 1988, p. 220, was the first scholar who associated such depictions with the *khassakiyya*, the slave-soldier elite who served directly under the Mamluk sultans (1250–1517), at whose court they were trained and educated and appointed to ceremonial posts as keepers of the royal symbolic paraphernalia (e.g., standard, parasol, cup, polo sticks, sword, arms, wardrobe, etc.), until being freed and, often, directly appointed amirs. The term *khassakiyya*

- and the system it describes are not attested before the Mamluk period, but antecedents can be seen, *mutatis mutandis*, in the personal guards of the Abbasid caliphs in the ninth century, *al-ghilman al-khassa* (Sourdel 1965). With regard to the Ghaznavids, Bayhaqi described richly dressed *ghulamani-khassagi* who surrounded the throne hall of Mas'ud I on the occasion of a celebration in A.H. 429/A.D. 1038; they were also called *ghulamani-sarayan* (guards of the palace) or *ghulamani-sultani* (guards of the sultan); see Bosworth 1963, pp. 101, 136. For other interpretations of the standing figures, see Heidemann, de Lapérouse, and Parry 2014; Rice, T. T., 1968, pp. 120–21.
3. Schlumberger 1978, pp. 101–3, 105, 108, pl. 122.a. Their interpretation as *ghulams* is strongly supported by the passage in Bayhaqi cited in note 2 above.
 4. The original context of the figural reliefs from Ghazni is not known, but it has been suggested that most came from one of the city's many royal palaces. Rugiadi 2010a, p. 298 n. 21; Rugiadi 2012, pp. 1092, 1110–11, 1302–3. The figures at Hisn Kayfa are difficult to observe. The objects they wield have been tentatively identified by Whelan (1988, p. 222, figs. 1–8) as an arrow or mace, a bow, and a bird. The objects held by the royal guards in the Gu' Kummet niche are clearer. Gibson (2012, p. 84, figs. 2, 2a–c) identifies them as a straight pole, a polo stick, a mace, a curved sword, beakers and napkins, and bows. The niche was removed from the site in 1960 and brought to the Iraq National Museum, Baghdad (A3105; see Gibson 2012, p. 84 n. 18), where its presence is confirmed after the events of May 2003 (Giovanni Curatola, personal communication and photographs).
 5. Whelan 1988, p. 221.
 6. For a recent interpretation, see Heidemann, de Lapérouse, and Parry 2014. For the distinction between the *kulah* and the *taj* (royal crown), see Soucek 1992, pp. 79–87, 94, which also quotes the following sources: the poet Hasan-i Ghaznavi praised an unknown amir with the verse, "May the headdress [of the official] of the State be always on your head/because, as the crown fits the king of the world, the *kulah* fits you." (My thanks to Viola Allegranzi for the translation); Nizam al-Mulk describes the "felt caps decorated with silver" on the guards of the Samanids and the gilded or silvered cap (*kulah-i khass-i mugharraq*) bestowed on a Seljuq official. We may add that jeweled headdresses also appear on nonroyal figures associated with authority, such as the genii of the Konya city walls and musicians and sphinxes elsewhere. Note, however, the headdress of the seated "ruler" of the Talisman Gate in Baghdad (Sarre and Herzfeld 1911–20, vol. 2, p. 260, fig. 257). Depictions of Turkish rulers in early thirteenth-century manuscripts from Baghdad and Mosul in most cases show them with an imposing *sharbush* (pointed fur hat) rather than with a crown or a jeweled headdress, while turbans are usually reserved for princes (see Contadini 2012, pp. 127–28; see also cat. 11).
 7. Soucek 1992, pp. 82, 90.
 8. Sarre and Herzfeld 1911–20, vol. 2, pp. 240–49, vol. 3, pls. 96, 97.
 9. Karev 2003, Karev 2005, and Karev 2013, pp. 111–20.
 10. Karev 2013, pp. 119–20, and p. 114, fig. 13, for the latest reconstruction of the enthroned figure (here, fig. 32).
 11. See Whelan 1988, pp. 221–22, for the identification of the strong connection between *khassakiyya* and sovereignty in coeval visual culture. For the two manuscripts, see cats. 11, 106.
 12. For this and other examples, see Rabbat 2006, pp. 100, 103, and p. 100 n. 3. For examples with figural depictions, see note 19 below. Depictions of amirs also occur in metalwork, for example, a candlestick in the Metropolitan Museum (91.1.596). For depictions of courtly life in Ghaznavid buildings, see Allegranzi 2015.
 13. Per Bosworth 1965, there is no specific study based on the sources on the status and progression that ruled the *ghulam* system for the Ghaznavid and Seljuq periods. However, a looser definition of the offices emerges from the sources of the Ghaznavid period. The custom of governors and viziers themselves collecting personal *ghulams* continued in the Seljuq period, when some of these attendants even became central in the political scene. Such was the case with the Nizamiyya, the personal guard of Malik Shah's vizier Nizam al-Mulk, after his death.
 14. Snelders 2010, pp. 343–46, 362–76, pls. 66–68, suggests that the figures may represent Christ and his heavenly army and that the figures holding napkins could evoke specific rituals performed during the celebration of the Eucharist in the Syrian Orthodox liturgy.
 15. For the hypothesis of a beneficial power attributed to this imagery, see cats. 37, 88.
 16. Among the examples that are geographically relevant to this discussion are, from the ninth century, the buildings in Samarra and Raqqa (Meinecke 1991), Susa (Hardy-Guilbert 1990), and the *masjid-i jami'* in Isfahan (Scerato 2001/2014, figs. 6–10); from the tenth century, the *masjid-i jami'* in Na'in, Nishapur (Wilkinson 1986); the Hajji Piyada Mosque, in Balkh (Melikian-Chirvani 1969; Golombek 1969); the mosque excavated at Siraf (Whitehouse 1980); and, from the eleventh century, the Davazda Imam in Yazd (dated A.H. 429/A.D. 1037; see Ettinghausen 1952, p. 76; Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 2, pl. 273B), the *masjid-i jami'* in Isfahan (where levels predating a Seljuq-period pavement with "painted relief work moulded around a mud core" was also found; see Jung 2010, pp. 114–15, figs. 9, 10), and the mosque and house in Balis (Salles 1939, pp. 221–22, 225). See note 17 below for twelfth-century examples.
 17. A nonexhaustive list of examples includes those from Termez (Pugachenkova 1981, p. 20), Ribat-i Sharaf and Sangani Pain (Korn 2003b), Lashkari Bazar (Schlumberger 1978), Ghazni (Artusi 2009), Dandanqan (cats. 165a–c), Merv (Herrmann 1999, pp. 114–15), probably Sava (Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 2, p. 1305), Rayy, as the mihrab in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran (Korn 2003b), Gulpaygan (Korn 2012), and Isfahan (Galdieri 1972, pls. 129 m, 190 s, (190) F; Galdieri 1973, figs. 67–69). See also the very flat and possibly unfinished stucco paneling in a madrasa in the government quarter in Rayy, found in the 1936 excavations, which included painted and gilded stucco (unpublished report, Art of Asia, Oceania, and Africa, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; my thanks to Laura Weinstein). "Kashan school" examples include those in monuments in Ardestan, Zavara, Qamsar, and Nushabad—close to those in Buzan, Hamadan, Sujas, and Qazvin (Shani 1989). One twelfth-century example from Mosul is the mihrab of the Nuri Mosque (Iraq National Museum, Baghdad, I.M. A9872). For Konya, see cats. 20a–g. The fewer occurrences in Egypt and Syria have sometimes been ascribed to Iranian craftsmen (Korn 2003b). See notes 21 and 22 below for figural examples.
 18. A famous fourteenth-century example is the A.H. 710/A.D. 1310 mihrab in the *masjid-i jami'* in Isfahan (Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 4, pl. 396). From this period onward, molded stucco elements were also assembled in elaborate *muqarnas* vaults (e.g., the tomb of 'Abd al-Samad at Natanz, 707/1307; *ibid.*, pl. 372), and the effect was often heightened by painted decoration.
 19. Thompson 1976; Kröger 1982, pp. 148–86, pls. 62–74, pp. 202–3, pls. 95–97. Recent archaeological investigations in the vicinity of Rayy are bringing to light stucco with figural depictions (Hamideh Chubak, personal communication, 2014).
 20. Fragments of at least two friezes were excavated in the ninth-century *sirdab* area in Samarra; see Herzfeld 1927, pp. 100–105, figs. 78–81, pls. 75–88, now in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (I.9319), the British Museum, London (OA+.10978, .11013, 14, .11017, .11020, 21), and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (A.97-1922, .98-1922). With regard to the latter example, the blue pigment was obtained with lapis lazuli (Burgio, Clark, and Rosser-Owen 2007). The examples from Sabra al-Mansuriyya include stucco heads and animals now in the Musée National d'Art Islamique, Raqqa (S1436, STC [61], STC [018]). Stucco is also extensively employed in the western Islamic regions, among them Algeria, Morocco, and Spain.
 21. For the Termez creatures, see Denike 1930, pls. 20–23. They relate to a twelfth-century restoration of the palace, for which see Pugachenkova 1981, p. 20. For the Khulbuk figures, see Siméon 2012, pp. 402–3, and pp. 404–5, figs. 17c–d, f–h. As for the heads, the Nishapur one is in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran; Rice (Rice, T. T., 1968, p. 118, fig. 12) understands it as a soldier. The other head is in the Museum of the Bishapur Research Center, Bishapur (74; see fig. 33). With regard to the Rayy figures, expedition reports mention two "hawk attacking duck" plaques. One is in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran (see Schmidt 1935a, p. 25), and the other is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (35.915; see fig. 97).
 22. Snelders 2010, pls. 43, 44.
 23. Lashkari Bazar: Schlumberger 1978, pp. 61–65, 101–8, pl. 122.a; Samarra: Karev 2003, Karev 2005, Karev 2013; Khulbuk: Siméon 2012, pp. 406, 409, fig. 21; Nishapur: Wilkinson 1986, pp. 272–90. In addition to the examples of modeled and carved stucco listed in the text that follows, the use of molded friezes is found all over these vast territories in the eleventh to thirteenth century, often with running

- animals or birds: a large number was excavated in Rayy, often with a pair of birds (most in the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston); molded friezes with geometric motifs were also excavated in Nishapur and are known from the Konya Köşk (cats. 20a–g).
24. Examples near Mosul include the Gu' Kummet niche now in the Iraq National Museum, Baghdad (see note 4 above), and the gate from Mar Behnam (mid-13th century), for which see Gibson 2012, p. 84, with reference to Whelan 2006, pp. 410–11. For full-relief carved marbles from Ghazni, see the animal-shaped drains in Rugiadi 2012, pp. 1120, 1276. In Iran stone is more commonly used for funerary purposes only (see, for example, cats. 200–204). A rare example of bas-relief employed in architectural decoration occurs at a palace at Sarmaj (ca. 1010); see Blair 1992, pp. 67–70, fig. 36.
25. For tools employed in stone carving, see Rugiadi 2010a, p. 298; Rugiadi 2012, pp. 1058–61. Less is known about the carving techniques of twelfth-century stonework from the Jazira.
26. Riefstahl 1931; Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39; Heidemann, de Lapérouse, and Parry 2014, p. 35.
27. On the Metropolitan Museum figures (cats. 1a, b, e, h, i), the blue is synthetic ultramarine, and some of the red lead is mixed with barium sulphate, a modern component; natural pigments are charcoal black and red lead. Pigments “were also distressed to give them an archaeological appearance,” as indicated by the presence of a bright orange on eroded areas only, while the “undamaged” surfaces show a “darkened” red color (Heidemann, de Lapérouse, and Parry 2014, pp. 60–62). Modern synthetic ultramarine and red lead with barium sulphate were also found in the figure in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (L.2658; *ibid.*); the latter pigment was also found in the figure in the Detroit Institute of Arts (25.64; *ibid.*, pp. 62, 71 n. 122). Natural pigments—vermillion red and carbon black—were found on a mask that formed part of the Marling bequest to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (A.23-1928), to which cats. 1c, d also belong; see Gibson 2012, p. 86 n. 26.
28. Central to the controversy was Arthur Upham Pope, an art historian who served as an intermediary between dealers in Iran and purchasers in the United States. Accused and then publicly absolved of assembling forgeries for the London exhibition of 1931, Pope himself contended that some of the stucco figures published by other scholars were obvious forgeries (Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 2, pp. 1304–5 n. 5; Lerner 2016, pp. 188–93).
29. At the Metropolitan Museum, these investigations were carried out by Federico Carò, Associate Research Scientist, who also wrote the scientific part of this text, and Elena Basso, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Conservation, both in the Department of Scientific Research; and Conservators Jean-François de Lapérouse and Vicki Parry, Department of Objects Conservation. Their work was carried out in collaboration with Sophie Budden, formerly Head of Conservation at the al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait; Victor Borges, Senior Sculpture Conservator, Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Stefan Masarovic, Conservator of Wood and Stone, Museum of Islamic Art, Doha; Paula Artal-Isbrand, Objects Conservator, and Philip Klausmeyer, Conservation Scientist and Paintings Conservator, Worcester Art Museum; and Melissa Meighan, Conservator of Decorative Arts and Sculpture, Philadelphia Museum of Art. (The author thanks all involved for their inspiring collaboration.) The scientific analyses undertaken included petrographic analysis, X-ray diffraction (XRD), and scanning electron microscopy/energy dispersive spectroscopy (SEM-EDS). See note 27 above for other studies that focused mainly on pigments.
30. Traditional kilns are still in use in Iran and, more generally, in the broader Middle East. See Aljubouri and Alrawas 2006, p. 3; Oudbashi and Shekofte 2008.
31. Most common impurities include, among others, quartz, feldspar, calcite, apatite, iron oxides, clay minerals, and sulfide minerals such as celestine, pyrite, and sphalerite.
32. XRD analysis showed only gypsum: no anhydrite or other detectable mineral phases were identified in the mixture. The investigation was carried out by Paula Artal-Isbrand, with contributions by her Worcester Art Museum colleague Philip Klausmeyer and by Federico Carò of the Metropolitan Museum.
33. In cat. 1a the area behind the head was sawn from the dry surface, either to detach it from its wall collocation or to level the depth of the independent detached figure.
34. For exceptions, see the Khulbuk and Termez panels cited in note 21 above. For a Sasanian stucco figure, see the Nizamabad head and torso in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (L. 4891a, b; Berlin 2011, p. 88).
35. Sarre and Herzfeld 1911–20, vol. 2, pp. 241–42. Instead, most nonfigural examples (inscriptions and vegetal motifs) are bas-reliefs, carved in situ out of a flat stucco surface.

Cats. 2a–c

1. Ettinghausen 1955, p. 30.
2. The seal is found on the verso of a folio from the dispersed manuscript, now in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1973.5.412).
3. Ernst Kuhnel in Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 3, pp. 1829–97; Ettinghausen 1955, p. 37.
4. Rice, D. T., 1976, pp. 168–79.
5. Cahen 1960 says the child was four years old. DeFrémery 1853, p. 431, gives his age as five years and several months.
6. Rice, D. T., 1976, pp. 172–73.

Cat. 3

1. Owing to extensive restoration, the inscriptions on the arms are difficult to read and translate. They are likely lines of Persian text or poetry. The tentative transcriptions given here are by Abdullah Ghouchani.
2. The passage, translated by Michael Rogers in Sydney 2007, p. 156, who reads the date as A.H. 538/A.D. 1143–44, is included in the account of the reign of Tughril II but not directly associated with the sultan: “Like a chess-player one has to observe the enemy’s moves as well as one’s own.”
3. For the waterweed, see Watson 2004, p. 338. For the inscription, see J. M. Rogers in Amsterdam 1999–2000, pp. 189–91, no. 148.
4. A similarly kneeling figurine, although smaller, turbaned, and with a circular opening at the top, was auctioned at Sotheby’s, London 2010 (lot 159). For examples of the *sharbus* and other royal headdresses in manuscript paintings, see Contadini 2012, pp. 127–28. It is important to note, however, that *sharbus* and *qalansuwa* are used interchangeably in al-Jazari’s *Kitab fi ma’rifat al-hiyal al-handasiyya* (Book of the knowledge of ingenious mechanical devices); see Ward 1985.

Cats. 4a–h

1. For a similarly written date, see a dinar struck at Rayy in A.H. 447 in Poole 1877, p. 29, no. 56. My thanks to Roberta Giunta for her contributions to the reading of these coins.
2. Cat. 4e was published previously in Welch 1979, pp. 206–7.
3. Album 2011, pp. 182–86.
4. The coin was minted during the reign of the caliph al-Mustarshid (r. 1118–35);

the closest parallel (possibly the same issue) is in Baldwin’s 2011, lot 1745. My thanks to Stephen Album.

5. Gierlich 1996, pp. 28–40, Daneshvari 2011, and Kuehn 2011.
6. “If the dirham is admirable because of its design (*naqsh*), and if the *haram* is noble and of high repute because it is secure, / The design of the dirham has been stolen from his pen, the security of the *haram* has been borrowed from his house”; see Tetley 2009, p. 117.
7. For an example, see Hanne 2004–5, pp. 157–70.
8. For examples and interpretations of the shifting meanings of certain motifs over time, see Bulliet 1974, pp. 289–96, and Shimizu 1998. For the interpretation of Mamluk devices as *tamghas*, see Mayer 1933, pp. 18–26; for its refutation, see Whelan 1988, p. 228.
9. Also *tawqi’*. For examples, see Rawandi in Browne 1902, p. 589; Stern, S., 1964, pp. 143–47; Bivar 1979; Bar Hebraeus in Shimizu 1998, p. 92; Peacock 2015, p. 127. Mahmud al-Kashgari, in his *Diwan al-lughat al-turk* (1072–74), reproduces *tamghas* of twenty-two Turkish tribes; Sümer 1992, pp. 169–71. See Kamola 2013 for an unpublished list of *tamghas* in a manuscript of Rashid al-Din’s *Jami’ al-tawarikh* (Majlis Library, Tehran, MS 2294; fols. 13v–14r). There is no mention of the use of these symbols on coins.
10. “You [the vizier Taj al-Mulk] are, with your pen, the guardian and watchman of the Shah’s signature [*tughrā*], the royal palace [*dār-i mamlakat*], and the Shah’s treasure”; see Tetley 2009, p. 115.
11. See Bulliet 1974; Shimizu 1998; Peacock 2015, pp. 126–29.
12. Treadwell 2001, p. xi; Peacock 2015, p. 126.
13. Treadwell 2001, pp. xviii–xix. For Ghaznavid coins, see Album 2011, p. 179, no. 1609.
14. For variations of dinars issued by Tughril, see two minted in Nishapur in, respectively, A.H. 449/A.D. 1057–58 and 450/1058–59; one minted in Umm al ‘Awamid (Syria) in 434/1042–43; and a fourth minted in Basra in 450/1058–59 (all American Numismatic Society, New York [1922.211.105, 1965.270.10, 1954.119.25, 1972.288.111]).

Cat. 5

1. Read by Abdullah Ghouchani and Alzharra K. Ahmed, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art,

New York; translation and transliteration in Yalman 2010, p. 326.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 328.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 331.

Cat. 6

1. For the Arabic inscription, the reading in Richter-Bernburg 1995, pp. 39–44, seems to be the most convincing. He follows Redford 1990, pp. 121–23, who corrects the reading of “*sawghan*” (Van Berchem 1910, p. 120) to the Turkish word “*sävini*” (*sevinç*, loving or joy). The Persian inscription, likely poetic, has not yet been identified.
2. Recent contributions include Redford 1990, pp. 120–32; Innsbruck 1995; Priscilla Soucek in New York 1997b, pp. 422–23; Steppan 2000; Koenen 2008; Müller-Wiener 2008a; and Asutay-Effenberger 2009.
3. Redford 1990, p. 120 and n. 2; Biron, Dandridge, and Wypyski 1996, p. 49.
4. Among others, the two closest parallels are the enameled Crown of Constantine IX Monomachos (particularly with regard to the dancing figures); and the ascension of Alexander the Great depicted on a stone relief, now in Venice. See Steppan 2000; Redford 1990, pp. 120–32.
5. Redford 1990, p. 121.
6. Koenen 2008, p. 122.
7. Enameled objects were considered luxurious artifacts and favorite gifts given by Byzantine rulers to their Christian and Muslim counterparts. Redford 1990, pp. 124–32, argues for a Georgian attribution; Thomas Steppan in Innsbruck 1995, pp. 33–35, Soucek in New York 1997b, pp. 422–23, Steppan 2000, p. 97, and Koenen 2008, p. 136 n. 75, see the plate as a Byzantine royal gift likely from Constantinople; Asutay-Effenberger (2009) believes that it was created in a Greek atelier of Seljuq Anatolia and sent as a wedding gift to Rukn al-Dawla Dawud as part of the dowry of his wife Sacide Khatun, daughter of the Rum Seljuq sultan Kilic Arslan I (r. 1092–1107). The bowl would therefore have been realized before 1130, the year of Sacide Khatun’s death.
8. For a summary on this ruler’s career and the broader historical context of early Artuqid history, see Müller-Wiener 2008a, pp. 149–52. The concentric composition recalls cat. 7.

Cat. 7

1. Reading and translation of the outer band, in French, by Re naud (1828, vol. 2, pp. 404–5). Reading and translation of the inner band based on Manijeh

Bayani, as communicated by the David Collection, Copenhagen. The letters of the last four words are out of sequence, as are the two words after **سنا** and before **سنا**. Karabacek 1907, p. 22, and Bayani read a date of either A.H. 600/A.D. 1203–4 or 660/1261–62. The author, however, does not interpret these words as a date. Moreover, while the first date falls into the early childhood of Artuq, the second postdates the existence of Artuqid rule in Harput. The first word as *sana* would be spelled in the Persian way. If read as *sana* and *sittin*, there would be one hook or several dots too many (سست). The second word reads as “سستيه,” which also has two dots over the *sin*. Although the word has been read as *sittamiya*, or 600, there is one hook too many for that to be correct.

2. Reign dates are drawn from Van Berchem 1910, p. 96.
3. Carboni 2006, p. 161; see also cat. 157b.
4. The other side is left plain, which, when polished, would become a reflective surface.
5. These are Venus in Taurus, Mercury in Gemini, the moon in Cancer, the sun in Leo, Mercury in Virgo, Venus in Libra, Mars in Scorpio, Jupiter in Sagittarius, Saturn in Capricorn, Saturn in Aquarius, Jupiter in Pisces, and Mars in Aries.
6. The Artuqid dynasty was divided into several branches: the Mardin, or Il-Ghazi; the Amid/Hisn Kayfa, or Sökmen; and the Harput, which also relates to the lineage of the Sökmen. See Bosworth 1996, pp. 194–219.
7. Almut von Gladiss in Berlin 2006–7, pp. 64–65.
8. The eagle is a solar animal and symbolizes the sun, which in Seljuq times was considered a metaphor for the ruler and kingship; see cats. 148a, b.
9. Gladiss in Berlin 2006–7, pp. 64–65.
10. Väh 1987, pp. 139–42.

Cat. 8

1. Reading and translation in *RCEA* 1931–, vol. 13, no. 4456, and Melikian-Chirvani 1968, pp. 264–65. According to the author, the last word of graffiti, read by Melikian-Chirvani as **سنا**, remains questionable.
2. Other comparable examples are in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo (Wiet 1932a, p. 137, no. XXXVII, and in the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (see Grabar 1961).
3. As confirmed by the now visible cavities from the silver losses of the letter shafts.

4. Similar sequences of titles were already in use in the Jazira in the first half of the thirteenth century (see cats. 12a, b). For Mamluk examples, see Ellen Kenney in New York 2011, p. 155; Doha 2002, pp. 66–67; and Ward 1993, p. 26. The assumption that the basin’s initial purpose at the time of its commission was to serve during Qara Arslan’s coronation cannot be concluded from this inscription alone (see Sotheby’s, London 2012, p. 128).

5. Ward 1993, pp. 111–12. For Mamluk examples, see also Kenney in New York 2011, p. 155; Doha 2002, pp. 66–67. According to Melikian-Chirvani 1968, the basin relates to Iranian metalwork.
6. Ilisch 1984, pp. 34–61. Qara Arslan was as a prince already pro-Mongol. Marco Polo described Mardin as a wealthy center of trade and textile production; see *ibid.*, p. 59. Wealth, power, and philanthropic efforts are illustrated by the building of monumental architecture by Qara Arslan, such as the Madrasa al-Muzaffariya, praised for its polychrome mihrab. See Beyazit 2009, vol. 1, pp. 135–38, 305–8, 479–80, 486–87.
7. Ilisch 1984, p. 61. The title *al-malik* is still used in the mint of A.H. 678/A.D. 1279–80 but replaced by *al-sultan* in the mint of 688/1289–90.
8. It is possible that the Mamluks, who regained strength in the 1280s, tried to win over Qara Arslan and sent the basin as a gift. The Mamluk overlord tried something similar with vassals in the Jazira in the 1250s, with the Lu’lu’ids (*ibid.*, pp. 41–42, 61).
9. According to historical sources, the two Artuqid rulers preceding Dawud—al-Mansur Husam al-Din Ahmad (r. 1364–67) and al-Salih Sharaf al-Din (r. 1367–68)—who had succeeded Dawud’s father, Shams al-Din al-Salih (r. 1312–64), were weak and had very short reigns; both were poisoned. The sources are not consistent, but Ibn Hajar and Ibn Munshi write that Dawud was involved in the murder of his nephew al-Salih. It is interesting that, on the ownership graffiti of this basin, Dawud is called “*amir*,” which means that he was already in possession of the basin before he officially ascended to the throne. The graffiti reinforces the possibility that Dawud had coordinated both complots and finally succeeded to the throne after his father (*ibid.*, pp. 120–31).

Cat. 9

1. James 1992, p. 44, no. 7.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

3. In the Archaeological Museum, Bursa; Museum of Islamic Art, Doha; Chester Beatty Library, Dublin; Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and Christie’s, London 2014, lot 48. See James 1992, p. 44.
4. Déroche 1992.

Cat. 10

1. Black, ed. 2006, p. 17.

Cat. 11

1. Rice, D. S., 1953c, p. 129.
2. In the National Library and Archives, Cairo, are vols. 2, 4, 11, and 13; in the Millet Kütüphanesi, Feyzullah Efendi Madrasa, Istanbul, vols. 17 and 19; and in the Royal Library, Copenhagen, on loan to the David Collection, vol. 20. See Rice, D. S., 1953c, p. 129; Stern, S., 1957, p. 501.

Cats. 12a, b

1. For the *naskhi* inscription, Arabic text, and partial translation in Van Berchem 1906/1978, pp. 206–7; for a full text and translation in French, see *RCEA* 1931–, vol. 12, no. 4456, as well as discussion of certain words in Rice, D. S., 1950, p. 633. For the graffiti, see Van Berchem 1906/1978, p. 207; Rice, D. S., 1950, p. 634.
2. Translation in German in Sarre and Van Berchem 1907, p. 33; Arabic text in Van Berchem 1906/1978, pp. 204–7. My thanks to Maryam Ekhtiar, Associate Curator, and Matthew Saba, Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellow, both in the Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, for their assistance with translations of the inscriptions in cats. 12a, b.
3. Completing the group are a candlestick in the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, a third tray, in the Museum of the Academy of Sciences, Kiev, and a box in the British Museum, London (1878, 1230.674); see Raby 2012, pp. 24–27.
4. Ward 1993, p. 79.
5. Rice, D. S., 1957, pp. 283–84.
6. Several generations of scholars have researched al-Mawsili inlay metalwork. For the most recent contribution, with extensive bibliography, see Raby 2012.
7. See *ibid.*, pp. 28–29. To celebrate the circumcision of his brother Muhammad in Cairo, in 1293, the Mamluk sultan Khalil distributed one hundred brass candlesticks inscribed with the sultan’s titles, as well as other metalworks; see Ward 1993, p. 26. For an example from the Byzantine world, see Ballian 2009, p. 114.
8. The good condition of this tray relates to its provenance. It was among the loot taken from the Ottomans at Ofen

- in 1686 by Maximilian II Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria, and until its transfer to the Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich, in 1926 it was preserved in the royal treasury of the ruling Wittelsbach family. See Sarre and Van Berchem 1907, p. 17; Frembgen 2003, p. 125; Almut von Gladiss in Berlin 2006–7, pp. 76–79.
9. Raby 2012, p. 25, reads the name as “Muhammad b. ‘Isun.”
10. There are several indications that the tray was left unfinished. The inscription specifying that the tray was ordered by Badr al-Din for the princess Khawanrah was never inlaid with silver, as confirmed by the untreated surface of the letters. The back of the tray is plain except for a circular double incision at the center, suggesting that a medallion or other central composition was conceived as decoration but never finalized. Another graffito engraved on the back alludes to Ihsan or al-Hasan b. ‘Absun. The script is in the same style as the graffiti related to al-Badri and thus from the same period. This owner of the tray may have been the groom of Khawanrah, who then would have been Badr al-Din’s daughter. It is unclear if and how Ihsan relates to Muhammad b. ‘Absun (the brother, according to Raby 2012, p. 26). Another graffito, but in a different style and likely from a later period, gives the name of al-‘Abd al-Dhalil Aybek al-Tawyl/Tuyil.
11. Rice, D. S., 1957, p. 284.
12. Patton 1991, p. 33.
13. Ward 1993, p. 80; Allan 2014, pp. 52–55.
- Cats. 13a, b**
1. Reading and translation of the *thuluth* inscription, in German, by Eugen Mittwoch; see also Sarre 1906, p. 13. My thanks to Maryam Ekhtiar, Associate Curator, and Matthew Saba, Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellow, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, for their assistance with the English translation that appears here. An additional Arabic inscription, in *kufic*, appears along the rim:
- العز والاقبال والدوله والسعاده والسلامه والشفاعه
والنعمة والعافيه والعيانه والبقاء داننا لصاحبه
(*Glory, prosperity, dominion, happiness, prosperity, intercession, prosperity, health, assistance[?], and perpetual long life to its owner.*) Reading and translation by Abdullah Ghouchani and Alzahraa K. Ahmed, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
2. Readings and translations of all the inscriptions in Allan 1982a, p. 54.
3. Almut von Gladiss in Berlin 2006–7, p. 80.
4. The motif of the crescent moon was widely used during Seljuq times in coins and metalwork (see cats. 14l, 44). For a discussion of the motif, see Redford 2005, pp. 290, 299.
5. Allan 1985, p. 133.
6. See Allan 1982a, p. 54; Kana’an 2013, p. 181, figs. 166, 167; fig. 168 illustrates the ewer before the replacement of the neck ring and spout in the 1970s, indicating that the spout was once curved and decorated with an interlacing vegetal band, similar to the ewer’s handle. It is possible that the plain foot of the ewer replaced one that was lavishly inlaid and decorated. For the similarities to Iraqi jewelry, see Allan 1982a, p. 57.
7. Kana’an 2013, pp. 183–86.
8. For an attribution to Mosul, specifically the workshop of Ibrahim b. Mawaliya, see Allan 1982a, pp. 54–57. Kana’an 2013, pp. 186–92, discusses the possibility of identifying Badr al-Din Lu’lu’ as the patron. On Ibrahim b. Mawaliya, see also cat. 79.
9. Nazan Ölçer in London 2005, pp. 130–31, 399–400, no. 87.
- Cats. 14a–l**
1. The right of the *sikka*, the prerogative of including the ruler’s name on the coin, similar to the *khutba*, in which the ruler is named during the Friday prayer, belonged theoretically to the caliph and eventually became in the early Islamic period a royal insignia of power; see Bosworth 1997; Wensinck 1986.
2. Heidemann 2002a, pp. 355–63; Heidemann 2009b, pp. 276–77.
3. Heidemann 2002a, pp. 355–57.
4. Ibid.
5. Bates 1989, pp. 421–41. Among the earliest examples are coins struck by Malik Ghazi Gumushtekin (r. 1104–34), ruler of the Turkmen Danishmendid dynasty in Anatolia, also a Seljuq successor state; see Whelan 2006, pp. 51–52. For early Artuqid and Zangid coins, see note 14 below.
6. Bates 1989, pp. 421–41; Heidemann 2009b.
7. Whelan 2006, pp. 201–300; Album 2011, pp. 199–202.
8. Reading and translation by Abdullah Ghouchani and Stefan Heidemann; see also Balog 1980, p. 59, no. 4, and Bresc 2001–2, p. 31.
9. Bates 1989, p. 430; Broome 2011, p. 17; Album 2011, pp. 132–35.
10. Heidemann 2006–7, p. 97.
11. “It is He who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may uplift it above every religion, though the unbelievers be averse.” Surat al-Tawbah, 9:33, Arberry 1996, p. 210.
12. This becomes even more noteworthy in certain silver coins minted by the Rum Seljuqs after A.H. 656/A.D. 1258, the year when the last caliph was killed, that name a fictive or anonymous “Caliph al-Ma’sum”; see Broome 2011, p. 17. There are, of course, exceptions and variations that allow for figural motifs on coinage. Among the most striking is an equestrian gold coin minted in 597/1201–2 by the Rum Seljuq ruler Rukn al-Din Sulayman II; see *ibid.*, pp. 58–59.
13. Heidemann 2009b; Bresc 2001–2, p. 31.
14. Per Bates 1989, p. 431, silver coinage ceased almost entirely for some time in certain areas east of the Euphrates. The first Artuqid silver coins were minted in Aleppo by Najm al-Din Il-Ghazi I and Nur al-Dawla Balak Ghazi between 1118 and 1124; those of the Zangids by ‘Imad al-Din Zangi (r. 1127–46); and those of the Rum Seljuqs by Kiliç Arslan II (r. 1156–92); see Album 2011, pp. 132, 196, 199.
15. Heidemann 2009b, pp. 283–84, 289.
16. For the Ayyubids, Zangids, and Rum Seljuqs, see *ibid.* and Broome 2011, p. 16. For the Artuquids, see Whelan 2006, p. 123.
17. Heidemann 2009b, pp. 277, 284; Schacht 1995.
18. Album 2011, p. 132; Hinrichs 1993, p. 37.
19. Broome 2011, p. 17. A similar parallel can be drawn with the urban landscape of Anatolia, whose cities under Ilkhanid domination saw the erection of new buildings relevant to the functioning of an Islamic society; see Blessing 2014. Cat. 14c represents the last figural Rum Seljuq silver coin.
20. For a rare example with a pair of ram-paging lions, see Broome 2011, p. 166, no. 274F.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 46–47, no. 21.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 57–63.
23. Redford 2005. See also cats. 4a–h.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 290, 299.
25. See Broome 2011, pp. 144–69, nos. 241–80. Leiser 1998 includes the gold coins for which doubts of authenticity have been expressed.
26. Leiser 1998, p. 97.
27. Öney 1969b, pp. 29–31; Gierlichs 1996, pp. 119–20. For a full historiographic discussion, see Leiser 1998, pp. 97–102.
28. Quoted in Leiser 1998, p. 108. On the continued use of the sun and lions as symbols of state from the later Artuqid period in Mardin into the Safavid period, see Ilich 2012.
29. Heidemann 2006–7, p. 97.
30. For the first coin of Timurtash, struck in A.H. 542/A.D. 1147–48, see Lowick 1974 and Ilich 1976, pp. 1–2. The date is further confirmed by the Artuqid chronicler Ibn al-Azraq, who writes, “In this year, which was 542/1147–48, al-Sa’id Husam al-Din struck copper coins, after I had gone to al-Ma’dan and bought copper for the coins” (Hillenbrand, C., 1990, p. 120). Whelan 2006, pp. 75–77, agrees on the date but attributes it to another type of coin. For other early Jaziran coins, see Whelan 2006, pp. 147–48, 203–4.
31. Beyazit 2009, pp. 466–67.
32. Heidemann 2006–7, p. 97. Other scholars believe that these copper dirhams were meant to replace copper coins; see Lowick 1985, p. 161.
33. The pair of busts on the reverse of cat. 14f is a doubling of the portrait of Antiochus VII Euergetes, depicted on a silver coin of this Seleucid emperor from 139 to 129 B.C., that appeared on the second Artuqid copper coin of Mardin, struck by Timurtash. The scene on the obverse was copied from a Byzantine gold coin of Romanos III (r. 1028–34). See Ilich 1976, pp. 1–2; Heidemann 2006–7, p. 104, no. 5; and Whelan 2006, pp. 75–76, 79–82. The winged figures in cats. 14g, h relate to medieval Islamic manuscript paintings, in particular those produced in Mosul, where winged figures often appear above depictions of rulers (see, e.g., cat. 11). See Whelan 2006, pp. 166–68, 204–6, 208–9. For cat. 14e, see Whelan 2006, pp. 155–57.
34. For cat. 14h, see Whelan 2006, pp. 166–69; for cat. 14j, *ibid.*, pp. 178–79; and for cat. 14l, *ibid.*, pp. 214–17, 229–30.
35. For cat. 14i, see *ibid.*, pp. 97–103; and for cat. 14k, *ibid.*, pp. 58–60, 114–15.
36. Lowick 1985, p. 169.
37. Recent monographs include Artuk and Artuk 1993, Spengler and Sayles 1992, and Spengler and Sayles 1996, which overinterpret the astrological meanings, and Parlar 2001. See also Brown 1974, Lowick 1985, and Heidemann 2006–7. Shukurov 2004 discusses the Christian elements, which would have been chosen as symbols of dynastic and/or royal power and would have been understood and well received by the majority Christian population. Yalman 2012, pp. 159–67, interprets some of the Artuqid coins as expressing rulership through solar symbolism. The most thorough discussion of the coins and their iconography remains Whelan 2006, especially pp. 15–20.
38. Heidemann 2006–7, p. 98; and Heidemann 1990, pp. 148–50. The coins of

‘Imad al-Din Zangi II (r. 1170–97), Zangid ruler of Sinjar, are inscribed with the title of the Abbasid caliph, “al-Imam al-Nasir lil-Din,” sometimes together with the caliph’s name, “al-Imam al-Nasir Ahmad.” The coins of his son Qutb al-Din Muhammad b. Zangi (r. 1197–1219) feature a *tamgha* on the eagle’s breast. The reference to the caliph may be interpreted as sovereign power expressed through the bird, while the *tamgha* refers to the power of the family. The Artuqid Nasr al-Din Mahmud (r. 1201–22) placed this device on almost all his coins (e.g., cat. 14j) as well as on the two towers of the Amid city walls and on tiles decorating his palace in the inner citadel (Gabriel 1940, vol. 2, pls. 58, 60; Aslanapa 1961, pp. 10–13, pl. 19, fig. 25a–b). On several of his coins, the double-chevron *tamgha* of the Artuqids, visible also in cat. 14f below the bust on the left side, appears on the bird’s breast. See Spengler and Sayles 1992, pp. 42–48, 97, 105–7; and Hennequin 1985, pp. 416–17, nos. 911–21, pl. 21, with the *tamgha* most clearly visible in no. 912. Another example of a royal symbol of power on copper coins is the image of the equestrian dragon slayer, which the Rum Seljuq sultan ‘Ala’ al-Din Kay Qubad I (r. 1219–37) used for both copper coins and lead seals (used to secure tied bundles of state documents); see Yalman 2010, p. 333.

39. See also the imitation of established gold coinage.

40. Heidemann 2006–7, p. 98.

The Courtly Cycle

- Names for pavilions include the Arabic *dar* and *jawsaq*, used by the Artuqids, and the Turkish *saray*, used at Mosul.
- Durand-Guédy 2013a, p. 331.
- Ahsan 1979, pp. 197–98.
- Nizām al-Mulk 1960, p. 94.
- Ibid., p. 119. The fact that Nizām al-Mulk makes a point of saying that it is uncouth for guests to bring food or vessels to a reception suggests that this had been a practice either of the Turkmen or of the lower class.
- However, see the reference to women playing polo in cat. 78.
- For the finds from Nishapur, see New York 2011, pp. 112–13, no. 70.
- This is suggested by texts devoted to enumerating uncouth behavior. See Van Gelder 1992, pp. 87–90.

Cat. 15

- For the *naskhi*, see RCEA 1931–, vol. 11, p. 13, no. 4046. For the *kufic*, see Re naud 1828, p. 424. Two slightly different transliterations are given in London 1976a, p. 179, no. 196.

- Pear-shaped, body-spouted ewers of globular or faceted form, probably based on Fatimid predecessors but ultimately deriving from Rome and Byzantium, were common in the region during the thirteenth century (Allan 1985, p. 133). One usually distinguishes this pear-shaped spouted ewer from the Khurasan or Herat ewer, on which the spout rises from the mouth rather than the shoulder (cat. 85). The body and neck are original, but the body has been cut down at the base. The handle and collar of the lid are from another object. The spout and filter are missing (London 2014, p. 136).
- The other object is a pen box from the David Collection, Copenhagen (1/1997), made in Mosul by Ali b. Yahya al-Mawsili in A.H. 653/A.D. 1255–56; see Folsach 2001, p. 317, no. 506, and Raby 2012, p. 23. For the most recent discussion on the al-Mawsili school, see Raby 2012 and Raby 2014. On the Blacas ewer specifically, see Hagedorn 1992; Ward 1986; Rachel M. Ward in London 2014, p. 136.
- Chinese textiles were quite popular at that time and traded in Mosul and elsewhere. Recent research in Allan 2014, pp. 52–55, suggests that the inspiration was taken from either traded Chinese originals or imitations woven in Mosul or elsewhere in the region.
- Shuja’ b. Man’a was probably the head of a workshop in Mosul. The Man’a family had considerable influence over the administrative and intellectual life of the city, which suggests that the metal industry, inlaid decoration in particular, was controlled by the elite. See Raby 2012, p. 23; Ward in London 2014, p. 136.
- Ward 1993, pp. 79–82.
- The importance of manuscript painting for inlaid decoration from Mosul and the relevance of the *Aghani* frontispieces is outlined in Raby 2012, pp. 44–52. The possibility of a connection between metal and painting workshops further confirms that metalsmiths worked at or in proximity to their patrons’ houses (Ward 1993, pp. 22–25, 82–83). On Badr al-Din’s carrier, see Patton 1991, pp. 8–33.
- Hagedorn 1992, pp. 32–34, on the use of ewer (*ibriq*) and basin (*tasht*), as well as the official roles of the *ibriqdar* and *tashtdar* at Seljuq courts.

Cat. 16

- Despite the breaks in the panel, this reading is confirmed by comparison with earlier photographs showing the inscription in a more intact state (see note 4 below). However, although the scrolls in the upper register and in the

field of the inscription are consistent, the sequence *al-sultan al-malik* may have been reconstructed.

- Wiet 1932b, pp. 71–72, pl. 19; RCEA 1931–, vol. 9, no. 3477; Pope 1934, pp. 110–13; Arthur Upham Pope in Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 2, pp. 1305–7, vol. 5, pt. 1, pl. 517; Hillenbrand 2010, pp. 94–98.
- The ruler is usually identified as Sultan Tughril III of Iraq (r. 1176–94), who was killed near Rayy and buried there (*Mujmal al-tavarikh* 2001, p. 465). Pope (Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 2, p. 1306) and Wiet (1932b, pp. 71–72) wrote Tughril II but intended Tughril III.
- Comparison between the extant panel and a photograph in Wiet 1932b (pl. 19; the panel was not mounted, and one extant fragment was left out of the photograph) makes clear that it suffered breaks and losses after the picture was taken and that the subsequent restoration, some of which may have taken place at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, was not integrative. A second photograph, published in 1938, already shows some differences (Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 5, pt. 1, pl. 517).
- The panel was acquired through Arthur Upham Pope and intermediary Khalil Rabenou in Iran. Other panels that came to the market during the same period and were also disputed are the “Stora panel” now in the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, and a panel formerly in Boston and currently in a private collection. Lerner 2016 refers tangentially to the issue.
- Other marks are visible on the fruit bowl at the left. Similar but not identical titles include *al-malik al-adil*, which appears in relation to Muhammad Tapar on the Great Mosque at Qazvin (RCEA 1931–, vol. 8, no. 2960) and at Gulpaygan (ibid., no. 2974); and *al-malik al-muzaffar*, which is used on coins of the Khwarazm Shah Atsiz b. Muhammad b. Anushtigin (ca. 1098–1156) and of Qara Arslan b. Ghazi (Artuqid, Mardin). See Bates 2014, pp. 33, 69. The titles of the Nasrid rulers of Sistan, Taj al-Din Nasr (1106–1164) and Taj al-Din Harb (1169–1215/16), as documented in the inscriptions on the now destroyed minaret in Qasimabad, are *al-malik al-mu’azzam al-adil* and *al-malik al-mu’ayyid al-mansur al-muzaffar al-alim*; see O’Kane 1984, pp. 89–97.
- Analyses of eight samples (three from the epigraphic band, five from the scene below) were performed by Federico Carò, Associate Research Scientist, and Elena Basso, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in

Conservation, both in the Department of Scientific Research, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. In both parts the gypsum plaster is consistent with production with a poorly controlled firing temperature in which gypsum rock was calcined. My thanks to Felice Fischer at the Philadelphia Museum of Art for allowing research and sampling of the panel and to her colleague Melissa Meighan for her help with the analysis.

8. Observation of the surface under ultraviolet light revealed small fills and modern adhesive in addition to visible areas of loss. As for the traces of pigments, the analyzed blue pigment from the upper band is consistent with a natural lapis lazuli mixed with huntite (a white carbonate of magnesium and calcium) and containing lazurite with traces of calcite, pyrite, and pyroxene, although this is not always the case with similar stucco figures (see cats. 1a–j). My thanks to Conservators Jean-François de Lapérouse and Vicki Parry, both in the Department of Objects Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Cats. 17, 18

- Reading by Abdullah Ghouchani.
- For previous literature, see Graves 2008, pp. 245–49, and Scerrato 2014a, pp. 18–24. According to al-Biruni, during the Zoroastrian festivities of Farwardjian, people drank on their roofs while their houses were fumigated and food was offered to the dead.
- Graves 2008, pp. 240–41. For Ghazni, see Scerrato 1959, p. 45 and table II.
- Examples include the saw-toothed stucco merlons with vegetal motifs excavated from the mosque at Siraf (9th–10th century) and similar ones, although in marble, found at Ghazni (attributed to the 11th or 12th century). In poems and historical texts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries (e.g., Farrukhi, Juzjani), merlons and rooftop decorations are mentioned in association with royal palaces; see Meisami 2001, p. 32, which translates *kangura* as “parapets”; and Flood 2009, p. 129. Fatimid mosques in Cairo still show crenellated rooftops opening onto a courtyard.
- For current examples in Yazd, see Graves 2008, pp. 240–41. Other current examples are in the domestic architecture of Yemen and Nablus; they underscore how much vernacular architecture depends on local traditions.
- The first such hypothesis was in Grube 1976, p. 174. Other objects with the same scene are at the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (139/59; see Graves 2008, fig. 20) and the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh (76.61.4;

- see Grube 2003, n. 7). The turbaned man lies beneath the woman on a pillow.
- For the interpretation of some of these vase-shaped elements as sugarloaves and their association with ceremonial occasions, see Scerrato 2014a; see also cat. 43, note 3, in the present volume. For the long-standing iconography of the drinker and its meaning in the medieval period, see Graves 2008, pp. 243–45, 248, with previous bibliography.
 - The *kursi* on this piece has also been explained as a minbar or pulpit; see Grube 1976, p. 174 n. 3; Scerrato 2014a, pp. 16, 30 and n. 31; and Grube 2003, pp. 460–61. House models are sometimes understood as representing mosques, but the cup-bearing figures in this scene, probably drinking wine, preclude the possibility of its portraying a religious ceremony; see Graves 2008, p. 247 n. 82; Grube 2003, p. 460.
 - Grube 2003, p. 461; Graves 2008, pp. 248–49; Scerrato 2014a, pp. 23–33.
 - For a house model with figures wearing differentiated headgear, triangular caps, and veils, as well as those that are bare-headed, see Metropolitan Museum (20.120.234).
 - All the figures were either separately molded (the cupbearers) or modeled (the man on the *kursi* and the two on the *suffa*) and applied to the object before any part of it was glazed. The two figures on the *suffa* have incised eyes, noses, and mouths.
 - For examples excavated at Susa, see Joel and Peli 2005, pp. 198–200, nos. 265–68, suggesting the connection to dance. See additional examples at the Musée du Louvre, Paris (MAO S.346, S.347, S.349, SB.8168). The personages on a house model in the Musée Ariana, Geneva (AR 12740), are represented with their hands joined, perhaps also as part of a dance scene; see Geneva 2014, pp. 60–61, no. 37.
 - Al-Tabari (d. 923) describes a gift of two castles (*qasrani*) in gold and silver and other precious objects offered to the Umayyad governor of Khurasan, Asad b. 'Abadallah b. Asad al-Qasri, in the mid-eighth century; see Scerrato 2014a, p. 26 n. 24. The Dutchman Cornelis de Bruy, who traveled to Isfahan in the late seventeenth to early eighteenth century, commented on the wax objects as part of an observance probably connected to 'Id al-Fitr, the feast day marking the end of Ramadan; see Graves 2008, pp. 247–48.
 - Scerrato 2014a, pp. 27–28 and n. 27.
- Cat. 19**
- The horseman's light-blue garment is the only painted motif left unoutlined. The second tile was found in the area in 1971. Both are believed to be imports; see Yusupov 1993, p. 50, fig. 28, and Kuehn 2007, p. 114, fig. 8. For a brief history of Kone-Urgench, including its toponymy and the studies taking place at the site, see Mamedov and Muradov 2001, pp. 15–23; Yusupov 1993, passim.
 - With regard to ninth-century tiles, plain-glazed and luster-painted ones are attested from the palace of Jawsaq al-Khaqani, in Samarra, and in the mihrab of the Great Mosque in Kairouan, Tunisia. In the palace at Ghazni, plain tiles appear in layers of the late eleventh century, while tiles with molded decoration start appearing in layers of the twelfth century. All are square- or lozenge-shaped, and none was found in its original context; they may have remained a local peculiarity (see Scerrato 1962 and, for the revised dating, Fusaro forthcoming). For glazed elements in architecture, including glazed bricks, see Wilber 1939; Pickett 1997, pp. 21–33.
 - See Lushey-Schmeisser 2000, pp. 363–66. Tiles excavated at Rayy include an octagonal example with vegetal and geometric decoration (RH6197), now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (39435), and another (RG7888) in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (see Mason 1997, p. 134, pl. 18c).
 - Mina'i* tiles from the palace of the amir 'Ala' al-Din in Konya have similar depictions of horsemen, although they are either octagons or six-pointed stars. See Sarre 1936, pp. 14–22, 49–51, pls. 1–7, fig. 16; Anik and Anik 2008, pp. 225–38, figs. 169–73, 175–83; Yardimci 2013, fig. 7. For the hypothesis of Iranian craftsmen, see Meinecke 1976, vol. 1, p. 24 n. 56; and Lushey-Schmeisser 2000, p. 367.
 - A possible comparison can be made with the painted-glass insets in the stucco decoration of the throne hall in the palace at Termez, which were added as part of the renovation works under the Ghaznavid Bahram Shah (before 1129–30); see Pugachenkova 1981, pp. 18, 20.
 - An example is in the minaret of Mas'ud III (r. 1099–15) in Ghazni; see Lee 1987, p. 187.
 - Mason 1997; Holod 2012.
- Cats. 20a–g**
- Among the few examples are the reception hall in the citadel of Merv (11th–12th century; see figs. 50, 51, and Herrmann 1999, pp. 97–98, figs. 116, 117) and the Domed Hall in the citadel of Damascus (11th–12th century; Gardiol 2002). Indirect evidence of Iranian court architecture of the Seljuq period is known from stucco figures and relief panels, e.g., cats. 1a–j, 74; see also a relief panel (11th–12th century) in the Metropolitan Museum (40.170.166) excavated at the “wart” at Nishapur. According to Redford 1993b, p. 219 and n. 1, further evidence resides in a group of carved stone fragments, probably from a house, with figural and ornamental motifs relatable in style to the Seljuq period, although one dated example (Metropolitan Museum, 32.15.1) is Ilkhanid (A.H. 703/A.D. 1303–4). Surviving palatine architecture in the Jazira includes the Zangid Qara Saray in Mosul and Qasr al-Banat in Raqqa; and the Artuqid palaces at Amid, Hisn Kayfa, Mardin, and Harput. For Qara Saray, see figs. 31 and 36; and Sarre and Herzfeld 1911–20, vol. 2, pp. 239–49, vol. 4, pl. 136. For Qasr al-Banat, see Toueir 1985. For the Artuqid palaces, see Gabriel 1940, vol. 1, pp. 62–63; Aslanapa 1961, pp. 10–18; Danik 2001, pp. 50–51; Beyazit 2008; and Beyazit 2009, vol. 1, chaps. 3.6, 3.7, 3.12, 3.13.
 - For an overview of and further literature on Rum Seljuq palaces, including the Konya Köşk, see Sarre 1936; Erdmann 1959; Redford 1993b; Redford 2000b; and Anik 2000, pp. 23–41. On tiles found in Rum Seljuq palaces, see Anik and Anik 2008.
 - Dendrochronological analysis of several samples from the building's *muqarnas* gave dates of A.D. 1167, 1173, and 1174; see Anik 2000, p. 29.
 - Sources mention royal quarters in or near Nicaea, the first Rum Seljuq capital, but material evidence is scarce before the early to mid-twelfth century; see Peacock 2013a, p. 195. For the earliest Rum Seljuq architecture in Konya, see Redford 1991; and Asutay-Effenberger 2006, which provides an updated chronology and disputes Redford's assertion that the mosque was a converted Byzantine church.
 - Sources mention that there were several (Qazwini counts twelve) such citadel towers topped with pavilions; see Redford 1993b, p. 221; Redford 2000b, pp. 53–85; and Redford 2000a.
 - For the ongoing excavations at Kubadabad, see Anik 2000. See also Redford 2000b, pp. 69–77; Anik 2014; and Anik and Anik 2008, pp. 290–398. Regarding Kay Qubad's countless pavilions, see Peacock 2013a, p. 197.
 - See Akok 1968, in which the results of the 1941 excavations are published. However, several of the interpretations and restitutions are questionable; see Redford 1993b, p. 221 n. 16.
 - Redford 1993b, p. 222; Redford 2000b, pp. 49–50. The red-and-white checkerboard and zigzag patterns relate specifically to hunt and battle (see cat. 69).
 - See Redford 2000b, pp. 60–61, 85–87; and Redford 1993a.
 - One lion is now in the Archaeological Museum, Istanbul (inv. unknown). The two opus sectile fragments are in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, with the current inventory numbers Konya 69 and Konya 70.
 - The inscription is transcribed and translated into German in Sarre 1896, p. 46; for a photograph of the inscription in situ and a reconstruction, see Sarre 1936, pl. 4. For other tiles from the *köşk*, see Anik and Anik 2008, pp. 234–38; Carine Juvin in Makariou, ed. 2012, p. 173, fig. 115; and Sarre 1936, pp. 14–22.
 - In addition to those in the Konya Köşk, comparable tiles were found at Hisn Kayfa; see Anik and Anik 2008, pp. 242–43, fig. 187. Those from Konya are the only *mīna'i* examples found in situ and used to decorate a large wall. On the basis of stylistic analysis, it has been proposed that itinerant craftsmen from Iran produced the tiles locally in Konya; see Meinecke 1976, vol. 1, p. 24 n. 56, and Lushey-Schmeisser 2000, p. 367. Archaeometric analysis on the pigments of these rare *mīna'i* tiles from Konya and their comparison with examples from Kashan would help determine a more precise attribution.
 - As suggested by a piece of wall mortar with embedded fragments of glass in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (I.1379c). It is not clear whether the glass is of the Seljuq or a later period.
 - A striking comparison can be made with several fragments depicting harpies, now in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul (Sarre 1936, pl. 13; Anik 2000, p. 38, figs. 17, 19), and with Metropolitan Museum (40.170.166; see note 1 above). On carved stucco and its traditional importance in Iran, see cats. 1a–j. Many stucco relief fragments from Konya are published; see Sarre 1936, pls. 9–16; Anik 2000, pp. 37–39; Tomtom 2001, pp. 55, 124; and Carine Juvin in Makariou, ed. 2012, pp. 172–74. As for the standing figure, three comparable fragmentary figures are in the Ince Minareli Museum, Konya (2512, 2527, 2538; see also Tomtom 2001, p. 124), although it is more customary for Pisces

- to be shown seated. The closest comparison depicts him half-seated, also holding fishes; see Hartner 1938, fig. 14.
15. See a stucco relief spandrel in the Ince Minareli Museum, Konya (1029; see Tomtom 2001, p. 55). For the dragon-slayer motif and the significance of the knotted tail, see London 2005, pp. 114–15, no. 58. For the relief of the double-headed eagle, see Öney 1972, fig. 19. See also cats. 77, 120 (dragon), and 148a, b (eagle) in this volume.
 16. Redford 2012. For the stucco fragment at Ani, see <http://www.virtualani.org/citadel/palace.htm> (accessed January 6, 2016). For Trebizond, see Eastmond 2004.
 17. London 2005, pp. 114–15.
 18. Cat. 20d likely formed part of one such benedictory inscription. See also Sarre 1936, pp. 55–56, pl. 18.
 19. See Beyazit 2009, chap. 4.2, “Opus Sectile.” For the Artuqid palaces at Amid (early 13th century), see Aslanapa 1961, pp. 10–18, pl. XII, fig. 5, pl. XIII, fig. 7; and at Mardin, see Beyazit 2009, chap. 3.13, “Bayt al-Artuqi, Late 14th–Early 15th Century.” For an Ayyubid palace (early 13th century) from the Aleppo citadel, see Tabbaa 1997, fig. 44.
 20. Sarre 1936, p. 12, fig. 6, pl. 3, shows the lion still in its niche. A pair of lions flanks the inscribed portal of the Çardak caravanserai (1230; Tomtom 2001, p. 38), and a relief showing an animal combat adorns the eastern entrance of the Great Mosque in Amid (early 13th century; Gierlichs 1996, pl. 48). See also the doorknockers in cat. 159.
 21. In other Rum Seljuq palaces, the most ornate figural decoration found in situ was sometimes located in an *ivan*, for instance, at Kubadabad (fig. 44). See also the Artuqid palace at Amid (early 13th century; Aslanapa 1961); or the Qara Saray of Badr al-Din Lu’lu’ (fig. 36).
 22. Peacock 2013a, p. 198.
 23. *Ibid.*, p. 199.
 24. *Ibid.*, pp. 191–222.
 25. Per Ibn Bibi, the sultan “decided to set off for the coast, and all the way making merry and hunting, he pitched his tent by every lake”; see *ibid.*, p. 205.
 26. *Ibid.*, p. 213.
 27. Redford 2000a; Redford 2000b.
- ### Cats. 21a–c
1. Paris 2009–10, p. 88, no. 95. Suggested transcription and translation by Manijeh Bayani and communicated by the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London, with the following explanation for “the work of Muzaffari”: working for someone with the *kunya* Abu-I-Muzaffar.
 2. Arabic text and English translation of the artist’s name in Rice, D. S., 1954, p. 19; see also Melikian-Chirvani 1985, p. 227. The reading of the *nisba* as “al-Quwayni” is not convincing; according to Abdullah Ghouchani, one could also read it as “sweet work of Ibn Awhad al-Quwa’i,” as Shirin is usually a female name (personal communication). See Venice 1993–94, p. 242.
 3. Baer 1983, p. 7.
 4. Sources speak to lighting devices made of silver or gold, but surviving examples are generally in brass or bronze (copper alloy). Ceramic and glass were also used, but for smaller devices such as oil and hanging lamps. For glass, see an example, excavated at Nishapur, now in the Metropolitan Museum (48.101.56; Carboni 2001, p. 167). Wilkinson 1973, pp. 233–34, 264, 266, 279, shows a rare example of a truncated candlestick in ceramic. For a range of small metal oil lamps that were common in Iran, see Allan 1982b, pp. 45–49.
 5. Lighting devices with comparable shafts are depicted in the *Kitab al-diryaq* (cat. 106) and *De Materia Medica* (cats. 107a, b); see Baer 1983, p. 8.
 6. *Ibid.*, pp. 10–18.
 7. For an openwork hanging lamp, see *ibid.*, pp. 29, 38. An openwork torch stand comparable to cat. 21a is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; see Melikian-Chirvani 1982b, p. 17, no. 17.
 8. Lion support fittings were excavated at Nishapur. See Allan 1982b, pp. 100–101, nos. 173–76.
 9. See cats. 136a–d; and Özбек 1999.
 10. For the Herati school of metalwork, see cat. 85; and for a Khurasani candlestick, see cat. 142. For a rare example in ceramic, see Wilkinson 1973, pp. 266, 279.
 11. Although Rice, D. S., 1954, pp. 14ff., posited this group of candlesticks as originating in Iran, it has since been accepted as Anatolian; see Melikian-Chirvani 1985, pp. 225–66; Allan 1985, p. 132; Allan 1982a, pp. 58–60; Priscilla Soucek in Ann Arbor 1978, nos. 69, 70.
 12. Allan 1982a, p. 60, and Melikian-Chirvani 1985, p. 227. Kjeld von Folsach in Paris 2002–3, p. 131, no. 76, refers to an example that was seen on the art market, bearing an inscription that indicates that it was made in Konya in A.H. 685/A.D. 1286–87, by a certain ‘Ali b. Abu Bakr.
 13. For a more detailed description of this candlestick, see Rice, D. S., 1954, pp. 18–20.
 14. For the cycle of verses, see Heinrichs 1995. A candlestick now in the Benaki

Museum might have been used during this ceremony; see Ballian 2009, pp. 128, 134–35. On a larger scale, historians record that the Mamluk sultan Khalil ordered from Damascus one hundred candlesticks of brass, fifty of gold, and fifty of silver, as well as one thousand candles, for the circumcision ceremony of his brother Muhammad in Cairo in 1293 (Ward 1993, p. 26). The Mamluk historian al-Maqrizi describes the use of candles, and hence of candlesticks, at a royal wedding held in Cairo in A.D. 1333: “On the eve of the seventh of Jumada al-Awal [of the year A.H. 733/A.D. 1333], the sultan sat at the palace gate and the amirs approached one by one according to rank, bringing with them candles. . . . The sultan continued to sit there until their offering was complete. The number of candles was 3,030, and their weight 3,060 qintar. Among them were ones over which much trouble had been taken, which were decorated in a very novel way, and with a great variety of embellishment. The finest and best of them were the candles of the amir ‘Alam al-Din Sanjar al-Jawali. He took a great deal of trouble over them and had them made in Damascus. They were very remarkable objects.” On the eve of the marriage, all the candles were lit and carried in a procession by the amirs and their *mamluks*, no doubt in equally sumptuous candlesticks. “All the amirs approached [the sultan]. Each amir himself carried a candle, with behind him his *mamluks* carrying candles. They approached according to their order of rank and kissed the ground one by one throughout the night.” See Allan 1982a, pp. 82–83.

15. For a domestic scene, see a Mamluk *Maqamat* in Baer 1983, pp. 8–9 n. 11. For a depiction of a candle in a funerary scene, see the bier of Iskandar in the *Great Mongol Shahnama* (ca. 1330s), in New York and Los Angeles 2002–3, p. 128, fig. 153.
16. Baer 1983, p. 9 n. 12, cites a tombstone, dated 1314, in the Ince Minareli Museum, Konya; for a Mamluk example, see the carved marble mihrab from the Baridiya Madrasa, in Cairo, dated 1357, in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo (MIA 19; see O’Kane et al. 2006, pp. 128–29, no. 114).
17. For examples in glass, see Carboni 2001, nos. 38a, 99, 100; and Kröger 1995, p. 182. For examples in metal, see Baer 1983, pp. 34–40.
18. For examples of mihrab niches, see cat. 166. For examples in a funerary context, see cats. 201, 202, and New York and Los Angeles 2002–3, p. 128, fig. 153.

19. See, for example, in the *Maqamat* (cat. 86), fol. 61v.
 20. Other examples are in the David Collection, Copenhagen (23/1994; Folsach 2001, p. 303, no. 475), and the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (54.2363; Baer 1983, p. 41). See also Stuttgart 2003, p. 56, fig. 59, with a different but still comparable lamp circle that is decorated with similar facing birds’ heads. Cat. 21c bears various illegible inscriptions (probably pseudo-benedictory) on all three of its feet. As read by Alzahraa K. Ahmed, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow in the Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the inscription on the pole may read as ٱلملء, in some instances with the letter ص, which perhaps refers to the benediction ٱملاس (prosperity).
- ### Cat. 22
1. The diadem and the moles on the cheeks of the proper left figure suggest a woman (Komaroff 2012, pp. 352–53). While the bowl has been restored with small infills of gypsum plaster and extraneous ceramic fragments, and partially overpainted, the iconography is largely intact; this text takes into account only the iconographic details left uncompromised by these interventions. UV and X-ray analyses were performed by Jean-François de Lapérouse, Conservator, Department of Objects Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
 2. For *diwans*, or official meetings, held in gardens, see Allegranzi 2014, pp. 104–5. The *Kitab al-diryaq* (cat. 106) includes a painting of an enthroned prince holding court within a domed building set in a garden; see Grube 1994, pp. 31–32.
 3. Marçais 1960.
 4. Some scholars relate the lack of information on palaces to the persistence of nomadic traditions among the Great Seljuqs, who would not have built palaces within cities but, rather, resided in the surrounding environs. There is indeed evidence of their establishment of camps as they followed their flocks, and of their use of tents; see Durand-Guédy 2013a, 2013b. The coeval Ghaznavids in Khurasan and modern-day Afghanistan often resided in palatial complexes composed of several structures and gardens; see Allegranzi 2014. Other gardens created by Malik Shah were the Bagh-i Karan (Garden of the Boundary), Bagh-i Ahmad Siyah (Garden of Black Ahmad), and the Bagh-i Bayt al-Mal (Garden of the Treasury). See Durand-Guédy 2010a, pp. 97–99; Rawandi in Browne 1902, pp. 598–99; Zahir al-din Nishāpūrī in

- Durand-Guédy 2010a, p. 98 and n. 134. For variations on the term *kushk* in Ghaznavid and Seljuq sources, see Allegranzi 2014, p. 101 n. 36.
5. Meisami 2003b, p. 370: "The early Ghaznavid panegyrist were well aware of the garden as the most powerful figure for both court and patron." See also Hanaway 1989.
6. Quoted in Tetley 2009, p. 116.
7. Guest and Ettinghausen 1961, pp. 43–55.

Cat. 23

1. New York 1983, p. 53.
2. See cats. 1a–j, in particular 1a.
3. Allan 1986, p. 15, fig. 72.
4. See New York 1983, pp. 52–53, for a full explanation of the construction of the roundel.

Cat. 24

1. Hillenbrand, R., et al. 2011, p. 41.
2. Al-Washsha 2004, *passim*.
3. Technical examinations were carried out by Florica Zaharia, Conservator in Charge, Department of Textile Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. For the Tatar style as well as the other dominant style of the period, *aqbiya turkiyya*, see Stillman 2000, p. 63. Similar ties are probably represented on the left side of the waist of a seated ruler dressed *al-aqbiya turkiyya* in fig. 52.
4. Hillenbrand, R., et al. 2011, p. 41.
5. *Ibid*.
6. Cleveland and New York 1997–98, pp. 32, 34–35, nos. 3, 5.
7. As determined by Florica Zaharia.

Cat. 25

1. This term may be anachronistic for the period but was widely applied in later sources and scholarly works. See Stillman 2000, p. 64, and pls. 17, 22–23; Stillman, Stillmann, and Majda 1986; Reinhart and Dozy 1845, pp. 352–62; and Mayer 1952, pp. 21–22 and n. 1.
2. Metropolitan Museum (30.94 and 1984.344). For the latter textile, see Cleveland and New York 1997–98, pp. 156–57, no. 44, which attributes it to the eastern Iranian region (mid-13th century).
3. Concha Herrero Carretero in Madrid 2005, p. 175, no. 20.
4. See Gabrieli 1960 and Stillman, Stillmann, and Majda 1986.
5. Persson 2014, pp. 118–19.
6. The robe in question was sold at Sotheby's, London 2010, lot 130.

Cats. 26, 27

1. Ghabin 1991, p. 87.
2. *Ibid*, p. 88.
3. However, cat. 1a, a nearly lifesize gypsum-plaster figure, wears a choker with

round beads and a slightly larger pendant bead, which may be analogous to the ones on these necklaces.

4. Melikian-Chirvani 1970, p. 237, fig. 44. On p. 235, fig. 40, and p. 236, fig. 43, all the beads appear to be pearls.
5. One such dapping block, most likely from the tenth or eleventh century, was excavated at Istakhr. See Allan 1986, p. 16, fig. 75.
6. Firdawsi 1905–25, v. 199–200.

Cats. 28, 29

1. Soucek 1992.
2. Flood 2009, pp. 76–83; Amirsoleimani 2003, pp. 234–35.
3. For slaves' earrings, see a passage in Rawandi, translated in Brown 1902, p. 596. For unenslaved persons wearing hoop earrings, see the attendants and genii flanking the seated ruler in the frontispiece to vol. 17 of the *Kitab al-aghani*, Millet Kütüphanesi, Feyzullah Efendi Madrasa, Istanbul (1566; fol. 1r); see Contadini 2012, pl. 17.
4. For the hypothesis that the hoard was hidden in the early 1080s during Malik Shah and Takesh's struggle for the town, see Khojanyazov 1977, pp. 38–40. The provenance of the group is given as "from New Nisa" in Ministry of Culture of Turkmenistan 1998, p. 19. My thanks to Aleksandr Naymark for his help retrieving and reading the Russian text.
5. According to Bayhaqi, a bracelet was among the gifts granted by the caliph to the Ghaznavid sultan Mas'ud I. Other gifts included a choker, a belt, a crown, sewn garments, a turban, and a sword, all worn by the sultan over the course of a long ceremony; see Amirsoleimani 2003, pp. 234–35.
6. The composition of the metal core is not specified; see Allan 1986, p. 16, fig. 75. For a comparison, see a silver bracelet in the Metropolitan Museum (1981.232.4). The pieces from Turkmenistan may have been part of men's military armor; Ruslan Muradov, personal communication. New York 1983, p. 43, mentions a similar piece seen on the Tehran art market.
7. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Umar al-Sufi (903–986). The manuscript is preserved in the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (MS Marsh 144). See also Wellesz 1959, pls. 5, 6, figs. 10, 11. Recent, unpublished research suggests that the dated colophon is a later addition, and that the actual date for the manuscript is ca. A.H. 575/A.D. late 12th century. See http://www.staff.science.uu.nl/~gent0113/alsufi/alsufi_manuscripts.htm (accessed June 15, 2015).

8. The Baghdad manuscript is in the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (MS MI-02-1998-SO; fols. 93r, v, 62v, 63r); see King, Da., Brend, and Hillenbrand, R., 1998. The Mosul manuscript is in the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (MS Hunt 212); see Wellesz 1964, pp. 89–91. A later depiction of a bracelets and anklets with similar beads and, possibly, double shanks is in the 1237 *Maqamat* of al-Hariri (cat. 86), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (MS Arabe 5847; fol. 122v).
9. See New York 1983, p. 40 n. 16. See also a bracelet in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (58.6), illustrated in *ibid*, p. 40, with previous reference to a large number of comparable bracelets in both silver and gold; Segall 1938, p. 144, no. 225, pl. 44.

Cats. 30, 31

1. Content et al. 1987, pp. 57–58, nos. 19, 20; Spink and Son 1986, p. 46, no. 33.
2. Melikian-Chirvani 1970, p. 189 and p. 41, fig. 55.
3. New York 1983, p. 83, no. 49b. See also Content et al. 1987, p. 44, no. 13.
4. New York 1983, p. 78, no. 45.

Cat. 32

1. For the ring, see Spink and Son 1986, p. 55, no. 51. For the ewers, see Gibson 2008–9, figs. 10, 11; and Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (I.5364).

Cat. 33

1. Milan and Vienna 2010–11, p. 274, no. 253.
2. Roux 1975; Widengren 1968; Soucek 1992, pp. 76–79, 83–86, 90–92; Allsen 1997, pp. 84–86. For examples in Ghaznavid contexts, see Amirsoleimani 2003, pp. 225, 227–28ff.
3. Pancaroğlu 2004; Kuehn 2011.
4. Snelders 2010, pp. 277, 301–4, pls. 43, 60–62. The building was allegedly destroyed in the spring of 2015.
5. The plaque has been attributed to both Iran (Jenkins, ed. 1983, p. 68; Milan and Vienna 2010–11, p. 274, no. 253) and West Central Asia (Kuehn 2011, p. 97, no. 94, pl. 69). A similar plaque in the Fursiyya Art Foundation, Vaduz, is attributed to Syria or southern Anatolia, 12th–13th century (Paris 2002–3, p. 189, no. 160).
6. A less attested variation in Anatolia shows a sword; see, e.g., Pancaroğlu 2004, fig. 8. The few dragon-slayer images known from Iran do, for the most part, include a sword, for instance, on the inlaid-metal Bobrinski bucket in Saint Petersburg (CA-12687). A *mina'i* tile in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., shows a horseman wielding a

weapon that was left unpainted but, from the position of his arm, may have been a bow. For these and other Iranian examples, see Kuehn 2011, pp. 96–98, pl. 22 (no. 96), pl. 68 (no. 90), pl. 69 (no. 95). Sagittarius, depicted as a bow-wielding centaur fighting a dragon, is iconographically comparable; see cat. 120. Danishmendid and Rum Seljuq copper coins also bear similarities; see Pancaroğlu 2004, p. 156, figs. 6, 7.

7. Anatolian depictions of the horseman impaling a dragon may have carried this symbolic value, as suggested by a stucco panel from one of the Seljuq palatine buildings in Konya and by a group of bronze candlesticks; see Pancaroğlu 2004, pp. 158–59, figs. 8, 9; see also cat. 92. Together with the latter group, an image semantically close to our plaque is an early thirteenth-century mirror from the Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Istanbul (2/1792), in which a horseman with a falcon and a dog are depicted beside a dragon. See Kuehn 2011, pl. 52 (no. 33), where it is attributed to Anatolia or the Jazira; and Pancaroğlu 2004, fig. 10, where it is attributed to Anatolia.

Cat. 34

1. Transcription and translation, in French, in Paris 1971, pp. 97–99, no. 135.
2. For instance, during births: in fol. 122v of the *Maqamat* of al-Hariri (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, MS Arabe 5847), Abu Zayd writes incantations for a woman in labor, while an attendant at the bottom left holds a pyxis-shaped incense burner. For more on fragrance in the Islamic world, see Copenhagen 2015, pp. 5–16. On aromatics see also Newid 2010, and Gyselen et al. 1998.
3. Aromatics and perfumes were traded in a designated section of the bazaar, *suq al-attariyyin* (market of the perfumers) or *al-attariyyin* (the perfumers); see Ağa-Oğlu 1945, p. 29. For their role as gifts or tribute, see Copenhagen 2015, p. 6.
4. Newid 2010, p. 51.
5. See Ward 1990–91, p. 68, fig. 1, which illustrates the *Maqamat* example cited in note 2 above. For an Ilkhanid example, see New York and Los Angeles 2002–3, p. 116, fig. 134.
6. Ağa-Oğlu 1945. The function of these incense burners is confirmed by an inscription on one in the British Museum, London (see fig. 54): "Within me is hellfire but without float the perfumes of Paradise." Although their exterior shape resembles incense burners, the deep containers for coals and incense have been replaced by shallow saucers richly inlaid with precious

metal, which are unlikely to have contained burning coals. The saucers may have instead held perfumed candles or aromatic oils. For a full discussion of the form and function of these incense burners, see Ward 1990–91, especially p. 69, fig. 2, and p. 80, fig. 14, which show images and a reading of the incense burner in the British Museum.

- For animal-shaped incense burners, see Baer 1983, pp. 43–61. Further examples of birds of prey are in the Metropolitan Museum (1987.355.2) and the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (MW.282.2006).
- Eyes inlaid with glass are peculiar to this group of metalwork. While those with eyes of turquoise are common (see cats. 21a, 136a), this example is among the few known in glass. According to Anna Colinet, the eye inlaid with opaque turquoise glass supports an Iranian origin. See Colinet in Makriou, ed. 2012, pp. 111–13.

Cat. 35

- Canby 2012, p. 126, fig. 15.
- Tait et al. 1991, pp. 128–29, fig. 161, is a related example. The shape has continued in use in various media until the present day.
- Copenhagen 2015, p. 7.
- Ahsan 1979, p. 161.
- Ibid., p. 162.

Cats. 36a–c

- Medieval hammams have been uncovered at Nishapur (in use up to the late 12th century), Ashkavar, north of Qazvin (12th–13th century; Wilkinson 1986, pp. 268–89), Taras (10th–11th century), Siraf (before A.H. 441/A.D. 1050; Whitehouse 1972, pp. 78–80), the Kirman area (11th century; Spuler 1952, p. 501), and Ani, Armenia (Minorsky and V. Barthold 1937, p. 105). See also Floor and Kleiss 1989.
- Kai Kā'ūs 1951, p. 79.
- Wilkinson 1986, p. 271, suggests that this may be owing to the use of a non-waterproof plaster. However, ongoing analysis of the fragments by Federico Carò, Associate Research Scientist, Department of Scientific Research, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, suggests that some of the layers are indeed waterproof *sarruj*.
- Floor and Kleiss 1989.
- Kai Kā'ūs 1951, p. 79.
- According to Wilkinson 1986, p. 270, fig. 4.15, “pumice stones of particularly brutal roughness” were excavated together with other personal-care objects from drains and latrines of the Qanat Tepe hammam.

- See Watson 2004, pp. 115–17, no. Ab.11. Bath scrapers similar to cat. 36a, probably made from the same mold, are in the Metropolitan Museum (26.102.7) and the Musée du Louvre, Paris (Scerrato 1995, fig. 7); and to cat. 36b, in the Metropolitan Museum (26.102.9).
- A bath scraper similar to fig. 55, probably made from the same mold, is at the Louvre; see Scerrato 1995/2014, fig. 10. See also the cast-bronze group of felines with incised and inlaid decoration in *ibid*.
- Hartner and Ettinghausen 1964, pp. 170–71; Watson 2004, pp. 116–17.
- Baer 1965, pp. 70–71, figs. 88–91.
- The presence of a workshop in the citadel is deduced from a passage in *al-Ta'rikh al-yamini* (A.H. 1286/A.D. 1869) by the eleventh-century historian al-'Utbi, but its production may have been limited to royal commissions. Herat is the best known production center; see Melikian-Chirvani 1982b.
- See one example depicting Harun in the bathhouse, painted in 1494–95 by Bihzad in a *Khamsa* of Nizami (British Library, London, Or. 6810, fol. 27v; see Bahari 1996, p. 135, fig. 73).
- Scerrato 1995/2014, pp. 716–19.

Cat. 37

- Reading by Abdullah Ghouchani.
- For the Cappella Palatina and many more comparative images, see Grube and Johns 2005, figs. 24–27, 44, 45.
- See, for instance, a tenth-century gold ewer inscribed with the name and titles of Abu Mansur 'Izz al-Amir al-Bakhtiyar b. Mu'izz al-Dawla in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, D.C. (43.1); a marble basin from Ghazni dated A.H. [4]82/A.D. 1[0]89, from the Rawza Museum of Islamic Art, Ghazni (M41; see Rugiadi 2012, p. 1273); and the paintings in the mausoleum of Kharragan I (Daneshvari 1986, fig. 30).
- Athir al-Din Ākhsikatī 1958, p. 132, translated in Daneshvari 1994, p. 196. The *simurgh* is a mythical salvific bird that appears in the *Shahnama*.
- Baer 1981, p. 17; Daneshvari 1986; Daneshvari 1994. See also cat. 38, with additional references.
- Mina'i* sherds most often originate from standardized productions with similar, repetitive depictions. They have been excavated from most urban sites in Iran and Central Asia that saw occupation in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They seem to be most commonly found at Rayy (see cat. 58), less so in Isfahan, Nishapur (unpublished fragments, Metropolitan Museum), Siraf, Ghazni, Jam, and Merv.

- See Giunta forthcoming for the enumeration.
- "Amir al-Mu'minin Sayf al-dawla Hamdān of the Banū Salgūk" (Wiet 1932a, pp. 23, 52, 54, 164).
- Savage-Smith 1997a, p. 73; Giunta forthcoming.

Cat. 38

- See cat. 60, note 1.
- This second “wall” is a distinct, multifunctional feature of medieval *habbs* that was forged in an individual step; see type II and III in Reitlinger 1951. The openwork in this example is characteristic of style III.
- Examples of truncated drinking cups include cats. 56 (silver), 65, and 66 (both glass). The *mandil*, a precious cloth affordable only by the elite, frequently appears in tandem with wine cups as an insignia of nobility. For more on the *mandil*, see Rosenthal 1991. For additional *habbs*, see Reitlinger 1951, pp. 15–20.
- On the peacock's long-standing paradisiacal and aristocratic connotations, as well as its association with eternal life, see Özbek 1999. The motif's appearance in coronation scenes suggests its further use as a symbol of sovereignty.
- For Iranian and Central Asian examples of the enthronement motif, see cats. 1a–j. For other *habbs* with enthronement scenes, see Reitlinger 1951, figs. 15, 17–20.
- The known imagery on *habbs* includes mother earth goddesses (cat. 60), apotropaic lions, bejeweled female busts (cat. 158), and a rare example of a warrior fighting a unicorn (see Berlin 2006–7, p. 47), which together with the epigraphic content of several examples and the archaeological contexts in which some were found, emphasize that magic and protection were also associated with their presumed functionality (see cat. 60 and related bibliography).
- The iconography of enthronement scenes thus acts as an illustration of political texts, such as the “mirror for princes,” describing virtues of ideal kingship; see Lambton 1962.

Cat. 39

- For the concept of astral kingship in Islamic art, see Baer 1981.
- Amirsoleimani 2002, pp. 164–65.
- Kurz (1972, pp. 302–3) reads the thrones depicted in paintings from the thirteenth century onward as folding chairs, such as that of Badr al-Din Lu'lu' in the frontispiece to the *Kitab al-aghani* in Istanbul. But this may not always be the case, especially with regard to those thrones depicted with a high seat-back.

4. Esin 1970 traces depictions of rulers in a seated position and flanked by courtiers to ancient Turkish traditions, together with the cross-legged position of the enthroned figure, which he also associates to the Buddhist tradition. The use of the latter depiction in the twelfth century may, however, be more complex and derive from other sources.

- The throne was made in the citadel of Ghazni (al-'Utbi in Bombaci 1964; Bombaci 1959).

Cats. 40, 41

- That cat. 40 and a large number of similar bowls (e.g., Metropolitan Museum, 64.178) bear dates in the month of Muharram allows for a possible Shiite reading of the iconography, for important Shiite commemorative ceremonies take place that month. Additionally, the vessels' makers descend from the line of 'Ali, from which the Shiite faction emerged.
- Majalis* were already well documented by the Abbasid period and go back to Sasanian times (Bosworth et al. 1986).
- Pancaroglu 2005, p. 388; Pancaroglu 2007, pp. 138–39. Blair (2008, p. 167) compares Abu Zayd's familiar use of poetical fragments to that of contemporary literates (such as Rawandi as investigated by Julie Scott Meisami).
- Blair 2008; Watson 1994; Watson 1985; Pancaroglu 2012. The *nisba* al-Kashani, with which Abu Zayd is often named, derives from earlier misreadings of the inscriptions and is not found in any of his signed pieces (Watson 1994, pp. 171–73, Graves 2014; *contra* Blair 2008, p. 161, which asserts his family was from Kashan). Abu Zayd's only direct relationship with Kashan is his collaborations with the Abu Tahir family of potters, who use the *nisba* Qashani (*sic*) in some of their inscriptions.
- Abdullah Ghouchani has shown that the poems found on *mina'i* vessels may have been taken from anthologies, which would have been available to potters and read aloud in ateliers (quoted in Blair 2008, p. 167). A mystical reading is also possible; see Houston 2010, pp. 90–91.
- For in-depth analyses of the complexity of Abu Zayd's vessels, see Ettinghausen 1961, p. 58, and Pancaroglu 2012.
- Watson 1985.
- See Ettinghausen (1961, pp. 52–53) for the Persian expression “az mah ta mahi” (from the moon to the fish) for depictions of moon-faced figures and fish, which may convey a range of meanings, from the mystical to the erotic.

Cat. 42

1. *Halwa* are pastries composed of a starch, oil or butter, sugar or honey, water, and aromatics. For the broad meaning of the term *halwa* in medieval Anatolia and Cairo, see Trépanier 2014, p. 116. For Baghdad sweetmeats, see Perry 2005, pp. 98–101; for Cairo, with further references to Baghdad and Iran, see Lewicka 2011, pp. 289, 291–92, 308–14.
2. The association is so strong that the “very mention [of *halwa*] becomes a device to emphasize the religious character of a situation.” *Halwa* also had a role in mourning rituals. See Trépanier 2014, pp. 78, 116–17.
3. The use of compartmented dishes for savory items such as dips, relishes, and pickles cannot be excluded; see Lewicka 2011, p. 346, and Perry 2005, pp. 86–91. Other suggested functions include lamps (Wilkinson 1973, pp. 237–38, no. 38) or ink holders (Watson 2004, p. 264).
4. Lewicka 2011, p. 430.
5. Rosen-Ayalon 1973.
6. See Wilkinson 1973 for examples in monochrome ware (pp. 237–38, 248, nos. 38 [eight compartments] and 39 [five compartments]) and buff ware (pp. 15–16, no. 48, with a Nestorian cross); and Fehérvári 1976b for one in splashware, with an applied bird. For an example most likely collected at Raqqa (one of a group of vessels confiscated by the Ottoman administration), see Jenkins-Madina 2006, appendix 1, p. 219, no. 3502. An object similar to cat. 42 in the Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass. (2002.50.59), also shows a human figure at center. Other examples of Jaziro-Syrian lusterware differ in that the hollows are not inserted into the dish and/or they do not have a high foot; see British Museum, London (1903.0411.2); Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul (1557); and Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (1978.2171).
7. For al-Biruni’s text and an object excavated at Afrasiyab that might correspond to al-Biruni’s description, see Grenet and Moulérac 1995. See, for an example of this interpretation, Ladan Akbarnia in Barcelona 2009, p. 182.
8. Glass examples are known from the eleventh-century Serçe Limani shipwreck; see Bass et al. 2009, pp. 111–14.
9. Grube and Johns 2005, figs. 38–41. On the short pants traditionally worn by wrestlers, see Piemontese 1964, pp. 465–69. For acrobats also wearing a shirt, see cat. 6 and the *Maqamat* frontispiece dated 1334 (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, MS A.F.9; fol. 1).

10. See Piemontese 1964, pp. 471–73 and n. 81, for the history of the *zurkhana*, its religious significance, and its affiliation to the *futuwwa*, most likely since the twelfth century. See also Ettinghausen 1965a, pp. 222–23.
11. Per thirteenth-century Iraqi illustrated manuscripts, the figure’s dark skin may indicate that he is Indian. Flood 2009, p. 21, with previous references. D’Erme 1997, p. 17, gives a symbolic interpretation of the light- and dark-skinned wrestlers in the Cappella Palatina, Palermo, which he links to Iranian Zoroastrian traditions.

Cat. 43

1. Soustiel 1985, p. 103, no. 106.
2. Scerrato 2014a gives a full list.
3. A comparable piece is in the Museo Nazionale d’Arte Orientale “Giuseppe Tucci,” Rome (2679). For this interpretation, linking the sugarloaf as a symbol of the *haoma* or *soma* of the Indo-Iranian mythology, and reporting of the *shiriburi* ceremony, performed as part of marriage rituals in Afghanistan, in which a sugarloaf is split with a specific type of axe (*qand-i shikan*), see Scerrato 2014a, pp. 24–25.
4. For parallels in museum collections, see Graves 2008, p. 233 and n. 11. For a summary of the lion’s symbolic connection to the sun and, thus, to Nawruz, see *ibid.*, pp. 237, 249.
5. Also notable is a unique example in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (L4577), the roof plaque of which displays a seated or enthroned figure with attendants, another recurrent image related to the beneficial influence of the sovereign and, possibly, to fecundity. See Scerrato 2014a, pp. 15, 18. I thank Julia Gonnella, Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, for her help in retrieving an image of this object.

Cat. 44

1. Reading and translation per Fehérvári 1976a, p. 72, except for the word القباية, which Abdullah Ghouchani reads as القباية.
2. Recently published in Berlin 2007–8, no. 99.
3. While rectangular examples are common, there are only a few known square-shaped ones, including one in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (see Paris 2001, pp. 50–52), and another in the Metropolitan Museum (56.144). Both, however, are more sophisticated in execution and have inscriptions on the sides. For a simpler square version with an octagonal recessed part, see Melikian-Chirvani 1982b, pp. 99–100.

4. While the animated script is unique to inlaid metalwork, the floral motifs do appear in other media.
5. Redford 2005, pp. 290, 299.

Cats. 45–47

1. Transcription and translation in Jenkins, ed. 1983, p. 67.
2. Canby 1983, p. 10. See also cat. 42.
3. For precious metals, see Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 10, pl. 1351C. For other metals, see Melikian-Chirvani 1982b, p. 125, no. 54; Münever Emiñoğlu in Tomtom 2001, p. 96; and Whitcomb 1985, p. 175, fig. 65g (and p. 169 for references to other examples). A cast and engraved brass spoon is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum (1978.378).
4. Lakpour 1997, pp. 47–48, no. 24.

Cat. 48

1. Reading and translation per Jenkins-Madina 2006, p. 126.
2. Raqqa is the capital of Diyar Mudar, one of the three *diyar*, or subregions, into which the Jazira was divided by the Arab geographers; see Canard 1965. On the bowl’s shape, see Mason 2004, p. 117; Jenkins-Madina 2006, p. 173, profile 3, “Biconical bowl.”
3. Jenkins-Madina 2006, pp. 166–68, patterns 2, 4, 6, 18, and 19. For a list of production centers, see Tonghini 1998, pl. 38.

Cat. 49

1. For a reading with English translation, see Rice, D. S., 1953b, pp. 234–35.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 238, dates the bowl to 1210–59, and Raby 2012, p. 58, to ca. 1225–50. However, the *nisba* “al-Maliki al-Badri” suggests that it was made during the independent reign of Badr al-Din (1233–59). “Al-Malikiyya al-badriyya” also appears engraved on the London tray (cat. 12a), while on the Munich tray (cat. 12b), a similar inscription gives the *nisba* “al-Badriyya” but omits “al-Malikiyya.” No coin or building inscription giving Badr al-Din’s name and royal titles is known before 1233. See also Van Berchem 1906/1978; Hagedorn 1992, p. 211; Album 2011, p. 201.
3. In the eastern realm inlaid brass was made not only for the court but also for urban authorities, merchants, and other wealthy society members.
4. Rice, D. S., 1953b, pp. 232–33, was the first to point out this relationship. See also Raby 2012, p. 24. Another explanation for this shape, unique in metal, was expressed by Baer 1983, p. 118, and Allan 1985, p. 139, who suggest that both the ceramics and this rare

- brass example were modeled on earlier vessels in precious metals that have not survived. The hypothesis is supported by the comparably shaped, though smaller and footless, silver drinking cups produced in Iran during the tenth and eleventh centuries; see cat. 56 and another example, now in Tehran, in Blair 2014, p. 28, fig. 2.13.
5. Other key pieces are a pen box in the David Collection, Copenhagen (1/1997), and a candlestick in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (7431). For the most recent discussion on inlaid brass related to the Mosul school, see Raby 2012, specifically pp. 23ff. for this bowl and other examples of the core group. See also Raby 2014.
 6. See, for instance, cats. 12a, 137.
 7. Raby 2012, p. 28. Rice, D. S., 1953b, p. 234, suggests that “the choice of the honorific ‘The Star of the Faith’ [Najm al-Din] for an officer of a ruler whose title was Badr al-Din, ‘The Full Moon of the Faith,’ may be more than a coincidence.”
 8. On food in Seljuq times, see Trépanier 2014.

Cat. 50

1. See Gibson 2008–9, p. 42 n. 16, for a comprehensive list of the figures in the group. For this jug in particular, see Los Angeles 1973, p. 49, no. 79.
2. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (OC.163-1946); see Washington, D.C., and other cities 1989–90, p. 20. I thank the Fitzwilliam’s Victoria Avery for the images. It may also depict an entertainer masked as a monkey, for which see Ettinghausen 1965a, pp. 218–19.
3. The story is narrated by Sibte al-Jawzi and mentioned in Gibson 2008–9, p. 48, with earlier bibliography.
4. Van Gelders 2005.
5. Lewicka 2011, pp. 460–64; Sadan 1991.
6. For instance, Farrukhi (d. 1037); see Omidsalar 1996.
7. The earliest mention of *kumis*, a libation of Mongol tradition, is in the 1096 *Kudatku-bilik* (Royal wisdom), a didactic poem written in Turkish by Balasaghuni at the Qarakhanid court. Subsequent mentions postdate its appearance to after the arrival of the Mongols; see Barthold, W., 1927.
8. See Gibson 2008–9, pp. 46–47, and Pancaroğlu 2003, p. 41.

Cat. 51

1. Watson 2004, p. 347, no. O.1.
2. New York 2011, p. 406.
3. Watson 2004, p. 347, notes the Fatimid connection. For the example in Cairo, see Werner Forman Archive, Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, <http://wfa.glbx.image-data.com/preview-action-ndf.do?prevbarcode=17571056> (accessed October 7, 2015).

Cat. 52

1. This name refers to the Sasanian king Anushirvan the Just. The poem appears in *Libab al-bab* (late 13th century) by Muhammad 'Awfi.
2. This quatrain, by an anonymous poet, appears in the *Nuzhat al-majalis*. All readings of inscriptions by Abdullah Ghouchani; translations by Maryam Ekhtiar, Associate Curator, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
3. Blair 2008, p. 171, which attributes this bowl on the basis of style to the master potter Abu Zayd (see cat. 40), proposes that the word before *wuzara* is *mu'ayyad*, of which only the last letter is visible, meaning "assistant of viziers." The bowl is very close in style, including the inscription reserved against a blue glaze, to one sold at Sotheby's, New York 1989, lot 215.
4. Nafisi 1960, p. 140, ll. 1778, 1780.
5. Bahrāmī 1949, pl. 74.

Cat. 53

1. Carboni 2001, pp. 178–79, no. 44c.
2. *Kitab al-diryāq* (ca. 1250), Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna (A.F. 10; fol. 1r); see Contadini, ed. 2007, fig. 6.
3. Goitein 1967–73, vol. 6 (1971), p. 13.
4. Kröger 1995, pp. 14–17.

Cat. 54

1. A similar bottle from the same group is in the Metropolitan Museum (57.61.6). Few objects in the assemblage are known from controlled archaeological findings, although one bowl is featured in an unpublished report (1936) of the Rayy excavations to the trustees of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; my thanks to Laura Weinstein in Boston for allowing me access to the archive. Another bowl, formerly in the Joan Taub Ades Collection, and one bottle, in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran (4753), are said to come from the Gurgan finds; see Bahrāmī 1949, p. 67, pls. 32–33.
2. The objects in question are in The Robert Lehman Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1975.1.1640), and the Miho Museum, Koka (Miho Museum 1997, pp. 288–89, no. 140); see also Komaroff 2012, pp. 357–58; and Stefano Carboni in New York 1996, pp. 160–61.
3. As suggested by the small variations in pattern. According to Linda Komaroff, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, some of the gilding on this bottle may belong to a later restoration (personal communication). Compositional analysis by SEM-EDS, carried out by Mark T. Wypyski, Research Scientist, Department of Scientific Research, The Metropolitan Museum

of Art, New York, indicated the presence of clay and silica along with some lime in samples taken from both the relief decoration and the stonepaste body of Metropolitan Museum, 57.61.6.

4. Modern overpainting sometimes makes it difficult to decipher whether in-glaze painting was carried out before or after the application of relief decoration (for example, in Metropolitan Museum, 57.61.6). Modern interventions include added relief decoration (for example, in Metropolitan Museum, 13.93.1, 57.36.8, and 12.224.1; personal communication with Jean-François de Lapérouse, Conservator, Department of Objects Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Furthermore, it is not always clear whether the relief decoration was added before or after the first firing.
5. This practice of displaying precious objects—e.g., porcelain and ceramic vessels—in specially made, customized niches is attested in sixteenth-century Safavid and Indian manuscript paintings. For medieval examples of niches excavated at Nishapur, see Wilkinson 1986, pp. 79–80, fig. 1.46.

Cat. 55

1. Chemical analysis of cat. 55 revealed a soda-lime-silica glass made with plant ash but no tin oxide; see Whitehouse 2010, p. 51 n. 67. The Nishapur bottle, excavated at Tepe Madrasa, is now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum (48.101.10). Kröger (1995, pp. 126–27, no. 171) attributes it to the tenth century, while Jenkins (1986, p. 29) attributes it to the first half of the eleventh, comparing its neck to those of similar finds at Serçe Limani. For the Chinese bottle, see An 1991, pp. 134–35, fig. 16.
2. For marvered glass, see Allan 1995, p. 9. An Iranian example with glass threads (11th–12th century) is in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (I.12/66); see Kuehn 2011, no. 42.
3. While an Egyptian provenance for the San Marco bowl is often suggested (see note 5 below), the shape of the body and foot support an Iranian attribution. Other opaque turquoise vessels include two bowls in the Corning Museum of Glass (69.1.32 and 71.1.23); a cup in the Gemeentemuseum, The Hague (OG 01-1930); bottles for perfume or kohl in the Metropolitan Museum (10.130.2649, with luster decoration) and the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (I.4331); and a jug in the British Museum, London (OA 1945.10-17.260).
4. An 1991, pp. 130, 134–35, figs. 12, 16. Opaque glass coin weights may be a

useful parallel for the dating of turquoise opaque glass. They were produced in Egypt since the beginning of the eighth century in a variety of colors, but they only started appearing in opaque turquoise from the last quarter of the tenth century, during the reign of al-'Aziz (975–96). The use of opaque glass increased throughout the eleventh century to completely replace transparent glass in the twelfth, a trend that continued until 1229 (Kolbas 1983).

5. Supporters of this theory interpret the inscription on the San Marco bowl as an attempt to authenticate its material as turquoise, for Khurasan was known for this semiprecious stone (Lamm 1938–39, p. 2597). While no medieval turquoise vessels survive for comparison, glazed rock-crystal beads, several of which were excavated at Nishapur, may represent an attempt to mimic precious stones (New York 1983, p. 27). For more on glass imitating precious materials, see Shalem 2012.
6. Similarly shaped stonepaste vessels include scalloped and carinated bowls, handled cups, and jugs.
7. Rugiadi 2010b, p. 179.
8. Abu Dulaf (*Risala*, mentioned by Yaqubi, mid-10th century) describes what may be opaque glass made in Fars by calling it "Chinese pottery"; a passage in al-Biruni's *Kitab al-jamahir fi ma'rifat al-jawahir* (second quarter of the 11th century) has been interpreted as describing a ceramic imitation of "Chinese bowls" (Allan, Llewellyn, and Schweizer 1973, p. 172). Pinder-Wilson 1991, p. 128, no. 61, notes that the glass of the British Museum jug (see note 3 above) is "slightly translucent when held up to a bright light: it may have been intended as a substitute for porcelain." One of the Coming Museum bowls (71.1.23) is also described as "semi-translucent"; see Coming 1957, p. 235, no. 463.

Cats. 56, 57

1. Francesca Leoni in New York 2011, p. 127, no. 83. Inscription read and translated by Abdullah Ghouchani.
2. Translation in Ward 1993, p. 54.
3. Both silver vessels and the drinking of wine were officially forbidden by religious law, despite their use and practice in private; see Leoni in New York 2011, p. 127, no. 83.
4. Melikian-Chirvani 1992.
5. Rowson 1998a; Rowson 1998b. His *diwan* has not come down to us, but this poem, among others, was quoted by al-Tha'alibi (see note 6 below).
6. Abu Mansur al-Tha'alibi (d. 1038), a litterateur from Nishapur, praised Ibn Sukkara's for his provocative, witty spirit and literary skill (see note 7 below).

7. See al-Tha'alibi 1982, pp. 35–36. The cup is part of a hoard, allegedly found at Nihavand, which possibly belonged to an otherwise unknown courtier, Abu Shuja' Inju Takin, as the inscription on a buckle from the same assemblage may suggest (Gray 1939; Ward 1993, p. 54).
8. Abdullah Ghouchani, quoted in Blair 2008, pp. 162–63.
9. For similarly shaped silver vessels, see the hoard of objects found at Hamadan (Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 6, pl. 1346C).
10. Hemispherical footed cups and cups of closed shape are also known from the *babas*; see Stark 2008, pp. 131–35, figs. 3c, 41a, 93d, 94a, e. For a *baba* without a cup, see cat. 190. A comparable gold bowl, showing roundels with lions and an eight-petaled cavetto encircling a medallion with three hares joined at the ears, is in the Reza Abbasi Museum, Tehran (2618).
11. According to Jean-François de Lapérouse, Conservator, Department of Objects Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the process involves an amalgam of gold and mercury.

Cat. 58

1. A. S. Melikian-Chirvani in Gyselen 1992, pp. 135–42.
2. The term "stonepaste" describes a ceramic body formed of a mixture containing silica with minor amounts of silicate minerals, clay, alkalis, and/or glass frit. A typical recipe is 70–80% quartz, 10–20% very fine clay, and 10% frit, and it is relatively difficult to throw. See cats. 108a–i for a thorough discussion of the emergence of this technology in Iran, the Jazira, and Greater Syria, and its possible origins in Egypt. See also Mason 2004, pp. 73, 94, 123; and McCarthy and Holod 2012.

Cat. 59

1. Watson 2004, p. 136. Ghouchani 1999, p. 141, provides a slightly different translation of this inscription: "It behooves you to drink cooked wine, for it is licit, provided it does not affect reason and understanding." This translation does not express the conditional aspect of the explanation of the legality of cooked wine.
2. Watson 2004, p. 136, explains the process at length.
3. Ghouchani 1999, p. 142. He discusses several vessels made from this mold; *ibid.*, pp. 142–47.
4. Qur'an 2:219, 4:43, and 5:90–91.
5. The word can refer to wine or another beverage made of fermented dates.
6. Melikian-Chirvani 1999, p. 150.
7. Opwis 2011, p. 66.

Cat. 60

1. The definitive study on these vessels remains Reitlinger 1951, pp. 11–22, which comprises a corpus of almost fifty complete and fragmentary examples. See also Bulut 1999, pp. 192–95, for examples from the northern Jazira. For the present vessel, see also Mouliérac 1999, p. 139; Eric Delpont in Paris 2001–2, p. 154, no. 135.
2. A few were found in a funerary context, at Sinn al-Dhibban and Wadi Armush, and may have been buried as incantation bowls. However, as pointed out in Reitlinger 1951, p. 15, the large size of *habbs* makes them somewhat unsuitable for grave burial. In Takrit, Mosul, and Sinjar—all centers of the Jazira—decorated examples (12th–13th century) were found under the foundations of houses, where their porous shells would drain moisture from the soil. They were also found under a Nestorian church in Mosul that was destroyed in the first half of the nineteenth century, for which see Layard 1853, pp. 279–80. At Hira *habbs* were found under eighth-century rooms; see Rice, D. T., 1934, p. 71, fig. 19.
3. Reitlinger 1951 classifies them as style II and III.
4. Owing to a highly conservative style of the imagery on several *habbs*, and particularly in style I from the early Islamic period, such vessels are believed to extend as far back as the first millennium B.C.; see *ibid.*
5. Ninmah (or Ninhursag) was a Babylonian mother goddess, while Ishtar was the goddess of fertility, love, and war. Friedrich Sarre was the first to suggest the two as possible sources for the motifs; see Sarre and Herzfeld 1911–20, vol. 4, p. 13; Sarre 1922, p. 56; and Reitlinger 1951, pp. 13, 16.
6. Reitlinger 1951, p. 21.

Cats. 61–64

1. For transcription and a tentative reading of two legible words as “Work of Sad[īq]?” see Watson 2004, p. 354.
2. On a tile of strikingly similar design in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (C444-1911), the shape of the object is much less well defined and seems to depict a fruit.
3. Cat. 62 was first published in Lane 1947, p. 27, pl. 36F.
4. Production is attested at Qanat Tepe in Nishapur (Wilkinson 1973, pp. xxxii; group 12, nos. 113–17), Isfahan (wasters were found in the excavation of the *masjid-i jami’*, unpublished), Samarqand (Shishkina and Pavchinskaja 1992–93, pp. 65, 69, 77, no. 17) and Ghazni (Fusaro forthcoming).

5. Although the manuscript is dated to A.H. 670/A.D. 1272, this painting was possibly completed in a late stage of illustrations; Barrucand (1991, pp. 120–21, fig. 39) attributes it to approximately the mid-sixteenth century.
6. The most important references are in Ettinghausen 1965b, Rogers 1969, and Savage-Smith 1997c. For the *fuqqa’* hypothesis, see Ghouchani and Adle 1992.
7. As for the retrieval of remains of mercury in some of the vessels, this is not confirmed (Savage-Smith 1997c, p. 329). The interior of the vessels usually seems virtually unsoiled.
8. An attempt in this direction is Savage-Smith 1997c. A forthcoming special issue of *Journal of Islamic Archaeology*, edited by Stéphane Pradines, will be dedicated to spheroidal vessels.
9. For examples found in the Crusader citadel in Banias and for previous references, see Sharvit 2008; see also Prag 2008, pp. 265–69, figs. 175(1–5), and Milwright 2008, pp. 177–81. For the hypothesis that the vessels might be hand grenades, see www.museum-secrets.tv/dossier.php?o=53 (accessed January 27, 2016).
10. Its worn-out inscription may or may not refer to the work of a “Sadik” (Watson 2004, p. 354, no. O.13).
11. Mexico City 1994–95, pp. 132–33.
12. Graves 2010, p. 71, with previous bibliography; an example of a rectangular tabouret is in the Metropolitan Museum (42.1.13.2).
13. Tonghini 1998, pp. 46–51, with previous bibliography; McPhillips 2012.
14. Graves 2010, pp. 71–72 and fig. 12.

Cats. 65, 66

1. Sadan 1977, p. 134.
2. Pancaroğlu 2007, p. 137, no. 89.
3. Carboni 2001, p. 172, describes the technique of this and related goblets. Carboni suggests that the goblets were stored upside down, which is borne out by the appearance of a goblet placed in this way next to a glass carafe of red wine on a *mina’i* bowl; see Folsach 2001, p. 153, no. 167.
4. Pancaroğlu 2007, p. 136.
5. For Kashan as the primary center of Persian lusterware production, see cats. 108a, g.
6. Carboni 2001, p. 172. The pair to the goblet is in the Metropolitan Museum (2000.279.1).
7. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (MS Arabe 5847; fol. 33r). See Grabar 1984, pp. 10–11; see also <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8422965p/f75.image.r=Arabe%205847.langFR> (accessed June 8, 2015).

Cat. 67

1. An additional inscription, written in *naskhi* on the interior, is illegible.
2. For the cup in general, see Jenkins-Madina 2006, pp. 129, 166, 174, profile 9 (p. 174); in the first reproduction of the object the blue paint is not visible, see Kouchakji 1923, p. 523. For urban versus rural finds, see Tonghini 1998, pp. 50–51; McPhillips 2012, p. 459; Rugiadi 2003, pp. 710–11; Milwright 2005.
3. The trench, made in the vicinity of the medieval palace of Qasr al-Banat (earlier thought to be the palace of Harun al-Rashid) in 1906–7, was initially said to have unearthed “the old *suq*.” The number of intact vessels from the Great Find was about sixty; see Yoltar-Yildirim 2013, pp. 77, 82–85, 88–89; Kouchakji 1923, pp. 523–24; Jenkins-Madina 2006, pp. 16, 27.
4. Not all the objects were illustrated in the article reporting the finding (Kouchakji 1923; see Jenkins-Madina 2006). Two are in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum (56.185.18, .25).
5. That Raqqa was a major production center is confirmed by the excavation of a large number of wasters; see Tonghini 1998, pp. 50–51; Milwright 2005, pp. 210–17; Yoltar-Yildirim 2013. For the hypothesis of the painter, see Jenkins-Madina 2006, p. 166. She also identifies three similar but unfinished objects now in the Karatay Museum, Konya, that may have been brought from Raqqa (pp. 23–25 and 33–35, appendix I).
6. Melikian-Chirvani 1974, pp. 126–27, 135. However, the size of this cup is larger.
7. As observed by most scholars working with excavated assemblages; see Tonghini 1998 and McPhillips 2012, p. 456.

Cat. 68

1. RCEA 1931–, vol. 11, no. 4267.
2. At least twelve ewers from the group survived; see Kana’an 2013. Other examples are cats. 13b, 15, 168a.
3. The name Yunus also appears on a basin, now in Kiev, that bears the name and titles of Badr al-Din Lu’lu’. Further, the date of cat. 68 falls within Badr al-Din’s reign. However, differences in style between the Kiev basin and cat. 68 complicate the possibility that both were made by the same person. See Raby 2012, pp. 26–27; Grabar 1957, p. 549.
4. Hagedorn 1992, pp. 32–34.
5. The golden tone of many Jaziran brasses suggests that they did contain a high compound of tin, but not necessarily in amounts sufficient to protect

against verdigris. One would expect a regular thin coating of tin. On the use of such ewers for drinking, see Ward 1986. On wine drinking, see Hillenbrand, R., 2014.

6. The tree at center alludes to the garden. A tavern scene in the 1237 Schefer *Maqamat*, from Baghdad (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, MS Arabe 5847, fol. 33; illustrated in Hillenbrand, R., 2014, p. 41, fig. 19), suggests that classical ceramic amphorae remained common for storing wine, while a wider dish was used for its preparation. For example, a painting in the Paris *Kitab al-diryaq* (see Pancaroğlu 2001, p. 159, fig. 4; see also cat. 106) depicts a ewer with similar shape, but it is not clear if it refers to an example in metal or ceramic where comparable shapes were in practice.
7. Hillenbrand, R., 2014, p. 44.

Cat. 69

1. Translation in Doha 2002, p. 31, no. 5.
2. Humlebaek 1987, p. 90, no. 115. Although its shape compares to medieval mortars (see cats. 97, 98), this tray stand remains the only known medieval example of its kind.
3. Common to all al-Mawsili brasses are fretwork circles and large polylobed medallions containing figural scenes; see cat. 15. Additionally, the *waq-waq* trees, the smaller circles enclosing figures, and the two hunting riders relate this tray stand to the Freer canteen (Ecker and Fitzherbert 2012, p. 178, fig. 2), which is now believed to have been made in Mosul (ca. mid-13th century) for one of the Syriac monasteries near the city; see *ibid.*
4. Compare with the Freer canteen (see note 3 above) and a candlestick, now in Doha, attributed to the 1220s–30s (Raby 2012, p. 51, fig. I.25e). The Rum Seljuq ruling elite used this pattern on banners and painted it on the walls of their palatial buildings (for example, Aspendos; see fig. 25). Red zigzags on a white ground are known in particular on suburban garden pavilions used as hunting bases around the town of Alanya, Turkey; see Redford 1993b, pp. 222–23; Redford 2000b, p. 87; Redford 2005, p. 293.
5. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence (360); see Baer 1989a, fig. 62; Raby 2012, table I.a; Raby 2014, pp. 58–59.
6. The winged angel-like figures in the enthronement scene suggest a Christian context but were actually a popular motif in the Jazira in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in several media; see, for instance, cat. 11 (Contadini 2014, p. 49; Raby 2012, p. 47, fig. a). For other examples in inlaid

brass, see Raby 2012, p. 47, fig. c, and, for comparable Christian examples, p. 50.

7. As outlined by Nizam al-Mulk, chief minister under Alp Arslan and Malik Shah, whose *Siyar al-muluk* (or *Siyasatnama*) established guidelines for the Great Seljuq rulers to follow when setting their tables for feasts. See Nizām al-Mulk 1978, p. 124.

Cat. 70

1. Viré 1965; A'lam 1990c.
2. Firdawsi 2004, p. 461.
3. Most of the painted decoration is visible only when the surface is humidified. Quite surprisingly, it shows the legs and boots of the horseman and the horse's trappings. The spotted body of the cheetah also becomes more evident.
4. Tonghini 1998.

Cat. 71

1. See Sotheby's, London 2007, lot 111. Similar bowls are in the Reza Abbasi Museum, Tehran (255), and the Musée du Louvre, Paris (MAO 2073); a bottle is in the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (AKM 552).
2. Durand-Guédy 2010a, pp. 97–99.
3. This is reflected in hyperbolic accounts. For example, the Seljuq sultan of Iraq Ghiyath al-Din (r. 1134–52) is said to have killed several lions without help from his assistants (Nishāpūrī 2001, p. 105). For a passage from the *Shahnama* on a large hunting expedition of the Sasanian king Khusraw Parviz, see cat. 70.
4. Nishāpūrī 2001, pp. 60–61.
5. Allsen 2006, pp. 186–208.
6. A'lam 1990a. For the ostentation related to falconry, see Viré 1960.
7. A'lam 1990a; A'lam 1990b.
8. Quoted in Melikian-Chirvani 1989. For the royal connotation of the falcon, see cats. 37, 131.

Cat. 72

1. The graffiti is the sole epigraphic element. It is possible that one or several inlaid inscriptions once decorated the now lost neck, which would have been contemporary with the body and contained information such as the name of the artist or of the owner, benedictions, etc.
2. The iconography and expressive figural style bear the hallmarks of the al-Mawsili artists (see, for instance, cats. 12a, b, 13a, b) and compare closely with a candlestick in Cairo that is signed by a pupil of Shuja', who decorated cat. 15; see O'Kane et al. 2006, pp. 106–7.
3. Amirs of the Seljuq Turkish ruling elite were also known to wear the *sharbus*;

see, for example, cat. 38, and

Rice, D. S., 1953c, pp. 128–35, figs. 16, 17, 19. For the *mandil*, see cat. 38 and Rosenthal 1991.

4. The variations in view are most evident in the friezes of musicians and dancers. See also cats. 15 and 68, both of which also show figures kissing the hand of the sovereign.
5. The *nawba* ceremony was already an integral part of court protocol at the caliphal court in Baghdad, during which a drum was struck several (maximum five) times at specific intervals; the greater the number of *nawbas*, the greater the prestige of the ruler/visitor. The Buyids, for example, were allowed only three *nawbas* (Hillenbrand, C., 2011, pp. 28–31).
6. From the anonymous Rum Seljuq chronicler, Jalali, ed. 1999, quoted from Mecit 2011, p. 68 and n. 19. For a Great Seljuq example of kissing the ground in combination with the *nawba*, see Hillenbrand, C., 2011, p. 30.

Cat. 73

1. Reading and translation, in Italian, in Venice 1993–94, pp. 234–37, no. 125.
2. The gold basketlike element with seated lions at the top is a later addition. The quintessential example of Herat metalwork and such ewers is cat. 85. Cat. 118 is another example from the same group. For a ceramic ewer of comparable shape, see cat. 93.
3. Blair 2014, p. 63 n. 12.
4. Such ewers commonly feature harpies along the upper body, a recumbent lion on top and at the edge of the spout, and seated lions to either side of the neck. The latter, however, are here replaced with falconers, which makes this vessel especially rare.
5. A *waqwaq* motif is an arabesque-like tree with animal heads. It evokes the talking tree with human heads that Alexander the Great is said to have encountered (as narrated in the *Shahnama*).
6. One of the most important figures in the formulation of the medieval theory on kingship was Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092) in his *Siyasatnama* (Lambton 1962, pp. 102–3). Hillenbrand, C., 2011, pp. 34–35, also points out that the hunt was a favorite pastime of Sasanian Persian nobles and continued by the Great Seljuq chiefs.
7. Firdawsi 2004, p. 461. See also cats. 70, 84.

Cat. 74

1. Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 2, p. 1305, vol. 5, pt. 1, pl. 515. The panel, in the collection of Demotte before being sold to the Seattle Art

Museum, is tentatively assigned to Rayy in various catalogues, for instance, Rome 1956, p. 257, no. 451, pl. 68. The intricate geometric interlace in the main field is based on an eight-pointed polygon and realized in a rather flat bas-relief; these features, the cursive script, and the trefoil motifs in the background all point to a date in the twelfth or thirteenth century.

2. For a notable exception, see the siege depicted on a *mina'i* plate in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (F1943.3).
3. For evidence of staff weapons in the sources, and for many examples of swords, staff weapons, and armors, see Nicolle 1982, vol. 1, pp. 86–108. A rare Iranian depiction of lamellar armors on a *mina'i* vessel is the plate in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (F1943.3); see Holod 2012, pp. 199, 214 n. 17, and fig. 9.
4. For more on the paradisiacal garden and its connection to royalty, see cat. 22 and corresponding references.
5. Translated in Tetley 2009, p. 40.

Cat. 75

1. Paris 2002–3, p. 116, no. 54; Mohamed et al. 2008, pp. 38–39, no. 9.
2. A sword of this shape, raised by Rabi' to slash Warqa, appears in an illustration of the *Warqa and Gulshah* manuscript of the second quarter of the thirteenth century; Melikian-Chirvani 1970, p. 224, fig. 19.
3. Melikian-Chirvani 1982b, pp. 96–98, no. 27.
4. Al-Sarraf 1996, vol. 1, p. 119.

Cat. 76

1. Paris 2002–3, pp. 118–19, no. 57; Mohamed et al. 2008, pp. 155–57, no. 148.
2. Mohamed et al. 2008, p. 155.
3. Ibid. For a variant, six-spoked swastika, see cat. 15.

Cat. 77

1. Read and translated by Alzahraa K. Ahmed, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
2. Folsach 2001, p. 314, no. 501; Kjeld von Folsach in Paris 2002–3, p. 131, no. 76. The curvilinear body is characteristic of Anatolian truncated candlesticks, as are the large medallions linked by narrow bands on a lush arabesque ground; see cat. 21b and accompanying references. For an almost identical example, see Allan 1999, pp. 58–61, no. 7; and for another, in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, D.C. (LTS2000.1.7), see Pancaroglu 2004.

3. Teresa Fitzherbert in London 2014, p. 30, based on Allsen 2006 and Melville 1990; see also Hillenbrand, C., 2011, p. 34.
4. Al-Hayr, at Abbasid Samarra, was a walled hunting reserve measuring 114 square meters; see Northedge 2005, pp. 151ff.
5. For the importance of the hunt in the medieval period, see Nizām al-Mulk 1978, pp. 94–95; Lambton 1962, pp. 102–3; Hillenbrand, C., 2011, pp. 34–35; and Fitzherbert in London 2014, pp. 30–37. On hunting, suburban gardens, palaces, and pavilions in Anatolia, see Redford 2000b; Redford 2000a; and cats. 20a–g, with accompanying references.
6. Hillenbrand, C., 2011, pp. 34–35.
7. For more on the dragon-slayer motif and iconography, see Pancaroglu 2004. The earliest Islamic-Anatolian examples are coins (ibid., fig. 6). An original version of the theme depicts a rider slaying the beast with the Parthian shot (cats. 73, 92).
8. Yalman 2010, p. 333.

Cat. 78

1. *Ruba'i* (quatrain) of Afzal al-Din Kashani, transcribed and identified in Ghouchani 1987, p. 36.
2. *Ruba'i* of Jamal al-Din Ashhari from the *Nuzhat al-majalis* anthology, transcribed and identified in Ghouchani 1987, p. 36.
3. *Ruba'i* of Mahasti from the *Nuzhat al-majalis* anthology, transcribed and identified in Ghouchani 1987, p. 36.
4. Another *ruba'i* of Mahasti, *Nuzhat al-majalis*; transcribed and identified in Ghouchani 1987, p. 36.
5. Watson 1985, pp. 90, 98, 104, 108, 109, 198, colorpl. E; Washington, D.C., and other cities 2004–6, pp. 77, 83, 91, 122, pl. 98.
6. See, for instance, an inkwell formerly in the Harari Collection (Rice, D. S., 1952, pls. 9a, 10a), and cat. 79 in the present volume. For comparative ceramics, see Baer 1983, pp. 238, 342–43 n. 292.
7. Northedge 2005, pp. 135, 213, figs. 57, 94; Leisten 2003, pp. 103–4.
8. Quoted in Massé 1965.

Cat. 79

1. Read and translated by Carine Juvin, Département des Arts de l'Islam, Musée du Louvre, Paris, and Abdullah Ghouchani.
2. Large *maydans*, or piazzas, usually with adjacent stables and spectators' lodges, have been tentatively identified as polo grounds at the Abbasid palaces of Jawsaq al-Khaqani, Ja'fariyya, and Balkuwara in Samarra. Such spaces

could also have been used for equitation exercises and other games of the Arab *furusiyya*, or equestrian culture. See Northedge 2005.

3. See Nizām al-Mulk 1978, pp. 94–95; Lambton 1962, pp. 102–3.
4. Massé 1965. Polo was generally played on horseback, though sometimes on foot (*čawgān piyāda bāzi*), as attested by the *Akbarnama*.
5. Single polo players appear with frequency on Anatolian candlesticks (e.g., cat. 92), where they represent just one of the various riders—falconers, dragon slayers, and lion hunters among them—that compose the courtly cycle of equestrian imagery. For Iran and Central Asia, see an inlaid inkwell (second half of the 12th century) from the Khurasani school, once in the Nuhad es-Said Collection, London (Allan 1982a, p. 33, no. 1). For a ceramic example, see cat. 78.
6. Similar figures appear on several ewers, including cat. 13b; Cleveland Museum of Art (56.11; signed by Ahmad al-Dahki al-Mawsili and dated A.H. 620/A.D. 1223; see Kana'an 2013, p. 180, fig. 156); and Metropolitan Museum (91.1.586; signed by 'Umar b. al-Hajji Jaldak, *ghulam* of Ahmad al-Dhaki al-Nakkash al-Mawsili, and dated 623/1226; see al-Harithy 2001).
7. This ewer is among the earliest in a group of lavishly inlaid pear-shaped ewers (Rice, D. S., 1952, pl. 12; Allan 1982a, pp. 56–57; Kana'an 2013). Another example with polo players is the Freer basin; see Ward 2005, figs. 18.2–18.6.
8. The bottom of cat. 79 is plain except for two engraved circles, which the artist may have intended to decorate.

Cats. 80–82

1. Ahsan 1979, p. 267.

Cat. 83

1. Although the story of Bahram Gur and Azada is not known from texts dating before the late tenth century, it was certainly well known at least from the seventh to eighth century, as it appears on Sasanian metalwork (see a silver dish in the Metropolitan Museum, 1994.402) and on stucco panels excavated at Chal Tarqan, near Rayy (see Ettinghausen 1979). The bowl was published in New York 2011, pp. 114–15, with previous references.
2. In addition to the Vaso Vescovali (cat. 124), examples in metal include a twelfth-century inlaid bucket in the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (Ettinghausen 1979, pl. 10), and a bowl in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (760-1889; see Auld

2004, figs. 8.9a, b, with further examples). Other subjects drawn from the *Shahnama* include the tale of Bijan and Manija, which appears on a beaker in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (28.2; Simpson 1981 lists comparative *mina'i* pieces for each scene). From literary sources such as the poems of Khaqani (d. 1190), episodes from the *Shahnama* are known to have been the subject of wall paintings in palaces of the eleventh to twelfth century; see Melikian-Chirvani 1984, p. 296. This is not, however, the case for any of the extant examples. Indeed, a wall painting in the Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass. (1935.23), was recently proven to be almost entirely an early twentieth-century repainting, as was its pendant at the Metropolitan Museum (52.20.1); Narayan Khandekar and Teri Hensick, Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass., unpublished conservation report, 2011, and Federico Carò, Assistant Research Scientist, Department of Scientific Research, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. My thanks to Mary McWilliams, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass.

3. For early Arabic and Persian versions of the tale, see Fontana 2000 and Fontana 1986, pp. 77–120. For variations linked to oral recitation, which continued after Firdawsi wrote his text, see Grabar 2000, pp. 99–100. A passage in the twelfth-century *Kitab al-naqd*, quoted by Qazwini, mentions singers narrating the tales of the Iranian heroes in the bazaars; see Bausani 1968. For more on related oral traditions, including ethnographic evidence, see Melville and Van den Berg, eds. 2012.
4. Shalem 2004, p. 124, suggests that variable depictions of the same story reflect efforts to meet market demand, prompted by mass production, for distinctive versions of recognizable motifs.
5. Sylvia Auld suggests that the scene may have incorporated astral symbolism, possibly related to the constellation of the Cygnus, whose popular name in Arabic translated as “The Follower” or “The Pillion Rider” (Auld 2004, p. 111).

Cat. 84

1. British Library, London (Add. 21,103), dated, possibly at a later time, A.H. 675/A.D. 1276. See Firdawsi 2005–6 and Bibliothèque Orientale, Université Saint-Joseph, Beirut (NC43), which may be closer in date to the Florence manuscript (Firdawsi 2010–11).
2. Piemontese 1980; Piemontese 1989, pp. 112–15.

3. Taeschner 1960. The *futuwwa* were fraternities of young men who shared some of the qualities of Sufis, some chivalric aspirations, and some loose professional connections.
4. Yalman 2010, p. 57.
5. Such as *al-'izz wa-l-baqa wa-l-ziada wa-l-baraka*, or “glory, long life, increase, blessing,” on fol. 39v. Yalman 2010, p. 34, notes that the historian Ibn Bibi described inscriptions on the walls of Konya built by 'Ala' al-Din Kay Qubad I (r. 1219–37) as having quotations from the hadith, Qur'an, and *Shahnama*. This may reflect a similar point in Rum Seljuq history, before inscripational standardization in architecture was established.

Cat. 85

1. This passage could also be translated as, “No matter what fire it is made in.” However, given the metal medium of the object that would melt away in the fire, such a meaning is unlikely. Other translations and readings of the entire inscription are in Blair 2014, pp. 65–67; Ward 1993, p. 77.
2. Ward 1993, pp. 71–79; Blair 2014, pp. 84–87. That artistic production did not diminish amid the political instability confirms that the metal industry in Herat was controlled not by the rulers but by the merchant society. On Herat, see also Frye 1971b.
3. On the Bobrinski bucket, see Kana'an 2009; see also Blair 2014, pp. 78–83. For an overview of the Herat attributions, see Ward 1993, pp. 71–79, which also posits that there were other centers of production at Merv, Nishapur, and Tus; see also Blair 2014, pp. 57–111. Cat. 170, inscribed in Hebrew and made in Georgia by Shlemo the Tblisian, further confirms that there were more centers of inlaid-metal production.
4. For similar ewers, including one in ceramic, see cats. 73, 93, 118. This type of ewer is distinguished from the one common in the Jazira, Greater Syria, and its nearby regions (e.g., cat. 13b).
5. Typical examples exhibit repoussé imagery—often harpies (e.g., cat. 118)—as decorative interstices, but the artist, Mahmud b. Muhammad al-Harawi, preferred a more two-dimensional composition for the body of this ewer with fully inlaid ribs, giving place to the poetic inscription.

Cat. 86

1. Grabar 1984, p. 7.
2. Rice, D. S., 1959, p. 218.
3. Ward 1985, pp. 76–78.

Cats. 87, 88

1. Pancaroğlu 2005, p. 387.
2. Farmer 2000. The eleventh-century painted ceiling of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo has several examples of different types of lutes (Grube and Johns 2005, e.g., pl. 36 A19.5–6). See also Kühnel 1951.
3. Farmer 1929; Farmer 1940.
4. On the tripartite headgear of the lute player, see Soucek 1992 and Pancaroğlu 2005, p. 387, which describes it as “almost exclusively a male attribute.”
5. 'Alam 2003. For an eleventh-century painting of a tattooed dancer, presumably from Fustat, and other comparanda for tattoos, see Rice, D. S., 1958a, pls. 1–3, figs. 1–2; Hoffman 2000. Face tattoos such as those in cat. 22, which were probably temporary, are also found on a male figure in a luster plate, for which see Pancaroğlu 2007, pp. 128–31 n. 83. The female lute player may represent the planet Venus, a type of symbolism found often in inlaid metalwork (e.g., Canby 2005, fig. p. 118). See Rice, D. S., 1958a, p. 38; Jones 1975.
6. Kühnel 1951.

Cat. 89

1. Joel and Peli 2005, pp. 198–212; Kiyāni 1984, p. 79, fig. 40; Safar 1945, pp. 36–37, figs. 21 (120–33), 22, pls. 18–21. Based on the archaeological contexts in which they were found, the Susa group dates to the twelfth–thirteenth century and the Wasit group to the second half of the thirteenth. Similar earthenware figurines, possibly of the seventh century, from Afrasiyab and the Bukhara Oasis suggest a long-standing tradition of manufacture; see Lo Muzio 2010, pp. 181–83, figs. 2–4.
2. Animal figurines excavated at Wasit (also known from a large number of sites, including Rayy, Nishapur, and Merv) are also modeled.
3. Or a toy shop, according to Safar 1945.
4. For Wasit, see Safar 1945, fig. 21(123), pl. 20. For Susa, see Joel and Peli 2005, nos. 265–68, and p. 198, which posits that one of the figurines originally held a finger to its lips in the traditional Iranian gesture of astonishment.
5. The house models are in glazed stone-paste, and their figurines are molded. An interpretation as a nuptial gift may also explain the Wasit figurines holding a doll or a baby, and the depiction of a royal symposium, as the elaborate headdresses suggest, may be associated with the beneficial value of the royal image.

Cats. 90, 91

1. The *nawba* ceremony was already an integral part of court ritual at the caliphal court in Baghdad, during which a drum was struck several (maximum five) times at specific intervals. See cat. 72; Hillenbrand, C., 2011, pp. 28–31. For an overview of music in Islamic art, see Denny 1985; Contadini 2014.
2. For publication on this dish, see Fehérvári 1976a, pp. 96–98, no. 125, pl. F; Almut von Gladiss in Berlin 2007–8, pp. 120–21, no. 101.
3. According to Hannah Lane in Fehérvári 1976a, p. 97, the surface brass has a higher tin content than that on the back of the plate, resulting in different rates of corrosion in the two parts. Tin had to be imported into Mosul, and it is possible that, in the turbulent years surrounding the Mongol sack (1262), it was more difficult to do so. Therefore, cat. 90 may date to the late 1250s–60s, toward the very end of the reign of Badr al-Din or even of one of his successors; see Patton 1991, pp. 51–83.
4. Originally six dark blue lozenges fit between the turquoise pieces to form a hexagon; see Sarre 1936, pl. 7. See also cat. 20a.
5. There are a few occurrences of *mina'i* tiles from Iran and Central Asia (e.g., cat. 19), all presumably exported from Kashan.
6. This vegetation is common in manuscript painting from the region, as well as in Iranian *mina'i* wares and underglaze-painted ceramics from twelfth-century Rusafa, in Syria, or thirteenth-century Anatolia.
7. Farmer 2000. The sources are not always clear about the terminology used for specific types of lutes. The most important distinction between the *barbat* and the *'ud* is that the former is composed of one graduated piece, while in the latter, the sound box and neck are crafted separately.
8. Artuqid rulers of Mardin were known to send their star musicians as gifts or tributes to the Mamluk court in Cairo; see Vāth 1987, p. 207; Ilisch 1984, p. 83. Two of the frontispieces of the *Aghani* manuscript made for Badr al-Din Lu'lu' in the early thirteenth century in Mosul depict rows of seated, mostly female musicians.
9. The Blacas ewer (cat. 15) depicts a rare example of a veiled figure playing a lute, most likely a woman of high social rank (see fig. 38).

Cat. 92

1. Venice 1993–94, p. 243.
2. Denny 1985.
3. The long sleeves continue into later periods, specifically in the context of

Sufi dance; see Denny 1985, p. 61, pls. 15, 16.

4. The group dance as a subject may be associated with Turkish dance traditions; see Morgan 1994, p. 159. Comparable examples from the same group of candlesticks are in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Melikian-Chirvani 1982b, pp. 363–65, no. 170); the Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass. (349.1983); and one sold at Sotheby's, London 1982, lot 36. See also Gökçığdem 1998. For a general discussion of the type, see cat. 21b and corresponding references.
5. In all the found examples, there were three to five figures.
6. See Hagedorn 1992, fig. 22. The river depicted is possibly the Tigris, on whose banks the city of Mosul and Badr al-Din Lu'lu's palace, Qara Saray, were built (see figs. 31, 36).
7. See Ventrone 1971.

Cat. 93

1. For a in-depth study of this ewer, including a line drawing of the scene, see Ventrone 1971; see also Venice 1993–94, fig. 111, and Hannover 2011–12, fig. p. 60. At least two molds were used for the known objects. A bottle in the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London, and fragments in the Reza Abbasi Museum, Tehran, instead display standing guards holding batons; the latter “were found in Nishapur together with one part of the mould in which the object had been made” (Morgan 1994, pp. 158–59, and p. 159 n. 152).
2. Fourteen personages are shown on this ewer. Gender is not discernible, although semicircular shapes on the busts of two figures may represent breasts; see Ventrone 1971, p. 36 and fig. 8. For comparison with other dancers, see cat. 94.
3. Neubauer 2009. The form *dastaband* is used by Rice, D. S., 1958b, Ventrone 1971, and Morgan 1994.
4. The Zoroastrian hypothesis is based on a later source, al-Nu'wayri (d. 1332), which calls the *dastaband* the dance of the Magi, i.e., Zoroastrians. There is, however, no direct proof for this interpretation; see Ventrone 1971, p. 39, and Taboroff 1972. The association with Turkish dance is for “the form of the dance” (Morgan 1994, p. 159, referencing Grube 1981, figs. 53–63). For Sufi dances that may relate to those performed by Turkish shamans across Central Asia, and for ethnographic examples of Anatolian dances, see Roux 1963, pp. 305–9. Molé 1963, p. 155, rejects the idea that Sufi dances derive from Turkish origins but recognizes the

potential Turkish influence on later, provincial forms of Sufi dance.

5. The caftan associated with the Turks is usually belted and worn with boots, which may or may not be the case for these dancers. See Soucek 1992, especially pp. 83–90, for a more nuanced interpretation of the use and meaning of such garments in Iran, both during and after the reign of the Great Seljuqs.
6. Durand-Guédy 2013a, pp. 337–38.
7. On this ewer canids and cervids, some with double-twisted horns or antlers, are in chase, culminating in the assault from behind of one of the cervids. Other of these vessels are decorated instead with molded images of animals, jewel-like ornaments, and inscriptions.

Cat. 94

1. The upper part is possibly the same as the San Francisco mold, read by Manijeh M. Bayani in Froom 2008, p. 123. The lower part is possibly the same as a fragment from Nishapur that is not entirely readable; see Wilkinson 1973, p. 329, no. 156a, b.
2. Abdullah Ghouchani, to whom I am grateful for sharing this information, first recognized these similarities and read the inscription. Persian appears in monumental epigraphy in the eastern Iranian lands, the earliest occurrence being at the tombs of Shah Fadl at Safid Buland (ca. 1055–60); see Blair 1992, pp. 128–29 n. 47, figs. 77–79. The most famous dated object with a Persian inscription is the Bobrinski bucket, in the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, dated A.H. 559/A.D. 1163.
3. The master mold is a positive mold, onto which complex patterns and inscriptions were more easily carved and from which additional negative molds could be made. The latter could then be carved with individualized decoration. For an example, see cat. 59.
4. The authorship may refer to either a potter or a workshop.
5. First suggested by Froom 2008, p. 56. This very spot appears blank on cat. 94.
6. For a summary, see Watson 2004, pp. 134–35, which postulates that molds could survive for generations. Other examples from Merv are in Pugachenkova 1958a; and from Samarkand, in Shishkina and Pavchinskaja 1992–93, p. 37.
7. See Wilkinson 1973, p. 329; the fragment is now in the Metropolitan Museum (40.170.653). My thanks to Abdullah Ghouchani for bringing its similarity to cat. 94 to my attention. While unglazed molded vessels are known from most Central Asian and Iranian sites, those with a molded, decorated base are known predominantly

from Merv, where there was likely a production center; see Pugachenkova 1958a, fig. 13. For examples from Sultan Kala, see Pugachenkova 1967, p. 143 and figs. 109, 112, 113; and from Jam, see Gascoigne and Bridgman 2010, pp. 124–25, fig. 6.11. There seem to be no such examples from Herat (Müller-Wiener 2008b, fig. 103; Watson 2004, pp. 111, 113, nos. Ab.6, Ab.8) or from Lashkari Bazar (Gardin 1963, nos. 35–45, 74, 79, 84, pls. 6–9), and only the one abovementioned exception from Nishapur.

8. For Bamiyan ware, see Watson 2004, pp. 326, 328, no. M.1.
9. For the dance posture, see Grube 1984, pp. 428–29. For the Turkish elements in the clothing, see Soucek 1992, especially p. 86.
10. Less prominent long sleeves can be seen in cat. 17. Dancers with long sleeves from seventh-century Tang Chinese to tenth-century Nishapur ceramics, as well as Fatimid and Sicilian examples, are illustrated in Grube and Johns 2005, p. 155. For a later depiction, see fol. 1v of the *'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat* (A.H. 722/A.D. 1322) of Qazwini in the Suleymaniye Library, Istanbul (Yeni Cami 813); illustrated in Berlekamp 2007, fig. 2.

Science, Medicine, and Technology

1. Fouchécour and Rosenfeld 2000.
2. Ibn al-Athir 2002, p. 189.
3. Kennedy 1968, p. 670; Fouchécour and Rosenfeld 2000.
4. Ward 1985, p. 74. This dating is at odds with 1204 or 1206, which had previously been generally accepted as the completion date of the manuscript.
5. Maddison 1985.
6. Emilie Savage-Smith in Maddison and Savage-Smith 1997, p. 29.

Cats. 95, 96

1. See Pormann and Savage-Smith 2007, pp. 119–20 (drugs) and pp. 90–93, 108–9, 151–58 (charlatans and popular medicine).
2. The jar was extensively restored in the past.
3. Coeval examples include a Fatimid lustre albarello of similar shape to cat. 95, excavated from an eleventh-century context in Fustat (Kubiak and Scanlon 1979, p. 110); and stonepaste ones, either monochrome turquoise or underglaze-painted, excavated at Nishapur, probably produced in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries in the east kilns of the site, where they were found (Wilkinson 1973, pp. 265–66, 270–71, nos. 11, 13, 19, 41). Iranian earthenware antecedents include those found

- at Isfahan, Istakhr, and Nishapur. The latter are green-glazed (Wilkinson 1973, pp. 235–36, 246, no. 28) or slip-painted (Wilkinson 1973, pp. 106, 125, no. 71). See also an earlier splash-ware example, possibly of the ninth or tenth century, at the *Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire*, Brussels (Van Raemdonck et al. 2015, p. 54, no. I.4).
- Pormann and Savage-Smith 2007, pp. 119–20.
 - Ibid., pp. 51–55, 71–75.
 - Syria of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was a major hub for the trade of apothecary goods (Holod and Rassamakin 2012).
 - The etymology is controversial: an Arabic origin is today generally dismissed in favor of a Latin one tied to the term *alveolus* (vessel) or *albarius* (tree); see Scerrato 1991. Among the earliest attestations is an 1196 document mentioning a “parvum albarello[m] de t[e]ra cu[m] globo” (a small ceramic albarello with a globular lid); see Larson 1998, p. 114.
 - The inscriptions on a pear-shaped Mamluk jar in the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (PO 40), include the word *nawfar*, or water lily, and state that it was made for the hospital “al-Nuri,” presumably the one established by Nur al-Din in Damascus (Holod and Rassamakin 2012, p. 372; for the image see <http://www.mia.org.qa/en/collections/ceramics/lusterware-apothecary-jar>; accessed January 6, 2016).
 - Holod and Rassamakin 2012, p. 362 n. 30.
 - Fol. 4v (Baer 2002, p. 2, fig. 1). Baer (ibid., pp. 9–10) proposes a date in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, while Rachel Ward (quoted in ibid.) suggested the beginning of that century.
 - The glaze on the interior of Syrian and Egyptian examples is often applied unevenly. As for the dating of cat. 95, its foot is cut obliquely on the interior, a typical feature for the earliest (11th-century) stonepaste productions (see also Metropolitan Museum, 20.120.56).

Cats. 97, 98

- First read and translated by Paul E. Chevedden in 1979 (unpublished article) and reconfirmed by Wheeler Thackston in 1990 (Linda Komaroff, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, personal communication).
- For an overview of mortars and pestles in the Islamic world, see Savage-Smith 1997b. See also Scerrato 2014b.
- For more on *De Materia Medica*, see Saliba and Komaroff 2008. See also cats. 107a, b.
- See Saliba and Komaroff 2008, p. 28.

- For a typology of medieval mortars that is based on James Allen’s unpublished research, see Savage-Smith 1997b.
- See type 6 in ibid., pp. 292–94, 314–15, nos. 197, 198, specifically the examples quoted in p. 314 n. 1. For more on this mortar, see also Pal, ed. 1973, pp. 163–64, no. 301.
- Savage-Smith 1997b, p. 294, distinguishes two groups among Islamic pestles, one banded and the other not.
- See type 3 in ibid., pp. 291–93, 304–9. For this mortar, see also Gladiss 2012, p. 37, no. 22. A very similar mortar attributed to northern Jazira is now in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul (4240); see Nazan Ölçer in London 2005, pp. 126, 396, no. 77.
- The handles of cat. 98 are plain.
- The phenomenon of pseudo-inscriptions also appears on Anatolian candlesticks. On the latter the pseudo-text is inscribed in similar locations of examples with readable benedictory inscriptions. The situation is the same with the mortars, which suggests that such pseudo-inscriptions had an apotropaic and talismanic function comparable with readable benedictory inscriptions.

Cats. 99, 100

- For cat. 99, see Bloomington 1970, p. 47, no. 260; and for cat. 100, see Canby 1987, p. 91, fig. 28.
- Pormann and Savage-Smith 2007, p. 124.
- Among a group of surgical instruments said to have been found in Fustat and dating to the Abbasid period is a scalpel with a decorative knob at the end of the handle, suggesting that, unlike other tools used for surgery, those employed for major incisions in the medieval Islamic world were deemed fit for ornamentation. See Awad 1976, pl. 2, no. 1.
- Bloomington 1970, p. 47, no. 260.
- See <http://quran.com/5> (accessed January 6, 2016).
- Lucas 2007, p. 355.
- Sajjādi 1990.
- Pormann and Savage-Smith 2007, p. 122, quoting Abu Marwan b. Zuhr.
- Albucasis 1973, figs. 159–62, illustrates various surgical saws, none exactly like the Seljuq examples. Ibid., fig. 162, from a manuscript of 1271–72 (Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Marsh 54), is the closest in appearance to the examples discussed here.
- Savage-Smith 2000, pp. 320–21.

Cats. 101–3

- My thanks to Ruslan Muradov for information on these objects.
- Albucasis 1973.
- For the lead spatula from Rayy, see Allan 1982b, p. 55 (with erratum: RCI 4031). Similar objects collected at

- Qasr-i Abu Nasr, including one in the Metropolitan Museum (34.107.145), have been interpreted as pins; see Whitcomb 1985, p. 169, and p. 175, figs. 65.r, .s. For Hama, see Ploug and Oldenburg 1969, pp. 66–67, figs. 25–27. The example in Tarsus is safely dated to the ninth–tenth century, see Pancaroğlu 2014, p. 3, fig. 1. For Tille Höyük, see Moore 1993, p. 130, nos. 79, 80, and p. 148, fig. 64. For bronze examples from the excavations of the town and merchant quarter in Bahrain (broadly attributed to the medieval and late Islamic periods), see Frifelt 2001, pp. 144, 145, figs. 293, 295.
- For Qasr-i Abu Nasr, see Metropolitan Museum (34.107.78), illustrated in Whitcomb 1985, pp. 169, 174–75, nos. 65.h, j. For Nishapur and references to the Siraf and Fustat tweezers, see Allan 1982b, pp. 39, 77–78, no. 89.
 - Albucasis 1973, pp. 276–87, 292–95, 517–19, and p. 285, fig. 71, p. 519, fig. 154. Pormann and Savage-Smith 2007, p. 64.

Cat. 104

- Details of the metal composition were obtained by pXRF analysis, carried out by Nina Owczarek, Conservation Center, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia.

Cat. 105

- Reading and translation by Abdullah Ghouchani and the author.
- See cats. 34, 35.
- Copenhagen 2015. For more on aromatics and perfumes, see also Gyselen et al. 1998.
- On silver inlaid with niello, see Ward 1993, pp. 51–58; Marschak 1986, pp. 104–20. Gladiss 2003, p. 80, identifies the box as Anatolian (13th century).
- On the multiple functions of aromatics as perfumes and their purifying qualities, see Copenhagen 2015 and cat. 23.
- Newid 2010, pp. 62–103.
- Most of the mixed aromatics were prepared with musk; see ibid., pp. 83–85, 187–215.
- Ibid., pp. 117–32.
- Due to its absence of fragrance, lak was probably omitted in Newid 2010. For more on lak, see Steingass 2000, p. 1127; “Lak” in Dehkhodā 1958–66.
- The reading of “bi-Allah(?),” or “to God,” may refer to another aromatic yet to be identified. If it were an invocation of Allah, then it would reinforce the belief that a substance’s healing properties depended on faith and help from God.

Cat. 106

- Farès 1953, p. 3; Pancaroğlu 2001, pp. 155–56; Kerner 2007, pp. 28ff.
- Farès 1953, pp. 8–9.
- Bosworth 1968, p. 25; Bosworth 2000. The ‘Uqaylids, a Shi’a Arab tribe, controlled various cities in the Jazira from the tenth to the twelfth century and lost control of Qal’at Jabar and Raqqa only in 1169, thirty years before the *Kitab al-diryaq* was completed. It is equally possible that the scribe and owner were descended from the ‘Uqaylids as from the Ismailis, whom Oya Pancaroğlu has suggested were interested in esotericism of the type that she claims characterizes this manuscript; see Pancaroğlu 2001, p. 166.
- Kerner 2007, p. 33.
- Farès 1953, pp. 22–23; Azarpay and Kilmer 1978, p. 371.
- Pancaroğlu 2001, p. 165.

Cats. 107a, b

- Saliba and Komaroff 2008, p. 8.
- Ibid., pp. 14–20, 41.
- Grube 1959, p. 172. This manuscript, the bulk of which is now in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Istanbul (Ahmed III, 2147, no. 49316, formerly Ayasofya 3703), contains the fourth and fifth books of *De Materia Medica*.
- Saliba and Komaroff 2008, pp. 30–31.
- Doctor: Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, website, <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/33697/single-leaf-from-the-arabic-version-of-dioscorides-de-materia-medica-2/> (accessed January 6, 2016). Assistant: Grube 1959, p. 176. Patient: Buchthal 1942, p. 24.
- Contadini 2012, pl. 48. Contadini, ibid., p. 149 n. 12, admits that her “previous, if tentative attribution to the North Jazira requires revision.” On close inspection of the illustrations to the *Kitab na’t al-hayawan* in comparison to those of the Ibn al-Sufi manuscript in the Reza Abbasi Museum, Tehran (M. 570), and the 1224 Dioscorides illustrations, Contadini rejects an attribution to the northern Jazira, ibid., pp. 149–53. Saliba and Komaroff 2008, pp. 32ff., firmly attributes the manuscript to Baghdad, following and amplifying the reasoning of Buchthal (1942, p. 31).
- Sajjādi 1990, pp. 257–58.

Cats. 108a–i

- For Syria, see Tonghini 1998, pp. 40–42, pls. 41, 42; Henderson 1999, pp. 262–64; and McPhillips 2012, pp. 455–56, with discussion of previous references. For Iran see Rugiadi 2011, pp. 235–38, with discussion of previous references; see also the mention of stonepaste in a

- mid-eleventh-century layer excavated in the citadel at Ray in Schmidt 1935b, pp. 48–49, pl. 6, far right; and Schmidt 1936a–b, pp. 84, 134–35, pls. 1, 3, above; for recent data from Nishapur and their complicated reading, see Rante and Collinet 2013, pp. 145, 152, 155, 205–6. Imported vessels found in Italy antedate to the mid-eleventh century the beginning of stonepaste production; see Tonghini 2005, p. 22, and Saccardo 2000, pp. 53–55, nos. 57–58, for new data relevant to the chronology. A useful discussion on the terminology of stonepaste is provided in Tonghini 1998, pp. 38, 119 n. 197.
2. Traditionally, scholars have linked the fall of the Fatimids and the 1176 fire of Fustat to the sudden eastward migration of stonepaste producers, but evidence of the material's production at least a century earlier in both Syria and Iran dismisses this connection.
 3. See Tonghini 1998, pp. 42, 50–51; Mason 2004, pp. 162–64.
 4. Mason 2004, pp. 69–71, 73–74, 78–79 (for Egypt); 94–109, 123–31, 144 (for Syria and Iran); 170–72. For contrasting readings of the experimental phases in Egypt, see Watson 2004, pp. 285–86, and Mason 2004, pp. 78–79.
 5. Porter, Y., 2015, p. 18, calls for a more nuanced explanation of the diffusionist theory for Iran (still, he relies on the traditional chronology). Wilkinson 1973, p. 263, with previous references, mentions a "related ware with a soft white body . . . apparently covered with an alkaline glaze" produced in the tenth and eleventh centuries at Dvin and Ani in Armenia.
 6. Mason 2004.
 7. Small bowls and cups, as well as jugs and pots, are also attested; see Tonghini 1998, p. 39, and figs. 33a, 42–52; McPhillips 2012, figs. 4.2, 4.7; and Porter, V., and Watson 1987, nos. A13, 29, 54, 56–57; B2, 5, 8–8a, 19, 141; C8, 17–20.
 8. The assemblage, however, does not provide evidence of manufacture at Tell Minis; see Porter, V., and Watson 1987, pp. 175–78. (The Bartels Gift, a related assemblage in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, also said to be from Tell Minis, includes wasters, but they belong to later productions; see *ibid.*, p. 199, and Mason 2004, pp. 107, 206–7, for analyses). An early stonepaste group was already distinguished from later productions at Antioch and Hama, see Waagé 1948 and Riis and Poulsen 1957, pp. 132–36.
 9. For Damascus, see McPhillips 2012, pp. 456–57, figs. 6.1–6.3. A kiln that produced *laqabi* ware is said to have been excavated at Raqqa; see Milwright 2005, p. 211.
 10. In the mid-twentieth century, cat. 108c was thought to be Chinese and displayed as such in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; see London 1976a, p. 240, no. 332.
 11. For Isfahan, see Rugiadi 2011, table 1, figs. 3, 4 (data related to 1,867 stonepaste fragments). For Rayy, the material excavated by Charles Vignier (1910s), Erich Schmidt (1930s), and Chahryar Adle (1970s) is largely unpublished; Schmidt's ceramics were viewed by this author at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia; the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and the storage in Persepolis (more fragments reside in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran). My thanks to Renata Holod, Donald Whitcomb, Laura Weinstein, and 'Ali Asadi. See also two fragments, excavated in 2006–7, in Rante 2015, p. 115, figs. 95.17, 96.8. For the composition of glazes, see Rante and Collinet 2013, p. 135. The neckless jars are close to coeval green- or brown-glazed earthenware vessels; for variations in both the body and the foot, see Rugiadi 2010b, figs. 4–9, with caption.
 12. Minor, isolated exceptions were found at the Damascus citadel and at Shayzar (Stephen McPhillips and Valentina Vezzoli, personal communication).
 13. For the obliquely cut foot in Syria, see Porter, V., and Watson 1987, p. 181, and Tonghini 1998, p. 42; in Iran, see Rugiadi 2010b, p. 179, fig. 4: III B6. For one exception in earthenware (in Iran) and in glass, see below.
 14. See Wilkinson 1973, pp. 262, 276, 288, nos. 74–76; and Rugiadi 2011, p. 235. Saggars were found at Tell Fakhkhar, Raqqa, but it is unclear if they were employed for the sgraffito or the stonepaste wares, both produced at the site in the eleventh century (Henderson and Tonghini 1998, fig. 4e, pp. 119, 123).
 15. Wilkinson 1973, pp. 272–73, 284, no. 57a, with previous bibliography. The scene, first identified by Glavira Shepelova, was narrated in both Firdawsī's *Shahnama* and Nizami's *Khamsa* (A.H. 571/A.D. 1175–76).
 16. This ratio pertains to the 1,867 stonepaste fragments from the Seljuq-period levels. In the lowermost levels of their appearance, the ratio is larger, almost 4:10 (639 stonepaste fragments); see Rugiadi 2010b, p. 178. The possible presence of a nearby stonepaste workshop (attested by wasters and kiln furniture) may have had an impact on these numbers; see Rugiadi 2011, pp. 233–35. At the Qohandez in Nishapur, the earliest levels in which stonepaste appears, attributed to up to the early eleventh century, have a 0.22:10 ratio of stonepaste to glazed earthenware (period IIIa, 5 fragments); see Rante and Collinet 2013, p. 152, fig. 98/31.
 17. The link between early Iranian stonepaste and Chinese Song wares was recognized by Arthur Lane (1946–47, pp. 21–29). Chinese ceramic imports mostly followed the sea route, as attested by the known assemblages; for the Siraf port, see Tampoe 1989, pp. 47–68 (chronology reviewed in Priestman 2011, pp. 105–6); for Nishapur, see Wilkinson 1973, pp. 254–58. See also Rougeulle 1991, pp. 25–32, 39–44.
 18. For Nishapur, see Wilkinson 1973, pp. 263ff.; Rante and Collinet 2013, p. 171, figs. 98/31, 92, 103, 104 (Qohandez); and Collinet 2015 (material from surveys). The assemblage from Lashkari Bazar is close (although there is mention of one crenellated rim), and it differs from the distinct Afghan stonepaste productions of the twelfth century (Gardin 1963, pp. 126–31, pl. 28/531–39; Fusaro forthcoming, with earlier references).
 19. Quoted in Allan, Llewellyn, and Schweizer 1973, p. 172.
 20. For more on opaque glass and on glass imitating precious materials, see cat. 55, with accompanying references. Allan, Llewellyn, and Schweizer 1973, p. 172, proposes that Abu Dulaf's passage refers to an opaque white glass made in imitation of Chinese porcelain; Morgan 1994, pp. 155–56 and n. 9, suggests instead a link to opaque white glazes. For a rebuttal, see Mason 1997, p. 130 n. 2.
 21. Abu Dulaf's mention of tin/tin oxide (if the interpretation is correct) is noteworthy. Chemical analysis of cat. 55 revealed a soda-lime-silica glass made with plant ash but no tin oxide; see Whitehouse 2010, p. 51 n. 67.
 22. Allan, Llewellyn, and Schweizer 1973, pp. 171–72. For discussion of the entire passage and previous references, see also Morgan 1994, pp. 156, 169 n. 12.
 23. See Porter, Y., 2004, pp. 356–58 (translated as "*porcelaine*," *ibid.*, p. 356).
 24. Carswell 1991, p. 591, cites a famous statement by al-Tha'alibi (d. 1038): "The Arabs used to call any delicately or curiously-made vessel and such like, whatever its real origin, 'Chinese,' because finely made things are a speciality of China." Both al-Tha'alibi and al-Biruni describe in detail the features of three specific types of Chinese porcelain (apricot, cream, and mottled); see Lane 1957, p. 31. That kaolin was a necessary ingredient to obtain true porcelain was not known outside China, although it was available in Iran and used for other purposes, such as in a quartz-based white slip in Nishapur; see Basso in preparation.
 25. For silica-based slip in Iraq, see Mason 2004, pp. 31, 36–37; for Iran (Nishapur), see Basso in preparation. A similar occurrence has been observed at Isfahan by the author. For the silica-based bricks, see Leisten 2003, pp. 72–74, with previous references. For proto-stonepaste, see Mason 2004, p. 32.
 26. See Mason 2004, pp. 171–72. Earlier hypotheses on the development of stonepaste technology in Iran (discussed in *ibid.* and Allan, Llewellyn, and Schweizer 1973) considered a possible link to the manufacture of faience beads.
 27. For Isfahan, see Rugiadi 2011, p. 234; for Istakhr, see Chegini et al. 2013, p. 12, figs. 10:C, D; and for Nishapur, Wilkinson 1973, pp. 268, 281, no. 26 (the fragments were discarded). Two unpublished examples, from Sabz Pushan (38.40.243) and Village Tepe (38.40.244), are in the Metropolitan Museum.
 28. Luster was first rediscovered on ceramics in ninth-century Iraq; the technique most likely made its way to Egypt in the tenth century, from which it probably spread westward.
 29. See, however, an assemblage of defective luster fragments of unknown provenance in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran, which Watson 2006 suggests may derive from excavations in Kashan; see also wasters excavated at Merv mentioned in Gascoigne and Bridgman 2010, p. 118.
 30. Watson 1985, pp. 37–44; Mason 2004, p. 142; Blair 2008, p. 160.
 31. Porter, Y., 2004, pp. 345, 352. See note 28 above for a luster waster from Merv.
 32. Redford and Blackman 1997, pp. 234–46. The nearby site of Tille Höyük also yielded a luster second/waster, tentatively attributed to Samsat, near Gritille, for which see Moore 1993, p. 74, figs. 51.301, 53.357.
 33. See, for instance, Mason 2004, p. 129, according to which the Iranian examples follow the forms of luster with little variation. Other scholars, relying on pieces with an inscribed date, support the hypothesis that luster arrived in Iran only in the second half of the twelfth century; see, most recently, Porter, Y., 2004.
 34. McPhillips 2012, p. 456. For other sites in Syria and Iran, see Tonghini 1998,

- pp. 41–42; Rugiadi 2010b; Rante and Collinet 2013, pp. 152, 171. In recent excavations at Rayy, the context in which two luster fragments were found was, for this reason, postdated to the twelfth century; see Rante 2015, p. 115, fig. 96.8. For an early appearance of luster, see the finds at Tille Höyük (Moore 1993, pp. 72–73, 197, figs. 51.302, 52.350; revised chronology in Mason 2004, p. 233).
35. Luster on light cobalt-blue and purple glazes is also known in Syria. See Porter, V., and Watson 1987; Tonghini 1998, pp. 39, 44; Mason 2004, pp. 96–97, 114.
36. See also a bowl, formerly in the Harvey B. Plotnick Collection, Chicago, dated A.H. 575/A.D. 1179–80 in Pancaroğlu 2007, pp. 136–37, no. 89.
37. For a discussion on the Isfahan material, dating before the last quarter of the eleventh century, see Rugiadi 2011, pp. 238–42. For Siraf, the chronology of which is revised in Priestman 2013, pp. 28, 347–49, 359–61, the context is attributed to the eleventh to thirteenth century; see Tampoe 1989, pp. 37, 80, fig. 60, nos. 1137–44. For Rayy, see note 34 above. One or two luster fragments from the Qohandez come from a context ranging from the beginning of the eleventh century through 1165; analysis of one of these revealed cobalt blue, transparent alkaline glaze, and no lead (Rante and Collinet 2013, pp. 132, 155, 171). Other luster fragments from Nishapur were brought to light during the excavations of the 1930s and 1940s but never published: five fragments of monumental, miniature, and “Kashan”-style luster are kept in storage in the Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (unaccessioned).
38. Tonghini 1998, pp. 43, 46, 48–51, with previous references, Mason 2004, pp. 176–77, McPhillips 2012, pp. 456–58. For luster technology, see Pradell, Molera, Smith, and Tite 2008, pp. 2655–57, 2660–61.
39. Tonghini 1998, p. 47, with previous references; McPhillips 2002, pp. 143–45.
40. Excavations at Rafiqa (Raqqqa) yielded several types of wasters: underglaze-painted stonepaste (black under turquoise and black under colorless), possibly polychrome-painted, and monochrome-glazed. See Porter, V., 2004, pp. 41, 43 and n. 21; and Milwright 2005, pp. 210–16, figs. 9, 10, with previous references. For more production centers and the problematic issue of “Raqqqa ware” from Fustat, see Tonghini 1998, pp. 50–51; Mason 2004, pp. 103–8, 201–2; and Dylan T. Smith in Jenkins-Madina 2006, appendix 2, pp. 230–35.
41. Tonghini 1998, pp. 46, 50; Gonnella 1999, pp. 167–68, pl. 26; Rugiadi 2003, table CXVa; McPhillips 2012, pp. 455–58.
42. Blackman and Redford 1994; Redford and Blackman 1997.
43. Moore 1993, pp. 72–73, no. 346, pl. 8.b; he compares this object with Antioch’s finds in Waagé 1948, p. 92.
44. Mason 2004, figs. 6.6–6.9, 6.11.
45. This suggestion is based on an assemblage of luster wasters in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran; see Watson 2006, p. 244.
46. Mason 2004, pp. 132–36.
47. As suggested in *ibid.*, p. 178. For the term *mina’i*, see Pancaroğlu 2007, p. 38, with previous references. For analyses of *mina’i* techniques, see Koss et al. 2009.
48. For an updated bibliography, see Graves 2014 and Ghouchani forthcoming. Blair 2008, pp. 169–72, provides a list of works by Abu Zayd.
49. Reading of the inscription in cat. 108d by Abdullah Ghouchani. A similar bowl is in the Jubelparkmuseum, Koninklijke Musea voor Kunst en Geschiedenis, Brussels (IS.6041); see Van Raemdonck et al. 2015, p. 86, no. II.1, with previous references to other comparable examples.
50. The nine groupings include post-Mongol wares (Mason 2004, pp. 140–43). For kilns excavated at Malekabad in Kashan, see Bahrāmī 1938, pp. 225–29, figs. 141–43.
51. This classification was proposed by Watson 1985; see also Graves 2014, with further references. An internal chronology of *mina’i* objects is proposed in Holod 2012, p. 210.

Cat. 109

1. Common formulas include “blessings, honor, perpetual glory, health, happiness,” et cetera.
2. Thanks to Nina Owczarek, Conservation Center, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia, who determined the composition of the body using pXRF analysis.

Cat. 110

1. Read by Abdullah Ghouchani and translated by Alzahraa K. Ahmed, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. A partial transcription and translation was published previously in Maddison 1985.
2. Only fragments of the original lid survive (*ibid.*).
3. Other comparable boxes include cat. 168c and one sold at Christie’s, London 2010, lot 16, both attributable

to the al-Mawsili school; for an example in ivory, ca. 1200, see Maddison 1985, p. 157, fig. 10, where it is dated ca. 1100; see Francis Maddison in Savage-Smith et al. 1997, p. 390, no. 344, for the corrected dating; one inlaid brass example, probably much later and possibly modern, is in a private collection, New York; see Maddison 1985, pp. 147–52.

4. Maddison 1985, p. 149.
5. Maddison in Savage-Smith et al. 1997, p. 390, no. 344. The letters of both the small disk and larger circular scale are in the order of the Arabic alphabet, which suggests that a word code was probably used for the correct position of the four double dials.
6. Hill 1974, pp. 199–201. On al-Jazari, see also cats. 111a, b.
7. British Museum, London (ME OA 1888.5-26.1); see Savage-Smith and Smith 1980.

Cats. 111a, b

1. Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, Diyar Bakr, dated A.H. 602/A.D. 1205–6; Ettinghausen 1962, p. 95, cites the 1254 version, Topkapı Sarayı Museum (Ahmet III, 3472). See also Caiozzo 2003, p. 433.
2. Hill 1974, p. 15.
3. Saint Petersburg and other cities 1990, p. 170; Robinson et al. 1976, p. 71.
4. Grabar 1984, pp. 10–11.

Cat. 112

1. A total of 98 folios are numbered on each side, and portions of the manuscript are missing. This folio is numbered p. 192. See *Penn in Hand: Selected Manuscripts*; <http://hdl.library.upenn.edu/1017/d/medren/4824919> (accessed January 6, 2016).
2. Vernet 1978.
3. Fouchécour and Rosenfeld 2000.
4. Hill 1993, pp. 60–61.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

Cat. 113

1. *Penn in Hand: Selected Manuscripts*; <http://hdl.library.upenn.edu/1017/d/medren/4921349> (accessed January 6, 2016).
2. Saliba 1990.

Cat. 114

1. *Abjad* numbering is a system in which letters are ascribed a numerical value. The vertical tooth that connects the letters *ح* and *و* has been awkwardly incised so that it almost resembles the letter *ف*. However, this would give an inaccurate date, so the date of A.H. 496 is accepted here.
2. The pin is a later replacement.
3. King, Da., 1987, pp. 4–5.
4. Maddison and Savage-Smith 1997, p. 202.

5. The distinctive shape of this arch appears well before the twelfth century in the architectural decoration of Ghazni and in an arched niche to the right of the mihrab in the prayer hall of the *masjid-i jami’* at Isfahan, built by Nizam al-Mulk in 1086; see Galdieri 1972, pl. 190; Galdieri 1984, p. 104, fig. 16. For more on the decoration of Ghazni, see Rugiadi forthcoming. The issue is also discussed briefly in Rugiadi 2010c.

Cat. 115

1. Milan and Vienna 2010–11, p. 62; Ahmed Djebbar in Paris 2005–6, p. 97.
2. Savage-Smith 1992, p. 18.

Cat. 116

1. Savage-Smith 1985, p. 3.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 218. The *Almagest* was translated into Arabic in the early ninth century and was a major source for Islamic astronomers and instrument makers; Makariou, ed. 2012, p. 150. In the period of time between the second century A.D. and 1144, the constellations had shifted in the sky fifteen degrees and eighteen minutes.
4. For Andromeda, see Makariou, ed. 2012, p. 151. For the 1125 *Book of Images of the Fixed Stars*, see Sotheby’s, London 1998, p. 36, lot 34. It is now in the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, and thought to be the earliest extant illustrated copy of the text.
5. Kennedy 1968, pp. 670, 672.

Cat. 117

1. Savage-Smith 1992, p. 52.
2. Heidemann 2002b.
3. Savage-Smith 2013, p. 125.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 144, fig. 132. The 1125 manuscript is in the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (MS 2.1998).
5. *Ibid.*, p. 145, fig. 133 and p. 144. The image of Andromeda with a fish, camel, and horse may have been added to the manuscript later. Wellesz 1964, p. 86, notes that whereas Ptolemy’s names for constellations are often based on Greek myths, the Bedouin named the constellations after animals that were familiar to them, such as camels and horses.

Astrology, Magic, and the World of Beasts

1. Ibn al-Athīr 1965–67, vol. 10, p. 78, in Yazdī 2008, p. 80.
2. Ibn al-Jawzi quoted in Said, Stephenson, and Rada 1989, pp. 45, 50.
3. Yazdī 2008, p. 76 n. 1.
4. Pingree 1968, p. 118.
5. Ibn al-Athīr 2002, p. 159.
6. al-Trabulsi 1993, pp. 40–41.
7. Degg 1990, p. 304.

8. Melville 1980, pp. 105, 116.
9. Melville 1981, p. 162.
10. Ibn al-Athir 2002, p. 230.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
12. Hanne 2007, pp. 125, 129.

Cat. 118

1. Related examples include cats. 73 and 86; Metropolitan Museum (08.138.1); British Museum, London (1848.0805.1, .2); and Victoria and Albert Museum, London (592-1898). Further examples are in the Keir Collection of Islamic Art (see Fehérvári 1976a, pl. 16, no. 53) and the National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul (see Melikian-Chirvani 1982b, p. 118, no. 45A).
2. Ward 1993, p. 78, pl. 56.
3. New York 1997a, p. 24, notes that the maker mistakenly represented the planet lord of Virgo as the bearded Saturn instead of Mercury.

Cat. 119

1. Michael Rogers in Amsterdam 1999–2000, p. 162, no. 117; Ward 1993, pp. 18–19, fig. 9. A further lacquered-wood version also has an analogous shape; see Folsach 2003, p. 85, fig. 18, and pp. 91–92.
2. Rogers in Amsterdam 1999–2000, p. 162.
3. Hartner 1973–74, p. 124. The sign is misidentified as Sagittarius by Rogers in Amsterdam 1999–2000, p. 162.
4. Baer 1972, pp. 204–5, figs. 10a, 10b.
5. Baer 1965, pp. 72–73.

Cat. 120

1. Hartner 1938, p. 117.

Cat. 121

1. Sergei Tourkin in New York and Milan 2003–4, p. 331 n. 15.
2. Hartner 1938, p. 131.
3. Hartner 1973–74, p. 124.
4. These are Leo: the sun; Cancer: the moon; Gemini: Mercury and the head of the eclipse dragon; Taurus: Venus; Aries: Mars; Pisces: Jupiter; Aquarius and Capricorn: Saturn; Sagittarius: Jupiter and the tail of the eclipse dragon; Scorpio: Mars; Libra: Venus; and Virgo: Mercury.

Cat. 122

1. Reading by Abdullah Ghouchani; translation by Maryam Ekhtiar, Associate Curator, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
2. Fehérvári 1973, p. 92, no. 102.
3. See Melikian-Chirvani 1982b, p. 185, no. 83, for a fourteenth-century version without a foot and with a wider opening.
4. Allan 1991, pp. 30–31, no. 16.

Cat. 123

1. New York 1997a, pp. 3, 20–21, and cover image.
2. Alexander, ed. 1998, vol. 2, p. 233. This entry also provides the bibliography for the bowl up to 1996.

Cat. 124

1. See http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=237090&partId=1&searchText=Vaso+Vescovali&page=1 (accessed January 6, 2016).
2. Hartner 1973–74, pp. 104–6.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
4. For a thorough discussion, see *ibid.*, pp. 121–23, and Hartner 1938. See also cats. 136b, 136d, 145.

Cat. 125

1. Read by Alzahraa K. Ahmed, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. For an earlier and slightly different translation, see Humlebaek 1987, p. 91, no. 123, pl. 26.
2. For an image of the top of the Doha tray stand (cat. 69), see James Allan in Doha 2002, p. 33. For other basins of the same group, see Allan 1982a, pp. 76–79, no. 12; Paris 2001–2, p. 50, no. 42. See also two basins with similar figural and epigraphic repertoires dedicated to anonymous dignitaries in the Metropolitan Museum (91.1.587, 553), the latter being particularly close. A basin of similar design with a comparable astrological composition, signed by 'Ali b. Abdallah al-Alawi al-Mawsili and probably made in Mosul under the Ilkhanids, is in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (I.6581; see Almut von Gladiss in Berlin 2006–7, pp. 85–89, no. 34). Such basins were likely made in series, which explains the often anonymous inscriptions.
3. Humlebaek 1987, p. 91, attributes the titles to al-Malik al-Mansur Nur al-Din 'Ali, a Mamluk sultan (r. 1257–59). Annabelle Collinet in Paris 2001–2, p. 149, no. 126, identifies the owner with an amir of an Ayyubid prince, either of Homs al-Malik al-Mansur Ibrahim (r. 1240–46) or of Hama al-Malik al-Mansur b. al-Muzaffar (r. 1244–60?), a descendant of Salah al-Din's nephew. Al-Muzaffar al-Mansur's title is, however, also frequently found for the Artuqid rulers of Mardin. In the thirteenth century they are Artuq Arslan al-Malik al-Mansur (r. 1203–39) and Ghazi II b. Qara Arslan al-Malik al-Mansur (r. 1294–1312). Under both Artuqid rulers, architectural activity is attested in Mardin; see Beyazit 2009, chaps. 3.4, "Shahidiyya Madrasa," and 3.6, "Renovation of

the Mosque of the Citadel." For names with titles and dates of these Ayyubid and Artuqid rulers, see Bosworth 1996, pp. 71–72, 194–95. The ownership graffiti confirms that the basin entered the treasury of a certain Hasan, son of Ayyub, who was either the same dignitary for which the basin was intended or a subsequent owner.

4. For ewers and the theme of washing hands, see cats. 13a, 15, 68, 168a.
5. Rulers are sometimes identified with the sun, see cats. 136a–d, with further references, and New York 1997a, p. 9. The sun, also personified as a male figure holding a disk, usually wearing a tunic and sitting cross-legged, is substituted by the sun disk.
6. Hartner 1938, pp. 116–17.
7. Libra as the balance holding a goose can also be seen in Metropolitan Museum (91.1.553).

Cat. 126

1. Arabic transcriptions and translations, in Italian, by Rachel Ward in Venice 1993–94, p. 242.
2. For other Anatolian candlesticks in this catalogue and further literature, see cats. 21b, 77, 92. The reference study on the subject is Rice, D. S., 1954, especially pp. 17ff, pls. 9–15, illustrating five examples of the Labors of the Months candlestick group. The one from Santa Maria in Vulturella, Tivoli, corresponds to cat. 126. The remaining examples are in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (IB.499), the Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Istanbul, and the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul. See also Stern, H., 1957.
3. Sometimes, as in Berlin IB.499, the roundels alternate with additional roundels decorated with a flower formed of seven dots, see Rice, D. S., 1954, pl. 9, fig. a.
4. Stern, H., 1957; Melikian-Chirvani 1985, pp. 256–60.
5. Stern, H., 1957, p. 494.
6. According to *ibid.*, the cycle disappeared in the sixth century.
7. A similar figure in the Berlin example probably allegorizes the same month, even though it holds fruits without the plate, see Rice, D. S., 1954, pl. 13, fig. 11.
8. Certain of these candlesticks and other medieval Islamic metalworks contain pseudo- or abbreviated inscriptions with benedictory or protective intentions.

Cat. 127

1. Hamès 2007.
2. Fahd 2000.
3. See Wenzel 1993; Savage-Smith, ed. 2004; and Porter, V., et al. 2011.

Cat. 128

1. Designs for amulets in this shape appear in the *Daqa'iqa al-haqa'iqa* (see cat. 130), fols. 112v, 114r, 117r, and 125v.
2. Since the haloed figure is not riding the lion, the image may or may not bear some relation to the lion rider found on Artuqid coins (see cat. 14k).
3. MacDonald and Madelung 1991.
4. All but one Qur'anic chapter begin with this phrase.
5. Canaan 1937, pp. 98–99.
6. Berlekamp 2011, p. 135, however, states that "none of the talismanic images corresponds precisely to any of the zodiacal or planetary ones." This amulet is illustrated in *ibid.*, p. 138, no. 71.

Cat. 129

1. "Magic-medicinal bowl" is the term used by Emilie Savage-Smith in Savage-Smith 1997a.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
3. Canaan 1937, p. 99.

Cat. 130

1. Barrucand 1991, p. 123 n. 3, gives the full bibliography of the manuscript.
2. Richard 1989, p. 9; Barrucand 1991, pp. 113–14, 121.
3. Multiarmed figures personifying the planets do appear in the Vaso Vescovali (cat. 124), attesting to the popularity of this imagery in twelfth-century Iran. See Hartner 1973–74, pp. 119–21.

Cats. 131, 132

1. Watson 1985, p. 120, fig. 99; Fitzwilliam 1986, pp. 54–55, no. 53; Fehérvári 1973, no. 100a, b; Grube 1966, p. 173, fig. 22; Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 5, pl. 647; Grube 1976, pp. 239–45. A similarly decorated sculpture of a harpy is in the Metropolitan Museum (57.51.1); see also cats. 134, 139.
2. The objects were found at Raqqa in 1924 by Eustache de Lorey. See Folsach 2001, p. 158, no. 186; Paris 2001–2, pp. 56–57, no. 51, in which the parrot head is interpreted as a griffin. Another famous *laqabi* sculpture is an elephant with a *hawda* in the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London (POT 1285).
3. According to the *Nawruznama*, attributed to 'Umar Khayyam but possibly later, "the *bāz* [falcon] is the boon companion of the kings at the hunting grounds; they love it and rejoice in it. The *bāz* has some dispositions shared by kings, such as magnanimity and cleanliness. . . . Therefore, it is more proper to kings than to other people." 'Alam 1990b; see also cats. 37, 71.

4. Bosworth 1960, quoting the eleventh-century historian Bayhaqi.
5. For this poem, see cat. 37. Conversely, 'Alam 1990b notes that, most often, falcon metaphors in Persian poetry are used "generally in a casual way."
6. The name would regain momentum in the twelfth century among the sultan's successors, most notably Tughril III (r. 1176–94), as would the Turkish name Arslan, meaning "lion." The epithet was applied to other rulers, such as King Sham, "The Falcon," in the romance *Warqa and Gulshah*; see Daneshvari 1986, pp. 77–78. Further, the "Gray Falcon" was a moniker of the Ismaili leader Hasan-i Sabbah.
7. Schimmel 1992, p. 181; and Hafez 2002.
8. Daneshvari 1986, pp. 58–66. A miniature stonepaste cockerel (turquoise glaze with underglaze painting) is in the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London (POT 265). See Gibson 2008–9, p. 47, fig. 15. Representations of cockerels and other birds were sometimes placed atop domes and buildings, for example, a cockerel from the Lavra monastery in the Sinai, which is tentatively attributed to late tenth- or early eleventh-century Egypt. See Ballian forthcoming.
9. For the parrot, see Schimmel 1992, pp. 182–84.
10. Pancaroglu 2003.

Cat. 133

1. Brill and Rising 1999, p. 205; Brill and Rising 2012, pp. 442, 682; Whitehouse 2010, pp. 123–24, no. 200, and fig. p. 389.
2. For the Nishapur find, see Kröger 1995, pp. 172–73. For Serçe Limani, see Bass et al. 2009, pp. 197–203, 503, figs. 16–4, 16–5.

Cats. 134, 135

1. Gibson 2008–9, p. 27, counted fifty-five bull figures and nineteen bull-headed ewers, twice the number of any other type of animal. For cat. 134, see Grube 1976, pp. 239–45, no. 181. For cat. 135, see Watson 1985, pp. 117–18, fig. 98.
2. Melikian-Chirvani 1992.
3. According to these studies, the humped zebu (*Bos indicus*), was introduced to East Africa from southeast Iran and Pakistan in two main phases, the latter being the twelfth to fourteenth century; see Delort 1984, p. 292. More detailed data on the complex evolution of the humped cattle in Africa is in Epstein 1971, pp. 505–56, especially pp. 513–20.
4. Digard and Boyce 1991.
5. Quoted in Boyce 1989. See also Wüstenfeld, ed. 1848, p. 165.

6. Malandra 2001; Kotwal and Kreyenbroek 2004.
7. For Faridun, and more examples in the Islamic sources of Faridun in association with cattle, see Tafazzoli 1999. For the history of the bull-shaped mace, see also Doostkhah 1999.
8. Grube 1976, p. 245, interprets the tail as ending in a snake or dragon. For dragons, see Daneshvari 2011, p. 26.
9. Hartner 1938, p. 121 (and p. 153 for other etymologies). For astronomical interpretations of bulls accompanied by lions, scorpions, and stellar motifs in the ancient Near East, see Hartner 1965.

Cats. 136a–d

1. Arslan seems to have been the Turkic name of Isra'il, son of Seljuq and eponymous founder of the Rum Seljuqs (Yalman 2010, pp. 328ff.). Other rulers with the name Arslan include Qara ("Dark") Arslan, Yuluk ("Capable/Good") Arslan, and Artuq Arslan. Similarly, Leon was a preferred name of Armenian Cilician rulers.
2. Öney 1969b, p. 37.
3. Daneshvari 2011, pp. 107–15.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
5. Lion depictions have been popular in Islamic art since the early Islamic period. According to Gierlichs 1996, p. 9, lions represent the most dominant group among the surviving figural reliefs in architectural decoration of the Rum Seljuqs and the Artuqids. See also Öney 1969b.
6. See Yalman 2010, pp. 328ff. See also cat. 5. In Mamluk times, under Sultan Baybars I, the walking lion was used as a heraldic animal and a figural blazon on buildings, coins, and objects; see Nasser Rabbat in Behrens-Abouseif et al. 2012, p. 26 n. 26. For the Seljuqs there is, however, no comparable evidence that would confirm the same.
7. Baer 1983, pp. 43–61, and cat. 34.
8. Incense and aromatics were rare and luxurious, and considered similar to high-value money, see cats. 34, 105.
9. Milan and Vienna 2010–11, pp. 262, 270, no. 244.
10. Another rare earthenware piece is a roundel in the Metropolitan Museum (30.106) that in design is comparable to cat. 39.
11. Hartner 1938.
12. Redford 2005, p. 290.
13. See Gibson 2008–9, pp. 39–50.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 47–48, based on Melikian-Chirvani 1982c.
15. Daneshvari 2011, p. 77.
16. See <http://www.smb-digital.de/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=1523735&viewType=detailView> (accessed January 6, 2016).

17. This doorknocker was published in Amiens 1999, pp. 54–55. no. 76. Comparable circular doorknockers were found in situ from Mosul, Aleppo, and Damascus. See the doors from the Mausoleum 'Ayn al-Din, Mosul, signed by artist 'Umar b. al-Khidr al-Maliki al-Badri (see Raby 2012, table I.a, no. 59), and those from the Maristan Nur al-Din, Damascus (see fig. 19 and Sarre and Herzfeld 1911–20, vol. 1, p. 21, no. 22, vol. 2, p. 269, vol. 3, pl. 8; Herzfeld 1942, figs. 43, 46, 48–50; see also the Herzfeld archive, local number D-215, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., at <http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?tag.cstype=all&q=mosul&start=0>; accessed January 6, 2016).
18. In the late Ottoman and early modern period, the houses of the wealthy and elite in the northern Jazira (Mardin, Amid [modern Diyarbakır], or Urfa), as well as in Qajar Iran, had a different doorknocker on each door panel, one for women and one for men. The difference in the sound of the knocking allowed the families to send an appropriate person to the door and to prepare themselves and the space for the visitor.
19. Cats. 4e and 13a also bear the name and honorific titles of this ruler. The doors and one of the doorknockers is in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul (4282.3749.3790). The second doorknocker is in the David Collection, Copenhagen (38/1973).
20. See Hill 1974, pp. 191–95. Al-Jazari's manuscript is now in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul (A3472, f. 165b).
21. Curatola 1985, with eight illustrations documenting the survival of the double-dragon doorknockers into the nineteenth century.
22. Daneshvari 2011, pp. 95–96.
23. Many of the examples are illustrated in Daneshvari 2011, pp. 83–93; see also Gierlichs 1996, pp. 28–40.
24. Hartner 1938.
25. Daneshvari 2011, pp. 55–133.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 65–66.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 55–133.
28. On possible apotropaic interpretations of the motif of menacing dragons and lions, see also Öney 1969b; Öney 1969c.

Cat. 137

1. Fehérvári 1976a, p. 71, no. 74, pl. 23a; Berlin 2007–8, no. 95.
2. The National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul, and the Rawza Museum of Islamic Art, Ghazni. See Scerrato 1959/2014, p. 975; and Melikian-Chirvani 1982b, pp. 60–61, both with further references.

3. For earlier wheeled compositions with conjoined animals, see Ettinghausen 1957, pp. 341–43. For centrifugal arrangements of the twelfth century and later of animals that are not conjoined or that appear in looser variations, see *ibid.*, p. 352, figs. Q, R, and Baer 1983, pp. 173–75. For a lampas textile with four hares, see Cleveland Museum of Art (1993.140; second quarter to mid-13th century) in Cleveland and New York 1997–98, pp. 158–59 n. 45. See also a gold bowl in the Reza Abbasi Museum, Tehran (2618).
4. "Do not be deceived by this golden coloured rabbit, that is drawn on the dagger by the armourer/For when lions battle with such a dagger, they will shed the blood of a rabbit." Translated in Daneshvari 1986, p. 18.
5. See *ibid.*, pp. 11–28, with references, for the Arabic and Persian words for the animal; Roux 1971.
6. Viré 1980. For examples of the hare-and-stars motif, see a silver coin of the caliph al-Muqtadir (p. 13, fig. 1) and a Fatimid molded ceramic (p. 22, fig. 15) in Daneshvari 1986.
7. Ettinghausen 1957, p. 344; Scerrato 1972/2014, pp. 1085–87; Filigenzi 2003. Buddhist antecedents include the wall paintings in religious contexts at Qizil, Qara Qoto, and Alchi, and an earthenware medallion also from a cultural context at Bir-Kot-Ghwandai, Pakistan. See Filigenzi 2003, with previous bibliography. The motif eventually made its way to medieval Europe, possibly through the mediation of Islamic art.
8. Scerrato 1972/2014, pp. 1085–87; Filigenzi 2003.
9. Filigenzi 2003, p. 335, with previous bibliography.
10. In the so-called animal style, as suggested in *ibid.*, p. 339, with examples.
11. The rayed nimbus is called a *shamsa*, from *shams*, Arabic and Persian for "sun." See Ettinghausen 1957, pp. 345–49, and for the occurrence of solar sphinxes and lunar hares in combined compositions, see *ibid.*, p. 344, pl. 10, and fig. 32.

Cat. 138

1. The first of the two quatrains also appears on another luster bowl now in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore; see Ghouchani 1987, p. 32, fig. 8; and Ettinghausen 1936, p. 72, fig. 29. My thanks to Abdullah Ghouchani for this suggestion.
2. *Ruba'i* by Abu Sa'id b. Abu-l-Khayr (967–1049).
3. Verse by Abu Shakur Balkhi (b. ca. 912); see Dabir Siyāqi 1975, p. 52.

4. Bahrāmī 1949, pp. 108–9, fig. 27, pl. 57, attributes the work to Gurgan and gives two diverging pieces of information on its collection: Jacques O. Matossian (p. 108) and Maximo Etchecopar (pl. 57). Although said to come from Gurgan, it is not clear if the dish was part of the famous hoard of intact luster-painted vessels found at Awdan Tepe. See *ibid.*, pl. 1, and p. 16; and Paris 2006, pp. 58–63.
5. Paris 2006, p. 58, notes that the dish is seemingly borne by the outstretched wings of the sphinxes.
6. This was from the time of Sultan Barkiyarūq onward; earlier, the Buyids made occasional military use of elephants. Ruska et al. 1965.
7. The earliest example of such iconography is a tenth-century textile now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (OA 7502). In the Arabic and Persian versions of chess, the elephant piece follows the Indian tradition in which it represents the royal army (Arabic *al-fil*, which evolved from the Italian *alfiere* and Spanish *alfil*; preserved semantically in the Russian *slon*, or elephant; and bishop in the Anglo-Saxon world). The iconography of cat. 138 is not linked directly to the Qur’anic narrative of the elephants refusing to attack the Ka’ba in the year of the birth of the Prophet, known as the Year of the Elephant, although contemporaries may have read such a subtext into the story (Beeston 1965). Other possible meanings involve Persian epic (e.g., Bahram Gur returning from Sind), the Indian deity Ganesha and his numerous encounters with snakes, or the Central Asian animal cycle deriving from the Chinese zodiac. See Otto-Dorn 1963, p. 144 (and for an interpretation critical of Otto-Dorn, Roux 1978); Ruska et al. 1965.
8. Museo Nazionale d’Arte Orientale “Giuseppe Tucci,” Rome (8428, SP2). Such an astrological meaning is also possible in a stone panel of a griffin chasing a caparisoned elephant from the thirteenth-century walls at Konya.
9. Court ladies traveled for a variety of reasons—pilgrimage, marriage, political scheming, to follow the largely peripatetic courts—but their lifestyle is largely omitted from the historiography of the Great Seljuqs and their successor states. For exceptions, see Redford 2015; Hillenbrand, C., 2003; El-Cheikh 2015; Meisami 2003a.
10. This snake resembles those depicted in a talismanic capacity on magic bowls, whose talismanic power operated against the major threats of the bite of snakes, dogs, and scorpions (see cat. 129), and in the *Kitab al-diryaq*, a text dealing with antidotes to its bite,

therefore suggesting here a negative force in need of counteraction. In the Paris manuscript, the snakes on pp. 13, 27, and 33 (current digital pagination) are different from the dragon/snake on the frontispiece (see cat. 106). The largely negative connotation of the snake seems thus prevalent in this depiction. Considering the tendency in Persian poetry of wordplay employing opposites, Persian poets were ambiguous in their use of the snake as a poetic device. It relates most frequently to the biblical narrative of Adam and Eve’s temptation; alternatively, it describes the tress on the beloved’s cheek (i.e., the snake in Paradise). See Schimmel 1992, pp. 84, 158, 196.

Cats. 139, 140

1. For cat. 139, see Grube et al. 1994, pp. 236–37, no. 267; Amsterdam 1999–2000, p. 239, no. 220; Paris 2009–10, p. 108, no. 129. For cat. 140, see Grube 1966, pp. 172–73, fig. 20; Ettinghausen 1970, p. 126, fig. 18; Grube 1965, p. 218, fig. 18; Jenkins et al. 1977, pl. 257. According to M. Shreve Simpson and Melanie Gibson (personal communication), an almost identical piece is in the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid.
2. For example, a late seventh- or eighth-century glass bottle (1999.145) and ninth-century luster bowl with four camels (64.259) in the Metropolitan Museum. Camel depictions have a long history preceding Islamic art; for southern Arabian examples, see Crone 2008.
3. For more examples, see al-Hariri’s *Maqamat*, dated A.H. 634/A.D. 1237, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (MS Arabe 5847), fols. 94v, 95r; see also fols. 31r, 51r, 134r, 138r, 143r. The seated figures in cat. 140 have been described as holding a rod, though it is visible on only one side of the camel’s head.
4. In the Qur’an camels are presented as an example of God’s creation: “Do they not look at the Camels, how they are made?” (Qur’an 88:17); see Pellat 1971.
5. Roux 1959, pp. 45–48, 70–71; Bulliet 2009, pp. 106–9. Turkish and Mongol terms for camels have variants to express species, sex, and age, but to a lesser extent than Arabic ones; see Roux 1959, pp. 37–43.
6. Roux 1959, pp. 60–62. For depictions of camels in the art of the Eurasian steppes, see Adamova 2004, pp. 10–11. For camels in Mongolian history and folklore, see Lang 2012 and Chuluubaatar 2012.
7. Bulliet 2009, pp. 96–126.

8. Quoted by Bayhaqi: “One must remember what mischief and trouble were brought by . . . those Turkmens whom my father [Sultan Mahmud] allowed in and brought over the [Oxus] river and gave a place within Khorasan, where they lived as camel herders (*sarbanan*)” (Bulliet 2009, p. 101).
9. Quoted from the *Diwan* of Farid al-Din ‘Attar. See also Schimmel 1992, pp. 194, 401–2 nn. 16, 18, with translation of ‘Attar’s verses.

Cats. 141, 142

1. Watson 2004, p. 265.
2. Such wares are known as “Aghkand ware” for the eponymous town in Iranian Azerbaijan. For cat. 141 and for Soviet excavations in Azerbaijan and Georgia that revealed many similar examples, see Watson 2004, p. 265, no. 1c.1. The wading bird may be akin to the ducks being attacked in various examples; one of these, a glass medallion in the Metropolitan Museum (2006.524), resembles others excavated at the palace of Termez belonging to its early twelfth-century restoration phase. See also the gypsum-plaster relief, excavated at Rayy, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (fig. 97). A *laqabi* dish in the Cleveland Museum of Art (1938.7), a rare Syrian depiction of an animal combat, also shows a bird of prey attacking a water bird.
3. Published in Milan and Vienna 2010–11, p. 110, no. 83, with previous references.
4. London 1976a, p. 169, no. 178, with previous references.
5. An example of the “lion on the carpet” image are the following verses by Rashid al-Watwat (d. ca. 1177): “The lion in your carpet, in whose body there is no life,/hunts, thanks to your majesty, the Leo in the sky.’ Even the lifeless figure woven into the patrons’ carpet is, because of the high rank of his owner, so strong that he can easily grasp the constellation Leo (which is usually connected with energy).” Translated and explained in Schimmel 2004, p. 322. The subsequent inference is that lion motifs appeared on luxurious carpets, although the earliest surviving examples date from several centuries later.
6. Translated in Melikian-Chirvani 1986, p. 77. See also Schimmel 2004, pp. 226, 322, 401, 415.

Cat. 143

1. The full bibliography for this object is given in the website of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/448671?rpp=30&pg=1&ft=32.52.1&pos=1&imgno=0>

&tabname=object-information (accessed January 6, 2016).

2. Mohaddith, ed. 1986, p. 217; New York 2011, p. 115, no. 73.
3. Otto-Dorn 1994, p. 303.
4. Hartner 1973–74, p. 124. They also appear as Sagittarius in cat. 121.
5. King, H., 1995, pp. 150–51.

Cat. 144

1. Watson 1985, pp. 106, 198, no. 19; and Daneshvari 2011, p. 67, pl. 23, both with previous references. The luster is applied in two slightly differing colors: reddish (for the dragons’ scales, the middle inscription, and the palmettes on the exterior) and golden.
2. However, cat. 144 was also previously attributed to Gurgan. See Bahrāmī 1949.
3. Listed in Watson 1985, p. 106, and Daneshvari 2011, pl. 22, both with previous references. For a ewer in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (MAO 444), see Maguy Charritat in Paris 2001, p. 110 n. 75. See also the bowl in the Metropolitan Museum illustrated in fig. 90. Grube 1965, pp. 222, 224, fig. 28, suggests that the group was decorated by a single artist, but differences in the execution of the same, painted motifs speak against such an interpretation. Compare, for instance, the palmettes on the exterior of cat. 144 and fig. 90. It is possible to suggest, instead, that different hands worked on the same object.
4. Transcribed and translated in Daneshvari 2011, p. 66, which also offers (pp. 66–67) an interpretation of the “circular objects” between the dragons’ jaws.
5. The medallion also features a bird and vegetal elements. The lion may be read as a symbol of power and as the cosmological depiction of the constellation Leo within its planetary overlord, the sun. See New York 1997a, pp. 32–33, no. 13.

Cat. 145

1. Published, with inscriptions, by Ellen Kenney in New York 2011, pp. 157–58, no. 106.
2. See also cat. 125, in which the same title is used for an anonymous amir. This title was used by Artuqid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk rulers, see Bosworth 1996, pp. 70–80, 194–96.
3. For references to doorknockers, gateways, and portals, see cat. 136d. For the occurrence of the motif on the Ahlat tombstones, see Öney 1969c, p. 176, no. 10, fig. 11.
4. On the dragon motif, see Öney 1969c, pp. 172–92; Berlin 1993–94; Gierlich 1996, pp. 28–40, 93–99; and Kuehn 2011.

5. Hartner 1938; Öney 1969c; Kuehn 2011, pp. 111–24; Daneshvari 2011, pp. 107–19, 159–65.

Cat. 146

1. Melikian-Chirvani 1970, fig. 10.
2. Nizām al-Mulk 1960, p. 103.

Cat. 147

1. The frame in which cat. 147 entered the Musée des Tissus de Lyon, had an inscription on the back stating that it came from Bibi Shahr Banu, one of the necropolises at Rayy (see cat. 196). This piece was presumably sold to Jean Pozzi by A. M. Indjoudjian after 1928. See Koechlin and Migeon 1928, no. and pl. LXIIa. However, this specific attribution to Rayy is suspect, as records of other textiles sold by Indjoudjian include no such claims of attribution. See King, Do., 2004, pp. 40–41. A second, larger fragment of the same textile is in the George Washington University Museum and Textile Museum, Washington, D.C. (TM.3.115), a technical analysis of which is given in Kajitani 1975. Interestingly, and without further comment, Kajitani notes a “figure (apotheosis?) within foliate circle” (p. 201).
2. For a photograph taken of the reverse (i.e., red on a blue ground), see Koechlin and Migeon 1928, no. and pl. LXIIa.
3. New York 1997b, pp. 399–400, no. 267.
4. See Johns 2014, pp. 71–74, especially p. 72, which hypothesizes that the painter may have misinterpreted the Alexander iconography by drawing on riding scenes that occur elsewhere on the ceiling. For a relief, possibly Byzantine, in the Basilica of San Marco, Venice, with a typical depiction of the apotheosis scene, see Stepan 2000, pp. 88–89, and p. 89, fig. 4.
5. Redford 1990, p. 119.
6. New York 1997b, p. 400.

Cats. 148a, b

1. See Annick Neveux Leclerc in Paris 2001, pp. 126–27; Öney 1969a, pp. 283–301; Öney 1972; Daneshvari 2011, pp. 135–59.
2. Early examples include a stone relief (dated 10th–11th century) from Stara Zagora, Bulgaria (New York 1997b, pp. 326–27, no. 220.); and marbles (11th century) from Ghazni in Afghanistan (Rugiadi 2012, pp. 1092, 1177, 1308, nos. 673–75).
3. This bookstand is now in the Mevlana Museum, Konya (332); see London 2005, pp. 133–34, 400, no. 88. For a discussion of the motif in architecture, see Gierlichs 1996, pp. 40–46, 92–93, 117.

4. For further references, see cats. 14a–l.
5. See Anik 2000, pp. 73–165; Yalman 2010.
6. New York 1997b, pp. 326–27, no. 227b, and p. 411; New York 2004, pp. 260, 391–92, 397.
7. Joachim Gierlichs in Berlin 1993–94, p. 60, no. 80; Stuttgart 2003, p. 70.
8. They are also known from the bath of Huand Hatun, the wife of Kay Qubad I, at Kayseri (Ank and Ank 2008, pp. 253–59).
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 320, 339.
10. This jar was published in Paris 2001, p. 129, no. 92.

Cat. 149

1. See Cleveland and New York 1997–98, pp. 144–45, no. 35, and pp. 154–59, nos. 43–45. Cat. 44 (Cloisters Collection, Metropolitan Museum, 1984.344) has since broadened attribution to Central Asia, North Africa, or Sicily, while the others, in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art, remain attributed to eastern Iran and Central Asia.
2. Notably, the closest parallel is a Chinese textile attributed to the Yuan dynasty with dragons and phoenixes that appear in similarly spaced and offset roundels (Cleveland Museum of Art, 1995.73; *ibid.*, p. 153, no. 42).
3. Indeed, the lions in cat. 5, while significantly more mannerist, paw at a stylized Tree of Life in a manner similar to those in cat. 149. As such, both textiles differ from Iranian depictions of lions (e.g., cat. 136a and fig. 55; see also *ibid.*, pp. 144–45, no. 35, and pp. 154–55, no. 43).
4. Katharina Otto-Dorn and others have argued that the double-headed-eagle textile from the shrine of Saint Servatius in Siegburg (see cat. 150) would have been manufactured for either Kay Qubad I or one of his successors. See Otto-Dorn 1978–79, p. 119.
5. See *ibid.* and Ank 2000, pp. 82–83, figs. 61, 62.

Cat. 150

1. The two fragments are in the Abegg-Stiftung in Riggisberg (Otavsky and Wardwell 2011, pp. 163–66); another is in the Cleveland Museum of Art.
2. The placement of the dragons is almost certainly explained by a desire to avoid overlapping elements, although an underlying phallic symbolism cannot be dismissed. See the discussion on dragons below and Daneshvari 2011, pp. 172, 184, for the possible edipical symbolism of a dragon battling a lion.
3. New York 1997a, p. 23.
4. Hartner 1973–74, pp. 114–15. See also Otto-Dorn 1978–79, pp. 134–35, and p. 135 n. 99.

5. Hartner 1973–74, pp. 106–7. See also New York 1997a, p. 23.
6. See Daneshvari 2011, pp. 136–59, for a speculative interpretation of the Erzurum panel.
7. Hartner 1973–74, pp. 114–15.

Cat. 151

1. Otto-Dorn 1979, p. 119; Rome 1994, p. 184, no. 91.
2. A second, larger fragment is in the treasury of the shrine of Saint Servatius in Siegburg.
3. For the significance of the color red to the Rum Seljuqs, see Yalman 2010, pp. 222, 326. For a similar robe worn by the Byzantine emperor Constantine Palaiologos in a typicon at Lincoln College, University of Oxford, see New York 2004, p. 265, fig. 9.11.
4. See Daneshvari 2011, especially pp. 135–58, for a detailed but hypothetical and dualistic interpretation of these scenes.
5. For images, see <http://archnet.org/sites/1924> (accessed January 6, 2016).
6. Otto-Dorn 1979, pp. 119–21.

Cat. 152

1. Al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait (LNS 32c, d. LNS 32b), also contains a griffin; see Milan and Vienna 2010–11, p. 271, no. 249.
2. Excavated at Cheshmeh ‘Ali Tepe, Rayy; see Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 5, pl. 514C. Another stucco roundel, comparable in size to the al-Sabah Collection examples, with an enthronement scene enclosed in a star pattern, is in the Islamic Museum of the National Museum of Iran (called “Rayy Style”; 13th century).
3. Armour 1995, p. 74.
4. Otto-Dorn 1994, p. 304.
5. Armour 1995, p. 77.
6. For the Pisa Griffon, see Contadini et al. 2002, p. 66. For the Fatimid bowl, see Grube and Johns 2005, fig. 84.7.
7. Otto Dorn 1994, figs. 294, 296–99, 304–6.

Cat. 153

1. The object is published in Watson 2004, p. 153, no. Af.15. The handle is repaired with infilling. For the Samarqand examples, see Shishkina and Pavchinskaja 1992–93, pp. 37, 77–78.
2. For Egyptian bread stamps, most of which also bear a positive motif, see Kühnel 1939; for the stamp with the inscription “Army’s bread” (*khubz jaysh*), see *ibid.*, p. 54, fig. 1.c. For the Tiberias examples, see Vincenz 2008, p. 158, pls. 4.39:4, 5, fig. 4.6.
3. For Byzantine bread stamps, see Galavaris 1970.

Cats. 154, 155

1. Read by Abdullah Ghouchani and translated by Alzahraa K. Ahmed, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
2. Compared with other animals, the sphinx is less common on monuments in medieval Anatolia and the Jazira. For the few examples, see Gierlichs 1996, pp. 46–49.
3. Ettinghausen 1957, especially pp. 345–56; Baer 1965; Berlin 1993–94; Otto-Dorn 1994; Paris 2001, pp. 138–41; Daneshvari 2011, pp. 166–76.
4. For an apotropaic function, see cat. 157a; and for a royal protector or guard, see Gierlichs 1996, pp. 46–49.
5. On Artuqid palaces, see cats. 20a–g, with further references. Yetkin 1964 confirms that the figurine has small holes that allowed water to pass through or that would have rendered it an appropriate decorative object for a basin or incense burner; see also Humlebaek 1987, p. 86, no. 92; Folsach 2001, p. 313, no. 499. Baer 1965, p. 15, however, thinks that the holes are too small for a water-related purpose and sees the figure instead as a finial for a throne post or tent pole.
6. See Folsach 2001, p. 158, no. 187. The glazed ceramic figure belongs to the same group as cat. 132.
7. Hartner 1938. More common in the Jazira and Syria is a lion (the sun and/or the zodiacal sign Leo; see cats. 136b, d) or the zodiacal sign Sagittarius, each with its tail ending in a dragon’s head. See Hartner 1938, pp. 131–44. For the iconography of the sphinx related to the sun, see Ettinghausen 1957, pp. 345–50; Otto-Dorn 1994, pp. 303–10. One could also argue for the combination of both solar and lunar eclipses—the sun represented by the body of the lion and the moon by the full-moon-like female head, which may explain the multiplication of dragons’ heads in this figurine. For the combined representation of the sun and moon with regard to the sphinx, see Scerrato 2014c. For human heads with tripartite crown as references to the sun or moon, see Carboni 2006, pp. 162–63.
8. See Daneshvari 2011, pp. 7–17.
9. Öney 1969c, especially pp. 186–88, 209–11; Daneshvari 2011, pp. 166–76. The possible association with water might also connote fertility.
10. Baer 1965, pl. 35, fig. 63; Berlin 1993–94, p. 54, no. 60, pl. 7; Berlin 2006–7, p. 83, no. 33; Gladiss 2012, p. 89, no. 53. Polygonal candlesticks were more common in the eastern parts of the Seljuq realm; see cat. 142.

11. Baer 1965, pp. 34–38, 50–56; Otto-Dorn 1994.
12. Comparable to cat. 154 but in contrast to cat. 155.

Cat. 156

1. Ettinghausen 1950.
2. See Berlecamp 2011.

Cats. 157a, b

1. Read and translated by Abdullah Ghouchani.
2. On mirrors in general, see Scerrato 2014c and Carboni 2006.
3. Ward 1993, pp. 30–31.
4. See three mirrors in the Metropolitan Museum, one with chasing animals (42.136), one with a falconer (1976.158.1), and one with a human borne by an eagle, interpreted as either Ganymede and the eagle or Zal and the *simurgh* (1976.158.2); illustrated in Carboni 2006, pp. 165–67. For a rare nonfigural example with a repeating pattern of hexagonal and star motifs, see Metropolitan Museum (40.170.265); illustrated in *ibid.*, p. 162.
5. Rice, T. T., 1961, p. 264, fig. 47; Rice, D. T., 1965, fig. 184.
6. Savage-Smith 1997d, especially p. 128, no. 52; Carboni 2006, pp. 163–64.
7. See Baer 1965; Otto-Dorn 1994. For a more in-depth discussion and typology of mirrors comparable to cat. 157b, see Scerrato 2014c, who at p. 1494 n. 14 also refers to one mirror with addorsed sphinxes made of silver, the exception among the many bronze examples.
8. Published in Berlin 1993–94, p. 54, no. 52; Gladiss 2012, p. 55, no. 33.
9. The motif of four chasing sphinxes also relates to several inlaid brasses of Badr al-Din Lu'lu' (cats. 12a, b), in which, however, the wings of the sphinxes are joined and interlaced. Otto-Dorn 1994, p. 304, interprets the interlaced wings as the solar wheel, an emblem of rotating sphinxes relating to the perceived movement of the sun.
10. Scerrato 2014c; Carboni 2006, pp. 163–64.
11. Scerrato 2014c discusses several possibilities; see especially pp. 1499–1500 for three interpretations related to Scorpio that in its ancient definition had specific talismanic powers: 1) to represent the particularly favorable and ideal astrological moment when the two luminary signs, the sun (represented by the lion body) and the moon (a female face), are conjunct in Scorpio (a scorpion tail); 2) to represent the astrological sign of Scorpio through his planetary overlords Mars (scorpion's tail), the sun (lion), and Venus (female head); 3) to

represent the three signs of the zodiac Virgo, Venus, and Scorpio.

12. Ülkü Bates, personal communication with the author. Bates witnessed the opening of a *türbe* (13th–14th century) in Amasya, Anatolia, in which a chainless mirror with addorsed sphinxes lay on the chest of the inhumed body. Scerrato 2014c, p. 1498 n. 38, notes that, in the regions of the Black and Caspian Seas, mirrors were also found in tombs, resting on the buried bodies, and that the Russia Tatars (18th–19th century) placed mirrors under the foundations of their houses to protect against fires. On the magic inscriptions and their dating, see Savage-Smith 1997d, especially p. 128, no. 52; and Carboni 2006, pp. 163–64.

Cat. 158

1. According to Alzahraa K. Ahmed, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the inscription reads as *Abd al-Rahman* on account of the way the letter *ha* is written.
2. *Habbs* were used beginning in pre-Islamic times in Iraq and parts of Greater Syria, and they became particularly popular in the Jazira in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The reference study on these vessels is Reitlinger 1951. For examples from the northern part of the Jazira (now part of southeast Turkey), see Bulut 1999. For more on their functions and symbolism, see cats. 38 and 60, with further references.
3. Reitlinger 1951, types II and III. Baer 1989b discusses how earthenware ceramics were decorated in a manner comparable to contemporary jewelry to increase their market value.
4. Humlebaek 1987, p. 84, no. 79.
5. Bulut 1999, pp. 192–95.
6. See, for example, Reitlinger 1951, figs. 17–20.
7. See Baer 1965; Joachim Gierlichs in Berlin 1993–94, pp. 23–25.

Religion and the Literary Life

1. Peacock 2010a, p. 126, notes Tughril Beg's burning of the Sinjar Mosque.
2. Madelung 1991.
3. Peacock 2010a, pp. 108–14. Tor 2011, pp. 41–43, makes a case for sincere piety as a primary motivating factor of Tughril Beg's actions.
4. These domed buildings and minarets, such as the one at the Great Mosque at Aleppo, destroyed in 2013, announced the tenure of Seljuq rule in the territories they conquered. Some structures, such as the domed hall of Taj al-Mulk in the *masjid-i jami'* in Isfahan were directly connected to the actual presence of the Seljuq sultan. In Iran the

primary building material was brick, also used to marvelous effect for decoration, whereas in Anatolia and the lands of the Seljuq successor states, stone was used predominantly, with brick and wood as subsidiary materials.

5. Hillenbrand, R., 1994, p. 95.
6. Rogers 1995, pp. 964–68.
7. Wolper 2003, p. 4.

Cat. 159

1. This pair is published and discussed in Humlebaek 1987, p. 87, no. 96, and Doha 2002, pp. 16–17, no. 1.
2. See Humlebaek 1987, p. 87, no. 94. For other examples from the same group, see *ibid.*, no. 95, and Folsach 2001, p. 316, nos. 504, 505.
3. See cat. 136d.
4. Another comparable example is in the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London (MTW 825); see Paris 2009–10, p. 97, no. 111.

Cat. 160

1. Reading and translation in Christie's, London 2003, pp. 36–37, lot 31.
2. Cats. 161 and 192 are among the rare examples.
3. For an overview, see the chapter on woodwork in Öney 1976, pp. 110–23.
4. It is possible that the appliques, together with the epigraphic panels and other parts, were painted, similar to door panels that are probably from the same set; see Enderlein 1976, pp. 33–34.
5. See Meinecke 1976, vol. 2, p. 328. On the attribution of Berlin I.661, see Enderlein 1976, pp. 34–35.
6. For a floor plan, see Enderlein 1976, p. 40, fig. 3.
7. See *ibid.*, pp. 33–34, pl. 1 (Konya), pl. 2 (Berlin I.2672).
8. For a transcription and German translation of the inscription on Berlin I.661, see *ibid.*, pp. 34–35.
9. Another indication of such a function for cat. 160 is the metal attachment piece at the bottom of the right side panel. It is also possible that there is confusion with the doors found in situ, and that these smaller wood panels and Berlin I.661 were the doors of the north and south lateral rooms, both relating to the mausoleum, while the Konya panels and Berlin I.2672 were the doors to the main entrance and to the prayer hall. Comparing the exact dimensions of the gateways and windows with all wood panels may give more clarification. According to Christie's, London 2003, pp. 36–37, lot 31, there are not four but three gateways, omitting the possibility of window shutters but suggesting that cat. 160 is a door from another building in Konya.

Cat. 161

1. Translated by H. E. McAllister and M. Bowen.
2. Creswell 1940, pp. 317–19, pls. 89, 90.
3. Meshkati 1974, p. 109, and Pedersen et al. 1990.
4. Pedersen et al. 1990.
5. A very similar wood construction can be found in the *masjid-i jami'* Nadushan, in Yazd. Although it was published in Afshar 1975, its current location and status are unknown. See also Ghouchani 2004. Technical analyses of these two fragments were carried out at The Metropolitan Museum of Art by Pinar Gokpinar-Gnepp, formerly Hagop Kevorkian Fellow, Department of Islamic Art, Daniel Hausdorf, Associate Conservator, and Mechthild Baumeister, Conservator, Sherman Fairchild Center for Objects Conservation. Ronald Street, Senior Manager, Imaging, Molding, and Prototyping, is responsible for all 3D modeling.
6. See, for instance, a twelfth-century tombstone in the Metropolitan Museum (33.118).
7. The inscription starts from the second half of Qur'an 67:3, continues through 67:4, and ends at the first half of 67:5. Some of the missing verses may originally have been carved on the lower crosspiece. For more information on the inscription, see Ghouchani 2004.
8. Ibn al-Athir 2006, p. 202.

Cat. 162

1. For this tentative interpretation and reading of the titles as referring to Malik Shah (r. 1073–92), see Blair 1992, pp. 170–71, no. 64. The panels are published in Wilkinson 1986, pp. 110–15.
2. Earlier analyses (Wilkinson 1986, p. 115) detected cinnabar and lapis in the vermilion and blue pigments. More recently pigments from two of the panels (Metropolitan Museum, 39.40.63 and 39.40.64) were analyzed using μ -XRF, the results of which have not yet been discussed, and with ultraviolet visible spectroscopy (UV-Vis). The compositions detected were litharge (PbO) (39.40.64, 39.40.63), only analyzed by μ -XRF; red lead (Pb3O4) (39.40.63); and ultramarine blue (Na6–10Al-6Si6O24S2–4) (39.40.63). See Holakooei 2015.
3. Wilkinson 1986, pp. 66, 99.
4. Cat. 162 has a restoration on its right side. It could be read as either *[a]za[m]* (the greatest) or *[mu]azza[m]* (the great). The title *al-sultan al-azam* is employed in monumental Ghaznavid inscriptions for Ibrahim (r. 1059–99) and Bahram Shah (r. 1118–52); see Giunta and Bresc 2004, p. 187. Seljuq

examples using (*al-*)*sultan al-mu'azzam* appear in reference to Malik Shah, Muhammad Tapar (r. 1105–18), Mahmud II (r. 1118–31), and possibly Tutush I (r. 1078–95); see *RCEA* 1931–, vol. 7, nos. 2707, 2734–37, 2773, 2780, 2783, 2792, 2798, 2804, 2934, 2943 (*al-sultan* only), 2960, 2973, 2974, and 3007; Blair 1992, p. 60; *MCIA* 1955, pp. 153–60, no. 57.

5. See Giunta 2011, p. 93. The formula must have entered the religious and public discourse in the eleventh century, as it is also common in Ghaznavid monumental epigraphy; see Giunta 2005, p. 533, and Giunta 2010b, p. 126.

Cats. 163, 164

1. For cat. 164, see Grube 1976, pp. 175–76, no. 123.
2. Fehérvári 1972; Khoury 1992. The earliest known panels (9th century) are from Mosul and Egypt; all are tombstones. Of the Iranian examples, many come from the Nishapur area and date to the tenth century; again, all are tombstones. More elaborate ones date to the twelfth century. Grube 1976, p. 176, suggests a funerary use for cat. 164.
3. These examples date from the early Ghaznavid to the Ghurid period (mid-11th–early 12th century). See Rugiadi 2012, pp. 1104–7; Giunta 2003a.
4. Scalloped niches, twisted columns, and similarly shaped capitals are not unknown in Iran; see a comparable panel, retrieved in Hamadan, now in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran (3899). It bears an epitaph with the date A.H. 524/A.D. 1131.
5. A close comparison is the Hamadan panel cited in note 4 above.
6. The existence of hanging lamps on eleventh-century panels with niche designs retrieved in Ghazni, likely deriving from mosques, suggests that the link between the hanging lamp and Ayat al-nur developed within a preexisting, favorable cultural context (Rugiadi 2012). The lamp would recall the light invoked by the verse; as on earlier mihrabs it occurred with other images, such as stars or shiny medallions (Flood 2000; Flood 2001, pp. 15–56).
7. Today scholars mostly agree that in Islamic contexts not all depictions of arches with hanging lamps link directly to the mihrab; the assumption that lamps are always connected to the Ayat al-nur has also been widely discussed. For a different opinion, see Baer 1989b, p. 95. See also Papadopoulou, ed. 1988.
8. Khoury (1992, pp. 18–21) has explored the reasons for the emergence of the lamp image in funerary

contexts. Evidence from Ghazni suggests that, at least in Ghazni, starting at the latest in the early twelfth century, funerary iconography borrowed the lamp motif already found in religious contexts and employed it as a visual alternative to the formula *nawwara Allahu qabrah* (Rugiadi 2012).

Cats. 165a–c

1. Read and translated by Abdullah Ghouchani.
2. Surveys and excavations were carried out in two short expeditions in 1942 by the Turkmen branch of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences. See Yershov 1947 and Pribytkova 1964. My thanks to Ruslan Muradov and to Sören Stark for help with reading the Russian articles.
3. For mention of the town by tenth-century geographers, see Bosworth 1993.
4. See *ibid.* Although most ceramics found at the site were attributed to the ninth to eleventh century (Yershov 1947, pp. 134–35), a reevaluation of their chronology in view of more recent scholarship extends to include the twelfth century.
5. For discordant views on the presence or lack of a dome, see Pribytkova 1964, p. 186, and Hillenbrand, R., 1994, p. 103.
6. The inscription lacks units and the first part of the decimal; the latter's remaining digits could be read as 4, 7, or 9. The most likely reading is A.H. 4[9]X, or A.D. 1096–1106, the more probable dating for the ten-pointed interlaced pattern of stars and polygons. For a reading of the inscription, see Diakonov 1948, p. 108. See also Yershov 1947; Pribytkova 1964, p. 186; Blair 1992, pp. 189–90, no. 72, figs. 142–44.

Cat. 166

1. Khoury 1992, p. 15.
2. Anisi 2004, figs. 26–28. For Ardistan, see Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 4, figs. 322–24.

Cats. 167a, b

1. See Meinecke 1976, vol. 1, pp. 5–35.
2. For a discussion of the building, see *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 283–99. The panel was published in Milan and Vienna 2010–11, pp. 176–77, no. 164, and Geneva 1985, no. 346.
3. Meinecke 1976, vol. 2, p. 289, mentions that a large portion of sura 2, verse 286, is missing above windows 11 and 12 (per the numbers given in *ibid.*, p. 287, fig. 41).
4. The building is discussed in *ibid.*, pp. 256–72 (the fragment is listed under “G”). The fragment is illustrated

in situ in *ibid.*, vol. 1, pl. 28/2. According to Gisela Helmecke, Curator, Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, the inventory number given by Meinecke, I.330/10(99), was used internally by the Berlin museum staff. The current number, Konya 99, does not correspond to the museum's regular numbering system; one that does is forthcoming.

5. Badr al-Din b. Muslih appears in the foundation inscription. He died after A.H. 656/A.D. 1258 and was probably buried in the Sirçali Madrasa's mausoleum, north of the entrance-vestibule. This area contains three cenotaphs, of which at least two were decorated with mosaic tiles in colors similar to those of cat. 167b. See *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 260, 264, 270; for a floor plan, see *ibid.*, p. 259, fig. 38. The Karatay Madrasa, from which cat. 167a derives, represents the other schema for Anatolian madrasas, that of a domed interior courtyard.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 271.
7. Other buildings that relate to this atelier are the Misri Mosque at Afyon Karahisar (mid-13th century) and parts of the Great Mosque in Malatya (A.H. 645/A.D. 1247), see *ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 35–45, 390–400, vol. 2, p. 271.
8. See also the *mina'i* tiles at the Konya Köşk (cat. 20a and figs. 45, 46).

Cats. 168a–c

1. This inscription was first read by Rice, D. S., 1957, p. 312.
2. English translation in Amsterdam 1999–2000, pp. 167–68, no. 122.
3. The foundational study remains Baer 1989a, which discusses eighteen metal objects with Christian imagery, including cats. 168a and 168b but omitting cat. 168c. See also Katzenstein and Lowry 1983; Washington, D.C. 1985–86, pp. 124–46; Hoffman 2004; Auld 2009. According to Rachel M. Ward (2005, pp. 314–15), a twentieth object could be added to this corpus, for she interprets the scene on the Blacas ewer of a figure kissing the hand of an enthroned ruler with a beard and bare feet (cat. 15, fig. 39) as Christ washing the feet of the Disciples.
4. On the Freer canteen, see Ecker and Fitzherbert 2012. Ward 2005, p. 321, emphasizes that conclusions of attribution, patronage, and meaning should be reassessed individually.
5. For a broader perspective regarding Christian imagery and iconography and their interaction with the Muslim world, see Snelders 2010.
6. Examples include cats. 13b, 15, 68. For cat. 168a, with further literature, see

Fehérvári 1976a, p. 105, no. 131; Baer 1989a, pp. 15–17; Annabelle Collinet in Paris 2001–2, p. 117, no. 101; Berlin 2007–8, pp. 122–24. The curvilinear spout ending with a dragon's head and the lid, as well as the entire silver inlay, are modern replacements.

7. Raby 2012, pp. 23–37.
8. Baer 1989a, pp. 15–17, 36, pls. 121, 122.
9. Other examples are in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (320–1866), and the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo (225); see Baer 1989a, p. 7, 13–15. On cat. 168b, see also Ellen Kenney in New York 2011, pp. 152–53, no. 102; Stefano Carboni in Paris 2001–2, p. 114, no. 97; Stefano Carboni in New York 1997b, pp. 426–27, no. 285.
10. Carboni in Paris 2001–2, p. 114, no. 97.
11. For the epigraphic content of these two boxes, see Baer 1989a, p. 13.
12. See cats. 11, 69.
13. Baer 1989a, p. 38.
14. For further literature, see Kenney in New York 2011, p. 153.
15. According to Carboni in Paris 2001–2, p. 114, no. 97, the iconography relates to Shi'a images of 'Ali and his sons al-Hasan and al-Husayn.
16. The lid has four dials, each with sixteen letters in *abjad* order and pointers that can still be turned, although the lock mechanism, originally on the inside of the lid, is now missing. This box was excluded from Baer 1989a but published in Christie's, London 1989, lot 526; Francis Maddison in Savage-Smith et al. 1997, pp. 390–91, no. 344; Amsterdam 1999–2000, pp. 167–68, no. 122; Paris 2009–10, pp. 96–97, no. 110. For an example from Iran and a discussion of this type of strongbox, see cat. 110.
17. At first glance the circular motifs recall the petaled rosettes that are common on medieval inlaid metalwork and appear on this box on the back side, where four of them flank the two representations of the moon.
18. Another common detail that Christ and the Virgin share is the little ridge at the top of the head, perhaps another religious symbol or attribute.
19. I am grateful to Helen C. Evans, Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator of Byzantine Art, Department of Medieval Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, for her help deciphering the iconography.

Cat. 169

1. The *naskhi* inscription was first read and translated in Fehérvári 1976a, p. 102; for a different reading, specifically the correction of the name Ulugh Qaymuz to Qaragöz, see Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, p. 150. The cursive inscription might refer to the size of the vessel or

to the quality of the silver; see Fehérvári 1976a, pp. 102–3. The word is not correct, however, for the *alif* of *maqyas* is missing. The other two words are not clear. There is also a seal.

2. If the three words inscribed on the base indeed refer to the quality of the silver or the size of the vessel (see note 1 above), then the economic potency of the bowl's owner could literally be measured in this bowl. For silver and gold vessels associated with wine drinking, see cats. 56, 57.
3. The question of whether there was scarcity or "famine" of silver has been discussed in studies of numismatics. See Allan 1976–77; Melikian-Chirvani 1982a. On the coins, see cats. 14a–l.
4. The bowl, which has been restored (the rim is broken in several places), is published in Fehérvári 1976a, pp. 102–3, no. 127; Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, pp. 144–55; Ward 1993, pp. 86–87; and Almut von Gladiss in Berlin 2007–8, pp. 114–15, no. 93.
5. Melikian-Chirvani 1982a, pp. 151–55.

Cat. 170

1. Only a portion of the inscription is decipherable, and it is read by Dan Shapira of Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, as "Shelomo the Tbilisian" and "make a Kiddush and let him/her drink." My thanks to him, Vera Moreen, and Ira Spar for their help with this difficult inscription.
2. For the star motif, see a late twelfth-century dish from Khurasan in Melikian-Chirvani 1982b, p. 96, no. 26a; and, for the interlace in a roundel, see a thirteenth-century casket from western Iran in *ibid.*, pp. 182–83, no. 82.
3. Zand, Neishtat, and Beizer 2007, pp. 495–97.

Cat. 171

1. Snelders 2010, pp. 151–52. The reading of the Gregorian date has been disputed.
2. Brandie Ratliff in New York 2012, p. 88, notes that it was Helena who discovered the Holy Cross, which was then divided between Jerusalem and Constantinople.
3. In cat. 86 the kneeling, turbaned figure in the right foreground wears a robe with a similar pattern to that of Constantine, variants of which appear in the *Kitab al-aghani* (cat. 106); see Farès 1953, pls. 7–9, 14.
4. Snelders 2010, p. 208 n. 207, and Melikian-Chirvani 1970, fig. 42.
5. Snelders 2010, p. 212.
6. In fact, Badr al-Din Lu'lu', ruler of Mosul and patron of illustrated manuscripts and inlaid metalwork, was originally Armenian, taken as a slave and converted to Islam by the Seljuqs.

Cat. 172

1. Claus Peter Haase in Berlin 2006–7, p. 40.
2. Beyazit 2009, vol. 1, pp. 73–82, notes that the mosque dates between 1122 and 1153. See also *ibid.*, p. 229, pl. 6.
3. On fol. 8v.

Cat. 173

1. London 1976a, p. 244, no. 344, with previous references; Watson 1985, pp. 45–46, 48–49, 52, pl. 11.
2. See Seyed-Gohrab 2009. For the interpretation of the pupils as girls and boys, see Copenhagen 1996, pp. 295–96. For a suggestion against the Layla and Majnun hypothesis, see Curatola 2006, p. 176.

Cats. 174a, b

1. This inscription was first read and translated by Eva Baer in Baer 1972, p. 199. Taragan 2005, p. 34, corrects the translation of *al-hadratayin*, a dual form for "excellence," to "the two Excellences."
2. Read and translated by Abdullah Ghouchani and Alzahraa K. Ahmed, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
3. "Recite, by the most beneficent Lord, who taught the use of the pen; who teaches man that which he knows not" (Qur'an 96:3–5).
4. Taragan 2005, pp. 31–32.
5. These edicts follow traditional religious relationships between the art of writing or transcribing the "word of God," the Qur'an, and the writing tools; see Baer 1972, p. 199, with further references.
6. Luxurious manuscripts intended for a courtly and elite society may also have been created in workshops elsewhere.
7. Melikian-Chirvani 1986; Taragan 2005, pp. 39–40.
8. Cat. 174a was published in Baer 1972 and Taragan 2005. Its removable interior piece has been preserved.
9. Two almost identical inkwells are known. One is in the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London (MTW 1474, see Paris 2009–10, p. 99, no. 115), and the other was seen on the art market (Paris 2012, pp. 30–31, no. 11). Their bodies are entirely inlaid with petaled rosettes enclosed in an overall interlace pattern, a design that compares with at least one candlestick from eastern Anatolia (Allan 1982a, pp. 66–69, no. 9).
10. For Victoria and Albert Museum, London (86-1969), see Melikian-Chirvani 1982b, p. 124, no. 52; for Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv (MHM a.93), see Taragan 2005.

11. Taragan 2005, pp. 30–31; Giuzalian 1968, pp. 118–19.
12. The lid of the London inkwell does not survive, but it was likely similar to those of cat. 174a and the Tel Aviv example.
13. The London inkwell bears a short phrase in Persian that reads, "For my teacher." The inscription of cat. 174a has not yet been deciphered.
14. Taragan 2005, pp. 30, 34.
15. Published in Gabrieli and Scerrato, eds. 1979, figs. 577–80.
16. See cat. 72. In the famous Mamluk Saint-Louis basin in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (LP 16), a standing attendant holds a rectangular box inscribed with a *dawat* attribute of the amir *dawadar* (see Melikian-Chirvani 1986, p. 83, fig. 18); and in the Ilkhanid manuscript painting of Rashid al-Din's *Compendium of Histories*, an oblong pen box is presented to the ruler (*ibid.*, p. 72, fig. 1). The Mamluk historian al-Qalqashandi (ca. 1400s) writes that, in his time, chancellery and treasury scribes used brass or steel pen boxes. Government scribes used long pen boxes with rounded ends, whereas treasury scribes used long, square-cornered ones. See James Allan in Doha 2002, p. 27.
17. Such inserted elements usually consist of two small circular and one large semicircular oblong cavities. Al-Qalqashandi describes in detail the usage of each compartment (see Kalus and Nafah 1983).
18. Taragan 2005, pp. 41–42.

Cats. 175–77

1. For analyses of the Topkapı scroll and its incised drawings, see Necipoğlu 1995, in particular the essay by Mohammad al-Asad on the geometry of the *muqarnas*. For the Tashkent scroll, see Holod 1988 and Bulatov 1987.
2. For a close-up view of each page, see *Penn in Hand: Selected Manuscripts*; http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/medren/detail.html?id=MEDREN_5829382 (accessed January 6, 2016).

Cat. 178

1. Allan 1982b, p. 32, and p. 72, nos. 72–74. Allan cites two unpublished medieval bronze seals, said to have come from Qazvin, in the British Museum, London (1909,0216.62, .63), one of which has an inscription.
2. Porter, V., et al. 2011, pp. 3–7.
3. The seal impressions on cat. 188 are later than the date of the manuscript, most likely from the thirteenth century. See also *ibid.*, p. 7.
4. Yalman 2010, pp. 330–31, fig. 4.4.

Cat. 179

1. It is numbered as fol. 1r and has been pasted to the recto of what would have been fol. 2 in the manuscript as originally conceived.
2. James 1992, p. 24. Also published in Rogers et al. 2008, p. 68, no. 56. The numbers of dots are written as 100,000, 56,000, and 81,000, which total 237,000.

Cat. 180

1. Déroche 1992, p. 30.
2. Blair 2007, p. 277.
3. Déroche 1992, p. 16, disputes the use of "*kufic*," preferring to call the script "Early Abbasid" and to define six different subtypes based on letter forms.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
5. Rogers et al. 2008, p. 70, no. 58.
6. Lings 1976, no. 14.

Cat. 181

1. The first and only descriptive publication highlighting this manuscript is Ettinghausen 1935. Since then the better-preserved folio of the double-page finispiece has been reproduced, without further discussion, in London 1976a, no. 508; Ettinghausen and Grabar 1987, p. 182, fig. 285; and Hillenbrand, R., 1999, p. 103, fig. 73. A research group at the University of Pennsylvania, headed by Renata Holod and Yael Rice, with Alexander Brey, Elliott Brooks, Michael Falcatano, Quintana Heathman, V. K. Inman, Emily Neumeier, Nina Owczarek, Raha Ráfii, Julie Ream, and Elias Saba, has carried out a detailed study of the major aspects of the manuscript. Preliminary results were presented in February 2013 at a workshop, for which see <http://sites.sas.upenn.edu/nep27wksp/>; a full report is forthcoming in *Penn in Hand: Selected Manuscripts*; http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/medren/detail.html?id=MEDREN_5829382.

Cat. 182

1. London 1976b, p. 46, no. 55, misidentifies the patron as the brother of Nur al-Din. Robinson et al. 1976, pp. 287–88, VII.3,4 gives the correct identification.
2. François Déroche in Paris 2001–2, p. 206.
3. It is erroneously given as the fifteenth *juz'* in Robinson et al. 1976, p. 287.

Cat. 183

1. Déroche 1992, p. 132, calls this script "New Style" and iterates the names by which it has previously been described.
2. Saint Laurent 1989, p. 116, states that all of the folios in American and European collections come from suras 4 and 5, volume 6 of a 30-part Qur'an;

folios in an Iraqi collection come from sura 16; and a bound volume of the manuscript in the Tokapı Sarayı Library contains suras 18–20, volume 16.

3. Saint Laurent 1989, p. 121; London 2009, p. 202.
4. See cats. 61, 78, 135. London 2009, p. 202.

Cat. 184

1. Blair 2006, pp. 157–68.

Cat. 185

1. Hillenbrand, C., 1995. Sa'ad al-Din Köpek was a powerful court official under Kay Qubad I and Kay Khusraw II, who had him executed in 1240.
2. Arberry 1967, p. 17, no. 46.
3. James 1992, pp. 46–47.
4. Lings 2005, p. 61 and fig. 36. Although this occurs in a Qur'an dated A.H. 685/A.D. 1286, the motif most likely was devised earlier, possibly in Baghdad, and then was popularized by the Ilkhanids.

Cat. 186

1. Sotheby's, London 1995, lot 54.
2. See cat. 106, note 3.

Cat. 187

1. Berlin 2006–7, p. 13. The Qur'an of 1164 (cat. 181), contains the signature of the calligrapher who is also the illuminator, Mahmud b. al-Husayn al-Katib al-Kirmanı.
2. Ettinghausen 1935, p. 512 (1984).
3. Berlin 2006–7, p. 36.

Cat. 188

1. Rogers et al. 2008, p. 81, no. 70.
2. Lecomte 1971.
3. Lings 1976, p. 18, no. and fig. 11. The stars in this illumination are six-pointed, however.
4. For the *kufic* Qur'an, see London 1980, p. 21, no. 8, which, however, avoids a specific attribution, assigning the page to the "Near East." For the psalter, see Hoffman 1982, p. 217, and fig. 75.
5. Thanks to Nahla Nassar of the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London, for providing an unpublished entry on this manuscript by François de Blois.

Cat. 189

1. The translation most likely dates from the early or middle Ottoman period (14th–16th century).
2. Part of this *juz'* is most likely missing, since the nineteenth section usually ends with sura 27, verse 55. Moreover, the *juz'* customarily begins with verse 21 or 22 of sura 25.
3. Blair 2006, p. 242, notes the lack of agreement on the birth and death

dates of Yaqut, stating that he was born in the first or second decade of the thirteenth century and died between 1297 and 1299.

4. Schimmel and Rivolta 1992, p. 16.

The Funerary Arts

1. Ali 1944, pp. 193–94; Grabar 1966, p. 8.
2. Barthold, V., and Rogers 1970, pp. 195–96.
3. Adle 1979, p. 514.
4. Schmidt 1936b, p. 135.
5. The tower would be associated with Tughril II (r. 1132–34), if it is to be connected to a Seljuq ruler at all. See Miles 1966 for an explanation of the date.
6. Hillenbrand, R., 1994, p. 283.
7. Whitehouse 1974, pl. Xld.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
9. Whitehouse 1968, p. 20.
10. London 2005, pp. 134–35. For a thirteenth-century example from Akşehir, see *ibid.*, p. 90.
11. Sauvaget 1938, p. 213, figs. 4–9.

Cat. 190

1. For the Early Turkish Period (mid-6th to mid-8th century) through the tenth century, see most recently Stark 2008, especially pp. 126–41. For the medieval Polovtsian statue in the Black Sea region, the chief study is Pletneva 1974. For references of similar practices up to the nineteenth century in south Siberia, see Gołębiewska-Tobiasz 2014, pp. 29–30.
2. The poles are mentioned in contemporary textual sources, while related hole posts have been found in excavations. The term *balbal*, of uncertain vocalization (Gabain 1950, p. 549), was found in Turkic runic inscriptions in Mongolia and in the middle Yenisei region, where it refers directly to funerary memorials erected to honor the deceased and to the enemies killed or taken prisoner by him (Stark 2008, pp. 126–27). Stone *babas* are sometimes also referred to as *balbals* in the literature and common language. Zoomorphic figures, in particular rams and horses, are known from funerary contexts in Anatolia, particularly the eastern parts, such as Tunceli. Scholars believe they were introduced by Sufi orders and movements such as Alevi, Yasevi, and Bektshi in the twelfth to thirteenth century. Later, with the Turkmen invasions of the Qara and Aq-Quyulu tribes, the figures were more widely developed (14th–15th century). Under Ottoman control, zoomorphic funerary sculpture remained more common in villages. See Danik 1993. Zoomorphic funerary sculptures are also known in Iran.

3. Scholars previously associated both *babas* and *balbals* with slain enemies, but the fact that many bear arms problematizes this interpretation; see Stark 2008, p. 132. For an Arab perception of Turkish funerary practices in the mid-tenth century involving woodcarvings in the shape and number of slain enemies, see Ibn Fadlan's account in Pletneva 1990, p. 32.
4. First housed in the Museum of History and Local Lore of Mary Province, Turkmenistan, the figure was transferred to the National Museum of Turkmenistan in 1998. In Mawarannahr (Transoxiana) there are few *babas* and memorial complexes associated with early Turkish nomadic culture. According to Stark (2008, p. 330), this may derive from the early interaction, beginning in the second half of the seventh century, between Transoxianans (namely the Sogdian aristocracy) and the Turko-nomadic element.
5. Nearby Turkmen tribes such as the Kipchaks did carry on these traditions through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.
6. For instance, as told by Ibn al-Athir, the sultan Alp Arslan visited the burial place of his great-grandfather Seljuq at Jand, near the Aral Sea, in A.H. 457–58/A.D. 1065–66; see Durand-Guédy 2010a, p. 78. The sultans' burials are listed in *Mujmal al-tavārikh va al-qīṣaṣ*, completed in 520/1126 (*Mujmal al-tavārikh* 2001, p. 465).

Cat. 191

1. Amsterdam 1999–2000, pp. 100–101, no. 36. An eighth- or ninth-century Qur'an, tentatively assigned to Damascus, contains a full-page image of a building, identified as a mosque, with a four-bay, two-story prayer hall with round mosque lamps suspended in the arches.
2. While provisional, this reading is suggested by the number of tall letters. The red has faded to pink.
3. Sophie Makariou in Paris 2001–2, p. 212, no. 225, has identified the blue strip as a lectern and the object on top or next to it as a book.
4. For example, the Shrine of Bilal, A.H. 625/A.D. 1227–28, and the Maristan al-Qaimari, Salihya, Damascus, 646–56/1248–58; see Herzfeld 1946, p. 15, figs. 16, 17.
5. Tabbaa 1997, p. 36, and figs. 98, 172.
6. Beyazit 2009, vol. 1, pp. 73–82, vol. 2, pl. 6.
7. Grube 1972, p. 33.
8. Makariou in Paris 2001–2, p. 212, no. 225.

Cat. 192

1. Although it is known that the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, acquired the cenotaph from Hagop Kevorkian, there is no information on its Iranian source.
2. For a cenotaph from the mausoleum of Mahmud Khayrani in Akşehir from ca. 1340, see Folsach 1990, p. 176, fig. 293.
3. Literally, "people of the house" of Muhammad, which for Shiites means the Prophet's direct descendants: his daughter, Fatima; her husband, 'Ali; and their sons al-Hasan and al-Husayn.
4. Hillenbrand, R., 1998, p. 170.
5. London 2009, p. 190, fig. 62.

Cat. 193

1. See cat. 160. The chest was published by Kjeld von Folsach in Copenhagen 1996, p. 102, fig. 35, and pp. 107–8, no. 69, identifying the material as sycamore wood, and Folsach 2001, p. 266, fig. 428, suggesting mulberry(?) wood. The lid and inlays are partly modern.
2. For example, the Great Mosque of Nur al-Din, the Qara Saray, and the monastery of Mar Behnam, all in Mosul. See Sarre and Herzfeld 1911–20, vol. 2, pp. 216–31, figs. 234–35, 241; pp. 238–49, fig. 247; and Snelders 2010, pp. 479, 481–82, 485, 490–91.
3. For the shrine of Imam Yahya b. al-Qasim, see Sarre and Herzfeld 1911–20, vol. 2, pp. 249–63; and, for the chest, pp. 262–63. Elements of the drawing in fig. 260 match the lower polygonal sections that form the vertical central axis between the two cruciform inlaid sections in cat. 193. The upper drawing, meanwhile, matches the left half of the polygonal section, toward the upper left-hand corner.

Cats. 194, 195

1. See Adle 1979, p. 511, pl. 1.
2. See Keall 1979, pp. 543–44.
3. Merritt 2000, p. 9.
4. Keall 1979, pp. 543–44. See also a photograph taken of the excavation in Schmidt 1940, pls. 35, 36.
5. Merritt 2000, p. 10.
6. According to the unpublished field notes of the expedition's director, Erich F. Schmidt, cat. 194 (RA 0874) was excavated from Grave 5, plot CC10. The coin (RA 0866) was uncovered in the refuse (i.e., soil searched post-excavation) of plot CC09. See Miles 1938, p. 177, no. 204, and discussion on dating, *ibid.*, pp. 173–76, no. 202B.
7. Algar 1990.
8. Halevi 2013.
9. Algar 1990.
10. *Ibid.* See also Baker 1995, pp. 16–17.
11. Algar 1990.

12. Baker 1995, p. 16.
13. Bulliet 1979, pp. 43–53, especially pp. 46–49.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 49. See also Rante 2015, p. 23 n. 59, for a Buyid coin that employs the title *shahanshah*.
16. Bulliet 1979, p. 49.
17. Although archaeological evidence indicates that the two tombs under discussion here predated the Seljuqs, it is not possible to say that they were not reused during the Seljuq period.

Cat. 196

1. Read, transcribed, and translated by Alzahraa K. Ahmed, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The vertical band of inscription is lost on the Dumbarton Oaks fragments but is partially preserved on the Abegg-Stiftung piece; see Blair 1997, p. 132, fig. 72. An older photograph in Picard-Schmitter 1951, p. 311, fig. 2, shows the original, complete composition.
2. See Phyllis Ackerman in Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 3, p. 2014, fig. 649, for a drawing of this scene.
3. Picard-Schmitter 1951, pp. 307–8.
4. Carboni 2001, p. 276, and Carboni 2006, p. 166.
5. Carboni 2001, p. 276.
6. Picard-Schmitter 1951.
7. This small fragment (RN6948), recovered toward the end of Erich Schmidt's campaign at Rayy, does not have a corresponding entry in Schmidt's field notes, which regrettably stop abruptly on August 17, 1935, at RH6831.

Cat. 197

1. Sauvaget 1938, figs. 6–9.
2. Blair 1998, pp. 78–79.
3. See several inscriptions in the Great Mosque in Diyarbakir, one dated 1091–92 by a governor of Malik Shah (Van Berchem 1910, pl. 8, figs. 3–4, inscription no. 18), and two others, dated 1117–18 and 1124–25, by the Inalids in the name of Malik Shah (*ibid.*, pls. 9–11, inscription nos. 9–20). See also the al-Asfar Mosque in Mardin (Beyazit 2009, vol. 1, pp. 73–82, vol. 2, pl. 6).

Cat. 198

1. Sauvaget 1938, figs. 10–11.

Cat. 199

1. Folsach 2001, p. 245, no. 392.
2. See the chapter on Abbasids in New York 2011, pp. 20–52.
3. See Ettinghausen 1952.
4. Sauvaget 1938, figs. 10, 11.

5. See Beyazit 2009, chap. 3. The tomb is unpublished, and a preliminary reading of the inscription as well as the style of decoration suggest a date in the thirteenth century and an Artuqid provenance.

Cat. 200

1. Read by Abdullah Ghouchani and Alzahraa K. Ahmed, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
2. Diem 2004, p. 64.
3. Bosworth 2010.
4. Wilkinson 1973.

Cat. 201

1. Fehérvári 1972, p. 245, corrects an earlier misreading of the inscription by J. M. Upton but fails to identify the hadith and one of the Qur'anic passages. The present reading, by Alzahraa K. Ahmed, Hagop Kevorkian Curatorial Fellow, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, is at slight variance with Fehérvári's.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 247; Khoury 1992, p. 16.
3. Khoury 1992, p. 17, ill. p. 16, fig. 6.
4. Déroche 1992, p. 136, N.S. 1 and N.S. 3.
5. Khoury 1992, pp. 15–22.

Cat. 202

1. Whitehouse 1968, p. 20.
2. Frye 1971a.

Cat. 203

1. James 1992, pp. 36–37, northwestern Iranian Qur'an of the last quarter of the twelfth century.
2. Déroche 1992, p. 163 (fol. 38r of cat. 180; not illustrated in this catalogue).

Cat. 204

1. Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 5, pls. 519E, 520; New York 2011, p. 104, no. 64.
2. Lambton 2002.
3. Pope and Ackerman, eds. 1938–39, vol. 5, pls. 519E, 520.

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Glossary

- water) is applied to a ceramic body to add relief decoration.
- basmla** Literally, “In the name of God”; the first verse of all but one *sura* (chapter) of the Qur’an.
- bazm** Persian term for feasting; often paired with *razm* (hunting and martial prowess).
- “beveled” style** A style of abstracted vegetal relief decoration popularized during the Abbasid period.
- bifolio** In manuscripts, a single sheet folded in half to form two leaves, the folios of which may or may not be sequential depending on their location in the quire.
- bota** Stylized leaf-shape motif.
- bullae(e)** Impressed clay disk(s).
- Burids** Atabeg dynasty that ruled in Damascus and southern Syria from 1104 to 1154.
- Buyids** Pre-Seljuq Shiite dynasty that ruled in Iran and Iraq from 932 to 1062.
- calcining** The heating of a material below its melting point to effect the decomposition of carbonates.
- caravanserai(s)** Lodging(s) constructed along caravan routes at regular intervals for use by travelers, merchants, and pilgrims.
- carbon 14 dating** Method of estimating the date of organic material based on the half-life of the carbon 14 isotope.
- chape** Fitting, often pointed, at the lower section of a scabbard.
- cintamani** Sanskrit term meaning “auspicious jewel” used to describe an attribute of a Bodhisattva; also, a motif found in Seljuq art consisting of groups of three or four dots. (In Ottoman art wavy stripes are also present.)
- Danishmendids** Successors of the Great Seljuqs in north central and eastern Anatolia, the Turkmen Danishmendid dynasty was composed of one line that ruled from Sivas (1104–74) and another that controlled Malatya and Elbistan (1142–78).
- dar** Edifice.
- decan** One of three divisions of an astrological sign (approximately ten days); also, the ruler of such a division.
- dendrochronology** A method of dating wood based on the analysis of tree rings.
- dinar** Gold coin.
- dirham** Silver coin.
- dirham aswad** Literally, “black dirham”; a debased silver coin or a cuprous coin with a low silver content.
- diwan** Literally, “register”; used in reference to financial and administrative services at court and, by extension, official meetings. Also, a collection of poetry by a single author.
- Estrangelo** The oldest form of Syriac script.
- fals** Copper coin.
- the Fatiha** The opening sura of the Qur’an, consisting of seven verses, the first of which is the *basmla*.
- the four caliphs** The first four caliphs after the death of the Prophet Muhammad: Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman, and ‘Ali. They are known collectively as the Rashidun, or Rightly Guided.
- furusiyya** Broadly, “equestrianism”; also, the Arab confraternity of equestrian culture.
- futuwwa** The ethics of Sufi orders; also, associations of young men with chivalric aspirations, sometimes with Sufi connections, or guilds.
- Ghaznavids** Powerful Turkish dynasty (977–1186) based at Ghazni, in eastern Afghanistan. At its greatest extent, the Ghaznavid realm ranged from western Iran to northwestern India.
- ghulam** Slave-soldiers or servants (sometimes non-Muslims who were converted to Islam) at the service of rulers and elites. Some rose in position and were eventually freed.
- Ghurids** Dynasty founded in the Ghur region of Afghanistan that first paid tribute to the Seljuqs, then took over Seljuq and Ghaznavid lands from the Caspian Sea to northern India. The Ghurids were in power from the early eleventh century to 1215.
- Great Seljuqs** Rulers over parts of Transoxiana, Afghanistan, and Iran from 1040 to 1194.
- gypsum plaster** A type of plaster made from the mineral gypsum. The term is used in the present volume when a composition was tested and the presence of gypsum was confirmed.
- hadith** The traditions of what the Prophet Muhammad said or did, conveyed to his companions and through a chain of transmitters; used in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) to resolve legal, religious, and social issues not addressed in the Qur’an.
- hafir** An ancient Iranian symbol of sovereignty.
- hammad** A public, more rarely private, bathhouse.
- han** (Persian, *khan*) Turkish term for a caravanserai.
- Hanafi school** One of the four main Sunni schools of law.
- houris** Virgins of Paradise mentioned in the Qur’an.
- ‘Id al-Fitr** A three-day festival marking the end of fasting during the month of Ramadan.
- Ildegüzids** Turkish atabeg dynasty with control over territories in Azerbaijan and northwestern Iran from about 1145 to 1225.
- Ilkhanids** Mongol rulers of Central Asia and Iran from 1256 to 1353.
- iqta’** Grants of land by sultans to military leaders or high-ranking officials from which revenue was collected.
- Ismailis** Shiite followers of the first seven Shi’a imams; ruled North Africa and Egypt as the Fatimids (969–1171) and resisted the Seljuqs from their fortress at Alamut and elsewhere in northern Iran.
- al-Jawzahr** Pseudo-planet believed to be responsible for eclipses; also, a mythical dragon thought to cause eclipses by devouring the sun. The tail of the dragon is referred to as Nawbahar.
- iwan** A single large, vaulted hall that is walled on three sides and open on the fourth. An *iwan* may open directly onto the exterior, a courtyard, or a covered space.
- the Jazira** Literally, “island”; a geographical term applied to the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in modern Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. In the medieval period the Jazira was divided into three subregions: Diyar Bakr, Diyar Mudar, and Diyar Rabi’a.
- jinn** Demonic being produced from a smokeless flame.
- juz’** Section comprising one-thirtieth of the Qur’an.
- Ka’ba** Islam’s most sacred building; the cubical structure at the center of the courtyard of the Great Mosque of Mecca in which a black stone is embedded. It is the focal point of ritual prayer and pilgrimage for Muslims, and it is said in the Qur’an to have been built by Ibrahim (Abraham) with the help of his son Isma’il (Ishmael).
- katib** Scribe or secretary in government administration in charge of the *diwan*.
- khanqah** (also *khanaqa*) Persian term meaning lodge, akin to a monastery, for dervishes.
- khutba** Ritual address delivered at Friday prayer in which the name of the leader of the Muslim community, invariably the caliph, but also frequently the sultan or amir, is invoked.
- Khwarazm Shah** Iranian rulers of Khwarazm on the lower Oxus (Amu Dar’ya) River; ruled by governors of the Ghaznavids (1017–41) and then by descendants of a Turkish governor of the Seljuqs. After defeating the Ghurids, they conquered the former Seljuq lands of Iran but controlled them only until 1220, when the Mongols conquered Transoxiana.
- Kiddush** In Judaism, a ritual in which verses and blessings are recited, usually over a cup of wine, to sanctify the Sabbath.
- köşk** (Persian, *kushk*) Turkish term for a pavilion or residential structure, often palatial.
- kuffic** Squared form of Arabic script.
- kulah** Turkish headgear.
- kurgan** Burial mound.
- laqabi** Decorative technique of applying splashes of colored glaze over a molded motif on stoneware vessels.
- lime plaster** A type of plaster made from lime. The term is used in the

present volume when the composition was tested and the presence of lime was confirmed.

luster painting (n.); **luster-painted** (adj.) Overglaze technique of ceramic decoration using silver and/or copper oxides, which fuse with the glaze during a second firing in a low-oxygen atmosphere to produce a shiny, metallic surface.

madhhab School of religious law.

madrasa A school, especially one offering higher education in Islamic law and theology.

majlis (s.); **majalis** (pl.) Session(s) or meeting(s) held at court to discuss subjects such as literature or science; also, a political reunion or festive gathering.

al-malik Arabic term meaning "king."

masjid-i jami' (Turkish, **Ulu Cami**) Congregational mosque where the male Muslim community performs the Friday prayer, during which the *khutba* is pronounced; also known as a Great Mosque or a Friday Mosque.

maydan Plaza or square; also, a polo ground.

Mengüjekids Successors of the Great Seljuqs, the Turkmen Mengüjekid dynasty controlled territory in northern Anatolia between the Danishmendid and Saltuqid domains, including Erzincan and Divriği. They ruled from 1118 to the mid-thirteenth century, when they were defeated by the Rum Seljuqs.

mihrab Niche in a mosque's *qibla* wall marking the direction toward Mecca, and therefore of prayer.

mina'í (also **haft rang**) A modern term derived from the Persian word for enamel (*mina*) used to describe ceramics with multicolored in-glaze and overglaze-painted decoration.

minbar Raised platform reached by a set of steps, usually situated in a mosque to the right of the mihrab; used by speakers to address an assembled group.

Muharram The first month in the Islamic calendar; coincides with important Shi'a commemorative ceremonies, most notably Ashura, which takes place on the tenth of Muharram.

muqarnas Stalactite-like architectural decoration.

nawba ceremony An integral part of court protocol whereby a musician performed regularly at court on a particular day of the week; alternatively, several singers took turns performing during a single *majlis*.

Nawruz The Persian New Year, coinciding with March 20 or 21.

Nisanids Wealthy, powerful family and Seljuq successors with de facto control over Amid (modern Diyarbakır) in the twelfth century.

nisba A component of an Arabic name that reflects an individual's connection to a profession, person, group, or place.

noria Waterwheel.

Oghuz (Arabic and Persian, **Ghuzz**) Members of the Gök Türk Empire.

pale dinar A debased dinar (a gold coin with a lowered gold content).

Parthian shot A martial tactic employed by the Parthians, who ruled Iran from the third century B.C. to the third century A.D., whereby a mounted archer turned to face backward on his horse to fire an arrow while retreating.

petrographic analysis Archaeometric analysis investigating the mineralogical and petrographic composition of earthenware and stoneware.

plaster Any plaster used for non-decorative purposes, regardless of its composition (e.g., lime or gypsum) or if the composition is not known.

pontil A rod tipped with molten glass that is attached to the base of a vessel to hold it in place during firing. After completion, the rod is broken off, and the resulting mark is referred to as a "pontil mark."

qa'a Arabic term for a reception area in a palatial/residential building featuring one to four *iwans* and a central courtyard or hall.

qaba Robe.

Qarakhanids Turkish rulers in Transoxiana, Farghana, Semirechye, and eastern Turkestan from 992 to 1212.

Qaramanids Turkish dynasty in Anatolia descended from a Sufi shaykh of the Turkmen Afshar tribe. They controlled most of southern and central Anatolia from about 1256 to 1475.

qasida A form of poetry.

qibla The direction Muslim worshippers face—toward the Ka'ba, in Mecca—when performing ritual prayers. In religious monuments this direction is usually marked with one or several mihrab niches included in the *qibla* wall.

quaternary alloy An alloy, or mixture, of four metals.

razm Persian term for hunting and martial prowess; often paired with *bazm* (feasting).

reserve-painted Technique by which design elements are left unpainted while the field around them are painted.

rinseau (s.); **rinceaux** (pl.) Scrolling vegetal motif(s), often employed in architectural decoration.

ruba'í Persian term for a quatrain (a poem consisting of four lines).

Rum Seljuqs Seljuq sultanate founded in 1081 by one of the sons of Qutlumush, a cousin of Alp Arslan, which had its capital at Konya, in central Anatolia. In the thirteenth century

their power extended to Alanya, on the Mediterranean coast, and to other parts of Anatolia, but the dynasty was curtailed by the Mongols in 1243 and dissolved by 1307.

sama' Mystic Sufi ceremony that may include chanting, music, and dance.

Samanids Iranian dynasty in Transoxiana and Khurasan from 819 to 1005.

saraya Pavilion or larger residential structure, often palatial.

sarruj Waterproof plaster.

sawab (also **thawab**) Literally, "reward"; refers to spiritual merit or reward that accrues from pious behavior and the performance of good deeds.

sejant erect In heraldry, a term for a seated animal with its forelegs held upright.

SEM-EDS analysis Energy-dispersive spectroscopy performed on a scanning electron microscope to analyze thin sections of a sample material.

sgraffito In ceramics, the decorative technique of incising with a thin point the slipped surface of an earthenware vessel and then coating it with glaze.

shahanshah Persian term meaning "king of kings." Originally a pre-Islamic royal title employed by the Sasanians, it was resurrected under the Buyids and subsequent dynasties as part of a broader interest in pre-Islamic Iranian culture in the medieval period.

shamsa Sunburst medallion.

sharbus Furred hat worn by rulers or members of the ruling elite.

shaykh Title of scholarly or social standing.

Shi'a Literally, "party"; refers to the party of 'Ali, the fourth caliph, whose followers believed that the leader of the Muslim world should be a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. Related forms include **Shiism** (n.) and **Shiite** (adj.).

simurgh/anqa Mythic bird from the *Shahnama*.

sprue The opening in a mold through which molten metal is poured during casting.

stucco Any plaster used for decorative purposes (for example, if carved or molded), regardless of its composition (e.g., lime or gypsum) or if the composition is not known.

sucket fork A combined fork and spoon.

suffa A small *ivan*; also, a platform.

al-sultan Literally, "authority"; from the eleventh century onward, a title bestowed by the Abbasid caliph on military-political leaders.

sunduq Literally, "chest"; an Arabic term used to refer to a wood cenotaph.

Sunni Literally, "conduct"; refers to the actions of Muhammad and his followers who subscribed to the four *madh-habs*, or schools of law, in opposition to the Shi'a followers of 'Ali.

takht A Persian term for a throne or throne-like seat; also, a bed or sofa.

tariqa An Arabic term designating "the path"; it refers to the mystical way or school followed by Sufis.

tympanum Architectural term for the wall surface above a lintel bound by an arch.

'ud A type of lute in which the sound box and the neck are made from discrete pieces of wood.

'Uqaylids Shi'a Arab tribe in Iraq, the Jazira, and northern Syria (ca. 990–1169).

UV analysis (also **UV-Vis**) Ultraviolet-visible spectroscopy analysis.

vizier A high official or the head of the bureaucracy.

waqf Charitable religious endowment.

waq-waq motif A stylized, scroll-like vegetal motif with animal heads. This animated motif relates to the legendary *waq-waq* tree, which in addition to animal heads consisted also of the heads and nude bodies of humans (predominantly female).

weft face The side of a textile composed primarily of weft threads.

XRD analysis X-radiograph powder diffraction analysis.

XRF analysis Nondestructive spectral analysis that uses X-ray fluorescence (XRF) to bombard a small area of a sample with radiation to cause the emission of fluorescent X-radiographs; used to ascertain the composition of pigments and glazes, the emissions of which occur at different wavelengths that correspond to specific minerals. **μ-XRF** (micro-XRF) is a more precise XRF system, capable of focusing on areas as small as ten microns (μm), or one one-thousandth of a centimeter.

Zangids Dynasty founded by Zangi, the son of a slave commander of the Great Seljuqs under Malik Shah. Its various branches ruled in the Jazira and Syria from 1127 to 1251, with dominion over cities including Damascus, Aleppo, Mosul, and Jazirat Ibn 'Umar.

Zoroastrianism Ancient dualistic religion practiced in pre-Islamic Iran, Central Asia, and, later, India. Adherents are considered by Muslims to be People of the Book.

zurkhana Persian religious institution in which men engage in exercises that combine wrestling, bodybuilding, and acrobatics.

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ISBN 978-1-58839-589-4



9 781588 395894

PRINTED IN ITALY